

That same day
Thursday, September 8th

Chicago, United States of America
Synthesis Data Facility

"Okay, guys, you have a mission!"

Hal still felt a little freaked out as the eyes casually wandered across her body, but she was getting used to it - they were fellow geeks after all!

"They are called Scorpio and we are mounting an operation against them. We need control of the CCTV at their London HQ. There must be no record of our visit before, during, nor after. A word of caution: you will see faces, but I urge you not to speculate - on that note we are going to trust you all with that information."

"You can trust us," Libby said and there were four other nods of agreement.

"Battle Guy will contact you with your individual assignments and VPN details to cover your tracks - we do not want an electronic flaming arrow pointing back to Chicago, right?"

"We're Hit Girl's best, Hal - we know what we're doing," Jesse pointed out.

"Yeah!" Peter and Kate said together.

"What is the operation?" Laurence asked.

"Most of it is need-to-know, Jolly Ox, but we're searching for somebody, a friendly, and we believe that Scorpio knows where that somebody might be," Hal explained.

"We have *Fusion's* back, Hal - *Vengeance's* back, too," Libby said.

Edinburgh, Scotland
Vengeance Command Centre

The six girls, plus Cassie, Keira, Craig, the Chief, and Eric, were arrayed around Natasha and Cameron.

"This is the Fusion Covert Combat Suit Mk2 - or FCCS2 for short. .
."

"Still a fucking mouthful!" Kaitlin muttered to Harper who giggled in response.

Natasha scowled at the interruption but she continued nonetheless.

". . . The suit is very similar to those worn by *Fusion* and *Vengeance* during our European adventure, earlier in the year. It is lightweight, so it can be worn beneath normal clothing while still providing a high degree of protection to the wearer. We are the first to gain these suits and we will be putting them to use very

soon. For now, please find your suit - they are colour coded for each of you."

It was not long before everybody was stripping off and pulling on their new lightweight combat suits. Each vigilante would be covered from head to toe, with a removable, full-face, mask. Unlike the usual suits, there were no unique embellishments, however, the single unique items on the suit were the coloured markings on the upper right arm and on the left thigh.

"How did you get mine, so fast?" Abigail asked as she studied the bright red markings.

"These suits don't take as long to make as the full combat suits. You're also very similar in size to somebody else, who that suit was intended for - same with Electra," Natasha advised.

"These are so sleek - they show off my curves," Kaitlin commented.

"What curves?" Naomi demanded.

"A girl can dream," Kaitlin grinned as she checked herself out in the mirror.

"Well, I do have curves and I look *hot*!" Cassie said with a smirk.

"Well, I'm sure Andy will love you in that suit!" Kaitlin grinned and Cassie scowled.

"You little. . ." Cassie began as Kaitlin ignored her and turned to her friends.

"You wouldn't *believe* the screaming when Cassie has her boyfriend, Andy, over - it's nothing *but* screaming: 'Harder, harder!', 'Yes, yes!', 'Fuck me deeper!' - it goes on, believe me!"

"Kaitlin!" Cassie growled as her face went very red.

Abigail just stood there with her mouth hanging open while Harper, Electra and Naomi just giggled.

"Way too much information!" Yvette added as she herself went pink in the face.

"I have more - so much more!" Kaitlin laughed as Cassie moved towards her.

"How about we check out these suits - maybe see how much of a beating they can take. Let's start with Glide - I'd like to see if the suit can stop a .45-calibre bullet."

"I forgot - I have nothing else that concerns Cassie's sex life," Glide offered quickly as she pulled on her mask and ran from the room.

The following afternoon
Friday, September 9th

Scorpio HQ
London

"*Synthesis*, this is *Vengeance* - standing by, over!"

Q was sitting in the back of a blacked-out dark blue Ford Transit, just around the corner from the Scorpio Enterprises HQ. The screens before him showed everything that was happening around the van and in the immediate area.

"*Vengeance*, *Synthesis* - *CCTV is under our control; fair winds and following seas.*"

"Will do, *Synthesis* - *Vengeance* out. *Vengeance* callsigns move in."

"Crimson and Nemesis are moving in with the rug rats."

Q smiled at the reference as he watched the team move into the hornet's nest. He was not happy with the operation but it was the only viable method to get the information that they needed without causing too many problems.

Each child wore a school uniform, with trousers for the girls to cover the suits.

..._...

After moving through security - their suits did not trigger any alerts and they carried no weapons - they were met by a tall man in a dark suit who escorted them to the lifts and then up to the tenth floor.

"I don't like it up here," Abigail muttered.

"Nothing's going to happen - well, not to you, Abigail," Natasha said quietly as they were escorted down yet another corridor.

"Here we are, ladies, and kids," their escort offered as he led open a door in to a large anti-room where two women sat at desks.

Both women peered over their computer monitors at the new arrivals and one picked up her phone.

"They're here, sir . . . right away, sir."

They were escorted through a pair of large polished-wood double doors and into a capacious office with large windows which looked out over the River Thames and the huge O2 venue.

"Sir - these are the kids from Scotland," the escort said as he stepped out of the way.

The man briefly cast an eye over the seven kids and two adults before he stepped forwards from behind his desk.

"Welcome to Scorpio Enterprises - I am . . ."

'A total bastard who needs his fucking teeth kicked in,' Abigail thought as she kept herself silent and partially hidden behind Craig.

". . . William Fraser, Managing Director of Scorpio Enterprises. You've met my Deputy Head of Security - Dale Evans; he's new."

"Thank you, so very much, for allowing us to visit, Mr Fraser," Natasha said.

The man launched into a speech about his organisation and how it benefited so many people in so many parts of the world.

..._...

Abigail was getting impatient with the rhetoric that spilled from the bastard's mouth. Cassie had noticed her anger building and she quickly decided to accelerate the mission.

"*Synthesis* - execute!"

"*Synthesis copies* - *program is running.*"

Every electronically operated door in the building went into lockdown. Nobody onsite would be able to open a door for the next four hours - without it being opened by *Synthesis* who were in full control of the high-tech building's computer systems.

Abigail stepped forwards.

"Do you remember me?" she asked insolently, her voice full of malice.

"I do," Fraser growled, his anger building as he recognised the situation. "What is the meaning of this?"

"Oh, we need information from you," Abigail replied.

"Evans!"

The Deputy Head of Security reached for his pistol but his hand was nowhere near the weapon when Cassie, quick as a flash, put him down on the ground and she acquired his pistol, pointing it at the unfortunate man's head.

"I understand," Fraser chuckled. "You are here about the boy. Well, he isn't here - feel free to look. I last spoke to the little shit about two weeks ago, only he escaped, along with his bitch."

"I ought to kill you where you stand!" Abigail growled.

"I don't think so," Fraser laughed.

"You have no idea what I am capable of, old man, you have no idea what I am."

"Quite the contrary, girl - I know exactly what you are. You are a *Predator* - a failed, fucked up idea that originated with the CIA and

filtered through to our side of the Atlantic. I understand the whole scheme was canned - no surprise; you're fucking unstable!"

"Where is he?" Abigail roared.

"Oh, I have no intention of giving up that little titbit of information - but suffice to say, he is safe. . ."

The bastard laughed out loud, his contempt for them all plain to see. Abigail flew at him, knocking the smirking bastard back against his desk. His smirk remained fixed in place, despite the angry young girl.

"You cannot hurt me. I have more of your kind - I die; they die. Understand, girl?"

Abigail paused as she was about to strike the man.

"Now, none of you will escape this building - my security force is not as inept as Mr Evans on the floor, there. I would suggest that you all surrender and I will find suitable work for you abortive, fucked up experiments."

"You're all fucking talk, aren't you," Craig growled. "I am sick and tired of me, my friends, and others like us being abused by sick bastards lie you!"

"I am an opportunist; I did not create you. I just see a profit, or maybe a resource. . ."

"You are fucking scum!" Cassie exclaimed as she made for the man and punched him hard in the face.

Fraser put a hand to his cheek and it came away bloody, revealing a long gash from the ring Cassie was wearing. The man swore under his breath before his smile returned.

"I'll leave you with a teaser - Jamie and his whore headed southwest, maybe a hundred miles or so. Take it, or fucking leave it."

Fraser glared at all those assembled before him and he brazenly walked behind his desk and he pressed the button for his secretary on his desk phone - only it wasn't his secretary who responded.

"Who do you wanna speak with, asshole?"

The American accent was easily recognisable, although slightly distorted by an electronic filter. Fraser hit another button on the phone killing the voice. He looked angry, but he just shook his head. Then, before anybody could move, Fraser walked over towards the far wall and he pushed open a section between two bookshelves. By the time Craig reached the section of wall, it had clicked shut and he was unable to open it.

"Fuck! Let's move, Vengeance," Natasha announced as she pulled on her mask and gauntlets.

..._...

Everybody followed suit, pulling on their own masks and gauntlets. Nemesis kicked the Deputy Head of Security in the head putting him out cold.

"*Synthesis* - let us out!"

The main doors to the office clicked open and Crimson went through the door first. The two women were both behind their desks - one stood as they entered and she brought up a pistol. Polaris dived at the women, leaping over the desk and punching her in the face with one hand and disarming her with the other. Fury and Prowl made for the outer door while Nemesis covered the other woman with her appropriated pistol. The rule that day was: no killing - unless it was absolutely necessary and *only* in self-defence.

"*Synthesis* - outer door and kill CCTV!" Nemesis ordered. "Break. Q, scramble *Twilight*!"

"CCTV is down!" *Synthesis* replied almost instantly.

"*Twilight* scrambled!" Q confirmed.

Fury and Prowl pulled open the doors and Glide carefully peered out into the corridor.

"Four men to the left and three to the right," the young vigilante reported, over the moon to finally be in action as Glide.

"Guns?" Nemesis enquired.

"Shitload of 'em!" Glide commented.

"Okay," Crimson advised. "You all know the exfiltration route. Take it easy and try not to kill. Stripe - you take La Terreur, Fury, and Rigour to the right and make for the roof. Nemesis - you take Glide and Prowl to the left; I'll follow with Polaris. Move!"

They all dived out of the door together, flooding the corridor with masked individuals. The three men to the right found themselves facing four masked individuals, three of whom appeared to be very young. The four men to the left found two groups advancing towards them, one of three and the other of two. The men were all surprised at the speed of advance and none of them were able to bring their firearms to bear in time before hell descended on them.

If any of the Scorpio security men thought that the kids would be easy meat; the *Predators* ensured that the men were left with a lasting impression of what they could do. Indeed, some of the men could well remember a previous visit, only a few weeks previously from a single *Predator*. They all went down hard as *Vengeance* powered through them all making their way to the fire stairs at each end of the corridor.

All nine vigilantes burst out onto the roof at about the same time, from either end and they all made for the south end.

That same time

Twilight

Scorpion was not a happy pilot.

She was hovering only a short distance from the main London City Airport landing pattern and she was receiving a constant stream of violations from Air Traffic Control.

"Golf Victor Echo November Golf, you are in violation, squawk seven two seven niner and ident."

In response, Scorpion flipped her Mode A transponder to 7600, indicating a radio failure. Air Traffic Control would have no choice but to clear the airspace around *Twilight* until her mission was completed. The cabin was noisy as both side doors had been locked back in the open position to allow quick and easy access for the troops she was about to pull out of harm's way. It was something she had done many times before - usually for Royal Marines being picked up from a hot landing zone.

Only a minute after her arrival, Scorpion grinned as she saw masked vigilantes appear in the rooftop. She counted each one as they ran towards her and she lowered the helicopter down to just three feet off the rooftop. She watched as Stripe literally threw Glide aboard followed by the other girls. He then pulled himself aboard and was followed by Crimson and Nemesis. Crimson pulled open the co-pilot's hatch and slipped into the co-pilot's seat. Once all the doors were shut and each member had reported in, Scorpion increased the pitch on the rotor blades and stomped on the left anti-torque pedal bringing *Twilight* around to the west.

As Scorpion lifted off, she flipped the transponder to 0026, indicating a change in designation to that of a military aircraft on a special tasking. Again, Air Traffic Control would have no choice but to clear the airspace around *Twilight*. That, in turn, generated a call from London Military Radar East Air Traffic Control to which Scorpion responded rather tartly: "London Mil, *Scorpion* - bite me!"

"Vengeance, Q - tracker is five by five!"

Everybody had an enormous grin on the faces as they unmasked; the endgame was moving inexorably closer.

That night

North of Hyde Park

Scorpion made yet another illegal move and dropped them all off in Hyde Park before she returned to the London Heliport.

The Mayfair property was off limits as it would require extensive maintenance before it would be habitable again. Instead, they headed for Safehouse VL, a property which had not been utilised but which had been available for a number of months. The property was spread over four floors and boasted eight bedrooms with six bathrooms plus a cloakroom. Strategically, it was also less than a mile from two Tube stations. It was a welcome refuge for the evening as there was no idea when things might start to kick-off.

The kids were encouraged to get themselves cleaned up and then into bed for some much-needed rest. As far as Eric was concerned, William Fraser was still at his HQ, most probably pissed that everybody had escaped. At eight that night, once everybody had eaten and enjoyed three hours rest, it was time to get back to work monitoring Fraser. Natasha and Abigail would take the first shift, that night, monitoring William Fraser. He was soon seen to be on the move, heading towards his own apartment in Knightsbridge.

Cameron and Eric had picked up Keira in the surveillance van and were heading over to Fraser's apartment.

..._...

"You okay?" Natasha asked as she drove through the dark streets of London.

"I'm surviving," Abigail replied. "They weren't kidding about your driving!"

"Funny! I'm a little heavy on my right foot, but I've trashed less cars than Mindy has."

"You all appear to respect Mindy - despite who she is."

"We all owe her something. My brother and I owe her our lives - without Mindy, I would not like to contemplate where we might be, right now."

"When this is over . . . will I be expected to become one of you?"

"No, Abigail. That is the point - you are free to do what you want with your life. After all, it is *your* life, Abigail. You want to become a normal girl, then you can. We can find you somewhere to live with a family."

"Would I be able to go live in America?"

"If you hose that, then I wouldn't see why not. You all lost control of your lives when you were taken and trained as *Predators*. You now have your life back and you can do with it what you wish. It will be hard, but you have many friends, Abigail."

"I've noticed - many used to be my enemies."

"You're all very strong - you can make it."

"Thanks."

"I think our slippery friend is leaving town," Cameron radioed.

"We're on it!"

A minute later, they pulled in a hundred yards beyond the dark blue Ford Transit. Cameron appeared and he knocked on the window and Natasha lowered it.

"He's got a bag with him - we think he's bugging out," Cameron explained.

"Which car?" Natasha asked.

Cameron grinned as he looked across at Abigail.

"Hope your seatbelt is cinched tight, honey," Cameron chuckled as he pointed down the street to where William Fraser was climbing into his car.

Just as he did so, he waved before he pulled down his door. The Storm Grey McLaren 675LT accelerated away rapidly.

Natasha grinned at her brother as she dropped the eight-speed gearbox of the Onyx Black Aston Martin Vanquish S into Drive and she floored the accelerator. Over six-hundred thoroughbred horses effortlessly accelerated the 1,320-kilogramme car as the pursuit began.

"Q!"

The Ford Transit slewed to a halt and Cameron pushed Q out of the driver's seat.

"You drive like a fucking old woman!"

..._...

The McLaren headed east along the A315, roaring past The Park Tower before taking a left onto Park Lane and the A4202 north past the east end of Hyde Park.

Abigail glanced over at the speedometer and she grimaced as saw that it registered a little over 70 miles per hour and they were in a 30 zone! Abigail ensured that her seatbelt was as tight as possible before she resumed her role of keeping a good lookout ahead on the dark streets lest they should crash into some errant driver. As they swept past Marble Arch, heading west they picked up a Metropolitan Police Vauxhall Astra which was thoroughly humiliated as its 4-cylinder 1.9-litre turbo-diesel was severely underpowered when compared to the six-litre V12 engine on the Aston or the four-litre V8 twin-turbo engine on the McLaren. Needless, to say, the Astra was left far behind as the pair of super cars continued east on the A402.

Cameron and Eric were heading east on the same road when the van was physically shaken as they were undertaken and overtaken by the two cars, Natasha leaning on the horn of the Aston as she blazed past on the inside.

"Stupid bitch is going to kill herself!" Cameron growled as he dropped the van into third and floored the accelerator revving the two-litre 170-horsepower turbo-diesel engine past the red line as he endeavoured in vain to keep up with the two cars which had rapidly vanished into the distance.

"You're going to kill *us*, dickhead!" Eric groaned as he braced himself.

Cameron served the long-wheelbase van in and out of the traffic as best as he could, narrowly avoiding other vehicles, pedestrians, and road furniture.

..._...

The Shepherd's Bush roundabout produced an interesting diversion as Fraser skilfully manoeuvred his McLaren through the traffic with Natasha and Abigail only feet behind, both cars in perfect symmetry as they used a power-slide manoeuvre to navigate around the square roundabout. Abigail kept up a running commentary over the communications for those enjoying the safety of the Safehouse.

"Okay - entering the roundabout *sideways*. . . Don't think the driver of that Mondeo was all that impressed by our manoeuvre - oh; that was just plain rude! Err Nats - red means stooooop! Where the fuck did you learn to drive? The fucking moon? Okay - passing forty . . . sixty - I'm too young to die! Oh, shit! We're *not* going to fit through that gaaaaap . . . how the bloody fuck!?"

Thankfully for all involved, the traffic began to thin as they left the heart of London behind. They picked up the A4 at Brentford which became the M4 after a few miles and both cars were able to properly accelerate. They blazed past Heathrow Airport continuing along the M4.

"Shouldn't we slow down, just a tad?" Abigail enquired.

"You are a real pussy - grow some balls!" Natasha grinned.

"Fuck you!"

"That's better - now let's catch that cunt!"

They passed between Windsor and Maidenhead at twice the 70mph speed limit.

"You know that he could be leading us into a trap?"

"We know - he wants us to follow him. The bastard is up to something - to be honest, I think he has a massive ego (you know, Stephanie size) and he thinks he can pull one over on us and survive."

"Arrogant cunt!"

They pursued the fleeing McLaren as far as the A34 junction at Chieveley. Then the million-pound super car just vanished.

"Where the fuck is he?" Abigail exclaimed as she twisted and turned in her seat, looking around them.

"Fuck knows!" Natasha growled angrily. "Vengeance - we've lost him."

"Copy that!"

..._...

The drive back, after a brief pause for some petrol and a cheeseburger, was a lot more leisurely and Natasha drove at just below the speed limit, much to Abigail's pleasure.

By the time they reached the outskirts of London, Abigail was fast asleep. Natasha smiled at the young girl - she looked peaceful as she slept. The bastard who had evaded them had a lot to answer for - he held that girl against her will for weeks and for all anybody knew, that bastard Fraser had had something to do with the girl's rape.

They met up with Cameron and Eric in the Transit at the Chiswick junction of the A40 Great West Road.

"You, okay, sis?" Cameron asked as he gave his twin sister a hug.

"Yeah - a fun drive, but we missed him by a cunt hair."

Cameron chuckled. Natasha's vocabulary got very salty when she was angry. He peered into the Aston and she smiled at the sight of the sleeping Abigail.

"She okay?"

"Yeah - she's tired."

Later that night

North of Hyde Park

Safehouse VL

"Thanks, Mindy - we'll update you further when we know more."

"You all take care," Mindy grinned as she terminated the video call.

Natasha sat back for a moment. The briefing for Mindy had taken over an hour and she was very tired. There was a lot to plan and a lot to bring together in a very short amount of time. On her way to her bedroom, she found Cassie chuckling at Kaitlin.

"I want to go on this mission!" Kaitlin growled. "I deserve to go on this mission; it's about rescuing *Predators*, after all."

Kaitlin folded her arms across her chest and she sat down on the edge of the sofa, her face looking like thunder. Naomi rolled her eyes and she shook her head in despair. Natasha just smirked.

"Kaitlin - we would not leave any of you out of this; just be patient. There is a lot to do and lot to get ready. We need your help, as much as everybody else, okay?"

Kaitlin grinned happily.

*This storyline continues in **Chapter 326: Stormtide of Forsaken***