

“Look, we don’t have much time, so bear with me and just listen,” I said, cutting Eggsy off before he could say anything. “Whoever you just linked the network to, they aren’t going to be able to get through to the rage wave control. It’s biolocked or something, routed through his office with a handprint scanner. Only Valentine can activate it.”

For a split second, Eggsy didn’t react, eyes following my nodding gesture across the large hall to where Valentine was relaxing. After a moment, the young spy cursed under his breath. I assumed he was listening to Merlin explain that if I was right about the lock, then I was also right about him not being able to get through it.

“We would need to get to his office and keep him away from the scanner,” He said, now looking back at me. “Assuming you’re tellin’ the truth.”

His natural accent slipped out as he studied my face with understandable suspicion. I wouldn’t trust me in this situation either. Thankfully, I had pretty solid proof that I wasn’t here with Valentine’s best interests at heart.

“Look under the table,” I said. “Does that prove I’m not fucking around?”

Eggsy raised an eyebrow and leaned back, his eyes going wide when he finally noticed the corpse mostly tucked away. He looked back at me with a new, appraising look.

“Who is that?”

“Pretty sure it’s the Prime Minister of Sweden. So, you know, no pressure.”

“Jesus... Alright, we need to get to his office,” The young British man said, seemingly accepting my proof for now. “Merlin can guide us there-”

“I assume Merlin is your hacker friend?” I asked, continuing when Eggsy nodded. “Alright, but first, he needs to hack into the controls for Valentine’s implants. He can set them off remotely, clear out every guard here, save Valentine’s personal bodyguard.”

Eggsy’s eyes went wide when I pointed that out, his eyes flicking a bit as he listened to Merlin on the other side. He smirked after a moment and nodded.

“He says he can do that, but Valentine will see it the second he starts,” He said, still smirking. “We have someone working on taking out his satellite chain, that will stop his broadcast. Then we-”

“No, we need to detonate the implants first,” I said, cutting him off. “The biggest names in the tech industry are on board with this fucker. Knocking out a satellite is going to buy us time, but a replacement is just a phone call away unless it’s done *after* your friend sets off all the

implants. Once the implants go, everyone who signed up with Valentine will be dead, so no one will be able to help him. Then we have time to take care of Valentine.”

Again, Eggsy's eyes started to drift a bit as he listened to Merlin, but I cut him off. We didn't have a lot of time, and I needed to get my plan across before a certain asshole interrupted us.

“Look, our times are almost up. In a second, you're gonna have to run, but don't go too far!” I warned. “While you're running, your partner needs to detonate all the implants as quickly as possible. If you wait for your other friend to crack the satellite chain, it's possible that someone could help him before the implants go off. Then you need to come back as fast as you can so we can go up to his office. There are holes all through this plan, so we need to assume the worst. Valentine cannot be allowed to activate the rage wave for even a few seconds, or *millions* will die.”

“Wait, what do you mean I'm going to have to run?” Eggsy asked. “What-”

Somehow, I managed to time it perfectly. As Eggsy began to question what I ment, the posh, stuck-up brat I knew was coming stepped into my peripheral vision. Before Eggsy could react he had a knife to his throat. I held my hands up and let out a gasp as if I was shocked.

“Fucking hell, what are you doing here?” Eggsy asked as the brat pulled him out of the seat, Eggsy giving me one last look.

I had, when I was formulating my plan, considered trying to take down this dickhead in the same way I had the now-dead Prime Minister. Unfortunately, while this brat had failed to become a Kingsman in the end, he was *still* a highly trained soldier. Silver spoon suppository or not, I had no chance of fighting against a guy like that unless I could surprise him with my pistol. So, instead of trying to take him down, I had to plan around him.

“My family was invited, obviously,” The brat said, his genuine posh accent only making his face appear even more punchable. “Now get the fuck up. Slowly!”

The brat, whose name I couldn't remember for the life of me, shouted across the party to Valentine, who turned in his chair and stood, looking out of his office at us, as did the rest of the party. I did my best to seem shocked and worried, sliding back in the seat to put my distance from the two younger men. It was hard to keep that up the act and add an extra gasp and jump of fear when Eggsy broke free from his grapple by tasing the fuck out of his head, following it up with a solid right hook.

Honestly, I was jealous he got to punch the smug bastard.

He barely gave me a look before showing off his parkour skills by vaulting over the railing and dropping down into the crowd below. I slowly stood up and moved to the railing,

watching the skilled free runner jump over a table, spin around a few people, and reach the side exit before the alarm sounded through the base.

As he disappeared, I quickly made my way to the stairs, working my way into the crowd, worried that guards would go to the second-floor booth to check up on the posh brat and find the corps under the table. I did my best to fade into the crowd, flinching with everyone as gunfire echoed back into the hall from where Eggsy had run.

Despite the crowd's obvious panic, Valentine picked up his mike and started his countdown, encouraging everyone to stand and focus on what he was doing. As he talked, I slowly made my way across the hall, trying to be as inconspicuous as possible as I went. Eventually, I reached my target: the door on the left side of the hall, right next to the foundation for Valentine's office.

By the time I made it to my destination, the countdown was at the one-minute mark, the wannabe bond villain having moved up the activation, just like he did in the movies. As the crowd watched the countdown on multiple screens, I waited impatiently for the real fireworks to start.

Slowly, the countdown got lower and lower, each second seemingly taking forever to pass. My heart was thundering in my chest, and my brain was going over everything I had done since I arrived, terrified that I had changed something that inadvertently messed everything up. Then, as everyone started counting down the final seconds with Valentine, it finally happened.

Now, in the movies, when Merlin finally sets off the implants, it's done with a major dose of artistic liberties. Instead of hundreds of heads exploding in all sorts of gore and blood, they exploded in clouds of colorful smoke, set to a rather uplifting song that I'm pretty sure was played at my high school graduation. I remembered liking the scene a lot when I first saw the movie, both because it was fresh and new, at least to me, and because it seemed artistic and interesting without being aggressively gorey, all while still getting the point across.

At the ten-second mark of the countdown, as the crowd's chant was violently interrupted, I desperately wished that the scene had actually happened that way, music and all. The alternative, mainly the sound of nearly two hundred heads popping around me, would stick with me for a while.

I put my hand over my mouth and leaned against the foundation, trying desperately to keep from dry heaving or vomiting as the smell of flash-cooked flesh reached my nose. I tried to turn away from the room of corpses, only to see that a half dozen guards were slumped over in the hallway. It took a long moment for me to get control of myself, pushing through my rising gorge and grabbing one of the soldier's weapons. I pulled back the charge handle of what I think was a movie-dramatized SCAR and watched a bullet fly out and scatter along the ground. I nodded and flicked the safety off before hiding along the foundation of Valentine's office.

As I did, I could hear the sounds of shouting, Valentine cursing, and screaming as he watched his plan crumble around him. I couldn't help but smirk when I heard the sound of vomiting as well, the psycho's weak stomach getting the best of him. He was doing his best to shout through his vomiting, but failing miserably. I had to fight the temptation to try and see for myself.

Instead, I waited silently for what seemed like many minutes, waiting for Eggsy to make his way to the hall. I knew I stood very little chance against the lethal bodyguard that worked with Valentine, but every second I wasted standing here, doing nothing, was another second that Valentine could be working out a solution to what Eggsy's partner had done. After all, he was described as a genius, and this was a movie world. Who knows what dumb idea he could pull out of his ass to keep the tension up.

I was just preparing to go ahead on my own when the sound of footsteps, quick and heavy, echoed to my ears from behind me. I whirled around, gun ready, just in time to see Eggsy rush around the corner. He was spattered with blood, his suit covered in a horrible splatter of head bits, but as far as I could see, none of the blood was his. I quickly lowered my weapon, and he did the same.

"You alright?" He asked, and I nodded.

"Traumatized, but fine," I responded with a nod. "Let's go. We need to take him down before he does anything stupid."

He nodded this time before turning around and gesturing with his hand for me to follow. I quickly jogged after him, easily keeping up with him as he confidently turned down a few seemingly random hallways. Merlin must have been directing him because we easily found a set of stairs, running up them two at a time. From there, it was only a few more turns before we were face to face with a huge wooden door, the other side of what I had seen through the large office windows. On either side of the door were two headless guards, slumped to the ground.

We slowly stepped closer, stopping at the door so Eggsy could pat down one of the guards, quickly pulling a small security card from one of their pockets. He flashed it at me, and I nodded, the suit-clad spy quickly moving to the door. He stopped by the wall, waving the security card at a small panel, which blinked green and beeped, the sound of a hefty lock clunking open echoing through back through the hallway. We both took two steps closer to the door, Eggsy reaching for the handle....

The sounds of metallic clinking, rapid and steady, getting closer filtered through the wooden door. Without much conscious thought, I reached out and snagged Eggsy by his collar, yanking him backward hard enough that we both lost our footing, stumbling and falling. Still, it was better than the alternative as, with a hefty thunk, a thin metal blade punched through the door at chest level with a small shower of splinters, driving up through where my new friend's head would have been. It retracted in an instant before the door slammed open, revealing the

black-haired, sharp, and stabby woman I had been nervous about confronting. She already had a pistol out and didn't hesitate to fire as she stepped out of the over-the-top office.

Both Eggsy and I rolled out of the way in opposite directions, bullets sparking against the stone floor, creating small craters as they did. Even as we got to cover, she kept coming, stepping into the hall and turning to fire at Eggsy as she kicked out backward, her bladed prosthetics slashing at me. I barely managed to dodge, her insanely dangerous foot blades somehow slicing apart my rifle, all while engaging Eggsy, forcing him to raise his rifle to block her bullets with his gun, just like he had in the original movie.

Rather than try and use the clearly ruined rifle, however, he flicked it around and swung it like a club, knocking the woman's pistol from her hands. With her pistol gone, she spun and lashed out again, losing focus on me for a moment as Eggsy put pressure on her. She swung up with a slash, which he neatly blocked, before spinning in the other direction, her leg coming back, forcing me to keep my distance.

Or it would have, if I was still there.

The second she had focused on Eggsy, taking her eyes off of me, I had turned towards the door and ran, making a beeline towards Valentine. He was furiously typing on his ridiculous touchscreen desk, a familiar display showing the now broken chain of satellites. He looked up as I stepped in, first at me, and then past me, his eyes widening.

Instinctively, somehow, I dove to the left, rolling across the floor just in time to dodge the now furious bodyguard. She slashed down at me even as I rolled, slicing across my side, her impossibly sharp blade slicing through my suit and along my torso. I strangled a scream and kept rolling. She jumped and flipped in a balled-up spin, slashing downward and trying to catch me again with an even more serious strike, but this time, Eggsy was there. He slammed his foot into her side as she flipped, hard enough to force her out of the spin and slam her against the side of Valentine's desk. She tumbled and rolled back, springing up onto her feet in a tight kip-up that sent sparks skittering away from her prosthetic.

Eggsy pressed on, putting pressure on the nimble psycho and keeping her off me. I could feel blood spreading through my suit, but I ignored it, scrambling up to my feet. I clutched my side, making sure I didn't have anything important hanging from my stomach, before reaching down with my free hand. Quickly, I pushed back the side of my jacket and pulled out my pistol in one surprisingly fluidly motion. I fired once, a bullet slamming into the touch screen desk, shattering the glass and reducing the display to flickering colored static. Valentine screamed and fell backward, landing in his fancy swivel chair.

"Stop! Or the next one goes through his chest!" I shouted, breathing a bit heavy, wincing as it tugged at my wound while holding the pistol steadily at Valentine.

The double amputee woman whirled around, her eyes wide as she saw I was holding her boss at gunpoint. I remembered that in the film she held a certain amount of attachment and affection for him, and I was hoping it would be enough to stop her from doing anything risky. Sure enough, rather than try and rush me, she stopped, slowly raising her hands while Eggsy stood up straight on the other side of her, quickly tugging his suit tight before stepping around her, putting some distance between them.

“Good,” I said with a nod before shooting her in the leg, the bullet punching through her left prosthetic.

Hiding my surprise that I had actually managed to pull that shot off, I turned back to Valentine and pressed the pistol against his skull.

"I think it's time we had a chat."