



Nine

There was no point just sitting in the Mess just looking at each other. The Angels were about to get up and go look for any more clues - not that they had any idea where to actually look - when Lisa's phone rang.

"Hm. James Bond. Wonder what *he* wants." She pressed 'accept call', "Hello?"

"Ah, Miss Chandler. We had a call from Miss O'Farrell earlier. She seemed to be having a spot of bother at a gig in Wales. We've looked into the current availability of tickets for such events."

"Correct so far," said Lisa, "Go on."

"There may be some gatecrashers in the area. Their tickets aren't valid, obviously, but they may attempt to gain access anyway."

"And that could be for this afternoon's performance?" asked Lisa."

"We believe so. We'd advise taking your seats as early as possible."

"We're about to go find our seats now."

"Lisa," 'said' Louisa, "Tell him to make sure the bouncers are informed as well."

"Ah, Miss O'Farrell thinks you should let the bouncers here at the gig know as well."

"We're about to do that. Take care, Miss Chandler, regards to Miss O'Farrell."

Lisa pressed 'end' on the phone "We all get that?" she 'asked'. If not, listen while I translate." Then she carried on in normal speech for the officer still sitting with them with a slightly bemused expression on his face, not really surprising as he'd only heard Lisa's side of the conversation.

"That was our boss, our contact at the Security Services. You're probably about to be subjected to a terrorist attack. They noted our phone call, Louisa's phone call, from earlier. They've probably collated several items of intel that now make sense where they didn't before. I'd suggest a full alert. The base commander should be informed anytime now.

Jody simply said, "Thank God for that. At least we have some idea what we're up against now maybe."

While the Air Force officer muttered into his phone again, Holly said, "Might explain why we can't find anything. It's not here yet."

"Not going to be now either," said Jody. "If the base goes on alert, nothing will get in or out that can't be accounted for."

At that very moment a siren began to wail somewhere outside.

"Whoops," said Lisa, "There we go. Wonder what - ah. The perimeter guard is increased and armed, the entrance gate guards are doubled, and pretty well everybody carries a gun."

"You just found that out from ..." 'said' Holly, flicking her head sideways to indicate the officer still talking into his phone."

Lisa grinned. "Yep."

"So how on Earth will anybody be able to set off a bomb?" asked Louisa.

Lisa frowned, "Dunno. But we still need to keep a watch out - well - Holly does anyway."

Holly just grinned. "Doing it, I am, I am."

The officer was back with them, putting his mobile phone away. "That's the base on full alert. Don't worry, just going to check my sidearm."

Of course, rather than shrink back in fear or apprehension as the officer pulled out his gun, all four girls leaned forwards with interest.

"Ah," said Jody, "Another Browning 9mm. Seem to be common round here. Which ammo do you use? Short or long?"

While the officer was wondering just how Jody knew about stuff like that and thinking about his answer, Jody herself, 'said', "It's 9mm short. I got that *ages* ago. I just like to stir it a bit."

Louisa 'said', "?"

"Later, Weeza. I think he's found his voice again."

"Er, it's 9mm short. How do you know ..."

Jody grinned disarmingly. "Don't forget who we work for."

"Not going to tell him the truth?" 'asked' Holly.

"Nah. Not worth the bother. Besides, my answer will make more sense to him anyway."

"Oh, I see. You're unarmed at the moment, do you want to borrow some firearms?"

Lisa answered before Jody could take in a breath to speak. "No, thank you. We'll manage without. We can use them if we need to but we *try* to manage without."

The officer looked doubtful so Jody held out her hand. "Let me check it out for you?"

The gun was handed over without comment, although the poor officer looked a little confused now as well as doubtful. Jody pulled out the clip of bullets. One by one she removed the rounds from their clip and stood them in a neat row on the table top. Then she pulled the slide forwards and blew down the chamber to make sure there was no dust in the barrel. Another check to make sure the clip was empty and it was slotted back into the bottom of the handle. Holding the gun in her right hand, Jody used her left hand to pull the top slide backwards and then forwards again. Releasing the safety catch, she pointed the gun into a empty corner of the Mess and pulled the trigger.

Of course, with no bullets in the clip, all that happened was a loud click as the firing pin hit the back of the block. Jody reversed the whole procedure, loading the clip once more. With the gun reassembled, she showed the officer that the safety catch was on and returned the weapon to him butt first.

"Seems like bullets will come out when you need 'em to," she grinned at him.

He'd obviously decided to accept everything he saw at face value. He smiled as he took back his gun and said, "You *sure* you don't want to borrow one?"

"He has no *idea*, does he," 'grinned' Jody.

"What did you expect," 'said' Holly, "They don't even know who we *are*."

"They'll find out soon enough," 'said' Lisa, grimly, "Especially if Holly has to do her party trick."

"Lisa?" 'said' Louisa, "Should we go and see what the base commander has to say now the base is on full alert?"

"We should," said Lisa. Then out loud, "We need to go and see what we might be called on to do. Would you excuse us?"

The officer stood up, nodded and marched off to see whatever he had to do. The four girls followed him.

"Weeza? Ring James Bond and see if he knows anything more. This is like running a race with a blindfold on."

While Louisa walked along with a phone to her ear, the other three tried to make plans - or at least Lisa did. Didn't look like she'd succeed.

"Right. There's no obvious explosive device and the base is locked down. Nothing's going to get in through the gate or the perimeter. If any unauthorised aircraft pop up, they're likely to get shot down. I shouldn't *think* anything'll get 'ported in."

They paused just outside the door to the office building so Louisa could tell them what she'd found out - which was not actually a lot.

"They don't know much. Basically, some people they had under surveillance have dropped below the radar, they've lost them. Also, a building they had in mind might be a bomb factory is now empty and abandoned. They can't actually say with any certainty that those events and ours are related, but they've passed on what they can."

"So we're no nearer knowing what's going on," said Holly. "At least the base is on alert and the parade's been cancelled."

"About the only good things so far," said Lisa with a sigh of exasperation. "Come on. Let's see what his nibs has to say."

The base commander was standing in the main office as the girls walked in. What was obvious immediately was his sidearm, now strapped around his middle and not sitting in its drawer.

"Right, sir," said Lisa, "We have about an hour or maybe a little less before you have to evacuate this building."

"So you still don't know anything?"

"Only that it will happen - unless we can stop it - and we *are* trying. I assume the base is secure, nobody can get in?"

"Not even a mouse." The smile was grim, but it *was* a smile.

"We're going for another look around, inside this time as well as outside if you don't mind."

The commander waved an arm. "Be my guest."

"We'll get more of an idea as we get nearer to zero hour," said Holly. That didn't seem to reassure the base commander in the least.

Lisa led the way through the offices. Every now and then they paused to let Holly 'scan' for anything that might appear as a threat. Eventually they found themselves back out on the parade ground at the rear of the building.

Holly was getting cross with herself. "*Why* can't I see anything?"

"Because there's nothing to see," said Jody. "Lisa? Have another look at the Precog, sorry dear."

"What am I looking for?"

"Wait until the explosion is just about over. Try and look at the building, has it been smashed in, or blown out?"

Lisa shuddered as she ran through the Precog in her mind. It was easier now that she knew all the casualties she could 'see' weren't going to happen. Eventually she said, "Pushed in. Rubble at the base of the wall, but not much on the parade ground itself."

“Hm,” said Jody. “Means the explosion happened *outside* the building. Been inside, the walls would have blown outwards and there’d be debris everywhere, on top of the casualties and all like that.”

“*Some* information at least,” said Holly. “If it *is* a terrorist attack, like James Bond seems to think, then the explosives or bomb or whatever won’t appear until the last minute.”

“What if it’s a missile or something?” asked Louisa. “I don’t know much about stuff like that, but ...”

“Good thought, Weeza,” said Jody. “Not a missile, but what about a shoulder-mounted something or other? A SAM or similar? Where’s the middle of the bang, Lisa? We can look from there and see if we can spot a likely place something might come from.”

Lisa and Jody walked towards the wall of the building, closely followed by Louisa. Holly stayed where she was. Her eyes were closed as she scanned again. There were plenty of vehicles moving around on the base so the sound of an engine getting closer was not a cause for alarm. A Land Rover came hurtling round the corner of the building and made straight for Holly - and it wasn’t going to stop!