

Small World

Chapter 23: Bad Case of Gas

"You mean like... 'explosion' kind-of 'self destruct'? Wouldn't that attract some unwanted media attention...?" Jack questioned, before noticing a quiet 'Hiiisssss' sound emanating from the air-vents on the ceiling. "...Oh. Gas. Of course," He muttered.

"We need to get to the launch pad...we might have fifteen minutes before we suffocate..." David wheezed, trying to cover his maw with his paws.

"I couldn't agree more," Jack huffed, "but first, get that smart phone off the desk!"

"The what...?"

"The rectangle thing with the touch-screen! Grab it! It might have information on it we can use!"

"Oh, right!" David nodded, snatching the small device off the table before scurrying over to his still unconscious sister.

"Don't worry about her, kid! I'll carry her!" Jack assured.

"You sure, Jack?"

The ex-commando nodded. "Just lead the way! I'll be right behind you!"

Hesitating a moment, David nodded again and rushed out the door through which they'd entered, which was now ajar due to the 'weapons malfunction' a moment ago.

After carefully propping up the young female Ferren on his back for maximum support, Jack made sure to retrieve his handgun and gingerly place it back in its holster. *'Never know if I might need this again...'*

"...FI-," the assault-squad leader was about to command, only to pause upon seeing a small, cylinder-shaped object roll into the room through the now-opened blast doors. "...GRENA-"

The trooper didn't get to finish his sentence as the explosive detonated, blackening his vision instantly.

"...I appreciate you switching sides for us and all that, Mr. Heralds," Jade chuckled sheepishly, "But did you have to KILL all those guards just doing their job...?"

"If their superiors found out they failed, they would have just been executed on the spot, anyway, and probably not as quickly as I did," the dark-haired secret agent explained. "As far as I'm concerned I did them a favour."

Taking a moment to stare in awe at the huge room with the massive rocket pointing towards the distant ceiling in the center, the news-lady's camera man remarked, "Is this...an actual spacecraft? I don't think I've seen a real one this close before..."

"Really? You guys must not get a lot of good stories," Jade teased.

Just then, red lights began flashing all around the launch silo, followed by the 'Hiissss' of something that didn't sound too healthy entering through the air ducts.

"...Uh...what was that...?" the camera guy asked timidly.

"The anti-intruder failsafe," Heralds answered, "It's designed to 'permanently neutralize' anyone inside the complex not wearing special protection." The agent then ran over to a nearby metal cabinet, kicked it open, and came back carrying four gas masks. "Here, put these on. I can't guarantee they'll fit you all perfectly, but they should at least buy us some time to escape."

Remembering something, Jade gasped, "Wait, what about Jack and David?"

"Your two 'furry friends'?" Heralds replied, "My partner is looking for them now. However, we can only give them so much time. If he can't locate them in the next ten minutes, I'm sorry to say but we're all leaving without them, you included. Understood."

Jade sighed and nodded, "Yes, understood..."

David wheezed, beginning to feel the effects of the toxic gas taking its toll on his lungs despite his best efforts to filter it out with his paws cupped over his face. He looked back, seeing Jack was still close behind, doing amazingly well considering he was carrying the weight of another Ferren on his back. Even he was starting to show signs of fatigue, though. They wouldn't be able to go much longer. "Jack...go on ahead of me...I'll take my sister for a while...give your shoulders a break..."

"No way kid..." Jack coughed, "Even in this tiny body I'm still ten times in better shape than you... And you're the one who knows the way to go, anyway..."

"Jack I mean it... I'm almost out of steam and my sister is still unconscious...you still have the best chance of making it to the launch silo first... Get to the rocket and come back for us after..."

"Kid...you'll be dead by the time I get back, assuming I can at all..."

"We don't...all have to die, Jack... One of us still needs to get the information about this place to your people...and to mine..."

"I'm not even supposed to be alive, kid! I signed up for this kind of dirty work, you didn't...!"

"Jack...it's...I..." David wasn't able to finish his sentence; his breath was beginning to falter. Too weak to keep running, he simply let himself flop down to the floor, tears dipping slowing down the side of his face.

"KID!"

David's vision was beginning to blur. All he could see was the fuzzy brown outline of his friend rushing to his side...followed by another, much larger shadow soon looming over-head of him. Closing his eyes for what he believed might just be the last time, David allowed his mind to slip into unconsciousness.