

An extract from ‘Saskias’ for you to read

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Pictures were taken, with us being careful who stood where. We were about to leave when there was shouting from the side of the Palace and some of the security guards began to run that way.

Saskia said, “James, Lydia, we need to see what’s going on. If we don’t come back soon, go back to the hotel and we’ll see you there.”

We ducked into a courtyard and the SuperTwins emerged flying over the Palace. We could see a crowd of police and security men at one corner of the Palace. They were being held at bay by two men with guns. They couldn’t risk shooting, there were too many people around. Saskia said, “Mine’s the one on the right. Go.”

We zoomed down and landed in front of the gunmen. I don’t know who was more surprised, the gunmen or the police. My man tried to shoot me. I caught the two bullets he fired at me rather than let them bounce off. The ricochets could do nearly as much damage as a direct hit. He didn’t get chance for another shot as he didn’t have a gun anymore, I did. And anyway it wasn’t even a gun any more, I’d squashed it.

Both men were handed over to the police. As they were led away we were approached by a plainclothes man. His whole manner said ‘policeman’

“Thanks. That saved us a very messy clean up. I wonder if you could help us further. In confidence, there’s a bomb hidden somewhere in Central London. Five are trying to find it as we speak.” He indicated the two gunmen. “We hope these gentlemen might help us with our enquiries. In the event we find it, your unique - abilities - might just make the difference.”

“What do you want us to do?”

“Can you come with us to the office and we’ll see how they’re getting on.”

“By all means.”

He led us to a car. As we got in we changed to more normal clothes. Our cop had evidently heard about what we could do, he raised an eyebrow but didn’t comment further. The car took us past the Houses of Parliament, down the Embankment and in through an archway.

At the front door we were stopped at a scanner. Apparently not having any form of ID was a problem.

Saskia said, “Phone this number and ask whoever answers it to ask the right question.” She reeled off a number. Somebody rang it. Apparently they were surprised at who answered but asked for the right question.

“What did you do to the Prime Minister when you met him in Number Ten?”

I answered, “We changed our clothes in front of him and he nearly wet himself.”

The poor man repeated our answer into the telephone. “Yes sir. Yes sir. I saw them myself. We can sir but..... Only one name. It’s unusual but if you say so. Yes sir I’ll watch them do it.”

“Ok. You’re vouched for. We’ll issue you with ID. Which one’s Kyra?”

“Does it matter? Can you tell us apart anyway?”

“No, I suppose not.”

“You can use the same photograph twice.”

There was a some strained laughter. Eventually we were given cards to act as ID.

“Those things will ID you anywhere, don’t lose them.”

I couldn’t resist, “Like this you mean?” I changed to be not holding it.

“Ahh, can’t catch us out. The PM said you’d do that. That’s our second line of

identification. Where did it go anyway?"

"Nowhere. It's still here." I changed to be holding it again.

"Enough of the tomfoolery, already," Saskia said. "Don't we have a crisis to deal with?"

We were taken up to a room full of computer screens and ordinary video monitors.

"We're trying to locate the bomb by backtracking information and video images. If we spot likely targets, can you check them for us?"

"Shouldn't be difficult. How do we talk to you?"

"We'll give you radio communications."

"And how do we get to the addresses? We're not native to this part of the world."

"Hand held GPS? Will that do?"

"Admirably."

"What are you looking for?" asked Saskia.

"This man or this man." Pictures were produced on monitors.

"Right. Show me your control system."

They demonstrated how to make the images move forwards or backwards. I found I could speed them up until they must have been a blur to the others watching. I could see them just fine. I even noticed Saskia doing the same thing on another monitor.

Saskia won the race. "Here. Is this one of them?"

"Yes." Then he saw the timecode display. "Blimey, you looked through two days images in forty five seconds."

Then I spotted one. I stopped the display. "Here's another, or maybe the same one."

"We've now got likely addresses. Can you check them for us?"

"Yep. Dish out the hardware and show us the way to the roof."

We were given a radio and the GPS. The roof was a maze of pipes and stacks but that didn't bother us, we took off straight up. The GPS was a bit confused by us not being on a road but did take us to the first location. A simple look with super vision revealed nothing out of the ordinary. So we moved on to the second address.

This one proved blank as well. I lifted the radio, "Both locations blank."

"Understood. Stand by for third location." Another address was sent. Saskia put it into the GPS and it led us off again. The third address was blank also.

This went on for another six locations, all blank. Then, "Check white transit van at location five."

I lifted the radio. "Understood, on our way." Location five was opposite the car park of a busy shopping centre.

There was a van at location five, in the shopping centre car park. There was nobody in it. A check with super vision showed a large package with wires and a clock mechanism.

"Van contains what I think we're looking for." I described what I was seeing.

"That looks like it. Is there a mobile phone in there connected to it?"

"Give me a moment, yes, there is. Is that not good?"

"It probably means it's being watched. If anybody goes near it, they'll trigger it."

"It's surrounded by people. If it goes off, there'll be a *lot* of casualties."

Saskia asked for the radio, "How long between making a phone call and the other phone receiving it? It's not instant is it?"

"No. There'll be about a two second delay."

Saskia said, "Twin, allow a couple of seconds for whoever is watching to place the call, plus another two seconds to receive it, that means we have about four or five seconds. How high can we get by then carrying the van?"

"Hm. Probably several hundred feet, maybe up to a thousand?"

"That should be high enough. It'll blow the van to bits and there'll be stuff dropping everywhere. There'll be some injuries but nothing major. I guess we can catch the big bits. What d'you think?"

"I'd say go for it. Let's get them to mobilise the emergency services first."

On the radio, "We plan to lift the van straight up. When it blows there will be shrapnel fall out. We'll catch the big bits but there'll be minor injuries. Call the emergency services. As soon as we hear them, we go."

The radio said, "Understood. In progress. Good luck."

In the distance we finally heard the wail of ambulance sirens. "Ready? Go!"

We shot down to the van. Grabbing one end each we lifted it straight up. Faster and faster, higher and higher. I heard Saskia, "Maybe it's not going to..." It exploded!

We ignored the bang and checked for the largest bits. There weren't many of them, the bomb had been quite large. We zipped about collecting bits. "Change so you're not holding them," I heard Saskia shout. Good idea, my arms were getting full.

We collected as much as we could until we more or less hit the ground. It looked like carnage all around us. There were screaming people everywhere. But a closer look revealed that it was as we'd thought, minor injuries only.

"Let's leave the boys and girls to clean up the mess and go report in."

"Think we'll get a medal?"

"Do you *want* a medal?"

"Well - no. Not really. Just a nice thank you will do."

We landed back where we'd taken off. Back in the control room, or whatever it was called, they were looking very relieved.

"We've rounded up a gang of terrorist types and you've dealt with the bomb, for which, good work, thank you. I can let the PM know we can reduce the threat level from Critical to High. Speaking of the PM, he's asked can you call round on your way to - wherever you were going?"

Another operator said, "We've got the rest of your stuff here. Welcome to the security services." He handed over wallets and a mobile phone.

I looked at the phone, "Does that mean you're going to call us every time a foreign national blows his nose?"

"No. The PM has given specific instructions. All calls are routed through his office. It'll be at his discretion only."

"Well, that's something at least. No doubt this won't be the last time you'll see us. We won't bother with the front door."

In the air on the way to Downing Street, Saskia said, "I'm not sure I like the idea of the PM on the end of a telephone."

"Hm. So where is it now?"

"You've got..... Oh. Where is it?"

"It's in the cosmic cupboard, or wherever stuff goes when we change. We can get it out if we need to."

The back door of Number Ten seemed the best way in. Once inside we followed a native guide upstairs, changing to ordinary clothes behind him. The PM's office was just the same, as was the PM.

"Welcome again Kyra and Katya. I just wanted to say thank you for this afternoon. Can I offer you a drink?"

"No, thank you. We were just on our way to congratulate a friend of ours, Sir James Robinson. Would you like us to convey your congratulations also?"

He seemed a bit taken aback, "Why, yes, thank you. That would be good. I'd heard he was a friend of yours. In fact, weren't you at that trade meeting at his plant?"

“Yes, but that was primarily to see Watanabe-san and his daughter, Saori.”

“Ahh. I see.” It was obvious he didn’t really.

“If there’s nothing more, Prime Minister, would you excuse us?”

“No. Thank you for coming.”

Flying away from Number Ten, Saskia said, “He’s still a prat.”

“Agreed. Now where’s that hotel?”

We landed out of sight of the front door. Changing to be wearing Edna’s dresses again we walked round. The roses were fresh once more, they looked freshly picked.