

**P215**

**Chapter Twenty-Five: 2am (pps215-218)**

*The gang switch cars*

AZ: Keep Kit and his woes at the centre. His fear, hatred of these people, extreme discomfort due to the cold.

Why at this point does Nigel still want Kit and Daisy? Wouldn't he want to leave them, or must they come to collect from the client? And does Nigel have a plan if the client is a no-show?

IT 1.6 'Kit was depressed beyond measure' sounds a bit too considered for a man in a panic – he's gutted, isn't he? Would something like 'distraught' or 'really panicky now' be better. And the word 'prank' also sounds a little too coy – because Kit knew from the first it would be more than that. I'd delete it and leave it at 'heist'

# 2 a.m. <sup>1 30.</sup>

The Hibernian Telecom van was ploughing through snow a foot deep. Elton drove at ten miles an hour in high gear to keep from skidding. Thick snowflakes bombarded the vehicle. They formed two wedges at the bottom of the windscreen, and they grew steadily, so that the wipers described an ever-smaller arc, until Elton could not longer see out, and had to stop the van to clear the snow away.

Kit was depressed beyond measure. *Expand on this a bit.*

He had thought himself involved in a prank, a heist that would do no one any real harm. His father would lose money, of course, but on the other hand Kit would be able to pay his debt to Harry Mac, which his father ought to have paid anyway, so there was no real injustice.

But the reality was different. Someone was willing to pay millions for the virus, and there could be only one possible reason: they wanted to kill people. He had never thought to be a mass murderer.

He wondered who Nigel's customer represented: Japanese fanatics, Muslim fundamentalists, an IRA splinter group, suicidal Palestinians, or a group of paranoid Americans with high-powered rifles living in remote mountain cabins in Montana? It hardly mattered. If they got the virus, they would use it sooner or later, and thousands of people

**p216**

IT 1.1 Do we need 'bleeding from their eyes'. 'Thousands of people would die' is somehow more impactful.

1.17 Can we re-jig this to read 'Who would spend Christmas at a motel, he wondered? Stranded businessmen, perhaps?' and get rid of the reference to Hindus – it seems a bit odd to pick them out, rather than Muslims, or Jews, or any other faith.

would die bleeding from their eyes.

But what could he do? If he tried to back out now, Nigel would kill him, or let Daisy do it. He thought of opening the van door and jumping out. It was going slowly enough. He might disappear into the blizzard before they could catch him. But then they would still have the virus, and he would still owe Harry a quarter of a million pounds.

He had to see this through to the end. Maybe, when it was all over, he could send an anonymous message to the police, naming Nigel Buchanan. But there would be no point. Nigel was going to hand over the virus at midday today.

He was stuck. All he could do was try to survive the day and not get caught. He had to

take care of himself, and that meant making sure Nigel's plan succeeded. There was no alternative. *Let him not cave in so easily. He could come up with another hair-brained scheme or two before he must recognize their futility.* Maybe the terrorists would release the virus in Glasgow, where he lived, and he

would pay the penalty himself. There would be justice.

Peering ahead through the snowstorm, Kit saw an illuminated neon sign that read: "Motel." Elton turned off the road. There was a light over the door, and eight or nine cars in the car park. The place was open. Who would spend Christmas at a motel, he wondered? Hindus, perhaps, and stranded businessmen, and illicit lovers.

Elton pulled up next to a Vauxhall Astra estate. "The idea was to ditch the van here," he said. "It's too easily identifiable. *We've supposed to go* We go back to the airstrip in that Astra. But I don't know if we're going to make it."

From the back, Daisy said: "You stupid black prick, why didn't you bring a fucking Landrover?"

"Because the Astra is one of the most popular and least noticeable cars in Britain, and

**P217**

EF: I'm not sure if Elton's insult is in character. But I'm not sure how to think of him. Earlier we saw him as a victim of Daisy's racist assumptions. That won him sympathy. But he has to be a bad guy. It might be good to develop him a bit more.

the forecast said no snow, you ugly white asshole.”

“Knock it off, you two,” Nigel said calmly. “It’s an Astra and we’ve got to take our chances in it.” He pulled off his false moustache and wig. “Take off your disguises. We don’t know how soon those guards will be able to give descriptions to the police.”

The others followed suit.

Elton said: “We could stay here, take rooms, wait it out.”

“Dangerous,” said Nigel. “We’re only a few miles from the lab.”

“If we can’t move, the police can’t move. As soon as the weather eases, we take off.”

“We have an appointment.”

“I don’t know whether your customer is planning to come to the airstrip in a car or a helicopter or a bloody space rocket, but in this weather I don’t think he’s going to make it anyway.”

*Is it wireless?*

Kit’s mobile rang. He checked his laptop. It was a regular call, not one diverted from Oxenford Medical. He answered. “Yeah?”

“It’s me.”

Kit recognised the voice of Rob McKinnon, one of the guards in the gatehouse. Rob was the Kremlin’s dope dealer, and Kit had been a customer while he worked there. Needing someone on the inside, he had bribed Rob. Kit was confident Rob would not betray him: Kit knew too much about him. It was Rob who had called him at four o’clock yesterday afternoon to say that Toni had left the building.

Now Rob said: “I’m on my mobile, I’ve got to be quick, while Fred’s in the toilet.”

“What’s happening?”

“She arrived just after you left.”

"I saw a car—I guessed it might be her."

"She found the other guards tied up and called the police. They're on their way."

"In this weather?"

"She just came up to the gatehouse and told us. Whether they'll get here...Gotta go."

Rob hung up.

Kit pocketed his phone. "Toni Gallo has found the guards," he said. "She's called the police, and they're on their way."

"That settles it," Nigel said. "Get in the Astra."

Why at this point does Nigel still want Kit and Daisy? Wouldn't he want to leave them, or must they come to collect from the client? And does Nigel have a plan if the client is a no-show? But keep Kit and his woes at the center. His fear, hatred of these people, extreme discomfort due to the cold.