

## Flee

By: Anh V.

I hate my job.

Everyday, it's the same thing. We kill government leaders, we topple empires from within, and we never stop.

It's sickening, yes, but it's the only way to stop her. I've given in to her wishes, and now I sincerely regret it. I've lost my integrity. I've tried to stop her countless times, and I've always failed.

She doesn't truly trust me, but she lets me set the bombs, she lets me pull the trigger.

And I always do. But then she would whisk it out of my hands, clip it to her belt, grab my hand, and flee with me.

Marley Johnson.

She's a demon disguised as an angel; the source of nightmares.

My heart and head tell me to flee, to flee this monstrosity of a life.

But I can't. I can't take her out. She's my former best friend.

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*6:03 p.m.*

"Hurry up, Jamie," she snapped, strapping a knife to her thigh. "We'll be late to the ball."

I fumbled with my own dress, secretly clipping a bomb onto her charm bracelet. It's tiny, like a microchip, but impossible to be found. We'll place this in the palace we're going to when we're at the ball, then flee, like we always do.

This time our target is the Queen of England. Our most important and biggest target yet. Marley's acquainted with a lot of political people, so they trust her enough to invite her to their personal parties. That's when she strikes.

"You know the plan," she hissed, "don't mess up."

"Why trust me then?" I asked.

She smirked, "I'm trying to get you to be evil, like me."

"That'll never happen," I snarled.

"We'll see. Let's go."

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*6:48 p.m.*

Once we arrived, Marley fit in easily with the other guests, joking and laughing, never drinking from the glass in her hand. You would've never thought she planned to kill everyone in the room.

I, however, awkwardly trailed behind her, nodding at guests, never speaking a word. I didn't have to speak. Marley was already doing the talking for us both. Besides, today I was too preoccupied with my thoughts. I was trying to kill her after all.

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*Three hours ago...*

*3:03 p.m.*

While Marley was showering, I opened the microchip bomb from my bracelet. Inside, there were thousands of different wires and explosive things. I knew that if I fiddled with the wrong settings, the bomb might explode right away.

I quickly fished out a pair of tweezers from Marley's bag and went to work, timing it so that the bomb would explode when we went back to the hotel, well after the party dispersed, well after the Queen's departure from the ball.

Marley, my former best friend, would die tonight.

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*Back to the present...*

*7:35 p.m.*

"The Queen has arrived!" a herald declared, and everyone curtsied as an old woman in white entered the Grand Hall.

"And just in time for dinner too," Marley murmured under her breath, smiling graciously.

When the Queen reached us, she swooped towards Marley, planting kisses on both her cheeks.

"Welcome, my dear! And this is the charming friend you've told me about?" the Queen was oblivious to Marley's true self.

"Yes; Jamie Sconers, the Queen," Marley nodded to me.

"It's an honor to meet you. Marley has spoken much about you." *About how to kill you.* I tried to smile.

"How sweet, Marley!" the Queen gushed.

"Yes, well, who wouldn't?" Marley's eyes narrowed at me.

"Dinner is served!" the herald announced again, and the Queen smiled at both of us and started for the table.

Once the Queen was seated, everyone followed suit and the night truly started from there.

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*8:58 p.m.*

Dessert was passed around, and Marley seemed to take the place of the host, flitting around the tables, chatting amicably with the guests and filling up their glasses. As always, she held a glass in her own hand, but never took a single sip.

This went on for quite some time. The calm before the storm.

*9:18 p.m.*

*10:24 p.m.*

*11:29 p.m.*

*11:56 p.m.*

"Hurry up, Jamie!" Marley hurried over and grabbed my hand, yanking my bracelet off my wrist - the one that didn't have a bomb, unbeknownst to her - and placed it on the fireplace of the palace. Then she rushed off to find the Queen, panic etched on her features. Anyone but me would've believed it was real.

“My Queen!” She exclaimed, still clenching my wrist. “Jamie has lost her charm bracelet, and it means so much to the both of us!” Marley held up her own matching bracelet that contained the bomb. “Would it be alright if we skipped the fireworks to find it? It’s late, anyway.”

The Queen was startled, but nodded, her face sympathetic. “Of course. Would you like me to help you look for it?”

“No, you should go out and enjoy the fireworks. They are sure to be lovely.”

“Always so thoughtful!” the Queen smiled. “Go, Marley, you are excused. I hope you find it. It was a pleasure, Jamie,”

I nodded tersely, “The honor was all mine.”

“Farewell!” Marley called, already hurrying off.

*12:00 a.m.*

“Run!” she screeched at me, as soon as we were out of the Queen’s earshot.

The fireworks start to go off.

How cliché, we’re fleeing while the fireworks go off. Oh, and it’s 12:00 a.m. as well.

I wonder if Cinderella felt this way - was her heart pounding, her palms slippery with sweat? Was she scared? I know I am. She’s scared of being discovered. I’m scared of killing my former best friend.

Then Marley stopped, and I ran smack-dab into her.

“Hold up, Jamie! I need to check the bomb.” Marley fumbled for her device.

I took a sharp intake of breath when she froze and stared at the screen.

“What is it?” I cried.

“The bomb’s been tampered with. It won’t explode when we need it to!” Marley cursed, and ran back to the fake bomb, me hot on her heels.

The Grand Hall is empty of people; they’re all outside. So we freely rushed to the fireplace, where the bracelet twinkled innocently.

“We have a while before it explodes. Quick, hand me my bag!”

But too late. I messed up.

Marley’s bracelet began to tick urgently.

For a split second, we lock eyes.

Panic in her’s, panic in mine.

Then the bomb goes off.