

Chapter 59 - Dealer down

It took us about five minutes to get in position, trying to balance being as quiet and stealthy as possible while also moving quickly. We needed to finish this before whoever Mauser was waiting for arrived, assuming that's what he was doing. Thankfully, we were all connected by M'gann, meaning silent communication was simple and easy.

"I'm in position," I said simply, waiting silently for my teammates.

A series of confirmations came in, the entire team ready and waiting for the command to engage. It might have felt a bit like overkill for one single baseline human, but Kaldur was right to err on the side of caution. A few seconds ticked by, my connection to M'gann the only thing I could sense until, eventually, Kaldur spoke up.

"Go!"

I pushed my energy down into the concrete sidewalk under me, crushing and flexing it down before pulling upward, launching myself up and over the street, aiming for the parking structure two floors up. I lashed out with the cable in my left hand, slamming and locking the head into the parking structure just in front of Mauser's car. I reeled myself in, increasing my speed as much as possible before pulling back with my right hand, which was already surrounded by meteorite metal.

I could see Mauser as I flew at his car, looking through his windshield as I slammed down into his hood, smashing as hard as I could while letting out a wave of energy, trying my best to completely total his engine. The front end of his hood crumbled, and I shifted the metal in my hand into a spike, driving it deeper into the internals of the car. I then turned and moved back, pushing the concrete under the vehicle to dig and shred into his front tires. His car sank noticeably into the concrete as I accomplished my mission of immobilizing the car completely.

Even as I totaled his car, removing any real chance he had to run, M'gann flew up into the building right around where I had entered. She reached out with her mind and tore the driver-side door off of its hinges, tossing it to the side. As she did this, Superboy flew in behind her, grabbed Mauser and pulled him out of his car, holding him up by his shoulders.

The man let out a string of expletives that actually made M'gann blush before pulling out a pistol, unsurprisingly a Mauser C95, and pushing it against Superboy's stomach. He managed to get two shots off before M'gann gripped it with her telekinesis, tore it from his hands and squeezed, managing to partially crush the receiver and bend the barrel. She tossed it back into his car, before finally landing next to me.

"We have him, repeat we have him," I sent, getting affirmatives from my teammates.

The rest of the team, who had been waiting at various points in case he managed to slip through our fingers, started closing in on our position.

“Do you have any idea how much that gun was worth?” Mauser asked, his harlequin mask facing M’gann. “Those are rare in that condition, a part of history.”

“Should have picked a different gun to carry around then,” I responded, shaking my head. “Not much point in asking now, but you are Mauser, correct?”

“Yes, yes, I am Mauser. What can I do for you? I don’t suppose you are here to buy something?” He responded, trying to sound as calm and collected as possible while being held up in the air. “I have a whole array of interesting products that you might find interesting. Or perhaps I could offer you something green? Say... five grand each to accidentally let me escape?”

“Is... is he seriously offering us a bribe?” Robin asked Wally in a stage whisper as they walked out of the shadows.

“It’s worked before,” The criminal said, his voice full of smug self-assurance.

“You have admitted that you are Mauser,” Kaldur explained, standing just behind and to the left of Superboy. “We have questions for you.”

“Oh, I’m not sure I feel up to answering questions at the moment,” He responded. “I’m feeling quite disagreeable now that my offer has been rebuffed.”

“The trunk is full of stuff giving off a lot of heat,” Superboy said, his eyes flicking back to the trunk before looking back at Mauser.

Robin walked around to the back of the car, kneeling down and inspecting it for a long few minutes. He studied the keyhole and the seam around the trunk and even looked under the vehicle itself. Once he established it wasn’t rigged to explode, he pulled out some sort of small tool and pushed it into the key slot. With a few quick movements and a laugh, the trunk unlocked with a click, letting Robin lift the trunk easily. He let out a long whistle when he did, Tora’s eyes going wide as she looked in over his shoulders.

“Well... At least we know he is definitely our guy.”

I walked around to see what he was talking about, and sure enough, the entire trunk was filled with weapons, boxes of ammo, rows of pistols, AR-15’s and shotguns. It also had four different types of the crudely put-together weapons that matched what we were looking for, as well as three bits of equipment that followed a similar theme but that we couldn’t identify.

“Are you sure you don’t feel like answering questions?” I asked. “Because from where I am standing, I see quite a large prison sentence in your future.”

“And this is the part where you somehow promise to let me off this time, as long as I tell you what you want to know?” He asked, sounding bored. “Let me guess, you want to know about the fancy tech I’ve been selling, don’t you.”

“Not exactly a large leap of logic,” I pointed out. “We need to know where you are getting them from. The maker, the seller, who you are selling them for.”

“Why would I turn on a good source of income?” He asked, shaking his head. “I upsold their tech by fifty percent and they still sold like hot cakes!”

“That’s not going to do you much good from prison,” Wally pointed out, zipping around the car to look into the trunk before zipping right next to Superboy. “Money doesn’t mean much when you’re behind bars.”

As Wally got closer, Mauser tried to make a move. He flicked his arm out, a holdout pistol suddenly in his hand. Before he could do anything with it, however, Superboy grabbed his hand and yanked the smaller gun away from him before crushing it into junk. He handed the crumpled pistol back to him, the masked weapons dealer looking down at it before sagging slightly.

“Look, kiddos, you got me, but I’m not talking,” He said dismissively after a long moment. “You may as well call the police and hand me over. I’m not a naive idiot, and none of you come off as the type to creatively motivate me. At least not enough to actually get me to talk.”

For a moment, we were all quiet before M’gann let out a sigh. She stepped closer to the criminal before putting her hand on his head. Her eyes glowed green as she focused, Mauser immediately tensing as she dived into his mind.

“What... What is she doing?” He asked, looking at Superboy, then to Kaldur. “Her glowing eyes are spooky, butt-”

He stopped suddenly, his eyes going wide before he shook and struggled with renewed vigor, desperate to break free of Superboy.

“NO! YOU CAN’T!” He shouted, wincing and kicking at Superboy. “YOU CAN’T DO THIS-”

He stopped again, this time slumping down in Superboy’s grip, his eyes shut and his body limp. Superboy twitched in concern, looking at me with wide eyes.

“It’s alright, Superboy. I knocked him out. You can put him down. He won’t be waking up for a while,” M’gann said, shaking her head.

Superboy nodded and put the arms dealer down on the ground, leaning him against his own car.

“You found what we needed?” Robin asked, stepping forward to handcuff the now unconscious man's hands behind his back.

“Yeah, he bought the weapons from the guy making them,” She explained, leaning against me now. “He is set up on the other side of town, set up in the hidden basement of an old mechanical plant of some kind.”

“Can you take us there?” Kaldur asked, M'gann responding with a confident nod. “Alright. Robin, call Batman and tell him we have a new target. Skarn, call the police.”

“I'm calling Detective Reza,” I responded, Kaldur giving me a look to explain myself. “We need to keep this quiet. If he gets taken in openly anyone with even a vague notion of intelligence would be able to figure out why we targeted him. Our real target might go to ground.”

Kaldur agreed, and I quickly called the detective, who arrived after ten minutes. By then, most of the team had returned to Bioship, leaving Superboy, Artemis, and me. She nodded to us and smiled at Kyle, but beyond that, she was the definition of a precision professional. We quickly handed the criminal off to her.

“I can hold him for seventy-two hours without charging him with anything, but that won't help keep it under wraps for long. I can forget to hand in the paperwork for the holding cell for twelve hours at most.” She explained. “After that, I will need to hand in the papers and eventually charge him with a crime. This is already stretching the rules because I'm taking him to a probable crime scene.”

“With any luck, this will be over in a few hours,” I assured the detective. “We have our target location. We are just waiting on intel.”

She nodded in understanding, leaving quickly to get the masked arms dealer into a proper cell. We all returned to the ship to find a projection of the machine plant already displayed from a small platform raised in the middle of Bioship's deck. It showed the plant in a detailed but straightforward 3D model, with the structure on top mostly wireframe, while the basement was more detailed and filled into a “solid” looking projection.

We discussed possible avenues of attack but quickly reached the conclusion that it was pointless if we didn't know how the engineer making the tech had set up inside. When we arrived, Bioship did a scan and overlaid it with the projection we already had, which took a bit of finagling but worked in the end.

The basement itself consisted of several rectangular rooms, ranging from a large closet to a large squarish room about three dozen feet wide. The largest room had several people in it, but around two dozen people were spread out in the other rooms and the plant itself. Two of the

mid-sized rooms seemed to have beds in them, with glowing horizontal forms hovering off the ground.

“Judging by the other heat sources, my bet is that they are building stuff here,” Robin said, pointing out the largest room. “The patrols are also orbiting that room, which means it’s what they are protecting.”

“I want to know how they got so many henchmen already?” Wally asked rhetorically. “They haven’t been working that long!”

“Promise of tech, probably,” I suggested with a shrug. “Not many job opportunities offer plasma pistols and laser rifles as standard kit, not at this level anyway.”

“Humm... Bioship is detecting a jamming bubble like what we experienced on Santa Prisca,” M’gann said, a pale teal bubble appearing around the projection, about a hundred feet or so in front of where we had stopped. “It’s not as perfectly tuned as she or the device she scanned could do, but it’s definitely functioning the same way.”

“They have Lexcorp tech?” Tora asked. “I wasn’t there, but that was in the report, right?”
“Indeed... Though I am confused as to why they would have something like that,” Kaldur said, looking confused and shaking his head. “It would make communicating inside very difficult and attract outside attention. Anyone getting close would lose cell service.”
“Could be... or they could have just developed similar tech,” I responded before looking at M’gann. “Is there any chance that Bioship could use her version to crack the jamming field open? Maybe let us listen in?”

“If they are in the jamming field, they won’t be communicating with each other,” Robin pointed out with a smirk.

“Right... Dammit.”

The group shared a quick chuckle at my expense before Kaldur retook control of the conversation.

“The first goal is to take down those patrolling the plant above ground,” He said, pointing to the four pairs that were walking around the abandoned machine plant. “This would preferably be done silently. Alerting those in the basement segment before we are ready to descend would give them time to dig in and prepare countermeasures.”

The projection, which was being controlled by Bioship and M’gann, crossed out the patrolling pairs that Kaldur pointed at, signifying that they were taken care of. He nodded in appreciation before continuing.

“Once they are taken care of, we will be breaching the lower levels. To do that, I want us broken into three teams. Team one will be Superboy and Kid Flash, and you will be entering here.”

Kaldur pointed to a stairway entrance to the basement, one that was farthest from the largest and most populated room.

“Your access point is the furthest away, but I don’t believe that will be a problem for either of you.”

Wally and Kyle both nodded, eager grins on their faces as they agreed.

“Skarn, Snapshot, and Ice, your entry point is here,” Kaldur said, this time pointing to a small room, one only a few rooms away from the main room. “Your entrance is the closest, but you will also be the only group making their own entrance. I believe I know your capabilities well enough, Skarn, but are you capable of burrowing down that deep?”

“Absolutely, it shouldn’t take very long either,” I assured him, our combat leader nodding in return.

“Good. Your group's goal will be to attack from an angle they aren't expecting and to break any stalemates. If any group reaches a point where they cannot progress, they will call for your help. The last group of Robin, M’gann, and myself will be entering from the primary entrance here.”

Kaldur pointed out their entrance point, which was near the primary room but not as close as my group's entry point.

“This breach will be fast and loud. We are going to attempt to catch any opposition off guard before they can prepare any surprises. That being said, we need to be prepared for everything,” He said, looking at each of us. “We have no idea how long this individual has been building tech and distributing it to his people, or even if he has. Assume every weapon and device is exotic and dangerous. No tanking weapons fire, no catching equipment, and throwing it back. Assume everything was purpose-built to take us down.”

We all nodded in understanding, the serious tone of the Atlantean solidifying everyone's attention. We were all ready and determined to show everyone what we were capable of.

“Good. Let's get in position to take down the targets in the machine plant,” He said, giving everyone an approving nod. “Stay in your groups so that we can move quickly into position for our primary assault on the basement facility.”