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## Chapter 1: Red Receives the Mission

Red crouches behind a rusted ventilation shaft, scanning the horizon as a regime patrol drone buzzes past, its searchlight slicing through the drizzle.

Mira, bundled in a dark cloak, approaches swiftly, boot soles splashing in shallow puddles.

She thrusts a small, data-encoded vial into Red's gloved hand and grips her daughter's shoulder, voice urgent: "This package must reach Dr.

Red's Mother (Mira) Mira presses the encoded vial into Red's gloved hand, her own voice trembling with urgency as she squeezes her daughter's shoulder, her eyes shining with fear and hope. Mira pressed the encoded vial firmly into Red's gloved palm, her grip lingering, eyes shining with a mixture of fear and fierce hope. She leaned in, voice trembling with urgency as she squeezed Red's shoulder—a silent plea behind the strategic determination etched into her features. Red felt the weight of both the glass and her mother's secretive resolve. Mira's words came low but unyielding: before dawn, the package needed to reach Dr. Ilan, and no one else could know. The contents, Mira insisted, could tip the fate of their people—either salvation or ruin if it slipped into the wrong hands. Her gaze searched Red's face, demanding a promise. Whatever happened, Mira urged, Red could not let anyone stand in her way. Red clutches the vial tightly, her jaw set with determination as she meets her mother's anxious gaze, nodding once before tucking the package safely inside her coat. Red closed her fingers around the data-encoded vial, feeling the hard edges bite into her palm even through the glove. Her mother's grip tightened on her shoulder—firm, urgent—a silent plea passing between them as their eyes met. Red's jaw set with resolve. She nodded once, swift and sure, then slipped the precious package into the hidden pocket inside her coat. "I promise, Mama," she said quietly, her voice steady despite the pounding in her chest. "I won't let you down, no matter what." Red's Mother (Mira) Mira squeezes Red's shoulder one last time, her eyes glistening with tears she refuses to let fall, then pushes her gently toward the shadowed path beyond the door. Mira squeezed Red's shoulder one last time, her grip lingering with all the force love could muster. Her eyes shone in the dim light—glinting, betraying the tears she refused to let fall. With a controlled breath, she pressed a small, data-encoded vial into Red's gloved palm, closing her daughter's fingers tightly around it. "Good," she whispered, her voice steady despite the tremor just beneath it. "Remember, I love you more than anything, and

I'm so proud of the woman you've become." The words came wrapped in urgency and pride, a shield against the danger waiting beyond the door. Then, with a gentle but determined push, Mira guided Red toward the shadowed path, holding her gaze a heartbeat longer before letting go. Ilan before sunrise—Wolf is already hunting for it.

Red's Mother (Mira) Mira adjusts the curtains, glancing out into the dim blue light, her brow furrowed with concern as she listens for any unusual sounds beyond the cottage walls. Mira adjusted the curtains with practiced care, her gaze flickering out into the dim blue light that crept along the horizon. The world was hushed, holding its breath before dawn, and every shadow seemed to stretch with intent. She pressed her hand to the windowsill, brow furrowed as she strained to catch any unusual sound beyond the cottage walls. "Red, dear, it's so early—the sun hasn't even peeked over the hills yet," Mira murmured, her voice low but edged with worry. The forest's hush felt heavier at this hour, and she couldn't help but think how different it seemed in this quiet. "You know how I worry when you wander out before breakfast," she added, glancing back over her shoulder, her mind already running through contingencies and escape routes. "The forest feels different in this quiet, doesn't it?" Wolf glides silently among the trees, nostrils flaring as he catches the faintest scent of Red on the wind. Wolf glided silently among the trees, his movements so fluid he seemed to merge with the darkness itself. The pre-dawn chill sharpened his senses; nostrils flaring, he caught the faintest trace of Red's scent drifting on the wind. Shadows pressed close, familiar and comforting—a cloak tailored to his relentless purpose. Calculating as ever, Wolf's thoughts coiled around the hunt, persuasive even in solitude. Inwardly, he acknowledged the early hour's advantage. The darkness was his ally. Every shifting shadow around him concealed a hunger, and this morning, his own hunger was precise, unyielding—one that would lead him straight to Mira's door. Red's Mother (Mira) Mira tightens her shawl around her shoulders, eyes narrowing as she peers into the dimness beyond the doorway. Mira drew her shawl tighter around her shoulders, the familiar fabric a small comfort against the predawn chill. Her eyes narrowed as she peered into the dimness just beyond the doorway, senses sharpened by years of caution. She kept her voice low, edged with suspicion but steady, as she addressed the shadow lurking near their threshold. "What brings you prowling so close to our home at this hour, Wolf?" Wolf lowers his massive head, nostrils flaring as he circles near the edge of the clearing, eyes glinting with anticipation. Wolf lowered his massive head, nostrils flaring as he prowled along the edge of the clearing. The first traces of dawn had not yet broken through the dense canopy, but he moved with utter confidence, each step deliberate, calculating. His eyes glinted with anticipation, catching the faintest shimmer of moonlight as he circled, every sense tuned to the silent world around him. Scent guides me, Mira, he mused inwardly, the thought cold and certain as a blade. There's something sweeter than dawn itself waiting just inside your walls. Red's Mother (Mira) Mira stands firmly in the doorway, her hand tightening around the latch as she watches Wolf with wary eyes. Mira planted herself firmly in the doorway, her silhouette framed by the first pale suggestion of dawn. One hand tightened around the latch, knuckles whitening as she watched Wolf prowl just beyond the threshold. Her eyes, sharp and wary, tracked every subtle movement. "Stay back, Wolf," she said, her voice low and unwavering, each word slipping into the space between them like a blade through mist. "Your words slither like fog, and I'll not let you near my daughter while the world still sleeps." The determination in her stance brooked no argument; Mira was a barrier forged of both love and cold strategy—unmovable, at least for now. Wolf circles the edge of the clearing, eyes gleaming in the fading darkness, muscles taut with anticipation. Wolf slipped along the edge of the clearing, his movements preternaturally smooth, eyes gleaming with calculation in the thin, pre-dawn light. He paused, nostrils flaring as if he could taste the fear that lingered on the breeze—sharp, electric,

irresistible. Muscles tensed, he relished the anticipation, murmuring almost to himself, “Fear sharpens the air, Mira, and it draws me ever closer—no locked door can hold back the hunger that walks before sunrise.” The words blended into the hush, a promise as inevitable as the coming dawn. ’ Mira emphasizes the secrecy and importance of the mission, urging Red to promise she will not let anyone stop her.

Mira expresses pride and maternal concern, mentioning her anxiety about Red leaving before breakfast and the forest’s early-morning quiet.

Red’s Mother (Mira) Mira projects the holographic map from her wrist tablet onto the table, tracing the blue route with her finger while keeping a watchful eye on Red, gauging their reaction and readiness. “Red, look here—these red markers are the active regime checkpoints. They’ve doubled patrols along the main corridors since the last breach. If we try to go straight through, they’ll catch us before we even make it to the outer sector. Now, this—this blue line—is our best covert route. We’ll cut through the old service tunnels beneath the market, then slip past the supply depot here. It’s tight, but if we follow these timings and keep our heads down, we can avoid the cameras and patrol shifts. Do you understand the importance of sticking exactly to the plan? One wrong turn, and we’re both at risk.” —Red’s Mother (Mira)

Red leans in closer to the holographic map, eyes flicking between the blue line and the red markers, voice low with a mix of anxiety and resolve. Red leaned in, her face nearly brushing the cool shimmer of the holographic map. Her eyes darted anxiously between the snaking blue line and the clusters of red markers that pulsed where regime checkpoints waited. She kept her voice low, tension threading through each word. “I get the route,” she murmured, not taking her gaze off the shifting projections, “but what happens if one of those patrols decides to switch things up? Are there any backup exits hidden in this mess, or is this really an all-or-nothing run?” Red’s Mother (Mira) Mira zooms in on the holographic map, highlighting two small green icons and locking eyes with Red to emphasize the gravity of her words. Mira’s fingers danced across her wrist tablet, summoning a luminous map that hovered in the dim air between them. She zoomed in, highlighting two small green icons amid a web of red lines denoting regime patrol routes. “If a patrol shifts unexpectedly,” she said quietly, tapping the first icon—a maintenance hatch tucked behind an innocuous service alley—“we have two fallback points.” Her hand slid to the second: a narrow gap behind the depot’s cold storage, nearly invisible on the map. Then she looked up, fixing Red with a steady, unwavering gaze, her voice soft but edged with warning. “But improvising means more risk. Use them only if absolutely necessary.” The message hung between them, weighty as the silence that followed, as Mira made sure Red understood just how high the stakes had become. Suddenly, Wolf arrives, his words menacing, hinting at his intent to retrieve the package.

Mira stands her ground, warning Wolf to stay away from her daughter.

Tension escalates as Wolf makes clear his determination.

Mira regains focus, projecting a holographic map of regime checkpoints and outlining a covert route.

She details fallback options if patrols shift, demonstrating strategic thinking.

Red listens, asks about backup plans, and receives instructions on alternative exits.

Overhead, the drone’s lights flare—a warning.

Mira signals Red to move, and Red darts for the edge of the roof, vaulting onto a fire escape as Mira wipes away the digital map and ducks into shadow.

The objective: Red receives the secret package and mission instructions, setting off into the city under threat of immediate pursuit, now with Wolf's presence and intent established.

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Red slips into the crowded alleyways below, the encrypted data pulsing against her chest. Even as the city's neon haze swallows her silhouette, the echo of the drone's warning lingers—a reminder that danger is already closing in. Every step toward her first checkpoint is shadowed by urgency and suspicion, and Red can feel the regime tightening its net. As she approaches the designated rendezvous, the tension in the air becomes palpable, signaling that her journey will be anything but straightforward. The city's underbelly waits ahead, and Red's resolve will soon be tested by threats she cannot yet see.

## Chapter 2: Checkpoint Ambush

Red sprints through the alley, clutching a weatherproof package, her boots splashing through rainwater.

She ducks behind a vending kiosk as Drone Unit 17 sweeps low, its sensors buzzing and red lights scanning for contraband.

Agent Kade steps out from a security pod, coordinating closely with Drone Unit 17: 'Drone, confirm visual lock.

Agent Kade steps forward from the pod, baton raised and eyes scanning the perimeter, signaling the drone with a sharp gesture. "Drone Unit 17, confirm visual lock on the target. Maintain formation and await my signal—no deviation. This is a live extraction. Any breach in protocol puts the mission at risk." —Agent Kade

Drone Unit 17 hovers into position, sensors focusing on the target, lights pulsing in standby mode. "Affirmative, Agent Kade—visual lock confirmed and formation maintained; standing by for your signal—protocol integrity at one hundred percent." —Drone Unit 17

Agent Kade glances at his wrist display, eyes narrowing as he scans the perimeter for hostiles. "Good—prepare countermeasures and synchronize with my HUD feed; on my mark, initiate containment protocol alpha." —Agent Kade

Drone Unit 17 Activates countermeasures, HUD link flashes green, motors hum with readiness. "Containment protocol alpha primed and synchronization complete, Agent Kade; awaiting your mark for execution." —Drone Unit 17

Agent Kade taps his HUD, signaling the drone to advance while scanning for hostile movement. "Mark given—execute containment protocol alpha, and keep comms clear for incoming variables." —Agent Kade

Prepare countermeasures and synchronize with my HUD feed.

Agent Kade issues a firm command, monitoring status displays as the lockdown sequence begins. "Drone Unit 17, initiate perimeter lockdown protocol. Confirm all entry and exit points are secured

and report any anomalies immediately.” —Agent Kade

Drone Unit 17Activating perimeter sensors and locking access points. “Perimeter lockdown protocol initiated, Agent Kade; all entry and exit points are being secured—no anomalies detected at this time.” —Drone Unit 17

’ The drone confirms, priming containment protocol alpha and tightening the perimeter.

Kade signals, and the drone initiates lockdown, sealing entry and exit points.

As Red hacks a malfunctioning street panel to create a flare distraction, she reports her sector breach over comms, revealing ongoing contact with Kade.

Kade warns Red of converging hostiles from grid north, indicating a complex relationship—perhaps forced cooperation or uneasy alliance—while the drone briefly loses track of Red.

Red sprints through the slick, neon-lit alley, clutching the encrypted package to her chest. Rain pelts her, mixing with the adrenaline in her veins as the distant whine of sirens and Kade’s angry voice crackle through the comms behind her. Red’s boots slapped against the rain-slick pavement as she darted through the neon-lit alley, every muscle coiled with urgency. The encrypted package pressed tight to her chest, she ducked beneath a flickering sign, breath coming fast. The distant whine of sirens chased her, but louder was Kade’s voice, crackling in her earpiece, tight with alarm. “Package secured—I’m clear!” she reported between gulps of humid air. “Sector C breach successful, but they’re right behind me.” The city’s electric glare glimmered off the puddles as she veered sharply, her HUD flashing a warning: battery at twenty percent. Gritting her teeth, Red rerouted her path, weaving through narrower alleyways. Kade’s warning echoed in her ear, his anxiety palpable: “Too close, Red, too close.” She didn’t answer, just pushed herself harder, trusting her instincts to keep her ahead of the hunt. Agent KadeKade slams his fist against the console, eyes flicking between the flickering drone feed and Red’s vital signs as the drone emits a garbled static burst before its camera winks out. “Kade: Dammit, Red, hold your position—backup en route, but you’ve got hostiles converging from grid north!” —Agent Kade

Drone Unit 17Sparks flicker from Unit 17’s chassis as rainwater shorts its circuits, its lens flickering out while Kade’s voice crackles unanswered in the downpour. “Unit 17: –system fail-tracking.Red.lost–” —Drone Unit 17

Red darts through a narrow passage, heart pounding, as distant shouts echo and her comm crackles with static. Red darted through the narrow passage, her breath sharp in her chest as distant shouts ricocheted off concrete and steel. The comm at her ear sputtered with static, Kade’s voice barely cutting through the interference. She didn’t slow. There was no time for hesitation; the package pressed against her ribs was too important to risk. Flicking her wrist, she switched channels, her tone clipped and urgent as she relayed her position. No time for backup, she signaled—she was already headed for extraction point Delta. Kade needed to redirect the others, warn them to scan for heat signatures in the alleys. The disabled drones behind her might buy a few precious seconds, but Red trusted her instincts and her speed more than anyone else’s rescue. She vanished into the next sector, shadows swallowing her as she refocused on the route ahead. Red insists she can’t hold her position and moves toward extraction point Delta, advising backup to watch for heat signatures in the alleys.

The drone’s systems fail momentarily.

Red escapes into the next sector, package secured, with Kade and the disabled drone left behind in the rain-soaked gutter.

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Red slips through the maze of dripping tunnels, each echoing footstep marking the distance from the chaos above. The brief reprieve is fragile—her pursuers are already recalibrating, their search tightening through the damp corridors. As Red navigates the labyrinthine undercity, a new complication emerges: a shadow looms ahead, one that moves with deliberate intent. The path to extraction point Delta is no longer just a race against the regime, but a collision course with an unexpected adversary.

## Chapter 3: Wolf's Interference

Red darts beneath a metal awning, clutching a waterproof satchel, scanning the shadowed corners for watchers.

Water drips steadily from her jacket as she kneels, prying open a service grate to access an underground conduit.

Wolf, his avatar flickering in the air as a holographic wolf with chromed fur, materializes beside her, intercepting her comm signals with a burst of static.

He projects a warning growl through nearby speakers and overrides the alley's security lights, plunging the space into a strobing red-white chaos.

Red yanks a signal jammer from her belt and slams it against the wall, scrambling Wolf's hold on the lights.

With her heart pounding, she shoves her satchel into the open conduit and slams the grate shut, then pivots to face Wolf's avatar, demanding, 'What do you want from me?'

' Wolf's voice, metallic and smooth, echoes: 'The package, courier.

Hand it over, or I reroute every drone in this quadrant to you.

' As Wolf reroutes a surveillance drone overhead, Red triggers a flash grenade, blinding the sensors, and sprints down the alley.

Wolf, calculating, begins hijacking city security feeds to track her escape.

The confrontation leaves the package hidden, Red on the run, and Wolf intensifying his pursuit.

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As the echoes of Wolf's threats fade into the hum of distant machinery, Red slips deeper into the labyrinth of forgotten tunnels, adrenaline driving every step. The package remains out of reach for her adversary, but the encounter has left her shaken—and desperate for a new lead. Amid the chaos, a faint pulse flickers on Red's comm device: an encrypted signal, familiar and haunting. Drawn by the possibility that it could be her grandmother reaching out at last, Red's focus shifts from evading Wolf to deciphering the message that could alter the course of her escape.

## Chapter 4: Grandmother's Signal

Red crouches behind a battered air conditioning unit, her gloved fingers tapping rapidly on her wrist console to intercept the encrypted signal from her grandmother.

Wolf, his sleek synthetic frame glimmering with moisture, scans the rooftop with glowing ocular sensors, recalibrating his targeting protocols and sending a silent command to Drone Unit 17.

The drone sweeps overhead, infrared beams slicing through the mist as it locks onto Red's heat signature.

Red hacks a maintenance terminal, rerouting power to trigger a short circuit in the drone's sensors, causing it to spiral momentarily out of control.

Wolf advances, his voice modulator echoing, 'Hand over the package, courier.

Your resistance ends here.

' Red launches a smoke pellet, dives across slick tiles, and scrambles down a utility ladder toward the fire escape, clutching the data chip tightly.

Wolf transmits a location update to regime agents, relentless in pursuit.

The drone recovers and circles, searching for Red's next move.

Outcome: Red escapes the rooftop with the signal and package, but Wolf and Drone Unit 17 remain in pursuit, now aware of her location.

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The rooftop's chaos fades behind Red as she slips into the shadows below, her mind racing with her grandmother's coded message and the narrow escape. Every heartbeat echoes with urgency—the lab awaits, but so do new dangers, now heightened by Wolf and the drone closing in. With the signal and data chip secured, Red moves quickly, blending into the city's underbelly, determined to reach the fortified lab undetected. The maintenance hatch looms ahead, her entry point into the regime's stronghold, where stealth and cunning will decide her fate in the precarious break-in to come.

## Chapter 5: Lab Break-In

Red crouches behind a rusted delivery truck, her gloved fingers tapping rapid commands into her wrist console, overriding the outer perimeter sensors.

As she slips across the puddle-slick loading dock, the buzz of Drone Unit 17 grows louder.

The drone lowers, scanlights sweeping, and Red flattens herself against the textured metal door, holding her breath as the drone's sensor grid passes inches above her head.

Driven by its programming to detect intruders, Drone Unit 17 halts, emits a sharp warning chirp, and deploys a micro-searchlight.

Red tosses a hacked sensor decoy into a nearby dumpster, drawing the drone away long enough for her to unscrew the lock panel and slip inside the lab's maintenance corridor.

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As Red and her grandmother reach the threshold, the cold air of freedom brushes their faces—only to be cut short by the looming figure blocking their way. Tension spikes, and the familiar glint in Wolf's eyes signals that escape will not be so simple. The lab's chaos falls behind them, replaced by a charged silence as Wolf raises his hand, ready to make his terms known.

## Chapter 6: Wolf's Ultimatum

Red darts beneath the overpass, clutching a weatherproof satchel, her boots splashing through puddles as she scans the shadows for pursuit.

Wolf materializes from a digital shimmer projected onto a graffitied pillar, his synthetic voice echoing with predatory calm: 'Hand over the package, courier, and you might leave on your own two legs.

' Red edges back, eyes darting for an escape route, but Drone Unit 17 drops from the sky, its spotlights slicing through the rain.

The drone's speakers crackle: 'Unauthorized presence detected.

Prepare for detainment.

' Wolf pivots, hacking the drone's targeting array with a gesture, causing its lights to stutter and its sensors to glitch.

Red uses the distraction to vault over a low barrier, skidding across slick pavement, as Wolf sends a garbled command to the drone: 'Acquire the courier.

Override protocol.

' The scene ends with Red ducking into a narrow alley, Wolf advancing with calculated steps, and the drone's rotors slicing the damp air behind them.

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As Wolf faltered, his movements slowed by the virus Red unleashed, the tension in the alley shifted. The hum of the disabled drone faded into the night, granting Red and her grandmother a brief moment to catch their breath. With their path to freedom suddenly clear, the city's labyrinthine streets beckoned them onward. Yet as they hurried into the shadows, questions lingered about the true origins of the virus—and what deeper secrets Red's grandmother might still be hiding.

## Chapter 7: Escape and Revelation

Red, sensing something off in the lab, seeks out her grandmother, Dr.

Lin Su, to discuss her urgent concerns about unusual symptoms she has noticed in patients on the third floor.

Red raises her hand slightly and catches Dr. Lin Su's eye, signaling discreetly from across the room. Red edged her way through the crowded control room, the hum of monitors and the low murmur of voices swirling around her. She caught Dr. Lin Su's gaze from across the room,



raising her hand just enough—a subtle signal, practiced and precise. When their eyes met, Red nodded, her expression earnest. “Dr. Lin Su, excuse me—could I speak with you for a moment? It’s important,” she said quietly, her voice carrying just enough urgency to cut through the bustle without drawing unwanted attention. Grandmother (Dr. Lin Su)Dr. Lin Su turns her full attention to Red, sensing the urgency and preparing to listen closely. Dr. Lin Su set aside the schematic she’d been poring over, her sharp eyes softening as she sensed the urgency in Red’s posture. She turned her full attention to her granddaughter, hands folded patiently, the hum of distant servers underscoring the quiet moment. “Of course, Red—what’s troubling you?” she asked, her voice warm yet edged with the keen alertness of someone ready to listen, no matter how dire the worry. Red glances nervously around, her tone serious, prompting Dr. Lin Su to pay close attention and prepare to respond. Red’s gaze darted over the shadow-drenched alley, every muscle taut with tension as she signaled for Dr. Lin Su to draw closer. Her voice, usually quick and light, was edged with urgency now. “Thank you,” she began, her words clipped but sincere. “I need your help urgently—something isn’t right and I couldn’t ignore it.” The conviction in her tone left no room for doubt; she was accustomed to danger, but this was different. Dr. Lin Su, sensing the gravity of the moment, straightened and prepared to listen, ready for whatever Red might reveal next. Grandmother (Dr. Lin Su)Dr. Lin Su gently guides Red to a quieter corner, signaling her full attention and readiness to assist. Dr. Lin Su placed a gentle hand on Red’s shoulder, her eyes warm with understanding behind the faint glint of fatigue. With a quiet nod, she steered Red away from the bustle of the lab, into the shelter of a quieter alcove where the hum of machines faded to a distant murmur. She positioned herself so Red had her full attention, her presence calm and unwavering. “I understand, Red,” she said softly, her voice carrying the weight of both reassurance and resolve. “Let’s step aside so you can tell me everything—I’m listening.” Red leads Dr. Lin Su toward the third floor, signaling the urgency of the situation. Red moved swiftly through the dimly lit corridor, her footsteps barely making a sound on the metal grating. With a quick glance over her shoulder, she beckoned Dr. Lin Su to keep up, urgency sharpening her voice. “Thank you, Dr. Lin Su—I’ve noticed some unusual symptoms in the patients on the third floor, and I think we need to check on them right away.” Even as she spoke, her gaze scanned every shadow, calculating the fastest route to their destination and weighing the risks. Her hand hovered near the concealed comm piece at her belt, ready for anything, her mother’s training echoing in her mind. The city outside might have been a maze of chaos, but inside these walls, Red was in control—at least for now. Grandmother (Dr. Lin Su)Dr. Lin Su signals readiness to accompany Red and heads toward the third floor with urgency. Dr. Lin Su met Red’s worried gaze with an understanding nod, her sharp eyes reflecting both caution and resolve. “Your concern is well-placed, Red,” she said, her voice steady but urgent as she swept past him, gesturing for him to follow. Without another word, she headed toward the third floor, her steps quick and purposeful. She was ready to assess the situation herself, determined to protect those she cared about, no matter the risk. The two step aside to plan an immediate assessment, but their covert conversation is interrupted by Wolf, who hacks into the rooftop security systems and issues a threatening ultimatum over the speakers, demanding the secret package.

Red, prioritizing both her grandmother’s safety and the mission, urges Dr.

Lin Su to trust her as they prepare to evade Wolf’s search.

Red pulls Dr. Lin Su behind the cold metal of the ventilation shaft, pressing a finger to her lips while Wolf’s voice crackles and booms through the overhead speakers, echoing down the dimly lit corridor. Red’s hand shot out, gripping Dr. Lin Su’s sleeve as she hauled her behind the cold,

ribbed metal of the ventilation shaft. Overhead, Wolf's distorted voice boomed from the speakers, ricocheting down the shadowed corridor and setting her nerves jangling. Red pressed a finger to her lips, her eyes fierce in the dim light—a silent plea for absolute silence. With Wolf so close, every breath felt too loud.

She crouched low beside her grandmother, whispering urgently, “Stay down. Don’t make a sound—he’s right here.” Her gaze swept the corridor—calculating, vigilant. “I won’t let him find you.” The promise was as much to herself as to Dr. Lin Su, fierce and unyielding. Red’s hand settled briefly over the small, worn satchel strapped across her chest. The package was heavy with meaning and danger both. “Whatever happens, you have to trust me,” she breathed, her voice tight with determination. “The package—he’s only after that. But I won’t let him take it. Not after everything we’ve lost.” Grandmother (Dr. Lin Su) Dr. Lin Su squeezes Red’s hand, her voice trembling but resolute as she glances anxiously toward the echoing speakers. Dr. Lin Su’s hand found Red’s and squeezed, her fingers trembling with a mixture of fear and determination. Glancing anxiously toward the speakers where Wolf’s voice reverberated down the corridor, she drew Red closer behind the cold shadow of the ventilation shaft. “My brave girl,” she whispered, voice taut but resolute, “don’t risk yourself for me.” Her eyes, sharp even in the dim light, flicked to the small, precious package nestled at Red’s side. “That research could save thousands, but it will mean nothing if you fall into his hands.” Wolf Red instinctively presses her grandmother closer to the wall, glancing at the ticking clock above the door as Wolf’s voice reverberates through the darkened vents. Red yanked her grandmother behind the ventilation shaft, heart pounding as she pressed the old woman close to the wall. The ticking clock above the doorway marked each precious second slipping away. From the darkness overhead, Wolf’s voice slithered through the vents—calm, calculated, and utterly merciless.

“You have one minute, Red,” he announced, every syllable sharpened by the speakers’ cold distortion. “Either hand over the package, or I’ll tear this place apart to find you both.”

The words seemed to tighten the air around her, forcing Red to weigh her options as Wolf’s relentless threat echoed through the shadowed corridors. They move stealthily towards the emergency exit, staying low to avoid detection.

The tension escalates as they hear the alarms triggered by Wolf’s actions, forcing them to improvise their escape.

Red leads Dr.

Lin Su to the emergency zipline, and together they launch themselves off the rooftop, narrowly escaping Wolf’s grasp as the city lights blur below.

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As the wind rushed past them and the city spread out below like a promise, Red held her grandmother close, knowing that together they had not only escaped the shadows of the past, but carried hope for a new beginning into the breaking dawn.