

ANTI

VENOM

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Dis-honourable Discharge

Bang bang bang! The sound of automatic gunfire enveloped the battlefield. It was 2036, a war was raging like the fires in hell. Two years before (in 2034), treaties had shattered like glass and allies had grown apart with hate and fear pulling them away. A quarter of the world (that was once a vibrant place) was now a barren wasteland.

Soaring above the mayhem like an eagle, the fighter jet handcrafted by god sliced through the air like an arrow. It was the Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor, the pride of the Air Force. Piloting this jet was flying officer (2nd RAF ranking)–Rellik Hurricane. Rellik had RAF (Royal Air Force) blood running through his veins, as did all his family.

His father was an RAF pilot, as had been his father and his father. One day a few soldiers were called to a summit at the Squadron leader's tent "Men," the squadron leader began "tonight I need you to carry out an assassination: you will be assassinating Andrzej Duda–the President of Poland."

“Why,” Rellik asked. “Because he knew too much,” replied the squadron leader. “About what?” Rellik further questioned. “About Operation Venom,” replied the leader. When Rellik opened his mouth to ask what Operation Venom was, he was silenced abruptly by the squadron leader: “silence, officer!”

Rellik believed the President to be a good, kind man who had done nothing wrong. His anger masked his better judgement and clouded his mind so he shot up, mustered all his strength and threw a punch filled with hate. As it landed across the leader’s jaw, a tooth ripped across the room. That punch was the spark that lit the fuse to the bomb that would change his life.

Back to London

The squadron leader pulled Rellik away and threw him to the floor. Before Rellik could even contemplate making another move, the leader drew his gun and squeezed the cold trigger. A bullet erupted from the barrel. The bullet slashed through the air and inserted itself into Rellik’s chest, narrowly missing his heart. “You shouldn’t have asked,” the squadron leader bellowed in a cold, deep voice.

As a result of assaulting a superior, Rellik was dishonourably discharged. He was sent back to London where he had lived, before the war, with his family: his wife(Sophia), who had the beauty of a goddess; his 6-year-old daughter(Emma), who had a kind heart; and his 8-year-old son(Carlos), who had a will stronger than any weapon.

When he returned home, his family were happy that their beloved father/husband had returned. However, although his children were not old enough to comprehend the concept of why their father was back home, his wife was disappointed that he was disgraced. Of course, the military covered up what provoked him to hit the squadron leader: they simply stated “He approached the squadron leader and assaulted him .”

Despite knowing that the army was doing a deed as evil as Satan's soul, he decided to take his first day back, to rest and go over the recent events in his mind (to try and make sense of it all). He then drifted off into the pleasant abyss of his dreams. When he awoke, a beautiful rose-red sun greeted him and a smile set across his face. But the smile was washed away by the sound of the door being smashed open by brute force.

Two men wearing black armour and sinister gas masks burst in. They were brandishing guns which Rellik assessed to be M15 assault rifles. At the sound of the door being forced open, his family rushed in, laying eyes upon the men, who were now aiming their guns at Rellik; they threw

themselves on the men, hitting relentlessly in a feeble attempt to stop them.

Without a second glance and even one persuasive thought of doubt crossing their minds, they released a rain of bullets upon his family.

“NO!” Shouted Rellik (in emotional agony), he shot out of his bed and raced to the first man, the man attempted to shoot him but Rellik brushed his gun aside and clutched his throat. With the adrenaline pumping through his body like a charging bull, he pulled the man off the ground and drew a knife from his waist; he then slashed the man and dropped him– dead. His attention turned to the other man who was standing next to the door. Rellik picked up the gun, which was dropped on the floor by the other man, and shot him.

He knelt next to the man to inspect his body. As he had expected, branded on the back of their masks were the words “RAF property” as clear as day. On the other body, a card was sticking out that read “Operation Venom .” Rellik returned to his family, dropping beside them, tears streamed down his blood–covered face. However, he didn't have time to mourn: six more men flooded the porch. Rellik ran into the kitchen but before he went, he unscrewed the tap so water would drip on the floor, then he turned off a lamp and smashed the top. When the top was exposed, he carefully placed it on the water before sprinting out of his house. As the men went into the kitchen their feet splashed in the water, one of them turned on the light. Using the

water as a conductor, the electricity raced through the lamp and into their bodies, electrocuting them.

The Card

Melancholically, walking across the pavement, Rellik tightly held the blood-soaked card in his hand. A million thoughts were racing through his mind, it was a mix of the good times he and his family had and the revenge he would take, but overall the possibilities of what “Operation Venom” could be and why it was so secret.

He thoroughly inspected the card and on the back were faint markings, which he suspected were lemon juice. It was an old trick: if you put lemon juice on paper and hold it above fire the juice shows like invisible ink, Rellik picked up a match and dropped it like a rigged claw in an arcade game. He observed his hands, they were shaking, eventually, he managed to pick up the match, light it and place it underneath the paper. It read “Big Ben, midnight on Wednesday.”

At eleven pm, on a sinister night, Rellik scoured the entire building from where it reached for the stars to where it rooted into the ground. Despite the thorough search he had carried out for an hour he still could not locate the meeting. Just when he was about to give up, a glistening light caught

his eye, he traced it back to the magnificent clock on Big Ben (which was one of its most famous features). Assuming they were hiding in there, Rellik attempted to find a way into the clock. He found two ways, using the picks beside him he could scour up the building or he could zipline across to the tower from another building. Eventually, he decided to combine the two by attaching the picks to the rope and impaling it onto the tower using it to get to the clock, therefore, using both the picks and the rope.

When he managed to reach the top, through the face of the clock he could faintly see thirteen figures. They were all huddled around a table as if they belonged to a secret group. “Perhaps they do?” thought Rellik. As he attempted to figure out what they were doing, he slipped and banged on the glass. Assuming his place back on the ledge, he heard one of them say in alarm “We’ve been compromised!” “re-group at the backup location.”

Rellik knew this voice well—it was the Squadron leader.

In The Clock

He heard the rapid scuttling away and in an attempt to catch at least one of them, he pulled from his pocket his wife’s earring. It was a sharp diamond on a gold hook, he

had meant to give it to her as a gift. He placed the diamond tip on the glass, took off his shoe and hit it with all his strength, working as a nail and a hammer, the shoe and diamond cracked the clock.

Rellik powered through the weak scraps of glass that were left. Relieved to be inside, he quickly jolted up and scanned the room. When he had realised they had all left as if they vanished into thin air, he picked up a piece of glass and threw it at the wall in frustration. The glass splintered into a thousand pieces as it clashed with the wall, one of the shards glided to the table and knocked a bundle of paper off next to Rellik's shoe (the one that he used as a hammer and was now on the floor).

When Rellik went to retrieve his shoe the paper caught his eye, when he looked at it his pupils dilated (widened) in anticipation. It was a stew of drug trafficking routes, recipes for a hundred illegal substances, deals, gun shipments, some of the biggest names in organised crime, dates for meetings and a piece of paper that read "terminate Andrzej Duda and Rellik Hurricane for immediate extraction."

Just then, he heard the unmistakable sound of death – a gun cocking. He ducked as a bullet sliced above his head, he frantically searched the room for his assailant. He turned to his right to be greeted by a man in a black skull mask illuminated by the moon's glow, who was holding a pistol that was still hot from firing. Rellik decided he had a better chance of surviving a fall slowed by rope than surviving the

bullets unarmed, so he leapt for the rope. The pain of sliding down was bad but it was a better fate than death.

Blocked route

When Rellik approached the bottom of the tower he leapt off the rope and instantly started sprinting away. He did not know where exactly he was going but he knew it would be away from there. He could hear the bullets ricocheting behind him but he did not take the time to look back, just when he was about to exit the whole building and go into the open streets he felt a searing pain in his arm—he had been shot.

Questioning who the man in the mask was, Rellik tried to find a place to sleep and take refuge. Knowing they would be monitoring him, he decided to take advantage of his training and build a shelter. First, he collected sticks to make the foundation. Then he stuck them in the ground to make an open square. After that, he filled in the gaps with leaves. Finally, he roped it all together with vines to strengthen the structure.

He was satisfied with the product he had produced in the end, he was even more impressed when it rained and it did not leak through the top. When he was inside, he began studying the information on the paper. He realised at that moment that to get revenge and to stop Operation Venom

he would need to stop everything on that paper and stop all the drug routes.

Number one

When Rellik awoke, he was fueled by anger but he made sure he was not to be consumed by it. He learned as he gazed at the paper that his first victim, who would be punished by justice when the law could not, would be Antonio Spietato. Antonio was infamous for his peculiar fondness for strangling, he acquired this taste when he found a rabid dog and he strangled it when it lunged at him. He was a despicable man but no one dared disobey him as those who did, never did it again or anything again.

Antonio's shipment would be delivered that night on dock seven, which is where Rellik planned to intercept this delivery. That night, Rellik crept to the docks as silently as possible. He planned to be in and out like the devil's whisper and leave nothing but a trail of bodies. However, his plans changed when he saw a sight that sent a chill of doubt about this plan down his spine—another person on the dock.

What frightened Rellik is not that they were there as there were many other armed guards, it was how this person was different. They were wearing a black uniform with a

balaclava and although the guards had assault rifles they had several knives and on their side a golden syringe. They exchanged glances and acknowledged each other, despite not speaking they had a mutual agreement to keep out of each other's way.

Rellik carried on but made sure he stayed vigilant of this person, and shortly after his encounter, he returned his concentration to his mission. He spotted the first guard from above, he leapt onto the man, pinned him down with his foot and attempted to knock him out. However, the man grabbed Rellik's leg and pulled him to the ground. As they were now on the same battlefield, the man's hopes shot up, but his victory was short-lived: while he was contemplating his next move Rellik easily knocked him out

As Rellik dug deeper into his mission, the more frequently he encountered many more guards. It soon became like a routine to see a guard and "take them out"; he found differently armed and defended guards as if they evolved/adapted. He then discovered a monster of a man: he was a giant compared to the others, he (instead of an assault rifle) had two uzis and a bulletproof vest.

An unexpected saviour

Rellik and this man engaged in an enchanting fight: the man released a cluster of bullets upon Rellik, each one skimming him; Rellik (after dodging all the bullets) grabbed his guns and ripped them away from the man, disarming him; they both landed many good hits on the other until the man tried a kick which was a fatal mistake. Rellik grabbed his leg and pushed him to the floor when he was unbalanced then he hovered over him to deliver the final blow.

Seeing Rellik's bullet wound, the man dug his thumb into his arm. Rellik fell back in pain, the man stumbled up and looked at him with hate in his eyes and drew a zombie knife. Just as he was about to slash Rellik he vibrated violently, he was being tasered. When he fell onto the cold floor, the ominous person in the balaclava was standing behind him "Tasers," he said joyfully "so small but so powerful."

The man (with a groan) began to get up, "looks like we have a survivor," the balaclava-wearing man announced "and Diego comes in with the dunk, BOOM!" With that, he collapsed onto the man. Rellik naturally assumed the man talking to himself was called Diego, who said as the man on the floor got up again " he's going in with the Diego double kick," then he leapt into the air and delivered two mid-air kicks.

After those kicks, the man was unconscious, (looking satisfied) Diego walked to Rellik and stared at him. Not sure what was happening, Rellik looked back at him and

said “Thank you.” He smiled and said “you’re welcome, see you in a bit,” before Rellik could reply he tasered him.

The next thing Rellik remembered was scraps of the past, remembered: getting into a car, passing a bridge and getting dragged into a disgrace of a building. He awoke in the day with the elegant sunlight hitting his eyes; they dilated to fully encase its enchanting beauty. He searched the room but could not fully see around himself as he was tied up, the rope digging into his skin not letting him move.

Then Diego turned around, he appeared to be playing a game on his phone, when he turned he looked surprised as if he had forgotten about Rellik. “Oh yeah!” I forgot you were here, the noises from the game carried on to shout, shoot, blast, ding, and whack. This obviously frustrated him as he began to frantically try to turn it off muttering “come on, turn off you stupid thing aghhhhhhh!” “Sorry,” he said awkwardly. Confused, Rellik questioned how this idiot could have kidnapped him. On the other hand, he did have a taser, this thought comforted Rellik.

“You are not supposed to be awake yet,” with that he picked up a golf club and said stupidly “well I guess it’s a time for a clobberin’.” He wound up the club ready to hit when Rellik stopped him motionless simply by saying “stop!” Curiously, Diego lowered the club but kept his guard up “why?” “because.” He hopefully racked his brain to find a reason “I have got something to ask you,” “What?”

“Who are you?” Rellik asked “I've got a question,” said Diego “was your mouth always so messed up?” He then struck Rellik in the mouth, knocking out his tooth. It flung through the air landing in Rellik’s hand, he concealed it in his sleeve to hide it. After Diego had gone, Rellik took out his tooth. Luckily, it was a Canine (the sharpest tooth), so he began cutting the rope. He knew he was near to success when he felt the rope’s grip loosen drastically but just when he could feel the last thread snapping, Diego walked in.

A sidekick

Rellik pulled the rope apart and launched at Diego; they both immediately sprung into action. Seeing they were almost perfectly matched, Rellik picked up a metal pipe and swung furiously at Diego. To make it fair, Diego grabbed another rod as they were everywhere he picked up two to give himself the upper hand, their poles repeatedly clashed being dented with every hit.

Diego hit Rellik with both poles, this power stunned him, resulting in his pole ejecting from his hand. Rellik was swept to the floor, Diego pointed the jagged end of the pole to his throat. Thinking quickly, Rellik clutched the handle of some cleaning liquid next to him and sprayed it in Diego’s eyes, temporarily blinding him.

Rellik kicked his knee and as Diego collapsed down he leapt up, the roles were reversed and Rellik had the upper hand while Diego was wiping his eyes.

"I'll ask the question again, who are you?" "My name is Diego." This confirmed Rellik's theory "why did you kidnap me?". "Because you got in my way," he said roughly.

"Where are we?" Rellik questioned "my house" Diego replied. Rellik looked around in disgust at the mould on the walls, broken wood, dirty clothes and the only clean thing in there, a rack of knives as sharp as lion's teeth.

As if he read Rellik's mind Diego said "I'm not much for decor," "I can see that," replied Rellik. Moving onto a different question Rellik said "What were you doing at the dock last night?" "Selling cookies," he replied sarcastically. Rellik shot him a stern look and jabbed him with the pole. "Fine," Diego said reluctantly, "I was robbing it."

Before either of them could say another thing, there was a knock at the door "Diego you scum, open up." "Who's that?" Rellik asked, startled "I'm a robber who kidnapped you, I'll give you three guesses," "police?" he guessed "nope," Diego replied "FBI?" Rellik guessed again "nadda," Diego said "debt collectors?" Rellik said as his final guess "ding ding ding." Diego shouted.

Debt

The door exploded into a thousand splinters of wood, and three monsters of men burst in, wielding baseball bats. Diego ripped five knives off the rack in his room and Rellik picked up two pipes; together they synchronised in defeating these men. Diego threw two knives at the knees of the first one while Rellik met his falling body with a swing of his pipe. Rellik clashed bats with one as if they were swords while Diego pinned the other to the wall.

When they were finished they took a minute to rest and admire their work. Although neither of them wanted to admit it, they made a great team. "Where did you learn to fight like that?" Rellik asked "CIA," "Are you still working?" "No." Rellik could see that he hit a nerve with this question but he carried on "Why?" "I had a mind of my own but they wanted me to be a sheep."

"What about you, where did you learn to fight like that?" "RAF special ops." "Are you still in?" "no, for the same reason as you." Looking at the men on the ground, Rellik said "who do you owe?"

"Several people: loan sharks, casino owners, mob bosses and just some average people." In the middle of their conversation, a fourth man rushed in aiming a gun at both of them. When he shot, both of them leapt to the other,

deflecting the bullet headed for them with a piece of metal without worrying about themselves.

This act lit a spark of trust, uniting them. “We should go,” Rellik suggested, “but where?” “Anywhere but here,” then they bolted down the cold stairs and into the frosty, dark night.

After they escaped, they sought refuge in the vibrant forest. With vines encasing their heads and branches smacking their faces, they ventured through one of the few places that mother nature still defended. “What were you doing at the deck?” Rellik asked for the second time “After I was fired from the CIA, I began doing the things that other law forces wouldn’t do, without the pages of writing every time you fire a round or a criminal grazes their knee.

“Why Antonio Spietato, there are a thousand criminals why him?” “I did not choose, I merely saw something wrong so I went to stop it.” Reflecting on the question to Rellik, Diego asked, “what about you, what were you doing?” Rellik felt a speck of trust for Diego however this was not enough to persuade him to simply blurt out his private life so he said: “I heard he was a bad guy and hurt nice, innocent people’s lives so I felt I had to stop him because for every man like him wiped out an innocent person is allowed to bloom in this world.”

Looking like he did not quite believe the lie, Diego asked “why Antonio?” “Antonio will not be the last: wherever evil triumphs over good it will never be final, when

innocents are being wronged and whenever someone needs help I will be there to do the right thing,” Rellik said, inspiring Diego

“But we have not finished yet.” Diego interrupted, “Antonio still lurks around infecting people with his hatred.”

Finishing the job

Far away, Antonio Spietato paced around his room screaming “I want half my men searching for the rat that attacked my shipment!” the act Rellik and Diego put on grabbed Antonio’s attention.

“But sir, where do we look, they could be anywhere?” one guard said bravely. Antonio looked him in the eye, drew his gun and without flinching shot him dead. “I do not care where you search as long as it ends with their heads on a pole, okay?” The guards stood– petrified by Antonio’s outlash but at risk of making him angrier, nodded compliantly.

Acting on Antonio’s words, his goons wreaked havoc over anywhere they were. This streak of violence by Antonio alerted Rellik and Diego before they were caught, “we need to move.” Rellik alerted “I know just the place.” Diego half-whispered

Diego led Rellik to a place that looked as if it were used by people from a thousand years ago, it had the following features: a worn-down roof, that had a big hole in the side; broken windows, with tattered curtains; and a smooth mahogany door, perhaps the only good thing about it. "What is this?" Rellik said, repulsed by the house "home sweet home." Diego said joyfully.

"You live here?" asked Rellik "yes, where do you live?" Diego replied, defensively "A place that makes this look like a palace." This made Diego question the quality of his home. "I admit it has got room for improvement," he said, gesturing at holes in the walls, mould on the roof and many more disgusting features the building had. "but it is my home and it is good enough for me." "It's a pigsty," Rellik said bluntly "yes," Diego immediately agreed.

The next day, Rellik and Diego pondered how they would kill Antonio. After a few hours of silence, Diego exclaimed "I've got it: every year Antonio splurges on a party at one of his most luxurious mansions and invites people who fall into the category of being one of the following: a person who has a bank balance over one hundred million and people who are in the same line or a similar line of business as him (drug trafficking, arms dealer, mob bosses and all high-end criminals)"

Rellik was astonished at Diego's knowledge, obviously, he sunk a lot of time into finding every crucial bit of information about Antonio and other criminals. Rellik (having dealt with people like Antonio) assumed the

reason he threw these annual parties was to gain allies and in the process, gain resources and other useful things.

“When does he throw these parties?” asked Rellik “on the first day of spring, which is in five days!” Diego said, suddenly realising they had little time “then we better get moving,” Rellik said, gesturing to the door.

In their escapade to destroy Antonio, the structure was in place: intercept the party, lure Antonio to a secluded spot, silently kill him and finally, escape without leaving a trace.

The day before

The first step in their plan was gearing up; they needed a variety of weapons as the mansion would be swarmed with heavily armed guards. Each person had one particular form of weapon that played uniquely well to their strengths; Rellik and Diego, who would usually get weapons fitted for highly trained professionals, would have to make do with the equipment they had.

Fortunately, both Rellik and Diego (due to their past) had already acquired all the basic tools for the job, all they needed now was the advanced weapons, which had to be obtained in less than legal ways. In their line of work, they had met people who could easily supply them with the

things they needed (grenades, armour piercing bullets, twister blades, AA12 Atchisson Assault Shotgun and C4).

Step two would be figuring out how to get inside. “Guards are surrounding the house twenty-four-seven,” Rellik began. “And every guest needs an invitation or they’ll be shot on the spot,” Diego added on “so we get an invitation,” Rellik said as if it was obvious.

Step three is devising a way to kill Antonio. “As the place is swarming with guards we need to find a secluded area.” “I’ve got it,” Diego answered “his collection room.” Like many rich people, Antonio had no plan on what to spend his money on so he sunk a fraction of his fortune into historical artefacts and stored them in his collection room. He did not trust any of his guards so this room was only entered by Antonio.

The Party

When dawn approached, an orange glow spread across the vibrant ground and warmed the quiet lands. Rellik and Diego’s bloodshot eyes slowly opened, for a moment a peaceful state of serenity enchanted them and it felt like everything would be alright but then the reality hit Rellik like a fist—it was the day of Antonio's party.

Rellik and Diego had six hours until the party officially started; Antonio (or rather his servants) prepared for the party one week in advance. Taking advantage of this time, Rellik and Diego elaborated their plan further. “How will we get a hold of an invitation?” Diego asked, “They all have watermarks and data cards on them, so we can’t fake one.” Rellik said, eliminating a possibility “So we’ll have to steal one.” Diego proclaimed

The whole guest list has their own private flock of bodyguards constantly protecting them so it won’t be easy to steal a card from them. “Freddie Lush,” Rellik said as he threw a picture of a troll-like man onto the table “he’s the lowest of the low and the only reason his fortune is even big enough to get on the list is because he betrays.”

As a result of his many betrayals, Freddie had a reputation of things not working out with his workers so very few people wanted to get into his professional or social circle; this meant he had very few bodyguards. “He’s a perfect candidate to steal from.” said Diego, “but where/when do we take his invitation?” Rellik asked

“We can’t get it from his house because there’s too much security.” Diego said, narrowing the choices down “So we have to get it where he is most vulnerable, which would be when he’s driving.” Rellik suggested.

Chauffeur

Freddie was very cautious, so he trusted very few people which meant he rode with only two people: a guard and his chauffeur (driver). Somehow Rellik and Diego had to get into Freddie's car. Freddie's guard in the car was his most trusted employee– Decapio Rost.

Decapio had a CV/resume filled with combat: his first job was only as a shop security guard but he slowly improved as he went on to become a head of security at a hotel and then he drove down into a darker road where he became security for criminals (Freddie Lush). Freddie knew Dicapio's face but he didn't learn the drivers so either Rellik or Diego had to go undercover as his chauffeur.

Between the two, Rellik and Diego managed to devise the foundation of a plan: one of them would pose as Freddie's driver and keep close to him while the other would be in the closest car behind him (as Freddie had a crowd of his guards escorting him everywhere) and make sure there were no problems. Both of them knew the plan was too vague but they didn't have time for fine details.

Rellik asked, "How are we going to get to Freddie?" In response to this, Diego took Rellik to a garage and ripped off a tarp as black as night to reveal a 1964 Astin Martin DB5 in perfect condition. Without wasting a second of time, they sped through the cobbled roads leaving a trail of

smoke and burned rubber behind them. Pedestrians on the pavement turned their heads in awe as the two raced against time while one of them screamed directions while the other frantically drove.

Eventually, they lay still in their car observing Freddie and his goons. When they saw the chauffeur, they silently opened the car doors and slithered out with ease but as a result of the pace, he was moving they had to lightly run to the chauffeur.

While behind him, they slid a cloth infused with chloroform to effectively but painlessly knock him unconscious as they knew he was just an expendable pawn. Diego disguised himself in the chauffeur's clothes while Rellik knocked out a guard and did the same, when in their disguises they took their places: Rellik would intercept the unsuspecting guards and Diego would be driving Freddie to his destination.

Like all plans, they never went exactly according to plan: Rellik was placed in the furthest car away from Freddie so he would have to work his way up. Another problem arose: instead of one, three guards accompanied Freddie in his car so as a result of both the problems Rellik would have to move from car to car (while they were driving) taking out all the guards and Diego would have to take out three of his best guards confined to one car to get to Freddie.

Ladder of cars

The second the acceleration pedals were slammed, all the guards' senses were on end. Rellik and Diego attempted to act as casual as possible but they were always last to do everything which aroused suspicion among the real guards, however, Freddie was oblivious to all of this as he believed everyone on his payroll to be second-class people.

Shortly into the ride, Rellik began to clear out the guards: he yelled in fake surprise “Look!” and pointed to the horizon. While the guards were distracted he efficiently pulled a pistol from his holster and (although he did it quickly) accidentally alerted another guard who drew his gun as well. First, Rellik shot his gun out of his hand but the bullet ricocheted, alerting the rest of the guards in the car. The guards attempted to shoot Rellik so he took the disarmed guard by the arm and threw the man in front of himself so he unwillingly acted as a shield.

Despite hating each time a soul is lost, the fact that every single man working for Freddie was a despicable person comforted Rellik. As he frantically looked for a weapon, the other guards took a shot at Rellik. While the trigger was being pulled back and the barrel of the gun being coated in gunpowder, a silver knife lay undisturbed under the car chair; Rellik (not thinking) pulled it in front of his face. The bullet split on the blade of the knife, both Rellik and the guards were astonished at his luck. Although he didn't

mean to cut the bullet, Rellik had no time to renounce his credit as he was now taking on two guards. Rellik saw a guard was about to shoot him while the other was getting ready to stab him so he lurched forward and grabbed the wheel. When the driver attempted to stab Rellik, he grabbed the knife and stabbed the driver's foot into the accelerator pedal.

The car aimlessly swerved down the road with no definite direction or destination. It then pushed right, fixing itself in a collision course with another car filled with guards. To avoid the result of the collision Rellik leapt out of the car's sunroof before it was swallowed by a fiery blaze along with the other car. Naturally, the tremendous sound of the explosion alerted the guards in Freddie's car. This was Diego's time to shine: a guard (one of the two extras) leant out of the window acquiring a clean shot at Rellik with this position, so as to stop him, Diego violently drove to the right then to the left repeatedly.

As a result of this rebellious act, everyone else in Freddie's car was now aware that Diego wasn't on their side. Decapio Rost (Freddie's most trusted guard), threw himself in front of Freddie while the two others launched themselves at Diego wielding weapons. Diego adjusted the front seats so they went back as far as they could- to squish the guards- then, he searched for something that could deal at least a small amount of damage. Under pressure, he settled for the blunt handlebar.

Then, Diego swung the pole across both of the guards' heads knocking them out instantly. When the extra guards were knocked out cold, Decapio drew his gun and his trigger finger didn't hesitate or waste any time to fire the pistol but in the brief moment between life and death for Diego the car flipped dramatically through the air. Behind Freddie's car, Rellik picked up some rubble from the other destroyed cars and threw it with all his remaining strength at the car's wheel, causing it to flip several times through the smoke-filled air.

Rellik stood searching for Diego in the flaming debris of the car. Eventually, Diego rose from the broken bumper. "That could have gone better," Rellik said. "You think?" Diego replied, wincing in pain. When they finished, another pained groan came from the remains of the car – it was Freddie. Rellik and Diego both ran to him, Freddie screamed at the sight of them and ran repeatedly, tripping on the charred stone. "What do you want, I'll give you anything." Freddie pleaded, "Well when I think about it there is one thing." Diego replied "It's just a little card, no biggie." Rellik requested. "Okay, sure!" Freddie instantly said, with no reluctance in his voice. When Freddie finished an extensive search for the invitation, Rellik and Diego began their trip to Antonio's party. Despite not being within a couple of miles of the party, Rellik and Diego heard raging music. When they entered the gold-encrusted gates inscribed with the words "Antonio Spietato" in cursive.

Masquerade Party

When they entered the estate, guards were stationed everywhere armed with weapons according to their position: guards on the roof had heavy bolt action snipers, guards on the perimeter each had an uzi and the guards covering the main entrances to the house had a glock pistol holstered at their side, two mini zombie knives and a heavy assault rifle.

Before they exited the car, they saw two guests enter the party wearing gold-lined smiling masquerade masks. As a result of the newfound information that it was a masquerade party, Rellik and Diego racked their brains for an idea when Diego nudged a bag, which made it fall over and two masks rolled out of it.

When they finally exited, a stern man walked up to them and said "Hello sir, madam." Rellik stifled a fit of hysterical laughter as Diego realised he was wearing a woman's mask and let out a huge sigh.

When they were out of earshot of the man who greeted them Rellik said “Do you want to change into a dress?” and chuckled, Diego sarcastically laughed and replied, “It’s under your lipstick and high heels.”

They both playfully laughed but stopped abruptly when they arrived at the front door, the guards cocked their guns while a scrawny man went up to Rellik and Diego holding a small machine. He held it in front of them for a while before saying in a surprisingly hoarse voice “For the invitation.” With that, Diego drew the card from his pocket and inserted it into the machine. To their delight, the guards let Rellik and Diego through the large double doors.

The sight that greeted them was lit like the halls of Valhalla and populated like Chongqing. There were so many criminals it looked similar to a Shawshank party. At the top of the room (between two grand staircases) was a shining stage with the host standing on it – Antonio. Antonio tapped a silver microphone in front of him and said to the whole crowd “My friends, we gather here today to trade, talk, bond and kill. It has come to my attention that two men have been a thorn in the side of my business so if they interfere in yours, inform me.”

Rellik and Diego looked at each other with a glint of fear and pride– because they were wanted dead and because they made such a big dent in Antonio’s business that he put out a hit on them– in their eyes. They now needed to get to Antonio’s treasure room. Luckily, they found some extensive blueprints of the

building; they had the location of several secret tunnels built into the room if Antonio needed to make an evasive escape.

“Here,” said Diego, pointing to a passage that started in Antonio’s walk-in wardrobe “We’ll have to disable the defences(cameras and motion detectors).” Antonio built his mansion with the ambition of making an attractive fort Knox: it had the appearance of a place that made a king empty his wallet but the durability of a military base.

As an addition to the guards, steel reinforcements and many traps, there was an around-the-clock surveillance team. The team operated from a single room which had monitors showing everything that happened.

“Because of the surveillance team monitoring everything on their computers, I have this,” Rellik said while holding a black USB “a kill drive.”

Override

Before they killed the cameras, they had to figure out how to slip away from the party. “I know how to go: if you spill some wine on me, we can go away from the toilet and wash it off.” Diego said, “But we have to go to the third one on the top floor because that’s the closest to the control panel.”

“Okay, so which one of us should get...” Diego said before he was abruptly silenced by Rellik throwing a glass of red wine on him, “This is a £5000 Italian leather suit, you’ll pour wine on it over my dead body.” Rellik said, justifying himself “Do that again, and it will be over your dead body.” Diego threatened but with no sincerity.

After this, they went to a waiter and Rellik said “Excuse me, but I accidentally spilt some wine on my friend here, can you tell us where the staircase to the bathroom is so I can wash my suit there? Although it was unnecessary to ask, it would take a lot of suspicion off of them if they get caught doing something conspicuous and they can use the waiter to ask someone to verify their reasons to be there.

They began their short climb that would lead to a significant event in their life. When they got to the bathroom, they noticed no difference in the hallway from the others in Antonio’s mansion except from a small box. As this was the power source of his whole security system, the box was made of tungsten carbon, the only thing harder—was diamond. Luckily, Rellik and Diego anticipated this so they brought a handheld, diamond-tipped drill. Slowly, Diego cut open the box with a thousand sparks lighting up the hallway.

When he finished, Rellik rapidly searched for a USB port. When he found it, he inserted the kill drive and watched the red light on the cameras, which indicated it was on, with his heart filled with hope that it would be extinguished.

To Rellik's and Diego's delight, the camera turned off. Now that they were free to wander around as they pleased, their minds filled with a million more ideas to stop Antonio.

As all the cameras turning off would bring suspicion and distress, Rellik and Diego made sure the USB wouldn't destroy the system, just clear it to make it like a stem cell or a blank piece in scrabble: highly impressionable and able to turn to anything.

Diego then took out a small camera and a wire, he connected the camera to the box. On the camera, was footage of the same hallway they were in, except empty.

Now that they were free to roam, they made their way to Antonio's room. As they made their way to the room, Rellik and Diego encountered a small problem – five armed guards and one guard who was significantly smaller and a lot more at ease.

Unfortunately, all of the guards were protecting the doors; Rellik and Diego had to take them out; however, they would have to be stealthy so as to not cause any commotion. To catch them unprepared, Rellik threw a small coin in front of the guards. As the coin jangled and shaken, all of the guards, except the small guard, cautiously walked towards it.

When they did this, while Rellik headed for the guards, Diego headed for the small man. Rellik knocked out the

other guards with ease: they were unprepared for the attack and while they had an intimidating look, they had no real fighting technique.

However, (to Diego's surprise) the small man more than made up for his wimpy look with his immense fighting skill. Rellik looked at Diego getting beaten up and said "You know you're supposed to be beating HIM up, not having an interview for a human punching bag?" Diego raised his eyebrows in disbelief and replied "Sorry I couldn't hear because my face is being beaten to a pulp, so how about you try this out and tag in?"

Taking up Diego's request, Rellik began to pace toward the man and threw his fist at the man's face. The man blocked Rellik's punch, took one last big hit at Diego (leaving him dazed on the ground) and began to fight Rellik. To neither Diego's nor the man's surprise, Rellik did roughly the same as Diego.

A fight with steel

Rellik and Diego both lay on the floor and despite both getting in a few clean hits, they were beaten. However, they

were not the kind to give up: they would fight for something until their last breath – if they truly believed in it.

They got up again, but not to fight the guard in turns: they got up to fight together because a single arrow is broken easily but a quiver of arrows is as strong as a thousand walls. Like it was a dance, they synchronised in their fight: each counter-attack suited the others perfectly as if they had rehearsed it for their whole lives.

Eventually, the guard let one of his hands down due to the exhaustion of fighting two people at once. When he did this, Rellik and Diego took advantage and landed a clean shot to the face. Although it was only one punch, it held the power of a thousand and it was all it took to knock the guard out.

After all the security was taken out, Rellik and Diego could stride into Antonio's room with ease. As the great oak double doors to the room, both Rellik and Diego were astounded by the greed of Antonio: a four-poster mahogany bed with the finest Spanish curtains lay in the centre of the room on top of a gold embroidered Arabian rug and several intricate paintings hung on the walls in expensive frames.

At the right of the room were two white doors. Rellik and Diego easily deduced that they must be the entrance to Antonio's wardrobe. Wasting no time, they ran to the doors ripping them open – only to be greeted by what looked like a never-ending line of clothes.

Stunned by the fashion greed of Antonio, Rellik and Diego stood motionless for a minute before remembering their purpose in Antonio's room. Then, they pulled aside the clothes to reveal a silver door– with a single golden handle on it. Curious about what was behind it, Rellik opened the door without hesitation.

What they saw was like an in-home museum: vases, antique weapons paintings, ancient hats and many more artefacts lay in the room. Thousands of years of history were in the room and both Rellik and Diego were honoured to see all of it.

Now they needed to get Antonio into the room, however, they already knew how to do this: when they entered the room (from any entrance), a motion sensor sent an alert directly to his phone. Which he always went to investigate.

As they knew Antonio was coming to them, Rellik and Diego prepared for the imminent fight: they checked their several pockets for their weapons. It was at this moment they looked at each other in horror: they realised they had left their weapons in the car.

When Rellik and Diego were still stunned, Antonio walked in. He looked at both of them and he didn't look surprised: he just sighed, started stretching then he said “Gimme a minute.” Rellik and Diego were surprised but relieved that Antonio wasn't going to instantly try to kill them.

After a minute or two, Antonio finished his warm-ups and, instead of drawing his gun, he looked at the weapon section and took a beautiful, ornate battle axe out of its case. “Choose your weapon,” Antonio said. Rellik and Diego now understood that he wanted them to take a weapon from the wall.

After careful consideration, they each took a weapon: Rellik chose a longsword and Diego chose a sabre. All of them stood in silence before, suddenly, Antonio leapt forwards, to Rellik and Diego.

Rellik and Diego raised their weapons in defence causing all three to clash, sending a thousand sparks from each of their blades. They engaged in a battle of the ages: each side gaining and losing the upper hand at different times.

Despite being in battle, Rellik, Diego and Antonio couldn't help but appreciate that they were in a fight where the air didn't reek of gunpowder, where the sound of bullet casings clattering on the floor flooded the room was non-existent.

Mercy

After a prolonged battle, Antonio finally fell to the floor. However he did not beg: he raised his weapon to his side but didn't take a swing, he sat still obviously in anticipation of the final blow.

Astounded by the honour and pride of Antonio, both Rellik and Diego thought about what they should now do. Finally, they came to a decision—Rellik and Diego dropped their weapons.

“We won’t kill you.” Diego said. “Only because taking another life won’t bring more light into this world, it will only pave a path for the darkness.” Rellik said, justifying Diego.

They tied Antonio up and grabbed his arms, Rellik held his right and Diego held his left. They dragged him across the room (towards the door) before realising they were still being hunted and an army of guards probably awaited them outside.

Then they thought—they couldn’t go down, they couldn’t go left or right. The only way left was up. Under a time limit of mere minutes, Rellik and Diego hatched a plan that involved a DIY grappling hook, several throwing knives and five shields.

Rellik and Diego knew their plan was unlikely to succeed because even theoretically they had a slim chance of succession. They planned to first, (using the many knives in Antonio’s room) throw many weapons into the ceiling creating a circular chunk of it to fall to the ground.

Secondly, they would fashion a grappling hook by tying three fu tao (hook swords) together and attaching a rope to the bottom of them.

Thirdly, they would throw the hook until it latches to the roof. Then they would climb up it.

Finally, when they are on the roof, they would each hold a shield to make a protective shell against the snipers.

Miraculously, everything seemed to work out except when they had taken out all but one guard. This guard seemed to be blind as their eyes were covered with a blindfold.

Rellik and Diego thought that this meant they would be easier to fight. However Antonio's sinister laughing that had started when he saw the blind guard, made them uneasy. Cautiously, they approached the guard, who had now drawn a bo staff in anticipation of the fight to come.

Rellik came at them from the right and Diego came from the left, in hopes to outflank the guard. Oddly, they didn't react to their enemies closing in on them.

This lack of action stunned Rellik and Diego causing them to lose concentration. In this short window, the final guard lunged at Diego sweeping his legs and swinging at his face. After he had finished with Diego, his attention turned to Rellik. Terrified, Rellik took a hit at the man, the guard dodged the weapon with ease. After observing Rellik fail so spectacularly, the guard looked at him with what seemed to be disappointment that he was facing (yet again) another inferior opponent.

Despite not even knowing the man, Rellik felt a pang of disappointment in himself for being beaten so easily by him. The man began to fight Rellik, his fighting portraying the fact that mercy was a stranger in his mind. When all seemed lost for Rellik, a single thought lay in his head, not if he was going to die or what he should do. He was thinking of the evil that operation Venom would achieve and the terrible effect it would have on thousands or even millions of innocent lives.

Second wind

As the guard prepared to deliver the final blow, Rellik lay down his weapon and clenched his fists. Although his opponent had a weapon and Rellik had only his bare hands he also had a reason to fight – a motivation.

Rellik felt a sudden strength power through his veins, it made him feel like he could take on a thousand armies and exit without a scratch. As the bo staff swung at him, Rellik grabbed it seemingly effortlessly and snapped it like a twig.

This sudden strength in Rellik induced a fear in the guard. Slowly he fought his way up from the ground, backing the guard to the edge of the building. When the guard was cornered, Rellik delivered the final blow and knocked him out.

Diego stood in shock at what he just witnessed, Rellik looked at him and said sarcastically “Well thanks for all your help.” lightning the mood. Disappointed that Rellik and Diego hadn’t yet failed, Antonio said “Well what are you idiots going to do now?” as these words hit Diego, he realised he didn’t know what to do next.

Seeing not really any point in lying he simply just said “I honestly didn’t think we would get this far.” Antonio looked at Diego in amusement. “I thought we would all be dead the minute we stepped onto the roof.” Rellik added.

They would die instantly if they jumped from the building, and even if they could somehow make it down alive, they would be greeted by a hundred guards and a thousand bullets from each of them. They were trapped like a pair of forsaken people on an island being circled by bloodthirsty sharks. However despite the odds being against them, Rellik and Diego weren’t the kind to give up.

Losing patience, the many guards waiting for Rellik and Diego to come down decided to take initiative and advance towards them.

Being unable to simply scale the walls, the guards took one of Antonio’s helicopters. Expecting more time, Rellik and Diego were still devising a plan and were taken by surprise when five guards abseiled down a rope from the helicopter to the roof. What surprised them even more wasn’t the fact they were using guns but the ammo they were using: the

bullets didn't simply ricochet, it sizzled in the stone and seemed to burn.

Rellik had seen these bullets before only once in special ops, they were a type of ammo infamous in the military world. The reason for this was that they were tipped with a poison so deadly that a single drop could kill five grown men. Its manufacturer and time or even place of origin were unknown, however one thing people did know was its name– each bullet was called “A drop of the Devil’s venom.”

They pulled their shields in front of them however the bullets simply passed through them like they were cloth. Through all the chaos Diego spotted one oddly calm sniper sitting on one of the helicopters, he was holding a heavy sniper loaded with the devils venom bullets.

Diego saw him aiming at Rellik and as he pulled the trigger on the gun, Rellik was still oblivious to the bullet speeding towards him. Diego saw only one way to save his friend. Knowing he had to so Rellik would live, Diego threw himself in front of him and felt an unbearable piercing pain in his shoulder. Seeing Diego limp on the ground, Rellik felt a wave of sadness and ashament that his unawareness had led to his innocent friend being shot.

While he was distracted five other guards stormed the roof, Rellik attempted to fight them off but in the haze of bullets, fists and blades, Diego’s unconscious body was grabbed by a man who had abseiled down from the helicopter and

taken by Antonio's men. Overwhelmed by the constant flow of enemies Rellik ripped a flashbang from one of the guards belts and pulled the pin.

In a flash, Rellik grabbed Antonio and leaped from the roof.

Green Room

For a second, Rellik was flying. He was weightless and careless, all mass, problems and worries were removed and he felt like he was just peacefully gliding through existence. Then, the scream of Antonio broke his fictional world and the reality that he was plummeting through the air.

Thinking fast, Rellik grabbed Antonio and aimed for a patch of the ground that was covered in bushes to cushion their fall. Although their landing was harsh and painful, Rellik and Antonio survived without any critical injuries.

Wasting no time, Rellik hastily made his way to him and Diego's base. When there, all his mercy and sense had been shrouded in anger. He tied Antonio to a chair and stared at him. Without wasting any time, he instantly asked "Where is Diego?"

Being a stubborn and proud man, Antonio spat in Rellik's face and said "I would rather die you scum." unfazed, Rellik nodded and replied "I really want to find my friend so we'll see what you say in a couple of hours."

For two days Rellik tried desperately to get the location from Antonio but he never gave it up until, opposed from what he usually did, Rellik silently walked towards Antonio and pulled up a chair in front of him. When he sat down, he said “You’ve killed, stolen, and lied your whole life but what I want to know is: do you do it because of the money, or are you just rotten inside?”

Then, Rellik raised his fist in anticipation of hitting Antonio and Antonio said firmly “Wait, i’ll tell you what you want to know.” This made a soft smile of satisfaction spread across Rellik’s face.

For the next three hours, Rellik’s ears were filled with a consistent flow of information coming out of Antonio’s mouth. By the end, Rellik was stunned by all he had just heard and already contemplating what his next move was. Despite all the information he had heard, one particular bit seemed to be a key component to saving Diego to Rellik: The Green Room.

The Green Room was a personal prison used by Antonio to keep his enemies and was most likely being used to extract info from Diego. It was impenetrable: for every foot of the area there were two heavily armed guards ready to kill and blind spots were a fictional thing there. Unless you had a key card, entry to any rooms was impossible as a three foot steel door and a compilation of traps stood in your way.

However, Rellik didn’t care because if not for him, Diego would still be living a happy life. Instantly, Rellik grabbed a

bullet proof vest and the same metal pole Diego and him fought with when they first met each other. He made Antonio draw a map of the green room, stuffed it into his pocket and started his journey to Diego.

After four hours of driving, Rellik saw the first structure for miles in the desolate desert called Dungeness. It was coated in a dark green paint. He concluded that this must be the infamous green room building. Rellik got out of the car and stared at the wall surrounding the building in the sandy wind, and the two guards patrolling the door.

As to not be seen, Rellik hid behind a nearby bush and observed the guards. After a while, Rellik found a fairly big rock and threw it five metres towards one of the guards. Intrigued, the guard scepticly made his way to the rock. Eventually, the guard got close enough and Rellik leaped out of the bush. He tried to fight off Rellik but eventually, Rellik knocked him out.

Seeing this, the second guard radioed the other guards for backup. After this, he drew his gun and pointed it at Rellik. His hand shook vigorously and he was breathing fast and heavily. Rellik saw that he was merely a young boy and that he evidently didn't want to shoot Rellik, so he laid down his pole and slowly walked over to the boy.

"Before you shoot," Rellik began, "remember that there are two types of people in this world, the good and the bad. You can still be good, please don't let the bad people change that. Please don't pull that trigger."

The boy stood still for a moment, but then he slowly started to lay down his gun. “Thank you, here are the keys to that truck, drive far away and please start a better life.” with that Rellik handed the boy the keys and in return he gave Rellik the keys to the gate. Rellik began to cautiously walk to the gates.

Five digits

The old gates made an ear piercing creak as they were opened. When Rellik entered, he did not receive the welcome he expected of a swarm of guards, instead, he stood alone in front of the building. No guards, bullets or even noise greeted him.

Suddenly, he heard a muffled yelling- it was Diego. Rellik ran towards the sound and went through the labyrinth of hallways inside the building until he finally stopped at a giant room filled with buttons, wires and electrics. In the centre of the room was a small see-through cube room made of a thick layer of tempered glass. Inside this was Diego and five armed guards.

Diego was tied to a metal chair using thick chains. When he saw Rellik, his emotionless eyes filled with hope. The guards followed his gaze and saw Rellik too. Seeing the intruder, one of the guards, who was evidently the leader,

ordered three of the others to grab Rellik. They ran out of a two foot steel door, which was the only way in or out, and lunged at Rellik. He instinctively dived out of the way, but Rellik wasn't quick enough and got tackled by them.

Rellik resisted and managed to catch one of the guards in the face with a kick but the other two grabbed both of his arms and firmly restrained him. Slowly, the leader started to walk out of the cage Diego was in and towards Rellik. "So you're the one who kidnapped Antonio, I expected better." With that, he knocked Rellik out.

When he woke up, Rellik was tied to a chair next to Diego. In front of them were the three guards and the leader. Rellik instantly looked at Diego, who was badly injured but managed to make a weak smile, he worriedly asked Diego if he was alright but Diego just replied "It felt like cotton rubbing against me when these guys were punching me."

Rellik laughed, happy to see that Diego still had his sense of humour. Agitated, the leader shouted "Enough, you idiots will be silent!"

Rellik and Diego stopped instantly for the man's voice was very loud and intimidating. "Now tell me," the leader said "who are you and why did you attack Antonio?"

"I thought you said we had to be silent. I can only be one, I can either speak or I can be silent. You gotta pick one."

Rellik said, intentionally annoying the man. Diego looked at Rellik and said "I know right, what an idiot. He probably got this job out of pity because he is terrible at this."

Rellik and Diego antagonising the guard worked and he was furious at their constant resistance to comply. "I tried to just ask, but now I get to use my preferred method – beating it out of you."

Five hours later, the three guards and the leader were exhausted and astounded that Rellik and Diego didn't break yet. They sat down tied up in the chairs, they were covered in blood and bruises but still managed not to tell the guards anything. Diego spat out a bloody tooth and growled "Pathetic!" However Rellik just looked the leader in the eye and let out a chuckle.

Rellik looked at one of the guards and weakly murmured something under his breath. "What did you say?" Again, Rellik just murmured incoherently. This time, the guard went even closer to him in an attempt to finally hear Rellik. Seeing this, Rellik said "You never should have worked for Antonio." and kicked the guard in the legs.

Seeing this, Diego erupted from the ground, still chained to his chair. A guard ran at him with his weapon and powerfully threw it down at Diego. Luckily, Diego was fast and quickly turned around so the guard's weapon hit the chair. Rellik did the same as Diego and jumped up but as he did the guard got up from the floor and swung at Rellik. He narrowly dodged it and stumbled backwards, then Rellik regained his balance and charged at the guard, aiming at his legs.

As Rellik made contact with the man's legs, the guard flipped over Rellik and landed hard on the floor. He was evidently unconscious so Rellik approached him and saw the glint of some keys – they were to him and Diego's chains. He grabbed them and unlocked his chains, he suddenly felt a satisfying relief of pain on his body.

He then passed them to Diego and he unlocked his chains. After they had knocked out all the guards, Rellik and Diego began to run for the exit but they were abruptly stopped in their path by the leading guard. He began to walk towards them with his hands behind his back.

“Impressive,” he said, “but it was all in vain as I will have to kill both of you now.” Then, the guard took out his hands from behind his back to reveal he was wielding two swords. Each one was as sharp as a razer blade and finely curved.

Despite his tries, the leader didn't incite even a glint of fear in nor Rellik or Diego's eyes as they were confident that together they would be strong enough to defeat him. Then, they ran towards the guard, each wielding a long metal chain.

