

# Chapter 177: Subject Escape

The only pilot among the test subjects was quickly brought over for a detailed scan. As I planned, the results turned up with several subtle issues. It was just major enough to taint the data we would collect if they proceeded to use him in the tests.

My ploy of sabotaging it using my nanomachines had paid off.

“Ran, I think this test subject should sit out for today. We’ll need to reinstall the bio-coprocessor correctly in him before he can participate in any tests.”

The old man nodded with an amiable smile. His tense expression from earlier, when I brought my suspicions to him, had completely vanished.

The contrast made him an unpleasant person to be around. After ensuring they did pull the pilot aside, I swiftly took my leave. No need to draw attention. I had been staying a short time throughout every test group, so I shouldn’t change that up.

I swiftly went over to the last few groups on the other wing of the lab. My objective was complete, but I knew helping the pilot was all I could do. The rest were on their own. I could only wish them good luck.

I had already put my neck out for them, and my power was limited. If I wasn’t so confident I could hide my involvement, I would definitely hesitate to assist them at all.

As I cut my way across the main lab, I made eye contact with the few remaining test subjects in their cage. It was easy to spot Polina as there were only a dozen of them left. There were backups, which meant they escaped the experiments for the day. I only briefly glanced over before resuming my meddling with the other groups.

Time swiftly passed by, and soon I returned to my own group.

I hadn’t witnessed any freak accidents, but from the reports, there were still some casualties. This wasn’t because there was a major flaw in the design I updated. It was because Nova Tech pressed them past their limit. In the name of limit testing, they didn’t mind losing a few expendable subjects.

On the walk back to my room, my heart couldn’t help but beat rapidly. Commander Poltrix was right beside me, and I was going to pull a fast one on his base. There were so many ways things could end wrong, and that kept me on my toes.

When I finally got into my room, I immediately pulled up the feed I had access to. I had access to both their systems in lab three and the security control room. However, I couldn’t go too far with my meddling, or they would know something was up. I needed to keep a low profile while helping the test subjects escape.

My optics soon showed me the main lab room where Polina and the other subjects were held. They were huddled around a few people who appeared sick and unconscious.

I knew it wasn't the best time, but I had to interrupt them.

\*Polina, it is almost time. Get everyone ready.\*

\*Understood.\*

Even though she replied succinctly, I could see the struggle on her face as she got her allies ready to escape. They would have to abandon those who were unable to move. They simply didn't have the leeway to care for them.

Polina's people were stronger than I had thought. They speedily composed themselves and got into position.

Our plan was simple. They had mysteriously attained some tools. Enough to break out of their cage. They had three people familiar with cybersecurity, and I would assist them if they needed as they breached them past the various security.

My role was to watch over the various cameras and feed them with information in real-time.

I watched the time tick and sent out the message to begin the operation as soon as the clock hand hit seven-thirty. This was the time when the patrols changed shifts and most staff were busy eating dinner.

Someone within the test subject's ranks took out a multi-tool and began cutting the cage made of steel wires.

There were a few guards in the lab, but they simply stood near the front. With over a hundred prisoners, they couldn't get a good view of all of them. They were so lax because they had full faith in their security monitoring.

However, little did they know I had access to their systems. It was simple for me to manually point the cameras away, creating a blind spot.

It wasn't long before a small group managed to break free from captivity, and they headed straight for one of the nearby terminals. The lab was filled with expensive equipment, and there were naturally numerous terminals.

The cy-sec experts in the group swiftly got to work. The first thing they did was to gain control of the lab's systems. With an insider like me here, I could guide them through the shortest path without doing anything on my end. It was like I had the answer sheet and I just had to read it out to them.

Once they gained control, they put up fake camera feeds for the security control room. They then opened the door leading to the gate control room, which was just adjacent to the exit gate. It drew the attention of all the guards, allowing their detachment to strike.

Without the same stealth abilities that I had, we knew from day one that they would have to get violent in their escape. If they couldn't sneak past them, they would have to eliminate them.

As four of them took out the two guards, another three of them rushed into the room. They swiftly dispatched the guards on desk duty and gained control of the gates. From there, dozens of them streamed out of their cells and they began to organize themselves.

Some took up arms from the fallen guards, while others huddled together with their families.

They wasted no time on idle chatter and opened up both airlock gates, creating a path to freedom for them.

While almost a hundred people escaped, I kept a close watch on the patrols around the facility.

\*Polina, a two-man patrol in power armor is going to cross that junction in two minutes.\*

\*Roger that.\*

I guided them up and down elevators, toward the hangar bay. Sometimes, they would all hide in a corridor until the patrols passed. Other times, they would have to double back and go around them.

So far, everything has been going smoothly. Their security room was entirely unaware of their escape. Otherwise, their defensive systems would've come online.

It was honestly so easy that it scared me. It was one thing for me to be able to sneak out; it was another for a hundred civilians to do so. My assistance with running sabotage with their defenses helped, but still...

*I should design something to scramble enemy communications when I have the chance. Just bringing down their control center has crippled them so much, it really has opened my eyes to its power.*

*Still, should it be this easy?*

There was nothing I could do despite my misgivings. I could only watch on as they continued their escape.

They soon arrived just outside the hangar bay. This was near the end of the escape for them, but also the hardest part. The hangar naturally consistently had people in it. They performed maintenance inside or simply performed their duties to watch out for new arrivals.

We had pulled out many hairs when we were planning what to do here. The guards were simply too well-armed here, and going quiet wasn't an option with so many people. In the end, we ended up with the most brute-force way we could think of.

While the prisoners gathered on the periphery of the hangar, a small squad had split off while they rested.

Following my map, they went straight for the nearest ordnance storage. The big spaceships they had required a lot of space to store their gunship-caliber rounds and missiles. The detachment force aimed for one of these storages.

I watched as the half-a-dozen men breached into the room and began carrying a huge missile together. They walked briskly with the high explosives on their shoulder and headed back to their companions.

Once they arrived, the group of subjects prepared to carry out their violent plan.

I watched with bated breath as one of them opened up the gates to the hangar. The moment it fully opened, the men carrying the missile charged straight at the control tower off to the side. They ran up the staircase as fast as they could.

Tuning into the camera feed inside the control tower, I could see a pair of Nova Tech employees panicking.

"Quick, get the turrets to shoot them down!"

"Are you crazy? If we hit that missile, we'd be dead too!"

Their moments of indecision allowed the men to get right outside their door. They immediately placed it down and hit the button on its screen. The test subjects then sprinted back out from the way they came with all their might.

It was then I had to intervene.

The two security guards had commanded the turrets to shoot them down, but I quickly canceled those commands.

They panicked, screaming at each other in bewilderment at the faultiness of their systems, and it was the last thing that crossed their minds.

The missile exploded in a bombastic fashion, engulfing the entire corner of the hangar.

Immediately, alarms rang out throughout the base. People rushed into defensive positions, and the aircraft pilots rushed to their fighter jets and gunships.

Unfortunately for them, despite going on high alert, it would take some time to reach their

destinations. While the test subjects were already right there. Once the explosion subsided, they swiftly rushed into the designated ship that Polina had pointed out.

Most of them rushed to board the ship, while several others performed the required inspections. They didn't only need to ensure that the spacecraft was flight-ready; they needed to ensure the energy shield to the hangar was still passable.

Thankfully, the security guards on duty hadn't closed off the energy shields. Their consoles were broken now, and I doubt they could quickly regain control of it.

This allowed the prisoners time to prepare their ship.

I carefully scrolled through the camera feeds of the entire base and studied their reaction. It would be useful during my own escape, too. In a morbid way, these prisoners also served as a testbed for me.

As I frantically scrolled through the feeds, in search of any threats, Polina's group finished their preparations. There was still nothing out of the ordinary in sight. It was both a good and bad feeling to it.

Their large ship soon took off and passed through the energy shield. I would soon be out of range to communicate with them, so I sent my final farewell message.

\*Take care, Polina. You guys still have to get back to Earth somehow before you can relax. If you're going to sell the ship for a safe passage like you plan to, make sure it's to a company that rivals Nova Tech. Not one of their allies.\*

She didn't let me plan that far ahead with her, citing it's their own business, but their future was still uncertain.

\*Thank you for everything. Let's meet again in Elevate City! I want you to meet my daughter too!\* she replied.

Our connection was soon lost as they got out of range. I switched over to the camera on the exterior of the facility and watched the figure of their ship grow smaller.

I wished them good luck as I tossed and turned in bed.

I would likely be interrogated again once this was over. There was a major security breach, and they would look over everything with a fine comb. They may even relocate me, but that was fine. I could always come up with a way to get into contact with my allies again. As long as I didn't give them a reason to dissect me and remove my cybernetics, I was confident.

I had seen their security protocols. Even on another base, I doubt it would differ that much.

Before I could deliberate further, something entered within sight of the camera feed in the corner of my vision. Four colossal spaceships suddenly came out of nowhere.

*No, they aren't moving at all...They must've been cloaked in active camouflage!*

The four ships headed straight for an interception course with Polina's spaceship. I didn't have to wonder what would happen next when one of the ships fired a missile. It sailed slowly through the expanse of space, but there was nothing anyone could do. The ship they took may have some defenses, but no skilled crew operated on it.

With only dozens of seconds to react, it was too late.

The missile landed precisely on its engines, and I watched as their ship slowly lost acceleration.

*...Has my plan doomed them all?*