

In the dusk that was the fourth floor, Myron tried to orient himself. The Metropolitan building had been to the west, the elevator had been facing north, toward Wilmington Avenue, where the front doors were. Myron closed his eyes and visualized, west, left, that was the direction of the light he's seen from the rooftop. He hoped. He opened his eyes and turned his head, there was a hallway heading to the west, but it didn't look like it went all of the way through. Myron spun and spotted the directory with offices and fire escape routes. He trotted over. According to the map there were three large office suites along the western side of the fourth floor and one single office. The light had to be coming from one of them, nothing else seemed to have a western window.

Myron tried to remain calm, forcing his steps into something between a walk and a jog. Trying to remember how much time he had left before... before what? He still wasn't sure. In the corridor he turned west and proceeded toward the offices. He wished he'd grabbed a flashlight or something useful. But the spontaneity with which he had acted had surprised him. Myron was pretty sure it had surprised the Man in the Dark Suit too, but to what end, Myron couldn't be sure. When doing something brave (stupid, his little voice corrected) one couldn't be expected to think of everything.

He passed a blue sign with an arrow and little stick figures. If he read the map correctly, the bathroom was near the end of the hallway. A few steps later the narrow corridor opened into a pseudo lobby with hallways running to the north and south. As Myron reviewed the floor map in his mind, he knew that there was an office suite directly behind the doors in front of him, an office suite down the south hallway, an office suite down the north hallway with a single office somewhere down the north hallway. Myron was certain the light had been closer to Wilmington. Certain? He wasn't even sure anymore that he had seen anything. His nerves and the two strange men toying with his reality.

Myron crossed through the sitting area quietly, imagining his silence would somehow lend credence to his actions, and put his ear to the door. The office door claimed to house Milton Positronics, Inc. Myron had no idea what that meant, and didn't really care. There were no noises coming from the suite and Myron stepped back, tried the door, only to find it predictably locked. He banged three times and shouted, "ANYONE IN THERE?"

Myron didn't wait for an answer. He trotted down the northern hallway. In the dim light he could see the doors to the single office and the suite further on, and at the end of the hallway an illuminated exit sign. "Good," Myron thought to himself, "at least there is a way out."

Then he knew he was in the right place. A sliver of light, just brighter than the filtered light in the hallway, escaped from under a door ahead of him. Myron clenched his toes, trying to summon whatever courage he could find, and slapped on the door with his open palm. The door, emblazoned with EastWest, Inc. in stylistic gold letters, rattled on its hinges. "HEY! IS ANYONE IN THERE!?" Myron yelled while he continued slapping the EastWest, Inc. logo. "OPEN UP!!!"

"Six minutes, Mr. Flynn." The Man in the Dark Suit's voice in his earpiece startled him.

"I KNOW...I KNOW!" Myron dipped his chin toward the mic on his collar. "I KNOW!" Although he didn't have any idea what six minutes actually meant. He banged harder, "HEY, OPEN UP IN THERE...C'MON, OPEN UP!"

The door jerked open so suddenly that Myron almost slapped the man now standing before him. The man was short and balding, as wide as he was tall, and sweating profusely. He had one of those earpiece/mouthpiece combos strapped to his head and his top lip was snarled beyond what Myron thought humanly possible. He looked like a deranged oompa loompa.

"YOU HAVE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS BUILDING RIGHT NOW!" Myron yelled into the sweating face of the oompa loompa man with the same hysterical voice he had been using while banging on the door.

"Who...the fuck...are you?" asked the man in the EastWest office. His voice came through the snarl with the learned modulation of a man always trying to keep a seething anger at bay.

"Look," Myron begged, trying to get his voice back in control, "You are in serious danger if you stay here. You need to get out now!" Myron would never have engaged with such

a man, anger flowing as openly as the sweat. But the real danger was the two strange men and whatever was about to happen in six...five minutes.

“I’ll ask you again...who the fuck are you?”

“My name is Myron Flynn,” Myron responded reflexively, not sure how his name was going to help the situation. “This building was supposed to be empty tonight by 8:15. That was almost an hour ago.”

“Yes, I know, I chose not to leave, I have business to conduct overseas.” The man in the EastWest office was breathing through his nose, allowing each word to convey his disdain for idiots that tried to disrupt him. “I told the owner of the building that, if I needed to, I would be here tonight. Do whatever you need to do, but leave me the fuck alone.” The man in the EastWest office stepped back and began to slam the door.

Myron did something then that would have been unthinkable just the day before. He stuck his foot out to block the door from being slammed. He was surprised how much it hurt. “I’m sorry sir, but this is a matter of life and death.” The panic returning to his voice. “I really need you to come with me.” And then, as an act of desperation, “There is a bomb in the building.”

The man in the EastWest office was turning a dull, throbbing red. The beads of sweat on his forehead had turned into small rivers, veering at his ridiculously bushy eyebrows and streaming down the sides of his corpulent face. He pulled the door away from Myron’s foot and stepped forward and brought his hand up. Myron flinched, but didn’t step backwards. The man wiped his brow with his empty hand. “Look you fuck, bomb scares aren’t advertised days in advance. My lease is current, I have goddamn important fucking business to finish tonight or there will be some big fucking problems tomorrow.” The man in the EastWest office’s voice had lowered, making it more ominous. Each word spat out cleanly and sharply. “There’s no cops, there’s no firemen, there’s no bomb. Get the fuck out of my office and go do whatever you need to do.” The man took his hand that he had wiped his brow with and poked Myron in the chest, “Do you understand me?” The spot he poked left a small, wet circle on Myron’s coat.

“Sir, please,” Myron tried one last time, feeling as feeble as he sounded, “I really need you to come with me.”

“I’m going to break your foot this time, so I need *you* to step back. You fuck. And I don’t want to see you the rest of the night.” The man in the EastWest office was looking up at Myron from underneath the eyebrows saturated with his own sweat. “Let me repeat... Do you understand?”

Myron stood speechless. The man glared and stepped backwards without dropping eye contact. His snarl intensified, somehow. Then the man in the EastWest office touched a small button on the headset he was wearing and spoke a few words of Chinese into the mouthpiece, turned his back to Myron, and with his shoe, shoved the door violently.

Myron moved his foot just as the door hammered closed. The sound echoed in the empty hallway. Myron put his ear back to the door of EastWest, Inc. and could hear the loud, one-sided discussion. Myron rubbed his forehead. What would a hero do in this situation, he wondered?

“Two minutes, Mr. Flynn,” in his earpiece.

Myron may have detected a hint of concern in the Man in the Dark Suit’s voice. But through the earpiece it was hard to be sure. Myron stepped back from the door of the EastWest office. Took a breath and thought. The little voice inside his head was coming through loud and clear. The little voice inside was screaming to get the hell out of there. Forget the angry oompa loompa man and get out. The little voice was telling Myron to leave, leave right now.

He looked down to the end of the hallway where the exit sign was. And he listened to his inner voice. Myron Flynn ran.