



I sprint down the neon-lit street. My shoes pound on the cracked tarmac as hard as my heart beats. Running for my life, I splash in puddles of acid rain. But I don't care since I'm already soaked from jumping into the river to escape Vince Power.

The *buzz* of a Wasp chases me. The attack drone – a yellow and black machine of rotors and weapons – is a relentless hunter.

I bolt down an alley to my left. A bag of garbage almost trips me up. But I keep going. I ignore the stares of two street kids who are under a plastic sheet, sheltering from the rain.

The Wasp zooms past them too. Its Stinger is trained on just one target.

Me – Scott.

“*Stop or be stung!*” The Wasp’s metallic voice echoes off the alley walls around me.

I glance back, feeling panicked. The Wasp’s Stinger is locked and loaded, its red camera eye focused on me. I exit the alley into a street clogged with traffic and leap over the bonnet of an Auto-Taxi. The man inside glares at me, then spots the Wasp and dives behind his seat.

The Wasp fires its Stinger. I duck down. The electro-dart zips past my ear and hits a 3D Street Screen behind me. Sparks flare out of the screen like lightning bolts and the huge display explodes. The flash is blinding and cuts short an



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I cover my head as glass rains down like razor-sharp hail. Then I dash into the alley opposite. I turn left. Then right. But the *whirr* of the Wasp’s rotors is closing in on me.

I have to find somewhere to hide. And fast. It was pure luck that I wasn’t hit by the first Stinger. Wasps *never* normally miss. Next time I might not be so lucky.

But my luck runs out sooner than I expected. I turn a corner and meet a dead end. A crumbling brick wall faces me and it’s too high to climb. There are buildings on both sides but their doors are locked and the windows barred. My only way out is a metal fire escape that clings to one building like a rusty dead spider. I jump for the lower rung of the ladder ... but it’s beyond my reach.

I think of my VK avatar's super strength and wish I had it in the real world!

The Wasp turns the corner and hovers in front of me.

"*Surrender!*" the drone orders, and targets its Stinger on my chest.

I can't let myself be caught. People need to know the truth about VK. It's down to me and me alone. I'm the only hope for those Elite Gamers still trapped in the game.

I pick up a loose brick from the ground and hurl it at the Wasp. The drone dodges it, so I throw another brick. This time it sails high and the Wasp doesn't even bother to move. I swear I can almost hear the Wasp's operator laughing at my poor aim. But I'm determined to have the last laugh!

I launch a third brick. This one hits the metal fire escape and knocks the ladder's

catch ... just as I'd planned. The ladder drops down and smashes into the Wasp. It spirals to the ground, its *buzz* dies and its red camera eye blinks out.

"Swatted!" I shout, and punch the air in victory.

But the grin falls from my face as three more Wasps swarm into the alley.