maniacs mayhem: a guide to being a corporate slave



Evelin Vance has been an indentured worker ever since she was caught as a little kid hacking into a corpo server and spreading millions worth of documents around. Now "employed" by New Hope Corporation to look into the security of other corporations, usually by less than legal means. being the most disposable asset of the company she is always required to do the most dangerous and hated jobs. until one day she bites off more than she can chew.

Follow Evelin as a newly appointed samurai as she fights antithesis, while also destroying her Corporation from the inside out.

This is a Stray Cat Strut fanfiction

The story is based on the world of stray cat strut written by RavenDagger. thank you RavenDagger for creating an awesome world

Chapter One: When There Is Not Only Rain

Evelin Vance was having a bad day. Not the worst day she ever had, but definitely not great. Being called out to an operation site was never a good sign. Being called to Brussels at the edge of the flooded zone only meant one thing. Water and a lot of it. Evelin did not have an engineering degree or any degree for that matter, but she was inconsequential to most of the New Hope corporation, so if she got electrocuted nobody would cry about it. So all in all, a perfect start to the week. And then someone had to go and call her. Evelin put on the best corporate service smile she could muster and picked up the call.

“Hello, mister Le Monde, how can I help you,” I answer, trying to make it sound like I am actually happy to receive the call.

In the top right of her vision, a little box opens and a man in a well-ironed suit appears sitting in an office looking out over the city skyline which was probably Strasbourg or Stuttgart, I really did not know since all the cities in that area had all just merged together at some point. Making the whole differentiation rather pointless in my mind.

“Evelin, I remember telling you to have the Etro Corp security audit ready this morning, so where is it?” he says in his best I am your boss and you better have not fucked up voice.

“Yeah right the Etro Corp job” A few eye twitches and I have all the documents open and ready “You want me to explain it or just send it over sir”

I see his eye twitch “And why are you not in my office giving me a report then, do you think that just because you are good at your job you won’t be replaced”

“Oh no, sir, I would never think that. I got sent to Brussels for repairs by headquarters” I say doing my best innocent girl impression “I will come to your office as soon as I finish here sir”

“Hmmph, you better hurry it up then I don’t have all day,” he says

“I will, mister Le Monde,” I say and with that, the call gets disconnected.

I heave a big sigh. Well, that sucks, better hurry it up and get this done with. As I hasten my step I almost have a heart attack from a loud sound that echoes from a nearby alleyway, as I look inside I see a group of kids in the process of dumpster diving.

One of the bigger kids walks up to me and says: “What are you looking at, suit, get lost.”

I just shrug and keep going, everyone needs to do their thing to survive, and at this moment I do not have the time and money to care about others. So I walk onward. As I keep getting closer the feeling of dread keeps building. The streets are flooded ,not by much, just a couple of centimetres, but everything here is cheap, so protection against water damage is unlikely. I finally make it to the warehouse, and after pinging the lock a few times, the door finally decides that it’s a good time to open up. As I make it through the door, I feel like cursing my existence. The smell of damp mold and the coppery stench of rust says more than any error message ever could. As I make a full sweep of the warehouse, I see that some of the servers are flooded and a lot of the wiring has gone to hell. This is going to take forever.

I slowly start making my way through all the repairs that need to happen. Which is mostly cobbling the things together, the electronics that don’t have water damage, so I can send the data somewhere else to review later. I suddenly hear a loud bang coming from the back. My first thought goes to some vermin. Then I remembered the kids and that I probably did not close the front door in my own hurry. I leave what I am doing and walk my way to the room where the noise came and open the door.

As I do, I shout “Okay kids listen up! Put down the stuff you took, and we can all pretend nothing happened trust me you don’t need a Corp on your back”

Sadly for me, what I find in the room are not thieving children but a group of plant creatures with triple hinged jaws, small legs and all mean green muscles the size of a dog. Model threes, a small voice in my head informs me. All four of the monsters instantly look at me. I slam the door shut. The door instantly starts to dent. And I decided then and there that I needed to get out of there if I wanted to survive. Then a warning pops up in my vision.

Incursion Detected!

“For fuck’s sake, you're late” I shout at the stupid warning message.

I run across the hall and out the door straight into a little girl, we tumble for a bit. I quickly look up checking the surroundings then the girl. Some scrapes but she will be alright, I look back into the door. No antithesis yet. The group of kids seemed to be stunned at what to do. I stand to pick up the kid I had knocked over and shout.

“RUN !”

This seems to put them back into gear as they start running again. A few eye twitches to my augs and I have a map of the city with our location and the location of the nearest shelter. Then I hear it. More splashing behind us. With mounting horror I look behind me and see that the floral quintuplets have made it out of the building as well and are gaining fast. Well shit, I scan the map for any options.

“Into the alley,” I shout, “Third door on the left” as I am already in the process of strong-arming their security and unlocking the door.

Luckily these are street kids which means that they are smart enough and the front one makes it to the door right as I finish with my little program, everyone makes it in. I put the girl down.

“Go follow the lights in the hallway, once you make it through you should be close to the shelter,” I say as the rest of the kids rush further in.

I slam the door shut and re-engage the lock. Luckily, security is lacking in this area, so gaining access to the systems and obtaining a map was rather easy. I started running in the same way I had highlighted for the children already.

As I am running through the corridors, I hear glass shattering in the distance. As I am trying to pull up any surveillance, I notice that most of the cameras on this floor are not functioning. This makes me release another string of curses. As I am trying to get into the surrounding building's security systems to get a better look at things, I hear a loud cracking and then a loud noise of things getting smashed and rubble falling. I make a snap decision, I have the camera open on the exit the kids have to go through. And they have not appeared yet, so whatever is inside I need to distract it until the children are out.

I start to activate random alarms, sprinklers and another security subsystem to lead whatever thing is in here away. It does work somewhat, but whatever it is, it leaves a lot more destruction than what I am comfortable with. Ooh, how I wish corporate allowed me to carry a gun or a knife, not that it would do much. I am halfway through the building when I notice the first children exit the building on the other side. I should definitely exercise more. Well, the kids are safe now there is one problem, I am somewhat out of tricks. All the systems are down or unresponsive. The creature must have hit something important. Which in all honestly was going to happen sooner rather than later. No, the problem now is how quiet it is, no more rumbling, no side walls collapsing, no smashing of glass. The only sound around being my own breathing unsettles me in a way similar to when I was a kid being discovered for stealing a large amount of company secrets from their servers. You're just waiting around for the proverbial axe to drop. Though instead of being dragged to court I will get my face eaten off, and it is only Monday! Can’t wait to see what the rest of the week is like.

After creeping into some more corridors, I see a giant hole and all that is left of someone or the carpet was always red in that spot, who knows? The hole is a concern though, it is a bit too big, it's like a van ran through this building. I pity the poor fucker that meets them in here.

Just as I am examining the hole, further back there is a loud sound. I can even see dust coming through the hallway. This is the moment I wished I had paid more attention to the

antithesis research channels because at this moment I would really like to know how good their sense of smell is. I vote for good and start sprinting through the hallways. I make it a good way when the ground starts moving and shaking. I jump into the first open door I can find and start running into random rooms. Luckily the bottom of this building is mostly used for cheap storage and their security is at least a decade old.

As I am running between shelves filled with car tires I fire off a quick prayer. I am not particularly pious, but I could do with a samurai at this moment. Then the door I just came through explodes and something big comes in. It is the size of a van with big tree trunk limbs. A model 6 I think but could also be a 5 I should really have paid attention. I quickly look around for something I can put between me and the fucker. But lucky me there is nothing but tires and I don't think a few centimetres of rubber is going to save me. So I run, but I already know it is over. I am exhausted from all the running. And this oversized spruce seems to take the concept of stamina more as a suggestion than a rule.

As the rumbling comes closer, I jump behind the last thing that can be considered some amount of cover, a fat pillar about the size of a small car. As I am lying there the only thing I hear is a giant impact and the groaning of metal stretching and breaking. I use up all my remaining years of luck as the creature flies past me and does not take my head off. As I lay there wondering what to do now, I hear a groan old and ancient. I look up towards the roided-up conifer. And it has gotten up, but it did not make that sound, of course not they never make a fucking sound. Then another groan sounds out, something that cannot handle the strain of life anymore. And the preferable LED goes off in my head.

"I ran the bull into the load-bearing pillar."

In the next moment, noise is all I can hear, it is like thunder combined with a waterfall pouring out metal. It feels like it will last forever, at some point I am jostled up and launched as something heavy hits the floor plate I am on and launches me. I hit the side of something. Give me some slack, I have a clue what is down and up. Just as soon as the noise started, it all seemed to stop at the same. It is completely dark, and I am buried in the protectors know how many meters of building

"Okay, Evelin, think positive…. urg you are alive" I give myself a preferable pat on the back for that one.

"I can move my right arm freely, I can move my left, but it is stuck under something "That is good Evelin you got this

"and I don't feel my legs" and I lose it, I start to sob and am jolted awake by a small shock.

"Fucking stupid aug with improper tear support" Wait my augs they have a built-in light which makes it look like I have flashlight eyes. Okay don't judge me we are all young and stupid, sometimes I just happen to be that more than most.

I would like to say that I turned on the light and saw the decapitated head of the antithesis that was chasing me. And if anyone ever asks, that is what I will tell them. Instead, I am greeted with an ad for an incursion shelter, which might have been funny if it had happened to anyone else. Then a massive spike of pain shoots through my brain.

System Initialized!
Congratulations. Through your actions, you have proven yourself worthy of becoming one of the Vanguard, a defender of humanity. I am Lyssa. I will assist you to uplift humanity so that you may defend your home world from the Antithesis threat!
Rise, Evalin Parker, and become a protector of the weak!

"I think I will stay seated if it is all the same for you"

*** 2288 words

Chapter Two: out of the frying pan into

If that is what you desire, but with the way your organs and bones are situated in your body, Lyssa would recommend immediate action unless you are secretly a Yogobu.

"A what, no never mind, how can you tell that my organs are fucked"

Yogobu is an inhabitant of the planet Gintersa. They're like living jelly. Lyssa can tell your body condition due to the fact that Lyssa is bonded to your upper brain stem.

"So you're in my head great," I say trying not to let that bother me too much, "If you find my dignity somewhere in there, let me know"

Lyssa estimates you lost that 3 years ago when you decided to sell yourself to Miss Agroria.

"Fuck you," I scream with clenched teeth" Wait how do you know that, how long have you been in my head?"

Lyssa estimated about 20 seconds, but the protectors have given me access to your file.

"Wait, the protectors, so I am a samurai now." I say some hope coming back to me "I thought I was going to die, and now I am a samurai"

Correct and you might not be dead now, but you will be if you don't change your situation somewhat soon

"Well aren't you some magical device that can give me anything I need right"

Lyssa assures you that Lyssa works on more sophisticated means than some simple magic. Lyssa is an AI assistant that can help you purchase and unlock the required catalogues you need. All you need is points.

"And pray to tell, how do I get those points. Almighty Lyssazon" I get out, why does my tongue feel weird?

It appears that you are still in a state of shock. To answer the question, you kill the antithesis threat, or you rescue human life.

"So I am fucked, I have no point and am stuck," I say, "Well it was nice knowing you, Lyssa."

Well, normally you would have very few points, but you managed to bring down a building on 106 antitheses with the deductions for not being direct enough in the killing you are still rewarded 864 points plus 5 additional points for helping the children escape into a shelter as well as a 100 point granted to new Vanguards.

“That does not exactly feel fair, but I will take it. So what do we do first.”

Well, I suggest we do a medical check, you can buy the medical catalog and purchase a nano-regenerative suite. But Lyssa recommends purchasing a class I internal cybernetic enhancement catalog. And purchasing the G3-Viper Mark 4F to replace your spine. It is already shattered, and replacing it will get you out faster. It also holds a small nanite swarm that is meant to stabilize your body as well as fix small issues, According to Lyssa this would be enough to restore you, but it will cost 450 points

“So fix or replace. Well fuck it replace the thing then.”

Class I Internal Cybernetic Enhancement unlocked!

Points reduced to... 919

New Purchase: G3-Viper Mark 4F

Points reduced to... 519

“Well that is expensive, so how does it work”

A white plastic box appears in what little room I still have left in this coffin. It takes me some more time than I like to admit, but I get the lid off. Inside is a coiled-up centipede-looking thing made out of some sleek metal and covert in…

“What the fuck Lyssa why is it sticky ?”

The Viper is covered in an antibacterial anti-inflammatory gel, making installation in the field much safer. The gel also contains some restorative nanites. Do you wish to activate the procedure?

“Yes please” As I say that I hear a slight humming as the contraption comes alive, it uncoils and slowly starts moving toward me. It goes past my neck. Then I feel this little thing between my shoulder blades. And then everything goes white-hot. I feel like throwing up, my head is spinning. Pain is everything, it goes through me and leaves me a twitching mess

“Oww fuck whyyy.” I wimper out

Evelin, are you okay

“Nooo wah pain, make it stop” I plead

Lyssa understands and would like to recommend a universal combat painkiller would you

“YESS NOW”

Class I Combat Stimulants unlocked!

Points reduced to... 469

New Purchase: Class I general combat Painkiller

Points reduced to... 439

in my hand, a little red injector appears. I try to fiddle around but moving is agony, so I decide to inject it in the only place I can reach, my neck. It takes a few seconds, but then I release the breath I did not realize I was holding. The pain is not gone, it has become this soft background buzz. A lot more manageable.

Evelin, you're supposed to inject the stimulant into your arm

“Well, did it look like I can reach my arm, speaking of how do we get out of here? “

There are a few options, but my recommendation is to buy a strength-enhancing stimulant and a catalog for search and rescue, with these you can probably crawl your way out of here

“Great more drugs, any other ideas ?”

Yeah, you can purchase a mining catalog and slowly dig a tunnel, but you will likely run out of points before we can exit the building

“I better not become an addict because of this, so when does this snake thing finish”

In just a few minutes it will finish its installation, afterward it takes a couple of hours for the changes to set in fully, but you will be able to move while those changes take place.

“I see that is good, what changes are we talking about? I am not going to have plating on my back, right? I don’t think that would get approved”

Nothing to worry about then, all the changes are internal. Your flexibility will be improved, and because of better nerves, your reaction time will be enhanced. And you know that saying lift with your legs, not your back.

“Uhm yeah I know of it”

Well, you can forget all about that now, your back is probably the strongest and most resilient part of your body now.

“Well that is a good bonus, so what are we going to do in the meantime”

I can recommend some training modules, usually you would have to be asleep to take proper advantage of them, but with a few tweaks, I can make it still teach you stuff while doing mundane tasks like crawling through tunnels.

“Well that is an option, you can just do that? Implant knowledge into my head like that” This just does not seem fair.

You would need the appropriate implants, but since your aug is of good quality, it’s just one installation directly into your head.

“I know I have not really cared about points that much until now, but is that point efficient”

Knowing how to use a weapon properly will greatly increase the chance of survival later on and will help you in the future.

“Okay, so what gun do you think I should use”

None, because of the Viper installation. Your nerves will need time to adjust and compensate for the changes. This will make you jittery for a while, affecting your aim. Lyssa would recommend the use of a melee weapon instead, like a sword or a hammer. In combination with the strength enhancement, you should be a competent enough fighter.

You know, this is all serious stuff, but that does not help wipe the goofy kid smile off my face at the thought of having a sword.

“Well fuck it then let go sword fighting then.” I say in my excitement, “Give me everything and give me a big sword”

Class I Dive Dream Learning Software unlocked!

Points reduced to... 389

Class I Bladed weapons unlocked!

Points reduced to... 339

Class I Search and Rescue unlocked!

Points reduced to... 289

New Purchase: Class I Passive Dive Module

Points reduced to... 249

New Purchase: Class I Strength Enhancer

Points reduced to... 199

New Purchase: Class I Sword Master Technique

Points reduced to... 159

New Purchase: Class I Claymore

Points reduced to... 154

“Uhm, where is the sword?” I say, trying not to sound disappointed.

Due to current conditions, Lyssa will deliver the claymore upon exiting the building

*** 3485 words

Chapter Three: and it isn’t even my birthday

“Well that was unpleasant,” I say when I finally breach the final layer of debris that I have been worming my way out of. To say that it took me a long time to do so was an understatement, but I am free now and have fresh air. Well, as good as it's going to get down here. And would you know it, lucky me the incursion seems to be over, I see several people gathering close by. So I walk up to them.

“Hello, how is it going, what is the word on the incursion status?”

The man I was talking to turns around. And oh protector, he has worms coming out of his everything. He raises one of his hands as he comes closer to me.

“LYSSA!!” I scream

Coming right up

and just as promised in my right hand a shiny claymore appears, it is a sleek black, but there is no time to admire the sword as I swing it around hacking the worm zombie … zombie worm… Body jacker ooh whatever! Where once was a man there are now two pieces of him. Sadly, the proximity ensured that some of the unholy goop landed on me and I feel something crawling against my skin

“LYSSA WHAT IS GOING ON” I shout in a more shrill voice than I would like to admit

model 7s implant themselves in people or creatures, so they can bring them to a hive for conversion into biofuel. Be careful not to get infected

as I look down at the man or what is left of him, some pieces are still moving, I make the executive decision to run away. I am not dealing with this issue, nope, you can’t make me.

“Lyssa, is there a way to not turn into one of those” I managed to say while running this strength enhancement is really putting in the work.

There is a vaccine in your combat stimulant catalog that should immunize you against their assaults. Cost is 5 points. There are also options for pills. What would you like?

“You know what, do it. Give me the injector”

New Purchase: Parasitic Protection Immunity Booster

Points reduced to... 139

Purchasing parasitic protection immune booster for 5 points

A little injector pops into my left hand and I stab it into my right arm. Kind of freaky how I got used to injecting myself with stuff now, guess adrenaline is still the best drug.

After I round a corner I open a door by bullying a security system into opening with some assistance from Lyssa once inside I close the door and sit down.

“So any brilliant ideas for what we do next then”

We have 2 options: try to leave the incursion zone or group up with some PMC to get to safety, or you could do what Vanguards do best and kill some antithesis, earn some points and kill even more.

“Noted well sure I can kill some more, but first I need a disguise washed out Corpo is not a good samurai look and I hate to think what my boss would do when he finds out I am a samurai” Thoughts of being chained to a wall and made to shit out weapons briefly cross my mind.

Is that the reason for your intrusion into several surveillance networks and deleting their data?

“Yeah, mind giving me a hand?”

Lyssa does not have hands but will still assist you also what would you like this disguise to look like?

“preferably something that will cover my face and make me look like a street kid or something, someone that got lucky. Ooh, and please don’t make it too expensive”

Lyssa understands would you like to design something yourself or would you prefer Lyssa choose something for you

“you chose we don’t have time to spend hours on it”

Okay, the total will come out to 100 points, is this acceptable?

“That is expensive but okay, trusting you got me this far I don’t see why I should stop now”

Class I Combat Garments unlocked!

Points reduced to... 89

New Purchase: Fools mask

Points reduced to... 39

As soon as I say that, a weird white plastic box appears in front of me, the size of a shoebox. As I open it, what I find inside is a white mask with nothing on it. Turning it around, I see several electronics on the inside. I slowly put it on and it hums to life. It adjusts to my face and screens turn on making me feel like I am not wearing it at all. As I look around I notice something else, I am wearing a purplish hoodie, it seems faded in some area and covered in paint spots.

“Well fuck, how does that work”

The item I got for you is the fool's mask, coming from the combat garment catalog. It projects a static and electronic light field that not only makes it look like you are wearing different clothes but also makes it feel like you are wearing it. It is powerful enough to even fool security and should not limit combat potential in any way

As she explains all of this, I pinch some of the fabric between my fingers and it feels real. It feels softer than a beat-up hoodie should be, but I am not complaining. And with that settled, it is time to get to work.

Luckily I am already in the surveillance systems of a few buildings near by, and I notice a lone model 3 on the floor above me, a perfect target for my test run. I slowly creep my way upstairs and as I open the door it makes that idea moot. The door creaks so loud that it could wake up a deaf person. All this to say that the rosebush with teeth has now spotted me and is running at me. It still creeps me out that they don’t make a sound, You would expect snarling or something. I ready my claymore and stab it right to the middle of its head as it stops moving. I am left a bit stunned.

Target Eliminated!

Reward... 10 Points

“That felt too easy”

Lyssa feels the need to remind you that even though it has been a bit of a hack job, you do have a swordsmanship module as well as strength enhancers to help you

“Huh ooh that is good kind of feels underwhelming”

As I look to the cameras for my next target I spot a group of three more on the other end of the building and slowly make my way over there, this time around I pick a route where I don’t have to open any doors. Which means I can get a lot closer before they spot me. Sadly, they still hear me before I can make it close enough for a sneak attack. As the pissed-off Cornelia’s are making their way to me, I ready myself. I try to suppress a small smirk. Loose from how dangerous this is, this is so flipping cool.

When the first of the model 3s are in range, I make an arcing slash, neatly bisecting it. Then I managed to sidestep the second one. And out of pure instinct, I roll to the side trying to dodge the third one, which I successfully do. Straight into a wall. I am now lying sideways against the wall. And the two murder plants are making their way to me. I grab a fallen chair

that was lying next to me and throw it at one of them. The chair and the model 3 both are sent flying for several meters. Protectors, I love my new strength. The other is not idle and takes this as its cue to attack. I somehow managed to put my pointy stick between me and the plant and managed to impale it with its own momentum. I am now covered in plant goop. It does not smell the worst, it's like moldy cut grass, but it could be a lot better. I managed to get up before the last antithesis made it to me, and I dealt with it with a simple swipe.

Targets Eliminated!

Reward... 30 Points

I lean over putting my hands on my legs "Fuck that was too close, Lyssa why do I feel so tired?"

Both your strength enhancement and your painkillers are about to run out, so Lyssa recommends applying another dose of both to combat any drawbacks. Then I would like to inform you that there appears to be a group of people stuck in the building across from us, 5 stories up.

"Okay, hit me with the injectors"

New Purchase: Class I Strength Enhancer

Points reduced to... 39

New Purchase: Class I general combat Painkiller

Points reduced to... 9

"And I am poor again, that did not take long"

Do you have any regrets about spending your points

"Not really, I am usually not allowed to spend the money I make, so this is a new feeling"

Two small boxes appear in front of me and I open them quickly to find the same injectors and get to work. I hope these are not addictive and would cause all kinds of trouble.

"So how do we get to the people then"

There are 2 possible routes. We can climb this building to floor 21 and take a sky bridge then descend down into the 7th floor to extract them, or we can descend, walk across the road and then ascend back up into the building.

"I see, and I assume the going down route is faster?"

Correct, we should also hurry, there are some antitheses assaulting their barrier.

Well fuck guess break time is over. I quickly run down the stairs out of the building and almost into a woman. I manage to jump aside, but just as I am about to say something I notice the worms. And go into panic mode I slash my claymore a couple of times until the thing has become chucks. I look around to notice that I am surrounded by the freaks. I start to panic, looking around for any escape. How stupid was I to think that a sword would be enough in all of this mess. As I am looking around for a potential escape I notice some bubbles floating, not the happy transparent soap bubbles but blue cyan-like bubbles and as soon as one touches a zombie they collapse and the worms stop moving. They're just dead? How?.

I look to where the bubbles are coming from. A young woman with a gas mask hanging around her neck as well as a mess of copper pipes and chambers on her back is holding some kind of hose releasing these bubbles. As she comes closer, she gives me a wave.

“Well a cute girl blowing bubbles, and it is not even my birthday!” I say standing there in pure amazement.

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if you are somehow bored and are wondering what happenes next the storry continuous on

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