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Cúchulainn crouched in the darkness; the sound of a soprano's aria seemed unending above him. Over his 'link, Tiny said, "15 seconds left."

With a crash of cymbals, the stage door dropped open above him. Light and smoke from the stage briefly illuminated the area, as the singer dropped through the door.

Before the door had time to close, Cúchulainn caud the rand slapped two tranquilizer patches onto the performer. She didn't have time to realize she been caught, much less cry out. The door finished closing, and the darkness returned.

He could hear the muffled sounds of the vidence erupting in applause, as he placed the unconscious woman on his shoulder. Keying his smallink he turned towards the exit and said, "Target acquired. What's security doing?"

"Nothing, yet," was the immediate esponse. "You should have about 12 more seconds before she's due on stage to take her bow."

Without responding, Cuth in hurried towards the door and the backstage exit from the theater. He could hear the sounds of the orchestra beginning a vamp as actors progressed onto the stage to take their bows. The sounds of applause were becoming more rhythmic.

"There are two guards outside the back entrance," came over the commlink.

"I'm incoming, have Watts take them down now."

As he ran down an empty hallway—the stagehands and the actress's assistant had already been taken care of—towards a dim exit sign, Cúchulainn smelled ozone and heard the muffled sound of electrical arcing. The music coming from the orchestra was starting to repeat again and the applause was starting to falter.

"They're down. Alley's clear. I just picked up a scramble signal for DocWagon, though," came over the commlink as he hit the panic bar on the door.

Waiting on the other side were two unconscious guards in Knight Errant uniforms, and Watts in her riding leathers. "We've got incoming, let's move," she said as she turned and hurried down the alley.

At the entrance to the alley was a Bulldog Step Van emblazoned with the letters "WHRN." The back doors opened as they approached, and a troll gestured hurriedly for them to enter. Watts climbed into the front passenger seat. Over their links, they heard Tiny say, "Get her in the Faraday cage. We'll take care of her signals later."

As he dumped the unconscious performer into the compartment and shut it, Tiny was already driving the van cautiously away from the alley. Cúchulainn smiled at his teammates and said, "No business like show business, huh?"

