

Chapter 38: Part Two: June 8

The chapter begins with June's internal conflict as she is detained by Thomas, a soldier who suspects her of stealing an electro-bomb. Despite her initial urge to attack him, she feigns cooperation as he leads her to the basement for interrogation. Thomas confronts her about the missing weapon, citing her access to the area and her recent interactions with Day as suspicious. June maintains her innocence, but Thomas remains unconvinced, his hand lingering near his gun as tensions rise between them. The scene underscores June's precarious position and her need to stay composed under pressure.

A sudden explosion disrupts the interrogation, caused by the Patriots' electro-bomb detonating in the square. Seizing the opportunity, June disables the basement's power grid, plunging the area into darkness and neutralizing Thomas's gun. She escapes up the stairs, counting down the 109 seconds before the guns reactivate. The chaos outside—crowds scrambling for money raining from the sky—provides cover as she races to rescue Day from the firing squad. The explosion and ensuing disorder highlight the Patriots' coordinated efforts to disrupt the execution and buy June time.

June reunites with John and Day, who is weakened and barely conscious. Together, they navigate the chaotic halls, but with soldiers closing in, their escape seems impossible. John realizes they need more time and makes a sacrificial decision: he turns back, intending to distract the soldiers by offering himself as a decoy. June is horrified but understands his choice, as it gives her and Day a chance to reach the exits. The moment is fraught with tension, emphasizing the dire stakes and the lengths to which the characters will go to protect one another.

The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as John runs toward the firing squad yard, leaving June and Day to continue their escape. June's calculations reveal they still lack enough time to reach safety before the guns reactivate, and the sound of approaching soldiers

heightens the urgency. John's selfless act underscores the themes of sacrifice and loyalty, while June's strategic mind races against the clock. The unresolved tension sets the stage for the next chapter, leaving readers anxious about the fates of all three characters.

