

THE ROCKETS' RED GLARE

Chapter 4.07

The Mall of America, Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
Friday - June 25

There was a sale at Macy's on women's and children's summer clothes, attracting mothers and families to the store at the southeast corner of the Mall of America, the largest enclosed mall in the U.S., second only to the West Edmonton Mall in Canada in physical size. But second to no one in shoppers, with over forty million passing through each year.

There was a concert in the Great Room of the Nickelodeon Universe, the largest indoor amusement park in America, and families were gathered around to hear the children's chorus sing all their favorite traditional songs. The Great Room was outside the Macy's entrance, attracting more people to that corner, the sheer size of the crowd seeming to tip the whole mall in that direction as if it was floating.

The sixteen screens at the *Theatres at Mall of America* were all operating, showing the latest movies in different venues, some with moving seats for realistic chase scenes, some with beer and wine for getting as uninhibited as the action in the story. All located at the South entrance to the mall, near Macy's.

At the moment dirty bombs were going off in Washington and Orlando, and two terrorists were dying in Chicago, thwarted in their mission, there were 36,482 people in the mall. About a quarter of them were within the intended blast radius of the bomb vest.

At that moment in The Mall of America, all those people were going about their lives, oblivious to the events, to their danger, shopping or working or just having fun.

And at that moment in The Mall of America, nothing happened.

Their bomb was in the FBI radiation forensics lab instead of on Mervat Saad, standing with the crowds in front of Macy's, waiting to martyr himself.

Their cesium was safely in a storage container instead of contaminating a million square feet of some of the most densely populated floor space in America.

Nothing happened at The Mall of America, and no one realized it.