

## Chapter 03

Standing outside 'Ulterior Motifs,' Ethan could hear the strong pounding music, but not as much as he could feel it. The bass sounds reverberated through the concrete streets and up through his feet.

Numerous young people flooded the doorway, entering and leaving the club, controlled only by the two giant Samoans guarding the door.

Ethan pushed his hair back with his left hand.

"Can I see some ID?" shouted one of the Samoans, who had 'Hello, my name is Neil' written on his badge.

Ethan tried to shout "Sure" but the music blocked his voice out. He just lifted up his card and walked in.

To Ethan's eyes, the inside of the club was more irritating than the outside. The air seemed to resonate with the bass-line of the music, and Ethan could hardly even make out any sound above that.

He walked to the bartender, and shouted "Do you know of a man named 'Petron' here?"

The bartender looked at him confusedly, and used his hands to communicate that he couldn't hear Ethan.

Ethan scowled at the bartender, and walked towards the stage. There were a number of speakers being fed from one amplifier. He pulled out his pistol, and put a hole in the amplifier. The room went silent, as everyone who had previously been dancing was now staring at Ethan.

"Does anyone know where I can find Petron Yussen?!" shouted Ethan, to break the silence.

There was a moment of consideration before the dancers made a rush for the door.

Neil the Samoan walked in through the door, and stared at Ethan.

"They've all left," stated Neil.

"Yes. They have."

A voice spoke up behind Ethan. "You won't find Mr. Yussen here, sir," the voice said, "not while he's under the protection of the Rippers."

Ethan turned to face a woman wearing a large cloak and a black fedora.

"He is here then."

The woman jumped at him, pulling out a large knife. She was too quick for Ethan, as she knocked down his pistol before he could point it at her. She punched him in the face, and thrust the knife towards his chest. Ethan pushed her knife out

of her hand, but she followed through with a punch from her left hand, dislocating his jaw.

Ethan staggered back a few steps, and his hand rose to his face, pushing his jaw back into place. The woman quietly took off her fedora as Ethan ran at her with his fist back. As he was about to strike, she threw the hat at his face, putting him off guard, so he was unable to block her punches to the stomach. Ethan fell to the ground in pain. He heard her footsteps approaching him, so he jumped out and grabbed onto one of her legs, forcing her off balance. She fell over as Ethan stood up.

She began to get up, her cloak melodramatically covering her, and she grabbed her knife off the ground. She ran at Ethan, the knife poised to stab him in the chest, but there was a gunshot, and she collapsed on the ground.

Ethan sighed. "You should have paid more attention. I was able to pick my pistol up and you didn't even notice."

Ethan turned to the bouncer, who had a look of deep contemplation on his face. "I wouldn't, Neil."

Neil turned and walked outside.

There were half a dozen men and women sitting around a table, when suddenly somebody burst in the door, gaining everybody's attention.

"There's a man here. He shot out the amplifier, and then killed Erika. He asked for someone named 'Petron Yussen.'"

The man with grey hair at the end of the table shot a look to the other end, where the Disappearing Man was sitting.

"Run? Hide? Fight?"

"If this is... Ethan Ramsey, I would rather... fight."

All of the people sitting around the table except for the two at the ends stood up and walked out of the door.

Ethan kicked down a different door, and found two men with machine guns. He ducked back around the corner to avoid the bullets, and waited for them to stop shooting.

He sighed again, then walked around the corner.

The two men were standing at the other end of the corridor, clumsily reloading their guns. They looked up as they saw Ethan.

"A tip," he said, "It's usually better to save your fire for when you can see the target, rather than shooting at an empty doorway, and hoping that he'll just absent-mindedly walk into it." Ethan pointed his pistol at one of the two men, who both dropped their guns, and ran through another doorway. That door immediately closed, and the one opposite opened. Another man with a machine gun ran out and aimed at Ethan, before being shot.

Ethan took the man's gun, ran through the door, and entered a room largely taken up by uncomfortable-looking beds and sofas. The light was dark and purple, and the air was dusty and warm. Ethan cringed at the smell of sweat.

Suddenly, three different people jumped out from different sofas, and opened fire. Ethan ducked, seemingly too late, but when he stood up he found himself standing behind them.

"That was weird," he said, which caused them all to turn around. He fired three shots from his pistol, coughed, and walked out.

The room he was in now was taken up mostly by a long table. The only inhabitant of the room was an old man sitting at the head of it. He was stroking a ginger cat, who was sitting on the table in front of him, enjoying the man's expensive-looking meal.

"I take it that you are the leader of the Rippers?" Ethan asked, holstering his pistol.

"Yes, I am. And I hear you are looking for Petron Yussen, the Disappearing Man."

Ethan stared at the old man. "Yes, I am."

There was silence for a drawn out few seconds.

"You won't find him here."

"Oh but I will. I know he's here."

The old man smiled. "But you won't find him."

Ethan considered looking under the table, but the old man's juvenile games weren't quite that juvenile. He pulled out his pistol.

"Alright, old man, you like games?" Ethan took a deep breath. "I'll cut you a deal, You will tell me where Mr. Yussen is, or you will die. Nice and simple."

The old man's smile fell off his face and was replaced with a look of anxiety. "I won't tell you anything more. You can't shoot me; you'll have no end of Rippers after you until you die."

Ethan stepped closer, until the pistol was an inch from the old man's head. "Do I seem worried?"

The cat licked its lips and began to purr.

"Fine, fine," said the old man, who began to sweat. "You're obviously akin to threats. You'll find Mr. Petron in the opposite door through the purple room."

Ethan stared into the old man's worried eyes for a few seconds before pulling his gun away. "You'd better be telling the truth. Otherwise, you know I'll be back."

Ethan walked out the door, but then stopped. There was a gunshot and the sound of glass breaking in the room he had just left.

Running back in, Ethan saw the old man clutching his chest, pointing at one of the windows. Ethan followed his hand, and saw the end of Petron's cloak whipping through the broken pane. He ran and jumped after the Disappearing Man, leaving the old man to die.