

Chapter 01

Ethan Ramsey sat down and took off his black fedora hat. He didn't say a word, but he knew that the boss was watching from the darkness behind the desk. Smoke continued to cascade upwards from the shadow, playing with the small amount of light.

"Congratulations on your success in your previous exercise, Ethan." Cigarette smoke ballooned out from the desk, in time with the Boss' words. "I am glad that you found it... easy."

"So am I, sir."

There was silence for a few seconds. Ethan felt the Boss' eyes glaring out at him from his cocoon of blackness.

"Unfortunately," he began, "your next one is a little more difficult."

Ethan did not move a muscle.

"In what way, sir?"

"Your 'bounty', so to speak, is a serial killer who has evaded police arrest several times." The Boss shuffled in his seat in discomfort. "He even evaded our own efforts to ensnare him."

"An Op 3 couldn't handle him?" Ethan leaned forward before realizing that this was not characteristic of his professionalism. He leaned back again. "Why do you think I can?"

"I have not given you a single task which has stumped you, Ethan. To put an industry term to it, you're invincible."

"Scar almost killed me, sir!" Ethan shouted, rising from his seat.

"Almost. He didn't though, did he?"

Ethan saw another puff of smoke rise from the darkness. He straightened his jacket and sat down again.

"I'm sorry sir."

"I will have the target's name and location brought to you. Good day, Ethan."

Ethan stood on the roof of a small building. There wasn't a single cloud in the night sky, and the moon was bright.

The paper in Ethan's hand stated simply that a man named "Petron Yussen" would step out of the building across the road between the hours of 9 and 10pm. The man was nick-named "The Disappearing Man" due to the fact that he had evaded capture against impossible odds.

A tall, largely built person, dressed in a ragged knee-length jacket stepped out of the building. Ethan pulled out his silenced rifle, and looked down the sights.

"I have him in my sights," he whispered into a headset, as his grip on the trigger tightened. The gun jolted back as he fired, but when he looked up the man was running away, further down the street.

Ethan dropped the rifle, and ran to the edge of the roof, jumping down to a verandah on the next building. He rolled, and continued running towards the Disappearing Man.

"I've dropped my rifle at my starting point. I'll pick it up afterwards."

His hand reached into his jacket, and he quickly pulled out a pistol. The verandah drew to an end, and he jumped off it.

"I'm in pursuit. He's dropped off round a corner."

Ethan followed Petron, and arrived at the bridge over a raging river. Petron stood on the side of the bridge, but looked up to see Ethan approaching.

"You're not going to get away that easily, Petron."

Ethan raised his pistol, but had it batted out of his hand as Petron jumped at him, knocking them both to the ground.

"Fun, Ethan... Fun..." Petron wheezed. He pulled out a knife and grinned, but the smile was hit off his face by Ethan's fist. Petron clambered to his feet and ran to the bridge again, where he jumped into the river.

"He's... he's in the river... I don't know why he did it, but I think it's safe to say he's..."

A knife point was held to Ethan's back.

"Dead...? I'm not Dead."

Ethan elbowed backwards then spun around with his pistol out.

Petron was gone, but a ragged cloak spun back around a corner, back into the city streets. Ethan naturally followed.

When he got there he was stopped by an alleyway, created by three tall factories backing onto each other. There were two or three cats scattered around the alley. Some were sniffing in a rubbish bin, two were deep in fisticuffs.

Ethan reached up and pushed a button on his headset. "I've lost him."

There was a small pause. Ethan could hear the Boss breathing out air.

"We can wait for another lead, Ethan."

"I was so close," said Ethan, looking down to see a purring street-cat brushing against his leg. "If I'd just been a little quicker."

"Don't worry, Ethan. You'll get him," said the Boss. "Just don't take too long about it. The man is dangerous."

"You don't have to tell me that, Boss."