

Chapter 06

"Her name is... Amelia," said the tired-looking Langley, before slamming the door in Ethan's face. "Amelia..."

Ethan knocked on the door. There was silence for a few seconds before he knocked again. The rich king-pin had told him of Amelia. She had apparently been the latest fling of Petron's, only weeks before Ethan was assigned to him.

"Try once more, Ethan," said the voice on the phone, "she could be the lead you require. She could lead you to Petron."

"Fine."

Ethan knocked again.

Just as he was walking away, he heard a clutter coming from inside. A woman screamed.

"There's something going on inside, Boss. I'll call you back."

"What do you-"

Ethan opened the unlocked door. Following the corridor around a bend, he saw a large dog standing over a young woman, who was crying, and had scratches on her face. Ethan jumped out from behind the cover of a wall, holding his pistol towards the creature, which turned to stare at him.

It turned its entire body around and jumped at Ethan, who ducked. Suddenly, he was at the woman's side, and he turned to see the dog take a last look at Ethan before scurrying out the door.

"What was that thing?"

The woman looked up at Ethan. "Nothing. It's a dog that hangs around here from time to time." She pushed him away. "Nothing at all for you to worry about."

Ethan stood up and brushed the dust off his jacket. He breathed out.

"I take it that you are Amelia?"

Amelia stood up. "Yes. What is it to you?"

"I'm... investigating someone who you have apparently been involved with."

Amelia looked nervously at the door, then back at Ethan. "Who? I've been involved with a couple of people."

"They call him 'The Disappearing Man.' I've been told his name is Petron."

"Oh. Him." Amelia walked to the kitchen, where she turned on the tap and splashed water on her face to wash the blood off it. "Yes, I was with him for a time. I take it you've been assigned to kill him?"

"I never said-"

"Don't worry, I don't blame you." Amelia walked to the front door and closed it. "He wasn't particularly... consistent."

"Do you have any idea where I could find him?"

"As I said, he wasn't at all consistent." She turned to Ethan and pushed a strand of hair behind her ear. "There wasn't much pattern to him, so I have no idea where he is."

There was a knock at the door. Amelia's eyes widened. "If I were you, I'd hide."

"If it's the dog, I thought you said there was nothing to worry about."

Amelia turned away from Ethan and opened the door.

"What do you want?"

A creaky sick voice came around the corridor and reached Ethan's ears. It sounded as though it belonged to someone who had a minimal life expectancy.

"I have come for him."

"Who?"

"The one... named Ethan Ramsey." A figure stepped around into Ethan's sight. This was the first time Ethan had seen him in proper light. He was a tall man, though he had a stoop. He was unshaven, and looked like he fit in on the streets. His coat could have been made up of ten coats, or he could have been very well built.

"Petron."

Petron smiled with yellow uneven teeth. "Very... observant, Ethan."

"What do you want with me?"

"I'm afraid your snooping... has become a bit of a... nuisance to me."

"So you'll just kill me here and now? In front of Amelia?" Ethan saw Amelia slowly making her way towards the door. She had fear in her eyes.

"I've done it before. Amelia should know well enough."

"I should let you know now, Petron..." Ethan pulled out a pistol. "I haven't been paid to investigate you. It's your death I have been sponsored for."

Petron's smile faded, then a brick flew out of his jacket towards Ethan's head. Ethan blinked, and found himself standing behind the Disappearing Man, hand around his neck.

"Smart move, Ethan... but you left your gun behind."

There was a flash. Ethan fell to his knees, and only gained sight soon enough to see Petron's coat whip out the door. He looked up, and saw Amelia staring at him.

"Are you going to follow him?" she said, "If you don't, he'll come back here anyway."

Ethan stooped to pick up his pistol, and ran out the door, just in time to see Petron's coat pull onto a rooftop, at the top of a ladder.

He tapped a button on his headset.

"Boss. Good lead."