

Why am I here ?

Waow ! What a hot day ! Hmm, actually it is only my head which is hot. But where am I ? I am sitting on a chair at a table. There are several glasses on it and bread crumbs. Some of the glasses contain some red wine, some others are almost empty. Around me, other tables, and people, and away at the horizon I can see the sea. Those people are all very well dressed. Well, so am I. I am wearing a suit and a tie. We are on a terrace before a little house. The terrace continues on the right after the corner of the house. More agitation is coming from this side. It looks like a party. Why am I here ? What happened to me ? It is very serious, I have lost my memory. I can't even remember my name and where I live. Come on ! I'm sure if I strongly think of the past hours, I'll remember pieces if not the whole.... No. I can take my head in my hands and rub my forehead, nothing is coming back to my mind.

Ah maybe I have something in my pockets, something that will give me clues about me. In my trousers. No. In my jacket or my shirt, neither. It starts feeling desperate. I must get up to calm down and find what to do. I don't even have a phone... Oh ! Under my chair, there is a black briefcase. At last, it must contain all my answers. I lift it onto the chair (it contains something hard!). I unzip the main pocket and there I see papers, printed papers which have been bent in four. What I had felt hard was in the outside pocket, I plunge my hand in it and, with a cold chill, I realize my hand is in contact with a gun. I withdraw my hand and look nervously around me. No one of the few people I can see seems to care about my doing. Alright, let's have a look at the papers. On the first one, a picture shows a beautiful woman in a violet dress, I couldn't tell where the picture was taken but she is walking with a lot of confidence and conviction. A caption indicates "Ursula Koch". On the second paper are written these few words: "Ursula Koch. Job of 500. Dead and clean." From what I read, this woman is to be executed ! An idea is getting very clear and probable in my mind. I am an assassin and I am here for a job. I am here for my job. The third paper bears a portrait photo of quite young a man with a scar on his right cheek. A caption indicates "Agent Lieb – right-hand man". On the second paper were hand-written words: "Here to help do the job. Count him in." So I have a right-hand man in this job, he'll probably help me answer my questions.

"Adam ! What are you doing ?" A woman, coming in my direction, is talking to me. "Why are you staying here ? Why aren't you joining us ?" She called me "Adam". So my name is "Adam". Quickly I think of what I could answer. "Sorry, I am coming right now." I walk to the woman and follow her along the terrace. "I have been waiting for you since you left with that friend of yours. Do you know each other from your work ? He must be one of your colleague because he called you 'sir'. Between friends, one doesn't 'sir' another." She is probably talking of my right-hand man so I ask "The one with a scar on a cheek ?" "Yes, that one." she answers. "That's right. We work together. By the way, have you seen him again after we left ?" I ask because I must find my right-hand man to ask him the right questions. "No, I am not even sure he came down from your room." she tells me. So I must go up to my room ! Quick let's pretend I've forgotten something. "Oh I'm really sorry, now you talk about my room, I remember I forgot something up there. Please tell me where to join you and I'll meet you there." "You'd better not linger." the woman warns me, "we are waiting for you in the garden."

Walking along the terrace, we passed by an entrance with a reception, I head there hoping I can get my key and my room number." A receptionist is at the desk. "Good mor..." a clock on the wall shows 3PM, "...ternoon sir, may I have my key please ?" I ask. Diligently, he picks up a key from his desk and gives it to me. It has a number on it: 215. I have an idea. "Could you tell me, please, who book the room for me ?" He thinks and has a look at his book. "Hmm, for you Mr. Boulton, it was the secretary from your office." I thank him and climb up the stairs. I let my intuition lead my feet to the second floor room number fifteen. The key does open the door. I enter a small apartment. A large window lights the room and a sofa on which is laid my right-hand man, eyes open. I am frozen by what I see. When I can make one step, I quickly think it shouldn't frighten me more than that. I must have seen several corpses in my professional career. I come closer with more confidence but I am still thinking: I lost a man, an ally. I am alone. With a gesture which tries to look accustomed, I check the vital signs of the body. Yes, definitely dead. His neck seems inflated. He was certainly strangled. On the floor of the room I spot a syringe. Intuition makes me touch my own neck. I find a little wound which is likely

due to the needle. But then, ... My right-hand man would have attacked me with that needle and I would have killed him. I was betrayed. The situation looks even more desperate: I am stuck with a gun and a corpse, and my memory is a white page. There is at least one thing I figured out: the product which was injected through the syringe must be responsible for my amnesia.

On the dead body, I find only a gun and a car key. I explore the rooms a bit mechanically, walking help me containing my anxiety. My heart leaps when a trolley goes by the door outside in the corridor. In another room, I find a silenced rifle installed before the window whose shutters are drawn. I turn on my heels and leave the room because it makes me panic.

When I go down to the garden, I think a lot about what I should do. I have a target to take care of, an dead ally and a memory to recover. I join with the woman which had come to fetch me. I meet her interlocutors, a couple of persons not very interesting to me but very interested about me. "Mr. Boulton, what a pleasure it is to have the opportunity to talk with you !" says the white-haired man of the couple. "Yes, we really looked forward to congratulating on the historical agreement you are about to sign." adds the with-haired woman next to the man. I barely end thanking them that the woman resumes speaking with enthusiasm: "We learned what an example of courage you were doing so. Many of your clients are dangerous and could harm you for what you did. But once more, justice prevails over those crooks." I don't know what they are talking about. In my situation, it must be a fake background that was forged for my cover. Yes, and it is quite a good background if people are impressed. "Excuse me. I couldn't help hearing what you said. Are you Mr. Boulton ?" A woman has joined us, I only realise she is my target after answering yes. She holds out her hand saying: "Johana Prieur, I'm from FH&P Lawyers and my office is likely to assist some of our clients in reaction to your ... hmm... decision." I can't see anything to answer so I say: "Oh, your a justice servant then. I am sure, then, you will make it triumph. Now, if you please, excuse me." I leave my interlocutors and go to the buffet where I drink a glass of cocktail. It makes me find a new energy and become more alert. Lost in my thoughts about my next steps, I don't notice at first that the white-haired lady has joined me at the buffet. She talks to me discretely: "Beautiful woman, isn't she ? Hmm ?" I give her a little smile of agreement. "But you see, I know FH&P. They're not many. I have never heard of a Johana Prieur from FH&P so if you want my opinion, she must be pretending to be from FH&P." "Oh, yes, I guess you are right." I answer smiling within myself about this smart last sentence. "You must not trust her and even not let her come and talk to you as she must be one of these journalists thirsty for any tasty piece of information. I am sure she is one the journalists who had this poor statesman charged for conflict of interest. Yes, she must be that mean woman. I warn you." She leaves me, and I head for the inside of the building. I gaze very shortly towards the group of my interlocutors where I see the so-told lawyer woman chatting.

I climb with resolve the stairs and go to my room. I am pretty sure I understand my contract now. This woman is not what she claims to be. And that's because she is Ursula Koch, my target of 500 million of dollars. She must be hiding under a fake identity for protection or dark deeds. Hence my contract makes sense. I can use the rifle installed in my room. I have noticed all windows look the same from downstairs so no one will be able to identify from which room the shot came. Then I'll make for the car of my dead ally. I enter the room and go to the rifle. Through the optical sight, I look for the group of my interlocutors. I can't find it but I find back the white-haired couple with other people. I take a better look at the other groups. "Clic. Clic." Two noises and two terrible pains come to my brain. I fall on the ground of the room, I have no strength to react. I see the woman I was looking for on the threshold of the room, a gun hands in her hand. "Were you planing to use the gun ? You are different than what I was expecting, than what I was told about you." she says calmly. She puts back the gun in a cover under her dress. "I see poor Mark did not succeed the task. You are a bold one, you know. Taking out my right-hand man... Well, the good side of this tragic loss is that I won't have to share the 500 million with anybody." The nose in the carpet, I realise some things she says don't fit with what I thought. Her right-hand man ? Her 500 million ?... Oh heck..., she is the assassin, I was the target... My eyes close and my mind fades on this thought.