

GOT'CHA

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. PRIVATE LOUNGE - NIGHT

A small plush executive suite, doors at opposite ends.

GAMER, (50s) clothes just barely respectable, face and hair freshly scrubbed, wolfs down a plate of food with the furtive swiftness of the permanently hungry. He eyes the overflowing buffet table, weighing his next options.

The door behind Gamer opens silently.

JASON BATTAGLIA (36), slips in. His knock-off Armani and slicked back hair scream "I'm Somebody". A permanent dislike of life in general sours any emotion he could muster up.

Sensing the presence, Gamer jumps from his seat. Wide panicked eyes soften to recognize Jason.

Jason nods at the chicken leg in Gamer's hand.

JASON

Are you even tasting any of that?

GAMER

I ain't no bum. You got a real nice spread here. It's just. You know --

JASON

Life makes animals of us all.

Gamer rips meat off, wolfs it down, uncomfortable under Jason's fake smile.

GAMER

You been to war?

JASON

Not your kind.

GAMER

It ain't like in the movies. Well, excepting maybe that Private Ryan flick. Army's not such a bad life when there ain't a war on.

He shudders, slipping into dreaded memories.

JASON

Afghanistan?

GAMER

(nods)

My Dad said Nam was a hellhole. Not like that one. The killing. That's the job. The looking over your shoulder, the worry that the next kid that runs up to you is the one carrying a bomb --

(shudders)

So you bury the memories as deep as you can, but then some sound ...

He scrapes fingernails along the wall. SCREECH.

Jason shivers.

AUDIO FLASHBACK: Inaudible VOICES WAIL, a CAR ENGINE RACES, HORNS BLARE, TIRES SQUEAL, a CRASH of METAL into STONE.

GAMER (CONT'D)

So you crawl into a bottle and everybody thinks you're a loser.

Gamer looks for the trash, finds a pail below a huge photo - Jason's college football self, hoisted high on teammates' shoulders, lofting a trophy. He squints.

GAMER (CONT'D)

This you?

Jason shakes out of the memory. His left shoulder twitches. He winces, jaw tightening with repressed anger.

JASON

A long time ago.

GAMER

Arm gave out, huh? I notice you hold it funny. You're young yet. You'll find something better than this dive.

Gamer returns to the table, shoves a last hunk of bread in his mouth, wipes his hands on his pants, lets go with a resounding BELCH.

GAMER (CONT'D)

Oops, pardon the hell out'a me. This was some spread. Much obliged. So show me this run.

Jason backs up to open the door. Another geyser of a BELCH wrinkles Jason's nose.

GAMER (CONT'D)  
My bad. Don't get to pig out a lot.

JASON  
No problem.

GAMER  
Good thing for me the streets been  
pretty empty of late. I'll sleep  
the sleep of the dead tonight. No  
worries about my goods.

Jason's smile chills.

INT. LABYRINTH - DRAGON'S LAIR - NIGHT

Hard foam walls are sculpted and painted into a Minataur's cave. Faux torches provide light and plenty of weird shadows.

Gamer hustles, sweating, BREATHING HEAVY, eyes wild.

He stumbles to a stop at a fork. The SILENCE weighs on him as he juggles a laser pistol in nervous fingers.

Finally moves off to his right on stealthy feet.

A pair of small drones glide to a stop at the fork, LEDs blinking. One goes left, the other right.

Gamer turns a sharp corner, finds himself in a dead end. Surprised, he runs a hand over the wall.

The gun goes into his waistband and both hands push at the wall, frenzy building.

A red dot laser sight hits high over his head, slides lower. Gamer's head jerks up.

GAMER  
No! No, no, no, no.

He grabs his gun and swings around to face the drone.

GAMER (CONT'D)  
You double-dealing son of a bitch.

He FIRES, the pistol emitting a SOFT BUZZ under the red beam with no effect, takes off past the drone.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Comprehensive computer equipment surrounds a cockpit of monitor screens covering various passages of laser tag mazes.

On the left, a city scape with forced perspective flats that form parallel streets of two and three story buildings. Fire escapes and platforms behind upper level windows and roofs.

On the right, the Minataur labyrinth of rock walls, lava tunnels, natural slides, carved steps and ledges.

Above the monitors, OTB-style tote boards with running stats on strategic moves, odds and sizeable bets.

A large TV flat screen takes up the right hand wall. The screen filled with blacked out or Zoom caller avatars.

Jason lounges at the main control panel, changes screen shots as he follows the man running through the labyrinth.

Other screens are drone perspectives of the hunt.

He touches buttons and labyrinth walls move into a new configuration, blocking Gamer into a smaller maze.

Another flick of a switch brings Gamer's showdown on all screens. Zoom call messages tumble over one another.

JASON

Fifteen seconds for final bets.

The odds board tallies rapid fire auction bids. A BELL signals end of the session and the boards freeze.

JASON (CONT'D)

And the winner is -- Client five  
four zero. It's all yours.

He cedes drone controls to the online hunter.

INT. LABYRINTH - RABBIT HOLE - NIGHT

Gamer stumbles into a wall, pushes off and rounds a corner into relative safety.

Zigs and zags through tight turns.

The drone skims into position.

BURSTS of LASER FIRE hit around the man, knocking plaster off the walls, leaving scorch marks.

Jason frowns disgust at the sloppy shooting.

PANTING, frantic, Gamer keeps moving, unaware that he's going round and round in a small circle of switchbacks.

LASER SHOTS get closer, HIT shoulder, back.

Gamer stumbles, manages to stay on his feet, lurches on. More HITS - mid-body, kidney. He's bruised and bleeding now.

A HIT to the thigh pitches Gamer against a wall.

Exhausted, he plants his back, stares down the drone.

Jason's attention moves to a banking screen. He locks in a 5 digit deposit transfer as a flurry of LASER SHOTS lights the screens.

JASON

And that closes this evening's session. Congratulations to five four zero. Hope to see you all again soon. Bring your friends. Good night.

Jason opens the chat box to PM Zoomer540.

Jason writes: Congratulations. How was that?

Message: Meh. These creatures. Anyone can run down the old and lame. I require a challenge. PM me if something comes up.

The chat box goes silent. Jason closes out the call.

Main monitor - White coated MEDIC 2 bundles the body onto a gurney and through a hidden door in the rock face.

The zoom calls sign off and TV fills with a news program.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Benny Gordon, a homeless veteran, is reported missing. Police are asking anyone with any information on Benny to call their hot line.

The candid photo displayed could be Gamer.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Gordon joins a growing list of missing persons from our area. The police have yet to identify a motive or a pattern.

Unmoved, Jason snorts, shuts down screens and computers.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Now, onto sports. Georgia Tech phenom Harold Burnside has signed with the Cowboys for one twenty-five million over eight years --

That rivets Jason's attention and envy rages up. A sharp finger jab at a button and the television winks out.

Mouth twisted sourly, his gaze lands on the banking screen and his measly 5 figures. He logs out with a snarl.

Getting to his feet, he feels something in his pocket. Pulls out a tarnished Purple Heart.

INT. PRIVATE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Jason cleans up the table, drops everything into a trash bag. The medal goes in last.

EXT. LASER TAG PARLOR - NIGHT

Small artisan shops and delis inhabit a long city block between flashy arcades and game halls. All shop lights dimmed and doors locked for the night.

Jason's place is a warehouse size building that takes up the entire block opposite. A blinding running neon sign advertises the ultimate laser tag experiences.

One of the scrolls is a montage of beaming chiseled jock Jason showing off tournament awards and ambush moves.

Exiting, Jason locks the door, strides up the street.

Coming up on Olsen's Laser Tag Parlor he's stopped by a large medallion under the painted shop name.

Dancing neon rope lights glint off the brushed bronze trophy emblazoned with CONFERENCE CHAMPION - SHADOW DANCER

Jason's left shoulder twitches and he snarls a rush of fury. He spits on the glass to land midpoint on Shadow Dancer, rubs his shoulder and picks up his pace to get away.

EXT. OLSEN'S LASER TAG PARLOR - DAY

Under the afternoon sun, time and declining fortunes show the seams in the glass and cracks in the paint.

INT. OLSEN'S LASER TAG PARLOR - DAY

Over an unmanned ticket booth multiple screens showcase the mazes. The arcade games idle with no players.

INT. STREET SET - DAY

A police training street with cut outs on tracks moving in and out of buildings to either side.

Behind safety glasses and vest, laser pistol raised in hunting mode, RUSS GENNARO (26) edges down the middle of the street with the confidence of a stalking panther.

Two steps behind him HELENA WARREN (32) failing miserably at dressing casual, dances through baby steps, eyes everywhere.

Her careless foot sends a CAN SKITTERING.

Russ pauses, shifts half an eye back to assess her nerves, almost smiles. He holds up a warning finger, points to her to take the shot.

A target swings out, spins to face them.

Helena fires, lands a killing shot. A BUZZER sounds. She blinks into focus - a terrified woman running from trouble.

HELENA

Oh, that was -- Crap!

The target zips back in. Russ chuckles.

A target pops out of an upper window - bad guy with a rifle.

He tracks it, aims, fires. BING, score! The target withdraws.

Helena playfully punches his shoulder.

HELENA (CONT'D)

You have an unfair advantage. You do this all the time.

RUSS

We could have gone to the movies.

HELENA

Hardly the place for conversation. I hear whispers that you're thinking of moving on.

He shrugs, ready to avoid the question, won't look at her.



HELENA (CONT'D)  
You'd better have a good reason.

RUSS  
I don't like to bad mouth anybody,  
but there's an ownership issue on  
the next gen games.

HELENA  
It was you who wrote the program  
upgrades. Not Sammy.

Russ settles a flush of nerves, sighs. He checks his pistol  
ammo level, moves out. Helena keeps close behind.

RUSS  
My concept, yeah.

HELENA  
Prove it. How did you solve the  
glitch with the multi-player  
conversion?

RUSS  
I paired the yes-no if-then  
algorithms with a random factor as  
a secondary pathway to new  
combinations of players. Based on  
real world decisions seen in  
elections.

HELENA  
Splitting the tickets.

RUSS  
In a way. If you like this guy, but  
can't stand that one, you defy  
party lines. It gets away from pure  
black and white choices.

HELENA  
Uh huh. So why not speak up when  
Sammy took all the credit?

RUSS  
Prime example. IF I don't protest,  
THEN he makes my life simpler by  
staying out of my face.

HELENA  
I don't want door mats in my  
department.

RUSS

You're not going to want empty suits either. He doesn't get his hands dirty.

HELENA

Now that sounds like sour grapes.

RUSS

Truth, boss. The people he can't impress with BS, he bullies with threats of discrimination. Nobody stands up to him so we can get the work done. Sorry you had to hear it this way. Get ready.

Two targets pop out. They each take aim, fire. BING, BING. Russ nods as Helena dances over her success.

RUSS (CONT'D)

As the wise man once said, don't get cocky, kid. They're going to get faster now. Take the left.

Helena scans the street for every potential hiding place, nerves rising once more.

HELENA

No, wait.

RUSS

They can't hurt you.

HELENA

It's the idea that this could happen. That's terrifying.

RUSS

Yeah, but think how much better you'll react in, God forbid, a real fire fight with this training behind you.

Nope, that doesn't reassure her at all.

HELENA

I still don't like it.

RUSS

Never said you had to like it, you just have to do it. Navy SEAL philosophy 101. Now, I'm moving out. You take the left.

Russ darts three steps to the right in a slight hitching limp that he's well accustomed to.

Helena swallows nerves, mimics his advance.

Targets zip in and out. Russ runs from cover to cover, FIRING with eerie accuracy.

Helena does her best to keep up, not as graceful or as successful and not enjoying herself.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Monitors show the runs empty.

Jason leans in heavily over a newspaper sports section. Odds boards silent. He yawns.

The side monitor lights with a Zoom call request. He checks the ID, taps that on.

A MAN'S SILHOUETTE comes on screen.

MEDIC 1 (V.O.)

You owe us a body.

JASON

You took one yesterday.

MEDIC 1 (V.O.)

That wreck? We'll be lucky to salvage corneas. You need to supply better quality.

JASON

Doing what I can. My bookings are kids and birthday parties lately. The solo players are all in their basements plugged into VR headsets and internet play.

MEDIC 1

Excuses are for losers. We're out ninety grand for failed supplies. I'm certain we could get that much out of you.

Jason shudders, hand rising to cover his heart.

MEDIC 1 (CONT'D)

Exactly. Remind me, how did your coaches motivate you?

JASON

You're only as good as your last completed pass.

MEDIC 1

There are people eager to take your contract. I suggest you get your ass in gear. Now, a friend of a friend has need of a kidney. Details to follow.

The screen blanks out. Jason falls back in his chair. His eyes land on a photo of his youthful self fronting his high school football team, hoisting a trophy.

Anger erupts and he sweeps the frame off the wall, grabs his left shoulder in pain.

An e-mail pops up. Jason returns to his chair, scans the medical print out. He growls as he writes a sticky note KIDNEY, O- and slaps it below the main monitor.

Another e-mail pops.

JASON

Ah come on, you said one kidney. Where am I supposed to find an O negative kidney and an A positive liver on short notice?

He hits buttons on the board to shift camera focus to the alley behind the building.

ON SCREEN - Dingy brown and grey concrete walls, dumpsters and no sign of life. A makeshift memorial of empty quart bottles and wilted dandelions makes a bizarre spot of color next to a tilted shopping cart of rummaged goods.

Jason shakes his head in frustration.

INT. OLSEN'S LASER TAG PARLOR - DAY

Gym bag slung over one shoulder, Russ exits a locker room. Helena waits under the monitors, focused on her phone screen. He checks a board where player scores are displayed.

RUSS

Not bad for a rookie.

HELENA

You were letting me win.

RUSS

Going easy. Not the same thing.

She arches an eyebrow at him. A WHOOPING CRY comes over the monitors behind them.

Russ startles with a touch of panic. He keys into the action on a monitor, calms.

ON SCREEN - SAMMY (29) slinks along a facade in a Western-themed room. Wesley Snipes cool and confident, he darts out to shoot two players, zips back into cover.

HELENA

He's fast.

Russ checks Sammy's scoring, reluctantly impressed.

RUSS

There's more to the game than speed. His accuracy sucks.

The front door opens. MONIQUE, (24) enters, saunters up to them. In no hurry and wishing she were elsewhere, she's a walking ad for black female business power suiting.

MONIQUE

Sorry I'm late. Car trouble.

They all look up as a ROAR indicates Sammy's scored another ambush. Monique sniffs disdain.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

Well now, it looks like sometimes cheaters do win.

RUSS

Not for long. Word gets around and you don't get invited to tournaments or wind up on the wall.

He nods to a row of framed awards running along the wall. Monique takes the time to read the nearest few. It seems like 90% belong to Shadow Dancer.

Sammy bounds out of the game hall. He looks up at the scoreboard to confirm that he's out-scored Shadow Dancer's latest win. Throws a big grin at Russ and Helena.

SAMMY

Looks like I'm ready to challenge this mysterious Shadow Dancer. You know what I mean?

(MORE)

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Russell, my man, you should have jumped in. I could have used you.

Russ shrinks under the unbridled machismo as Sammy strikes an intentionally intimidating pose.

RUSS

(under his breath)

Used being the operative word.

Only Helena overhears, keeps her face neutral. Monique turns back to the group, ignoring Sammy.

MONIQUE

Shadow Dancer?

RUSS

Avatar name.

MONIQUE

Ah. He has quite the reputation. But does it get him laid?

Russ has no answer for the smirk in her eyes.

SAMMY

In his dream world with fantasy girls. Real men take on the real world. You know what I mean?

MONIQUE

And so you're in a game parlor for the research?

SAMMY

Gotta stay on top of my team. You know what I mean? Speak the same language. Isn't that right, Russ?

RUSS

You're the section lead.

Sammy smirks at Russ' body language saying otherwise, then sneers at Monique.

SAMMY

Sounds like a fellow lead is jealous of my leadership skills.

MONIQUE

As if.

Russ sneaks a glance at Helena taking it all in over a blank phone screen.

SAMMY

Well, I was hired to get results.  
If you can't stand the heat.

MONIQUE

In MY kitchen, we cook the food, we  
don't scorch everything to a crisp.

No way to win here, so he turns to Russ.

SAMMY

Women. So how about a head to head?

The last thing Russ wants. His fidgeting picks up, like an  
animal ready to bolt.

RUSS

Not a good idea.

HELENA

Actually, I like it.

She slides the phone away. Sammy recovers first, always ready  
to leap before he looks.

SAMMY

Yeah, we're off the clock. It'll be  
-- team building.

HELENA

More like your promotion reviews. I  
need effective people on my team to  
get our games into market before  
the competition. That means cutting  
through the he said, she said  
bullshit.

Three suddenly nervous people dart looks at each other. Sammy  
and Monique nod. Russ cringes, grits his teeth.

RUSS

Fine.

He starts back to the locker room.

HELENA

But not here. Someplace where  
you're not so comfortable. Like  
Battaglia's across the street.

Russ frowns out the window to --

Where Jason's perfect face leers down from the scrolling sign  
above the doors. He swallows bile.

RUSS

Yeah, no. I've crossed paths with the manager. It didn't end well.

HELENA

Too bad. It's my party.

She heads out the door. Sulking, Russ trudges after her. Monique holds Sammy back.

MONIQUE

We need a plan.

SAMMY

For what?

She eyes him with the deliberation of a hungry snake.

MONIQUE

She's going to go with Russell.

SAMMY

How ?

MONIQUE

She likes his work ethic, the fact that he doesn't make waves. So, how do WE eliminate him from the competition?

Sammy takes a moment to consider, sneers a grin.

SAMMY

Push his buttons. He'll tense up and show he can't direct people without getting emotional. You realize that once we're rid of him it's game on against each other.

MONIQUE

I have no problem with that.

Sammy waves for her to take the lead.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Jason keeps half an eye on the outside camera scene as he skims through sports pages.

ON SCREEN - One stumbling bum shoves a cart along. He stops at the memorial, adds his token, takes something from the cart, hurries out of camera range.



Jason snorts, shifts the view to his box office.

ON SCREEN - Helena and Monique step up.

Jason eyes them critically, shakes his head and goes back to his sports section, missing Sammy and Russ joining the women.

INT. LASER TAG PARLOR - READY ROOM - DAY

Helena reads the rules of the game from a card while the others select colorful vests and pistol rigs from a rack.

HELENA

Don't mess with your sensors. Raise your hands on elimination to alert other players you're out. Once eliminated, don't pass on locations to other players. Climb only in marked areas. Really? Common sense is that foreign a concept?

Shielded from the others behind a row of lockers, Russ closes his locker, pivots on his right foot, staggers.

He spins to plop on a bench, pulls his pant leg up, revealing a prosthetic lower leg attached just above his knee.

Practiced hands check the vacuum seal on the anchor cuff.

Sammy comes around the corner. He gapes at the metal shin and ankle. Russ adjusts his pant leg down.

SAMMY

What in the hell? When did that happen?

Sammy continues to gawk, freaked out as Russ coolly rises.

RUSS

A long time ago. We ready?

He shoulders past the stunned Sammy.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Newspapers folded precisely, Jason marks up the player photos with mustaches and scars.

JASON

Ten point three mil signing bonus and you're crying you're under valued?

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

Wait until you get hurt your first game and you wind up running a place like this.

He stabs the marker to X out a couple of faces. His watch PINGS an alarm. He heaves to his feet, kicks the photo frame into a corner, exits into the private lounge.

On the monitors - Russ' group enters the city scape run.

INT. CITY SCAPE - DAY

Just inside the four stop to size up the layout.

The forced perspective and weathered paint details make the room feel like a decaying barrio of empty doors and short alleys between two long blocks of buildings.

RUSS

So?

HELENA

Every person for him, her, themselves.

RUSS

You know that sounds weird.

She crinkles her nose at him. Russ shrugs.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Okay. Standard fifteen minutes. Unlimited ammo, five hits and you're out.

He moves to a time clock, looks them over, assessing battle readiness.

Sammy and Monique both seem at home in the urban jungle, scanning upper floor windows as well as street level.

Helena fidgets, battling down nerves.

Russ presses the button and they scatter into the set.

MONTAGE:

Sammy springs out at Russ for a HIT, darts away.

On a second level balcony, Russ hugs a wall as Monique passes underneath. He takes aim, surprising her with the HIT.

Helena stays behind cover, sighting late on her targets.

Russ and Sammy trade SHOTS as they head for opposite sides of the main street.

Monique gets the drop on Sammy to eliminate him, smirks at his annoyance.

Helena hits the button for a new round of play.

Behind a second floor wall, Monique holds her fire as Russ crosses her field of vision. She's bored, contemptuous.

Sammy surprises Helena at a corner. They both score HITS.

Resetting his gun, Russ is jumped by Sammy and Monique coming in on opposite sides. In a SHOOT-OUT worthy of The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, SHOTS rack up BINGS of hits to eliminate all three.

Games end, new ones begin. Lead scores on a tote board go up and down with Russ pulling ahead.

Russ is in his element, careful at every corner and shadow.

Helena gains confidence that teeters on the verge of failing.

Sammy's temper strains as he can't seem to catch Russ' lead and he takes to sneaking through the backdrops to ambush.

Bored, Monique finds good hiding in a spot overlooked by all.

Russ TAGS Helena, shrugs an apology and darts out of sight.

INT. CITY SCAPE - REAR HALL - DAY

Helena edges along a hall. Up ahead a glint of movement.

She shakes her pistol for ammo, takes aim.

Rounding a corner in a rushed crouch, she's surprised to face a mirror image of herself.

Just as she relaxes, FOOTSTEPS sound behind her and she darts into the maze of glass walls and mirrors.

On a second story balcony, Sammy sights movement below, finds a vantage point for an ambush.

Helena circles through the maze, one hand up, unable to find the way out.

Sammy takes aim. He lowers his pistol.

SAMMY

Too easy.

He checks the area, fades back around.

Helena finally finds her way out to the street.

Her vest lights up with a hit. BING.

Where? Who?

Directly opposite, Monique peeks from her hiding spot.

HELENA

Really? That's it. I'm done.

Throwing her hands up, she takes to the center of the street, heads for the exit.

After a moment Monique joins her.

HELENA (CONT'D)

You're not hit.

MONIQUE

But I am done.

INT. CITY SCAPE - REAR HALL - DAY

Russ follows the walls off the main street. A reflected laser shot off glass dazzles his eyes.

Sammy darts around to a side door.

Blinking for sight, Russ listens to FOOTSTEPS, retreats the way he came, ducks out a back door.

Sammy darts in. Empty.

He goes to the front window, checks the street. Turning back, he considers a choice of two doors.

SAMMY

Russell, my man. So how did you  
lose the leg? Iraq, Afghanistan?

In the next room, Russ stops, then retreats quietly.

RUSS

Long Island City.

Sammy zeroes in on the voice, advances on soft feet.

SAMMY  
So what happened?

Russ edges backwards, two rooms ahead.

RUSS  
There was a truck, then a wall,  
then the fire department cutting us  
out of the front seat. Somebody  
saying I was lucky to be alive.

Sammy slows as he tracks a shadow, darts around a corner.

Into an empty room.

Sammy edges along a wall, gun up and ready. His nerves jangle  
in the SILENCE.

He comes out of the last building, scans a collection of  
trash cans and pallets. A bit of cloth peeks out.

Sammy grins, takes aim, then holds his fire.

SAMMY  
No, no. I'm not falling for that.

He advances one sliding foot at a time, back to the wall.

As he rounds a column he spies a sleeve peeking out of a  
small alcove about five feet beyond the first cloth.

Sammy LAUGHS SOFTLY, aims on the sleeve, focus riveted.

A step. A pause. Deep breath. Jump into firing position.

Stares at an undershirt hung on a nail.

A gun muzzle tickles the back of his neck. Emerging from the  
trash cans, Russ holds out a hand for Sammy's gun.

RUSS  
Got'cha.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Multi-tasking, Jason scans multiple texts on his zoom chat  
box, phone to his ear for an inhouse call.

JASON  
I know there are people in the run.  
It's okay. Close up shop. Sylvie,  
it's okay. I'll take care of them.

He ends the call, goes back to his newspaper.

INT. LASER TAG PARLOR - FOYER - DAY

Helena eyes the slant of setting sun out the front door as she finishes her snack, joins Monique at the monitors.

HELENA

They haven't run out of testosterone yet?

MONIQUE

You know how boys get when they're in a pissing contest. It's a shame Russell doesn't bring that energy to real world situations.

HELENA

He's a poor worker?

MONIQUE

Oh no, one of our best. He's just -- a worker bee. No stomach for command. Now Sammy. He's all command, no substance.

Helena weighs Monique's not-quite-smirk of satisfaction, locates an intercom, BUZZES into the hall.

HELENA

Hey, Rambos, how about coming up for air?

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - DAY

Sammy comes out of an alley, surprised to see Russ waiting. He raises his gun, holds his fire, looks around.

SAMMY

What are you up to?

RUSS

I do have other things to do, and the ladies are getting antsy. I propose a showdown, winner take all.

SAMMY

It's a trick.

RUSS  
No. We call up for control to count  
us down. Best shot wins.

Sammy still hesitates.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The intercom BEEPS. Jason presses the button without looking  
up from his message board.

JASON  
What?

RUSS  
I'm calling for a showdown to  
determine the winner here.

JASON  
Like I got nothing better to do.

SAMMY  
Hey, I agree. I want this settled.

JASON  
You cowboys are all alike.

The odds board lights up with bets. Jason considers that.

Russ crosses a camera eye.

Jason's breath catches. Old resentments bubble, erupt.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Son. Of. A. Freaking. Bitch. You  
got your nerve showing up in my  
place. I should toss you ---

A zoom caller BUZZES for attention. Jason checks the incoming  
number, sweats.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Sorry, can't talk now. I --

His eyes go back to Russ on the screen. He picks up the call.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Hey. Give me a couple of hours. I  
can deliver a healthy resource.

MEDIC 1 (V.O.)  
O positive?

JASON

Um, not sure. I don't have the stats just yet. If not he should be good for other needs. Yes?

He sweats out a response. Finally.

MEDIC 1 (V.O.)

We'll be waiting.

The call ends. A fresh text pops up.

540 Message - I have a large gathering ready for action. Can you supply?

Jason follows Russ on the screen, laughs.

JASON

Can I!

Jason types - How about taking on the Shadow Dancer?

Message - Claim to fame?

Jason types - Only the reigning solo tag champion. Follow the current action. Yellow vest.

Jason flips a switch and the showdown plays on all monitors.

JASON (CONT'D)

All right, boys. We've all seen the Westerns. Twenty paces apart, guns in holsters. I count down from five. Best shot wins.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - DAY

Sammy and Russ pace off the distance, set themselves.

JASON

Check your weapons.

They both do a quick check, slide the guns into holsters.

RUSS

Armed and ready.

SAMMY

Ready.



INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

JASON  
On five. One.

He artfully manipulates the cameras to boost tension.  
Close up of Sammy's smirking eyes.  
Russ' steady hands.  
Long shot to show full body tension.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Two.

Russ sets, Clint Eastwood focused.  
Hands hover above pistol grips.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Three.

Doubt erodes Sammy's confidence. His eye twitches, watching  
for any crack in Russ' confidence.  
The odds board counters go nuts as bets come in.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Four.

The cameras rotate a collage of close ups.  
Hands.  
Eyes.  
Tension.  
The moment stretches.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - DAY

Sammy's fingers flutter above the pistol grip.

JASON  
Five.

Lightning quick draws, SINGLE SHOTS, BINGS, and its over.

SAMMY  
I won! I got you first.

Russ walks to a monitor, discharging his weapon.

RUSS  
Control?

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Lips pursed like he was eating lemons, Jason replays the video as his zoom callers flood the chat box.

Sammy's shot tags Russ high on the right shoulder. Russ' hit lands mid-chest.

JASON  
First shot goes to green, but the computer gives the duel to yellow.

SAMMY  
No way! Are you on his side?

JASON  
Look at the replay.

He runs the slo-mo again, eyes narrowing with intent.

INT. LASER TAG PARLOR - FOYER - NIGHT

The sun has set. Lights are dimmed, concession stand and ticket booth both dark.

Russ and Sammy exit the ready room with their gym bags, join Helena and Monique waiting at the concession counter.

SAMMY  
There is no way you won. I got you first.

RUSS  
We agreed to best shot, not the fastest.

SAMMY  
If those were real guns you'd be on the floor bleeding out. You know what I mean? No way you're going to shoot me dead from the floor.

Jason comes down the stairs to the front door. He holds back from unlocking, focuses on Russ with a sneer of a smile.

JASON  
 You come into my place and don't  
 say hello?

Russ squirms under a rising dread, not meeting Jason's eyes.  
 Sammy peers from one to the other, reading body language.

SAMMY  
 (to Jason)  
 You know him?

JASON  
 The one and only Shadow Dancer? I'm  
 the one who gave him his name after  
 he took my championship belt in his  
 second. It was only your second  
 competition, right?

He smiles at Russ' embarrassment.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 He's a stone cold sniper.

Russ squares his shoulders, looks up.

RUSS  
 Me or you, Sidewinder? You hang  
 back letting your team take out all  
 the slower players, then swoop in  
 and grab the laurels.

Jason bristles, controls his temper.

SAMMY  
 Sidewinder. Nice. You still play?

Jason pulls his eyes off Russ, measures Sammy, slips back  
 into formal manager civility.

JASON  
 Depends on the competition. Now, if  
 Shadow Dancer wanted a one on one.

RUSS  
 Not especially.

HELENA  
 And I'm not ready to go.

JASON  
 Sorry, but as you can see, we are  
 past closing time.

Helena flashes a credit card.

HELENA

It's not like people are lined up around the block to get in. My Platinum card says your bottom line could use the boost if price is no object for another hour or two.

He glares at her. Helena stares back. On the verge of losing his cool, Jason pulls in his emotions.

JASON

For a Platinum player, I can make an exception. Make it a foursome?

SAMMY

Done. Put some respect on my name for taking down the Shadow Dancer.

Jason's gaze moves to Monique. She sniffs at the private invitation in his leer.

MONIQUE

Oh honey, you don't have the staying power I require.

HELENA

Russ?

Russ wants to say no, but wilts under the demanding eyes.

RUSS

Fine. Whatever.

INT. READY ROOM - NIGHT

Jason leads them to a locked closet. Opens the door to neat rows of vest and pistol packages in coordinated bundles.

JASON

All personal effects in the lockers.

SAMMY

Including phones?

JASON

Especially phones. You won't get a signal in there anyway. The labyrinth has maps at passage junctions and there are intercoms for emergencies.

RUSS  
What kind of emergencies?

JASON  
If you can't hack it.

They glare at each other. Sammy smirks at the hostility.  
Jason relents, confident.

JASON (CONT'D)  
It's called labyrinth for a reason.  
People do get lost and panic.

He picks out different colored vests, hands them out. Blue to Russ, Purple to Sammy, Red to Helena and Green for Monique.

JASON (CONT'D)  
These are the latest in sensor  
reactive game wear. Full medical  
telemetry. Don't take them off once  
inside and no fiddling with the  
controls.

The four pull on their vests, adjust the fit. Jason gives Helena a hand from behind as she shrugs the vest straight, brushing some dandruff onto the vest sensors.

Sammy snags a finger in the buckle, YELPS, wipes a drop of blood on the vest.

Russ moves his watch to the opposite wrist before strapping on the monitor bracelet. He scrapes a finger on a sharp edge without drawing blood, shakes his head in disgust.

Monique has trouble with the clasp, catches the tongue under a nail. She HISSES indignation.

MONIQUE  
I hope you didn't pay a lot for  
these rigs.

JASON  
They're top of the line.

She puts her wounded finger in his face.

MONIQUE  
So are these nails.

SAMMY  
Girl, why don't you just sit out.

HELENA  
 Why don't both of you save it for  
 the game?

She scowls from one to the other. Jason picks up a wrist band to demonstrate the screen components.

JASON  
 All your stats in one easy to read  
 LED screen. Target hits, lives,  
 ammo, recharging status. Questions?

SAMMY  
 These guns feel heavier. What's the  
 range?

JASON  
 Thirty yards. You won't find many  
 distance shots in there.

He fires up a Tablet, eyes Monique.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 And now, pick your avatar name.

MONIQUE  
 Oh, Cleopatra Jones, for sure.

Jason nods, enters the name, looks to Sammy.

SAMMY  
 Sandman.

JASON  
 Interesting.

He offers Helena a smile. Her return smile is a formality.

HELENA  
 Calamity Jane.

JASON  
 And of course, the Shadow Dancer.

He finishes with a flourish.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 Enjoy the game.

Russ finds an extra control on his wrist band.

RUSS  
 What's this?

JASON

That? That's a little extra spice.  
You each get a drone.

SAMMY

Isn't that cheating? Like you could  
hide your eyes in the sky and wait  
in ambush. You know what I mean?

JASON

If you're a coward.

He eyes Sammy with disdain.

HELENA

Looks like they don't recharge.

JASON

That's right. Limited air time,  
limited fire power. So use them  
wisely. Anything else?

Nobody has thoughts.

JASON (CONT'D)

Okay then, good hunting.

INT. LASER TAG FOYER - NIGHT

Jason closes the door behind them, posts a "Game in Progress"  
sign and THROWS the lock.

At the front doors he DOUBLE-LOCKS multiple locks with keys.

INT. LABYRINTH - FOYER - NIGHT

The compact entry is a cave with three passages hacked into  
the rock. Imitation torches set high. The ceiling hangs low  
here, smothering, intimidating.

Russ powers up a map of the maze, a standard hedgerow design  
of parallel intersecting passages with dead ends, switchbacks  
and cul-de-sacs artfully named - Dragon's Lair, Cyclops Doom,  
Rabbit Hole, Bamboozle, etc.

HELENA

I want to play partners for a few  
rounds.

She looks for objections, gets shrugs/nods of approval.

HELENA (CONT'D)  
Okay. Sammy first.

A soft CHIME. Wrist bands light up.

Helena heads into the maze, not waiting for acknowledgement. Sammy darts after her. Russ eyes Monique.

RUSS  
Ladies choice?

She studies the map, traces out a route to intercept at a blind turn. Russ nods, lets her lead the way.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason settles in his chair, adjusts the cameras to pick up the action, miffed that they've split into teams.

JASON  
What the -- Nice. Make this harder for me.

His PHONE RINGS. He checks caller ID, stifles an impatient GROAN before picking up.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Mom, I'm at work.

Listens. Sits straighter in worry.

JASON (CONT'D)  
She what? Slow down. What happened?

Relief floods through him and he lounges back.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Is that all? It's about time she got married. I'll see if I can make the date.

Listens, and his mood darkens with annoyance.

JASON (CONT'D)  
What do you mean, can I give you thirty thousand? Sure. No problem. I'll just grab that out of petty cash. Go to the bank and get a loan. She's not my daughter.

His agitation increases and he jumps up to pace, eyes rolling, unable to put the phone down.



He comes to the wall and a framed picture -

INSERT - The proud family around teenage Jason and a football trophy. CAPTION - Sophomore star to sign with NY Giants.

Jason turns his back on the photo, finds his backbone.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 Mom. Mom. Hey lady, shut it for two minutes. Aren't you forgetting something? I never got that pro contract. Rusty's accident wiped out my arm. So no pro career, no big money. No can do.

But the defiance doesn't last. Glued to the TINNY VOICE on the line, his posture wilts like the 12-year-old emotional kid that he is.

He turns back to the control panel and the bank of monitors. His whole life story of stunted opportunity. He hates this place. Rage flares.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 Come on, I'm the manager of a freaking laser tag game room.

His eyes go wide in disbelief.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 What do you mean, you already promised? Christ! You can't promise money like that without talking to me first. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You sacrificed everything to get me into the pros. Not my fault I didn't get there.

He drops the phone on the board, rubs his face. The TINNY VOICE continues. He can't win.

A flutter of action on-screen and he shifts focus.

Helena and Sammy scurry through passages. On a second screen there's Russ and Monique.

Below that his post-it note - Kidney, O positive, A negative  
 The thought hits him - harvest all four?

Bets are mounting like crazy on the odds board, focused on last man standing.

Jason grabs up the phone.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Mom. Mom, enough. When do you need  
this? I'll get back to you.

He hangs up on her protest, keys up the vest IDs. The medical monitor flashes four ready lights.

Readouts from the vests chart functions similar to an ICU unit - heart, pulse, O2 levels, liver, kidney function, sugar, sodium levels.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I know your blood doesn't match,  
bro. I have another use for you.

Next screen.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Cleopatra, you're a little anemic  
and your sugar -- Girlfriend. I'm  
about to save you from type 2  
diabetes.

He runs a finger along the next set of numbers.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Sandman. Hmm, high blood pressure.  
Yeah, you struck me as an A Type.  
Good liver, kidneys, and O  
positive. Perfect. I have a man  
waiting just for you. And last but  
not least.

Final set of numbers.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Oh oh, who would have thought you'd  
be the druggie? Shame, shame. And  
the substance of choice is --  
Bennies? Well, you could stand to  
lose a few pounds. We won't hold  
that against you.

The chat box lights up with multiple messages.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Chill, people. I have one more  
thing to check before we're open  
for business.

Screens change as he Google searches backgrounds, bringing up the profiles side by side.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 Family ties - iffy, non-existent,  
 who cares. And -- Shit. You all  
 work together?

He flops back, deflated, watches the odds board rack up  
 impressive numbers. Pulls himself back to the board.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 All right, ladies and gentlemen.  
 Your players -

Photos go up on each player's line.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 The Sandman, quick on the trigger,  
 hot for revenge. Cleopatra, queen  
 of the sneak attack. Calamity Jane,  
 her goofiness hides a heart of  
 stone. And the legendary Shadow  
 Dancer.

Russ' photo finishes the quartet.

Jason sneers his contempt.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 High bid wins the killing shot.  
 Superfecta play open to all.

INT. LABYRINTH - BAMBOOZLE - NIGHT

At a corner that leads to multiple passages Helena and Sammy  
 consult a wall map. He edges just a little too close. Helena  
 shifts away with a scowl.

SAMMY  
 I wasn't trying anything. You were  
 hogging the map.

HELENA  
 Speaking of maps, when can I expect  
 a beta of Suburban Commando?

Panic lights his eyes.

SAMMY  
 Oh. We're talking work? I'd have to  
 check my logs. Know what I mean?

HELENA  
 What about the status of the multi-  
 player conversion?

Sammy struggles with a flush of resentment.

HELENA (CONT'D)  
Ah ha, that there. Right there.

She wags a finger in his face.

HELENA (CONT'D)  
That look in your eyes. That 'I'm about to get shafted by a white boss because I'm black' look. That annoys the piss out of me. Not everything is about the color of your skin, mister.

SAMMY  
You ain't never been black.

HELENA  
Oh, do you have it tough? First words out of any exec's mouth when I show up is, where's the coffee, hon? Don't talk to me about bias in the work place.

SAMMY  
Then why are you coming at me?

HELENA  
You're a crew chief. You better know what's going on.

SAMMY  
I get things done. Look at our track record.

HELENA  
I have. It's impressive. But. What's the atmosphere like? Do people feel free to bring you issues or are you getting problem reports after they've been fixed?

His composure rattles just the tiniest bit.

SAMMY  
All managers get push back.

HELENA  
Agreed, but unhappy people make for an unstable work force. For instance, sick time. How much have your people racked up in, say, the last two months.

He takes time to think, belligerence undermined by worry.

SAMMY

It -- About one a week.  
(sighs)  
Sometimes every day somebody's  
calling in.

HELENA

Does that tell you anything?

SAMMY

We've been pushing that last update  
hard. Guess they're tired.

HELENA

Maybe. Anything else going on that  
we need to discuss?

Sammy almost misses the change in her stance, but still wary,  
he hesitates.

HELENA (CONT'D)

If you can't communicate with me  
how are you going to communicate  
with your team? How do you  
communicate with your team? Maybe  
its a tone of voice issue.

SAMMY

Tone of voice?

HELENA

I'll give you a for instance. When  
women get angry our voices  
naturally pitch up. Weird, but true  
and we sound like nags. People tune  
out nags. Now, if I pitch my voice  
low and soft, that gets focused  
attention. So, are you a nag or a  
focal point?

And it hits him, she's giving him a fair chance.

SAMMY

I'm. Damn, my last job all we did  
was get on each other. Guess that  
won't work here.

HELENA

Sales is a totally different  
animal. Last thing we want is  
someone crying about a hostile work  
environment. Right?

SAMMY

Yeah. So.

HELENA

So I need you to be presenting solutions instead of adding to the problems. I have a couple of books on leadership you can borrow. Right now, how do we win this round?

INT. LABYRINTH - DRAGON'S LAIR - NIGHT

Twisting high walls deaden sound. Russ and Monique edge into a warren of stalagmites, ledges and low ceilings. It's unnervingly QUIET. Russ slows, head swiveling.

MONIQUE

Do you ever lighten up? I thought this was your game.

RUSS

Sore losers make for no fun. You saw the showdown. That's every day with him.

MONIQUE

I hadn't noticed.

RUSS

At the risk of sounding racist and sexist, you're a pretty black woman, so you don't catch the brunt of his prejudices.

She sniffs derision.

MONIQUE

Oh my God, is the poor little white boy scared of the nasty old black man? Pul-lease. You caught the easy road, making a name for yourself playing some kid's game. He's got to work for his respect.

Monique flings a dismissive hand at him, runs fingers over the rock face.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

Huh. This feels like real rock.

RUSS  
Sculpted concrete molds. Foam  
around the edges to mitigate  
bruises.

MONIQUE  
Mitigate bruises. You are a  
contradiction in motion. Too bright  
for your own good, too soft to  
stand up -- Oh, it's the leg, isn't  
it? You feel inadequate. I'd say it  
puts you on even terms.

She flicks her hand, catching her nails. Jumps back.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)  
Ow, mother! There's a crack here.

Russ comes over to look where she's tracing fingertips,  
touches the wall. Chips flake off under his hand.

Monique backs up under his look. Russ scans the wall, sets  
his weight and pushes hard.

Chunks break off revealing the rebar underneath.

RUSS  
This place isn't that old that it  
should be falling apart.

MONIQUE  
Rough players?

RUSS  
More likely builder shortcuts.

He kicks the debris into a pile. Monique checks her monitor.

MONIQUE  
They're closing fast. We should go  
high and wait.

RUSS  
I don't see you climbing anything  
in those shoes.

She looks at her heels, sniffs.

MONIQUE  
Well fine, then I'm going left.

Not waiting for an answer, she moves through the outcropping,  
disappears into a passage.

Russ shrugs, takes his passage one step at a time.

Pauses at a sharp turn.

Monique screeches surprise. Gunfire - BING, BING, BING, BING.

Russ automatically starts for her.

A sharp turn and he faces Helena, gun leveled at his chest. BING, BING, BING. His vest lights up, he's dead.

HELENA

Got'cha.

Sammy leads Monique over. She's coldly furious.

SAMMY

Told you it would work. Mama hates to take direction.

HELENA

Well, I guess I'll give you two time to work it out. Russ.

She retreats the way they came in. Russ hustles to catch up.

Sammy and Monique eye each other for too long.

MONIQUE

Well?

SAMMY

I'm waiting on you.

MONIQUE

Really. Is this your idea of kissing up?

She starts past him.

SAMMY

Hardly. I'm not getting stabbed in the back.

She stops dead, eye to eye, not amused. Sammy smirks.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Calling it like I see it, MIZ Basque. You're all lovey-dovey to somebody's face then soon as they're gone you're sabotaging their work. Yeah, I got your number and it ain't Number One. You know what I mean? This way.



He starts off down an off-shoot. Monique fingers the pistol, contemplating shooting him in the back.

INT. LABYRINTH - HOBBIT HIDE - NIGHT

Russ stops in a shallow cup to look and listen. Behind him Helena keeps an eye on their back trail.

HELENA

So, you and Jason, all that because you beat him at his own game. How long ago was that?

RUSS

Four years. It wasn't that hard. He was pretty smug.

HELENA

That's a long time to hold a grudge over a game.

RUSS

No, the hate goes back a lot longer. The day I lost my leg, he crushed his rotator cuff, shredded the tendons in that arm.

HELENA

Really? You'd never know it.

RUSS

Normal stuff, he's fine. But his bread and butter was tossing a football sixty yards to his wide receiver.

She stops moving, looks at him. Russ shrugs.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Jason Battaglia. Hofstra First string quarterback in his sophomore year.

HELENA

I'm not big on college sports. Hold on. You're -- No way you went to school with him.

RUSS

Not at the same time. He's my big brother. He was driving me to a track meet when he hit that wall.

Her eyes narrow, dissecting his face.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
I use Mom's maiden name. For a couple of reasons.

HELENA  
So he blames you then, for losing a career?

RUSS  
The whole family. Golden boy was on track for a multi-million dollar contract that would support Mom and Dad in the style to which they always aspired. Me? I was a knock-kneed clumsy after thought, a Cinderella only good for cleaning up after the precious darlings.

She can only gape at him, stunned by the emotion. Russ takes a breath, shakes off the anger.

HELENA  
Feel better?

RUSS  
Not really. My therapist says I have to face him to get over the block.

Helena taps her pistol on her palm, steps out of cover.

Monique edges into view, fires. BING!

Helena YELPS - HIT. Russ lays down covering FIRE as they retreat with Sammy and Monique in pursuit.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
So, are you having fun yet?

Helena darts wildly through an off-shoot.

Russ takes another passage.

Sammy FIRES from cover. Helena's vest lights up with HITS. Russ angles to get a bead on Sammy.

Monique edges for advantage.

Russ dodges backwards, fires at Monique. BING, BING, BING. She's out.

He reloads on the run, rounding a column to come up behind Sammy. Sammy's already taking aim.

Russ dives to the floor, rolls onto his back, FIRES, nailing Sammy with a cluster of SHOTS before Sammy can lower his aim.

BING, BING, BING, BING. Sammy's vest lights up - dead. He sputters his fury.

Helena brings them into a loose circle to catch their breath. Sammy eyes Russ, then Monique, turns a grin to Helena.

SAMMY

How about one more round? I need to partner with my man.

RUSS

Is that really necessary?

MONIQUE

I'd like to see that.

HELENA

So would I.

No way can he win this argument.

RUSS

Sure, fine. Two minute fresh start?

They all sync wristbands. Helena thumbs the button to start. She leads Monique down the passage.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason checks the auction board, liking the odds building. Scanning the monitors, he zeroes in on Russ and Sammy facing off, intrigued by the animosity in their postures.

A touch of buttons, and he pulls in sound.

INT. LABYRINTH - HOBBIT HIDE - NIGHT

Russ and Sammy stare at each other until Russ looks away. Sammy keeps him boxed in.

SAMMY

I don't like hearing from management that there are problems in my department.

RUSS

It's kind of tough raising issues when you do all the talking.

SAMMY

Somebody has to keep you geeks on point, which brings me to the real issue here. Pull your name from the promotion list and I'll forget all your resistance to taking orders.

RUSS

Sorry, what?

SAMMY

I'm saying step aside. You're a worker bee. Nothing more. This promotion is mine.

RUSS

You didn't earn it.

SAMMY

Yeah, I did.

Russ steams, almost bites his tongue, shakes his head.

RUSS

You didn't contribute anything to the actual build. You came in on the beta.

SAMMY

That's what a manager does.

RUSS

Only the lazy ones. You want the office? Get your hands dirty with the team. And don't give me that black bias shit. That's bogus and you know it.

That strikes a nerve. Sammy's hackles rise automatically. Russ isn't backing down for once.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason cuts the sound, sits back to think.

His chat list blinks with multiple red messages, people are challenging each other, picking sides and scenarios.

He clicks on his high roller thread.

Message: My people are bored waiting for this champion to be isolated.

Jason frets, licks his lips, leans into the keyboard.

Jason types: How about taking out all four?

Message: At one time? That whets the appetite. The price?

He puts in 30, pauses, erases that.

Jason writes: 500K.

Message: Extravagant.

Jason writes: You won't get this anywhere else, and I'll throw in a bonus. Obstacle auction on the side. Neither you or they will know what's coming.

He TAPS nervous fingers. Finally the chat scroll works.

Message: LOL. Done.

The chat box closes out. Jason slaps himself a high five.

JASON

Okay. Hunt, harvest, then burn the place down and buy myself an island to retire to. Bye, Russ, not nice knowing you.

He gets busy locating the others, activates the drones.

INT. LABYRINTH - HOBBIT HIDE - NIGHT

A moment goes by. Sammy's arrogance simmers down.

SAMMY

Everybody's name goes on the project.

RUSS

Yeah, in the fine print. Do you know how that looks in a job interview? Like we were exaggerating our importance to the effort.

SAMMY

So the rumors are true. You are quitting.

RUSS

You know, I just might, just so I don't have to hear you bitch and moan how you can't catch a break because you're black. Why in the hell did you want this job in the first place?

SAMMY

To get my mama off my back.

Russ gapes at him. Sammy shrugs.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

And it looked like fun. I've written insurance policies. Talk about your dead end careers. You know what I mean?

They study each other, belligerence fading.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Ladies are getting a real head start. So, how are we doing this?

Russ consults his map.

RUSS

Let's check out the Grand Gallery. Should be plenty of ambush ops there.

Sammy nods. Russ takes the lead, keeping Sammy close enough to avoid a shot in the back.

INT. LABYRINTH - SMUGGLERS RUN - NIGHT

Helena advances, ineffectively mimicking peek and search action. Monique trails behind her, eyes on her wrist monitor.

Helena checks the walls high overhead, shivers.

HELENA

Why do I feel like we're not the only ones in here?

MONIQUE

There are a ridiculous number of cameras. For their nerd fests I imagine. Boys do like to watch themselves doing stuff.

HELENA  
You really don't like these games.

MONIQUE  
Not especially. Do you?

HELENA  
Hate them. I'd rather read a book.

MONIQUE  
Fiction or non?

HELENA  
Non. Oh, I do like fiction, but  
stand alone novels. I don't have  
the time for a twelve volume  
series. How about you?

MONIQUE  
Vampire smut.

Helena stifles a giggle, tries to anyway.

HELENA  
So, who would you like as manager?

MONIQUE  
Well, of course, myself. Russell  
shies away from confrontation and  
Sammy --  
(sighs)  
Without the team he's all flash, no  
substance. I'd put him in sales.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason tracks the action on four different monitors. Drone  
views take up screens as the crafts take up the hunt.

He nudges the power level of the guns up for Sammy and  
Monique.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Sammy and Russ track the girls on their wrist monitors.  
Splitting up, Sammy goes right, Russ heads left.

Helena tracks Russ to a crossroad. Her SHOTS go around him.

Sammy zips through a parallel passage, FIRES to back her off.

Monique picks up Russ, follows through twists and turns.

Russ catches the slightest SCUFF of vest against wall, freezes in place. A moment to listen then he ducks low.

A laser SHOT hits the wall over his head, throwing up a puff of plaster.

Russ dodges into the left fork of a switchback, missteps on debris, stumbles along on his prosthetic.

Monique hurries after him. Left. Right. Right again. Passing ledges without a second look. Frustrated, she picks up speed down a fresh passage.

Russ gently rolls out from under a knee high ledge, listens before rolling into the open.

He pushes to his feet, heads back to the ambush point.

There's a pile of plaster and small rocks at the base of the wall. A round scorch mark surrounds the wall damage.

He touches fingers to the blast area, knocks off more plaster. This shouldn't happen.

He aims his gun at the opposite wall. The SHOT barely registers as a light spot, no damage.

Nerves keying up, he turns away. His bad leg gives out and he sinks to the floor to check the prosthetic.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Sammy advances slowly through multiple small coves, hyper-alert to the SILENCE.

JASON (V.O.)

Sandman.

Freaked, Sammy whirls a circle, puts his back to a wall.

JASON (V.O.)

Calm down, dude.

SAMMY

Is the game over?

JASON (V.O.)

Not by a long shot. How about an edge?

SAMMY

Right. What will that cost me?



JASON (V.O.)  
 Your pride, but then I don't see  
 where that matters much to you.  
 It's all what others see on the  
 outside, isn't it?

SAMMY  
 You been spying on us all along.

JASON (V.O.)  
 Part of my job. Now, do you want  
 some free hints or not?

SAMMY  
 Keep talking.

JASON (V.O.)  
 Russ' leg.

SAMMY  
 What about it?

JASON  
 What are you, a boy scout? Get rid  
 of it to slow him down.

Sammy considers that, laughs at the absurdity.

SAMMY  
 That's a dirty trick. What did he  
 ever do to you?

JASON (V.O.)  
 The little bastard cost me a pro  
 ball career. Two weeks shy of  
 signing with the Giants I got stuck  
 driving his sorry kid ass to some  
 stupid track meet.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason shifts in his seat, agitation rising. Hands POUND the  
 control board.

AUDIO FLASHBACK - ANGRY VOICES, aroused TRUCK HORNS,  
 PROTESTING TIRES.

JASON  
 It was his fault we hit that wall.  
 Yak, yak, yak, he wouldn't shut the  
 hell up. Arguing with me over some  
 stupid shit.

AUDIO FLASHBACK - CRASH of METAL against STONE.

His eyes find Russ on the monitor, narrow with hatred.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Sammy deliberates, almost sympathetic.

SAMMY

Your own brother?

JASON

A whoops baby. Useless since the day he was born. You'd be doing the whole family a favor.

SAMMY

Make it worth my while. Bragging rights won't do it.

JASON (V.O.)

How about a piece of the action? I got people watching and the odds on you winning this round are pretty dismal.

Sammy burns, humiliated.

SAMMY

I'm not that bad a shot.

JASON (V.O.)

Get real. If this was a tourney, you'd be eliminated in the first, maybe second round. You're reckless and sloppy. Now a long shot coming in makes for a nice payout. I'll cut you in for half.

Sammy takes a moment to stew, pacing a tight circle. Does he have any integrity?

SAMMY

Keep talking.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Sammy moves through the turns, following his wrist monitor. He stops behind the last wall, peeks around.

Russ' back is to Sammy as he levers himself upright.

Sammy charges, tackles him to the ground, fumbles for the pressure valve.

RUSS  
Hey! Get off me.

He squirms, but Sammy uses his weight expertly.

SAMMY  
All's fair. You know what I mean?

RUSS  
I've heard that before. Get off me.  
You're going to break something.  
Christ. I'll give you the leg. Back  
off.

Russ reaches to push Sammy's hand off, breaks the seal. Sammy yanks the leg.

He's off and running. Russ lays still, fed up.

INT. LABYRINTH - WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

A literal dwarf's wine cellar with barrels and kegs of all sizes lining the walls. Wood table and chairs.

Sammy stops to catch his breath, juggles the prosthetic. It's heavier than he imagined. Time to ditch it.

He TAPS the barrel tops until he finds one that moves, stuffs the leg in and checks out the door before exiting.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Russ sits, digs in a pocket for a small device. A thumb press and the screen lights up. A green dot stops moving.

He checks the tracker screen against his labyrinth map, gets himself up, holsters the gun and hops out.

INT. LABYRINTH - BAMBOOZLE - NIGHT

Monique ambles along, using the wrist monitor to avoid the others. A high pitched WHINE brings her head up. She looks around, spots a camera, moves out of its range.

Finds a cove that isn't monitored and hides behind a column. Turns off her wrist monitor before peeking out.

A drone hovers through the passage, stops at the camera.  
Turns left, turns right.

Monique ducks back, peeks out as the drone flies past her  
hiding spot. Huffs indignation recognizing the colors.

MONIQUE  
Sammy. Figures he'd cheat.

INT. LABYRINTH - WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

Russ hops in, hugging the wall for support. He keys in to a  
high pitched WHINE, checks his wrist monitor. The drone  
signal shows and its bearing down on him.

Fear rising, Russ PUNCHES each keg in sequence, halfway  
around the room before he finds the hollow barrel.

He lifts the prosthetic out, drags over a chair to sit. His  
wrist monitor BEEPS with the drone's approach.

Russ fumbles with the fitting, pushes the prosthetic off to  
try again. Finally gets the suction solid, checks out the  
door, then takes off up the passage.

INT. LABYRINTH - CYCLOPS DOOM - NIGHT

Dodging around stalagmites, Russ almost runs head-first into  
a second drone. FIRES at the machine, keeps running.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason's having a good laugh when his chat board lights up.

Message - We had an arrangement.

Jason types - Chill. This is just a little of the side  
action. Lasers at minus power. No harm, no foul.

He's ready to return attention to the monitors when --

Message - We want Dancer undamaged for future amusement.

Jason types - Uh, what?

Message - Nothing you need to know about.

That sends a shiver down Jason's spine. He has to steel  
himself before going back to the keypad.

Jason types - You don't know this kid. He won't go for that.

He sweats, staring at the chat box as the icon whirls.

Message - With the right incentive anyone will do anything. An anonymous call to authorities regarding certain missing persons would complicate your life, yes?

Jason forces his hands to the keypad.

Jason types: Agreement will be honored.

He watches the chat box anxiously. Only regular messages.

INT. LABYRINTH - RABBIT HOLE - NIGHT

Russ ducks and dodges the drones, angry at this assault, worried that he can't shake them.

He starts FIRING at the wall cameras to blind the lenses.

Gains a few yards.

Backing along a wall he hits a hidden floor button that opens the door to the medical room.

Surprised, he hesitates.

The WHINE of the approaching drones makes him slip inside. The door closes just before the drones enter the passage.

INT. MEDICAL LAB - NIGHT

Heaving to get his breath back, Russ looks around, gapes at what seems to be a first aid station.

He checks the ceiling and corners. No obvious cameras.

The disinfectant smell gets to him. He gags, falls against the wall. Finds the latch to open the door.

Edges an eye out to scout.

An ice machine DROPS A LOAD.

Startled, Russ swings back, gun leveled.

Okay, no threat. Just ice.

His eyes land on a red and white cooler peeking out from under a curtain edge. Red letters HU show. He advances, brushes the curtain aside.

His breath catches. Then he's checking the room again, scared. But he's alone.

The lettering on the cooler - HUMAN ORGAN IN TRANSIT.

Behind the curtain there's shelving with more transit boxes.

He can't get out fast enough.

The curtain moves under an influx of air. A door opens and the MEDIC 2 sticks his head out to look around. He shrugs.

INT. GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

Medic 2 shuts the door, returns to his chair. The room is small, comfy with sofas, fridge, table and chairs, all the electronic diversion you could want.

He grabs his coffee and book, settles in.

INT. LABYRINTH - MINATAUR NEXUS - NIGHT

Russ races through the passages blindly, just to get away.

He forces himself to stop and breathe, locates an intercom with a video screen. Calls Jason.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason finds Russ on the monitors, scowls.

JASON  
Calling quits?

RUSS  
What's that lab doing in this run?

A flicker of guilt crosses Jason's face.

JASON  
What lab? Oh, you mean the first  
aid station. Do you know how many  
idiots get hurt in here?

He works his controls, feeding the drone's camera to the screen above Russ. The auction board racks up dollars.

RUSS

Don't snow me, Jase. That's a full on freaking OR. I saw stacks of organ donation boxes.

JASON

No, you didn't.

RUSS

I was in there. I saw -- What kind of game are you playing?

JASON

It's called saving my skin, literally.

RUSS

Well, count me out.

JASON

Oh. Too bad. I guess your playmates' lives are on you then.

The auction board stops. Jason awards drone control to the winner, sits back at ease.

RUSS

What?

JASON

Yeah. Sorry, not sorry. You guys just happened in here on the wrong day. I'm in deep and four bodies will go a long way to getting me flush.

RUSS

You can't do that.

JASON

You're such a dweeb. When the bills come due, money comes in handy. You wouldn't believe how much people will pay to do some exotic hunting. Couldn't do it too often. There are only so many places you can safely dump a body.

Russ is fascinated and horrified. And the drones advance.

JASON (CONT'D)

Luckily I found some people looking for organs, no questions asked and what they can't use goes to medical schools. Problem solved and more money in the bank. Med schools pay ridiculous money for bodies.

RUSS

All this to get back at me?

The first drone tracks the passages.

JASON

You're nothing. This is my business, the business I had to take after you destroyed my life.

RUSS

Oh, pardon the hell out of me, being a pro football player was the only career option. You're the idiot who paid people to take your classes to get passing grades.

JASON

Hey, I had better things to do.

RUSS

Sure you did. Like sucking up to Dad to be his trophy winner because neither one of you cared about anything but being The Man.

JASON

Boo hoo hoo. Is little Rusty angry that he didn't get any attention? You were a waste of space, always falling over yourself. What were your big plans then?

RUSS

I was going to join the Army Rangers, jackass. Be the man you wimped out on.

Jason pushes back from the control panel, humiliated.

INT. LABYRINTH - MINATAUR NEXUS - NIGHT

Russ listens, smirks at the SILENCE, pleased with himself. The moment passes and worry sets in.



RUSS  
Good move. Antagonize the jerk  
who's keeping you in the cage.

He catches a faint WHINE of drone props, turns down the intercom volume. His wristband screen stays blank.

JASON  
You still there?

RUSS  
You won't away with this. People  
will come looking for us.

JASON  
And I'll tell them you left long  
and ever ago. Just hold still and  
this will be over quick. The odds  
on you winning at this point would  
cost me a bundle.

Russ hits the buttons to disconnect. The intercom stays lit.  
He takes off down the passage.

JASON (CONT'D)  
You can't hide. That cyborg leg of  
yours makes you easy to track.

INT. LABYRINTH - TREE TOP AERIE - NIGHT

A warren of columns and hanging creepers. Monique hides, lets Sammy pass without making a sound.

INT. LABYRINTH - TROLL TOLL - NIGHT

A series of half caves and tunnels. The drone flies in. A near miss sends Russ ducking thru the switchbacks.

He stops at a triple fork, scans the passages.

RUSS  
Okay. This is not how to go about  
it. Think. Anticipate.

He shifts his weight. His bad leg resists and he wobbles. Rubbing the brace sparks hope.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
A target?

He advances, looking for a vantage point.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The first drone follows a targeting grid through the passage. Jason ready at backup controls as it hovers.

Then its moving, maneuvering up and over a medium sized boulder, swiveling as it corners. The laser HITS the wall --

Above the prosthetic where it leans upright.

JASON  
What in the hell?

He leans in, not believing what he's seeing.

INT. LABYRINTH - TROLL TOLL- NIGHT

Russ heaves up behind the drone, throwing his shirt like a casting net to capture the machine.

He drags it to the floor, SMASHES it to death with the butt of his pistol.

BREATHING HEAVY, he's still on his knees when a new WHINE breaks the silence. He looks up at the second drone.

Nowhere to hide. Russ reverses his grip on the pistol, eyes not leaving the machine.

He throws himself sideways, avoiding the drone's first SHOT.

The drone spins, TAGS Russ in the left shoulder. He aims, blinding the drone sensors. The craft SMASHES into a wall.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The drone monitor goes to static, then black. Overhead the odds board goes crazy.

HOWLING MAD, Jason works the controls to pick up the cameras.

MESSAGE - Get me another drone! This is brilliant fun.

JASON  
Yeah, its all fun and games until I have to pay for new equipment. Keep your shirt on. These things have to be programmed.

INT. LABYRINTH - TROLL TOLL - NIGHT

Russ is still on hands and knees, recovering his breath. FOOTSTEPS run up. He throws himself onto his back, takes aim.

Helena comes around the corner. Russ holds his fire. She YELPS her surprise.

He lays back, done. She crosses to the drones.

HELENA

What happened here?

Russ grabs his prosthetic, fits it on, a little wobbly.

RUSS

We're in trouble.

HELENA

Maybe you are. I have plenty of ammo.

RUSS

No. No, listen. Jason's set us up in some crazy hunt. He means to kill us.

HELENA

If you're tired of playing you could just call quits. No need to make up excuses.

RUSS

Do you see this mess here? He came after me with these to kill me.

HELENA

They have the same firepower this has.

She fires at him. BING. The vest registers the hit, no damage.

RUSS

He changed the power level.

HELENA

Aren't you overreacting? Maybe you're tired. In fact. No, you know what. I'm tired of this. Not a one of you shows the slightest interest in working as a team.

RUSS

You wanted every man for himself.  
This is how it works. Teams are  
totally different strategies.

HELENA

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Keep making  
excuses. I'll be outside waiting  
for you children to grow up.

She stalks away from him.

INT. LABYRINTH - FOYER - NIGHT

Helena marches to the door, reaches for the handle. When it  
doesn't open, she tugs on it. POUNDS the panel.

HELENA

Hey! Hey, you, game's over. Open  
the door.

SILENCE. She looks around for the wall map and the intercom  
buttons underneath.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason glances at the blinking button, searches cameras until  
he finds Helena at the door.

JASON

Oh, is someone a sore loser?

He brings up sound on the monitor as she alternately POUNDS  
the control buttons and the walls.

HELENA (V.O.)

Get this door open now! Are you  
asleep at the switch up there? What  
kind of place are you running here?  
Not everybody can hold their water  
for hours on end. You're going to  
have a mess on your hands if this  
door isn't open in two minutes.

Jason considers that, looks over his board, finds the button  
that lights up an EXIT sign behind Helena.

INT. LABYRINTH - FOYER - NIGHT

Helena BASHES the buttons some more, GROWLS and turns a  
circle, spots the EXIT ONLY, crosses to a camouflaged door.

SNORTING victory, she shoves through.

INT. LABYRINTH - ACCESS HALL - NIGHT

Helena finds herself in a sterile dim curving hall. She follows it along, passing rest room doors.

An EXIT sign glows above the door at the end of the hall. She trots up, pushes the door out and --

INT. LABYRINTH - SMUGGLERS' RUN - NIGHT

Finds herself back in the maze.

HELENA  
Son of a bitch.

She checks her wrist monitor. There's another emergency exit in the Dragon's Lair.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason keeps focus on Helena.

JASON  
Time for the weakest link to go bye-bye. Who's up for target practice?

Hatches open to release a pair of drones.

INT. LABYRINTH - RABBIT HOLE - NIGHT

Helena passes the medical door without stopping.

A drone sails along behind her. Walls pivot on tracks to close her into a circle.

INT. GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

The medic shakes out of his gaming when a yellow light flashes above the door to the lab.

INT. LABYRINTH - RABBIT HOLE - NIGHT

Nerves stretched thin, Helena makes arbitrary turns without realizing she's going in concentric circles.

She stops to listen and look around, baffled by the change she can't define.

She takes the passage again, past tiny pockets and weirdly shaped pillars.

Comes back to the same spot.

Frustrated, she takes off a shoe, leaves it as a marker, leaves the second at the first junction.

Confidence peaking, she moves faster, less cautious, ignores the weird pillars.

A final turn and she's back at her first shoe.

Breathing hard, she fights to stay calm. There has to be a way out. Then she catches the WHINE of the drone props.

Grabs her shoes, and keeping one hand on a wall, she advances deliberately, checking every inch, taking different turns.

She winds up back at the junction, ducks back when the drone comes into the passage.

It heads away from her.

Helena darts back the way she came in, past the medical door, down the passage but it dead ends.

Fighting her panic under iffy control, she takes an off-shoot, finds a tight cul-de-sac and wedges herself in.

She drops the pistol. Shaking hands are forced together between her knees and she rocks out nerves.

INT. LABYRINTH - FOYER - NIGHT

Monique strides confidently to the door. It doesn't open under her push. Annoyed, she goes to the wall map, locates the other players, TAPS nails on the board.

INT. LABYRINTH - MINATAUR NEXUS - NIGHT

Sammy slows as checks his wrist monitor. The drone WHINE turns him in a circle. He shuts off his monitor, ducks into a half-cave.

INT. LABYRINTH - RABBIT HOLE - NIGHT

Nerves fraying as the drone WHINE closes in, Helena peeks out of her hiding spot. The drone passes her, hovers at a branch.

Helena snatches her pistol, darts out the other way. The drone swivels around, follows.

Herding her back into the circle trap.

Helena stops in a dead end. Tears of frustration break.

She turns, waits for the drone. EMPTIES her PISTOL at the machine as it lowers into point blank range to no effect.

Her fear gives way to fury and she bunches up for a charge as the drone laser FIRES.

INT. LABYRINTH - DRAGON'S LAIR - NIGHT

Russ comes out of hiding behind Monique, catches her close to his chest, gun to her head.

MONIQUE

Hey! You bastard, no fair.

RUSS

I needed your full attention.

MONIQUE

You cheat worse than Sammy.

RUSS

Just listen. Point at that rock and fire.

He flicks his gun barrel so she can see where he's pointing, puts it back to her head.

MONIQUE

You don't think I can hit it.

RUSS

I think I want you to do what I say.

She huffs indignation, aims at the rock. Takes her time, not sure of her aim or of him.

FIRES. A BURST of ignited plaster.

MONIQUE

Oh! Oh. How?

RUSS  
Are we cool?

MONIQUE  
For now.

He releases her. She turns on him, checking her LED levels.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)  
This says I'm at five percent.

RUSS  
So does mine.

He FIRES at the wall, gets a soft PUFF of plaster.

MONIQUE  
Why would anyone screw around with these? Somebody could get hurt.

RUSS  
Somebody could get dead. If we don't kill each other with lucky shots Jason will do the honors with his drones. He has a lab standing by to deal with the bodies.

Monique squints at him with disbelief.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
I need your help to convince Sammy that this isn't a trick.

Monique takes her time, not close to trusting, then again maybe a temporary change of partners is in order.

MONIQUE  
I want to see that lab.

RUSS  
No, you don't.

INT. MEDICAL LAB - NIGHT

The medic drops Helena on the table. He admires her, then pulls a tray of instruments close.

He chucks her under the chin, turning her head to evaluate the near miss laser burn across her scalp. Then realizes she's breathing, jerks back.

MEDIC 1  
Oh shit.



He gets himself under control, picks out a scalpel.

Helena's eyes open, focus on the scalpel and she erupts in a flurry of arms and legs.

The man stumbles backwards. Helena rolls off the table, puts herself in a corner behind a cabinet, throws whatever she can reach.

The Medic cowers behind a shelf, pulls a cell phone.

INT. MEDICAL LAB - LATER

The door SLAMS open, pausing the barrage. Jason doesn't enter, places the medic who points to Helena's corner.

JASON

You had one job.

He arms a small caliber pistol.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Russ and Monique come at Sammy from two sides as he skulks through a narrow passage. He glares disgust at Monique.

SAMMY

Well, now I see where The  
Weathergirl nickname comes in.

MONIQUE

Excuse me.

SAMMY

You know they call you that behind  
your back? I had to wonder, but now  
its clear. You turn whichever way  
the wind blows.

Her eyes narrow with fury, posture stiffening.

MONIQUE

At least my staff has a name for  
me. Your crew can't even bother to  
undermine you, you're so useless.

RUSS

Stop it. This is what he wants - us  
at each other's throats.

SAMMY

So what's happening? Game over?

RUSS

The game has changed. Jason sold us out as targets.

SAMMY

People don't just hunt people. Well, normal people.

RUSS

Can't you take anything I tell you at face value?

Sammy remains skeptical.

SAMMY

The place would get a rep if people kept disappearing.

RUSS

Unless the people disappearing are people nobody bothers with in the first place. There are homeless for blocks around except right around here.

That hits a nerve.

SAMMY

So he's going to take out four of us? That's bull. I'm thinking its just you he's after. Revenge, you know.

MONIQUE

What?

SAMMY

They're brothers. Russell cost him a pro football career.

Russ' frustration boils over.

RUSS

I was twelve years old! That ass was driving like Vin Diesel in Fast and Furious except we were in traffic and he lost control. Not my fault and I sure didn't plan on losing a leg just to screw with his life plans. We're wasting time. Shoot something. I'm telling the truth.

Sammy's still not convinced, but he FIRES at a stalactite, shocked when it EXPLODES into a puff of plaster.

SAMMY  
Well shit the bed.

MONIQUE  
Exactly.

SAMMY  
Did anyone check the doors?

Monique nods. Sammy hesitates still.

SAMMY (CONT'D)  
So, what's the plan?

RUSS  
We have to make Jason open the door. If we set up a deadfall and trap him, we can turn the tables.

SAMMY  
What if he doesn't bite?

RUSS  
Oh, I can make him bite.

MONIQUE  
Wait a second. Why go to all the trouble of getting him in when we can get out through that lab?

Russ gapes, mortified that he didn't think of that.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)  
So, show the way.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason follows their progress via the sensors in the vests. He figures out where they're headed. A simple touch of button disables the door control.

INT. LABYRINTH - RABBIT HOLE - NIGHT

Russ slows as they come into the passage. He passes a hand over the camouflage door.

SAMMY  
How does it open? I don't see any latches.

RUSS

Foot pedal.

He backtracks, scraping a foot until he nudges the button.

Monique waits. He won't open the door.

MONIQUE

You're afraid there's somebody on  
the other side.

RUSS

Has to be. How else is he getting  
bodies out?

Sammy pushes between them, stomps the button. Nothing. He  
smirks, vindicated in his disbelief.

MONIQUE

Let me try.

She feels along the ground, taps the button, steps on it  
hard. Nothing. Glares at the wall.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

No way to pry open that seam.

SAMMY

Because there isn't any.

RUSS

Or the man upstairs is watching us  
and cut off escape. We have to go  
back to Plan A, get him to come in  
after us.

SAMMY

So he won't figure out what we're  
doing then?

RUSS

Take out the cameras. We do it  
randomly so he can't find a  
pattern, then rig the trap.

MONIQUE

And Helena?

RUSS

She could be sitting at the door  
waiting for us to finish this.  
We'll look after we set the  
deadfall.

He starts up the passage.

SAMMY

Hold on. He'll figure out we're up to something if we're all bunched up. We should take different routes. Meet up in the gallery. You know what I mean?

Abruptly the lights go out.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Not funny.

MONIQUE

How are we supposed to navigate?

RUSS

It's okay. The emergency lights will come on any second.

SAMMY

What if --

Dim blue lights come up, throwing up weird shadows.

RUSS

He can't screw with security systems. They're independent. This works to our advantage.

SAMMY

He could go infrared.

RUSS

Either way we have better cover for movement. There's a weak wall in the gallery that's prime for sabotage. I'll take Monique as far as the Minataur Nexus and split off. Take out every third camera to mess with him and we'll see what we can do.

Sammy and Monique nod before they split up. Sammy watches them around a corner, heads the other way.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Cameras go out one by one. Jason fumes when secondary systems can't compensate. The infrared lens are compromised by the speed that the players are traveling.

He works the control board, looking for undamaged cameras. Switches the lights back, leapfrogs through screens at high speed. Beside him the message board continually BEEPS with incoming notes.

A Zoom call comes in. Medic 1's silhouette.

MEDIC 1  
My man is late calling in.

JASON  
I'm kind'a busy right now.

He puts a map of the run on one screen, crosses off rooms after he checks for occupants, closing in on the Grand Gallery.

MEDIC 1 (V.O.)  
The B positive will go a long way  
to clearing your debt.

JASON  
Yeah, well, there's a --

Jason stops his work, turns to the zoom screen.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I never told you his blood type.

MEDIC 1 (V.O.)  
The machines you were supplied also  
report to me.

That sends a shiver down Jason's spine.

JASON  
You spy on me!

MEDIC 1 (V.O.)  
We maintain surveillance on all our  
suppliers. It's good for business  
relations. I'm sending a second  
unit. I suggest you have the goods  
ready.

His call blacks out. Jason just stares at the screen.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Sammy's inspecting the wall when Monique, then Russ join him.

SAMMY

This piece here should come down in one chunk. Maybe. How are we going to drop it?

Russ looks around, finds something he can move.

RUSS

Work it loose then prop it up with this. We can trip him into it.

They get to work, putting the guns on a low ledge. Russ keeps both people in sight, edgy with worry.

Monique stays out of the way, moving small pieces to disguise the obvious nature of the trap.

Russ picks up Sammy's gun, slides it into his holster as they finish balancing the pieces in place.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The message board fills up with demands for action.

Jason pinpoints the players by their vest monitors, opens a drawer without taking his eyes off the screen.

Brings out the pistol. The butt brushes over the switch to the medical lab, flicks it on.

Jason checks the cartridge load, SLAMS it home.

INT. PRIVATE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Jason STORMS in, leaving the control room door open.

His rush across the room is distracted by muffled GURGULING, and he looks over at Helena bound and gagged.

The pistol raises slightly, lowers. He shakes his head.

JASON

You're the least of my troubles.

He exits. Helena's eyes narrow. She can see the monitors inside, the tote boards with bets still in play.

That makes her even more furious and she wiggles in her bonds, dislodges a loop. Works methodically at the weak spot.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

The three take stock of their simple mousetrap build.

SAMMY

So this is really going to work?

RUSS

Jase always bragged he was smarter than me. He'll spring it just to prove I couldn't catch him.

He steps closer to feel for the release point. Sammy uses two hands to shove Russ forward, triggering the fall.

MONIQUE

What are you doing!? He was telling the truth.

Sammy cheats a glance her way.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

You're working the system, doing what that maniac wants.

She SMACKS him again and again. Sammy grabs a shoulder, holds her away from solid punching.

SAMMY

Get a grip on yourself. This is part of the plan.

She tries kicking at his shins, scrapes nails across his hand to make him release his hold.

Jason rounds a corner, just watches until they notice him, and the real gun he has leveled.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

You don't need that.

JASON

I'm running a business here. I don't have all night to play with you jokers.

And it dawns on Sammy, he's been played.

SAMMY

You gonna shoot me? You backstabbing mother. Go ahead. Nobody wants my organs, man. I'm HIV positive.



JASON

There's more than one use for a corpse.

SAMMY

Man, this is messed up. Where's your mouth, girl? You ain't shut up all day.

MONIQUE

Like I should sacrifice myself for you? I don't think so.

As Jason's attention flicks back and forth, Monique palms a rock, slings it at him, HITTING him in the face. When he flinches his eyes shut she takes off down the hall.

Sammy aims his pistol at Jason's eyes for a quick BURST before he runs up another passage.

Jason blinks his vision back, goes to the deadfall to look it over, nods appreciation, then takes off after Monique.

INT. LABYRINTH - RABBIT HOLE - NIGHT

Monique stops, listens for pursuit. She checks her wristband. No screens.

Checks her location by sight, recognizes some configuration and heads off with deliberate steps.

She comes to the hidden door, STOMPS the button, relieved when it actually opens and dodges inside.

INT. MEDICAL LAB - NIGHT

She keeps her pistol up and her back to the door, ready for action. But the room is DEAD QUIET.

Monique scans the room, locates the rear door.

MONIQUE

Told ya.

She edges along a wall, still wary, remembers the maze door. It opens out so she can't really blockade it, but she can slow down pursuit.

Lays her pistol on the table, gets behind to push, freezes.

The medic is dead on the floor, gunshot.

For a moment she's freaked, then shoves the table up to the door. She heads out the rear door.

INT. GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

Monique pushes the door shut. This one she can block, looks over the furniture. She grabs a straight back chair to jam under the knob, exits.

INT. LOWER HALL - NIGHT

Quick eyes scan left then right down the empty corridor. Which way?

INT. MEDICAL LAB - NIGHT

The maze door cracks open. Jason pushes in, barks shins on the table.

INT. LOWER HALL - NIGHT

Muffled CURSING from the room behind her. Monique huffs a LAUGH, takes off down the corridor.

Around a corner, an EXIT sign glows red in the dark.

She hurries. Stops with one hand on the bar as she feels for her purse and phone. Dammit, she's wearing the stupid vest. She strips that off, drops it and turns back.

She's not leaving without her goods. Passes the lab door, heads down the other way to a dead end and a staircase. Little option. She heads upstairs.

INT. UPPER HALL - NIGHT

Monique faces a long hall of doors.

Treading softly she listens at each door, tests handles, frustration mounting as nothing yields to her pull.

MUTED sounds of AIR CONDITIONERS and MACHINERY.

At least she's headed toward the front of the building and hopefully another staircase that will access the foyer.

INT. LOWER HALL - NIGHT

Jason comes out, pistol raised. He listens for FOOTSTEPS, heads up the hall for the exit.

He grabs the vest off the floor, beside himself with frustration, turns back up the hall.

INT. PRIVATE LOUNGE

Helena gets enough play in the ropes to slip one hand free. After that its easy to disentangle the rest and get up.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

She tiptoes in, impressed by the set up and looks over the entire layout. The chat box overfilled with comments.

HELENA TYPES: Bastards. The FBI will be in touch to determine what charges to press. Have a nice day.

She gets a glimpse of Jason passing a camera, heads out.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Sammy's huddled in a corner, strung out with waiting.

SAMMY

That shot was dead between his eyes. He can't be alive. So go check and get out of here.

He forces himself to his feet, heads out on soft feet.

INT. UNDER THE ROCK FALL - NIGHT

Russ is pinned face down, upper body shielded by a large slab, his thighs crushed under a cross-wise slate, bleeding from scrapes.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Pistol up and ready, Sammy edges into the run. He's stunned that Jason isn't sprawled there. Looks around. Now what?

A GROAN from under the deadfall.

Help? Don't help? Be the bigger man?

He goes to the deadfall, lays his pistol on a ledge, moves smaller pieces to create an opening.

SAMMY  
Russell, you alive?

Faint movement. A hand reaches.

Sammy gets to work, throws debris out of the way to create a hole big enough to pull Russ out.

SAMMY (CONT'D)  
I got you, dude.

He leans in to grab Russ' arms at the elbows, tugs.

INT. UNDER THE ROCK FALL - NIGHT

Russ comes alert in a panic under the pull that doesn't budge his position.

FLASHBACK

INT. JASON'S CAR - DAY

Working from the back seat, a firefighter tries to pull Russ out from under the deflated air bags.

Russ CRIES out, not moving. The dashboard is practically in his lap. Jason unconscious and bloody, pinned behind the steering wheel.

END FLASHBACK

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

RUSS  
No. Stop. I'm pinned.

Sammy releases his hold, tries to see under the fall.

SAMMY  
Where?

RUSS  
My legs.

FOOTSTEPS. Sammy twists around, searching.

SAMMY  
Hush up.

He's up, reaching for his pistol when Jason comes around a corner. Jason threatens with his pistol, looks past him at the deadfall.

JASON

Really? Now you feel sorry for him?

SAMMY

A day late and a dollar short. He's gone.

JASON

Well, that's something.

Sammy edges a foot toward the ledge. Jason's aim follows.

Russ slits eyes open to watch. His hand inches for his gun.

SAMMY

You're not going to shoot me here.  
Get blood all over your play zone.

JASON

Doesn't matter now. Arson hides a  
lot of sins.

Sammy grabs up his pistol, thumbs the button for AUTO FIRE as he swings his arm up.

TAGS Jason in the shoulder with no effect.

Sammy gapes, looks down at the gun. Now the color registers. This is Russ' weapon.

His eyes snap up to Jason. He gets a snide smile. If he stays still, he's dead. If he turns tail to run, he's dead.

So.

He heaves the pistol at Jason, charges.

Jason sets his feet, aims from the hip. The SHOT hits Sammy mid-body.

Sammy staggers the last few steps, his lunge evaporating into a pawing at Jason's shirt for stability. Jason lets him fall.

Russ holds his breath, eyes barely open as he aims.

Jason eyes the trap. All he can see is a limp left hand and head cocked at a bad angle.

He heads out.

INT. UNDER THE ROCK FALL - NIGHT

Russ GASPS in a breath, gun flopping to rest. He feels over the slab.

Wiggles as best he can, realizes he still has the wrist monitor. Works the buttons until he gets a feeble light.

Enough to see that his legs are pinned under a tight triangle of space created by the leaning sheet.

He squirms to get a hand in to feel around underneath. If only he could lose a leg he could squeeze his good foot out.

Wait a second.

He squirms around the other way, works the prosthetic valve open to release the suction around his thigh, hitches to free his amputated limb which gives him the room to pull his good leg out.

INT. LABYRINTH - GRAND GALLERY - NIGHT

Russ pushes out the gun and prosthetic, drags himself out, choking on dust.

He sits against the wall, shakes with nerves. Pulls the prosthetic to his chest, LAUGHS.

Reattaching the leg, he spots the lump that's Sammy.

He crawls over, feels for a neck pulse, checks the mid-back bullet hole, then eases Sammy onto his back.

A pool of blood, another bullet hole. Sammy's breathing labors through a deep inhale. He COUGHS harshly, curling up.

RUSS

Stay still.

SAMMY

Right.

Russ checks his wristband for the labyrinth layout, locates himself. There's a first aid box somewhere close. He plops Sammy's hand over the wound, pushes to his feet.

RUSS

Right back. Pressure this.

Pushes up to stand, but the prosthetic gives out. Russ barely breaks his fall, pulls the leg to examine.

Hikes his pant leg up high and works the prosthetic on again.

The suction is working, but he's not getting a solid fit. He tugs at a rip in his pant leg until the material parts into strips. He ties that around the prosthetic cup.

He pushes to his feet, gingerly tests his balance, then hobbles up the hall.

Sammy shudders through breathing.

Russ returns with a first aid box. Not much by way of supplies, but better than nothing.

He tears open several gauze pads, slips the bunch under Sammy's hand. Sammy gets his eyes open, lets them close.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Just don't move. You got lucky.  
It's through and through.

SAMMY

Don't feel lucky. That backstabbing  
cocksucking loser of --

RUSS

Hey.

SAMMY

Should'a known he was full of shit.

RUSS

Christ, will you shut it. You're  
not dying.

SAMMY

Course I am, I'm shot.

RUSS

And bleeding like a stuck pig.  
Lucky for you Jason's aim is as bad  
as yours. I don't think he hit  
anything vital.

Sammy sobers, focuses on him.

RUSS (CONT'D)

For real, man.

SAMMY

Mother ... Still hurts.

RUSS

And you're still bleeding. There's not much in this kit. Best thing is to get out and get help.

SAMMY

So, go make yourself useful.

Russ shrugs out of his game vest, tucks it around Sammy.

RUSS

I'm going. Monique?

SAMMY

Girl can save her own ass. She got me shot.

His eyes open, fix on Russ with something like remorse. Russ shrugs. Sammy nods, lets his eyes close.

Before Russ can push to his feet, Sammy catches his arm.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

The leg. How did you find it?

RUSS

You're not the first to pull that stunt.

He brings a tracker out of a pocket.

RUSS (CONT'D)

I get them micro-chipped.

Sammy LAUGHS, GAGS on pain.

SAMMY

That's dope. You win.

Russ pushes to his feet, heads out, awkward on the wobbly prosthetic.

INT. LASER TAG ARCADE - READY ROOM - NIGHT

Knocking dust off herself, Monique lets herself in a back service door, listens for company, then darts to her locker and pulls her goods out. She tries her phone, but there's no service.

She stuffs it away, goes to the foyer door, opens it a fraction to peek out.



INT. LASER TAG FOYER - NIGHT

Helena comes down the stairs, eyeballs the room, heads for the front door. Locked.

She SLAMS a shoulder against the panel, only hurting herself, keeps at it.

INT. LASER TAG PARLOUR - READY ROOM - NIGHT

Monique lets the door close, THROWS the LOCK. She grabs a rifle out of the rack, ready to use like a bat.

INT. LASER TAG PARLOUR - FOYER - NIGHT

The labyrinth door opens.

Helena ducks behind the snack counter.

Jason barrels out, up the stairs two at a time.

Helena peeks up. Won't be long before he's out again.

She darts to the ready room door, annoyed when it doesn't open. She's about to hammer on it, stops herself.

No time for this. She runs to the city scape hall, closing the door softly behind her.

Jason storms out of the lounge. He travels the balcony, scouring the floor from all angles.

The labyrinth door SNICKS shut.

He smirks. Where else would she go? Good. He heads back into the lounge.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Jason works the controls to check what cameras are working. The cameras flash through shots. The odds board is static.

He turns to the vest trackers, picks up Russ' vest.

Finally gets a long shot view of Sammy.

Jason leans in to the screen trying to figure out what's wrong with the picture.

Fingers the zoom for a closer look.

Monitor - Sammy struggles for breath, arms hugged across his middle. He shifts a bit and Russ' vest slides, showing the second vest underneath.

Jason's breath catches. He moves the camera angle to the rock pile and the hole in the side.

Chat room box blinks for attention.

He glances at the zoom scene to less than half attendance.

Opens the chat to a litany of complaints, questions and cross conversations.

A singular message pops up in red capitals.

Message: Have you lost your f\*\*king mind? Contract is cancelled. Withdrawing funds.

Emotionally spent, he just shakes his head in disbelief. His phone RINGS. Caller ID - Mom.

JASON

And here's the icing on the cake.  
Bitch, I'm blaming you.

He disconnects the RINGING call.

Another camera picks up Russ limping out.

Jason checks his ammo in the pistol, grabs another clip and heads out, leaving the phone on the board as it starts RINGING again.

INT. LASER TAG FOYER - STAIRS - NIGHT

Jason takes steady aim on the labyrinth door.

Russ exits. SHOTS plow into the wall over his head. He ducks for cover.

Gets an eye around a beam, glimpses Jason upstairs working to unjam his pistol. Russ looks around.

The city scape door is right there. He darts over, nearly falls head first when his right leg gives out. Manages to stay on his feet and dives into the room.

Jason runs down the stairs, takes a moment to double-check his clip, enters the maze.

INT. READY ROOM - NIGHT

Curled up on the floor, arms over her head, Monique opens her eyes, listens to the SILENCE. She forces herself to the door, FLICKS the lock and opens it a crack to peek out.

INT. LASER TAG FOYER - NIGHT

Monique takes one hesitant step out. The overhead monitors show Jason and Russ in the city scape run.

Okay, good. She darts to the front door, SLAMS up against it, can't get the lock to unlatch. Next option? Find the keys.

She heads up the stairs to the lounge.

INT. CITY SCAPE - REAR HALL - NIGHT

Russ ducks through buildings to the back of the run.

Through the windows he checks on Jason coming up the middle of the street with deliberate steps, fury held in check.

JASON

We've been here before, bro. It's not going to end good for you this time.

Russ slows his pace to avoid excess noise. Force of habit he drops his hand to recharge the laser pistol. Shakes his head at the absurdity and looks for better cover.

He passes under Helena wedged into a second floor corner.

Jason dodges sharply to his right, gets behind the facades, BANGS on railings and walls.

Russ freezes to place the SOUNDS. He skirts the mirror maze, darts across the street and into cover.

Safe behind a wall he scans out a window for any sign of Jason, brings the pistol up ready to fire.

Jason checks rooms across the street.

Russ takes aim and reality hits him hard - toy weapon against the real thing. He falls back in despair.

Brainstorm. Get to the door and out of the building.

Holstering the gun he heads for the front of the hall, keeping well into any shadows and behind cover.

Jason advances deliberately, looking into every corner.

JASON (CONT'D)  
That's right. Wimp Rusty. Hide like  
the girl you are. Army Ranger. Ha!  
In your dreams.

He bolts into a room, ready to fire. Nothing but shadows.

The creeping tension starts to get to him.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Come out, come out, wherever you  
are. I'll be nice, make it quick  
and clean.

He advances into the next room.

JASON (CONT'D)  
You wanted to be a hero, right?  
Well, think of how many lives you  
can save when we harvest your  
organs.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

At the end of the block Russ stops to listen and look.

Escape is just twenty feet away. But there's no cover.

And there's no choice. He ducks low, makes his run.

Gets his hand on the push bar.

It yields under his pressure, doesn't release. Far behind him  
Jason LAUGHS.

JASON (O.S.)  
Dumb shit, did you forget this is  
my place? I'm the only one with the  
key. Bye, bro.

Russ hits the ground under a short burst of GUNFIRE. He keeps  
rolling to get behind a row of trash cans. Scrabbles to his  
feet and ducks back into the building.

JASON (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Run, rabbit, run.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Monique locks the door, gawks at the computer set up. Before doing anything else, she plugs her phone in to charge.

Goes through drawers for the keys, ignores anything that won't get her out of the building, comes up empty.

She looks over the control board, switching the monitors to city scape cameras, barely invested in the chase.

The chat box catches her eye and she scans through the messages, finding a lot of critiques of her gaming ability.

MONIQUE

Not worth the effort to hunt? I'll give you, not worthy.

Picks up her phone, dials 911.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

Yes, I'd like to report an illegal gambling operation, murder and attempted murder.

Before she settles in to the chair, she hits the LOCK on the city scape hall door.

INT. CITY SCAPE - SECOND FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

Russ scrambles up a staircase, finds refuge and HEAVES to get his breath back.

Sights Jason swaggering down the street.

His hand goes to the pistol. He draws it, puts it back.

He can't stay here.

Traces the catwalk supports of the next level, then the ceiling of the room. Sprinkler heads blip ready lights.

He takes aim. Lowers the gun. Too far away.

Keeping low, he heads for a ladder to the catwalk.

INT. CITY SCAPE - CATWALK - NIGHT

Russ finds cover behind a beam, stands to take careful aim on a sprinkler head, FIRES an extended shot on the electric eye.

Nothing.

He looks around. There's nothing to throw or swing.

He scuffs some trash.

Russ piles papers and wood shavings, takes aim.

The beam holds steady.

RUSS

Come on, come on.

Is that a char forming? Russ has to release the trigger, flex his fingers and recharge the gun. He takes aim again.

A wisp of smoke dissipates quickly.

FOOTSTEPS sound on a staircase somewhere.

Russ checks the immediate area. He's very exposed. Recharges and takes closer aim.

This time the smoke wisp is stronger. A tiny flame erupts. Russ holsters the gun to feed shavings into the fire.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Jason descends a stair case, unprepared for a BEEPING ALARM that announces sprinkler system activation. Water sprays from multiple jets. He runs for the main door.

INT. CITY SCAPE - SECOND FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

Russ finds an adequate hiding spot out of the spray with good view. All he has to do is wait for fire rescue to show up.

NOISE off his right. He shifts position.

A hand comes around the wall. Russ grabs the wrist, yanks, ready to pound his pistol on Jason's head.

But its Helena. He manages to stop himself, helps her to sit.

RUSS

Helena! How did you get in here?

HELENA

Long story. I'm sorry I didn't believe you. The others?

RUSS

Sammy's down. I don't know about Monique.

HELENA  
Russ, he has a real gun.

RUSS  
Yeah, I know.

HELENA  
What do we do?

RUSS  
We sit tight until help arrives.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Soaked to the skin, Jason opens a control panel, tries several buttons. Nothing. There's no way for him to override the fire system.

He SLAMS the panel shut, squints through the rain seeking likely hiding spots.

Heads to the nearest building off his right.

INT. CITY SCAPE - HALL - NIGHT

Jason edges room to room. No sound but the sprinklers. Edgy fingers open and close on the grip.

He passes under Russ' hiding place.

JASON  
You there, chickenshit? Why are you hiding?

RUSS  
Game's over. I don't have to do anything but wait for the cops to show up.

JASON  
Coward.

RUSS  
I'm rubber, you're glue --

JASON  
Shut it!

Helena nudges him hard, scared.

HELENA  
You're making him angry.

RUSS

God, I hope so. He's careless when he's pissed.

HELENA

Please stop talking to him. He'll find us.

Russ wraps an arm around her to comfort.

RUSS

Trust me. When everybody in the house has it in for you, you get real good at hiding. Come on, let's get a place for you he won't find.

Russ checks the level below, holds his hand out. Helena squeezes his fingers, follows his lead.

INT. CITY SCAPE - REAR HALL - NIGHT

Russ and Helena edge down a covered stairwell and into the back rooms of the run.

Russ passes a tiny sheltered nook behind a sofa, backtracks. He pulls the sofa out a foot, eyeballs the space and nods.

RUSS

This is good. Get down in here. Flat. And stay put. I'll keep him on the other side.

Helena checks out the space, chucks him under the chin.

HELENA

Toy guy against real gun. No superhero antics, okay?

RUSS

I'll be fine.

She slithers into place. Russ edges the sofa into position, checks the floor to erase any marks from the move, heads out.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Russ steps out. Behind him, Jason swings around, gets off a SHOT that grazes Russ' left arm. Russ darts into the hall.



INT. CITY SCAPE - HALL - NIGHT

Jason gives chase, running, dodging, cutting corners, in and out of rooms. Never getting a clean target.

JASON

What are you running from! Just roll over and be dead.

He slows to catch his breath.

Ahead, Russ wraps a bit of rag around his oozing arm.

JASON (CONT'D)

You little bastard. I hope you're happy. You ruined my life.

RUSS

That's right. I spend every waking moment thinking of ways to make you miserable.

JASON

You're not that smart.

RUSS

I'm not jealous of you, Jase. Hell, I'm not even angry. Well, about all this, yeah. I'm ashamed of you, of having to apologize to people for your lack of success.

JASON

I'm warning you.

RUSS

All the time it was, 'whatever happened to Jason?' He had such a bright career ahead of him. He would have made a wonderful coach.

JASON

A coach! A sideline wannabe! I was supposed to be the next Tom Brady. All you had to do was shut up.

RUSS

It wasn't me, you ass! It was Nadine.

JASON

Nadine?

He stops cold.

RUSS

On the phone. She was pissed over some stupid anniversary you forgot. You tried to throw the phone out the window.

FLASHBACK

INT. JASON'S CAR - DAY

20-year-old Jason behind the wheel, phone in his right hand, steering with the left. 12-year-old Russ braces hands against the dashboard as they careen through TRAFFIC.

Incensed at the high pitched VOICE screaming from the device, Jason whips the phone out his side window. Except its closed and the phone bounces back across his face.

His eyes follow it to the lower console.

HORNS BLARE.

RUSS

LOOK OUT!

Jason jerks his eyes back to the road. The back end of a semi looms just feet in front of them, brake lights beaming.

He jerks the wheel a hard right to evade and there's a car stopped. He has to keep turning, TIRES SCREAMING, crossing traffic. Bumping over sidewalks, sideswiping trash cans. Then the white wall of the train bridge. CRASH!!

END FLASHBACK

Jason howls, SPRAYS several SHOTS.

JASON

God, I hate you. I hate all of you.

Russ, in his hiding spot, fingers his pistol.

RUSS

You're not going to let this go, are you?

JASON

Not a chance in hell.

Russ edges an eye around a wall. It's too quiet. He has to move. But where?

A SOFT SPLASH - a FOOTSTEP!

Russ rivets on his left, looks around, fades back down the wall to another corner and the end of the building.

The next doorway is a twenty foot sprint through puddles.

Russ drops to his belly, slithers to avoid making any noise.

Inside the door, he rolls to his feet, checks his rear, then looks for a vantage point.

Checking for ambush.

Slowing. Cautious now.

On the other street Jason parallels the advance.

Russ - A RATTLE off to his right.

Stop. Listen.

SILENCE.

Advance one step at a time.

Cross alley.

Look left. Look right. Listen.

FEET SCURRYING ahead.

Instinct says go right. Take the left.

Twist, turn, gun at the ready for whatever its worth.

INT. CITY SCAPE - REAR HALL - NIGHT

Jason enters in full commando mode, checks every corner before advancing to the next door.

He comes up on the sofa with a bare glance.

Helena listens to the footsteps, turns her head a bit, gets a nose full of dust. She muffles a SNEEZE.

The sofa gets yanked away. Jason peers at her over the pistol. He grins.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Jason shoves Helena ahead of himself to the middle of the street, looks around.

JASON  
I have your playmate. You come out  
or she's toast.

INT. CITY SCAPE - SECOND FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

Russ checks the street from a window, ducking back as Jason turns a circle.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Jason holds Helena close.

JASON  
Guess he doesn't care that much  
about you.

HELENA  
I'm his boss, you ass wipe, not his  
girlfriend.

They're both surprised when Russ steps out at the end of the block. Jason takes aim.

He's unprepared for Helena's sudden eruption of fists and feet. Russ ducks out of sight.

JASON  
You crazy bitch.

He CLOCKS her with the pistol butt, dropping her unconscious.

RUSS  
NO!

He FIRES at Jason, for all the good it does, darts out of sight. Jason runs after him.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MIRROR MAZE - NIGHT

Jason's into the hall of mirrors before realizing it. The low lights and sprinkler spray make navigation difficult, but there's Russ limping just ahead.

FIRES, BREAKING GLASS. Russ nowhere near the shot.

Jason can't find his way out of the center, FIRES blindly all around. GLASS SHATTERS.

Russ finds cover behind a wall, huddles head down.

JASON  
You little prick, come out and face  
me.

Russ steps out, thirty feet away.

RUSS  
It's over, Jason.

JASON  
It's not over until I take you out.

RUSS  
With what ammo? You're empty.

Jason thumbs the trigger on an EMPTY CLIP. He searches his pockets, reaching down deep into a lower cargo pocket to bring out a fresh full clip.

He pops out the spent clip, inserts the new one with a satisfying SNAP. He's ready.

Russ reacts to the SNICK of the reload, winces.

Jason FIRES a round.

A mirror spiderwebs. Russ disappears.

Jason rushes forward. FIRES at another fleeting image. Another mirror SHATTERS.

JASON  
Bastard, stop running.

NOISE to his left. Spins. FIRES a couple of SHOTS.

GASPING, listening, he turns a circle, searching.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Who's the coward now?

At the end of a twenty yard straightaway, Russ steps out.

Jason takes aim, holds his fire.

RUSS  
I'm the coward? I don't brain  
defenseless women.

JASON  
Just hold still and this will be  
over quick.

Jason FIRES. The MIRROR SHATTERS. He HOWLS frustration.

For real Russ steps into the straightaway.

RUSS

Did you count your shots? I did.  
You have two bullets left. Better  
make them count.

Jason holds his aim.

JASON

You're playing with me.

RUSS

Duh. How's it feel? I beat you  
twice now. Take your shot. It's the  
only one you'll get.

Russ FIRES at a mirror, sending a beam ricocheting around  
into Jason's eyes.

Jason SHOOTS wildly, SHATTERING GLASS.

Russ ducks under the shrapnel, falls. The gun skids just out  
of reach. His prosthetic pops off.

Frantic, Russ drags himself to the gun.

Eyes tearing, Jason follows the NOISE, confident, takes aim.

JASON

Looks like I win after all.

Russ gets his gun, FIRES at the mirror. The beam rockets  
around the panels and into Jason's chest.

Jason LAUGHS, feels at his scorched shirt.

JASON (CONT'D)

You are so pathetic.

A step and he falters, suddenly feels the depth of the hit.  
His hand comes away bloody.

JASON (CONT'D)

That's impossible. I rigged your  
gun.

RUSS

My gun, yeah. This is Sammy's.

Jason's eyes widen. Russ' fingers work the power level.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
 It wasn't hard to figure out what  
 you did. No way was I trusting him  
 not to shoot me in the back.

Jason lifts a leaden arm to aim again. Russ' SHOT tags him  
 between the eyes.

Jason HOWLS, falls.

INT. CITY SCAPE - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Russ hobbles out to Helena, afraid to get a close look.

The sprinklers have diluted the blood on her face. She's  
 breathing, tense with keeping her eyes squeezed shut.

RUSS  
 Helena? Hey. It's over.

He gets down beside her to check the head wound. One eye  
 opens to verify his identity. She accepts his hand to sit,  
 pulls him into a tight hug.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
 It's okay. How do you feel? Any  
 dizziness, double vision?

HELENA  
 I think I peed myself.

RUSS  
 How can you tell?

She LAUGHS, a little hysterical. Russ uses a sleeve to clean  
 her face. The sprinklers turn off. The both look up.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
 Took them long enough. Can you  
 walk?

She nods, but flops against him which throws him off balance.  
 They cling to each other for stability. Russ shakes his head.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
 Screw it. Let them come to us.

Her LAUGH turns into SOBS. He cradles her close.

EXT. LASER TAG ARCADE - NIGHT

Russ has a seat away from the fire trucks and ambulances, works the prosthetic back into place.

Monique exits the building as the first ambulance closes up and takes off. She finds Russ, joins him.

MONIQUE

The cops are falling over themselves trying to figure out his operation. I liberated this before they broke in. Do you want it?

She offers Jason's phone. Russ looks at it, looks at her, beyond caring. The phone BEEPS waiting messages. He takes it, shoves it in his pocket.

The second ambulance takes off, followed by the fire trucks. Cop cars remain in place.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

Well, this certainly changes things at work.

RUSS

How do you figure that?

MONIQUE

Two people down. One of us has to move up and I believe I have seniority.

A shrouded gurney comes out. Russ gets to his feet in a show of respect as it passes, turns annoyed eyes to her.

RUSS

As simple as that?

MONIQUE

Don't give me attitude. My job description does not include putting myself in danger for staff.

RUSS

And I thought Sammy was a piece of work. Well, enjoy the new office.

He heads up the block.

MONIQUE

Excuse me. Where are you going?



RUSS

Gave my statement. I need dry clothes, a drink, then some sleep.

The phone BEEPS. Russ takes it out to look at the caller ID.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Since you're now in charge, here's my two week notice. I quit.

MONIQUE

You're -- You can't quit. That game program needs to get finished.

RUSS

That's on you. Truth is, I've kind'a had my fill of hunting games for the present.

The phone BEEPS. Russ taps the screen, brings it to his ear as he limps away.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Mom. No, it's Russ. Well, there's a reason why I have Jason's phone. If you'll button it for two minutes I'll fill you in.

Monique starts after him, stops. Chasing is beneath her dignity.

One by one the cop cars take off and she's left alone behind the crime scene tape.

FADE OUT.