

Prologue

26th August 1589

7:45 pm

Cologne, Germany.

"Come on Sasha, get the cattle inside! It's getting dark!", said Rosenda, her mother getting inside the house.

Their house was made of wood, just like any other ordinary house in that region would be exempt, their house was situated away from the rest of the village; just outside the forest.

Dark clouds were gathering from all around and the cold chilling wind was cutting right through the flesh.

Sasha, who was 11 years old, was now moving the goats inside when she realised that one of them was missing.

"Mamma...!" shouted Sasha. "Lucy is missing!"

"Lock the others up and get inside. She must have wandered into the woods for some food. She will return eventually." -replied her mom from inside the house.

But Lucy was Sasha's favourite goat and she could not stand her missing.

She took the lamp, wrapping a cloak around her and set off to the forest.

The inside of the forest was way too dark than the outside and a lot much creepier as well. But Sasha was brave and there was no way that she was going home without Lucy.

"Lucy!!.....where are you?!" she said in a monotonous tone, but all she could hear was the crumbling of the dead leaves beneath her feet.

Upon moving further into the forest she heard some strange noises.

"Lucy? Is that you?" asked Sasha running towards the source of the sound with her cloak flowing high in the air behind her.

The noise now grew louder and louder with every step that she took.

A stinking smell filled her nostrils as she saw a dark figure in front of her.

"Lucy?! it's me, Sasha," she said moving forward and holding the lamp high in front of her. "Let's go home."

As the light of the lamp fell upon the dark figure, it turned out to be a werewolf who was monstrosly cutting right through the flesh of the goat or what was left of it.

The neck of the goat was twisted and her intestine and blood were all over the place.

Sasha stood still; frozen on the spot as if not able to move at all. She wanted to scream and cry but no words came out of her mouth. Fear had overtaken her body.

The lamp fell from her hands and went off leaving her in perfect darkness with a pair of glowing eyes that were now staring right at her, looking at its new prey.

"Grrrrrrhhh!!!!" the wolf snarled and leapt towards the girl who stood there; helpless.

Chapter 1

Present Day

"Are you ready to do this?" asked Eric sipping up the dew from his can.

Eric was in his mid-twenties, had black hair, an average built body and wore glasses all the time which gave him a geek look, which he was indeed. Not to forget the light beard and the moustache.

"Never been any better!" replied Mathew who too was of the same age as that of Eric's but with a distinction; his body and the medium blond hair.

Both of them sat quietly in a black sedan, parked just in the corner of the Great Louvre Museum. The only sound that came was from the constant sucking of the dew and the chirping of the chips.

"How many of these did you have?" asked Mathew giving Eric a dirty look.

"Don't blame me!" replied Eric in a muffled voice as most of his mouth occupied with the chips. "We have been on a long flight and not to forget the inconvenience caused by the taxi driver, that man was creepy."

"Yeah sure.....sure," said Mathew turning his face sideways towards the window and started observing the guards at the entrance through his binoculars.

"Ok, then," said Eric turning up the laptop. "Here, wear this," he said giving up a watch to Mathew which he took and wore obediently. "It's got a GPRS tracking device and a two-way radio communication feature, a jammer and stuff like that."

Mathew looked curiously towards the watch which looked like any normal digital watch would look like.

"Press the right button on the top, will you?" commanded Eric.

Mathew pressed the button and a red dot appeared on the laptop screen which gave the look of the radar of some kind.

"Good. Your GPRS is active now," said Eric. "I will be monitoring your movement the whole time and will guide on your way."

"Here," Eric said giving the earpiece to Mathew. "Now, all you need to do is, just keep your watch in front of your mouth and speak and we are good to go," finished Eric, wearing headphones.

"You are an asshole!" said Mathew closing up his watch towards his face.

"You hear that?" asked Mathew grinning towards Eric.

"Cristal clear," replied Eric sounding it like he didn't care much.

"Now when you go near the guard just press the centre button and it will jam everything that runs on electricity," said Eric. "All you need to do is to give them your phone so that they can make a call to check upon your identity which they will and the call will be redirected straight to me no matter whatever number they dial."

"That looks great!" said Mathew his eyes lighting up.

"I have set your phone's frequency out of the range of jammer, so your phone will work just fine," said Eric.

"Got my bag?" asked Mathew.

"Right here!" replied Eric pulling up the bag from the back seat.

"It's got all the stuff I asked for?" asked Mathew checking up his bag pack.

"The rest is in the back of the car," Eric said finishing up his dew.

"It's about time," said Mathew getting out of the car and looking at his watch. "Which button do you want me to press for seeing the time?" asked Mathew from the half-opened door.

"Yeah well about that, aaaaahhhh.....it really isn't made to tell time, you know," replied Eric.

"I'm still working on that part," Eric said giving an innocent smile.

"Great!" said Mathew closing the door and moving up to the back of the car from where he picked up two trays full of coffee cups.

"Hey! Don't forget to say, Mona Lisa, that Eric says ``Hi" " said Eric over the opened window of the car.

Mathew stopped by the window and replied: "How about `Howdy`?"

"That would work," said Eric opening a fresh can of dew.

And with that, Mathew made his way to the first main entrance. He was wearing a security guard's uniform with the ID card dangling from his chest reading the name Phil Connor.

The air outside was cold and everything around seemed very quiet. The only sound that came was from the fallen leaves that came in Mathew's way.

As he approached the entrance gate the guard at the entrance became alert and looked at him from head to toe.

"Que voulez-vous?" said the guard staring down at Mathews. He was heavy in shape and had a light beard.

"What does he mean, Eric?" whispered Mathew trying to straighten his cap.

"He means what do you want, just say Je suis ici comme un remplacement pour Benoit" replied Eric looking up from his laptop. He had known that this situation would come up so he was already prepared with the translation software.

Mathews replied as instructed trying to keep up his French together. He had taken a few French classes when he was in high school but he could barely pass the examination.

"Vérifiez pour Benoit. Est-il encore là?" said the guard to the one who was inside the room adjoining to the gate.

The guard made a few clicks on his computer and replied: "Il n'est pas encore là, son évolution a débuté il ya environ 15min de."

"He says the shift was to begin 15minutes ago and Benoit has not yet reported," said Eric.

"Nous aurons besoin de la vérifier auprès des autorités. Appelez le centre et demander de Phil Connor" said the guard.

"Now, press the button," said Eric who now was straightened up in his seat. "They are about to make a call."

Without wasting any time, Mathew pressed the button on his watch and waited for the show to begin.

"La cellule ne fonctionne pas, ni n'est l'ordinateur. Il ya un problème," said the guard from inside the room who now looked quite confused. He started pressing all sorts of possible keys but it wasn't very helpful.

"Laissez-moi tenter ma cellule," replied the other guard by taking out his cell which too was not working.

"Time for your little trick now," said Eric.

And with that Mathew took out his cell and pressed the button of his watch.

"What do I say.....?" said Mathew trying to be as quiet as possible.

"Ohhh....yeah just say to him Le mien est de travailler, vous pouvez essayer mon aîné" said Eric after making a few clicks on the laptop.

"Le mien est de travailler, vous pouvez essayer mon aîné," said Mathew politely extending his cell towards the guard, which he, in turn, passed on to the one inside.

The guard took the phone and started dialling the number.

The call immediately got transferred to Eric who now looked quite proud of himself.

"Bonsoir supérieurs. Voulu vérifier si Phil Conon est de service ce soir?" said the guard.

"Laissez-moi vérifier," replied Eric changing his accent, and after a brief pause he said, "Oui, il est en hausse pour le quart de nuit ce soir."

"Très bien supérieurs, qui seront tous," said the guard.

Of all the words that Mathew heard he could make out that the things were on track.

"Désolé pour la inconvéient que, vous passez," said the guard now coming out and opening the gate.

"You are good to go," said Eric over the earpiece, getting back to his unfinished can.

Mathew made his way towards the gate, the tray of coffee held firmly in his hands.

"Nous devons vérifier votre sac à dos," said the guard stepping forward.

"They need your bag for checking," said Eric.

"Vous," said, Mathew, before Eric could say something.

"Hummmm.....still got some French juice left in there haaan," said Eric who now had gotten back into a more relaxed position now.

Mathew gave a slight smile to the guard who now passed his bag into the electronic machine.

Mathew knew exactly what to do. He waited for the right moment and as soon as the bag went into the machine he pressed the button of his watch thereby disarming the machine.

And just as the bag came out of it, he again pressed the button, making the bag look all clean.

He collected the bag and made his way towards the main entrance.

The length of the museum seemed to spread all over the place. The eye-catching part was the establishment of the glass pyramid in the middle of the museum.

The whole place was so spellbinding that Mathew wanted to stay there and stare at the site for all night long, but he knew that now was the right time.

"What's going on out there?" asked Eric, eagerness could be sensed in his tone.

"I'm making my way towards the main entrance now," replied Mathew. "You should really see this someday."

"If we pull this off right, then maybe we can come someday," said Eric who was now getting bored by sitting all by himself in the car.

Mathew crossed the great pyramid and walked forward towards his destination. He could see a guard covering the front gate, but that was not what worried him, the thing that caught his attention was the new magnetic card security system that was there.

"Ahhhh.....Eric, we might have a problem here," said Mathew.

"What?" asked Eric. "Did the coffee go cold? Because I know it's quite chilly out there."

"Seriously, the coffee?!" said Mathew feeling hopeless. "It's the security, I need to get the access card to get past the main entrance."

"That wasn't supposed to be there," said Eric feeling surprised. "They must have upgraded the security after the last few failed attempts by thieves, you know."

"Great!!" said Mathew, whose mind seemed to be working at its utmost efficiency trying to figure out the way in.

"So, what now then?" asked Eric.

"I'm not sure," replied Mathew who was now only a few feet away from the guard.

Mathew held the tray of coffee in his left hand and loosen up his jeans with the other. He rolled down the jeans just enough for his cleavage to see the outer world.

He approached the guard who was not at all French in his looks and the name which read Larry Hoffman made it even clearer.

Lucky me, Mathew thought.

"You must be Larry, right?" asked Mathew greeting the guard who was not quite expecting it.

"Yes?" replied Larry. "And who might you be?"

"I'm Phil, didn't Benoit mention about me?" said Mathew giving the best-confused expressions as possible.

"No, he didn't," said Larry.

"Maybe, it's that chick; he's dating. He often forgets a lot of things these days. She really keeps him on his heels," said Mathew.

"Damn that son of a bitch! I knew he was hiding something," said Larry making an amusing face.

"Mind opening the door for me?" asked Mathew who was expecting a positive answer.

"You got to open it with your key card," replied Larry.

"Oh well, yeah sure," said Mathew. "It's in my back pocket and my hands are a bit occupied at the moment," he said rolling his eyes towards the coffee tray.

Mathew turned around pointing his butt towards Larry who made an ugly face by seeing the butt line.

"Never mind, I just open it for you," said Larry taking his key card from around his waist and inserting it into the machine.

It immediately accepted the card and Larry's name was clearly visible in the machine.

"What's up with the coffee cans?" asked Larry.

"You know, it's a night shift and I'm not very much of a nightwalker if you know what I mean. So it's for me to keep me through the night," replied Mathew offering a cup to Larry which he refused.

"See you around," said Mathew and with that, he made his way inside the museum.

"You know, you will need that card again in the building," said Eric who seemed quite impressed with Mathew.

"You are right," said Mathew. "That's why I borrowed it from my friend" flashing Larry's card in his hand.

"Aahan.....always been great with your hands, Aren't you?" said Eric making a few clicks on his laptop.

The inside of the museum was as elegant as it could. Everything was perfect.

"I need you to give me directions for the control room," said Mathew exploring the area and looking at all the possible locations for security camera.

"It's on the ground floor, you can take the stairs to your left," replied Eric who had now a porn site opened in one of the tabs of his browser.

Mathew took the escalators down to the ground floor which led to a long hallway with doors on either side of it.

"Ok, what now?" asked Mathew.

"The control room is at the end of the hallway," replied Eric.

Mathew quietly strolled along the length of the hallway momentarily gazing towards the doors and thinking of what lied behind them.

Upon reaching the control room Mathew inserted the magnetic card into the door and opened it.

Six pairs of eyes stared straight at him when he closed the door behind him as if trying to scan right through him.

The room was semi-spherical in shape with TV screens covering the most part of it. A quick scan through the room gave Mathew a fair enough idea that there was no part of the museum that was not guarded by a piece of high-resolution equipment.

"Qui êtes-vous?" asked one of the guards sitting on the extreme right side of the room.

Mathew waited for Eric to say something in French but nothing happened. He cleared his throat two-three times in order to give Eric an idea but when nothing happened, he took his chances with whatever he had over French.

"Remplacement pour Benoit, je vous apporte le café chaud pour vous tous, vous aideront dans votre quart de travail," replied Mathew as confidently as he could.

Lying to someone was an art; that is best executed when you are looking right into the eyes of the person and this was one thing that Mathew had learned to do over the time.

"You can speak English if that makes you feel comfortable," said one of the guards who had judged by the texture of Mathew's face that he was from America.

Mathew took a sigh of relief for he now didn't have to continue in his broken French.

"We really appreciate it," said the guard getting up from his chair and taking the tray from Mathew's hands.

Each one of the guards took sips from the coffee cups, which was surprisingly hot and the guards seem to enjoy them too.

"Why don't you have it too?" said the guard forwarding the cup towards Mathew but could barely make it out of his chair when he fell unconscious and the cup fell from his hands.

The other guards too felt dizzy and one of the guards tried to hit the alarm button but Mathew grabbed him from behind and eased him into his chair where he fell unconscious.

The next moment the room changed into a pile of bodies and spilt coffee all over the floor.

"Where the fuck are you??!" asked Mathew raising his voice this time.

"Ohhh...well...yeah I'm right here all along," countered Eric who had been a little too busy in seeing the cleavage of the girl in the bikini on his laptop.

"I think it was a technical problem," said Eric trying to clear the things up. "Since you are in the ground room, the signal is probably weak."

"Yeah, yeah whatever," said Mathews sitting on one of the computers.

Making a few strokes on the keyboard he told Eric the IP address of the PC, hoping that he could hack into the system and delete all the security footage that was recorded.

"You think, you can do this?" asked Mathew looking around the room.

"Let me see," said Eric trying to concentrate. "I can do it but we have a little problem."

"Now, what?" asked Mathew who didn't like waiting much.

"They don't have any central server that I can hack into. All the computers are connected to one another and each one of them has a part of the total memory," said Eric his eyes glowing by the light of the LED display.

"Hacking into each system, will take me about 5 minutes and considering the number of systems, it will take me about half an hour," finished Eric.

"We don't have that much time!" said Mathew a sound of disappointment ringing in his voice. "Looks like, we have to do this the old fashioned way then."

"And that would be like beating the hell out of every PC?" asked Eric eagerly.

"No that would be too messy plus there is always a chance of recovering the data from a broken hard disk. I will have to make a strong electromagnet that will wipe out its entire hard disk," said Mathew who was now surveying the room looking for the raw material.

The legs of the chairs were made of iron so he took the chair and tried to break one of its legs. Luckily, the foundation of the legs was not as strong as it looked; a little pressure at the right spot and you are in business.

He had the iron, now he needed the wire which was a little tricky as all the wiring in the room was underground and no trace of any wire was visible on the outside.

"How is my boy doing?" asked Eric getting back to his usual business of eating.

"So far so good," replied Mathew who was busy looking for the wires.

That should work, Mathew thought, looking at the wiring that connected different PCs together.

He pulled the wires out of the system and took a Swiss knife from his backpack and started tearing off the outer covering of the wires.

When he had had enough wires, he wrapped them around the iron rod keeping the turns close to each other and as tight as he could.

Now all he needed was to provide it with an electric source which was available almost everywhere in the room.

Before connecting to the electricity, he had to make sure that he was properly protected as dying from the electric shock was the last thing he wanted.

He tore off the cushion part of the chair and pulled out the sponge from it. Then he removed the shirt of one of the employees and tore it into two parts with each part covering some sponge.

He held the two wires together with the help of the sponge and inserted them into the socket. After doing so, he carefully placed the electromagnet one by one over each CPU and when he was done, he kept it in the middle and left the room.

"Directions, please!" asked Mathew making his way back to the hallway.

Eric guided him through the hallway up to the ground floor and then towards the first floor for which Mathew took the escalators.

"What do you see?" asked Eric.

"I see a room that has a number plate saying 32," replied Mathew taking a step forward.

"That is your antiquity section, not our business," said Eric over the headphones.

Before Mathew could take another step, he saw a guard approaching from the other end of the hallway.

From his looks, Mathew could tell that he definitely didn't like his presence in the room as he now took brisk steps.

"What are you doing in here?" asked the guard sternly.

Mathew was a little taken aback as he had not expected to hear English words out of his mouth.

"You see, Benoit is off duty today and I am his replacement, it's my first day and I don't have much of an idea as to where to go," said Mathew making up a puppy face.

That was one thing that Mathew had learned over the time to put up faces according to the situations.

"I need to call upon the control room to do some checks." said the guard who wasn't very satisfied by the show put up by Mathew.

"Please sir, if you give a negative feedback, I might even lose my job and this is all got!" said Mathew politely as the guard was about to make a call from his walkie-talkie.

The guard had a change of thought as he held his walkie in mid-air and then, after a brief pause, kept it back.

"Thanks a lot!" said Mathew.

"Let me guide you through, I know where Benoit worked," said the guard. "His shift was on ground floor," he finished saying and was about to move when Mathew interrupted him.

"Is that a Rolex?!" said Mathew staring towards the guard's wrist with a bright smile on his face.

"Aaah no no.....it's just some..." and before he could finish, Mathew threw a punch straight at the hollow part of the stomach just below the ribs, knocking the air out of him.

The security person was taken off guard as he now held his stomach with both hands. He tried to scream in pain but nothing came out of his mouth. Before he could do anything else Mathew quickly got to the back of the guard and kicked at the back of his right knee thus, making him off balance.

Before he could stumble down to the ground, Mathew held the guard by the throat with his right arm and within a few seconds, the guard lay unconscious on the floor.

Putting the right amount of pressure on the right artery would stop the supply of oxygen to the brain thus, leaving a person in an unconscious state completely unharmed.

"Sorry dude, I had no choice," said Mathew straightening up his clothes.

"Did I miss a something?" said Eric all of a sudden.

"Nothing much, just an unconscious guard on the floor," said Mathew now holding both the hands of the guard and trying to drag him.

"Wow! That was not a part of the plan," said Eric helping himself with the chips.

"He was about to drag my ass back to the ground floor and I couldn't let him do that! Could I?" said Mathew who now dragged the body all the way into the room number 32.

He checked his pockets and didn't find many useful things other than the walkie which he kept with himself along with his id card reading the name, Andrew Moore.

"Just go straight and take the first left, which will put you back on your track," said Eric.

Mathew made his way past a few doors, crossed some hallways and still there seemed to be no end to the museum.

"How much more?" asked Mathew.

"That's it, you are almost there," replied Eric.

And there it was; the room number 13. The one, that mattered the most at the moment.

Mathew extended his hand forward towards the doorknob but before he could get any further the knob twisted all by itself and the door opened.

A guard appeared from the other side of it and was a little shocked to see Mathew all of a sudden.

"Holy crap!" said the guard in a shaky voice taking a few deep breaths.

"I'm sorry!" apologised Mathew. "I didn't mean to scare you."

"What the fuck are you doing up here?" asked guard suspiciously.

"I was looking for Andrew," said Mathew quickly making it up. "It seems he dropped his id card on the ground floor." finished Mathew taking the id card out of his pocket.

"I thought maybe I should return it, so any ideas as to where he might be?" asked Mathew sounding concerned.

By the look on the guard's face, Mathew could make out that he has won the guard's confidence as his expressions looked quite relaxed.

But they didn't remain there for long when one of the guard's voice came popping out of their walkies.

The guard was shouting something in French and Mathew couldn't make out much out of it but got hold of a few words that sounded like emergency....quick....backup.

And the very next moment, the emergency alarm went off and the voice of sirens filled the whole hallway.

"We need to move fast!" said the guard.

"There has been a breach!"

Mathew couldn't understand as to how this was possible as he had been quite careful unless it was not because of him the alarm went off.

His question was answered soon enough as he heard the sound of gunfire over the radio.

"Come on! What are you waiting for?" said the guard who was already halfway down the hall.

"You cover the stairs while I take care of the elevator," replied Mathew.

And with the took off from the stairs and Mathew jogged his way down to room number 13 trying to speak to Eric but he was not able to hear anything from the other side.

"Damn it! Where are you, Eric?" said Mathew trying to make the head and toe of what was going on.

Upon reaching the middle of the room, Mathew sensed that he was close enough and there it was to his left side; on the wall was the painting of the woman with the pearl.

Strikingly similar to the Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa. The visible difference lied in the background of the painting and the clothes that the lady wore.

A never-ending stillness covered the face of the lady as she sat quietly with her hands crossed.

But this was not the time for admiration as so Mathew removed the painting from the wall and to his surprise it was a lot heavier than he had expected it to be.

That was probably due to the bulletproof glass covering it.

The bulletproof glasses were introduced as Mona Lisa was once stolen from the museum and was taken to its so-called homeland Italy.

Mathew would have to take extreme caution while even getting close to the painting as it was fitted with thermal sensing alarm that went off if a person gets too close to a painting.

But since the alarms were already on so, that decreased Mathew's work to a great extent. He placed the painting on the floor and turned it backwards.

The frame of the painting was all covered with small screws that held it together and there seemed to be at least 50 of them.

"Time to work," said Mathew to himself.

He opened his bag pack and took out an automatic screw opener which was smaller in size than the regular one and he started opening the screws one by one.

He had only opened about a dozen of them when he heard some noises approaching from the corner of the stairs but there wasn't much that Mathew could do about it as he was in the open and clearly visible as there was no hiding place at all.

The noise grew louder and louder with every passing second.

Mathew carried the painting and made his way towards the elevator and punched the down button.

The sound did not belong to the guards but a group of guys all in black clothes and each one of them carrying a semi-automatic Uzi machine gun.

None of them was wearing any kind of masks which made one thing very clear to Mathew that if they were showing their faces to someone then, they didn't intend to keep them alive, which was bad news.

"There!" said one of the guys seeing Mathew as the door of the elevator opened up.

"Time to go!" said Mathew getting inside the elevator.

The sound of bullets rang the whole hallway as they started firing towards Matthew.

With the door of elevator still open, Mathew shielded himself with the frame of the painting which was big enough to provide him with a decent cover.

The glass of the painting being bulletproof stopped any bullet from doing Mathew any damage.

The door of the elevator started to close as the guy who was sprinting towards the elevator closely; followed by the others.

And just as the door was almost closed the guy inserted the front nozzle of his gun inside the doors thus preventing it from opening.

The elevators were installed a long time ago and needed a decent amount of force on its doors to completely open it unlike; the new ones that open up sensing even a small amount of force while being closed.

The guy started firing aimlessly into the elevator and Mathew got up with his screw gun and stood carefully leaning against the door of the elevator.

He then put his own gun into the narrow gap above the guy's Uzi and fired up with whatever he had got.

The screws could be quite fatal if they hit a person at the right place and one of the screws pierced the area just below the eye of the guy.

He cried in pain and fell backwards as the doors of the elevator closed behind him.

Mathew had a sigh of relief but he knew that it was short lived as he could not remain hidden for long.

That's what a gun like this can do which can fire 10 rounds per second, seeing the glass of the painting which was all covered with bullet holes.

The disadvantage that Mathew had was that the museum had only two floors and there was not much of an option for him to go.

But if he could somehow stay in the elevator that would give him some time to think.

The elevator was moving downwards towards the lower ground floor.

"Take the stairs!" shouted one of the guys who seemed to be commanding them all. "I need that painting!!!"

And with that, the guys sprinted towards the stairs except for the one that was now trying to get up on his feet with his whole left part of the face covered in blood.

"He...llp me!" he said in a shaky voice with his one hand covering the point where the blood was pouring out and the other extended towards his boss.

"Sorry, I forgot to bring the med staff with me," and with that, he fired a single shot that hit the forehead of the bleeding guy thus, putting him out of his misery forever.

On the other hand, Mathew was thinking hard as the lift had now crossed the first floor and was moving towards the ground floor.

Most lifts are fitted with a security feature that if anything goes wrong with the lift, it stops still. So, Mathew held up the painting in both his hands and started hitting the upper wall of the lift which seemed to stay in his place.

He didn't have much time so he used all the energy that was left in him and started stroking it. The upper part of the lift bulged a little and with continuous hitting one corner of the wall came off.

That was enough for him to stop the lift which now stood still with a red light glowing in it.

Mathew placed the painting down and used his hands to open the upper cover of the lift.

On the other hand, the men were now descending down towards the lower ground floor. They had already made it down the ground floor where a pile of bodies lay motionlessly soaked in blood.

Mathew took his screw opener and started opening the frame of the painting as he could not carry the heavy frame with him for a long time.

After opening the frame, Mathew carefully removed the frame and folded the painting in his bag pack.

The men had reached the sub-basement level and were now staring down at the lift which showed the ground floor sign and was not moving at all.

Mathew jumped upwards to the outer covering of the lift and stood on top of the lift. The passage above the lift was very dark but thanks to the guard's uniform, it came equipped with the dress.

Mathew held the flashlight in his mouth and started climbing upwards using the iron wires that held the lift together.

Meanwhile, the boss of the men had also arrived and he didn't seem much to be pleased by seeing his men staring down at the lift.

"What's the fucking problem?" asked the boss furiously.

"There seems to be a problem in the lift, it's kind of stuck," replied one of the guy.

"You are the Tech guy, right?" asked the boss staring towards one of them.

"Yes," replied the guy firmly.

"Go in the control room and fix this thing right away, we don't have much time," said the boss.

"Why don't we just blow it off, we have enough explosives to turn the whole place into ashes," said one of the guy.

"That painting is way too valuable and I don't want to take any chances with it," replied the boss now looking impatient.

Mathew was making his way upwards by climbing the iron wire with his bare hands. He was not prepared for this and his hands were already getting all kinds of rashes but none of it mattered at the moment, as he had to go on and on till he reached the top floor.

That was the only way he was hoping to get out.

"Where's Jason?" asked one of the guards looking concerned.

"In another dimension, care to join him?" he replied giving a little jerk to his neck.

All of them fell silent as nobody wanted to piss off their boss.

Mathew could now see the door that led to the first floor. A little more, said Mathew to himself as his hands were now starting to give up.

He spread his legs wide open to both the sides against the wall supporting him and gave his hands a much-needed break.

"How much more do I have to wait?" asked the boss who was now starting to lose his temper.

"Almost there, just need to turn off the emergency services of the lift and we are in business," replied the guy from inside the control room.

Mathew had now crossed the first-floor door and was making his way towards the top floor.

"That's it," said the guy from the control room, "It's working now."

And with that, the lift once again started to descend downwards and Mathew was all but taken by surprise; as the wire, he was holding onto, was now going downward taking Mathew with it.

I didn't come all the way up just to go down again thought Mathew as he gave up the rope and used his legs and hands to keep him steady in one place.

"Everyone will hold their fire," said the boss reloading his Uzi with a fresh set of magazine, "I repeat; no one will fire till I say!"

Everyone seemed pretty clear with the orders and with all their guns pointed at the elevator which now came to a halt.

The door of the elevator opened up and to everyone's surprise, it was empty.

Confused was clearly seen on the faces of the men as some of them lowered their weapon while others were staring down for further orders.

With the lift stopped, Mathew again started to make his way towards the upper door and this time with even more pace.

The boss went forward and lifted the frame with no painting in it.

He then looked upwards where he could see some gap in the wall and lifted the cover. The passage was very dark and nothing was visible.

"Pass me the flashlight!" he ordered.

One of the guys gave the flashlight and the boss flashed it in the passage above him but the flashlight was not powerful enough to reach until the end.

Mathew could see the light beneath him and he knew he didn't have any time at all.

"He's up somewhere," said the boss signalling his men to come into the elevator.

He then punched the top floor button and the lift started moving upwards.

Not good; thought Mathew who was imbalanced as the wire started moving upwards.

Mathew reached forward towards the door and tried sticking his fingers into it in order to open it but the door wouldn't budge.

"Come on!" gasped Mathew using everything he had and also trying not to fall down.

The lift was approaching fast and his efforts were going in vain. He needed something thinner than his fingers to slide inside.

And then it occurred to him, his security badge, embedded in his uniform's chest, could do the trick.

He removed the badge and stuck it inside the gap between the doors and it worked. The door slid open a little and a narrow beam of light came gushing through it.

Mathew inserted his fingers and opened the rest of the door and pulled himself up through it.

He had never felt so good smelling the fresh air before. His whole body was crying in pain but this was no time to rest, so he got up and sprinted towards any possible direction that could work out as his escape route.

Meanwhile, the men in the elevator had reached the top floor and seeing the door wide open only made them even mad.

"Everybody, take one floor each!" ordered the boss. "He can't escape! All the doors have been locked and there is no way he is getting out of this building alive."

The voice echoed down the hall and Mathew could hear it too. Damn it, he was planning on using the main door to get out but it now looked as if he might need a new plan.

All four of men scattered around the museum, fully loaded, searching each and every corner of the museum.

Mathew knew that he couldn't hide in the museum forever and that he needed to think quickly. But the thing that was bothering him the most was that even after the alarms went off where was the police and the firing squad, they were supposed to be here minutes ago.

He took out his cell phone only to see a no service message being displayed. Well, of course! Thought Mathew, they have jammed the signals and that explained as to why he wasn't able to make any contact with Eric.

If he could somehow make a call and give a tip of the situation in here he might stand a chance, but with no phone, it wasn't going to be an easy job.

Only if he could somehow make it to the storeroom where the whole telephone wiring was done, he might get what he wanted.

Usually, the storerooms are present in the area of limited or no public access which left Mathew with the lower ground floor and he remembered seeing something that looked like a storeroom. It was worth a shot.

Bullshit! – Thought, the boss. They were supposed to be out of this building by now and there they were pursuing a man who somehow just got lucky.

He carefully made his way towards the heap of bodies that lay piled one above the other. Mathew felt sorry for them and he took the stun gun from one of the security personals.

He reached the lower ground floor only to see it being patrolled by a guard.

Mathew turned towards the hallway and called "Looking for me?"

The guy quickly turned around only to be stunned by 10000v of high electricity and within seconds, he lay unconscious on the floor.

Mathew dragged his body into the storeroom and took his gun just in case.

He now opened the mainline box that provided all the communication lines within the museum. They were all crammed into one another and it was very difficult for him to find the right wire.

Of all the wires one line is always kept safe only for emergency purpose only and is usually marked by a different colour than the others.

As he was looking for the right wire Mathew's head suddenly exploded with pain which seemed to captivate him.

His vision got blacked out and he held his head crying in pain while leaning against the wall. He had been getting these blackouts since he was a child and recently they had only got worse.

"Not now, please not now!!" cried Mathew with tears welling up in his eyes.

And then, it got better as his vision started to adjust the surroundings around him and the pain started giving up.

With one hand still on his head, he started looking for the wire and then, he noticed one of the wires, was yellow in colour. This has to be the one! - Thought Mathew. This better be.

On the other hand, the boss was getting exhausted and frustrated at the same time; playing this cat and mouse game.

He wanted to end this as soon as he could.

Mathew cut the wire and peeled the outer covering of it. He then took his cell phone and opened it and started connecting the wires to it.

He would have never have been able to do any of these things if it weren't for the man who taught him all, the only one his maker, his Master.

His life would have been totally meaningless if it weren't for him.

"Got it!" whispered Mathew to himself. "Now, you better work."

He took a deep breath and dialled the emergency number and to his relief, it worked!

"You have reached the emergency line, state your emergency." said the voice of the girl on the other side.

"I am calling from the Louvre Museum, there has been a breach in the security by some armed men. They have killed my partners and taken over the whole place," replied Mathew in a concerned voice.

"You need to do something, fast!" said Mathew raising his voice.

"We need to know your name and batch number," said the woman who hardly seemed to be surprised by what Mathew said.

Mathew understood this for he knew that a lot of people played pranks by stating a fake emergency and in a condition like this one has to be sure enough before sending a full task force.

He took out Andrew Moore's ID card and said his name and id number. After confirming the identity, the lady on the other side now definitely sounded concerned.

"Mr. Moore, emergency backup is right on your way and will reach within five minutes. Stay tight and we will get you home safely." said the lady.

I doubt so, thought Mathew.

The guys weren't going to give up without a fight he knew that but, they didn't stand a chance either.

"Any luck?" asked the boss over the earphone to his men.

All the replies came out negative and he just grew more and more agitated.

Mathew laid down leaning against the wall and all he could do was, wait till the help arrived. Waiting wasn't one of his favourite things to do but there was nothing much he could do at the moment.

I just hope that Eric is fine, thought Mathew.

Every passing second seemed like a minute and every minute like an hour. And then, it happened; the moment he has longed for, he has never been so happy to hear the sirens of the police before.

The whole museum was surrounded by police cars which were parked all over the place, followed by the SWAT team which were all geared up and getting out of their vans.

The ambulance and fire department were also crawling along the area.

"What the fuck just happened?" said the boss with frustration clearly ringing in his voice. "Gather up quickly!!"

With that, all the three of them stood to face each other.

"Where's Kevin?" asked one of the guys.

"Will anyone tell me as to why are we surrounded by the police?" asked the boss. "They weren't supposed to be here, how on Earth they managed to know?!"

"I think we should leave the painting and get the hell out of here," said one of the guys.

"I know a way of getting out of here, but you will not like it," said the boss.

"We will do anything to get out of here," said the guy and everyone else nodded in agreement.

The boss raised his Uzi in the air and fired the complete round at his men. It all happened so fast that none of them stood any chance and all of them lay on the floor with blood gushing out of their bullet wounds.

"What needed to be done; has to be done," muttered the boss to himself.

The sound of the firing was loud enough for the cops to hear and they didn't want to waste any more time.

"SWAT team, in position!" said their commanding officer.

"We don't know how many armed men we have in there, nor do we know the number of hostages, so it's all up to you now. Show them what you are made up of, now move!" finished the officer.

All this noise, on the other hand, had woken up Andrew Moore who had been lying unconscious in room number 32 thanks to Mathew.

What the fuck just happened thought Andrew as everything felt dizzy and he couldn't remember landing up unconscious there.

The boss, on the other hand, had worn one of the guard's uniform and was pretending to be one of them now.

Mathew now needed a plan to get out of here as he couldn't just show up as he would not be able to explain his presence there.

The SWAT team had now entered the museum and were spreading all over the place like a plague.

"Over here!" said the boss imposing as one of the guards.

Three members of the SWAT team moved quickly towards the boss who was standing by the pile of dead bodies of what used to be a part of his team.

"They attacked my men, I was doing my shift up here when I heard the firing!" said the boss.

"They came upstairs and I caught them off guard and shot them!" he finished saying.

"It's all right Sir, you are safe now," Said one of the SWAT personals trying to calm him down but the other one didn't seem much convince with his story.

"I would like to see some id please," said the other SWAT personnel.

"I.... aahh.... I think I dropped it somewhere in all this mess." said the boss trying to explain.

"You shot them with your Jericho 941 F 9 mm, right?" asked the SWAT personnel.

"Well, yes of course," replied the boss who now looked a little uncomfortable.

"Then, why is it that your gun's safety still on?" asked the person. "And seeing the intensity of the bullet injuries, you were supposed to be standing right next to them to them. I find it hard to imagine as to how could a guy, with a handgun take out three people with semiautomatic Uzi by standing right in front of them unless you were one of them."

The other SWAT personnel now seemed alert and had tightened his grip on his gun.

"You want to know how I shot them, I will tell you how!" said the boss and with that he reached for his handgun which seemed totally pointless as he stood no chance in front of them and before he could get a hold of it, one of the SWAT personnel hit him with the back of his gun and he fell on the floor unconscious.

"Nice work!" said one of the SWAT personnel and the other one acknowledged it.

Mathew was thinking hard about to get out of this mess unseen and then it struck him, if he could somehow bring the fire team in, he might have a chance of getting out.

He looked around the room and found some boxes of matchsticks and now all he needed was to create enough smoke for the fire alarm to go off.

He took off the shirt of the man who lay unconscious and set it on fire. Soon enough, the smoke went upwards and into the smoke alarm, which went off instantly along with the water which came sprinkling down and falling on Mathews burning face.

The other guy on the floor started mourning as the water fell on his face.

"Shit!" said Mathew.

He quickly grabbed the duct tape and started tying up the hands and feet of the guy and ended up covering his mouth.

Hearing the fire alarm, the firing squad became alert and started gearing up with their equipment's.

Andrew Moore made his way down through the stairs in a semi-unconscious state by leaning against the railing.

The SWAT team surrounded him as soon as he landed on the ground floor.

"What's going on?" he asked looking confused and shocked at the same moment.

"Down on the ground, and hands where I can see them!" barked on the SWAT members.

"Ok...ok..." said Andrew lying on the ground with his hands on his head as he didn't want to get unconscious again.

The SWAT team escorted him outside the museum while the fire team made its way inside.

Mathew took a bundle of wire and set it on fire. Rubber burns easily, but it creates lots of smoke and that's exactly what he needed at the moment.

He opened the storeroom door and saw one of the firemen in the hallway.

"Over here!" said Mathew moving his arm and pointing towards the room from where the smoke came gushing out.

The fireman reached Mathew and asked: "Are you ok?"

"I am fine," replied Mathew coughing. "In there..." he said pointing towards the door.

As soon as the man entered the room Mathew grabbed the man's neck from behind and choked him. He tried to fight back but Mathew's grip was firm and he landed hard on the floor.

Mathew took off the fire man's clothes and wore them. They were loose but there wasn't much space for his bag to be adjusted.

So, took the painting and covered it beneath his uniform.

Now all he needed to do was to blend in and get the hell out of the museum. He hoped that Eric would be still outside waiting for him in the car.

He made his way upwards and saw other firemen moving in and out of every room.

"How are we on the lower floor?" asked one of the fireman to Mathew whose face was well hidden under the helmet.

"Clear!" replied Mathew in a harsh voice with his heart beating rising.

The other man nodded and moved in the other direction.

Mathew gave a sigh of relief and made his way towards the museum's front door.

The outside was a complete mess as cops, firemen and ambulances were covering the entire area.

Mathew walked outside and blended into the group of firemen that were surrounding the fire brigade truck waiting for orders.

Everyone around was busy in one or the other work and Mathew waited for the right moment and sneaked from the spot.

It took him a while to get out of the main gate but he was happy that he did.

"Car's still there!" said Mathew looking happy. "Now let's hope Eric's there too."

He removed his helmet and almost sprinted toward the car.

As soon as he reached the car, it was empty. No sign of Eric or his stuff.

"There you are!" came Eric's voice. "I have been worried sick about you."

Mathew turned around and saw Eric emerging from the nearby bushes.

He had got out of the car so as to avoid being detected which Mathew understood.

"You have the painting?" asked Eric.

"You bet!" replied Mathew pulling the painting from beneath his clothes.

"We need to move fast, you get in the car and give me the painting, I will put it in the back trunk," said Eric

Mathew obediently gave the painting and opened the car's door and went inside.

But as soon as he closed the door, all the other doors got locked all by themselves and gas started coming out from beneath.

"What the fuck!?!?" said Mathew trying to open the door as the gas started reaching his nostrils. "Eric!!!" Mathew shouted at the top of his voice.

And Eric emerged on the side of the window, holding the painting and a smile creeping on the side of his face.

"You son of a bitch!" said Mathew now trying to smash the window with his elbow.

Dizziness started taking control over Mathew as he couldn't hold his breath for long and darkness started surrounding him.

"Get ready for your worst nightmare!" said Eric leaning towards the window as Mathew's body finally gave up and he fell into the driver's seat.