

Mother's & Father's Day.

6th world problems.

I was sitting at the bar, my normal watering hole, where I was just watching the people around the bar. I saw orcs, trolls, dwarves, elves, and even humans both male and female dancing and drinking, moving through the rituals of dating and mating.

Bodies bumped and grinded to the beat of the music, a clashing metallic slam of Orc Rock. Smoke filling the air and my lungs from the special effects from the stage. Not seeing any of the normal Johnsons, Fixers, or others who hire runners for jobs, I decided it was time to take my leave.

A slim shadow slipped into the booth I was sitting in, across from me. I eyed the shadow and saw a young boy, not more than 21 years old. A human with blond hair, blue eyes, wearing a black cloak. His silver arms glistening in the laser light.

He looked right at me, "Are you Quicksilver?" he asked.

I assented him. He was a mundane with a fair amount of cyberware. I was right, his age was less than 20 years of age. He was relaxed and on edge at the same time. It looked like this was his first time meeting a runner.

I looked right in his eyes, "Who wants to know?" my gruff voice growled. A slight lisp from between the tusks in my orc mouth.

"The name is Johnson and I have a job for Quicksilver. His fixer friend Jacobe sent me."

Jacobe, that fragger. He wasn't my fixer anymore. I thought to myself, 'what the dreck. Work is slow anyway.'

"Ok kid, I am Quicksilver. What is it you want done." I could see him bristle at the term kid. It almost made me laugh. This one was trying way too hard to be grown up in the shadows.

"I have a job to retrieve a person from a school for gifted and talented children off of Horizon property in Seattle." he pulled up an AR schematic without realizing I can't see it.

I pulled out my glasses and turned them on. The 3D display of a school appeared in front of me.

"You do not want to go over these details here." I said coldly. "It is a good way to get yourself geeked and the job compromised." He waved the images away.

“You also don’t want to give out details until a price is agreed upon. That way everything is deniable up until you hire the team.” The kid nodded at what I was telling him.

“The job pays 10K for the safe return of the child.” he said it flatly as if he had been doing this for years. I countered just to see what he does.

“15k”

He looked flustered. “I was only given 10k to get the job done.” He looked down at the table. I couldn’t tell from looking at him if he was telling the truth or not. I assented him again, he was truthful and sad at the thought of failing on this job.

“I will do it for 10k, but you should NEVER start with your maximum job offer. A good fixer or Johnson always has some wiggle room for negotiations. Besides, you would keep whatever is left over from the job.”

He seemed to take it all in. “How do I give you the information?”

“Data packet. The runners will look over everything and make their plans accordingly.”

He pulled out a credstick, “Your money.”

I put it back into his hands. “You pay after the job is done, otherwise I could just take the money and leave town on you.”

A look of surprise came across his face as if he had never even thought of that. Putting the credstick away he said, “Ok, thank you for the information. Here is your data packet.”

I grabbed the packet in AR and got up to leave.

“Good luck kid. Try and learn before things get too hairy for you.”

I went and got into my van and started going through the data packet. The child I was supposed to pull out was a young girl with blond hair and blue eyes. It was obvious she was related to the Johnson.

Normally for a job of this caliber I would be using a team, but the pay didn’t warrant one. Instead I was going to go in sneaking, grab the girl, and sneak out. If all goes well no shots will be fired.

I continued through the packet, found everything I could on the family, and made my plans. I would do the job straight, but I would let the kid know that he should stay out of the shadows.

I finalized my plan and went to sleep. In a few hours I would be going into acquire a child.

Later that night I got up and called my spirit. "I will be needing some services from you my friend. I will release you after this job is done."

The spirit greedily agreed. Freedom from a bound spirit is a nice gift. The Spirit of Beast was more than happy to help for its freedom.

I drove to the nearest street where the school was located. It was in a fenced in compound owned by Horizon, a mega-corp that was more powerful than most countries. The fence was electrified and I could hear drones flying around unseen. It was time to get ready.

I whispered to the spirit. "Conseal." I also cast improved invisibility on myself. This would make it harder for the drones to see me. Only a spirit or projecting mage would be able to see me.

I leaned on my spirit, who lifted me up and over the electrified fence. It set me down safely and vanished into the astral plane. I knew it was still here, but it was not visible to the naked eye.

I moved across the open plaza toward the housing unit I found in my searching. I knew the target child was on the third floor. Here is where things will get interesting.

I assessed the building, there was a mana barrier around it. That meant I either needed to crash the barrier, alerting the mages that cast it, or drop my spells to cross the threshold. I looked around the area, noting the camera movement, I dropped the spell when the camera panned away from me and stepped through. As soon as I was on the other side of the barrier I recast my improved invisibility spell, disappearing as the camera panned back across my location.

That was too close. Another second and the security could have spotted me. I walked over to the front door, there is a maglock on the front. Dreck, I don't have a hacker with me.

I look around the patio, and pick up a rock. Moving to the door, I through the rock through the window and stand beside the door waiting for the security guards to open the door.

A moment later, two drones come flying up and start scanning the area. Three guards come running up searching the area. As one of them opens the door, I slip in right behind them. I move to the wall and slip around the outside of the room.

Two more guards come running from down the hall into the room and talk to the one that came in from outside. I stood silently watching in astural to make sure no one notices me.

The guard from outside tells the other guards that a window was broken from outside. It was thought that some gangers or something threw the rock from the street. They would keep higher security for the next little while, but they think that it is nothing.

I moved over to the stairs, and open the door after seeing where everyone is. No one was looking this way and I didn't see any camera on the door. I slipped in and ran up the stairs.

When I get to the third floor, I peered through the window in the door. There is a desk facing the door and elevator that is next to the stairs. There is a troll guard there watching some camera feeds on multiple monitors.

I call the spirit once again, "Spirit, can you make a noise down at the end of the hall without being seen?"

"Of course my friend. Then I will only owe you two more tasks before you grant my freedom."

I smiled. The spirit was not going to let me forget. It really wanted its freedom.

The spirit fled in astral space down the hall. Then it made a door bang shut as it dispersed back to astral space once again.

The guard jumps up and runs down the hall, I slip into the room allowing the door to slowly close behind me. The guard walks back to his post and radios his team. "It must have been the wind. I found a window open and shut it now." listened to static, "no, I think everything is ok up here."

I walked around the corner out of earshot of the guard.

I quickly find the room and realize there is a maglock on the door. It shows locked. I realized that these doors are locking their occupants into the room. These children were prisoners in this school.

A sour feeling hit my gut. What was this corporation doing to these kids for them to have to lock them in? I probably didn't want to know.

I pulled out my electronics kit and a maglock passkey that I have. I don't like to use these because there is too big a chance for failure, but it looks like I don't have a choice. I started working on the maglock. It clicked to unlocked and the door swung open.

I went to move into the room, when I noticed her. A young elvish girl was standing in front of the door. She was wearing a school uniform and was holding a backpack over her shoulder. She looked at me and smiled slyly. "It took you long enough," she whispered.

I was taken back. She had somehow known I was coming. What was this young girl? She had to be no more than 12 years old, but her determination in her face made her look much older.

"I am 13" she said flatly, "and I suggest we get moving, there are two guards coming down the hall. Cast your spell on me so we can get moving."

Confusion hit me for a moment, then I realized what she was saying. I must have asked her age out loud without realizing it. I cast my improved invisibility on her as well. Holding the two spells was stretching me a little bit. I felt some of my energy drain out of me. This wasn't going to be easy.

The girl goes out front, before I can argue and she runs down around the corner. I jump out of the room and follow her.

I get back to the entry and see the girl standing over the guard. He is down, a trickle of blood flowing from his ears. She looks at me and smiles, "He was thinking about his boyfriend and never heard me coming."

I shuddered, how can this girl know that?

"I hear thoughts." she replied softly.

I shuddered again, this time out of fear of my charge. I would have to be careful of my thoughts.

"If you don't want me to hear them, then yes." she said.

I turned and headed out the door down the stairs.

We got out of the compound quite easily with the girl's guidance. Her ability told her where people are and made it so we could move through undetected. I was impressed. I would have run into a few of the guards on our flight out of the compound.

We get back to the vehicle and get out to a safe house that I have set up. I sensed the girl and see she is awakened. Her aura is masked so I am uncertain what she is, but she is strong. Her magic is huge for someone so young.

"You may want to free your spirit. He is getting agitated by your waiting."

I had forgotten. I called the spirit up and gave him some reagents as an apology for waiting for the freedom. Then I called his true name and told him that he was free. He smiled widely and disappeared. Blinking out into his reality.

I called Mr. Johnson and told him that I had the package. He rushed out to a spot I chose for a meeting. He said he had to pick up someone and he would be there in 10 minutes. I knew I would be 20 minutes out and I told him so.

We climbed into the van, I smiled at the girl while envisioning a white screen.

“You are a quick learner. A white screen blocking out your thoughts. That is good. Keep it up and your natural armor will be strengthened.” she said to me.

I smiled and pulled out on the highway, moving toward the exit that would mean my freedom from this job.

I pulled into the abandoned shopping center that I have used for cargo transfers many times in the past. There was a Ford Americar waiting in the parking lot. Standing in front of this car are three people. Mr. Johnson was the younger man in the middle, he was towered upon on either side by a blond female human and a dark haired male elf. The female looked a lot like the child that I have taken, almost exactly, except the ears.

I walked out to the meeting, the girl hiding behind me. I started walking forward when the girl started running toward the meeting. She was squealing with joy.

“Mom, Dad, Johnny, I have missed you all.”

There were joyful sobs. A family was reunited, joy making everything a little better here.

Mr. Johnson turned to me with a huge smile on his face. He handed me a credstick and said, “Well done Quicksilver. Thank you for helping us get my sister back.”

I looked at him and said, “I hope everything goes well for you. I am sure the corp will come looking for her.”

“They will never find me.” the girl says.

The boy turns to his parents and says, “Mom, Dad, happy Mothers and Fathers day!”

It was at that moment I realized it was fathers day. Dreck, now I had to go call my pop.