

WUHAN, CHINA. THEN.

IN MY FIRST FEW WEEKS AT THE ACADEMY, BEFORE THE TRAINING BEGAN, I LOVED TO RUN THROUGHOUT THE GROUNDS.

IT WAS SO HUGE--A VAST IMPROVEMENT OVER THE HOVELS I'D INHABITED BEFORE.

IRIS--
WE CAN'T BE OUT HERE!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, LIAN? I LOVE THE RAIN!

LIAN WAS ONE OF MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCES THERE. SHE HAD ARRIVED SEVERAL MONTHS EARLIER.

ALTHOUGH SHE WAS BARELY OLDER THAN ME, SHE TREATED ME LIKE A LITTLE SISTER...

WE NEED TO GET BACK INSIDE BEFORE--

YOU KIDS JUST MADE A BIG MISTAKE.

...ALWAYS TRYING TO KEEP ME OUT OF TROUBLE.

JUST LOOK DOWN. DON'T LOOK AT HER.

P--PLEASE. IT'S SO HOT AND STUFFY INSIDE, WE JUST WANT TO PLAY.

IN RETROSPECT, I PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO MY FRIEND.

NO! PLEASE! WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? NO!!!!

LIAN!!! ANYONE!!! PLEASE!!!

BOOM BOOM BOOM

IN THE HOURS I WAS LEFT IN THE COLD, WET ISOLATION OF THE STORM CELLAR, MY MIND FILLED WITH UNBRIDLED EMOTION.

AT FIRST, I BELIEVED IT WAS TERROR I FELT. THEN I THOUGHT IT WAS SADNESS.

IT WAS NEITHER.

I WAS FURIOUS.

ANGRY AT THE BULLY WHO TORMENTED ME FOR NOTHING MORE THAN BEING IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME.

AND MOST OF ALL, ANGRY AT MYSELF FOR BEING POWERLESS TO STOP THIS FROM HAPPENING.

THONNK

KNOKK

ANGRY AT LIAN FOR NOT PROTECTING ME.

NEVER AGAIN WOULD I BE A VICTIM.

LOS ANGELES, TUESDAY MORNING.

NEVER!!!

CRASH



MERE
MOMENTS AGO,
MY EMPLOYER
WAS THE VICTIM
OF A VICIOUS
ATTACK OF
TERRORISM...

NEVER
AGAIN,
IRIS.

...PERPETRATED
BY A THUG IN
THE EMPLOY OF
ONE OF HIS
SO-CALLED
BUSINESS
ASSOCIATES.

FORMER BUSINESS
ASSOCIATES.

A PRICE
MUST BE PAID
FOR THIS--THIS
CALAMITY!

THERE IS NOTHING
MORE INSULTING THAN
TO ASSAULT A MAN IN
HIS OWN HOME--TO
FORCE HIM TO SEEK
PROTECTION--
TO COWER IN FEAR--
IN HIS OWN PERSONAL
VAULT BENEATH THE
FLOOR.

DO YOU
UNDERSTAND
ME??

I SHOULD HAVE NOTICED
THEM APPROACHING.
I SHOULD HAVE
PREVENTED IT.

WE MUST
GO.

I HAVE FAILED
MY EMPLOYER.

I AM IN
NO MOOD
TO ANSWER ANY
QUESTIONS
ABOUT THIS. WE
HAVE NO NEED
FOR CIVILIANS' HELP

I MUST MAKE
AMENDS.

THIS IS AN
INTERNAL MATTER,
IRIS. YOU SHALL BEGIN
IMMEDIATELY.



MONTE CARLO.
WEDNESDAY EVENING.

VICTOR HWANG WAS MY
EMPLOYER'S FIRST
BUSINESS PARTNER.

LE CASINO
DE MONTE-CARLO,
MADemoisELLE.

MERCI,
MONSIEUR.

HE SUPPLIED HWANG
WITH THE "LEGITIMATE"
BUSINESS NECESSARY TO
LAUNDER HIS GANG MONEY
OUT OF SHANGHAI.

ALWAYS MORE OF A RECLUSE,
HWANG SHUNS THE SPOTLIGHT,
PREFERRING TO SPEND HIS
DAYS AT SEA, ON HIS YACHT.

WITH HIS MAIN OFFICE IN NICE,
HWANG LIVES MOST OF HIS DAYS
ON THE MEDITERRANEAN.

AND WHILE HWANG IS IN
TOWN, HIS RIGHT HAND MAN,
MARC SAURO, PREFERS THE
CASINOS OF MONTE CARLO.





SOON...



HE TELLS ME ALL ABOUT HIS LUXURIOUS LIFESTYLE: FROM HIS SUMMER HOME IN THE HAMPTONS AND HIS WINTER CABIN IN TELLURIDE, TO THIS CONDOMINIUM WITH ITS OWN PRIVATE BEACH WHEN THE BOSS IS IN TOWN.

HE FILLS ME IN ON EVERY VAPID DETAIL.



HE LEADS SUCH A FULL LIFE, HE LAMENTS, BUT HAS NO ONE TO SHARE IT WITH.



COULD I BE THE ONE, HE WONDERS?

WE DECIDE TO TAKE A WALK ON THE BEACH.



I ASK HIM TO TELL ME ABOUT HIS BOSS, THE RECLUSIVE MISTER HWANG.



HE DEMAENS HIS EMPLOYER, CALLING HIM A FOOLISH ECCENTRIC.

HE'S NEVER BEEN ON HWANG'S BOAT--HE ONLY KNOWS OF HIS BOSS' EXACT WHEREABOUTS BECAUSE OF A GPS FEATURE ON HIS I-PHONE.

SAURO SUSPECTS THERE ARE STRANGE HAPPENINGS ABOARD...



...DEVIAN'T SEX ACTS, PERHAPS.

