

ix. the new horseman

"The Eye, it may not lie but don't think for a moment it can't be lied to. Seeing is believing but is it the truth? People see the Horsemen as noble Robinhoods, are they? Or are they common thieves? Depends on your point of view, here's what you know. They robbed a bank in Paris from a stage in Las Vegas, they've fleeced an insurance magnet of hundreds of millions of dollars and disappeared from a roof in New York, always showering their devoted fans with money. Here's what you don't know. They let one man behind, framed, holding the bag. Me. Are you listening, Horsemen? When you emerge, and you will, I will be there, waiting, because mark my words, you will get what's coming to you. In ways, you can't expect but very much deserve because one thing I believe in is an eye for an eye."

Evelynn turned off her phone and threw it on the couch. "He's so dramatic," she groaned out as she buried her face into her hand. Jack chuckled at her from his spot next to Merritt. They recently moved to an abandoned auto-shop, of sorts. So there were old cars everywhere.

"How about instead of stalking Bradley's website, you try to learn a thing or two from me?"

"I mean, he's in jail," she continued, pretending she never heard Jack talk. "How does he have access to the Internet? I even saw a bookshelf in his room. That's insane! How does he have more freedom than we do?"

Merritt rolled his eyes, "The guy made millions, what did you expect?"

"I guess, you're right. It'd be fun to see him miserable, though."

"Okay," Jack announced. "Back to the lesson."

Evelynn got up and walked over to them. Today, was card learning day so Jack was the teacher. She stood next to Merritt as Jack started to talk. "It's all in the wrist," he explained as he threw a card. It flew perfectly from the front window to the back of the old and worn out car. "Let, the momentum of the card do the work for you."

He continued to throw each and everyone one of them amazingly, "Mm-hm." Merritt agreed, watching.

"This last one I call the Stall." He threw the card behind his back and picked it up with his other hand throwing it so that the card stopped on the trunk of the car.

Merritt whistled, "Not bad, but do you want to see a thing of beauty?"

"I do indeed," Jack responded.

"Here we go," Merritt threw his card. Instead of doing what Jack's did, it fluttered lifelessly to the ground. He turned to Jack smiling.

Jack began to nod at him, "That's good. No, no, it's good to be positive despite making zero progress in the last year. Evelynn you give it a go."

Evelynn took the card from his hand and was actually better than the last time. "You're kind of making progress," Jack sugar-coated.

Evelynn rolled her eyes at him and sighed.

"Whereas when it comes to hypnotism," he addressed Merritt. "The student has almost become the master." Evelynn snorted at his false claims.

"I like your confidence," Merritt started out. "But you might say you have the better teacher."

"You know you're right, you're right," Jack said with a strained smile while flicking his cards. "You're teacher definitely, doesn't know what he's doing."

Jack grabbed one of the cards he flicked in the air and showed it to Merritt. "By the way, was this your card yesterday?"

"In fact, it was," answered Merritt.

"That so?" Jack asked cockily taking the card and throwing it through the car, perfectly, yet again.

"You guys are salty as hell," she commented.

"And you, need to stop going on the internet and learning weird slang," Merritt shot back at her.

"Big ball of sodium."

They all heard an engine of a vehicle come in through the garage. When they saw the bike, they knew instantly that it was Daniel.

Jack turned to Merritt. "If I can hypnotize Danny before you can hit him with a card, I get the top bunk for a week."

"Why do you have to phrase it like that?" Evelynn whispered to herself.

Merritt ignored her, "Okay. That's a deal."

Jack ran up to Daniel, and put his hand out as if to shake it, "Danny what's up man?" He then moved the hand, palm facing Daniel's face. "Stare at the palm of your hand and as your eyes change focus you will begin to notice."

"Everything," Daniel interrupted. "Because I'm not hypnotized. It's not working. Please don't become him."

"I tried to tell them," she said quietly while shaking her head.

Daniel began to walk and so did everyone else, following him. "I didn't know you did party tricks when there weren't floozies around to impress."

"I think we stopped trying to impress floozies in like, nineteen thirty-seven," Merritt told him as Jack chuckled.

"And since Ev found us out," Jack added.

Evelynn glared at Jack when he winked at her jokingly.

"Okay, somebody broke into my apartment. Some amateur who knew everything about me, everything about Henley leaving, and everything about us." He spoke quickly then paused as they neared the railing, taking in the scene in front of him. "That's her."

"Hey!" Shouted a woman, next to Dylan.

"Hi," Daniel greeted her.

"You've met Lula," observed Dylan.

"I've met her," Daniel confirmed. "What is she doing here?"

"Why I'm the new Horseman," she announced waving her hand in the air. "I'm the girl Horseman or the second, wait, third? But yeah!"

When she saw that the others just stood in shock she seemed to have finally noticed the atmosphere. "What? No excitement? Jack? Evelynn?"

"Dylan, tell me what's going on here," Merritt demanded.

"Well, Lula's been on the underground scene for the last decade. I think she has some real talent I'd like to try to put her on stage to balance out the team."

"What? No, are you serious man?" Jack asked in disbelief. "A er Henley let you said I'd get back on stage again not someone who just showed up."

"I told you I'd think about it and I have. I really need you behind the scene with me for a little while," Dylan reasoned.

"Dylan, come on. I've been behind the scene my whole life," Jack complained.

"You're replacing Henley?" a devastated and shocked Evelynn asked Dylan.

"Um, not replace per say. She's just filling in. Plus, I thought you'd be happy about another girl in the group again."

Evelynn just sighed sadly, obviously not over Henley. "But she barely let," Evelyn whispered. Jack being the only one who heard her patted her on the shoulder, trying to comfort her.

"Much as I appreciate the addition of some more femininity to the group," said Merritt. "Over about what Evelynn and Atlas provide, I think the real issue is wi-

"The issue is that we've been rehearsing for months," Daniel interrupted. "For something we don't even know what it is."

Dylan looked over at Atlas. "You're gonna keep working."

"Until we work as a single organism," Daniel finished. "The thing is when you say that, I think the thing you're referring to is us, not you."

"Listen, I'm getting my orders directly from the Eye," Dylan told Daniel. "Then I give them to you if you don't like that you're welcome to go."

"No, I'm not going anywhere but I'm taking care of myself."

"Guys," Lula called for attention. "Can I just weigh in here, really quick? Because I think I know what's going on here."

"What's that?" Evelynn asked.

"You guys are this big, amazing, tight-knit family unit. I'm a new person stepping in."

"No," Merritt looked over her. "We are anything but a family."

"Well, my mother literally knifed my father in the neck one-time. So you are actually a little bit like my family unit." Lula rambled.

"Really?" Merritt asked.

"Yeah, it was an accident," She informed. "I think."

"Okay," Merritt directed his attention to Dylan. "But does this actually mean we're gonna do something?"

"Yes," he answered. "You've all heard of Octa and their new playboy CEO, Owen Case. His partner Walter Mabry died a year ago. You wanna know what all this has been leading to?"

"Yeah."

"Octa's hosting a launch for the next generation cellphone. Once they move on to the streets they'll siphon their user's information to the black market. Meaning, Octa's selling privacy to up their profit. So, the Eye's decided to expose them for it. The objective is to hijack the show," He spread out a large black piece of paper and started shining a black light on it. "Rehearsal's over guys, this is what we've been waiting for. Now it's time to get to work."

"Woah," Evelynn marveled at the blueprint. "Not as fancy as last time, though."

"Definitely not," Jack agreed.

"You guys study that, I'm needed back at the precinct," Dylan said walking away, leaving them to look at the paper.

"Wait," Lula said. "What was last time?"

Jack and Evelynn shared a look and turned back to her. "Holographic blueprints," they said in unison, grinning.

"That was creepy and you should not do that again," Lula informed them laughing.

"Get back to work," Daniel interrupted. "We need to be prepared."

"Let them have their fun," Merritt chastised him. "They're kids a er all."

"Yeah, Daniel. Stop being a grumpy old man all the time." Evelynn joked.

"Be more like Merritt," Jack added. "A happy old man." Evelynn snorted.

"I defend you and this is what I get?" he asked. "Betrayal?"

"And you guys don't call yourselves a family. You bicker like one," Lula observed.

"We're not," they all said in sync.

"I told you to stop that!" Lula sighed then addressed Evelynn, "So, since we're the only chicks, we gotta stick together right?"

"I'd leave you in approximately, one point three seconds for a corn chip."

"Only?" she asked jokingly.

"I tend to be lazy at times," Evelynn played along. Then she turned to the table, shining the black light to it. "I really should start reading on the blueprints, though, we'll talk about being friends later."

"Got it," Lula responded while looking at the blueprint, doing as she was told.