ECHELON

by
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EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Steam gently HISSES from a rusty pipe. DRIPPING water
collects into a murky puddle amongst uneven cobblestones.

Feet PLOD, sprinting.

A coat FLAPS.

HEAVY BREATHING, someone is running full-throttle.

Two people, actually.

VIGO is a middle-aged, darkly handsome man whose attire
would indicate homelessness. His accomplice, BOROS, is
lankier and squirrelish, but similarly dressed.

One of them SPLASHES through a puddle along the way.

As they pass through a billowing wall of steam, their
destination becomes visible: a man named SIM, waiting for
them near the end of the alley.

Sim is fidgeting nervously in the shadows as they
approach.

                    SIM
          Did you get it?

Vigo, PANTING heavily, hands Sim a sleek, palm-sized,
metallic-grey DEVICE. Sim marvels at the tiny object.

                    SIM (CONT'D)
          Did they see you?

                    BOROS
          No, no, ...I think we're --

A distant SIREN flares to life. The trio exchanges
terrified looks, and take off running together out of the
alley.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

They come out into a dirty, crumbling street. The simple
road is lined with trash, and a tangle of electrical
cords crisscross overhead. Old, abandoned industrial
buildings compose the surroundings.

The three stop to think.

                         VIGO
          You two take the Device back to Meridia,
          hide it there. I'll buy you some time
          with the Police.

                         SIM
          You'll never make it....

                         VIGO
          We don't have a choice. Go!

Sim, a little apprehensive, nods in agreement. He and
Boros run one way down the street. Vigo, the other.

Sim and Boros run to a door of one of the industrial
buildings and try the knob; it's locked. They skip to the
next one, but it's locked too.

Crossing a street, they are stopped by the sight of the
POLICE down the road. They are four figures dressed
purely in black, wielding FLASHLIGHTS.

The moment they freeze, the flashlights turn on them.

                         POLICE
          Hey!; There they are!; Hold it!

Sim and Boros tear off in a new direction, the Police
chase after them.

Vigo, a block away, hears the commotion and turns around,
heading back to help his friends.

Sim collides into a rotting wooden door, desperate. It's
locked, but the lock is faulty and he kicks it open.

INT. DECREPIT INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - NIGHT

Once the two are inside, Boros slams the door behind
them. In here the siren is muffled slightly before it
DIES AWAY.

Shadows and light play tricks with plumes of rolling
dust. Aside from some large tables and rubble, the
cavernous room is empty. Sim nabs a nearby shank of wood
and wedges it against the door, securing it closed.

The two amble, nearly blind in the darkness, deeper into
the room.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Vigo, rounding a corner, spots the Police kicking in the
door Sim just rigged. They enter the building.

                         VIGO
          Shit....

Vigo, checking for Police first, carefully crosses the
street and skirts around the outside of the building.
Through a tall, cloudy window he can see flashlights
scanning inside.

INT. DECREPIT INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - NIGHT

Sim and Boros are ducked down behind a pillar near the
back of the room. The lights of the searching Police
twinkle not far behind them.

                         SIM
          We need to split up. Let them follow you
          up the stairs and head for the roof. I'll
          wait down here for them to --

                         BOROS
          I'll hide, you take the stairs. Give me
          the --

                         SIM
          Goddamn it, Boros, just do it! We don't
          have time. Just make sure they follow
          you. Go, now!

Sim pushes Boros into action, and he timidly creeps
toward the stair access door in the corner. Sim stalks
into an adjoining office room and watches their pursuers
approach through the window there.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Boros manages to evade the dancing flashlight beams and
sneak into the stairwell unnoticed. Once inside, though,
he hesitates.

INT. DECREPIT INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - NIGHT

Still searching, one policeman heads right for Sim's
hiding place. Sim dips beneath the window to avoid
detection, and positions himself behind the door.

                         SIM
             Come on, Boros, come on....

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Vigo has found one of the outside windows partly opened,
and he climbs into the building.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Boros is HYPERVENTILATING, trying to summon up the will
to make himself a distraction. Looking out the window of
the stairwell door, he sees two Policemen coming to
search the stairs, and ducks out of view just in time.

INT. DECREPIT INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - NIGHT

The Policeman pushes open the door to Sim's office room
and it WHINES open painfully. His bright flashlight
illuminates the room as he looks around.

His boots THUNK heavily on the floor.

Checking behind a desk, Sim gets a view of the nightstick
he's carrying; its big, sharp SPIKE gleams in the jumpy
light.

Sim swallows hard, his lips pursed.

The policeman is nearly satisfied, all that's left to
check is behind the --

Sim rams the policeman with the door and punches him in
the face. The dark figure rolls backward over the desk,
and Sim runs out of the room.

The two who were just about to open the door to the stair
well hear the scuffle and -- with a hand just about to
turn the knob -- they backpedal to chase Sim.

One throws a nightstick at Sim with expert accuracy. It
WHIRLS across the room and --

EXT. PALACE, BALCONY - DAY

-- A sledgehammer SMASHES into a white-marble statue,
breaking off an arm.