

## Ghost Boy

### Chapter 12

Going ghost-mode in the morning was odd. Doing it outside of his bedroom? That felt even weirder.

But there was no helping it. This was the only way.

He'd deal with the consequences later. And there would almost certainly be consequences. The chances of him getting away with this without his mother finding out...

Later. Kyle would deal with it later.

Right now, he had a job to do.

And that job was to find a mark. That *was* the right word wasn't it? 'Mark', as in someone marked. A target. A person sized up as wealthy and-

Kyle shook his head.

Did it matter what the correct word was?

He was looking for someone to rob. To steal from. To mug with Wanderer mind powers. A victim who'd never be aware of the crime, would never see Kyle's face or hear Kyle's voice. He was looking for someone wealthy, so he could take their money.

That didn't make him a criminal. It didn't mean he should start using criminal terminology. He wasn't looking for a *mark* or a *target*. All he needed was a bit of cash. Not a lot. Just a little bit.

He wasn't a criminal. *This* didn't make him a bad guy.

Lucy. That's who the real criminal was. She was the real evil. Kyle was just using the means at his disposal. He was only doing what he'd been forced to.

He had no other choice.

*There.*

A man in a business suit, carrying a briefcase while talking into a wireless earpiece. A sleazy-looking, older guy.

Kyle tailed the man invisibly, waiting until just the right moment. The streets were mostly empty around, no-one seemed to be paying attention to the guy. That was good. Tall buildings all around, though no faces in the windows that Kyle could see. Cars were moving by, drivers indifferent and oblivious. Any moment now...

The instant the man reached an intersection in the sidewalk – a slim, dark alleyway to his left – Kyle snatched his hand out, tore the man's ghost out of his body. He pushed the inanimate ghost of the man aside, flew into the vacant body even as the body fell limply to the ground like a puppet with its strings cut.

A world of sensations awakened. The sounds of traffic, the familiar scents of the city streets, a sudden awareness of weight and gravity, the sharp pain of his body hitting hard concrete.

Kyle pushed himself to his feet quickly, not wanting to draw attention to himself.

He glanced around, saw a few people looking at him. Raised eyebrows here and there, a cold snicker from one person. No-one came over to help or as if he was okay. Good.

A benefit of living in a city; no one gave a shit about anyone else.

Everyone here was a stranger. Another random face to be ignored and forgotten. Maybe in smaller communities, people might know each other's names. Maybe in other places, people were kind enough to care about a stranger who'd fallen to the ground randomly. Kyle didn't know what other places were like. Never been to any. All he knew was this shitty city. And in this city, no-one gave two shits about some random asshole who'd fallen over on the sidewalk for no reason.

Satisfied that no-one was coming to him, that none of the few faces around were going to follow him, Kyle walked into the dark alleyway.

The man's body ached. Not just from the fall. His joints felt stiff, his back sore. One

of his knees felt particularly achy.

And there was a voice in his ear. Another man asking what'd just happened, if 'Barton' was alright. That, Kyle guessed, was this body's name. Barton.

He ignored the voice emitting from the earpiece, reached into the man's pockets one at a time until he found a wallet.

Lots of cash. Excellent.

If the man hadn't been carrying actual, physical money, Kyle would've been forced to try again with someone else. Maybe even moved to a different alleyway altogether.

Kyle grabbed all the man's cash out of the wallet – no time to count it and only take what he'd need – and then slid the now much lighter wallet back into the pocket he'd found it in. Then, glancing down both ends of the alleyway to make sure no-one was watching, he knelt over a pile of bins and trash. Carefully, Kyle slipped the cash into the jacket pocket of a passed-out body hidden in the shadows.

His heart was racing as he walked back to the street, took a few steps away from the alley entrance.

The, inhaling a single, deep breath, Kyle relaxed that special part of his mind that allowed him to Wander. The body's sensations vanished immediately. He could still see and hear, could still experience the world around him; it just felt different. Less physical and real.

Barton's body dropped to the floor for a second time.

A quick glance around and Kyle saw a ghostly replica of the man a few feet away. It was the easiest thing in the world to float over to that ghost, grab hold of it, and shove it back where it belonged.

The man's body sat up, blinking and confused.

Kyle left it behind, didn't look back as he returned to his body in the alleyway and reoccupied it.

He walked away, sticking close to the alley walls.

Money for a train ticket. That's all he'd needed.

And now, he had it.

Most of the day. That's how long he had. And how long it'd take.

He'd be cutting it close, that was for sure. Chances were, his mother would arrive home from work before he did. And she'd find his note – which claimed he'd 'gotten better' and was 'taking a walk for some fresh air'. Even if she bought the lie, she wouldn't be happy with him.

When she'd left their apartment that morning, he'd feigned illness again. Another day off school.

Only, unlike yesterday, he wouldn't be shadowing Ana all day.

Today, he'd be meeting another Wanderer. Teach. A woman he'd seen the face of countless times, had jacked off to on more than one occasion. A woman who was currently serving time in prison for a slew of crimes she'd been forced to commit by Lucy.

If anyone could help Kyle, it was Cindy Orion.

Lanky had told Kyle about the fifth Wanderer during his warning. A warning that now, in retrospect, Kyle should have listened to and heeded far more than he had done. 'Don't trust Lucy', he'd said. 'She'll ruin your life'.

Back then, Kyle hadn't listened.

He'd been a fool.

Lucy was cute. A short, petite, pretty girl. A little strange sure, but harmless. How could a girl who looked like *that* ever be as dangerous as Lanky claimed? Surely, the tall Wanderer was just joking, or else mistaken.

Now Kyle knew better. Lucy was *deranged*. Legitimately crazy. A psycho that got off on torturing Kyle and fucking with his life.

Lucy was the devil. And, unless Kyle stopped the bitch, he'd probably end up in a jail cell just like Teach.

A jail cell. Or worse.

And Ana... The love of his life, his soulmate and bride-to-be. There was no way Lucy would let Ana go unscathed. The cunt wasn't going to stop with her games, not until unthinkable lines had been crossed and Ana was left broken and stained.

It wasn't just Ana, either. Lucy was dragging Kyle's *mother* into her sick games too. Ana, Kyle's mother, even Ana's mother. They'd all suffer if Kyle didn't stop Lucy.

He was the *only* one who could protect them.

And he'd do just that. No matter what.

Wandering had a range limit.

It wasn't a noticeable limit, most of the time. But it was there.

From his apartment, Kyle was able to Wander anywhere in the city, even glide out beyond it. A large, huge area. But, if he tried going too far, something stopped him. An invisible barrier that he could neither see nor touch, but which prevented him from continuing all the same.

That was why he needed money for train tickets. Why he was about to spend half a day trapped inside a train compartment watching the clock.

The facility Teach was being kept in, a place called Greenwater Prison, was way out of normal Wandering range.

He'd never be able to ghost his way over to Teach's prison from the apartment. Or *anywhere* in the city. Hell, he'd have to travel for hours and hours just to get anywhere *near* the damned prison.

Luckily, despite the fact that most of the area around Greenwater Prison was empty – lakes and forests and fields – there was at least a small town nearby. A town that, if Kyle's calculations and guesswork were to be believed, would be comfortably inside his Wanderer's range.

A town with train-tracks cutting right through it.

The train Kyle was on would take him right to that shitty little rural town and, from there, he could Wander out and visit the prison in ghost-form.

If he was going to talk to Teach, this was the only way.

Waiting away the hours, however, was easier said than done. He amused himself on his phone for a while, then spent some time in quiet contemplation. He counted the money he'd stolen, thought up different ways to spend it; food and drinks for today, a gift for his mother, maybe something nice for Ana.

For the first time in a long time, Kyle thought about the powers he possessed. The abilities he had as a Wanderer.

He'd learned so much about what he could do.

Touching minds and reading thoughts were things he'd known from day one. The ability to pass through solid objects was a given. But dream tampering? Possession? Altering actual personalities? He'd never have even considered half the that stuff a few months back – before the fateful day he'd met Lucy.

How had that happened anyway? How had Lucy actually found him?

The city was a big place. It didn't seem like a coincidence that Lucy just so happened to drift into the very same attic bedroom that Kyle had been in.

There was still so much he didn't know about his powers.

So many advantages that Lucy had over him.

Even if Teach couldn't help with the Lucy problem, even if she couldn't provide Kyle with the bitch's real identity or a way to stop her, Cindy Orion might still do as her nickname implied and teach Kyle a few Wanderer tricks that he didn't already know.

When the train finally arrived at his stop, Kyle stood and stretched. As he stepped

off the train, he looked around – thoughts racing.

Time to find some place he could Wander in peace.

Kyle didn't bother with inns or restaurants or anything of that sort. Those kinds of places would try to wake him and kick him out if he 'fell asleep' in them. He lingered in the quiet town long enough to buy a drink and a snack, then walked out to a nearby forest.

He didn't go far past the treeline, not so far that he couldn't still see the town through the shrubs and bushes. Then, ignoring the bugs and dirt and foliage, he sat down with his back to a tree and tried to get as comfortable as he could.

It wasn't ideal, but it'd have to do.

Eyes closed, breathing relaxed.

A moment later, his ghost was detached from his body.

Without waiting, he shot into the sky and – fast as a bullet – flew off in the direction of the prison.

Miles passed in heartbeats.

Almost as soon as he'd started moving, he was there – floating high above the same prison complex he'd seen satellite images of. Greenwater Prison. Named for the mossy lake situated so near to it. Cindy Orion's home, thanks to Lucy.

Kyle darted down, passed through tile and stone and concrete like it was nothing. And, wasting no time, he went in search of Teach.

The prison complex was large, with multiple buildings and lots of places Teach could be. And, with so many women in prison outfits around, searching face to face would take forever. Instead, Kyle found a prison guard, quickly searched the man's mind for information on Cindy Orion. As always, he had to fight off the tidal-wave of emotions and thoughts and memories.

Thankfully, Cindy Orion was famous.

Finding images and information on her in the guard's mind didn't take long. Everyone knew who Teach was – the infamous nymphomaniac. At this prison, if no-where else, she was something of a celebrity.

If the prison guard's mind was correct, Cindy Orion spent most of her time in her cell – only leaving it to eat and bathe. Kyle read the cell's exact location from the man's mind, flew off in that direction without hesitation.

Time. He didn't have a lot of it. Not if he wanted to have any hope of arriving home before his mother did.

The cell, now that Kyle knew exactly where it was, wasn't hard to find. And inside that cell was a very beautiful woman. A woman whose face he'd seen plastered on news channels and websites.

She looked much the same as those pictures and videos.

Brunette hair that ran down to her shoulders, neat and flowing and stylish despite her current living situation. Clear blue eyes hidden behind thin-rimmed glasses that were, at that moment, scanning over the pages of a scientific-looking book. Her lips formed a thin line as she read, focus entirely dedicated to the words in front of her.

Her body, as Kyle already knew, was fantastic. Slender and lean for the most part, but round and curvy in all the right places. Large tits, a shapely ass. It was the body of someone who existed to tease and titillate men. She, like all the other women at the prison, was wearing an orange jumpsuit – though several buttons of hers were undone at her neckline and chest.

Kyle stared at her for a long moment, admiring the way her body looked as she lounged and read. How should he do this? What would be the best way of introducing himself?

Kyle stepped into Cindy Orion's jail cell with solid, human feet.

Cindy glanced up and over at him as he entered, eyes flicking back to her book immediately.

"Whatever it is, Candace," Cindy spoke, voice bored, "I don't care."

Candace. That must be the name of the woman Kyle was possessing.

"Hello, Teach," Kyle stated, eyes intent on her face.

Cindy's head snapped up, eyes narrowed. She stared at Kyle's face for a long moment – a frightening glare marring her otherwise sexy face. Seconds ticked by, neither of them uttering a word until, finally, Cindy seemed to relax. Her head tilted to one side, curiosity shining in her eyes.

"You're not *her*," Cindy said, speaking softly. "And you're not the fat-ass or the coward. But you're clearly a Wanderer. Which begs the question; who *are* you? And how do you know about me?"

"I'm..." The questions took Kyle aback. He'd thought about this conversation all day; how it might go, what he'd say, the offer he'd make. But not once had he considered which name to call himself by. Kyle, his real name? Ghost Boy, the name Lucy had given him? "I'm Ghost. And I need your help, Teach."

Best to get straight to the point.

"My help?" Teach smiled, she glanced around her tiny cell, a single eyebrow raised. "In case you hadn't noticed, I'm not exactly in a position to be helping anyone right now."

"I need your help," Kyle continued, "to stop Lucy."

Teach's eyebrow raised higher. Kyle could see the confusion in her expression. And, only then, did he realise the mistake he'd made.

Lucy had only taken on that name – Lucifer - *after* she'd fucked over Teach and destroyed her life. Before that, she'd been...

"Shorty," Kyle corrected himself, watching as the confusion in Teach's face was replaced with recognition and loathing. "I need your help to stop her. She knows my real name. Who I am. And she's doing to me what she did to you."

Teach set her book down, crossed her arms.

"Tell me everything," Cindy Orion told him. "And I mean *everything*."

Kyle glanced around, made sure no-one else was watching. Then, he stepped further into Teach's jail cell, took a seat on the woman's hard bed.

And he told her everything.

"So," Teach said, lounging and relaxed, "either you face-fuck mommy or your girlfriend has to give her daddy a blowie?"

Kyle nodded his head, held back his rage.

"How long did you say she gave you?"

"Seven days. I have five left."

"Bummer," Teach shrugged. "Have you decided which one you're going to go with yet?"

Kyle had, though he didn't say it.

"Are you going to help me?" Kyle asked through gritted teeth, trying his best to keep the anger from his tone. "Or not?"

He'd come here hoping to find an ally. Or, at the very least, some *useful* information. Instead, all he'd gotten so far was indifference and callous disregard. Teach didn't care what was happening to him. Why should she? What did it matter to her if Kyle was forced to fuck his own mother, or if the girl he loved was defiled and abused? Teach had no reason to care.

It'd been a mistake coming here. He'd wasted one of his valuable days. He'd-

"Yes," Teach said simply, gaze locked with Kyle's. "I'll help."

Before Kyle could ask how, or thank her, or even sigh in relief, the woman continued – eyes hard and unforgiving.

"But," she stated the word hard and clear, "there's a catch. I can do more than help you, *Ghost*. I can give you Shorty on a shiny, silver platter. I can hand her to you gift-wrapped and vulnerable. But, here's the problem; it's going to take some time. Three weeks. Or twenty days, to be specific."

Twenty days. While not exactly a maths genius, Kyle was *fairly* sure twenty was more than five.

"Until then," Teach said, mirroring Kyle's thoughts, "there's nothing I can do. You'll have to play along with Shorty's games and do what she wants you to. Someone's going to have to give someone else head, be it you and your mother or your girlfriend and her father. There's no avoiding that. And there's no getting out of whatever else she wants you to do for the next twenty days."

Twenty days. Three weeks. There was a *lot* Lucy could do in that time, none of it good.

"Survive that long," Teach smiled. "And I'll tell you how to find out Shorty's real identity."