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No Escape

Ch. 1

The year is 2012. The Millennium has come and gone, and sure enough, so has the Apocalypse. Well, in a way. An EMP burst, like a flaming sword from the sky has taken the world back to simpler times. Very little of what used to be technology remains. Most things are gas powered, if not animal driven, so oils of all kinds have become the new gold.

The governments of the world have united, and are now known as the Human United Betterment Council, or HUB C to the common people. HUB C has is located in what used to be known as Greenland, in a highly guarded and well-hidden valley. The members from each sub-government gather twice a month, bringing the voice of their people to the table, and, usually, leaving with an equitable outcome to all involved. It is what government was meant to be, but times change.

The sun was dipping low on the horizon. He was standing in the midst of his field, wiping the sweat from his brow. He looked out over his work and a small, almost imperceptible grin slid over his mouth. He turned to head for the farm, but stopped as his eye caught a glint of metal protruding from a pile of weed he had just thrown into his barrow only a moment before. He leaned over and as the greenery and dirt were brushed away another smile quirked into his face. A lighter.

I haven't seen one of these in years. He pocketed his prize and started towards his home. On his way, he the dinner bell started to chime.

Like I'd forget. He quickened his pace. *Always lookin' out for me though. What would I do without her? Probably go crazy, or worse, work for the government.*

As he walked through the back door, a handsome brunette turned from the sink and glared at him. "Wipe your feet you lazy oaf."

Snake Plissken stopped in his tracks and back-peddled to the doormat. He scraped his feet as best he could, then turned, with a smirk, to his wife, "Better, Molly dear?"

She wiped her hands on a dishtowel and padded over to him. She wrapped her arms around his neck and leaned in to kiss him. Snake put his arms around her waist and pulled her close, as they fell into each other and kissed passionately. Molly pulled back from the kiss and nestled into a hug, whispering in his ear, "Much better."

"Oh man. Not again." They had been so caught up they hadn't heard their son enter the room. He was standing at the kitchen table with a wry grin on his face. "If you guys are gonna play kissy-face, can you at least warn somebody?"

Snake shifted Molly aside and stood on the other side of the table, staring across at the boy. "Fine by me," he said, an identical grin creeping into the wrinkles and scars on his face, "Joseph, your mother and I are going to play kissy-face. And afterwards, I am going to chase you down and tickle the daylights out of you."

Joseph took a step back from the table, on the balls of his feet, ready to bolt. Snake just stood there, arms crossed in front of him. Neither moved, but Molly turned back to the sink with an exasperated sigh.

"You ready?" Snake stood still as a stone observing his son. He knew the boy was fast, which was to his disadvantage, but he was also very predictable. Snake loosened his arms to his side. He lowered himself until he was looking his son in the eye across the table and said, "I'm gonna give you a chance. I'll count to ten. You get a head start, but I warn you. I will find you and when I do, you better be ready."

Joseph gave a small laugh, "Old man, you think you know me so well? What if I told you that I was just setting you up all this time, making you think I had a pattern, so that one day, a day like this, I could show you up and come

out on top for once?"

Snake was impressed. For a ten year old, his son was already thinking like a man. His grin widened, "I would say you were bluffing. I know this farm better than you do. What say we put a time limit on it? If I don't find you in... Molly? What time will dinner be?"

Molly turned from the sink and checked the oven. The smell of fresh roll and chicken wafted across them and for a moment, both forgot the game at hand. Molly prodded at things, gave everything a closer look, then announced, "I'd say you've got about fifteen minutes, but don't forget to save some time for cleaning up."

Snake nodded, "Alright. Ten minutes. If I can have you caught in ten minutes, I win. If you make it back here without being caught in that time, you win."

A gleam entered Joseph's eyes, "And what exactly do I win?"

Snake smirked, "I'll teach you how to use my guns."

There was the crash of a metal bowl hitting the counter and tomatoes rolled across the floor. Both Snake and Joseph turned to Molly who was standing at the sink rigid as a post, with her back to them. A small shudder escaped her as she said, almost in a whisper, "I thought we promised."

Snake slowly approached her, but she put up a hand to ward him off.

"Molly," he said, hoping to calm her down, he knew the signs, and he knew she had a bad heart since Joseph was bon. The last thing he wanted was for her to get over-exited. "He needs to learn some day. He'll be a man soon. He will need to learn how to use them, in case... in case I'm not around any more."

Joseph stepped forward slowly, reached out, and took his mother's hand. She started a bit, then relaxed and turned to face him. "Besides," he said, with a small smile, "he doesn't have to teach me now. Dad can teach me when I'm older, maybe in a year or two. And who says he won't catch me anyway?"

Snake looked from his son to his wife. He moved in and wrapped his arms around them and hugged them to him. His life had changed so much since Molly. He couldn't imagine life without her or Joseph. "I'm sorry, honey. Joseph's right though. I can hold off a while longer." He turned her to him and gripped her shoulders, "How about we forget about the game for tonight?" He looked down at his son, "We can play some other time. Who knows, you might even show your old man up, yet."

After dinner, everyone sat around the table telling each other about their day or a story they heard or whatever came to mind. By the time they had finished, everyone was in a consensus that it was time to go to bed. Snake and Molly kissed Joseph and sent him off to his room. When he had reached the top of the stairs and closed the door, Molly turned and took Snake by the hand. She gave him a look that told him that sleep was going to be postponed for a while as she led him to their room.

As she crossed the threshold, she untied the top of her dress and let it fall. As she stood in the moonlight gleaming through the window Snake let out a sigh.

"Molly, my love," he whispered as he unbuttoned his shirt, "you are more beautiful than when I met you."

"You're just saying that," she said, slightly twisting in place, being coy. "Now, why don't you come over here and show me why they call you 'Snake.'"

As their bodies touched, they fell onto the bed, pressing themselves to one each other, a cigarette was being lit out in the fields. A dark figure watched from a distance as the shadowy figures inside the house combined into one. After a long while, they finally settled into the darkness and calm of the night. The house was asleep. The time was now.

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