

IT DOESN'T TAKE A THIEF
by
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It Takes a Thief

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FADE IN:

EXT. EUROPEAN COASTAL CITY - NIGHT

A city built on old money and newer lies.

Moonlight slides over terracotta rooftops, bell towers, and narrow streets that remember every secret ever whispered between deals.

A BLACK TOWN CAR glides through the old quarter.

Unmarked. Untouchable.

INT. TOWN CAR - NIGHT

JACK VALE (50s) sits alone in the back.

Tailored suit. Relaxed posture.

A man who has learned patience the hard way.

He studies a MUSEUM BROCHURE, folded open to architectural schematics.

Not admiring the art.

Mapping the exits.

Jack checks his watch.

Right on time.

He closes the brochure.

For a brief moment, his reflection in the glass overlaps with the faint image of a WOMAN'S FACE - memory, not hallucination.

Gone as quickly as it came.

Jack exhales.

Locks it away.

EXT. NATIONAL MUSEUM - NIGHT

Closed. Floodlit. Guarded.

Security cameras sweep the grounds with mechanical indifference.

The town car stops.

Jack steps out, buttons his jacket, and walks toward the service entrance like a man late for his own retirement party.

INT. MUSEUM - SERVICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Concrete walls. Utilitarian.

A KEYPAD and a CAMERA.

Jack removes his gloves.

Times the camera sweep.

His fingers move - precise, unhurried.

BEEP.

The door unlocks.

Jack slips inside.

INT. MUSEUM - MAIN GALLERY - NIGHT

Darkness.

A lattice of LASERS hums softly, invisible except when they catch dust in the air.

Motion sensors blink.

Jack stands still.

Counts.

Three seconds.

Then moves.

Graceful. Economical.

Not flashy.

This isn't thrill-seeking.

This is discipline.

Jack passes through the grid like a man following choreography written into muscle memory decades ago.

INT. VAULT ANTECHAMBER - NIGHT

A BIOMETRIC SCANNER guards the final door.

Jack removes a small, old-fashioned DEVICE from his pocket – brushed metal, almost antique.

He presses it gently against the panel.

The scanner flickers.

Turns GREEN.

The door slides open.

Jack pauses a fraction longer than necessary.

A habit.

Or a premonition.

Then steps inside.

INT. VAULT ROOM - NIGHT

One object.

Under glass.

Spotlit.

A RENAISSANCE RELIQUARY – ornate, sacred, priceless.

Jack approaches with an almost reverent calm.

He kneels.

From his coat, he removes an IDENTICAL REPLICA.

Perfect weight. Perfect balance.

He swaps them.

Seals the case.

No alarms.

Jack exhales.

Then—

RED LIGHTS SNAP ON.

ALARMS SCREAM.

Jack freezes.

He closes his eyes.

Straightens his jacket.

INT. VAULT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SECURITY DOORS BLAST OPEN.

Armed guards flood the room.

Jack raises his hands.

Not panicked.

Almost amused.

JACK
Took you long enough.

They tackle him.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL PRISON - DAY

Cold. Concrete. Fluorescent.

Jack sits alone on his bunk.

Hands folded.

Calm.

A man who has already rehearsed this ending.

He reaches into his pocket.

Removes a WORN LEATHER WALLET.

Inside: a photograph.

Jack and a WOMAN in sunlight.

Laughing.

Real.

The door slot CLANGS open.

GUARD
Vale. Visitor.

Jack looks up.

The photo disappears back into the wallet.

The smile does not.

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Metal table. Two chairs.

Jack enters in cuffs.

Waiting is ELEANOR CROSS (40s) – sharp suit, controlled posture, eyes that catalogue everything.

They shake hands.

Professional.

Balanced.

Two predators measuring each other.

ELEANOR
Jack Vale.

JACK
I was hoping for cake.

She slides a folder across the table.

Inside:

- surveillance photos
- blueprints
- timestamps

- faces Jack never knew were watching

Jack flips through.

Unimpressed.

JACK (CONT'D)
You missed Lisbon.

ELEANOR
We didn't.

Jack stops flipping.

Looks up.

A beat.

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

Coffee cups now.

Time has passed.

ELEANOR
You're looking at thirty years.

Jack shrugs.

JACK
I've lived worse versions of
myself.

She slides another document.

A CONDITIONAL PAROLE AGREEMENT.

Jack reads.

Sentence reductions. Missions. Oversight.

A job disguised as mercy.

JACK
You want me to steal.

ELEANOR
We want you to retrieve assets.

JACK
Semantics are the currency of
liars.

Eleanor doesn't flinch.

ELEANOR
Every mission reduces your
sentence.

Jack looks up.

JACK
And when I finish them all?

Eleanor hesitates.

Just a breath too long.

ELEANOR
We'll see.

Jack smiles.

He saw.

EXT. PRIVATE AIRFIELD - DAY

A sleek PRIVATE JET idles.

Jack walks toward it.

No cuffs.

A subtle ANKLE TRACKER beneath his sock.

Eleanor waits.

JACK
That better not explode.

ELEANOR
It only tracks.

Jack studies her.

JACK
For now.

INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY

Luxury. Silence.

Jack pours himself a drink without asking.

Eleanor hands him a TABLET.

A photo appears:

VIKTOR DRAVEN – handsome, philanthropic, untouchable.

No caption.

Jack studies the face.

Something registers.

Not recognition.

Intuition.

JACK
He looks familiar.

Eleanor chooses her words carefully.

ELEANOR
You've never met him.

Jack's eyes stay on the screen.

JACK
That's not what I said.

EXT. ZURICH – NIGHT

Snow drifts through narrow streets.

Wealth sleeps behind reinforced glass.

INT. LUXURY HOTEL – SERVICE FLOOR – NIGHT

Jack, now disguised as staff, pushes a housekeeping cart.

He stops briefly near an OPEN ELECTRICAL PANEL.

Inside: a mess of wiring and COMPONENTS.

Jack pockets a SMALL, SEEMINGLY USELESS ELECTRONIC MODULE.

No emphasis.

No music cue.

Just instinct.

He moves on.

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE - NIGHT

Jack opens a concealed wall safe.

Inside:

- DATA DRIVES

- PASSPORTS

- CASH

- A LEDGER MARKED WITH DRAVEN'S FOUNDATION LOGO

Jack freezes.

This name again.

He pockets one drive.

His jaw tightens.

EXT. ZURICH STREET - NIGHT

Jack exits the hotel.

Eleanor waits across the street.

He hands her the drive.

ELEANOR
Successful?

Jack studies her.

JACK
Who is Draven?

Eleanor meets his gaze.

Careful.

ELEANOR
Someone you shouldn't worry about.

Jack nods.

That's confirmation.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack alone.

He opens his wallet again.

The photo.

This time, he turns it over.

A handwritten date.

The same year his "legend" truly began.

Jack closes his eyes.

Something ugly clicks into place.

FADE OUT.

INT. SAFEHOUSE APARTMENT - ZURICH - NIGHT

Modern. Minimal. Sterile luxury.

Jack enters. No guards. No comfort. Just control disguised as hospitality.

A SINGLE CAMERA in the corner. Subtle. Not hidden.

Jack notices it immediately.

He sets his coat down with exaggerated care – like he's performing for an audience.

He opens the fridge.

Nothing but water, fruit, and a perfectly portioned meal in a sealed container.

Jack smiles.

JACK
Diet prison.

He checks the ankle tracker.

Blinking.

Watching.

He moves to a small desk.

On it: a neatly printed packet.

MISSION DEBRIEF + NEXT OBJECTIVE.

Jack flips through.

His eyes land on a name:

DRAVEN FOUNDATION – "CULTURAL RESTITUTION INITIATIVE."

Jack's jaw tightens.

He turns to the camera.

JACK
You're going to have to try harder
than that.

Jack walks to the window, city lights below.

He pulls out his worn wallet.

Opens it.

The photo of the WOMAN again.

This time we see her clearly:

ISABEL (30s) – alive, bright, fearless.

Jack's thumb brushes the edge like it hurts to touch.

He flips the photo over.

The handwritten date.

A location: MONACO.

Jack exhales.

Softly.

JACK (CONT'D)
Monaco...

He closes the wallet.

Locks it away.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - LATER

Jack sits at the desk.

A burner phone BUZZES.

He answers.

ELEANOR (V.O.)
You took an extra item from the
hotel.

Jack doesn't react.

JACK
Did I?

ELEANOR (V.O.)
The electrical module.

Jack glances at the useless component on the desk.

JACK
It looked lonely.

ELEANOR (V.O.)
Put it back.

Jack smiles.

JACK
You want the drive. You got the
drive.

Don't get greedy.

A beat.

ELEANOR (V.O.)
Your next assignment is Paris.

Jack leans back.

JACK
So romantic.

ELEANOR (V.O.)
Don't romanticize it.

Jack smirks.

JACK
I don't romanticize anything.

He hangs up.

Jack picks up the small electronic module.

Studies it like it's a coin from a dead empire.

Then pockets it anyway.

EXT. PRIVATE AIRFIELD - NIGHT

A different jet.

A different country.

Same leash.

Jack boards.

INT. PRIVATE JET - NIGHT

Eleanor sits across from him now.

No video.

In person.

Jack clocks the change immediately.

JACK

They send you when it's personal.

Eleanor doesn't blink.

ELEANOR

They send me when they can't afford mistakes.

Jack sips his drink.

JACK

How many years did I earn tonight?

Eleanor opens a file. Doesn't look up.

ELEANOR

Eight months.

Jack chuckles.

Not humor. Diagnosis.

JACK
That's generous.

Eleanor meets his gaze.

ELEANOR
It's the number on your sheet.

Jack nods slowly.

JACK
And the number in reality?

Eleanor's silence is precise.

Controlled.

Jack leans forward.

JACK (CONT'D)
I don't mind prison, Eleanor.

I mind fantasy.

Eleanor looks away – just a fraction.

Crack number one.

EXT. PARIS – NIGHT

Paris glows like it's trying to seduce the world into forgetting its sins.

Jack steps into the city with the casual confidence of a man returning to a scene of a crime.

Because he is.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE – PARIS – NIGHT

Black tie. Champagne. Soft orchestral music.

Money speaks quietly here.

Jack blends perfectly.

He studies the program.

LOT 47 – PRIVATE COLLECTION (RESTRICTED)

A small emblem appears beside it:

DRAVEN FOUNDATION.

Jack's eyes narrow.

Eleanor appears beside him in a sleek dress – not trying to be invisible.

Trying to be uninteresting.

ELEANOR
You'll retrieve a flash drive from
a lockbox.

No casualties.

Jack watches a WAITRESS pass.

Her laugh catches his attention.

For half a second, it's Isabel again.

Then it's not.

He's back.

JACK
What's on the drive?

ELEANOR
It's proof.

Jack smiles.

JACK
Proof is never proof.

It's leverage wearing perfume.

Eleanor's eyes flash – offended because it's true.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE – RESTRICTED FLOOR – NIGHT

Two GUARDS at a door.

Eleanor speaks to them – smooth credentials, practiced tone.

The guards let them through.

Jack studies Eleanor as they walk.

JACK
You're good at this.

ELEANOR
I'm paid to be.

JACK
No.

You're wired for it.

Eleanor doesn't respond.

But her face tightens as if he touched something private.

INT. PRIVATE VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

A single LOCKBOX on a pedestal.

Minimal. Elegant. Like a joke.

Jack circles it.

Kneels.

He cracks it quickly.

Inside:

A plain FLASH DRIVE.

Jack pockets it.

Then notices something else:

A second compartment.

He opens it.

A small card with a printed symbol:

DRAVEN FOUNDATION — and beneath it:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.

Jack's smile fades.

He looks up at Eleanor.

JACK
Did you know about this?

Eleanor is still.

That answer lands.

Jack closes the box.

Slowly.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE - SERVICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

They move briskly.

Jack's phone BUZZES - a text from an UNKNOWN NUMBER:

HE WON'T LET YOU GO.

Jack stops.

Eleanor notices.

ELEANOR
What is it?

Jack pockets the phone.

JACK
Fan mail.

They continue.

But Jack's eyes are colder now.

EXT. AUCTION HOUSE - NIGHT

They exit.

Paris air. Night traffic. Glamour.

Then—

Jack sees TWO MEN across the street.

Not police.

Not security.

Professional watchers.

They clock Jack.

Jack clocks them back.

A silent handshake between predators.

Eleanor notices, too.

ELEANOR
Keep walking.

JACK
They're not here for you.

Eleanor's jaw tightens.

ELEANOR
Then they're here because of you.

Jack smiles thinly.

JACK
No.

They're here because of him.

EXT. PARIS STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jack and Eleanor walk.

The two men follow at a distance.

Eleanor's hand drifts toward her clutch — where a weapon could be.

Jack keeps his hands relaxed.

A couple laughs nearby.

A flash of Isabel again, in memory, on a balcony—

Jack pushes it down.

Hard.

EXT. PARIS ALLEY - NIGHT

Jack makes a sudden turn into a narrow alley.

Eleanor follows without hesitation.

The two men follow.

Footsteps.

Close.

One MAN lunges.

Jack pivots, slams him into the wall.

The second man draws a knife.

Eleanor pulls a compact pistol.

Jack glances at her – impressed.

JACK

Of course you have that.

Eleanor fires a warning shot into the ground.

The knife man freezes.

Jack disarms him with brutal efficiency.

The first man coughs.

Blood.

He looks at Jack with contempt, not fear.

FIRST MAN

You belong to the Program.

Jack freezes.

That phrase.

The man spits at Jack's shoes.

FIRST MAN (CONT'D)

Draven doesn't lose property.

Jack's eyes go dead calm.

Jack releases him.

The men retreat—vanish into the night.

Eleanor watches Jack.

Sees the change.

ELEANOR

What did he mean?

Jack stares down the alley.

JACK

He meant I'm not the only thief in
their prison.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - PARIS - NIGHT

Jack plugs the drive into a laptop.

Encrypted.

He cracks it with ease - too easy, again.

Files open:

Transfers. Shell companies. "Charity" pipelines.

Jack scrolls and stops.

A name flashes:

ISABEL SORIANO.

Jack goes still.

Eleanor watches him.

ELEANOR
What is it?

Jack doesn't answer.

His throat works.

He clicks.

A file opens.

MONACO INCIDENT REPORT.

COLLATERAL CASUALTY - FEMALE - CODE: ISABEL.

OPERATIONAL NECESSITY.

Jack's hand trembles - barely - as if the air got heavier.

JACK
(low)
They killed her.

Eleanor's face tightens.

ELEANOR
Who?

Jack looks at her with something like hatred.

But it's not for her.

It's for the system she represents.

JACK
Your people.

My people.

Whatever you call the ones who decide who gets to live.

Eleanor swallows hard.

This is new information to her.

Real.

ELEANOR
I didn't know.

Jack laughs quietly.

No humor. No warmth.

JACK
Of course you didn't.

He closes the laptop.

Slow.

Controlled.

Dangerous.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - LATER

Eleanor stands at the window, shaken.

Jack sits at the table, staring at the parole agreement.

He flips to the fine print.

Eleanor turns.

ELEANOR
Jack... what are you doing?

Jack reads aloud.

JACK
"Credits subject to review."

"Final release at agency discretion."

He looks up.

JACK (CONT'D)
That's not parole.

That's ownership.

Eleanor's defenses rise.

ELEANOR
It's classified.

Jack smiles.

JACK
So was Isabel.

Eleanor flinches.

Jack stands.

He picks up the useless electronic module — the one Eleanor demanded back.

He tosses it lightly in the air.

Catches it.

JACK (CONT'D)
You know what I think this is?

Eleanor doesn't answer.

JACK (CONT'D)
A spare key.

Eleanor's eyes narrow.

ELEANOR
Put it down.

Jack pockets it.

JACK
Make me.

A beat.

Two people realizing they're on opposite sides... and neither likes it.

Eleanor's phone BUZZES.

She answers, listens.

Her face drains.

She looks at Jack.

ELEANOR
We're leaving. Now.

JACK
Why?

Eleanor hesitates.

Then:

ELEANOR
Because the people who sent you...
just upgraded you from asset to liability.

Jack smiles.

That's the moment.

JACK
Finally.

FADE OUT.

EXT. PARIS SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

Rain streaks down the windows of a quiet residential building.

Jack and Eleanor exit quickly.

No luggage.

No comfort.

Just movement.

A BLACK SEDAN waits at the curb.

Jack clocks the driver.

Not agency.

Private.

He opens the rear door.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - MOVING - NIGHT

The car pulls away.

City lights smear across the glass.

Jack sits back, calm.

Eleanor grips her phone.

ELEANOR
You're officially flagged.

Jack nods.

JACK
That was always the plan.

Eleanor turns to him.

ELEANOR
No.

This wasn't their plan.

Jack watches her.

Really watches her now.

JACK
Then whose was it?

Eleanor doesn't answer.

The silence is enough.

EXT. PARIS - INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - NIGHT

The car pulls into a forgotten stretch of warehouses.

Rust. Graffiti. Old Europe.

The driver stops.

DRIVER
You've got ten minutes.

Jack opens the door.

Eleanor hesitates, then follows.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Dark. Cavernous.

A single light flicks on.

A man steps forward—

LUC RENARD (60S)
Elegant even now. Old-school thief
posture. Calm eyes.

Jack freezes.

A beat.

Then—

JACK
Luc.

Luc smiles faintly.

LUC
You're late.

Jack steps forward.

They don't hug.

They clasp forearms.

Respect.

History.

Eleanor watches, outsider to something real.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Luc studies Jack.

LUC
They finally put a collar on you.

Jack smiles thinly.

JACK
Temporary.

Luc's eyes flick to Eleanor.

LUC
Is she the collar?

Eleanor bristles.

Jack answers before she can.

JACK
She's the mirror.

Luc studies Eleanor.

Then nods.

LUC
That's worse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

A folding table. Old coffee thermos.

Jack lays out the flash drive, the parole agreement, the small electronic module.

Luc picks up the module.

Turns it over.

LUC
They let you keep this?

Jack nods.

Luc's smile fades.

LUC (CONT'D)
Then they're sloppy... or arrogant.

Jack watches him.

JACK
What is it?

Luc doesn't answer immediately.

He looks at Eleanor.

LUC
How much did they tell you?

Eleanor stiffens.

ELEANOR
Enough to do my job.

Luc smiles sadly.

LUC
That's what they told me too.

Eleanor freezes.

Jack's eyes sharpen.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Luc plugs the flash drive into a rugged laptop.

Files spill open.

Luc scrolls fast.

Stops.

His face changes.

LUC
They tagged you.

Jack leans in.

JACK
Define "tagged."

Luc brings up a file.

ASSET: VALE, JACK

STATUS: MANUFACTURED
Jack goes still.

Eleanor steps closer.

ELEANOR
Manufactured?

Luc looks at her.

LUC
They didn't just recruit criminals.

They built them.

Jack exhales.

Slow.

Controlled.

JACK
Keep going.

Luc scrolls.

Files open.

MISSION LOGS.

EARLY HEISTS.

Jack recognizes every one.

But now—details he never knew.

LUC
Your first Monaco job?

Jack nods.

LUC (CONT'D)
They rerouted security that night.

Cleared escape corridors.

Let you win.

Jack's jaw tightens.

JACK
They wanted a legend.

Luc nods.

LUC
So they could own it later.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Eleanor steps back.

This is not what she signed up for.

ELEANOR
That's impossible.

Luc looks at her gently.

LUC
You think power improvises?

Jack closes his eyes.

A memory floods—

FLASHBACK - MONACO - NIGHT (YEARS AGO)

Jack and ISABEL run across a moonlit balcony.

Laughing.

Free.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack opens his eyes.

Glass-hard.

JACK
They killed her.

Eleanor stiffens.

ELEANOR
What?

Jack clicks another file.

Isabel's name.

The incident report.

Luc looks away.

He already knew.

JACK
She wasn't collateral.

She was leverage.

Silence crushes the room.

Eleanor's face drains of color.

ELEANOR

They told me she was an accident.

Jack laughs.

Quiet.

Dangerous.

JACK

They tell everyone that.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

Luc closes the laptop.

LUC

They've done this for decades.

Thieves. Hackers. Soldiers.

They break you... then offer purpose.

Jack stares at the table.

JACK

So the parole—

Luc cuts him off.

LUC

Is fiction.

Eleanor swallows.

Luc slides the parole agreement toward her.

Points to the fine print.

LUC (CONT'D)

Read it like a criminal.

Eleanor reads.

Her eyes widen.

ELEANOR
"Final release at agency
discretion."

Luc nods.

LUC
No one gets out.

Jack looks at Eleanor.

Not accusing.

Just asking.

JACK
Did you know?

Eleanor meets his gaze.

For the first time, she's honest.

ELEANOR
I suspected.

Jack absorbs that.

Then—

JACK
Why stay?

Eleanor struggles.

ELEANOR
Because if I don't... someone worse
does.

Jack considers that.

Then—

JACK
That's how they keep everyone.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Luc hands Jack the small electronic module.

LUC
You stole this in Zurich.

Jack nods.

LUC (CONT'D)
It's a relay bypass.

Old model.

They stopped tracking it because they think it's obsolete.

Eleanor snaps her head up.

ELEANOR
It can disable the tracker?

Luc nods.

LUC
Temporarily.

Jack smiles.

Not relief.

Decision.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack stands.

Moves toward the door.

Eleanor watches him.

ELEANOR
Where are you going?

Jack stops.

Turns.

JACK
To stop working for them.

Luc raises an eyebrow.

LUC
That's suicide.

Jack meets his gaze.

JACK
No.

It's theft.

INT. AGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Monitors glow.

Jack's tracker blinks.

A SUPERVISOR watches.

SUPERVISOR
Keep him moving.

An ANALYST hesitates.

ANALYST
What if he doesn't comply?

Supervisor smiles.

SUPERVISOR
Then we remind him why he exists.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack looks at Eleanor.

A beat.

JACK
You can walk away.

Eleanor shakes her head.

ELEANOR
They won't let me.

Jack nods.

JACK
Then steal something.

Eleanor frowns.

ELEANOR
Like what?

Jack holds up the module.

JACK
Your fear.

Eleanor stares at it.

Then at Jack.

Something shifts.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack, Eleanor, and Luc exit.

The city hums.

Jack checks his ankle tracker.

Still blinking.

Still watching.

For now.

Jack looks at Eleanor.

JACK
You want to know how this ends?

Eleanor nods.

JACK (CONT'D)
We let them think they still own
me.

Eleanor's pulse quickens.

ELEANOR
And then?

Jack smiles.

Not charming.

Not playful.

Focused.

JACK
We steal the ledger.

Eleanor exhales.

She knows what that means.

War.

FADE OUT.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL ROAD - NIGHT

The black sedan moves through empty streets.

Jack sits forward now.

Engaged.

Alive in a way he hasn't been for years.

Eleanor watches him from the corner of her eye.

She recognizes it.

Purpose.

INT. SEDAN - MOVING - NIGHT

Luc drives.

No questions.

Just instinct.

LUC
They'll move you fast now.

Jack nods.

JACK
Good.

Luc glances at him.

LUC
Good?

Jack smiles faintly.

JACK
Pressure reveals structure.

Eleanor shifts uneasily.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - BRUSSELS - NIGHT

A new location.

Rain streaks down reinforced windows.

Jack enters first.

Checks corners.

Habits never die.

Luc sets up a laptop.

Eleanor paces.

Jack removes the ankle tracker.

Sets it gently on the table.

Everyone watches.

ELEANOR

If you disable it too long-

Jack interrupts.

JACK

They'll come.

Luc activates the small electronic module.

A low HUM.

The tracker light dies.

Silence.

A beat.

Then-

Jack exhales.

Not relief.

Release.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jack moves immediately.

Purposeful.

Pins photos and documents to a wall.

Draven's name repeats everywhere.

Foundations. Shells. Fronts.

Jack circles one location with a marker:

VIENNA.

JACK
That's the spine.

Luc nods.

LUC
Ledger core routes through a
private vault.

Eleanor stiffens.

ELEANOR
No one hits Vienna.

Jack turns.

JACK
Everyone avoids Vienna.

That's why it works.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - LATER

Jack works with Luc at the laptop.

Eleanor watches.

Out of her depth now.

Jack pauses.

Looks at Eleanor.

JACK
You still think you're on the
inside.

Eleanor bristles.

ELEANOR
I am on the inside.

Jack shakes his head gently.

JACK
You're on the edge.

That's where truth leaks out.

Eleanor absorbs that.

Slowly.

INT. AGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Jack's tracker signal flickers.

An ANALYST leans forward.

ANALYST
We lost telemetry.

Supervisor steps closer.

SUPERVISOR
Find it.

Screens shift.

A new signal appears.

The tracker - moving again.

Supervisor smiles.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
He's scared.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack has reattached the tracker.

Light blinking again.

Eleanor watches.

Conflicted.

ELEANOR
You're letting them see you.

Jack nods.

JACK
I need them confident.

Luc looks at Jack.

LUC
You're feeding them a version of
you.

Jack smiles.

JACK
The one they built.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack sends a message from the agency phone.

JACK (TEXT):

Ready for next assignment.

A beat.

Then—

UNKNOWN: Vienna. Immediate.

Jack shows Eleanor.

JACK
They walked right into it.

Eleanor's stomach drops.

EXT. VIENNA - NIGHT

Imperial. Cold. Perfect.

Old money dressed like history.

A PRIVATE BANK looms like a cathedral for secrets.

INT. PRIVATE BANK - GALA PREP - NIGHT

Staff move efficiently.

Security everywhere.

Jack enters in tuxedo.

Relaxed.

The legend returns.

Eleanor enters separately.

Elegant dress.

Nervous eyes.

Luc watches from a distance.

Invisible.

INT. GALA FLOOR - NIGHT

Music. Laughter. Power networking.

Jack glides through conversations.

Charm on autopilot.

Then—

He sees VIKTOR DRAVEN.

For the first time in person.

Draven laughs with diplomats.

Effortless authority.

Draven turns.

Locks eyes with Jack.

Recognition.

Not surprise.

A smile grows.

Draven approaches.

DRAVEN

Jack Vale.

Jack inclines his head.

JACK

You're hard to reach.

Draven chuckles.

DRAVEN

Only if you're trying to steal
something small.

Jack smiles.

JACK

I prefer foundations.

Draven's smile tightens.

They circle each other verbally.

Predators acknowledging lineage.

DRAVEN

I admired your work in Monaco.

Jack's eyes harden.

JACK

You ordered it.

A beat.

Draven doesn't deny it.

DRAVEN

You were meant to survive.

Jack leans in.

Low.

JACK

She wasn't.

Draven's eyes flicker.

Just once.

That's confirmation.

INT. GALA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Eleanor watches from across the room.

Draven gestures.

Two guards approach Eleanor.

Polite.

Firm.

Jack sees it.

His jaw tightens.

The trap reveals itself.

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Eleanor is escorted inside.

Draven follows.

Closes the door.

DRAVEN
You're very brave.

Eleanor stands her ground.

ELEANOR
You're very exposed.

Draven smiles.

DRAVEN
Only to people who matter.

INT. BANK - LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Luc moves.

Security cameras loop.

Doors unlock.

Jack slips away from the gala.

No hesitation.

No doubt.

INT. VAULT ANTECHAMBER - NIGHT

NINA (30s), elite lock engineer, waits.

Focused. Calm.

Jack arrives.

JACK
You ready?

NINA
I don't do ready.

I do inevitable.

Jack smiles.

INT. AGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Supervisor watches feeds.

Draven's face appears on screen.

SUPERVISOR
He took the bait.

INT. BANK - PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Draven pours a drink.

Offers one to Eleanor.

She doesn't take it.

DRAVEN
You know how this ends.

Eleanor meets his gaze.

ELEANOR
Not anymore.

Draven chuckles.

DRAVEN
You all say that.

INT. VAULT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Jack and Nina move fast.

Guards converge.

Jack disables one.

Nina cracks a panel.

They slip through.

INT. VAULT CHAMBER - NIGHT

The LEDGER CORE.

Cold. Monumental.

Jack stares at it.

A lifetime of cages.

He plugs in the device.

The download begins.

INT. AGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Alarms BLARE.

ANALYST

Unauthorized access to Ledger Core!

Supervisor leans in.

Smiling.

SUPERVISOR

Seal the vault.

INT. VAULT CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Steel shutters SLAM.

Lockdown.

Nina swears.

Jack watches the progress bar.

Slow.

Too slow.

Jack exhales.

JACK

They want us alive.

Nina looks at him.

NINA

That's comforting.

Jack smiles thinly.

JACK

It shouldn't be.

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Draven's phone BUZZES.

He checks it.

Smiles.

DRAVEN
He's exactly where he belongs.

Eleanor's eyes flash.

ELEANOR
You don't own people.

Draven steps closer.

DRAVEN
I own systems.

INT. VAULT CHAMBER - NIGHT

The progress bar hits 62%.

Jack looks at Nina.

JACK
When this finishes...

Nina nods.

NINA
We don't leave clean.

Jack smiles.

JACK
We never do.

INT. VAULT CHAMBER - NIGHT

The LEDGER CORE hums.

Cold. Indifferent.

The download bar ticks upward.

71%... 72%...

NINA works furiously at a side panel.

NINA
They've rerouted power.

We're on borrowed time.

Jack watches the progress bar.

Unblinking.

JACK
They built this place to be a
coffin.

Nina glances at him.

NINA
You sound surprised.

Jack almost smiles.

INT. AGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Monitors flash red.

The SUPERVISOR stands calm at the center of the storm.

ANALYST
We can terminate the feed—

SUPERVISOR
No.

The analyst hesitates.

ANALYST
Sir?

Supervisor steps closer to the screen.

SUPERVISOR
Let him finish.

The analyst freezes.

ANALYST
That's catastrophic.

Supervisor smiles.

SUPERVISOR
It's instructional.

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE - BANK - NIGHT

Eleanor stands rigid.

Draven pours himself another drink.

Unbothered.

DRAVEN

You see... Jack believes exposure is freedom.

Eleanor meets his gaze.

ELEANOR

It is.

Draven chuckles.

DRAVEN

For people who still believe in consequences.

He gestures toward the city beyond the glass.

DRAVEN (CONT'D)

I rebuild faster than truth travels.

Eleanor's jaw tightens.

ELEANOR

Then you don't understand him.

Draven arches an eyebrow.

INT. VAULT CHAMBER - NIGHT

Jack removes the worn leather wallet from his pocket.

Nina notices.

NINA

Bad timing for nostalgia.

Jack opens it.

The photo of ISABEL.

He stares at it—longer than before.

Not mourning.

Accounting.

JACK
They erased her to simplify me.

Jack closes the wallet.

Pockets it.

Looks up.

JACK (CONT'D)
That was their mistake.

INT. BANK - LOWER SECURITY HUB - NIGHT
Luc watches feeds from a hidden station.
Sweat beads on his forehead.
He toggles a switch.
The power grid stutters.
Lights flicker.

LUC
Come on... come on...

INT. VAULT CHAMBER - NIGHT
The lights DIM.
The hum of the Ledger changes pitch.
Nina looks up.

NINA
Luc's buying us minutes.

Jack nods.

JACK
That's all thieves ever need.

INT. AGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT
An alarm spikes.

ANALYST
Power fluctuation!

Supervisor's smile tightens.

SUPERVISOR
Prepare Phase Two.

A new screen appears:

MEDIA NARRATIVE PROTOCOL — JACK VALE

Pre-written headlines.

"INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST"

"DATA SABOTEUR"

"FOREIGN ASSET"
Supervisor nods, satisfied.

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE — NIGHT

Draven's phone BUZZES.

He checks it.

Smiles.

DRAVEN
They're letting him do it.

Eleanor's eyes sharpen.

ELEANOR
Letting?

Draven steps closer.

DRAVEN
My dear...

They need villains more than they need truth.

Eleanor suddenly understands.

This isn't damage control.

It's conversion.

INT. VAULT CHAMBER - NIGHT

Nina's fingers fly.

NINA

We're going to be locked in.

Jack steps closer to the Ledger.

Places his palm against the cold surface.

JACK

I spent my life stealing objects.

He looks at Nina.

JACK (CONT'D)

Now I steal meaning.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - PARIS - NIGHT

Luc watches the mirrored upload spike.

Servers cascade.

Data forks outward—everywhere.

Luc laughs.

Relieved.

Terrified.

LUC

You beautiful bastard.

INT. VAULT CHAMBER - NIGHT

A tone sounds.

UPLOAD COMPLETE.

Jack exhales.

The shutters remain sealed.

Silence.

Then—

Jack pulls out a SECOND DRIVE.

Nina stares.

NINA
You didn't—

Jack nods.

JACK
Never steal once.

He plugs it in.

A BROADCAST INTERFACE appears.

Nina's eyes widen.

NINA
That's not internal.

Jack smiles.

JACK
It is now.

He hits EXECUTE.

EXT. WORLD - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

- Newsrooms light up
- Phones BUZZ in gala halls
- Politicians freeze mid-sentence
- Markets stutter
- Screens fill with encrypted files unlocking in real time

The Ledger spills into the world.

INT. GALA FLOOR - NIGHT

Guests stare at their phones.

A SENATOR drops his glass.

A CEO turns pale.

Draven checks his phone.

His smile vanishes.

For the first time.

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Draven turns on Eleanor.

DRAVEN
What did he do?

Eleanor doesn't answer.

She watches the screen.

Names.

Transfers.

Proof.

She breathes.

ELEANOR
He told the truth.

Draven's eyes burn.

DRAVEN
Truth is noise.

Eleanor steps forward.

ELEANOR
Not when it's synchronized.

INT. VAULT CHAMBER - NIGHT

The shutters UNLOCK.

Doors slide open.

Nina stares.

NINA
They let us go?

Jack nods.

JACK
They think they've won.

Jack turns.

Runs.

INT. BANK - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Jack sprints upward.

Guards converge.

KOSTA (40s), ex-special forces, appears from the smoke.

Drops two guards.

KOSTA
You're late.

Jack grins.

JACK
I had to finish something.

They run.

INT. ROOF ACCESS - NIGHT

Jack bursts through.

Wind howls.

Lights blaze.

Draven's HELICOPTER spins up.

Draven runs for it.

Jack fires.

Not to kill.

To stop.

Draven stumbles.

Turns.

Sees Jack.

They lock eyes.

EXT. BANK ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The city sprawls below.

Draven raises a gun.

Jack doesn't.

DRAVEN
They'll replace me.

Jack steps closer.

JACK
That's the lie they sell you.

Draven fires.

Jack dives.

The shot goes wide.

Jack tackles Draven.

The gun skids away.

They struggle.

Draven claws at Jack's face.

Desperate now.

Human.

DRAVEN
You were built for this!

Jack pins him.

Breathing hard.

JACK
No.

I survived it.

Jack wrenches Draven's phone free.

Steps back.

Draven scrambles toward the edge.

Slips.

Hangs.

Wind roaring.

Draven looks up.

Terrified.

DRAVEN

Help me.

Jack looks at him.

No anger.

No joy.

Just clarity.

JACK

You already fell.

Draven's grip fails.

He drops.

Gone.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Jack stands alone.

Breathing.

The helicopter lifts off—empty.

Sirens approach.

Jack turns.

Disappears into the stairwell.

INT. AGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Supervisor watches footage.

Draven dead.

Ledger exposed.

Chaos everywhere.

An analyst whispers:

ANALYST

What now?

Supervisor considers.

Then—

A message appears on the screen.

INCOMING VIDEO FILE

He clicks it.

INSERT - VIDEO

Jack, calm, direct.

JACK (ON VIDEO)
You built me to steal quietly.

So I stole loudly.

Jack holds up Draven's phone.

JACK (CONT'D)
I have the names of everyone in
your program.

Including you.

The video cuts.

Supervisor's face drains.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Jack sits on the edge of a bed.

Bruised. Alive.

Eleanor sits across from him.

News murmurs from the TV.

"UNPRECEDENTED GLOBAL DISCLOSURE..."

Eleanor watches Jack.

ELEANOR
They'll hunt you forever.

Jack nods.

JACK
I was already hunted.

Eleanor exhales.

ELEANOR
What happens to me?

Jack looks at her.

A beat.

JACK
You stop hiding.

Eleanor absorbs that.

Fear and resolve mix.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - MORNING

A train idles.

Eleanor stands with a bag.

Jack stands with her.

No romance.

No speeches.

Just recognition.

ELEANOR
You showed me how to steal my own
life.

Jack nods.

JACK
You showed me how to stop running
from mine.

The train doors open.

Eleanor boards.

The doors close.

EXT. PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Jack watches the train pull away.

Then turns.

Walks into the crowd.

Anonymous.

Unowned.

FADE OUT.

★

EXT. EUROPE - DAWN - SERIES OF SHOTS

- Morning breaks over capitals.
- Police tape flutters outside ministries.
- Protestors gather, phones raised.
- Markets halt.
- Helicopters circle government buildings.

The world didn't end.

It rearranged.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Jack sits on the edge of the bed.

News plays softly.

ANCHOR (V.O.)
 "...leaked financial intelligence has
 implicated senior officials across
 multiple governments..."

Jack clicks the TV off.

Silence.

He opens his wallet one last time.

The photo of Isabel.

He studies it.

Then gently removes it.

Places it face-down on the table.

Not forgetting.

Retiring it.

INT. SAFE APARTMENT - BRUSSELS - DAY

Eleanor sits at a bare table.

A LAWYER and an INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST sit across from her.

A recorder between them.

Eleanor's hands shake.

She steadies them.

JOURNALIST
Once we publish, there's no
protection.

Eleanor nods.

ELEANOR
There never was.

She slides a drive forward.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Ledger architecture.

Chain-of-command.

Names.

The lawyer exhales.

LAWYER
This will destroy your career.

Eleanor almost smiles.

ELEANOR
It was already destroying me.

She clicks the recorder ON.

This is her leap.

INT. AGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM - DAY

Chaos.

Desks empty. Files seized.

The SUPERVISOR packs a briefcase.

Calm.

Professional.

An AGENT approaches.

AGENT
They're freezing accounts.

Borders are closing.

Supervisor doesn't stop packing.

SUPERVISOR
Then it worked.

Agent hesitates.

AGENT
Worked?

Supervisor looks at him.

Almost kindly.

SUPERVISOR
Control doesn't disappear.

It migrates.

He snaps the case shut.

Walks out.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Jack moves through a crowd.

No disguise.

No rush.

Anonymous because no one knows what he looks like—only the idea of him.

A giant screen above a plaza plays Eleanor's interview.

ELEANOR (ON SCREEN)
 "I helped build a system that
 replaced justice with usefulness..."

People stop.

Listen.

Jack stops too.

He watches.

Not proud.

Relieved.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Jack sits alone.

A drink untouched.

The TV plays pundits arguing.

Jack ignores it.

A MAN sits beside him.

Mid-40s. Clean. Watchful.

Not law enforcement.

Not criminal.

Something else.

MAN
 Mr. Vale.

Jack doesn't look at him.

JACK
 If you say my name again, I leave.

The man smiles slightly.

MAN
 Fair.

A beat.

MAN (CONT'D)
You broke a very old machine.

Jack finally turns.

JACK
It was already broken.

MAN
Yes.

But now everyone can see the cracks.

Jack studies him.

JACK
Who do you work for?

The man shrugs.

MAN
Whoever doesn't want the next one
to be worse.

Jack chuckles.

JACK
That's ambitious.

The man slides a card across the bar.

No logo.

Just a number.

MAN
You're going to have offers.

From people who want to rebuild what you burned.

Jack doesn't touch the card.

MAN (CONT'D)
Some of us would rather you steal
from them instead.

Jack smiles faintly.

JACK
I'm retired.

The man stands.

MAN
Everyone says that.

He leaves.

The card stays on the bar.

Jack doesn't pick it up.

Yet.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

Luc packs equipment.

Methodical.

Jack enters.

Luc looks up.

LUC
They'll mythologize you.

Jack shrugs.

JACK
They always do.

Luc gestures to the news playing silently.

Eleanor testifying.

LUC
She's brave.

Jack nods.

JACK
She finally stopped negotiating
with fear.

Luc studies Jack.

LUC
And you?

Jack considers.

Then—

JACK
I stopped stealing objects.

Luc smiles sadly.

LUC
That's dangerous.

Jack returns the smile.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - INTERNATIONAL COURT - DAY

Eleanor sits alone.

Exhausted.

A BAILIFF opens the door.

BAILIFF
Ms. Cross.

Eleanor stands.

Walks forward.

Cameras flash.

She doesn't flinch.

This is her sentence.

And her freedom.

EXT. RURAL BORDER ROAD - NIGHT

A car moves through darkness.

Jack drives.

No destination.

Just distance.

He pulls over at a turnout.

Steps out.

The world is quiet here.

Jack takes out the card from the bar.

Looks at the number.

Considers.

Then—

He dials.

JACK
You said steal from them.

A beat.

VOICE (V.O.)
When you're ready.

Jack hangs up.

Smiles.

Not excited.

Resolved.

INT. AGENCY BLACK SITE - UNKNOWN - NIGHT

The Supervisor enters a secure room.

Others wait.

New faces.

Same posture.

SUPERVISOR
Ledger One is dead.

A woman across the table speaks.

WOMAN
Then we build Ledger Two.

Supervisor shakes his head.

SUPERVISOR
No.

We evolve.

They turn to a screen.

A blurry image of Jack walking through a crowd.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
And we never make another thief
that smart again.

A beat.

Then—

WOMAN

What if he comes back?

Supervisor smiles.

SUPERVISOR

Then the game gets honest.

EXT. PUBLIC SQUARE - NIGHT

Jack stands in a crowd.

A massive screen shows Eleanor finishing her testimony.

ELEANOR (ON SCREEN)

"They taught us that safety
required secrecy.

But secrecy was the crime."

Applause ripples.

Jack watches.

A stranger beside him cheers.

Jack doesn't.

He exhales.

Something heavy finally leaves him.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - NIGHT (MIRROR OF EARLIER SCENE)

A train idles.

Jack stands alone now.

No one waiting.

No one leaving.

The doors open.

Jack doesn't board.

Instead—

He turns away.

EXT. COASTAL ROAD - DAWN

Jack drives along the sea.

Sun rising.

Wide. Open.

The road stretches forward.

Jack rolls down the window.

Lets the air in.

For the first time in decades—

No leash.

No handler.

No cage.

Just choice.

FINAL IMAGE

Jack's car disappears around a
bend.

The sea remains.

Endless.

Unownable.

FADE OUT.