

Story for A Whiff of Steam

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Focus recap

Cornelius King, protagonist, wakes up from on the crash site of a train, severely wounded. He notices someone is searching his pockets. It appears that person is trying to rob him, but he fades into unconsciousness, to wake up again in a hospital.

At this point, he doesn't remember anything about his past. The only possessions he still has, apart from his clothing, is a note, neatly folded, with a name, Lutricia McNeal, and what appeared to be a phone number.

Before he can investigate to find out his identity, he is taken to the police, who are investigating the train crash. They suspect him, the only survivor of the crash, but there is no evidence, so they have to let him go. The policeman Cornelius met first, Thomas Worthington, a friendly if overbearing man, befriends him. Thomas becomes Cornelius' prime contact in the police force.

Cornelius King (CK) is tormented by nightmares, which feature him doing horrible things, first vague and general, later clear and cruelly specific. He does not want to know himself like that. Still, he wants to know who he was, so he can put it all behind him.

The police already investigated the note, but they did not know of a woman named Lutricia McNeal, and the telephone number was dead. It was still all CK had. (At this point he still doesn't know his own name either.)

Pre-game events

Cornelius King is an engineer. Not only that, he is a Technologist — a militant one at that. He joined a Technologist terrorist cell, working to overthrow the Community of the Faithful (CotF). At first afraid to do the dirty work — idealism seems a lot less important when you are assigned to kill a low-ranking mage to join the cell — yet after a rousing speech from Lutricia McNeal, the leader of the cell, he knew he had to do it.

Fast forward six months, when he is a trusted (as far as there is any trust in a terrorist cell) member, and begins a relationship with Lutricia.

By accident, CK's cousin and distant friend Eleanor “Ellen” Montgomery finds out about the cell. She is a Junior Investigative Mage for the CotF, so it is her duty to report the cell to her superiors. However, she values her cousin more than her duty and begins her own game.

She made sure — by excessive scheming — that the complete cell, except for CK, would be present on a single train on the main island, far from the places CK and Ellen grew up and had lived for most of their lives. A train, which she was going to crash in the hope that her cousin would not come and investigate.

However, on the great day, Ellen finds Cornelius in the train, rather than Lutricia. He had gone in her stead.

Desperate, but determined, she manages to rescue CK before the train crashes.

However, she now has a huge problem on her hands. He now knows she is connected to this, and it will be a matter of time before CK gets the word out to Lutricia — Ellen knows about their relationship — which will spell disaster for Ellen, not to mention that her cousin will be up and running around soon,

and with the recent events it is clear her superiors will not be pleased.

She sees only one way that involves Cornelius not being dead, which she rather prefers: erasing his memory, leaving her cousin, staying out of his life forever... but then, Lutricia will get away. Ellen decides to give Lutricia's name and the phone number of the cell's main hideout to CK, and start watching him from a distance, so she can find Lutricia before Lutricia can find her.

Further events

CK starts asking around, about himself, about the name, about the phone number. But no-one knows him, or Lutricia, or the phone number.

His dreams get worse and worse.

After a while, the dreams become so clear he can extract clues from them. Clues that help him getting into contact with some peripheral cell-related figures that used to know him. This way, he learns his name and the nature of his relationship with Lutricia. Eventually, he tracks her down.

In the meanwhile, the CotF tightens its grip on the Technologists, who still seek separation between Church and Steam. However, the resistance never quite seems to die out. Their position is a lot weaker than previously, though, since several Technologist cells have been wiped out. They start aiming high, since they know they are almost out of time. This gives a new flicker of hope.

CK finds Lutricia. When he sees her, his old feelings for her return. He remembers everything about her that he forgot. She is suspicious of him, thinking he had fled or died just like the others. Just as she begins to trust him again, Ellen appears. She knocks out Lutricia and ties down Cornelius, who doesn't know who she is. She explains the whole deal and warns him that he should give up Lutricia, that it will be for the best — for his own sake, for Ellen's sake and for Lutricia's sake.

CK escapes a bit sooner than Ellen anticipated and begins chasing Ellen. He wants to save his girl, and cares significantly less for Ellen's safety than she does for his.

If Cornelius doesn't find a way to eliminate his cousin and free Lutricia, the latter will be executed and all will be lost.

If he does, he and Lutricia get away, leaving the player with a half-open ending.