

Bryon Walden had been quite a few things in his life. Prior to the Chicago Incident, he was a college student studying for a Bachelor's in Biology. After the virus was unleashed, he became a wanted man, fleeing Chicago and the horrors that had been unleashed. On his travels, he became the vigilante known as Phantom, who exposed corruption while searching for the truth.

But in this particular case, the hero could be described as nervous or paranoid. The rex rabbit couldn't explain it, but he felt as though someone or something was constantly watching him. He would find himself checking corners and behind his back. Even on patrol, the rabbit didn't feel safe.

He spoke to his friends Gary and Erin, a possum and raccoon who were the heroes Vermin and Miracle respectively. The two took the matter quite seriously and told him to keep a sharp eye out for anything suspicious. Miracle explained how she felt a similar way back in Savannah and how she met a particularly ruthless hunter.

On this night, Phantom was going on his usual patrol searching for signs of crime. His eyes scanned the streets as he ran along the rooftops of the city. Little did he realize, however, that his paranoia would prove to be correct...

Moonlight reflected off the glass lens of a scope, the device mounted atop of a large rifle. The figure gazed through the scope, carefully tracking a certain rex rabbit with it. The crosshairs lined up with the hero as the figure tracked him.

"Hmph... He doesn't look like he's much of a challenge to me. I honestly don't see why the client offered so much for this rabbit. But... Then again, he might be worth something after all."

Meanwhile, the rabbit was getting a familiar sense of paranoia. *"There it is again! I'm sure someone's tracking me! I better use my power just to be safe..."*

Closing his eyes for a moment, the rabbit's body faded out of sight, giving some small comfort for the hero. The figure tracking him, meanwhile, couldn't help but smirk.

*"Invisibility... How quaint. Too bad it won't help him in the long run."*

With a chuckle, the figure drew the rifle back inside, holstering it before heading out of the room...

Phantom slid down a nearby fire escape, landing in a dark alleyway. Even though the rabbit was still invisible, he still felt that he was being tracked. Cautiously, he made his way out towards the city streets. The rex rabbit checked around every corner and behind himself for any signs of danger. However...

The tracker was peering out towards those same streets, peering through a different scope. The rabbit's body was clearly visible through the scope, showing a myriad of reds, yellows and

oranges against a sea of green. *"You may be able to hide yourself in plain sight, but you can't mask your own heat, bunny boy."*

With a predatory grin, the figure squeezed the trigger...

At that moment, a small piece of the ground was thrown up in front of Phantom. The rex rabbit jumped slightly before looking down on the asphalt. *"Is that... a bullet hole? But where did it...?"*

He didn't have time to think as two more rounds impacted the brick wall next to him. With no time to lose, the rex rabbit made a break for it. He pushed himself to run as fast as he could while bullets hit the ground in front of him.

*"This is impossible! How could the shooter see me?! Unless... Unless he's got something to see body heat!"*

More rounds hit the ground in front of the rex rabbit, causing him to stop in his tracks. However, a cloud of powder floated up into his face, causing him to cough and gag. His invisibility wore off, exposing the bunny as his throat, nose and eyes burned.

*"Wh-What is all this?! Pepper spray?!"*

As the bunny staggered about, his ears picked up footsteps rapidly approaching him. Before he could gather himself together, he felt a powerful blow against his back. Phantom let out a grunt as he was slammed to the ground face first.

He struggled with his might, attempting to get his attacker off. The pepper spray made it difficult for him to concentrate, rendering his telekinesis useless. He then felt his hair being pulled as his head was tilted back. The rex rabbit then felt a sharp metal blade against his neck, causing him to freeze.

*"I wouldn't move if I were you, bunny boy. This blade of mine can cleave your head off quite easily and I'd rather keep my trophy alive and unfettered."*

The bunny's eyes grew wide with shock. Before he could even ask, he felt a sharp pain in his neck. His vision began to swim as the attacker's voice became distorted. He couldn't make out what was being spoken. His eyes became closed as he slipped into oblivion...

Phantom's head was throbbing as he slowly came to, hearing distorted voices. His vision was blurry for a moment before he felt cold water thrown against his face. The rex rabbit coughed and sputtered, shaking his head to get the liquid off of him.

*"Ah, good. About time you woke up."*

The rabbit lifted his head up, feeling the water still dripping from his face. As his eyes focused, he got a better view of his surroundings. From the look of things, the room he was in was quite

bare. He could only make out the shape of a table and chair, but nothing else. A single ceiling light shone down on him, making the rabbit squint. From across the room, a shadowy figure was leaning against the wall.

The rex rabbit tried to pull himself up, only to feel something holding him back. Looking down at himself, he was shocked to see his wrists bound to the armrests of a chair. His ankles were tied up as well as his torso. The bunny squirmed in his bindings as he glared at the stranger.

"All right... Who are you and what is this place?!"

The figure merely chuckled at the strung-up rabbit. "A little base of mine, actually. I merely brought you back here. As for whom I am..."

The stranger approached Phantom, revealing itself to him under the light. What was in front of him was a rather tall walia ibex woman with tawny hair flowing down halfway her back. Her antlers were curled over her ears. She garbed herself in a safari helmet with a hunting vest and khakis. Knee-high brown boots adorned her feet, while her belt carried some holsters and several masks on her. Combined with her thick powerful muscles, it was apparent she was some kind of hunter.

"...I am the famous hunter, Sandstalker."

The rex rabbit's brow was furrowed as he stared at the ibex, wondering where he heard her from before. Just then, his eyes grew wide with shock as the realization hit him.

"Ah, I see you've heard of me."

"Of course I have! People speak of the horrible things you've done! You kidnap heroes and dragging them off to nowhere!"

The ibex hunter merely shook her head, smirking at her prey. "I don't kidnap them, bunny. I hunt for them. It's a sport to me. The more of a challenge they give me, the better the hunt becomes."

Her smirk faded, only to be replaced with a scowl. "Unfortunately, you didn't even offer me anything remotely challenging. The only reason I took the hunt was because my client gave me quite a paycheck for it."

Phantom's teeth were clenched in anger. "No matter what you call it, kidnapping is still kidnapping! When Strikira and the others find out about this...!"

The ibex's ears perked up at the rabbit's words. "Hm? Did you just say Strikira?"

The bunny, realizing his mistake too late, clamped his mouth shut. Sandstalker grabbed Phantom's ears, pulling them so the rabbit was forced to look into the hunter's eyes. "I know you

just said Strikira's name as though you're a friend of hers. Perhaps you could be of use to me after all."

At that moment, the rabbit felt a sharp pain in his neck, causing him to hiss. Sandstalker straightened herself up, holding a syringe in her hand. "Heh... I think I'll go send a message out to the heroes here. Hopefully, Strikira and any other friends of yours will arrive. After all..."

Phantom's vision was swimming as the ibex walked back into the shadows. "I could use a few more trophies for my collection." With a chuckle, the huntress left the rex rabbit to himself as he fell into unconsciousness...