

Chapter 1: The First, No - Second Mission

Rynn sat in training with a half-dozen other new recruits. They'd been training for months. He'd learned to shoot a laser gun very accurately and how to fight with many different types of weapons.

It was a great honor to be selected as a Time Cop. Unfortunately, Rynn didn't feel honored. Sure, he'd done well in grade school. He passed calculus when he was twelve, but almost everyone did. After all, it was 2599 on his world. Anyone who didn't graduate college by age eighteen was looked down on. Rynn had done well in school, but he'd known since he was young that he'd be a Time Cop. After all, his father was the head of the department. So, where he learned how to take apart and rebuild a communicator as all children did, he spent more time working out and learning to fight than most. Consequently, he was pretty buff, and very nice looking with his brown hair and deep blue eyes.

All the time spent working out did make him the top of his class in Time Cop training, which was impressive, since he was only nineteen, and most men would not even be considered for the force until age twenty-five.

He tapped his stylus on the table from boredom as he looked around the room. Mostly the people were as expected, big, strong men.

One girl, Becka, stood out. He'd seen her in school, as she was his age. She was invited to the force because she had a unique ability. She could turn invisible.

He'd trained with her for the past several months. She had brown hair and brown eyes and always wore a circlet on her head. It was thin and metal with a fancy weave. She wasn't overly aggressive, but she did try hard. Of course, she wasn't on the force for her fighting ability. She was training to be a spy. Invisibility would help with that.

Rynn continued to tap his stylus on his desk, listening to protocol about not doing anything that would change time. He'd heard that a hundred times.

One would think that Time Cops were constantly traveling through time, but they didn't. Time travel was strictly forbidden, as a time paradox could make them cease to exist. They didn't have time machines. Their job was to intercept time travelers from the future and stop them from changing the past. They did have a time teleporter device that could connect to a time machine that landed in the past and teleport them to where the person stopped.

Honestly, it didn't happen too often. Mostly the time cops were pretty normal cops. Yet, they were respected and considered an elite force because sometimes they traveled to the past.

Because their technology connected to warps in the space-time continuum that were caused by time travel, they all had to be ready at a moment's notice to leave. The connection only lasted about five minutes.

The instructor called them to go to fight practice, so Rynn got up and headed to the gym. Their training facility was very nice. When they fought, they had padded vests that also had sensors, so they could tell if they'd been hit with a laser gun

without getting hurt. The padding was for fist fights. They also wore helmets.

Rynn put on his vest and helmet and picked up a laser gun. When the instructor called for the fight to begin, he charged into battle.

He made some good shots and dodged a few close hits. He was tackled from behind and ended up in a brawl. Several of the guys in the group went after him, not liking that a nineteen-year-old was coming on the force and wanting to put him in his place and show their superiority.

Points were awarded for number of hits shot and lost for hits taken, so that meant Becka was often a target too. She was pretty small, not skinny and frail, but short and thin.

Honestly, Rynn didn't think it right to make the girls fight with the men. Sure, a girl could shoot a laser gun equally with a guy, but when it came to brawls, it just wasn't fair.

Rynn saw someone pounding on Becka. She was on the floor and really not in a position to fight back. He shot the guy with a laser gun, scoring an easy point, and the man shot back, but he grabbed Becka and pulled her up to use as a shield.

That didn't set well with Rynn. He stepped over, pulled the guy away, and decked him across the face. He wouldn't get a point because it wasn't on a sensor, but it wasn't against the rules.

When the bell sounded, signaling the end of the game, Rynn walked over to Becka and asked, "Are you all right?"

"I have to be, don't I?" she responded. "I'll be fine. I can do this." She then blushed and thanked him for helping her.

Rynn expected the next round of battles, but instead, the instructor called him over.

“We need you on a case,” the instructor informed him. “We already have two teams out on missions, and the rest of the force is dealing with a crisis downtown. Pick a partner and go.”

Rynn looked over at the recruits. Some definitely looked stronger than him, and some were good. “Becka,” he decided. “I want her.”

“But...” the instructor started to argue.

“There’s no time for debate,” Rynn reminded him. “Becka.”

The instructor agreed and hurried them to the transporter. They were given stun guns and told to get on a platform. They had been told that it didn’t hurt at all, that it was a type of dimensional wormhole that they could connect from the pad they were standing on to the disturbance caused by the time travel.

It didn’t hurt. That was true, but it did feel very weird, and Rynn held his stun gun out, ready to shoot. He’d been warned in training that they would never know in advance what they were teleporting into. It would be nice to know, as they didn’t even know what to wear.

They arrived way back in the year 1985 and quickly located the time machine. He’d been told that wouldn’t always be easy to do, as sometimes they were well designed to fit into the time they were traveling to. This one wasn’t. It looked like a time machine that would be in a sci fi movie from the twenty-first century. Obviously, the time traveler hadn’t done his research

well enough to realize they didn't have those back then, but only had them in old movies.

"How do we find the time traveler?" Rynn asked.

"Let me look around," Becka suggested. "It may be best for me to do it invisible. We aren't dressed right for here."

They looked around. The downtown area they were in had people dressed mostly in business clothing. There were also some people in jeans and t-shirts.

Both Rynn and Becka wore the uniform of the time cops, which were made of very stretchable material that was also fire proof. They also wore vests that were bullet proof, laser proof, and electric proof. Plus they had belts with gadgets attached. The vests were made to fit them perfectly. Definitely, they didn't look like they belonged there.

They both pulled out technology, hoping to track the time traveler and started following it.

As they walked, Becka noticed a burglary at a jewelry store. "Do we stop it?" she asked.

"No!" Rynn insisted. "You know that we aren't allowed to change anything in time. We can't even stop someone from dying. It could affect our future. We can't create time paradoxes. Let's just stop the time traveler and go. I'm not getting a strong reading.

They did get enough of a reading to get a general direction, so they followed it into a building. The building looked much more modern than most of the buildings in the downtown. A receptionist at a large desk asked them their business as soon as they stepped in, and several men in uniform stepped up beside

Rynn and Becka. Rynn looked nervously at the two men. He was carrying unconcealed weapons. That did likely draw attention to him.

He raised his hands to chest level to show he had no intention of drawing a weapon. He tried to convince them to ignore him and let them go about their business. They didn't. That wasn't good, as any little action could inadvertently change the future. Perhaps those security men were supposed to be capturing someone else right then. He stared at them for a moment, unsure what to say.

Fortunately, Becka came in for the save. She stepped behind him, went invisible, and suddenly knocked over a trash can. The guards were startled by it, and it gave Rynn the chance to run away.

As he was running out, he noticed something suspicious. A man dressed in a gray outfit that seemed very out of place was on the next floor. The man looked around stealthily and headed down a hall.

Rynn ran out of the building. Becka was waiting for him. "This way," she ordered. Technically he was in charge, but he followed her without hesitation. She led him around the side of the building and pointed up. Rynn knew exactly what she was thinking before she said a word.

He hit something on his belt, and it shot up several stories and attached to a balcony. Rynn grabbed onto Becka and had the wire pull them up to the balcony.

They jumped in and went through a lab, heading toward where they had seen the man going. It didn't take long to find

him. He had some device that he was using to get through the security to a classified section of the building.

Likely, he was trying to steal some technology. That would be bad, as stealing tech could vastly affect the future.

Rynn stepped up to him and ordered, “Stop! You are under arrest!”

The man laughed at him, pulled a blaster, and shot. Fortunately, Rynn’s vest was bulletproof or he would have just died. That was a terrifying experience. Never had anyone tried to kill him before. He tensed and could feel himself start to shake, but he couldn’t let fear get to him. Instead, he did as he’d been trained and grabbed the man’s wrist and stripped the gun from it.

The man put up a fight, so Rynn fought back. He’d practice fighting many times, but never before had he fought someone who was trying to kill him.

“Don’t do this!” Rynn warned as they fought. “You’ll change the future.”

“I intend to,” the man hissed back as he threw a punch into Rynn’s face.

The hit was hard and it took a moment to shake it off. The man took advantage of it to hit him low in the gut under his armor.

The fight was ugly, as fights are, but Rynn came out on top, literally. He forced the man down on his stomach and tied his hands behind his back.

He then led the man down the hallway, holding a stun gun to him so he wouldn't try to escape. He heard the building security coming after them, so he ducked into a bathroom with the man.

Becka felt very awkward in the men's room, so she went invisible.

Rynn decided not to go out through the hallway. Instead, he used the wire on his belt to lower himself and the man down. Becka also had the same technology to lower herself.

When they reached the ground below, Rynn stepped into an alley with the man. "What were you doing?" he demanded to know. "You cannot change the past. It will affect the future. You could undo your very existence!"

"I don't care!" the man retorted. "I'd rather be dead than have my life."

"Stealing technology will not help your life," Rynn explained.

"I wasn't stealing technology," the man defended. "I was planting it so my ancestor can develop it and be rich. That hurts no one."

"It does," Rynn defended. "It hurts whoever really developed the technology. Getting tech early would really change the world. You can't do that. We are taking you back where you belong."

They were about to go to the time machine to bring him back when a gang walked into the alley they were in. Rynn wasn't expecting that, nor did he feel any match to fight a

gang. He was taught in Time Cops school to negotiate, as negotiation seldom would affect the time stream.

He found quickly that negotiating with a gang was pretty pointless. The leader of the gang pulled a knife and attacked. Rynn really wasn't trained to fight a gang. He was taught to flee, but in an alley, there was no place to flee too. He looked around quickly. Perhaps he could use his grappling hook to pull himself up, but then they'd be back in the building they'd just escaped from, and surely security would be looking for them.

He really didn't get more chance, as he was being attacked. He grabbed the gang leader's arm to keep from getting cut, but the tip did hit his cheek and make a small cut. That was something he'd never experienced before, and it was distracting and a bit painful. He threw a right hook, knocked the guy back, pulled his stun gun, and shot him, which made the guy immediately go unconscious. Stunning hurt; Rynn knew it, as he had to experience it as part of training. It felt much like getting tazed, which he knew from experience hurt too.

When their leader went down, all the gang attacked. Rynn had never fought a dozen guys trying to kill him.

Fortunately, he was able to stun several of them, and he had a bullet proof vest that made the knives not be able to cut his chest.

He fought hard, but took quite a few hits and got a cut on his upper arm. Rynn knew he was way in over his head.

He likely wouldn't have come out on top of the fight, but Becka turned invisible and helped fight. She was a great help, as the gang didn't see what was hitting them. Of course, Rynn

couldn't either, which made him very nervous, as he couldn't protect her that way either. He became almost panicked when he heard her scream. He could see that her stun gun was knocked to the ground.

To make matters worse, the man they'd caught was running away.

As soon as he heard Becka scream, she became visible. One of the gang members had managed to grab her arm stab her with his knife. Her protective clothing kept her from getting cut, so he dropped the knife and hit her hard across the face.

Rynn panicked. He dove over on the gang member who had her caught and tackled him to the ground. Becka fell too, but Rynn pummeled the guy. Another guy tried to stab him in the back and one went to hit him in the head. Becka rolled over, picked up her dropped stun gun and shot the guy going for Rynn's head. Rynn's vest took the blow of the other strike without cutting.

"Run!" Rynn called to Becka. They both blasted their way out of the alley, stunning all the gang members.

They ran toward the building, figuring the man was once again going to try to get in and plant the technology.

Rynn tackled him before he got in the door. The man fell hard and cut his face, as his hands were tied behind his back. Several bystanders nearby tried to pull Rynn off the man.

Rynn pulled his Time Cop badge and showed it to everyone, announcing, "Special forces. He is under arrest."

The people didn't question him and let him and Becka take the man away, but police pursued them.

Rynn wasn't in any mood for a chase, so he stunned both the policemen and headed to the time machine.

There was a crowd around the time machine. That wasn't good, as he wasn't supposed to let anyone see the time machine disappear in fear that knowing time travel was possible could alter research and alter the future. Yet, he had little choice. The crowd was there, and he didn't know how to work the time machine to move it someplace else. Certainly the man he had tied was not going to cooperate.

He did the next best thing he could think of. He turned his laser gun to low power and pointed it at a building. "Look!" he called, pointing to the laser dot he had moving around on the building. As the people gawked, Becka opened a compact on her belt and hit the button to return them home.

Fortunately, they didn't need to get the man to work the time machine. Their technology could utilize the time machine's warping tech to bring them back without even starting the machine.

Soon, he, Becka, the time traveler, and his ship were back on the pad they had teleported from.

His father was there to congratulate him on his first mission being successful. He tried not to show his panic at the blood from the cut on Rynn's cheek or the bruises. On the other hand, Becka didn't try to hide her panic at all. She went immediately to administering the aid needed.

Rynn's father was obviously very proud. Yet, he didn't have time to listen to the story, as he had to take care of the time traveler and time machine. Rynn and Becka would be debriefed after the captive and machine were dealt with.

Rynn really wasn't sure how they destroyed the machines and still returned the time travelers to their times. Of course, he really didn't care. He didn't have to worry about it. His father and his top men took care of that. All Rynn needed to know was to turn the time travelers over.

Becka put ointment on his wounds and bandaged the cut. He assured her that he couldn't have done it without her. She told him that she thought their first mission was exciting but also terrifying. Going through time and stopping someone from changing it was not anything they could have really prepared for. They'd been told that at times they would even go to times on other worlds. That would be even more freaky. She then asked why he chose her as his partner.

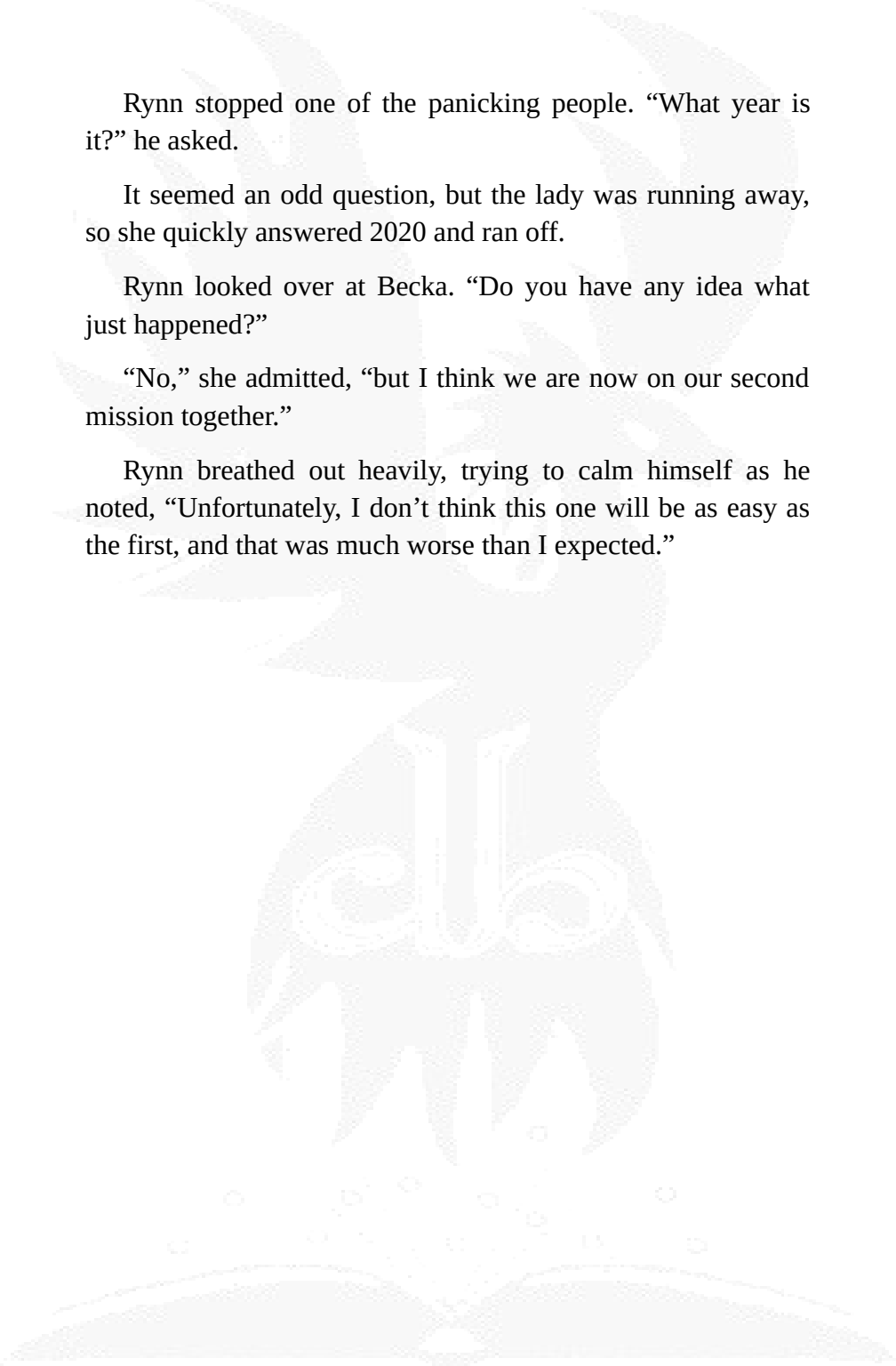
He answered that he trusted her more than the others.

He didn't say more because something odd happened. The room began to shake. Space itself seemed to be crashing with itself. A bright light then suddenly hit.

Becka grabbed onto Rynn for safety as everything seemed to change around them.

When the air around them cleared, they were standing in a park, at least the ruins of one. Rynn wasn't sure if he was in the past of his planet or on another planet all together. There was damage done to the park, and about a half mile radius around it. It wasn't all rubble, but it looked twisted and rearranged. A slide was coming from the top of a shelter with picnic tables, and a twisted picnic table was on top of a car.

People were screaming and running for their cars. Fortunately, they seemed to not be hurt.



Rynn stopped one of the panicking people. “What year is it?” he asked.

It seemed an odd question, but the lady was running away, so she quickly answered 2020 and ran off.

Rynn looked over at Becka. “Do you have any idea what just happened?”

“No,” she admitted, “but I think we are now on our second mission together.”

Rynn breathed out heavily, trying to calm himself as he noted, “Unfortunately, I don’t think this one will be as easy as the first, and that was much worse than I expected.”