

# Everlasting Agent

By : AmaraEvers

Amara is a young girl taken off of the streets by a mysterious dapper man. She is taken to a facility to be a test subject of a new machine. When she is the first to survive, she is thrust into a new world of responsibilities and obligation. The machine sends her through time to collect items that her company needs for their lofty goals. Can she survive the life of an inter-era spy while interacting with some of the most prominent and dangerous figures in history? Her company depends on her ability to do just that, and when there's money involved, you can be sure Amara won't disappoint.

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“Right where your mouth 's gonna be, you lil’-”

The brutish man stopped mid-sentence. He fell forward and the girl dodged his cumbersome weight. It was then that she noticed a dapper man standing behind the other two, who were now slumped on the ground in uncomfortable positions. “Who... who are you?” mumbled the young street rat, stunned by this man's apparent magical abilities. He gave her a cold, uncaring look, which was odd after he just saved her. He peered around suspiciously before returning his gaze to her and observing her tattered clothes and disheveled hair. “Have you got a place to stay, young lady?” The girl only stared at him with curiosity. He had sharp features and piercing green eyes. His brown hair poked out from under his trilby, and though his clothes were looked expensive it appeared he'd been wearing them all day. Had he been walking around the city fighting crime all day?

“I asked a question, miss,” the man snapped in a condescending tone.

Ripped from her train of thought, the girl stuttered out a reply. “N-no, I, uh, I don't really have a home.”

“Are you homeless?”

“Well, yes.” The quick, to the point question caught her entirely off guard.

“Come with me. I can get you food and a warm bed.” And with that, the man started off down an alleyway headed to a place only he knew. She wanted to protest, to explain that she didn't trust him and wasn't about to follow him, but after looking back at the pile of men on the floor she was immediately dissuaded. This was in her best interest, because should she disobey, he might use his black magic on her, too!

The man led her to a small room in a hostel that she'd never noticed before. It was out of the way and the perfect place for such a mysterious man. She wondered what he might be. A secret agent? A terrorist? An overly kind tourist? While she explored possibilities, the shower was turned on. The man motioned for her to go in and handed her a baggy shirt and pants. Closing the door, she hurriedly undressed and literally jumped into the shower in excitement. It had been a long time since she'd been able to use one of these. She had snuck into a gym for the sole purpose of showering, and got kicked out as soon as she stepped out to leave once some of the regulars saw her tattered clothes on the rack. After her hour long encounter of the soapy kind, there wasn't a drop left in any of the complimentary toiletries. She happily stalked out of the bathroom with the shirt down to her knees and the pants kept on by a giant belt that she poked an extra hole in.

Her eyes began moving over the entire room. There were several suits hung in the closet. The man must have planned to stay long, though many had no arm or leg creases and most likely hadn't been worn yet. She saw no other clothing like the kind she was wearing, and wondered if the man had planned to come help someone out. That was awfully kind of him. Of course, that's not how things work. Her distrust in the man returned, now that her moment of bliss was over. People never gave you anything, they merely paid you for services. She wondered what she could possibly offer the dapper man while trying to avoid obvious answers. She then contemplated running. Her escape plan was thwarted when he returned with some items.

The man began spreading out his newly acquired goods on the bed, assorting them for reasons the girl did not know. She moved closer to snoop around

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shamelessly. The dapper man made no attempt to hide the items. A particular pair of papers caught her eye.

“Those... those are tickets. Two of them. I didn't know you were staying with a friend. Are you guys leaving?”

“I am here alone. We're leaving tomorrow morning,” he explained while continuing to organize his things.

“I'm okay here though. It's a shithole for my kind, but its home. Thank you for the offer, sir.”

“It wasn't an offer.”

And with that cold statement, the girl's short dark hair stood on end as the stranger continued arranging his things unaffected by his own words as well as her reaction to them. He paid no heed to her bulging eyes as he finished and placed the tickets in his coat pocket. She had a million questions to ask, but her mouth didn't move a muscle. She only continued to stare while trying to communicate her inquiries by shouting at him with telepathy.

“Get some sleep, miss. You'll need to be up early tomorrow. There will be warm food for breakfast, but this will do for now.” With that, he handed her a sandwich and a cup of chamomile tea. Still in shock from the statement, she ate while staring at him, questioning his motives and hoping for a spontaneous explanation. He continued moving about the room and paying her no attention, her eyes on him the entire time.

The sun spilled into the room in straight lines. The girl opened her eyes and sat up quick as lightening. She'd forgotten the events that brought her here, and they all came rushing back when she spotted the dapper man asleep on the bed. She rolled off the couch and checked his suit pocket for the tickets. The departure time was 9:00am, departing from London international airport and arriving at the Geneva international airport.

“Switzerland?” the girl blurted, forgetting the dapper man.

The man stirred and eyed her. “If you're going to be awake now, be quiet or go get some food to shut you up. It would be much appreciated.”

The girl huffed and went downstairs, following her nose to the breakfast buffet. There were mainly simple powdered eggs, biscuits, toast, and the like, but the girl's eyes lit up nonetheless. “How much am I allowed to eat?” The girl asked a passerby who had a hotel uniform on. “As much as you can fit in your stomach, kiddo,” was the stranger's reply. Her smile stretched across her face in visible pleasure. She thanked the man and grabbed two plates, piling food high on each one and covering most of the first with gravy. She sat down to enjoy her feast: Eggs and biscuits smothered in gravy, scones and buttered toast, fruits of various kinds, and a cup of orange juice to wash it all down. She ate her way through three generous plates before sighing in utter fullness. Once she came down from her heavenly bliss, she remembered the dapper man and her predicament. She quickly thought of various modes of escaping before seeing the dapper man descend from the stairs and approach her.

½

“I see you had quite the appetite. Wait for me in the room; we're going to go buy you some things in a bit.” The man sent her off, not needing to touch her to make

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her feel physically compelled to return to the room. She sat for only five minutes planning escape again before the man returned and squashed her hopes. With few words exchanged, they left to a couple of stores to pick up basic female clothes and necessities. He bought a few plain dresses, pants, skirts, shoes and blouses. He didn't ask opinions, merely held the clothes up to her, decided himself if they suited her or not, and then moved on to the next. They visited a general store for a comb and a few other things that she would probably need. They returned to the hostel around 7:45 am.½ "You have ten minutes to get dressed. Brush your teeth with the blue toothbrush I left in the w.c., and feel free to use any of the products we bought you." The dapper man left the room entirely and she started to do as she was told.

½ Resigned to her fate, she got ready and sat down on the couch. The dapper man walked in after exactly ten minutes. He scanned the girl, noticing her hair was brushed but unstyled and her dress still had a tag hanging on it. He removed the tag from her dress as well as the rest of the clothes they'd bought, and stuffed them in a small suitcase. "This is yours, take care of it," was all he instructed. In an almost mechanical way, she followed the man to a taxi that took them to the airport. The man saw the security booth up ahead. "Okay, listen, those men up there are going to search you. They mean you no harm, only wish to make sure you are not a threat. Do as they ask without question. She walked through and, still afraid of the possibly magical man, held her composure while being asked to do strange tasks such as removing her shoes. She watched curiously as they searched her bag. A security guard took notice of her stare, glued to the movements of the workers. "What's wrong girl, you hidin' something?" he joked. "N-no sir, I'm not a threat at all, nope!" She stammered, not expecting any questions. The man gave her a quizzical look before laughing. "Didn't mean to scare you hon, carry on." Feeling a bit scared and as if she had failed, she continued on after the dapper man until they reached their terminal.½

Her broody mood lifted when she saw the plane. The man observed her eyes lighting up with child-like wonder as she followed the length of the plane with her eyes. She could not control her excitement, constantly bouncing in her seat as she observed her surroundings and as the plane roared to life. She even squeezed the dapper man's arm unintentionally as they took off, squealing a bit in her excitement. "Maybe being kidnapped wasn't so bad," she thought, "if I get to fly in planes and see new things." The clouds floated by like a white armada and she stared out the window in wonder, her rapid thoughts ceasing for once in her troubled life. She marveled over the hospitable attendants who offered her drinks, which she happily accepted. As the plane began to land she got the sinking feeling one gets in their stomach from the rapid change in altitude. Only, this wasn't the only reason her stomach was doing flops. She realized that she still didn't know what the man wanted of her, and the possibilities ran through her mind making her thoughts like a blender. What was really going on here?!

They exited the plane and left to search for the dapper man's car in the airport parking lot. When he found it, the girl stopped in awe. It was a sleek black car with two seats only and a mean look. She'd never seen those around her London slums. The man drove while she kept silence in her awe yet again. The man gave her a quick glance. "She's the most compliant one yet," he thought. "I hope she makes it."

They pulled up to a small building on the side of a large hill of green.½ They had long left the lights of the city to get here. She stepped out at the dapper man's command and they approached the entrance. He slid a card through a slot and typed in some sort of code on a dial pad attached to the door. They stepped in to a sterile, plain hallway. "This," he explained with a tone of grandeur, "is your new home."

½ "This looks like a hospital," she said unimpressed. "I don't like hospitals, that's where I'd get stuck every time I hurt myself."

"You'd have to get pretty hurt to get placed in a hospital with your situation." She only looked at him blankly, not having a clue as to how he could question her ability to get into trouble. He got the feeling that she was

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perhaps the kind who trouble sought out, and wondered if perhaps she was not the perfect candidate after all. It wasn't his decision though. If her body could handle it, she would be their *only* candidate.

The man led her down the stairs. Stairs? She thought this was the only floor. They walked down several flights before they finally stopped at one of the strange doors. This looked more complicated than the last. The man stooped to swipe his card, put in a code, and let the machine run a scan of his eye. When the light changed to green, the two waltzed into the room. It was laboratory, large and advanced. A large machine took up the back end of the enormous room. Mouth agape, the girl was walked to a small room at the end of a connecting hallway. She didn't notice the many scientists and engineers watching her go. The man had her sit on a small cot as he clasped his hands together.

"Alright, you've been quiet all this time, and I'm to assume you have little grasp of language or commonalities."

"I can speak just fine. I just don't understand some of the weird things you say and do."

"Latter point proven. Continuing. Your help is needed in our current research project. We need... volunteers to test our devices."

"Do I get paid?"

"If you do well, yes. The work is of a difficult nature, but should you prove a worthy candidate you will be trained by us, free of charge. You will be given this room as a living quarter for now, and can move up if you... succeed. Please, rest for now. We will bring you out for basic testing soon. You may ask questions after the testing."

"Wait!" The girl pleaded. "Quick question. Are we friends?" The girl seemed genuinely confused as to what constitutes a friend.

The man thought a bit, and seeing her possible fate in the near future, decided to give her some form of kindness. "Yes, I suppose we are."

"That's nice. I've always wanted one. Even if you are scary and practice black magic."

The man gave her one last look of confusion from her last words and walked slowly out of the door. This girl obviously had no connections to the outside world, and this was good. Though, she seemed lonely and uncared for, which was bad if you wanted to take a moralistic view on things. The dapper man did not, and he left to tell his boss the good news. They had another shot.

The girl sat in the room. She quietly kicked her feet around for a while. She explored the room, which took all of five minutes as there really wasn't anything in there. The walls were more barren than the hostel, but the cot had a lingering scent to it. It smelled like people, and that was strange to her. After all, was it not her cot? She fell asleep possessively snuggling her cot.

Meanwhile, the dapper man approached his boss. The boss sat behind a large cherry oak desk on a black velvet chair with cherry oak accents. Behind him were historical paintings from various eras and books of all shapes and sizes, some of which looked like they could be hundreds of years old.

"I hear you have good news, Horatio," bellowed the portly man behind the desk.

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"Yes Mr. Archibald. I found another candidate. She is young and energetic, and appears to have no links whatsoever to the outside world."

"Perfect. We shall test her immediately. There is no point in drawing it out after what past tests have shown us."

"I understand. Do I send the testers down?"

"Yes, tell them to go as soon as possible. This might be the one."

"Yes sir."

With that, Horatio had delivered his information and was off to send the testers. He felt a pang of regret for bringing such a young thing. The feeling dispersed once he remembered what he had saved her from. "This is better than what would have been," he told himself. And he almost believed it.

The girl was startled from her peace by two men in lab coats. "Come with us miss. We will be running some tests on you today."

She hurried after them, too excited to object. She had a job. A real, honest to goodness job, a room, a bed, and a friend. She'd never been so pleased with her life. She had something now, a goal and a place. Even if she would be stuck in this facility for the rest of her days, she'd have more than she ever had out of it. She smiled, even as they strapped her into a large chair and began taking her vitals and a blood sample. It hurt, but she didn't complain once. They briefed her and gave her directions as to what to do if the machine was a success. They assured that she was able to read before adding another check to her board, and placing a note into her pocket. They put a headset on her and made sure she could hear them speak to her from the other room. When they were done, they led her to the large machine at the back.

All of the workers scattered like ants. They all stood behind a short barrier that went around the circumference of the machine. She figured that the circle she stood in was the area that would be affected by this science magic of theirs. She fiddled with her headset and contemplated her future, imagining many new technologies being given to her, just like this one! She stopped when she noticed the crowd. Many turned away while others looked on. Some seemed excited, others terrified. She began to feel worry as the machine began lighting up and making scary noises. Pistons pumped and the lights dimmed from the sheer amount of power being drained into this monstrous machine. Her worry turned to terror as she noticed more of the workers looking away, one even crying in the back. In her last seconds of this place, she turned to see none other than her friend, the dapper man. A smile crossed her lips as she gave a weak wave towards him, and then she was gone. A flash of white was the last anyone saw.

The dapper man's mouth dropped open. No screaming. The testers ran up to him and handed him the other headset that could communicate with her's. "Young miss..?"

"Hi friend! Why didn't you say how scary that thing was?!"

A tear rolled out of Horatio's eye. It had worked. The bloody machine worked! And this time with significantly less bloodshed. "Take the paper they gave you out of your pocket. It is a map. Follow it up to the marked area. There should be a large rock there with a perfect circle engraved into it.

The girl hurriedly searched for the rock, using the crude map to find her way. She found it quickly and asked excitedly, "Found it! What next?"

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Everyone in the room listened on, huddled around Horatio. They plugged his headset into the intercom so everyone could hear. Mr. Archibald listened contently from his room.

"What is around you?"

She looked around. "Nothing, just lots of trees and grass. I'm on a big hill."

"Good! Sit on the rock and wait. Do not move."

The girl sat patiently. The large rock began to light up on the lines she sat on. Another flash, and she was suddenly back in the compound. Everyone was clapping and cheering while she sat confused on the machine floor. The one person crying was now crying tears of joy. The dapper man came out of the crowd to congratulate her.

"Whats going on?" she asked timidly.

"Let me show you," the dapper man explained. He took her outside of the compound and behind it. There, she saw a large rock with a perfect circle engraved into it.

"You moved me outside?" she asked in confusion.

"Did you see the compound?"

The girl could not comprehend. The man quickly explained with enthusiasm, the first she'd ever seen of this side of him. "You *were* moved outside, but not today. You were moved outside of here, 500 years ago. This place did not exist then."

The girl's brain could not wrap around this. The man continued explaining the machine and the workers inside. Apparently, they had all been working on this for years. A little over 30 to be exact. They had succeeded in making a machine that could transport their curiously marked rocks and metals back in time so that they could go to the coordinates they sent them to and retrieve them, aged some hundreds of years by then. They thought this meant that time travel could now be utilized, but the first of the scientists to try it died in the process. Out of fear of losing another of their highly skilled workers, they began collecting street rats and homeless wanderers from various cities to test the time machine. All of the previous trials had been a failure, however, and they were beginning to lose hope on transporting a human.

"So... I could have died?" the girl asked quietly.

"Yes, I'm sorry I couldn't tell you sooner. It's just that-"

"I guess I'm pretty special then. Does that mean I get a nicer room and better pay now?"

The man stared in astonishment. "We haven't even told you how much you're getting paid."

"Well it's never too early to ask for a raise."

The man didn't know if she was fearless, crazy, or a mixture of the two. "You're an official employee of Clockwork Corp. now. What is your name, so that we know who to issue these *huge* checks to?"

"Name?" The girl gave an asking stare in reply.

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"A name is what people call you by and refer to you as."

"You call me miss, is that my name? Because if so I get called *lots* of other things like-"

"No, it is not a word. My name, for example, is Horatio."

"I don't have my own word people call me by. Like I said its usually things like-"

"We will give you a name then. From this point on, your name will be... Amara."

"My name... is Amara." She felt as if though, after all these years, she'd finally been given her own identity.

"My name is Amara, and this... this strange place is my new home."

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