

Alex Rider: Junior World Cup Assassination

Bam, shots fired! I lay on the middle of the field, three holes in my chest. They found out I was a spy.

Three years ago I was living with my uncle who was a spy for MI6 when he was killed by the Russian assassin, Yassen Gregorovich. Since then, I have made it my mission to find Gregorovich and end his reign of terror.

Earlier this year, through my MI6 connections, I learned that Gregorovich had a new target. This time he was being paid three hundred thousand dollars from Boris Kuzmich, a Russian billionaire and soccer fanatic to take out the English soccer team's star player. Kuzmich had a son, Vladimir, playing on the Russian soccer team and will go to no end to see Russia to victory.

I started playing soccer over the summer after learning the World Cup was being held in Russia. This seemed like a likely place for Gregorovich to target Danny Williams. Danny plays center forward and is the captain of the youth English soccer team. He has played soccer his whole life and is used to being the star. He is reported to be Gregorovich's target.

On the first day I arrive at the youth English soccer training, I could barely complete a pass. Most of my teammates felt like I didn't deserve to be there, and they were right. Most of them have had a soccer ball at their feet since the day they were born. They resent that I am there.

After having a one on one with the goalie to end our first scrimmage, I shoot and it goes wide. Danny sarcastically says "Nice shot, Alex," and everyone starts laughing as they walk off the field. I have athleticism on my side but I am not a natural soccer player. A call from the Prime Minister is the only reason I made the team. I was put on the team to make sure Gregorovich was not successful at murdering Danny.

When I joined the soccer team, I took the place of Theo Rogers, a long time friend and teammate of Danny's and Danny holds a grudge.

My teammates and my soccer coach wonder why I show up late or don't show up at all, or why I show up with bruises and cuts on my face and arms that I got during combat training. I brush it off with excuses like a fall while mountain biking. My coach becomes suspicious of my excuses and follows me home. As I enter MI6, he yells, "Alex, why are you here?" I turn around, see him and I run.

The next week Theo's dad comes up and asks why I made the team instead of Theo. Coach says that it was important national business and that I am really an undercover spy. My secret is out. Later that night at the Roger's house, Theo's dad tells Theo that I am a spy and that Theo should be on the team instead of me. Theo decides to take revenge. The next day, Theo jumps on a plane to Russia to meet up with the Russian soccer coach. Vladimir Kuzmich overhears this conversation and tells his dad that there is a spy on the English team. Boris Kuzmich is eager to find out who the spy is, so he looks up the English roster. The only kid he doesn't recognize from the old team is me, Alex Rider. Kuzmich immediately calls Gregorovich and tells him that I am the spy. When Kuzmich mentions my name, Gregorovich has a flashback to three years ago when I told him "Someday, I will kill you."

The first qualification game we get an easy win against Nicaragua. I sat on the bench. While sitting there in the soccer stadium in the pouring down freezing rain watching my teammates fight against the Nicaraguan team, I look up and see a man in a black trench coat walking around suspiciously. Then three men in the same outfit but with black ski masks parachute down into the coliseum. All of a sudden a bomb goes off and the lights go out and

we are in complete darkness. With their night vision goggles, the enemy is able to come in and abduct Danny. With the chaos of the explosion and darkness, their escape goes unnoticed.

Once they are safely away, the light is restored to the coliseum and it is only then that we realize Danny is missing. "Where the hell did Danny go," coach asks. "Did he run to hide? Is he in the locker room?" It didn't take long for us to realize Danny had been abducted.

Later that day an Amber Alert went out to the whole world asking if anyone had seen him.

No one had. We realized that the Amber Alert had gone everywhere but Russia. We tried to send it out again but a notification came up saying that we were blocked by a Russian and that none of Russia would know of Danny's disappearance. We became suspicious of the Russians and considered not going to Russia for the World Cup. We were forced to play when our club's owner said that we were going. My boss, the leader and founder of MI6, may have had an influence on the decision to go, because he thought it would be a good opportunity to find out more about Yassen Gregorovich and to find Danny.

When we arrive in Russia, the team morale is low. We are missing our star player. I was just to be a sub but oh boy did things go wrong.

Our semi-final game is against Germany. With Danny out, they have no choice but to put me in. It was an intense game and we were tied with 5 minutes left in the game. Our team draws a penalty kick. As center forward, the job of kicking the ball falls on me. I line up and as I am about to kick the ball, I see Gregorovitch in the stands. I lose concentration as I kick and the ball doesn't even reach the goalie. All the German players and fans start cheering and laughing. The English players fall to their knees in agony and I can hear the roar of the English fans booing me. I feel terrible but I know that I must hunt down Gregorovich before he has a chance to cause another catastrophe. I run off the field and into the tunnel of the stadium. As I turn into the locker room, I see Gregorovich. He sees me too and lifts a gun level with my chest. I run back through tunnel and out onto the field. Now I have my gun ready. We stop and face off.

"I am Alex Rider, you killed my uncle. Prepare to die."

Before I have a chance to pull the trigger, I hear shots and go down. Looking up at the stadium lights, I think I am dead. As I am about to pass out, I see Gregorovich's face come into focus and then I see darkness.

I wake up in a dark room with duct tape covering my mouth and rope tied around my arms and legs. I look to my left and I see Danny. He is tied up just like me. Thankfully, I was well trained by MI6 and am able to get out of my ties. Danny looks to me pleadingly. I free him. Just as we are trying to escape, Kuzmich opens the door and walks in. He has a gun pointed at Danny. As he takes aim, his son Vladimir bursts through the door and tackles his father. I pounce on this opportunity and kick Kuzmich in the head, causing him to lose consciousness. I grab Kuzmich's gun and we make our escape. As we near the exit of the building, we run into Gregorovich. I quickly pull the gun up and he slaps it out of my hand and the gun goes flying across the room. The three of us enter into hand to hand combat against Gregorovich. He punches me in the face and I fall back and stumble. Gregorovich and I scramble for the gun. I get there first. As we struggle for control of the gun, it goes off. Gregorovich is hit.

My uncle's death has been avenged.

Danny, Vladimir and I walk out of the building. Danny says " Now I understand where you get all the cuts and bruises".

Vladimir helps us make contact with MI6 and soon they are there to help us.

"I didn't want to win this way," Vladimir tells me sadly.

I find out later that none of my bullet wounds were life threatening and I am soon discharged from the hospital.

Several weeks later, I am once again sitting on the bench with the English Junior Soccer team, headed up by Danny as we win the Junior World Cup against Russia and our old friend Vladimir.