

# FRACTURE OF FOUR

The briefing room smelled of ozone and old coffee. Lights stayed low because the fractures liked shadows. A city map hovered—three red triangles nested inside one another, seven fracture nodes pulsing like fresh bruises.

Ace stood arms crossed, 120 cm of coiled silence, violet eyes catching the glow and fracturing it. Mai leaned on the table, silver hair sliding over one shoulder while her disruptor rested in its holster. Shammy filled the space behind them—195 cm of quiet storm, electric-blue eyes tracking every data shift, silver-white hair drifting though no wind moved.

Bright did not smile. "Jacob. Son of Trigon. Four eyes, one lattice. He's not here to own the city. He's here to see if three of you break when he tells one of you to kneel."

Theta-24 sat opposite. Badger kicked boots onto the table. Heavenly kept his back straight. Grouse watched the map like it might bite. Skullker polished a shotgun shell. Jello spun a signal jammer between fingers.

Mai's voice stayed low. "He's keyed the geometry to us." Ace exhaled once. "Then we unkey it." Shammy's presence thickened the air a fraction—just enough that the map flickered.

Bright slid the file shut. "Perimeter is theirs. Inside is yours. Try not to level the block."

Outside, rain slicked the streets. Neon bled across puddles. A subway train groaned past.

First fracture opened at the intersection. Glass shattered in every storefront. Mai felt the pull behind her sternum and thumbed her disruptor alive. Shammy tilted her head; raindrops slowed, hung, then reversed. Ace stepped off the curb and the world narrowed to knife edges.

Theta-24's van skidded in. Badger leaned out the side door, rifle already up. "Satanic volunteers, dress code optional." Heavenly: "Civilians still moving. Watch your arcs." Grouse: "Alley left—three, stacking." Jello: "Carrier signal live. I'll make it ugly."

Zealots unfolded from the dark—tall, plated, blackened wraps sewn with obedience sigils. They locked into perfect triangles. Badger whistled low. "Discipline like that costs souls."

Flashbangs popped. Skullker went in shotgun first, bodies folding like broken marionettes. Grouse's burst stitched across shoulders. Heavenly called cover for a woman dragging a child. Jello's jammer screamed; two zealots froze mid-chant, eyes rolling.

Ace appeared between the formation lines, katanas humming emerald. One swing and a zealot's command lattice snapped; the rest staggered. Mai's disruptor cracked—rune flare, geometry fracturing like ice. Shammy walked forward and the rain remembered gravity again, slamming down in sheets.

Jacob stepped out of the fracture itself. Long coat, calm face, four violet eyes that matched Ace's color too well. He looked at them the way an engineer studies rivets.

Ace's voice cut dry. "That shade doesn't belong on you." Jacob's smile never reached the eyes. "Power belongs where it decides." Mai: "Not on her." Shammy: "We're still upright."

Ace vanished toward him. Space folded. Blades sparked against nothing. Jacob raised one hand and the street narrowed to a corridor only he controlled.

Mai called out, "Straight lines are his. Don't walk them." Ace pivoted mid-air, aura flaring emerald fault-lines. She drove forward anyway—because hesitation was damage.

Theta-24 kept the zealots honest. Badger took a plated fist to the ribs and laughed through it. Heavenly dragged a civilian behind a car. Skullker breached a doorway and ended three at once. Jello corrupted the next chant so obedience tasted like vomit.

Jacob's voice stayed even. "You're a hinge. Hinges break." Mai answered by firing into the seam where his lattice met the asphalt. Fracture stuttered. Ace cut coat fabric and skin. Blood that smelled of sulfur hit the ground. Shammy layered pressure downward; zealots skidded like they'd hit an invisible wall.

Corridors tried to form—perfect paths to isolate each of them. Ace carved seams before they finished. Mai sealed the gaps with disruptor pulses. Shammy slowed the zealots until they moved like they were underwater. Theta-24 punched the hole wide. Badger bled from the shoulder; Heavenly patched while still shooting.

Jacob focused on Shammy. "You were made to stand above them." Shammy's hair lifted. "I stand with them because I choose it." Jacob: "Choice is fragile." She stepped inside the Triad circle instead of out. The trap closed on empty air.

Ranking virus rippled next—city itself offering Shammy a throne of streetlights and camera lenses. Zealots angled upward in worship posture. Phones came out; civilians recorded. Mai's voice stayed sharp. "They're turning her into the door." Shammy shrank her presence deliberately, storm folding inward until she felt smaller than Ace. Refused the crown. Ace ruined the patterns around her. Mai cracked the certainty lattice. Jacob watched, curious, four eyes narrowing.

Subway stairs. Wet concrete, old copper smell. Shammy's shoulders tightened; enclosed spaces always grated. Mai scanned the rails—hierarchy diagram glowing on the wall, four violet eyes staring back. Jacob's voice echoed. "Bones don't lie."

Spotlights swung to Shammy. Cameras tracked. Zealots knelt upward again. Shammy: "You don't get my storm." Jacob: "Then I'll force it."

Last warning left her mouth quiet. Then she let go. Lightning branched through the lattice like veins. Metal screamed. Jacob fractured—literally—edges of him peeling into static before he pulled himself back together less certain.

Platform felt like a cathedral now. Lights still bent toward Shammy. Theta-24 cleared the last civilians; Jello killed every feed. Jacob baited one more strike. Shammy answered. The lattice shattered outright. Jacob thinned, smiled once—analytical, almost proud—and stepped backward into the closing fracture.

Red emergency lights. Smoke. Zealots dropped to human shapes, coughing, confused. Heavenly moved them out. A final node pulsed in the control hub—zealots chanting, redrawing the mocking diagram.

Ace broke postures with two clean cuts. Mai overclocked the node until it smoked. Jello corrupted the carrier until the chant tasted like broken glass. Heavenly put a round through the glowing symbol. Relay died. Everything went quiet except dripping water and distant sirens.

Jacob's silhouette lingered on a cracked screen for half a second. Four violet eyes met Ace's single fractured pair. No words. Just the smallest tilt of his head—acknowledgment that three had held.

Then nothing.

Ace exhaled, katanas cooling. Mai holstered her disruptor, fingers brushing Ace's shoulder once—grounding. Shammy let the air settle, rain returning to normal, her height still impossible against the low ceiling.

Badger limped up, grinning through blood. "Well. That was Tuesday." Heavenly: "Tuesday's over." Ace looked at the empty screen. "He'll be back with a better shape." Mai: "Then we'll still be three." Shammy's voice carried the low static of after-storm. "And still upright."

Lights flickered once more and steadied.

File closed.

## Epilogue

[ace](#), [mai](#), [shammy](#), [bright](#), [theta-24](#), [triad](#), [blackfile](#)

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