

Epilogue — Callsign: Horizon

Gears wrote the report as if it were a pathology prepared for a patient who would be reading over his shoulder. He did not include adjectives until he ran out of nouns. He did not speculate until the facts refused to continue without escort.

Site-Delta field pair (Ace/Mai) established **threshold behavior** at 07:42.

Handshake attempted; refused entry; consented to coordination.

Phenomenon displayed **route behavior** (non-textual vector grammar).

Black archives 07 and 11 mirrored into data-null pockets; contents absent; permissions **respected** (sic).

Horizon core spec remains technically unmet; surrogate behavior approximates intention without authority.

Conclusion: "Door" is now a shared vocabulary item.

Risk profile: moved from **viral** to **ecological**.

New directive: custodial protocols favored over extinction protocols.

He read what he had typed and disliked it less than he expected. He added one more line and did not tag it for search.

The Vessel-pair is a constraint the system understands and obeys.

He sent the report. Then he stood at the small window by his desk and watched rain traverse glass in runnels. He had once liked machines best because they did not insist on being admired. He had learned to respect people who did their jobs when machines were not enough. He adjusted his tie, which no one asked him to wear anymore, and allowed himself one unproductive thought: *I am glad they came back.*

Bright sat on the safehouse stairs with his coat on the banister and a paper cup cooling between his hands. The coin sat on the step below his foot where he wouldn't forget it and wouldn't remember to pocket it until the timing of forgetting meant something. The stairwell had learned their footsteps. It would notice another weight and make the sound that tells you a friend is coming.

He was not repentant, not exactly. Repentance requires a belief in a single right thing. He believed in the set of right things that changed with the light and the humidity and which of his names people used when they were angry with him. He believed in receipts. He believed in the gravity of the people who took his better words and did them correctly.

He tipped his head back against the wall and addressed the crack in the plaster like the world's smallest confessional. "We'll deserve this later," he said, and the building, which had seen less convincing vows, accepted the attempt.

Ace and Mai ate because eating is what you do when you are not performing heroics. The food had improved a little since morning because time can be an ingredient. The kettle was done apologizing; it boiled and rested when asked. The chairs remembered them and took their weight without complaint.

They did not rehash. Stories become lies when you make them work too hard. They moved through the quiet like people who had learned the shape of the room yesterday and found that it had not betrayed them.

"We're not naming the cars," Mai said, the rule spoken to keep it the right kind of rule.

"Absolutely not," Ace said. She tucked a stray strand of Mai's hair behind her ear because rituals can also be small. "We'll let them earn it."

"We'll let them refuse it," Mai said, correcting the grammar, and Ace nodded. Consent is a precise word in every language.

The comm stayed quiet. The city exhaled. Somewhere, someone who did not know them moved through a ribbon that had chosen to be a line. The Keeper counted cash and promises and missed them by the same amount. The drivers argued about what a race was without admitting it was theology.

In the undercity, a wall that had been told it could be a road remembered the kindness and did not take advantage. The concrete kept its seam the way a healed bone keeps its line. The fifth bell in its case did not ring. That was how you knew the ritual had been correct.

Night returned with the confidence of a city that had decided days were optional. The rain changed its mind twice about how hard it wanted to fall and settled on persuasive. The streetlights obeyed a schedule someone had bothered to give them. A cat made a decision and crossed a street.

Ace and Mai stood at the safehouse window and let the glass transmit the weather. Ace rested her forehead against it for a second, as if to ask the room to confirm it was still a room. It pressed back, polite as ever.

"Tomorrow," Mai said.

"Tomorrow," Ace said.

In the log that was not supposed to display sentences, three not-letters wrote themselves slowly, as if they wanted to be read aloud and had accepted that this wasn't the moment. They did not repeat. They did not flash. They existed exactly long enough.

Horizon active. —

© 2025-2026. "World of Ace, Mai and Shammy" and all original characters, settings, story elements, and concepts are the intellectual property of the author. All rights reserved.

Non-commercial fan works are allowed with attribution.

Commercial use, redistribution, or adaptation requires explicit permission from the author.

Contact: editor at publication-x.com

Check out our SubscribeStar page at <https://subscribestar.adult/konrad-k>

From:

<https://datavault.ws/> - **DataVault**

Permanent link:

<https://datavault.ws/doku.php/canon:ace13.9:epilogue>

Last update: **27/03/2026 16:04**

