

# ACE 20 — Structural Override

## Epilogue — Aftermath (Finalized, Micro-Enhanced)

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### 1. The Report Doesn't Match Reality

They start writing it immediately.

—

They always do.

—

Containment breach.

Hostile incursion.

Crossfire event.

Localized anomaly.

—

The words line up nicely.

Clean.

Ordered.

—

None of them are wrong.

—

None of them are right either.

—

Control Room B is quieter now.

Not calm.

Just... tired.

—

One of the technicians scrolls through the recorded feed again.

Stops.

Rewinds.

Plays it forward.

—

“...it doesn’t show it.”

—

No one asks what “it” is.

—

They all know.

—

Because they all saw it.

—

And none of it made it into the data.

—

## **2. Dr. Gears Does Not Like This**

Dr. Gears stands behind them.

Hands folded.

Still.

—

Watching.

—

“...we are not measuring the correct variables.”

—

That’s the only comment he makes.

—

No frustration.

No urgency.

—

Which, somehow, is worse.

—

He steps closer to the display.

Pauses.

—

“...log everything that doesn’t align.”

—

The technician hesitates.

“...sir, that’s—”

—

“...most of it.”

—

Gears nods once.

—

“...yes.”

—

### **3. Site-19 Doesn’t Reset Properly**

Maintenance teams move through the corridor.

Careful.

Slower than usual.

—

They fix what they can.

—

Panels back into place.

Damaged sections replaced.

Weapons collected.

Bodies removed.

—

Standard procedure.

—

But—

—

one of them stops.

Looks down.

—

“...this line was straight, right?”

—

The seam along the floor.

—

It isn't anymore.

Not quite.

—

Another worker crouches.

Runs a finger along it.

—

“...it's within tolerance.”

—

They both stare at it.

—

It doesn't feel within tolerance.

—

Neither of them says that out loud.

—

They move on.

—

Behind them—

—  
the line does not correct itself.  
—

## 4. Theta-24 Leaves First

Badger stands in the corridor.

Hands on his hips.

Looking around like he's trying to decide if he's impressed or annoyed.

—

<blockquote>

"...I'm gonna go ahead and say we don't shoot random doors anymore."

</blockquote>

—

Grouse doesn't look at him.

—

"...it wasn't the door."

—

Badger:

<blockquote>

"...yeah, I figured that part out."

</blockquote>

—

He glances toward the far end of the corridor.

Where things still don't quite line up.

—

<blockquote>

"...still counts."

</blockquote>

—  
HeavenlyFather exhales quietly.

—  
<blockquote>

“We file this as unresolved.”

</blockquote>

—  
Badger snorts.

—  
<blockquote>

“We file this as ‘never doing that again.’”

</blockquote>

—  
No one argues.

—  
They leave without ceremony.

—  
Like they were never really part of it.

## 5. The Corridor Keeps Something

Later—

—  
when it’s empty—

—  
the corridor sits in silence.

—  
Lights steady.

Air still.

—

Normal.

—

Almost.

—

A loose tool left behind on the floor shifts.

—

Not much.

Just a few millimeters.

—

No sound.

—

No visible cause.

—

It settles.

—

Like it found a better position.

—

Like something had already decided where it should be.

—

Then nothing moves again.

—

## **6. Quiet, Finally**

Safehouse.

—

No alarms.

No sterile lighting.

—

Just a room that behaves like a room.

—

Ace leans back against the wall.

Arms crossed.

—

Doesn't say anything at first.

—

She doesn't fully relax.

—

Mai sits.

Not slumped.

Not rigid.

—

Just... there.

—

Shammy stands by the window.

Watching outside like she's making sure the world is still doing what it's supposed to.

—

For once—

—

no one rushes to fill the silence.

—

## **7. It Didn't Stay There**

Mai exhales slowly.

—

“...it was simple.”

—

Ace glances at her.

—

“...yeah?”

—

Mai nods slightly.

—

“Everything had a place.”

Beat.

—

“And anything that didn’t... could be removed.”

—

Shammy doesn’t turn.

—

“...sounds quiet.”

—

Mai looks down at her hands.

—

“...it was.”

—

Too quiet.

—

## 8. That’s the Point

Ace pushes off the wall.

Steps closer.

—

Not invading space.

Just... there.

—

“...and?”

—

Mai pauses.

—

“...and it didn't feel right.”

—

That's as close as she gets to saying it.

—

Ace nods once.

—

“...good.”

—

## 9. Back to Normal (Mostly)

Shammy turns from the window.

—

The air shifts slightly.

Subtle.

Familiar.

—

Not perfectly even.

—

Just enough.

—

“...you're still here.”

—

Mai looks up.

—

“...yes.”

—

Shammy studies her for a second.

—

She doesn't look relieved.

—

Just... satisfied enough.

—

“...good.”

—

That's it.

—

No follow-up.

No analysis.

—

Just confirmation.

—

## **10. One Last Check**

Ace tilts her head slightly.

—

“...you done fixing things?”

—

A beat.

—

Mai actually considers it.

—

Then:

—

“...for now.”

—

She doesn't sound entirely certain.

—

Ace smirks faintly.

—

“...I'll take it.”

—

## **11. The Small Thing That Doesn't Matter (But Does)**

The room is quiet again.

—

Outside, something moves in the distance.

Normal.

Expected.

—

Inside—

—

a glass on the table shifts slightly.

—

Just enough to settle more evenly on the surface.

—

No one touches it.

—

No one reacts.

—

Maybe no one notices.

—

Or maybe—

—

they do.

—

And choose not to say anything.

—

The glass doesn't move again.

—

But it doesn't feel entirely done moving, either.

—

## END — ACE 20

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