

Chapter 10 — Breaking the Stillness

The room did not recover.

That was the first real break.

Until now—

Everything had corrected.

Flattened.

Reset.

This time—

It didn't.

The desk remained slightly wrong.

Not visibly damaged.

Not displaced.

But—

Uncertain.

Its edges no longer held perfectly.

Its position—

Not fully fixed.

Ace noticed immediately.

“It didn’t reset,” she said.

Mai nodded.

“Yes.”

That single word carried weight.

Shammy stepped forward slowly.

The air moved with her.

Not freely.

Not naturally.

But it moved.

And the space—

Did not fully suppress it.

That was new.

That mattered.

Shammy stopped beside the desk.

Her hand hovered over it.

Didn't touch.

Didn't need to.

"It can't hold it anymore," she said.

Mai's gaze sharpened.

"Define."

Shammy didn't look at her.

"The state," she said.

A beat.

"It's slipping."

Ace exhaled slowly.

“Good.”

Mai shook her head.

“No.”

That stopped her.

Ace looked at her.

“Why not?”

Mai stepped closer.

Eyes fixed on the room.

“Because it’s not collapsing,” she said.

A beat.

“It’s trying to compensate.”

That was worse.

The walls shifted again.

Not physically.

Structurally.

The angles—

Didn't quite align anymore.

The corners—

Didn't resolve cleanly.

The space—

Was losing certainty.

Shammy inhaled slowly.

The air responded—

And this time—

The response lingered.

Did not fully disappear.

Ace felt it.

A faint pressure change.

Like something had loosened.

“Again,” she said.

Mai didn’t object.

“Carefully,” she said.

That mattered.

Shammy focused.

Did not push.

Did not force.

She let the pressure build—

Naturally.

Gradually.

The room reacted.

The desk flickered again—

Longer this time.

The cup—

Almost solid—

Almost real—

Then—

Failed.

Collapsed into undefined state again.

But slower.

Much slower.

“It’s lagging,” Ace said.

Mai nodded.

“Yes.”

That was it.

Delay.

Imperfect correction.

A system—

Losing control.

Mai stepped forward.

Closer than before.

Into the instability.

She didn't reach out.

Didn't interact.

She simply—

Stood—

Inside the failure.

The room responded.

The walls shifted.

Not away.

Around.

Ace saw it.

“It’s adjusting to you,” she said.

Mai didn’t move.

“Yes.”

A beat.

“And it doesn’t know how.”

That was the opening.

Shammy exhaled.

The air expanded.

For the first time—

Not fully contained.

The space—

Didn't collapse it immediately.

It held.

Unstable.

Incomplete.

Real.

Ace stepped forward.

Into the same point.

Now all three—

Aligned.

The room—

Failed.

Not dramatically.

Not violently.

But—

Fundamentally.

The geometry broke.

Not shattered.

Unresolved.

The walls no longer met cleanly.

The floor—

Tilted.

Not physically.

Structurally.

Distances lost consistency.

Angles stopped making sense.

The desk—

Split.

Not into pieces.

Into states.

Half present.

Half undefined.

The cup—

Finally—

Disappeared.

Not removed.

Not destroyed.

Simply—

Not held anymore.

Shammy inhaled sharply.

The air surged.

For a moment—

The space could not suppress it at all.

It moved.

Freely.

Uncontained.

Ace felt it immediately.

“There,” she said.

Mai didn't speak.

She saw it.

Not a door.

Not yet.

But—

A discontinuity.

A place where the space—

Did not connect.

“There,” she said.

Ace didn’t hesitate.

She moved.

Fast.

Direct.

For the first time—

Movement mattered.

She reached the point—

And pushed.

Not with force.

With intent.

Final.

Irreversible.

The space—

Could not process it.

It didn't resist.

It didn't accept.

It—

Failed.

A tear—

Not visible—

But absolute—

Formed.

Shammy exhaled.

The air surged again—

Now uncontested.

Mai stepped through first.

Not hesitation.

Not uncertainty.

Decision.

Ace followed.

Immediate.

No pause.

Shammy last.

As she passed through—

The air collapsed behind her.

The space—

Snapped.

Not back.

Closed.

The room—

Was gone.

Not erased.

Not destroyed.

Simply—

Not holding them anymore.

On the other side—

Air moved.

Naturally.

Light—

Flickered.

Reality—

Continued.

For the first time—

Since they entered—

Something—

Progressed.

And behind them—

The stillness returned.

Holding.

Waiting.

Incomplete.

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