

EPILOGUE — Baseline Noise

Night City didn't change.

It never did.

Not for things like this.

Traffic moved.

Lights shifted.

Voices overlapped without pattern—

without pause.

The tower behind them—

just another line in the skyline.

Nothing marked it.

Nothing warned of it.

It stood—

like it always had.

Functional.

Wrong.

Ace walked ahead.

Not leading—

not following—

moving.

Mai kept pace beside her.

The photograph—

hidden—

not stored—

contained.

It didn't react.

That made it worse.

Shammy tilted her head slightly.

The air—

alive again.

Unstable in the way that mattered.

Free.

“It’s still there,” she said.

Not the penthouse.

Not the system.

Something else.

Mai nodded.

“Yes.”

A pause.

“It doesn’t belong here.”

Ace didn’t respond.

She already knew.

V walked slightly behind them.

Quieter than usual.

“...You’re not going to explain that, are you.”

Mai didn’t answer.

Because explanation—

would make it real.

And this—

wasn’t something this city understood yet.

Ace stopped.

Not suddenly.

Just—

enough.

The city flowed around them.

Unaffected.

Indifferent.

“Next,” she said.

Not a question.

Not a suggestion.

Direction.

Mai adjusted her grip slightly.

Not on the photograph—

on the idea of it.

“Rogue will have something,” she said.

Shammy exhaled.

The air—

shifted.

Somewhere far below—

in systems that tried to organize—

and classify—

and control—

something failed—

quietly—

again.

V looked at them.

“...You’re going to fit in here way too well.”

Ace didn’t smile.

“Good.”

That word again.

And the city—

unaware—

unconcerned—

continued.

Because in Night City—

nothing needed to be fixed.

Nothing needed to be understood.

Everything—

just needed

to keep working

long enough

to matter.

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Last update: **05/04/2026 15:53**

