

EPILOGUE — Margin of Delay

The city moved.

It always did.

Ace didn't watch the people.

She watched the gaps.

Between movement.

Between intent.

Between what should happen—

and what did.

There had been no gap.

That was the problem.

She replayed it—

not as memory—

as structure.

Strike—

before motion.

Impact—

before decision.

No delay.

No space to act.

That wasn't speed.

That was absence.

She stopped at a crossing.

Traffic flowed past.

Perfect timing.

Predictable.

Safe.

Wrong.

Everything here ran on delay.

On the fraction—

between knowing—

and doing.

That fraction—

was where control lived.

Where choice lived.

Where she lived.

Remove it—

and you didn't get faster.

You got something else.

Something that didn't wait.

Something that didn't choose.

Something that just—

happened.

Ace exhaled slowly.

The city didn't care.

It never did.

It rewarded results.

Not reasons.

Not structure.

Just outcome.

She stepped forward.

Across the street.

Timed.

Measured.

Delayed.

Exactly enough.

“That would’ve been faster,” she said.

Quiet.

Not regret.

Not doubt.

Calculation.

Faster—

meant less delay.

Less delay—

meant less space.

Less space—

meant less control.

She understood that.

Completely.

Didn't change the result.

She kept walking.

The city moved with her—

around her—

through her.

Unconcerned.

Because in Night City—

being right—

didn't matter.

Being late—

did.

And somewhere—

just ahead of where she was—

just outside the space she still controlled—

the next decision—

was already waiting—

for her

to arrive

too late.

—

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