

CHAPTER 3 — The Hallway That Repeats (Rewrite)

The corridor didn't begin.

It was simply—

there.

Ace stepped into it without slowing.

Behind them—

the space they had come through didn't close.

It just... stopped being the same place.

That was enough.

Forward held.

For now.

The walls were wrong.

Not broken.

Not unstable.

Layered.

Mai stopped.

Not hesitation.

Recognition—

and something that didn't quite fit inside it.

"...too much," she said.

A beat.

"Not layered."

Her gaze tracked the surface—

and then deeper than the surface.

"...just... everywhere."

Ace looked.

And saw it.

Text.

Not written once.

Not repeated cleanly.

Stacked.

Pressed into the space itself.

Every surface.

Every angle.

Every depth.

Carved.

Scratched.

Burned.

Etched.

Different tools.

Different hands.

Different moments.

The same words.

BAD WOLF

Again.

And again.

And again.

No direction to it.

No start.

No end.

Just accumulation—

until it stopped behaving like repetition

and became something else.

Ace didn't step closer.

Didn't follow it.

She let it exist.

That mattered.

Mai moved instead—

one step—

then another—

slower now.

Not cautious.

Adjusting.

Her eyes narrowed.

The lines were consistent.

Too consistent.

That was the problem.

BAD WOLF

Once—

one instance didn't sit right.

Not clearly wrong.

Not readable.

Just—

off.

Like a word remembered incorrectly.

Then—

it wasn't.

It aligned.

Perfectly.

Like it had never shifted at all.

Mai didn't comment on it.

But she felt it.

Shammy tilted her head.

The air tightened—

then slipped—

like it couldn't decide how to move around something that refused to behave like structure.

"This isn't pressure," she said.

A pause.

"It's pulling."

Not forward.

Not inward.

Everywhere.

At once.

Ace moved.

Forward.

She didn't track the pattern.

Didn't acknowledge it.

She treated it like it didn't matter.

That mattered more than anything else.

Because the moment attention settled—

the wall responded.

Subtle.

Immediate.

Words didn't move—

but they aligned.

For a fraction—

as Ace passed—

the repetition leaned.

Toward her.

Then broke apart again.

Like it hadn't meant to.

Mai saw it.

"...it reacts," she said.

A beat.

"Not fully. But enough."

Shammy stayed centered.

Didn't let her focus collapse.

Didn't let the space decide where she should be looking.

The air held better that way.

Not stable.

But not falling apart either.

The corridor stretched.

Then compressed.

Then—

for a moment—

distance didn't resolve at all.

Ace stepped—

and the floor wasn't there yet.

Her weight landed—

into something that hadn't finished existing.

Then—

it corrected.

Too fast.

Too late.

The space snapped into place under her.

No stumble.

No sound.

But it had happened.

She didn't react.

Didn't slow.

Mai adjusted her path—

less precise now—

less optimal—

allowing the space to stay inconsistent.

Working with the failure.

Not against it.

The walls shifted again.

One of them corrected too far—

closing distance that hadn't been crossed—

then eased back.

Like it was testing the shape of itself.

Shammy exhaled slowly.

The air folded—

then spread—

uneven—

alive.

The corridor didn't resist.

It adapted.

Poorly.

And then—

it ended.

Not gradually.

Not logically.

It simply—

stopped.

The wall ahead was clean.

No text.

No pattern.

Nothing.

That was worse.

Mai stepped forward.

Careful.

Deliberate.

“It stops here,” she said.

A pause.

“Not naturally.”

Ace didn’t wait.

She reached the surface—

and pushed.

For a moment—

it held.

Not solid.

Not resistant.

Just—

unwilling.

Like it hadn’t decided if she should be allowed through.

Then—

it gave.

Not opening.

Not breaking.

The idea of it—

shifted.

And there was space beyond.

Clean.

Stable.

Aligned.

Wrong in a different way.

Shammy exhaled.

The air settled—

too easily.

“They’re here,” she said.

Not a guess.

Mai didn’t argue.

“...yes.”

Flat.

But slower than before.

Ace stepped through.

No hesitation.

No delay.

And the moment she crossed—

the corridor behind them didn’t collapse.

Didn’t disappear.

It just—

stopped existing as something that mattered.

Like it had never been anything more

than a path

designed

to bring them

to a place

they had already been expected to reach.

—

© 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

From:

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

Permanent link:

<https://datavault.ws/doku.php/canon:ace34:chapter3>

Last update: **13/04/2026 07:33**

