

## CHAPTER 6 — Not an Accident (Rewrite)

The space behind them didn't close.

It didn't collapse.

It didn't reset.

It simply—

stopped applying.

Ace didn't look back.

There was nothing there anymore

that needed to be checked.

The skull in her hand didn't distort the world.

Not now.

No misalignment.

No shift.

No visible effect pressing outward.

But it didn't feel neutral.

It felt—

held.

Too tightly.

Like something forced into a shape

it hadn't agreed to keep.

Mai walked beside her.

Her attention stayed on the object—

not analyzing—

not breaking it down—

just... tracking.

"It will not remain stable," she said.

Not a projection.

A limit.

Ace didn't respond.

She didn't need to.

Shammy followed just behind.

The air around her held—

balanced—

controlled—

but thinner than it should have been.

Like there was less of it than there used to be.

"It's quieter," she said.

A beat.

"...but not empty."

That held.

The Serpent's Hand didn't follow.

Didn't interfere.

Didn't need to.

The same voice reached them again—

not louder—

not closer—

just present.

"You think you took it," they said.

A pause.

"You didn't."

Ace stopped.

Once.

Turned just enough—

not fully—

not giving them more than necessary.

“Client,” she said.

Flat.

The figure inclined their head.

“Yes.”

A beat.

“For now.”

Not agreement.

Assignment.

That was enough.

Ace didn't ask.

Didn't push.

Didn't waste movement trying to extract meaning

from something that had already decided

how much to give.

She turned—

and kept walking.

The path out didn't resist.

Didn't shift.

Didn't misalign.

It didn't need to.

It was already correct.

Corridors held.

Angles stayed true.

Distance resolved.

Everything—

functioned.

But not the same way as before.

The wrongness was gone.

Not fixed.

Not undone.

Removed.

Like a piece of structure had been taken out—  
and the rest had closed around the gap  
without acknowledging it had ever been there.

Mai felt it first.

“It normalized,” she said.

A beat.

“...incorrectly.”

Shammy glanced once across the space—  
not searching—  
checking.

“There’s less here,” she said.

Quiet.

“Something’s missing that shouldn’t be.”

Ace didn’t respond.

She stepped outside.

Night City met them exactly as it had before.

Lights.

Movement.

Noise.

Layered, constant, indifferent.

Nothing reacted.

Nothing shifted.

Nothing marked what had just happened.

Except—

now something that didn’t belong

was inside it.

And the city—

didn't push back.

Mai looked at the skull again.

Still contained.

Still wrong.

Still—

holding something that hadn't resolved.

"This was not random," she said.

A beat.

"It was placed."

Not moved.

Placed.

Ace nodded once.

"Yes."

Flat.

Complete.

Shammy looked back.

Just once.

The building had already dissolved into the rest—

indistinguishable—

unimportant—

like it had never been anything else.

"They knew we'd come," she said.

A pause.

"They needed us to."

That was it.

Ace didn't answer.

Because she already knew.

Not as memory.

Not clearly.

But close enough to recognize.

A step taken—

before it happened.

A choice made—

before it was needed.

Not the first time.

Never the first.

The skull remained still in her hand.

Contained.

Silent.

Unfinished.

And somewhere behind everything—

behind the corridor that repeated—

behind the symbol that aligned—

behind the space that had corrected itself around them—

something had already accounted for this moment

long before they entered it.

Not predicted.

Not calculated.

Placed.

So that when it happened—

it wouldn't matter that it wasn't understood.

Only that it occurred.

Exactly.

Like this.

© 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:chapter6>

Last update: **13/04/2026 07:38**

