

[← Chapter 7](#) | [Index](#) | [Chapter 9 →](#)

---

## Chapter 8: The Memory That Isn't Yours

<!-- Word count: ~4,800 | Target: 4,800 | Anchor: The fragment memory viewed from outside—Ace sees herself in the memory, but she's watching, not living. -> <!-- Emotional Surprise: The fragment memories aren't Ace's. They're transmitted—from the real Vera's death through the construct's programming. -> <!-- POV: Ace | Structural Approach: Memory Flash ->

---

The wooden bird sat in Ace's hand. Half of a whole. Crack running through the center like a wound that wouldn't heal.

She didn't remember it. But her hands did.

The fragment pulsed. Emerald glow flickered at her edges. Shadow-pressure moved through her. Not consciously. Body responding before mind.

---

Night. Base quiet. Mai counting somewhere. Shammy watching doors somewhere. And Ace sat alone with the wooden bird.

Half. The piece. The thing that was supposed to prove something.

But what it proved, Ace didn't know.

---

The fragment memories came without warning. Always had. Smell of burning hair. Violet light. The screaming. The reaching hand.

But this memory was different. This one came when she touched the bird.

Ace closed her eyes. Let the fragment receive.

---

The room appeared. Fire. Heat. The smell of burning.

But Ace wasn't in the memory.

She was watching it.

From outside.

A girl. Child. Maybe seven. Maybe eight. Dark hair. Violet undertones. Eyes that could be Ace's shape or anyone's.

---

The girl was screaming. A name.

“Vera!”

The name echoed through the fire. The girl reached for something. A hand. Another hand reaching back.

But Ace wasn't the one reaching. She was watching. In her own memory, but not her own experience.

---

The memory shifted. Fire grew. Girl was running. The hand she'd been reaching for was gone.

Then the violet light. Brighter than anything. The Blood-Rift. The thing that destroyed everything.

The girl screamed again. Cut off. The light swallowed her.

Ace watched from outside. Her own memory. Not her own experience.

---

And then: the doorframe.

Ace saw it clearly now. A door in the burning room. Smoke pouring through the cracks. A small figure standing on her toes, reaching for the doorknob.

Too small. Always too small.

The doorknob above her head.

She couldn't reach.

Her sister's body on the floor behind her and she couldn't reach the doorknob to call for help. She stood there on her toes, small as she was, and the smoke poured in and her fingers stretched and stretched and the doorknob was right there, right there, and she couldn't—

The fragment released. Ace gasped. Hands shaking. The wooden bird fell to the floor.

The memory wasn't hers.

Watching, not living. Receiving, not remembering.

---

Mai appeared at the doorway. Framework already running. “What happened?”

“The fragment.” Flat. “The memory. Not mine.”

Mai's framework clicked. “What do you mean, not yours?”

“Watching. Not living.” Shadow-pressure stabilized. “The memory came from outside. Someone else's.”

Mai's fingers tapped. One. Two. Three. “Transmitted. Through the fragment. Through the bird.”

"The girl looked like Vera. But younger. A child."

"The real Vera?" Mai ran the probabilities. "The one who died in the Blood-Rift?"

"Maybe." Fragment pulsed. "Or the Vera who's here. Younger. Before."

---

Vera appeared at the threshold. Fingers brushed the doorframe. Grounding.

"You touched the bird." Soft. "The fragment received."

"The memory wasn't mine." Flat. "Watching. Not living. Someone else's memory."

Vera's threshold touch activated. "My memory?"

"I don't know." Fragment quiet now. "The girl looked like you. Younger. A child. She screamed a name."

"What name?"

"Vera." Flat. "She screamed 'Vera.' Someone was calling for her."

Vera's control cracked. "That's... that's my name. But I don't remember that. I don't remember screaming."

"You remember dying." Shadow-pressure flickered. "The fire. Reaching for someone."

"I do." Fingers touching the doorframe. "But I don't remember being called. Being young. I don't remember..."

The fragment pulsed. "The memory came from outside. Someone else's experience. Transmitted through the fragment. Through the bird."

---

Mai's framework ran. Clicked.

"If the fragment is receiving," analytical, "then the source is connected. Same resonance. Someone who died. Someone whose memories are being transmitted."

"The real Vera." Flat. "The one who died in the Blood-Rift."

"Or the construct." Fingers tapping. "If Vera is a construct, someone built her from memories. Real memories. From a real person who died."

Vera's control cracked. "You think someone built me?"

"Probabilities are even." Cold. "Your story has emotional truth but factual gaps. Your handwriting matches Ace's. The fragment is receiving memories that aren't hers."

"And those memories are..." Threshold touch. "Mine? From someone else's death?"

"From the real Vera's death." Framework clicked. "If you're a construct, someone built you from those

---

memories. Real memories. Real person.”

---

Ace's shadow-pressure stabilized. Fragment quiet. Memory faded.

But the question remained.

“If the memories are real,” flat, “then the Vera who died was real. My sister. She screamed for me in the fire.”

“And if the construct is real,” Mai pressed, “then someone built her from those memories. The real Vera's memories. The real Vera's death.”

“So I'm carrying someone else's death.” Flat. “Fragment receives. Bird conducts. Memories come from outside.”

“The question is: who is the Vera standing here?” Framework running. “The real Vera who survived? Or the construct built from her memories?”

---

Vera's control didn't rebuild. Threshold touch activated. Grounding. Grounding.

“I don't know what I am.” Cracked. “I don't know if I'm real. I only know I remember loving someone. I remember dying. Reaching for a hand in the fire.”

“But you don't remember being called.” Shadow-pressure pulsed. “Being young. The village. The day before. Your parents' faces.”

“I don't.” Control broke. “I remember dying. That's all. Dying, and then I woke up. Years later. Alone.”

“That's not a full life.” Mai pressed. “That's a fragment. A piece. Someone took the real Vera's death and built a story around it.”

“Or that's all that's left.” Threshold touch. “Trauma. The fire took everything else.”

“The fire took facts.” Fingers tapping. “But emotional content doesn't survive this cleanly without factual anchors. Not this consistent. That's not trauma. That's construction.”

---

Shammy appeared at the doorway. Pressure shifted. Heavier. Watching.

“She believes it.” Warm. “The pressure around her is real. She believes every word.”

“Belief isn't truth.” Mai pressed.

“No.” Shammy moved closer. “But the question isn't whether she's lying. It's where the memories came from.”

“They came from outside.” Fragment pulsed. “The real Vera's death. The moment she died.”

“So the real Vera existed.” Shammy's presence steadied. “Died in the Blood-Rift. And her memories...”

where did they go?"

"Into the fragment." Framework clicked. "Into the construct. Into someone who received them."

"The real Vera died." Flat. "And the memories of her death transmitted. Through something. To someone."

"To me." Vera's control didn't rebuild. "The memories are in me. But they're not mine. They're hers. The real Vera's. The one who died."

---

The wooden bird lay on the floor. Cracked. Half. The thing that was supposed to prove something.

What it proved was more complicated than blood. More complicated than family.

The memories weren't Ace's. They came from outside. From someone who died. From a moment of death.

The question wasn't what happened to her sister.

The question was whose memories she was carrying.

---

Ace picked up the wooden bird. Fragment pulsed. Shadow-pressure stabilized.

"If the real Vera died," flat, "then the sister I had is dead. The memories I've been receiving are hers. From the moment she died."

"And the Vera standing here?" Mai pressed.

"Carrying those memories." Fragment quiet. "Built from them. Or surviving with them. I don't know which."

"But the memories are real." Vera's control rebuilt slightly. "They came from someone who died. Someone who screamed my name in the fire."

"Someone who screamed 'Vera.'" Flat. "That's the name in the memory. The real Vera's name."

"My name." Threshold touch. "The name I've always had. The name I woke up with."

"Or the name someone gave you." Mai pressed. "When they built you. From the real Vera's memories."

---

The fragment memories weren't Ace's. Transmitted. From someone who died. From the real Vera's death.

And the Vera standing here was carrying those memories. But whether she was the real Vera or a construct built from them, blood or fabrication, was still unknown.

The wooden bird was a conductor. Fragment a receiver. Memories from a moment of death.

---

Whose memories was she carrying?

Ace didn't have an answer. Not yet.

But she knew one thing.

The memory wasn't hers. The grief wasn't hers. The death wasn't hers.

And the Vera standing here, whatever she was, was carrying something that belonged to someone else. Someone who had died reaching for her.

---

Night. Base quiet. Fragment still.

And Ace held the wooden bird. Half of a whole. The thing that was supposed to prove something.

What it proved was that memory was complicated. Blood was complicated.

And the question wasn't going to be answered by holding a piece of wood.

---

<!-- END CHAPTER 8 -->

---

[← Chapter 7](#) | [Index](#) | [Chapter 9](#) [→](#)

© 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

Check out our SubscribeStar page at <https://subscribestar.adult/konrad-k>

From:

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

Permanent link:

<https://datavault.ws/doku.php/novellas:ace-sister-letter:chapter8>

Last update: **23/04/2026 16:18**

