

## Chapter 36

### ### Epilogue - Debrief

The Triad's shared space felt unusually restless.

Not in a bad way.

More like the kind of restlessness that happens when three people are standing a little too close to each other, in a little too good a mood — and all three are very aware of what the others have been up to the past few days. The low lamp light cast everything in warm amber, turning the air thick and golden. Rain had stopped outside, but the windows still carried faint streaks that caught the glow and made the room feel like it was breathing. The faint scent of tea and warm skin lingered, mixing with the quiet hum of the city far below.

Ace was the first to break the silence.

She leaned against the edge of the table, one hip cocked, oversized shirt slipping slightly off one shoulder. She looked from Mai to Shammy and back again, violet eyes dark and glittering with heat, then shook her head slowly, a wicked grin spreading.

“Okay. I’m saying it.”

Mai lifted an eyebrow, silver hair loose and catching the light like liquid mercury. She stepped closer — not quickly, but with deliberate grace — until her body brushed Ace's side, one hand resting lightly on Ace's lower back, fingers tracing a slow, possessive line just above the waistband.

Shammy tilted her head, tall frame leaning against the counter, silver-white hair glowing faintly. Her electric blue eyes moved between them with calm intensity, one long hand sliding to rest on Ace's shoulder, thumb stroking along the exposed skin at the collar of her shirt.

Ace sighed dramatically, but the sound was low and rough as she felt both of them close in, the heat between the three of them crackling like static.

“You two absolutely cheated.”

Mai didn't even attempt to look surprised. Instead she leaned in until her lips brushed Ace's ear, voice velvet and teasing.

“On what exactly?”

Ace spread her hands, but her body stayed pressed between them, hips shifting slightly as Mai's fingers traced higher under the hem of her shirt and Shammy's hand slid down her arm in a slow, heated caress.

“The entire experiment.”

Shammy glanced briefly at Mai, then back to Ace, her tall frame pressing closer from the other side until Ace was deliciously trapped between them. Her voice was calm, but thick with promise.

“Technically speaking,” she said, fingers tracing the line of Ace's collarbone, “no rules were violated.”

Ace snorted, but the sound came out breathless as she felt Shammy's breath against her neck and Mai's hand sliding possessively around her waist.

“Oh please.”

Mai stepped even closer, bodies now flush, her silver hair brushing Ace’s cheek as she looked up at her with dark, knowing eyes.

“Your evaluation process was... remarkably enthusiastic,” Mai observed, thumb stroking slow circles just above Ace’s hip.

Ace narrowed her eyes, but her breath hitched as Shammy’s hand slid lower down her back, the tension between the three of them thick and electric.

“That was a quick field assessment.”

Shammy hummed softly, leaning down until her lips grazed Ace’s temple, voice low and charged.

“Eight and a half.”

Ace spun toward her instantly, but the movement only pressed her harder between them, bodies aligned in heated proximity.

“That number was confidential.”

Mai finally lost the battle with her composure.

A quiet, husky laugh escaped her as she pulled Ace flush against her front, arms wrapping around her waist with clear possession.

Ace noticed immediately, eyes darkening as she felt both of them surrounding her.

“Oh no,” she said, pointing accusingly, but her voice was rough with heat, “You don’t get to laugh.”

Mai smiled, dangerous and warm, pressing a slow kiss just below Ace’s ear while Shammy’s hand slid up her side in a lingering caress.

“I’m not laughing,” she said, lips brushing skin.

“Liar.”

Shammy stepped fully between them — though not in any real attempt to separate. She simply rested both hands on Ace’s hips, pulling her back against her tall frame while Mai pressed forward, trapping Ace in delicious, charged warmth.

“Observation,” she said calmly, but her voice was thick as her fingers dug gently into Ace’s hips, pulling her closer.

Ace groaned, head falling back against Shammy’s shoulder as Mai’s lips found her throat.

“Of course it’s an observation.”

Shammy looked at Ace.

Then at Mai.

Then back to Ace again, her tall body flush against Ace’s back, one hand sliding up to cup her jaw

while Mai's fingers traced teasing patterns across her stomach.

"All three of you appear to have acquired a noticeable increase in kinetic energy."

Ace blinked, breath short as she felt both of them pressed against her.

"...what."

Shammy tilted her head slightly, lips brushing Ace's ear, voice low and heated.

"A spring in your step."

Mai finally lost the battle with her composure completely.

A quiet, throaty laugh escaped her as she pulled Ace's hips against hers, the three of them tangled in warm, charged closeness.

Ace immediately pointed at her, but the gesture dissolved into her grabbing Mai's shirt and pulling her closer.

"You started this."

Mai smiled, dark and hungry, pressing fully against her.

"Did I?"

Ace turned to Shammy, voice rough.

"Don't encourage her."

Shammy appeared to genuinely consider that, but her hands stayed possessive on Ace's body, pulling her back harder against her while Mai pressed forward.

"Encouragement may already be statistically unnecessary."

Ace snorted again — but this time she didn't bother arguing.

Instead she simply pulled both of them closer, arms wrapping around Mai while Shammy's tall frame enveloped her from behind — bodies pressed tight, hands roaming in heated, suggestive touches, breaths mingling, laughter and low, charged whispers interrupting half-finished sentences.

Ace rested her forehead briefly against Mai's, voice husky.

"So," she said quietly, hips shifting against both of them.

Mai lifted her gaze, silver-blue eyes dark with heat.

"So."

Ace glanced at Shammy, who was pressed fully against her back, lips brushing her neck.

"Worth the experiment?"

Shammy considered the question, her hands sliding slowly down Ace's sides as she held her between them.

“Empirically speaking,” she said at last, voice low and warm against Ace’s skin, “the results were conclusive.”

Mai nodded softly, pressing a lingering kiss to Ace’s collarbone.

“Very.”

Ace smiled, dark and satisfied, pulling them both impossibly closer.

“Good.”

Shammy drew them both slightly closer, the three of them tangled in warm, heated closeness — bodies pressed together, hands exploring with suggestive intent, the air thick with tension and affection.

“However,” she added, lips brushing Ace’s ear.

Ace groaned immediately, but the sound was low and pleased as she felt both of them against her.

“There it is.”

Shammy smiled, pulling them tighter.

“Further experimentation may still be required.”

Mai glanced at Ace, silver-blue eyes burning.

Ace glanced back, violet eyes dark with heat.

Then all three of them started laughing — low, breathless, charged laughter that filled the room with promise.

Far from that moment, in a place that belonged neither to time nor to space, two observers watched the same scene.

Mephisto leaned back.

“Well,” he said.

Konrad did not answer immediately.

Mephisto glanced sideways at him.

“You predicted this.”

Konrad nodded once.

“Of course.”

Mephisto sighed.

“I hate when you’re right.”

Konrad watched the Triad for another moment.

“They were always going to stabilize.”

Mephisto chuckled quietly.

“Still.”

A small grin crossed his face.

“That was entertaining.”

Konrad did not disagree.

The Triad knew nothing about the wager.

And it didn't matter.

Ace leaned back slightly, arms still loosely around the other two, bodies pressed close and warm.

“You know what the best part of this whole thing was?” she said, voice husky.

Mai looked at her, silver-blue eyes dark with promise.

“Coming home?”

Ace smiled, pulling them both tighter against her.

“Exactly.”

Shammy pulled them both a little closer, the three of them tangled together in heated, intimate closeness.

Outside, the world continued moving.

Inside, the Triad laughed at one more joke.

And this time, all three of them very clearly had a new spring in their step.

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