

Black File — Interlude: “Mai’s Protocol IV — Load Distribution”



The table was full again.

That was expected.

What wasn't—
was how little it mattered.

Shammy didn't even slow down this time.

“...no.”

Mai:

“Yes.”

Ace was already seated.

Grouse took position across from her.

Badger looked at the table.

Then at Mai.

Then at everyone else.

“...I don’t like this one.”

HeavenlyFather:

“...you won’t.”

Mai placed the food.

Not equal.

Not assigned.

A shared pool.

Shammy blinked.

“...what are we looking at.”

Mai:

“Distributed load.”

Badger:

“...that sounds illegal.”

Mai placed the device.

No timer this time.

That was worse.



“Rule,” Mai said.

Silence.

“The total must be consumed.”

A beat.

“You decide who eats next.”

Silence.

Badger:

“...no.”

Mai:

“Yes.”

Shammy:

“Absolutely not.”

Mai:

“Required.”

Ace:

“Eat.”



First move.

No one moved.

Badger pointed.

“YOU go.”

At Grouse.

Grouse:

“Accepted.”

He ate.



Second move.

Grouse looked at Ace.

“...you.”

Ace:

“Confirmed.”

She ate.



Third move.

Ace looked at Badger.

"...you."

Badger froze.

"...betrayal."

He ate.

Regret immediate.

"...why did I agree to this."



Fourth move.

Badger pointed at Shammy.

"YOU'RE UP."

Shammy:

“NO.”

Mai:

“Non-compliance invalidates participation.”

Shammy stared.

“...fine.”

She ate.

“...this is manipulation.”

Mai:

“Yes.”

⚖

Fifth move.

Shammy pointed at Mai.

“...you.”

Mai:

“Accepted.”

She ate.

No reaction.



Sixth move.

Mai pointed at Badger.

Badger:

“NO—NO—ABSOLUTELY NOT—”

Mai:

“Assigned.”

Badger ate.

“...this is targeted.”



Seventh move.

The pattern broke.

Everyone started choosing—

strategically.

Badger pointed at Ace.

Ace:

“Confirmed.”

She ate.

No hesitation.

⚖

Eighth move.

Ace pointed at Shammy.

Shammy:

“...I hate you.”

She ate.

⚖

Ninth move.

Shammy pointed at Badger.

Badger:

“STOP PICKING ME”

He ate.

“...this is bullying.”

HeavenlyFather:

“...this is consequence.”

⚖

Tenth move.

Grouse observed.

Calculated.

He pointed at Mai.

“...optimal.”

Mai ate.

⚖

Midpoint.

The food remained.

But now—

everyone was watching each other.

Not the table.



Badger snapped.

“OKAY—NEW RULE—I PICK MYSELF”

Mai:

“Invalid.”

Badger:

“THIS SYSTEM IS BROKEN”

Mai:

“No.”



Shammy slowed.

“...I’m not doing another one.”

Mai:

“You will.”

Shammy:

“...I won’t.”

Ace looked at her.

“...you will.”

Shammy sighed.

“...I hate all of you.”

She ate.

☺

Late phase.

The choices got sharper.

Badger stopped picking randomly.

Started targeting.

Grouse.

“...you.”

Grouse:

“Accepted.”

He ate.

No hesitation.

♁

Ace waited.

Watched.

Then pointed—

Badger.

“...you.”

Badger:

“OF COURSE IT’S ME”

He ate.

“...this is personal now.”



Final phase.

Only a few portions left.

Everyone slowed.

No one wanted the next pick.



Mai spoke.

“Completion required.”

Silence.



Grouse moved first.

He pointed at himself.

“...accepted.”

He ate.

Badger:

“...that was illegal.”

Mai:

“Within rules.”

⚖

Last portion.

Silence.

Everyone looked—

not at the food—

but at each other.

⚖

Ace pointed.

"...Grouse."

Silence.

Grouse looked at the portion.

Then at Ace.

A beat.

"...accepted."

He ate.

Finished.

□ Outcome

Mai:

"Load completed."

Badger:

"THIS WAS WAR"

Shammy leaned back.

"...this was worse than all of them."

HeavenlyFather:

“...yes.”

Grouse nodded once.

“...optimal distribution.”

Ace:

“Effective.”

□ Epilogue

Later.

Empty table.

No leftovers.

Shammy:

“...I feel manipulated.”

Badger:

“I WAS TARGETED”

Mai:

“System functioned.”

Ace walked past.

Paused.

“...inefficient.”

Mai:

“Yes.”

A beat.

“Effective.”

Grouse stood still.

“...balanced.”

Ace nodded once.

“...noted.”

And moved on.

Because sometimes—

it isn't the food—

It's who decides

who carries it.

End.

© 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/foodwars:mai_protocol_iv_load_distribution

Last update: **11/04/2026 17:44**

