

DON'T KILL YOURSELF

The snow never stopped falling, each footstep a heavy trudge through the building snowpiles everywhere. The pallid light of the night barely cast its glow upon the white cover across the city. The calm was tepid, faint sounds of life and death echoing throughout the environment as Nyx, Yan, and January marched through it. The android took point, its mechanical limbs mostly indifferent to the snow as it cut their path along, easing the work required by the other two. They both clung to themselves tightly, fighting hard against the frigidity enveloping them. They were far from underdressed, Nyx with her insulated longcoat and Yan with the Arctic Pararescue uniform, knowing full well that the coming days would be frigid and to prepare for the worst long before Leroux Medical deployed relief teams. Even still, their pitiful rest only stanchied their fatigue in small measures.

"Nyx..." Yan spoke lowly, face shielded by the deployable wind guard that hid in his helmet.

"Yeah?" She answered back, slightly turning as they marched on.

"Why... Won't December protect anyone else?"

"I- I said before, my brother programmed it that way. He didn't want it to ever leave me open to risk... Ever."

January's helmet turned back just slightly, as if listening more intently to their words like it didn't hear all of it clear as day.

"Then why the Hell doesn't he make more? I mean- With a thing like that Jesus fuckin' Christ we'd all still be... Suse and Kara would..." His words trailed off, the hollowing ache returning to his chest.

"Because... December is a weapon. Its sole purpose is to kill- To annihilate completely. Aside from the fact it's **literally** nuclear powered, it's... Nearly to the same scale as the weapon that ended the Second World War."

"But he- That thing **teleports**! It's so fast it- God it could've- It killed the scavs in..." Yan's words began to trail off as he struggled. Flashes of alternate realities, of better outcomes, of lives lived longer ran through his head.

"Because I didn't have a choice!" She pleaded, turning back with traces of frustration in her eyes.

"Neither did they!"

"Because the reason December exists is because I *died*!" She stopped dead, turning back to face him. Her eyes were wide, breath haggard. "I've nearly been executed, had my skull fractured with sledgehammers, kidnapped, nearly *raped*! The reason I have these markings on my face is because someone threw a bomb at my face and it took my hand and blew half my face off! I tried to save the girl who was in the way! Every-" She choked. "Every single time I've been hurt- It's because I was trying to protect someone! My squadmates, a kid on the street, my family, my team-" Her hands were held in front of her, clutching at nothing as her very soul poured out from her. "Because I try- And try, and try and fucking try! I try to make sure no one dies, even people that have tried to kill me already! I *have* killed people! That night was the worst night of my life, hiding in a pile of bodies so I wouldn't be gunned down only for them to move on and *murder a child!* Because there are some people in this world that are PURE. EVIL. Vile, malice-ridden, evil incarnate!" Her hand snatched outward towards the skyscrapers, pointing upward. "And they've won! They got the world they wanted, a world bled dry all in the name of money and power! A vampire would be appalled at the level of subjugation and blood-sucking that runs the world now! I try to stick to my morals and never raise my hand against another, to craft a world that is good and true to itself! To make men realize that life is sacred and beautiful, and that collecting such power, or causing such harm is unnecessary and pointless but I KEEP! GETTING! PROVEN! WRONG!" She screamed, her cries bouncing off the empty city streets in a dim cascade of echoes as frosted tears streaked her fur. "Yan I am sorry! I am so- Soul-crushingly sorry! I've brought you along into this Hell with the desperate hope that we could all escape it- That I could at least save others and live to see tomorrow but the city around us is just DEATH! I've turned to manipulating December's protective protocols so that it would try and save-" Again, her voice cracked. "To save anyone! Not only have I failed at that I just- I feel like that vow is broken... Just because I didn't pull a trigger doesn't mean I didn't-"

She was interrupted as her entire body was snatched up, Yan snaring her as tight as he possibly could in a hug. "Shut- Shut up- Nyx," He spoke softly to her, just past her ear. "I took this job because I wanted to do the same- To help people. To save others, knowing full well that there was a risk of losing my life in the process- Especially now, the past few days..."

They both swayed gently, a faint windy silence drifting between them. January remained ahead, turning back to watch them both, the pearlescent visor cracked and scattered with faint prismatic in the moonlight.

"We're just fucked, like that, Nyx... We're both idiots that chose to go at life the hardest, to help others without ever taking the time to help ourselves..." He slackened, staring into her eyes as they welled with tears. His voice remained quiet, soft, hoarse from ache. "But as long as there's one other person out there willing to do the same, it'll all work out. The fact you're like... What, fifty-something? And had this fucked up of a life means... Means you're running positive. None of that happened to you because of some divine judgement or a cruel author of fate or... Some other destiny-type crap- You kept going because there *were* others you would fight for, that you would wake up the next day and do it again. And there will always be someone until the world stops turning... And despite how slow it's spinning tonight, I know it will still be here when the sun comes up."

She stared into his auburn eyes, beneath the polymer visor shielding them from the elements, and saw a look she had never seen before. She had a dawning realization, like something she had never understood in her half century of life.

It was *her* eyes. The look of care, of sorrow, of comfort she had given to countless others across the world and throughout her life. The look of someone who would never give up until their heart was stayed forever. Of someone who truly, truly believed every word they just said.

"It's love, Nyx. It's love for the whole world, for everything on it."

She clenched her eyes shut, the tears clinging to her eyelids running free as she let her head fall forward, lightly bumping against Yan's head. "Thank you..." She sniffled. "Thank you Yan..." Her claws barely dug into

his clothing, clutching at someone she never wanted to let go of. Eventually, she relented, standing still in front of him. She jumped slightly, feeling a hand on her shoulder from behind. She turned back, watching as her damaged android looked at her, silently with its hand on her shoulder.

January nodded, just so, like it repeated every word Yan had just said without a single syllable.

Her lip, her chest, her heart trembled as she shook her head, casting the tears away with another sniffle. "Thank you- I mean it." She opened them, looking back out to their path, to their continuing journey ahead. January took its hand from her, and Yan let her go. Without another word, without a sound for a long while, they kept going. They cut through the snow, beneath eaves and across alleyways. They watched as the displaced flitted about like lost animals picking through the trash, and hid from menacing figures stepping through the night with arms and armor. Distant gunfire still pockmarked the night, the occasional explosion or deep boom shaking snow from roofs throughout.

Their ultimate destination was out from the core of the fray, out from the fringes of warfare and into steadier ground. This war wasn't over territory, only power and influence. There were no borders to be redrawn or thrones to claim. As a result, there would be no reason for it to spill out into the residences, where buildings scarcely crossed twenty stories. The things at stake were multi-trillion dollar corps and technologies, not low income housing and single families.

"...Wonder what caused this blackout?" Yan mused, breaking the silence after eons.

"You mean the power or communications?" She asked in return.

"Both. I mean- The power's not too hard to imagine- Some dickhead lobbed a bomb at a power station or something and just-" He snapped his fingers. "Knocked the lights out. But the comms staying down is... The freaky part, to me."

She nodded.

"I've never felt so isolated- Like the size of the world just expanded to a galaxy... Never felt anything like it before."

She chuckled lightly. "It is strange... Were it not for the threat of death everywhere... It would be almost peaceful, if not still slightly haunting. If I had to guess?" She looked up, into a night sky that had been hidden beneath the pollution of light for so long she nearly forgot what it looked like. "Someone destroyed a few satellites... Broke up the already overloaded comm array over this part of the country and worked away in the dark."

"...Christ. Throwing missiles out into space just to keep people from using phones..."

She nodded again, then sighed. "I've been keeping an eye to the sky in the vain hope I might see a plane- A friendly one. For my brother to come swooping down from the sky in an AV and rescue us from this nightmare... I can't imagine how terrified he is."

"Mhmm..." Yan nodded, idly leaning down to drag his fingers through the snow. "How long can he stay up there? Hasn't it been- I mean I don't know how much fuel a plane can carry but surely it's not *that* much?"

"No, he's surely landed to refuel at some point... Or done a mid-flight refuel, and never left the skies. I'm sure he's running his entire team ragged just to track me down."

"...I was going to ask why you don't just shoot a flare up or something but... Then realized how that would probably just attract more trouble."

"Mhmm..." She mirrored him. "If... We find somewhere with power, I want to try and get a signal out- *Something* to get word out to him."

"You gonna build a radio tower or something?"

She snickered, "No, sadly I don't know how to do that... *Wait.*" She looked outward, a dawning realization hitting her. "If we can find somewhere with enough power- A junction station or something- We might be able to rig something up to shoot an SOS signal up into the sky."

"What like- Flick the switch on and off? Is... Is that safe?"

"No not at all- But it's an option."

Yan laughed, already agreeing to her plan.

Nyx gave a few orders to January, to keep an eye out for heat, to use infrared to sniff out even the faintest trace of power running through

a line somewhere as they continued their journey through the blizzard. They looked for lights, for heat, for changes in static that would indicate some sign of life. Time stretched on, a second wind cracking through their exhaustion as they drifted across the city like paper caught in a breeze. Nyx knew that the metro area of the city would have the power stations, given how huge, unsightly, and cumbersome they were, the power companies could find no better place to put them than right on top of the poor's laps.

The tops of the buildings began to slowly sink down, revealing just a bit more of the sky as they went. Yan remarked how he'd never seen it like this before, so many stars, even the halo of the Milky Way stretched across the winter sky.

"Kind of a comforting smallness, I think," He spoke, neck craned upward as they walked. "I know a lot of people are freaked out by space but... I dunno, it kinda does the opposite for me. The universe is so big and I'm so nothing- Who cares if I get it wrong or make a mistake? It'll all keep going, and I'm just here to see as much of it as I can."

Nyx hummed happily. "I like that philosophy... The universe experiencing itself, a fluke amongst the stars, just doing what it can..."

They both kept their gaze upward, pace slowing. They let themselves that moment of peace, of contemplation and solace. The tone of the empty city changed, from that of a graveyard to an entire world with just the two of them, **just** for them.

"Sometimes..." Nyx spoke. "I wonder what it would be like to drift endlessly up there. To wash across the nebulae, to watch small universes live and die, and their dust to drift to another. Just a silent spectator, watching the universe breathe."

Yan chuckled. "Being a spectating god huh? Maybe that's where he went."

She smiled, shaking her head. "A long, painful vacation away from their little science experiment."

January's head turned, upwards then away as it followed a line. Its visor flickered, like the sight of a bloodhound catching a scent. It turned back to Nyx and Yan, beckoning them on as it picked up its pace.

"Oh shit- Whatcha got boy?" Yan joked, jogging along.

"*Power.*" Nyx said with confidence.

They went for two more blocks, before they turned a corner and finally saw it. Wires, ceramic insulators, transformers, and junction boxes all rigged up at the very edge of the city like a metal tumor keeping it alive. It was a desolate place, not even litter or the remnants of a homeless encampment remained in it. January walked carefully, scanning around it so as to not accidentally arc off of something and flash fry them all. As it followed a line, it looked down to a large junction box in the center of the array. Nyx followed in, reaching the box. It was huge, about the size of a freight container with few obvious markings other than electrical hazard warnings all over it. January carefully popped one of the doors open, letting them all peer inside.

"Do you... Know anything about electricity, Yan?"

"I replaced an outlet in my apartment once."

She snickered, shaking her head. "*Thanks, Yan.*"

He chuckled, shrugging. "Hey- You're the one with a doctorate."

"In *biomechanical engineering, not electrical engineering.*" She looked around, searching through for anything obvious like a massive breaker, or a cartoonishly large switch. "If we made it this far just to accidentally die to arc flash... I'm going to be livid."

"Well then don't go flipping switches to find out what they do."

Hearing enough of the two vastly underqualified electricians, January gently nudged them both out of the way, scanning through the interior of the panel, before moving on to the next, then all the way down the line. Once it came to the final panel at the end, it opened it up to reveal a set of immensely thick metal bars, resting at the bottom of the enclosure. Just above them was an equally large pair of electrodes. The ends of the metal bars had round wear marks pressed into them, the faint signs of wear from electrical connection and disconnection.

"...Is that a breaker?" Yan asked.

January chirped in the affirmative.

"...does it have power?"

The same chirp came from the android. Yan and Nyx both smiled, standing up just slightly taller.

"This is it. I doubt this will restore power to the rest of the city but... It'll at least let us make a signal," Nyx said.

"Well, as long as doing that doesn't make it blow up."

"Power flickers all the time, I'm sure they're built... To..." Her words trailed off, a creeping thought reaching up to her. "Withstand worse... Something just occurred to me- This is cutting off power to a section of the city for a tactical advantage like we talked about, but it's undamaged. Nothing's been detonated and there aren't any bullet holes in it. Someone manually shut this off."

Yan's body language changed, the same thought as Nyx's flooding into his head. "Someone targeted this thing and shut it off themselves, and the odds are good they're watching it-"

January snatched backwards, looking out from where they had come in with a loud chirp just before a searing light bathed them all and robbed them of their vision. They both instinctively raised their hands up to shield their eyes.

"Don't move. Step back from the transformer," Came a calm, level voice. It was gruff, present, and professional. Through just sound, it didn't seem like an errant scav trying to rob them, or a crazed bandit looking to cause havoc. It was a pro, whoever it was. Whoever *they* were. Nyx glanced down, still completely unable to see past her hand against the sunlight scorching her retinas. Her shadow split in multiple places behind her. Multiple sources of light. Multiple people. "Step. Forward." It came again, the final warning engraved in his words.

Nyx and Yan did as they were told, January refraining from movement, for just a moment. Nyx spoke first. "Who-"

"Do not talk." The man barked.

Nyx barely cracked her fingers, letting a sliver of light cut through to her cybernetic. Subtly, it dropped its exposure as low as it possibly could, reducing the photonic flood to singular pinpricks with silhouettes standing behind them. There were maybe two dozen men, dressed in some kind of armor. They all had weapons, and they were all pointing at them.

She tried her luck again. "We're just medics- We need power to be able to-"

"You've violated the black zone, and were just in the process of interfering with peacekeeping operations by trying to restore power to insurgent groups."

"Insurgent-! We don't even-!" She protested.

"You will be taken in for questioning and summary judgement. If you come quietly, we will assure your safe transport."

Nyx could swear, just behind the talking man, she saw a smirk form on the darkened face of the man behind him. It was a lie, all of it. This was not a time of trials and tribunals, only faux charges and subsequent execution. She glanced to her side, eyes flicking to Yan.

Quiet, contempt riddled rage built upon his face. *They were so close*, he thought, *only for these cocksuckers to steal it all from them.*

"Tell your droid to step away from the breaker. Now."

"Listen here you cocksucking piECE OF SHIT!" Yan broke into a scream. "We did not crawl our way out of this blood soaked hellhole just to have you CORPORATE! FUCKING! COWARDS! TAKE IT ALL AWAY!" His voice rang out through the dwindling edges of the city, the quiet solace subsumed by firm tension.

Nyx's shoulders tensed, feeling the air change. It was a feeling that kept cropping up time after time over the night.

It was the feeling she got when she knew someone was about to die.

"Yan- Don't-" She pleaded.

"Five. Four-" The man counted.

She saw the blinding lights adjust, focusing more tightly on them. They were putting them more firmly in their sights.

"Three-"

"BURN IN HELL!" Yan screamed, throwing his arms down and lunging forward.

Time dragged to a crawl, the second hand of the clock caught in a sludge of chronology.

She heard the crack of thunder.

She saw a muzzle flash.

She felt a roar of heat flash out from behind her.

The shimmer.

The shape.
The bolt of lightning.
The-



January crashed its arm across the contacts, turning its entire body into a circuit for a city's power grid. The flywheel in its core spun to far beyond hypersonic speeds almost instantly. The overwhelming and unending power designed to sustain hundreds of thousands coursed through the lone android, the sound of the flywheel screaming like a jet engine about to rip itself apart.

The emergency overload protection made only for the GT-1 prototypes was stressed to its entropic limit. It was designed to allow the androids to harvest power from anywhere at any time and extend their duty nearly infinitely as long as there was power nearby. It was incredibly overbuilt, and so immensely maintenance heavy and costly that it never made it past the original four. In the event the power gained was too much, the generator overspun to shed the power.

The GTs also had an emergency function to not detonate from overcharge.

Move as fast as possible, and utilize every single system available.
Deplete the power, or melt down.

A forbidden option, triggered only a few times in times of ultimate peril.

OVERLOAD

Only four robots were ever created with such a capability.

March.

April.

November.

January.

The snowflakes drifting down through the air stood still, hung in place forevermore. January tilted its helmet, steering its visor to the Shimmer that stood behind and beside Nyx. The air around its mid-emergence hand was illuminated, plasma beginning to crackle around the edges of its horrid weapon. As January moved its head, the air around it bent, a shockwave forming against the standstill-point-in-time the white droid occupied. It took a step, the fronts of its legs moving each particle of stuck-air out of the way like it was gelatin. It stepped again, and again, and on until it reached the spear. The stiffened movements, the locked up servos in January's body seemed to all snap loose from the shock now put through them.

December was still moving.

January sprinted forward, as if it and the Black Android were the only things able to move in this stopped point in time. The spear flew from its hand. January chased it down. It had just flown past Nyx, the lightning surging with it creating a red haze that bathed the substation. In its sprint, January jammed a fist beneath its point near the end of the shaft, destabilizing its flight and sending it spiraling between Nyx and Yan's captors. The red visored android turned its own visor to January, an unreadable, calculating look that only another android would have understood.

Rage.

The muzzle flashes emerging from a few of the men were the starting line for their projectiles, some of them headed for Nyx, others headed for Yan, and the remainder for where January once was. The faces of its chassis began to glow, the remnants of the white ceramic armor glowing brighter, as if they became pure light. The speed of the GT1 crashing through the air was like a spacecraft experiencing re-entry, the force and friction of the air superheating it quickly. In a deft motion, January carefully took Yan in its arms, carefully moving and placing him in such a way to avoid the path of the round. It did the same to Nyx, so gently and precisely that they would simply fly into the snowbanks piling up at the edges of the brick wall surrounding the substation. It would hurt, and possibly knock them out, but they would be okay.

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She was sent careening into the snowbank so fast, with a flash of light and a deafening crack she thought that was it. She died. That it stuck this time, and that it was all over. The thought was quickly overrun with the overwhelming symphony of light and sound blasting her senses like a lightning storm taking place ten feet away. Raucous gunfire ripped the night apart, along with the sound of thunderclaps happening so fast it may well have been the drumbeats of a war god. Her slightly concussed vision gathered itself, her cybernetic recalibrating as fast as it could to the sight ahead of her.

She watched as the lights, the men behind them, were all thrown about. Two APCs quickly sped into position, only to be smashed in the side by a shooting star. They flipped over their sides, rolling two or three times before stopping on their lids, the multi-ton machines upended like a turtle rolled onto its back. Her mouth hung open in awe, the searing light of the spotlights replaced with a bright white trail of plasma and jetfire ricocheting between each and every individual holding them hostage.

They crashed into walls, skidded across asphalt, or were flung straight through snowbanks. The light looked like a pirouette, so many spins, twists, and leaps that all looked like nanosecond course corrections. She had watched as December moved straight through its targets, leaving nothing behind but bloody mist. When January bolted from place to place, the men were flung, displaced, shoved, all far out of the way and into something hard, but less lethal. Her gaze broke from the scene ahead, and off to her side where Yan had been standing. Opposed from her on the opposite side of the enclosure, he too was half buried in a snowbank, hand clutched to his head and staring forward in dumbstruck awe. Her senses gathered, breaking themselves loose from their trance as she shouted.

"YAN!"

He snapped out of it, head bolting to Nyx's cry.

"MOVE! NOW!" She said, scrambling to her feet on the icy ground. She bolted backwards, back to the junction box where January once stood. Her hands snatched around the massive red lever, heaving her

entire body weight into the immense thing. Only a second later, Yan locked on as well, both of them throwing themselves downward to overcome the massive spring holding the breaker open. With a great cry, it snapped downward, the heavy metal breaker inside snapping upward with a great crash. Sparks flew out from the open box like an electric dragon breathing fire into the space ahead of them. They heard everything, fans, power units, the great hum of power and electricity roar to life as the substation flooded the city section with life.

Block by block, lights returned to the ghostly buildings. Streetlights tick on one by one, and the pale blue light of the snow is bathed in a warm amber glow. Yan's eyes were transfixed, like he just watched life be breathed into nothing. Nyx gazed on as well, before her head snapped back down to the scene ahead. She gasped.

"Jan- JANUARY!" She shouted.

The trail of white had slowed, no longer a formless thing bouncing from position to position, but a metal chassis glowing a bright white from unyielding heat. All of the snow around it had melted into water, some of it already steaming away. The men that had once held them all hostage were laying across the ground, faces to the sky, some crawling, the sound of groaning barely leaving their mouths. Limbs were facing the wrong directions, and clothing was ripped and torn from either road rash or raw heat. The glowing shape stumbled, skidding across the ground in a pathetic crash.

Nyx darted ahead, leaving behind the junction box as she ran towards January's glowing body. At their side, further down the street and near the outermost edges of the city, the eternal void of black had shifted to blue, with traces of deep orange surrounding it in a halo. The android bathed in white continued to glow, trying to push itself up from the ground. It struggled to get its knee beneath itself, only able to manage that before its arm gave out. January's left arm hung limply at its side, the metal throughout sagging and deforming. It scraped across the ground, heaving its right arm up to its knee. She ran to the side, panicked, grabbing armfuls of snow and throwing it at the droid. It sublimated to steam before it even reached its frame, violent puffs of gas jetting out from the failed attempt at cooling.

She gritted her teeth, trying to think of some desperate way to cool it down, before it beckoned her.

It knelt on the ground, one hand across its knee, its head bowed, like a knight surrendering itself to its queen. Nyx's breath caught, clasping her hands to her face.

"January- January no no no don't do this- You don't have to-"

It looked up, each degree of movement more strenuous than the last. Its visor met her gaze as the white faded into orange, the outer extremities of its body cooled from a deep red to a dull gray. Steam roiled all across its frame, the sound of contracting and cracking metal tinkling through the street. Its gaze didn't falter, forever locked on to Nyx's face.

The sun finally cracked the horizon, beams of blinding orange light sprinting across the ground, into January's back and on to Nyx's face. Her cybernetic flickered, a message sent to her personal link.

"P R O T E C T L I F E ."

"P R O T E C T Y O U R S E L F ."

"Y O U A R E W O R T H S A V I N G ."

The words hung in the space in front of her, like the epitaph on a gravestone. Yan stepped forward taking his helmet off. He stood, silent, looking down at January's gray chassis. The reds, the whites, all the color from its armor and body were scorched black and gray, rainbows of purple blue and yellow in its joints as the titanium fused to itself. Its shattered white visor was a cloudy gray, the edges stained with soot and carbon. Yan didn't speak, not completely sure how January did what it did, but fully understanding why. He wrapped his arms around Nyx as again as she stifled a cry, pressing his forehead to hers, breathing heavy and shoulders tense. She responded by wrapping her hands around his head, clenching her eyes shut tight as tears fell from the corners.

The winter sunrise draped around them, gilding the fused chassis of the last GT-1 ever made, the one made especially to protect Nyx in the early years of her strife, and around her and Yan. The only two survivors of their team, the woman who struggled to save everyone, and the man who stuck with her no matter what Hell opened up beneath them.

The distant sky let go of a new sound, something they had both nearly forgotten through their eternal night. A chorus of jet engines ripped the air apart, a squadron of VTOL aircraft diverting fast and hard, pulling down towards the ground with the urgency of a life or death rescue. They were clad in black and red, a thin stripe of white running across them.

LAROCHE ROBOTICS emblazoned along their sides.

One, three, five aircraft all touched down at once along the street, jet engines blowing the snow out of the way as their doors opened up. From the centermost, a blue blur shot out from the gate as soon as it could fit through the opening. November came to a controlled skid just behind the two, its cobalt blue and ivory white chassis glinting in the sunlight, highlighting its own fair share of battle damage. It quickly scanned the surroundings, its sapphire visor flickering and flashing as it took in the scene. The incapacitated men, the melted snow, Nyx and Yan clinging to each other, and the smoldering form of its brother.

November looked to Nyx, holding its hands in parade rest behind its back.

It chirped.

From the same aircraft that released November, another goat man came sprinting out of it, moving at superhuman speeds for a man in his fifties. Her brother's boots crashed across the concrete, his own sapphire eyes glowing in the sunrise.

"NYYYYYYX!" He screamed, closing the gap in no time.

He didn't slow down, nor make it graceful. He crashed into his sister, arms wrapping around her with the force of someone who had been awake all night, scouring every block, every ruin, every shadow for a sign she was still alive. Someone who had only found her because January lit the sky like a dying star and the city suddenly surged to life around it in an instant, desperate flare.

Nyx collapsed into him, Yan taking a step back from the moment.

Nix peeled himself off of her, staring into her eyes, tears falling from his as a smile that once carried grief was stricken from his face. "I- Oh my god you're okay- I'm so glad you- I-" He sniffled, trying his best to

keep himself composed. He tried to divert attention from his inevitable ugly-crying, looking at Yan. He cleared his throat. "And- And you uh..."

"Yan. Yan Hayamoto, Leroux Pararescue..." He answered almost sheepishly, like he was giving name rank and serial number to a commanding officer.

Nyx smiled softly, lip trembling ever so. "He was with me through it all... Through..." The hours upon hours of pain and torment crept at the edges of her voice, "Everything."

Nix looked from her, back to Yan. He let his sister go, straightening himself up and trying desperately to regain his professionalism. The tightness in his lips and cheeks made it clear he was still struggling to not cry. "Pleasure to meet you, Mister Hayamoto." He said, extending his hand and shaking it firmly.

"Hey the uh... Pleasure's all mine- I mean- She's uh- Well-" He stammered.

"Oh fuck this-" Nix blurted out, snatching Yan up in a hug. "Thank you. Thank you for keeping her safe. For keeping her alive- For- God I don't even know what you did but thank you for all of it."

Yan was surprised for a moment, before he smiled and gave the mess of a man a firm pat on the back.

Nyx looked on with a quiet smile to the other two, before looking off to her side, to November, into the sunset.

November stood vigil beside January's body, visor dimming low as the sunlight bathed its sapphire surface in a reflection of the blue and orange sunrise. The sun climbed higher, bathing the street in gold. The cobalt droid knelt down beside January, reaching its hand to its helmet and placing it there for a few long moments. Then, it stood, walking back to face Nyx. Its visor flickered, its inbuilt screen flashing white, with text flashing across it.



Protect life.
Protect yourself.
You are worth saving.