**Chapter 2**

Newbie was glad she’d gotten the shaking to stop, holding the cup of tea that Medbie had made for her, for them all, really, a little glad that it hadn’t *just* been her that’d been… *shaken*. She felt ashamed, both at losing her composure like that, as Barbies *didn’t*, and at feeling better at someone *else’s* pain, as the others were similarly uncomposed, but buried that feeling and took another sip of her tea, looking around the main room.

Everyone was here, in their armor, except for their helmets, none of them wanting to be *alone*, which was something Newbie was glad for, since *she didn’t want to be either.* “So,” she commented, just to fill the silence, “*that’s* why we need Kens.”

Everyone turned to stare at her.

Then *erupted* into laughter.

Not… happy laughter, but uncontrolled, almost *manic*, several of them crying as they did so, even the unflappable Capbie chuckling, while Newbie just stared at the others, confused, and a little hurt, as she *hadn’t been joking.*

“Oh, that *good* one, Newbie,” Shotbie sighed, wiping her eyes, grinning broadly.

“That… That Ken *wasn’t* a Ken,” Snipebie remarked, quietly, though the woman *always* was. “That was an *Agent.*”

Newbie frowned, checking, “You mean like the ones we save?”

“Yes,-” Medbie started to answer, as, beside her, Shotbie stated, “No,-”

Both turned to look at each other, frowning, but Capbie stepped into the conversation, before they could say anything else, “We save the Agents who are *failures*, not the successful ones.”

“Oh,” the youngest woman blinked, connecting the dots. “So… he *wants* to be here?”

Boombie snorted, “Kens never *want* to be here. Didn’t ya hear him, Newbie? He’s here to ‘pay off his debt’. Soon as he does that, he’s *gone*. So don’t get too attached.”

“Perhaps,” Shotbie disagreed mildly, ignoring the yellow-armored woman’s glare. “Perhaps-” the older woman started to say, breaking off, going *utterly* still.

And, distantly, there was the sound of P̷͖̼̎̆̀̾̓̍ǐ̵̢̡͙̱͇̃ͅP̷̟͌ê̵̫̞̦̼̓͌̚S̸̹̀͌͗͒.

Shotbie moved first, commanding, *“Hackbie. Do not look outside!”*

“What?” the fuchsia and cyan clad woman questioned, bringing up her tablet, starting to click-

*Crack!*

Only to have the tablet *blown out of her hands*, Capbie having shot it, the end of the woman’s pistol shaking slightly.

The sound of the P̷͖̼̎̆̀̾̓̍ǐ̵̢̡͙̱͇̃ͅP̷̟͌ê̵̫̞̦̼̓͌̚S̸̹̀͌͗͒ grew ***louder***, and there was something oddly *enticing* about it, that just made Barbie to want D̴̢̢͓͉͕̪͍́̑̅͘å̴͔͓̞̞̣̲͌̄̍̄͘͝͝Ň̸̺̣̥̤͈͓̀͗̀̽̀͑̉͋͝͠ͅc̷̼̺̲̤̥͘͝ͅȨ̵̮̻͖̺̟͙̜̯̔̈́̓͗̐̐̈́́́͌͛̿̀͜ͅ.

Looking around at the others, they, too, were starting to *twitch* a little, the music just *catchy.* Newbie, seeing the confused looks on Boombie’s, Snipebie’s, and Hackbie’s faces, while Medbie had turned to stare at the door in increasing *dread*, started to ask, “Wha-”

*“*[***I’M A BARBIE-GIRL! IN A BARBIE WORLD! MY LIFE’S IN PLASTIC, AND IT’S FANTASTIC!***](https://youtu.be/e21N7N89aS8?si=O6FDTMay3RxK7Ovq&t=10)***”***

The sound was ***DEAFENING*,** so loud that, even covering her ears, it was all she could hear. Looking over, Shotbie had the tv controller, expression grave as she dropped it and readied her machine gun, pointing it at the door. The song was *so* loud that it *shook the ground*… no, wait, that was something *else*, the faintest sound of S̵͉͉̾̀͋͒̃͐̀̓̄̆̍̔̚c̵̡̤͔͈͖̽̄̔̑̐͊́͐̎̌̈́̚͘̚R̴̝͇͕̖͖̱̤̺̰̟͂̏̓́̇̒̇͑̓̿̂͠͝e̶̡̝̘̜̟̩͈͉̫̬̖̣͖̘̼̓͒Ą̴̛̰̫͎̙̺̲͔̘͇̠͍̲͊́̓͆̎́́m̷̯̳͙͚̻͑̔S̶̭̺͈̎́͋̾̕͘̚ barely audible, but even those… *hurt*, like they were scratching against her *soul*, the walls seeming to shudder, then, subtly, *warp*, only for an odd twisted pentagram, with an eye in the center, to appear over their door, sending a ripple outwards that stabilized everything, even as Capbie frowned, swearing to herself, as she ran for her room, coming out a moment later with a sheathed katana, the handle glowing slightly, though she didn’t pull it out.

Standing and turning towards their commander, the youngest Barbie *tried* to ask, “Are we under attack?” but her words were lost to the song. However, the elder Barbie either read her lips, or understood anyways, because she shook her head, motioning for Newbie to sit.

The song was on repeat, and every time it restarted, the momentary sound of P̷͖̼̎̆̀̾̓̍ǐ̵̢̡͙̱͇̃ͅP̷̟͌ê̵̫̞̦̼̓͌̚S̸̹̀͌͗͒ started to bleed through, *pulling* at the girl, until at the end of its fourth repetition, the sound was *gone*.

There was a long moment of silence, until, unable to take any more, Newbie finally asked, “What *was* that?”

“Company Enforcer,” Capbie stated. “A *high*-level one. They can be… *indiscriminate*. Haven’t seen one *that* strong since… since…”

“Since Continuity War,” Shotbie finished for the other woman, shooting a concerned look towards the eye-patched Barbie, who nodded back in return

“They’d *hurt* us?” Boombie demanded, *just* as caught off guard as Newbie was, but louder about it.

“Not on purpose,” Shotbie replied, shaking her head. “That said, Outer Gods? Control? *Not* their strength. Thing we *all* learned today.”

Medbie, hesitating, nodded. “I’ve seen them. Weaker ones, I suppose. Class C would send Amnesiatics to wipe our minds of the experience. We’d go mad, but be patched up afterwards, and the nightmares wouldn’t be considered ‘disabling’. It’s cheaper than giving us all protections. We had a Ken with an art based power, which he used to make temporary womb tattoos, create an Elder Sign to reinforce our rooms, but they’ve all probably burnt *out* now.”

“Can we remake them?” Newbie questioned, worried.

“Not easily,” the doctor stated. “It’s, it’s more than just a shape, it’s *magic*, and magic is something none of us really understand.”

She knew that the Barbie **Template** didn’t contain magic, not of the formal-cast kind that used magical symbols, but had hoped that it was something *they* knew, but… but that just meant that someone *else* had to step up and do so, and that someone could be *her!*

She could be… *Magebie!*

Only, *not*, since that meant one of her teammates would have to *die*, and she’d *rather* be ‘Newbie’ forever if *that* was what it took! But that meant she needed to-

“You can’t,” Medbie stated.

Newbie blinked. “What?”

“If you don’t have *some* talent for magic, you *can’t* learn it,” the doctor said. “Trust me, *I’ve tried.*”

For a moment, the younger Barbie wondered how the green-haired woman had known what she was thinking, but, right, *they were both Barbies.* “Well, Lee said he, he might be able to get us powers, so-”

“And you *believe* that?” the other woman asked scornfully. “If an *Enforcer* is here, he probably did something *stupid.* He *is* a Ken, after all. No, he’s probab-“

*Rattle* went the door, which was apparently locked.

*Knock Knock*

Came a moment later. Capbie looked to Shotbie, who nodded, the larger woman grabbing the remote, while the older, with her pistol at the ready, moved to the door. The latch automatically flipped a moment before Capbie opened it, then froze, the sounds of distant *screaming* barely heard.

“Oh, thank god,” Newbie could hear Lee say, the words making her feel a bit better, even as Medbie blinked rapidly, nonplussed. “Glad *you’re* okay, but those asshats didn’t install eldritch shielding?”

“We had a temporary fix, but it’s broken,” the older woman stated, leaning forward to glance down the hallway. “Did you…?”

“Yeah,” their squadmate replied. “Should we call someone?”

Stepping aside, Capbie let Lee enter, stating, “The Amnesiatics will make the rounds,” and Newbie *gasped* as his armor was cut and blasted, portions of it *melted*, others discolored in rainbow fractal patterns that seemed to twist and shift. The armor on his left arm, from the elbow down, was just *gone*, his skin red and raw, though, as she watched, it was slowly but *visibly* healing.

“Lee!” she cried out. “What happened?”

“Amnesiatics? I mean, I *guess* that’d work,” he told their leader, glancing Newbie’s way, and holding up a finger. Popping his helmet off, or trying, as it partially *stuck*, he had to twist to work it off, Capbie, still holding her katana, hesitating before holstering her pistol, pulling a knife, and cutting him free.

Once it was off, she could see *burns* around his eyes, which were subtly glowing, but those, too, were healing and dimming slowly as well. Smiling her way, he told Newbie, “Had a talk with management. Turns out *they* don’t like following rules either, so I kicked it up the chain, *a few times*, and, well, they *sure* as fuck didn’t like that. I’m sure if they still existed, they’d be *quite* cross with me!”

*“If?”* Capbie questioned, sheathing her knife, and moving back to her seat, looking at the man, brows furrowed.

“Yeah, the Azzy that showed up was kind of… *annoyed,”* he shrugged nonchalantly.

“Azz- do you mean *Azathoth!?”* Medbie demanded.

Lee, however, just nodded. “Yeah, she was nice, if a bit tired. Anyways, turns out finding the department-cluster-novel Entity of ScoObY dOo caught some people’s interest, and my getting, er, shall we say *stiffed*, offended some of the fairer minded beings in lower-middle-management. The fact my boss’s boss’s boss tried to *Mind Flay* me legally unprovoked, not even an in-setting hour later, well, that was getting into *Compact Violation* territory, even if not directly.”

He shook his head, “Class A wouldn’t’ve given a shit, and Class B would’ve only cared if paid or *forced*, but, surprisingly, Class C’s a bit more *touchy* about that kind of thing, though I guess it makes sense given they’re only *here* because of the Compact of Winter’s Eve, *especially* as I shrugged it off and ripped the Squiddy Dick’s head off, before shoving it *literally* up his ass, *like I said I would,* and then the *others* got uppity in *direct* violation of our department’s Retribution Rules, it was an entire thing. Also, I *think* some of this is melted *on* to me, so, uh, can I have a bit of help? Also, why are you all still in armor?”

There was a long moment of silence at his rush of words, Newbie glancing to the others, who just stared at him.

“Um,” he said, a little awkwardly, “Are you *sure* you guys are okay?”

Shotbie coughed into her hand, and Capbie blinked, nodding. “Alright. Danger’s passed, Girls, armor off,” she ordered. “Ke-Ki-*Lee,* you go with Shotbie and she’ll get you out of that. Newbie… go with them and give them a hand. Medbie, grab your gear and give our Ke-our *Officer* a double-check, to make sure there’s no lingering damage. Shit, shower, and exfoliate, and we’ll meet back here in half an hour.” She paused, looking around, adding with the whip-crack of authority. *“****Now.***”

*That* got everyone moving, though, as she walked past her, Barbie could’ve sworn she’d heard the grizzled veteran mutter to herself, *“what the actual fuck?”*

<BtK>

Shotbie had to *cut* my armor off, the plastoid having melted like the plastic that it superficially resembled under the onslaught of Eldritch Entities, as, while the Blind Eternities didn’t have the Malignance that WH40K’s *Warp* did, they were in many ways similar in their effects, and, well, while stormtrooper armor was good, it *wasn’t rated for that shit.*

Thankfully, because it was an upgrade secured through a modification of their base loadouts, getting replacements was simple as long as we turned in the old and busted version, or wrote up a report explaining why we *couldn’t* return it that *might* get checked.

Some of the prismed sections were also conceptually *toxic*, but Shotbie checked before touching them, tossing the slowly monochroming tab into the ‘hazardous materials’ bin, and, checking the guides, ordered some neutralizer that’d last long enough to package it up and drop it off for proper ‘study and disposal’.

My *medical* checks, meanwhile, just annoyed the green-haired Barbie, though most things I did seemed to, as the second she tried to double-check the readings she’d taken of me, they’d, ever so slightly, *changed*. Also, while everything I looked at seemed oversaturated with color, it was slowly fading, and the invisible tides of mana that weren’t quite so *invisible* to me right now were fading as well, as were the low levels of pain from my *numerous* injuries, both internal and external, but, with **[Bear]**, turned up like it was by **[Intensify]**, if I wasn’t *actively* dying, I’d be fine.

Cleaning myself off afterwards, the water on my raw skin wasn’t exactly *fun*, but I’d felt worse in Basic, and soon enough everyone was back in the meeting room, waiting on me.

“Good, you’re *finally* done,” Boombie called out as I entered.

“How long did it take to remove your armor?” I questioned in return.

The wild-haired girl frowned. “Like, three minutes. Why?”

Shotbie spoke up, “Took twenty-two to remove his. *Very* damaged.”

“… oh,” the explosives expert replied, glancing away from both of us. “You, like, need a few more?”

“I’m fine,” I deferred, grabbing a seat, and turning to look at the others. “So, to start with, Management was *fucking* you guys.”

“What else is new?” Boombie snorted, Hackbie rolling her eyes, and Snipebie giving a nodding sigh of agreement.

However, the *others* frowned at that, the older contingent looking at the younger, while Newbie was looking my way, Shotbie asking, “*How* bad?”

*“Bad,”* I replied. “Like ‘So Egregious We Mindfuck Anyone That Questions It Rather Than Get Caught’ bad. When I started pointing out the rules, I got brain blasted, and, well, *that’s against the rules too.* So I retaliated, which *is* in line with policies, and the *rest* attacked me, which is when the Compact Violations were threatened, and my request for an Arbitrator was approved, and an Azzy dropped by to *have some words with them*.”

Really, people tended to underestimate how *overpowered* Super Speed could be, which was why I picked it up in the first place.

“A question,” Shotbie stated. “And no offense, but how are you sane?”

“I’d argue I’m *not,*” I offered with a grin, “given I signed up with *The Company*, but one of my Runes, **[Reassure]**, heals mental wounds, which then harmonized with **[Bear]**, likely through the effects of **[Intensify]**, so my toughness isn’t just physical, it’s *psychic* too. That, and, well, *I’m an Agent.* Can’t exactly ‘Go Mad From The Revelation’ if it’s already been revealed, and I’ve moved on.”

I winced. “That and I took *every* Class’s required Seminars, which, well, *it seemed like a good idea at the time,”* I added. “But, again, it gave me a certain degree of *resistance* to things.”

Newbie’s eyes went wide, “Even Class *A’s?”*

I nodded regretfully. “Yeah, the ‘having to torture people’ thing was… *not good*, but the teacher’s aide was quite surprised when I caught him out and used his *own* lessons against him instead of the poor souls that had been provided by the Seminar. *Anyways*, Azzy was a bit much, but she pulled that shit in after it wasn’t needed, and helped me get my bounty for negotiating a client contract with ScoObY dOo.”

“Bounty?” Capbie asked, glancing towards Boombie for some reason. “You had a debt…”

“Oh, yeah, I *could’ve* bought out my Contract outright, but that’d be a *dick* thing to do,” I replied, with a shrug, summoning my Smartphone and interfacing it with the display, turning it on. “So, to start with, while we get to *keep* the Huey, we’ve also got *this.*”

A person standing next to a black airplane

Description automatically generated

<https://media.starcitizen.tools/thumb/8/87/CutlassBlack_TouchingDown.png/1200px-CutlassBlack_TouchingDown.png>

“And *these.”*

A group of guns with text

Description automatically generated

“For the armory.”

Silence stretched out for a long moment.

“Oh, those look interesting!” Newbie *finally* stated, and I smiled back, glad that I’d managed to at least do *that* right. ‘Thank you, Lee!”

“Wheelbie would’ve loved that,” Shotbie sighed, then nodded. “Good. *Very* good. Maybe we find *more* Eldritch Horrors for you to seduce, no?”

“Seduce?” I echoed, confused, then saw her small, teasing smile, and realized she was giving me a hard time. “I mean *technically*. Either way, that’s not all.”

“It’s *not?”* Medbie demanded, disbelieving, and with a few more clicks, I sent the [Contract](https://imgchest.com/p/o24ag83d4lj) to everyone’s phones, a chorus of beeps sounding out, as, on the main screen, I opened it up on the larger display.

“Okay, so, not the *full* one, *obviously,* but I got us all a back-door into the general empowerment matrix. None of us get a God off the bat, as none of us are heading into *that* Class E Extravaganza, though you *can* purchase one for fifty points, since they come with a whole *set* of ‘free’ powers. Everyone has a starting budget of *ten* points, and yes, some of the ‘free and/or exclusive’ things the Gods give don’t make a *ton* of sense, but ignore them for now, as I’m in talks with R&D to hammer out how *that* all works.”

Hackbie scrolled on her phone, musing, “So, we pick the ones we want, and you finalize it?”

I frowned. “… No? They’re *your* Contracts, completely independent of me. We’ll get paid in points, on *top* of the payments you were receiving, which will increase as, yeah, Management was stealing from *them too*. Higher tier missions *should’ve* paid more, and now they will, along with payment in Points. There’s also a ‘priority’ queue system for mission choosing, that, if we try and game, we’ll get auto-assigned the occasional ‘shit’ mission from, but that was apparently *all* you guys were getting, which is probably going to piss of the *other* teams, but *fuck ‘em, they can pull their own* ***goddamned weight.*”**

Newbie nodded, looking through her Catalog, Boombie snorting derisively, while Snipebie was silent, but the elder three Barbie’s all looked up at me in confusion. “But we’re *Barbies*,” Capbie stated.

I just looked back, confused. “You’re *also* employees of The Company. What does your Clone-source have to do with anything?”

*“Very little!”* Shotbie replied cheerfully. “Now let us see. Oooh, a way to get stronger? But, ah, good, I can *still* gain it with training, and is cheaper too!”

“Right,” I nodded, going back to explaining the setup, still not sure *what* was going on, but rolling with it. “So, one of the reasons I went with this one, of the few offered, is the fact that it allows you to get a discounted version of most of the purchases,” I indicated the difference on the display. “Also our Tier range for missions is now Three to *Six*, instead of Two to Five, but, well, *Superpowers*. Capbie, technically *I’m* in charge of mission selection, but *you* know this stuff better than I do, so it’s up to you.”

The older Barbie slowly nodded, as Newbie smiled, almost chirping, “That make sense, Lee!”

The name made Snipebie twitch, the woman asking, “What are *you* getting?”

I smiled, “**Grit**, the training multiplier, to try and bring myself up to Barbie Standard; **Enhancing Aura**, the sharing ability, to lean into my support role; and **Speed** Tier 3, because, with armed combat, it’s kind of the *master* stat. Potential all, of course, not Actual, so I can work my way up to it.”

“Lead from the back?” the markswoman questioned.

“More like *manage*. Capbie’s the leader on mission,” I countered, the eye-patched woman looking up my way, nodding after a moment, and going back to her phone. Standing, the Barbie’s all paused what they were doing, and I asked, “Anyone want drinks, snacks, whatever? I got a monetary bonus for ‘exposing corruption’, in addition to Points, which I cashed in for *all* of our Contracts so we have ten to work with instead of the five I originally got offered, so I can hit up the commissary for anything you guys want.”

Heading out with a list of drinks, from Butterbeer to Sprunk to Ambrosia (Battlestar, not Greek), people outside were *still* shrieking, chanting in strange tongues, and, yep, tearing into themselves to create eldritch sigils from a mixture of their blood and feces, but a Company team dropped in, and started shooting *everyone* with circular stun-bolts.

A bit of superspeed let me sidestep them, and give the Pacification Team a jaunty wave, which caused the agents to check their fire, and, telling them of my team’s location, they nodded, so as not to jump in and get *perforated*, going on their way. Thankfully, the commissary was largely automated, and when the cook tried to jump me with a bone knife, it was easy enough to super-speed just enough to drop the big-tittied elf with a careful punch, and tie her up with her own belts, as she was wearing a *dozen* of them for some strange reason. After that it was easy enough to grab what was requested and return, handing Hackbie her glowing drink.

She looked confused as she looked up at it, telling me, “I, I was joking.”

“Oh… do you *not* want it?” I replied, just as confused as she was.

“I never said *that,*” the pink-haired hacker replied, grabbing the glass of Ambrosia, taking a sip, and sighing. Capbie accepted her Kal-Da, which was some kind of spiced hot drink, with an absent nod, the others taking their own, Newbie accepting a warm glass of Lon Lon Milk, and I sat down with my own can of Spite, since the cafeteria didn’t serve *Sprite*.

Because, clearly, Sex Slavery was okay, but *Copyright Infringement* was a bridge too far!

“So, everyone got what they wanted?” I questioned, Boombie smirking and holding her hand up, a small bright yellow fireball forming in it, the edges dancing with orange light. “Is that Potential or-”

The red-clad blonde frowned, “Do I *look* like that much of a fuckin’ idiot?”

Snipebie sipped her matcha, tilting her head, and starting to say, “Well, since you asked-”

“Of *course* I got Potential,” the explosives expert snapped. “Didn’t have the points to get Actual anyways. This is about all I can fuckin’ do, though I’m barely feelin’ it.”

“Ke-*Lee*,” Capbie stated, catching herself. “Remove Boombie’s **[Bear]**. To get a baseline.”

I did so, the imprinted Rune recalled with a thought, and the woman winced, her fireball shrinking to almost nothing, though, with effort, she pulled it back up to where it was before, though now she was starting to sweat, straining, her breathing starting to pick up.

Standing, I approached her, then hesitated, and finalized *my* purchases. My physical speed cap increasing I *couldn’t* feel, but now, in my chest, I could feel a faint sense of Determination that was likely **Grit**, while a mantle-like sensation stretched out across my shoulders, likely **Enhancing Aura**, doing nothing for *me*, but that wasn’t why I got it.

Holding a fist out towards Boombie, she looked at it, confused, before she bumped it, and, channeling **[Give],** it twisted *oddly*, catching bits of **Enhancing Aura** with it, that let me attach **Grit**, weak as it was, to the **[Bear]** Rune and pass both over to her much easier than I *probably* should’ve been able to.

A Black aura roiled around my body, expanding to run down my arm, and sink into hers, as she froze, then quickly pulled her hand back, looking down, going, “The fuck did you do to-”

“You gave the Loudmouth your training enhancer,” Snipebie stated, frowning, as she stared at me.

“Yep!” I smiled, “Anyone else want it?”

“Oh, I do!” Shootbie ginned, grabbing Medbie’s hand and raising it. “Both of us!”

The medic pulled her hand away, testily declaring, “I can make my *own* decisions!”

The heavy weapons expert frowned, “Then you… *don’t?”*

For a moment, the green-haired Barbie fought with herself, before admitting, “Of *course* I do, but-”

“Both of us, please!” Shotbie requested of me, and I rolled my eyes, walking over to them. Extending a fist, the larger woman *slammed* hers into it, the shorter rolling her eyes before extending hers as well. Empowering them both, Capbie and Newbie took it as well, but, heading over to Snipebie, I realized I’d missed her with initial **[Bear]** **[Give]**.

The pink-vested girl didn’t reach out, instead taking a moment to finish her purchases, a white corona of light momentarily surrounding her head. She looked up at me and *squinted*, before nodding, seeing… *something,* and meeting my extended hand, accepting the empowerment.

The others finished up their purchases, Medbie concentrating as, in her hands, light brown energy swirled out of the air and formed into an… eye?

Yep, just, *straight up* an eye, with an optical nerve bundle and muscles and, *okay, that’s gross.*

But, having clearly taken the **Lay on Hands** power, that let you create slot-able replacement body parts, well, it was *the* power to take as a medic, and the requirement of needing an ‘extensive study of Biology to perform correctly’ wouldn’t really be an issue for *her*, from what little I knew of the woman.

The others finalized their purchases, Shotbie’s hands glowing green, Capbie’s eyes doing the same in purple, while nothing happened to Newbie at all.

“Going full Physical Potentials?” Medbie questioned the youngest Barbie.

“Oh, No, I purchased Speed Potential, like Boombie, but I’m going to save the rest to get Luffy as a God. Haki is *really* useful, and a Logia Fruit will be even better!” she smiled. “The sooner I get those, the sooner I can do something *really* special!”

Boombie frowned, “Don’t tell him what *I* got! And, aren’t you worried about being too weak?”

The newest Barbie frowned in turn, “But, I’ll have the rest of *you* to help me! It’s what I’m doing anyways, still learning all of this, just like Lee is!”

I gave her a thumbs up, which she smiled broadly at, while Medbie gave us a flat stare, Shotbie, beside her, giving Newbie a gesture that matched mine, and Capbie?

Capbie just sighed, ran a hand down her hair, and shook her head.

**<BtK>**

It was five days later and we were on our next mission, heading to Columbia, the cartoonishly corrupt flying city, not the country. Our Dumbass of the Day had slotted in as Booker DeWitt, Likely planning on grabbing Elizabeth and jetting, something that one of my Squad-mates in Basic had planned on doing, as Elizabeth’s ability to world jump was *extraordinary* open-ended for her Tier, and making a run for her, and then escaping, equipped with the proper **Defences**, would be decent way to start *most* journeys, able to side-step the requirements to either ‘fill’ your progress meter or take the options presented by The Company.

I’d even looked into it, and it *was* doable…

If you were *careful*.

And, clearly, this Agent had *not* been.

Passing through the aerial dimensional gate in our new starship, a small window in our HUDs showed us the ship’s forward camera, as sitting inside the large metal box didn’t tell us much about what was going on *outside.* Within seconds, Hackbie, who was flying the Cutlass, opened fire, Newbie in the turret adding her own flurry of laser-bolts, ripping through sky-ships with ease and sending the converging security forces screaming into the clouds below.

“Oh, this almost isn’t even *fair!”* the hacker laughed over our comms.

“*Good,*” Capbie replied tersely. “Slide us in, then go high!”

“You got it!” the pilot stated, and, even *through* the inertial dampeners, we had to hold on as she sent the ship into a spin, the wide side door opening as she did so.

Shotbie, Who’d been waiting there, opened fire with her YellowJacket Gatling, which was the smallest size of *ship-board* weapon available, and which she’d retrofitted to be Barbie-portable… If you squinted.

She could still handle it, *somehow,* and, as we came up beside her, the woman was cutting down the few *trees* that’d been artfully arranged in our LZ, and eliminating the guard-contingent running towards our target.

“*Jump!”* Capbie ordered, and, with running leaps, we all hit the now blood-slick tiled streets of Columbia.

Moving together, our training had *already* started to pay off as Boombie found herself having to slow down a little to stay with the rest of us, having gotten used to the rate she *used* to move, and finding herself starting to unconsciously outpace the rest of us with her enhanced **Speed**.

Up the stairs, and around the corner, we entered the fairgrounds, towards the angry cries of *“False Shepard!”* as we came across *another* group of guards that had taken cover and were shooting at… *Twelve Bookers?*

But, as one of the Agent we were here to save was hit, and puffed into smoke, I had a feeling what was going on, our Squad opening fire and killing the attackers in seconds, a manly call of *“Rasengan!”* echoing off the halls, as a body, broken and twisted, was sent flying high into the air from deeper in, followed by an, *“****Ohshit!****”*

A deep enraged, *“GRAAAAAAHH!”* came from beyond, and I took a deep breath, still keeping pace with the others as time *slowed,* giving me *extreme* reaction capabilities as the Shadow-Bookers waved us past them, taking more shots at someone leaning out a window, the Columbian man, with a cry of pain, falling to the ground.

Clearing the booths, we saw *Prime* Booker, as evidenced by the fact that he was *bleeding,* desperately scrabbling to get out of the way of the malformed Victorian cyborg, with fists bigger than the Agent’s Torso, as it slammed them down on the ground, cracking the street.

It reared back and roared again, giving us a clear line on the panel in its chest which displayed its exposed, enlarged, and *literally* enflamed heart, as I lifted my weapon.

Aimed.

*Fired.*

And ***Missed.***

Thankfully, Capbie *didn’t*, magdumping her pistol into its chest, the glass shattering and the shards, along with a few extra bullets, ripping the glowing organ to bits, the enormous enemy going limp, and falling to the ground with a car-crash like cacophony.

Our target turned towards us, slowly, words lethargic as he shouted, “Whhhhhhaaaaaaaaaatttt ttttttthhhh-”

Ignoring him I turned, the other Barbies already opening fire, and added my *own* bullets to the hail that was lashing out at *every* other guard left in the area, cutting down the security forces, as, *unlike* Global Justice, these racist assholes got *no* sympathy from me, especially as they were going to *firebomb America* given enough time.

In moments, we’d cleared the area, our target’s cry of *“Fffffffuuuuuuuuuuuucccccck,”* speeding up as I breathed out, continuing, “Are *stormtroopers* doing here? And why are you *pink?*”

Pointing a rifle the Agent’s way, Boombie demanded, “What’s fucking wrong with *Pink!?”*

“Uh, nuthin’?” the guy responded, unsure, hands going up. “But, uh, are you lost?”

Rolling my eyes, and pushing Boombie’s barrel to the side, I stepped forward, “Agent Δ-8GS21P?”

Booker blinked, “Uh, yeah? Who are you? Thanks for the save, but, uh, this is supposed to be *my* world!”

“And it *still is*. I’m Agent… *Kencifer,* and we’re Class C Loss Prevention,” I informed him. “You were gonna die in a few minutes, so we got sent to extract you.”

“What? No! But I *had* that!” the man yelled, pointing at the now-dead ‘Handyman’.

“Naruto **Template**?” I questioned, and he, while still looking angry, nodded. “**Double-stacked**?” I pressed, and he nodded again. “Then yes, you did have *this* fight handled, but, remember, Tiers are ranges, and while **Double stacking** *just* puts you at Tier Five-.”

A [**Tune**](https://youtube.com/clip/Ugkxsh1936fxhIpBBgyx4eZpTHnq9XYUtKIf?si=L0mK1ynRVberNMvy) played, that caused ‘Booker’ to turn deadly pale, as a responding ***SHRIEK*** came from the skies.

“That puts you in the same *League* as that, but nowhere *near* its level,” I finished, a *little* nervous, but trusting in the plan.

“I, I, *fuck,* ***already!?****”* the man cried out, looking up, “But, *fuck*, I was supposed to get to the ball-throwing bit before, before *any* of this happened! But they, they spotted the damn mark *right away!*”

“**Destiny** and **Paradox** Resistance?” I asked, and he nodded, still watching the skies, confirming he’d fallen into the trap I’d spotted in my research. “Yeah, those are *double edged swords* here. You’re bucking the set timeline, which is required if you don’t want to *die horribly at the end*, but that means missing the *good* nudges as much as the bad. And, remember, every time a Booker died, *he* didn’t get revived or something, *a different one from the Multiverse took his place.* There’s a *reason* that he doesn’t have the *Immortality* tag in the Catalog.”

“Oh, what?” the Agent frowned, glancing over my way, as I stood patiently, unhurried. “Oh, wait, that’s right. And every checkpoint load had you coming out of a doorw-***FUCK!”***

From above, ***IT*** dropped, twenty feet tall, and with a wingspan of well over double that, tearing through nearby buildings.

The Songbird ***SCREECHED*** its discordant rage to the heavens.

A cartoon of a bird with fire and flames

Description automatically generated

<https://i.imgur.com/ojIqeO3.png>

Or it *tried* to, as halfway through its declaration of mal-intent, *Tempest Missiles* slammed into its back, blasting it away from us as they detonated, flashes of light raining down as the Cutlass’ gatlings and laser cannons *tore* into it, forcing it further and further away, until, with a pained ***SHRIEK*** of agony, it fell down into the clouds.

“And that gives us an *hour*,” I smiled, glad the timing worked out, *this* being why I trusted Capbie to make the plans. “There’s some wibbly-wobbly timey-wimey *bullshit* at play, so we *can’t* just kill the damn thing for you, but you got found out early, and, if I had to guess, your ‘Demonic False Shepard Powers’, that being your *Jutsu*, scared them enough to call in the big guns. Either way, *time to go!”*

The man hesitated, “But, like, the Vigors are *right there!* Can’t I just grab ‘em?”

“Not our mission,” Capbie replied, looking around, commanding, “*Hackbie, find a spot and come in for a landing.”*

“Actually,” I disagreed, and her head snapped my way. “Agent, are you asking for *a Salvaging Addendum* to your Retrieval?”

The Booker looked between Capbie and I, obviously getting that there was… *something* going on. “I, uh, am?”

“Cap,” I said, turning to face her. “Salvage Rules let us grab what we can carry. And, with the Cutlass, we can carry a *good bit.* It’s one of the reasons I went for a Black instead of a Red or Steel. Besides,” I waved off to the side, at Medbie, who had dipped *inside* a tent as we talked, and was trying to sneak out. “We’re *already* grabbing stuff.”

The older Barbie sighed, our medic freezing, and giving us a small wave as we all looked at her. “Kid,” the veteran questioned, “*why* would we do that?”

“Vigors are good ability-granting items of power. As discrete trade goods, we’ll have to give up a third for taxes and base fees, but we can offload the rest, either for funds or Points,” I rattled off, having found *this* buried in the rules and regs I’d been spending *weeks* digging through. “*Another* way Management were screwing you was that they’d claim *one hundred percent* of anything not covered by Riddick Rules, though, really, they should be called *Necromonger* Rules, but the alliteration opportunity was just too good, I guess.”

“Wait, Points?” our target perked up.

I shook my head, “It’s *Contract specific*, but if you want to grab a crate and fill up as many as you, *individually* can carry, maybe you can work something out with your manager. That said, a few dozen Shadow Clones to help load shit up *would* be appreciated!” I smiled.

“I, uh, sure!” the Agent replied, making the handsign and creating another dozen hims as the Cutlass touched down in the middle of the square. With the extra Bookers, we stripped the place *bare*, Snipebie going high and performing overwatch, keeping away the few guards willing to try to come after us after what we’d done to The *Songbird*, either through fear, or surprise ventilation. Hackbie took over the turret so Newbie could help us load everything, blasting a guard ship out of the sky with its laser cannons, which stopped any *others* from trying to come in after.

Stuffing the space halfway full of bottle-filled crates, the other half was then packed with odd foods, guns, and really *anything* that looked like it *might* be valuable, and then we were done, the enemy forces gathering to try and overwhelm us, the shadow-clones poofing away as Snipiebie rappelled down from her rooftop position and we did a final check. “Okay,” I sighed, “that’s all of-“

“[Heads,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viO_5aaF0zc&ab_channel=BioshockInfiniteOST)” a man spoke from behind me, and to the right.

“Or…tails?” a woman completed, confused, behind me, and to the left.

Turning, holding my breath to give myself time to think, I saw the Lutece ‘Twins’, Dimensionally displaced versions of the same genius inventor, A Quantum *Demigod* working together with itself to try and make sense of the bit of the Infinite Multiverse they could access, from their own limited perspectives, if technically, they were just relying on itself.

They were also, combined, a Tier *Eight* Being.

“Edge,” I finally responded, addressing them directly, while, behind my back, I gestured for the rest of my team to *get on the ship*.

“Edge?” Rosalind Lutece questioned, confused.

“*Edge,”* I repeated.

“But what are the chances of that?” Robert Lutece, Rosalind’s ‘brother’, inquired in turn.

*“Kencifer!”* Capbie ordered, but I shook my head, as the best way to handle such Entities was to *play along*.

Smiling, I replied, tone amused, “About one in six-thousand, though *those* odds are *far* too generous for this particular twist of happenstance.”

Both of them focused on me, and, as one, they shuddered, and then *sighed,* a slight weight seeming to ease from their shoulders. “Oh, who are *you?”* Robert asked. “A Constant-

“Or a Variable?” Rosalind finished.

“An *Anomaly*,” I informed them. “Or, to put it differently, an *Imaginary Number*, only present due to the confluence of other factors beyond the standard equation.”

Rosalind looked past me. “That *ship* of yours is certainly beyond the standard equation-”

“Flying, yet with not a Lutece Field in sight,” Robert mused.

“This Booker made an *additional* deal, in a way,” I informed them. “With Existences that are to you, as you are to *him*.”

“Oh, how *dreadful!”* Rosalind frowned.

“Oh, how *delightful!”* Robert smiled. “We’d wondered where those unique abilities of his-”

“Had come from,” his ‘sister’ finished.

Reaching into my armor, carefully, both of them tensing slightly, I pulled out two business cards, and handed one to each. “If you’re interested in making a deal *yourselves*. Management wishes to go talk to *this* Booker, who will likely be back, if you wish to pursue this Quantum Variance, or to leave him alone, the choice is yours.”

“What is choice-” Robert noted, frowning.

“But a matter of perspective?” Rosalind mused.

I nodded knowingly, “Ah, *Multiversal Ennui*. Have to be *careful* of that. The Multiverse is Infinite, *truly* infinite, and it is impossible to truly affect it in any *sizeable* way, because what’s a sizeable slice of infinity?”

“The way you speak,” Rosalind stated, staring, looking at me with eyes that went beyond the physical.

“You are familiar with this?” Robert inquired, smiling, looking at me with eyes that held surprised hope.

“I *am*. You’re keeping each other stable, but it’s a *temporary* solution, without proper harmonization,” I informed the pair. “I’m a band-aid on *that* bullet wound, but while you *might* figure it out on your own, *they* can help. In some dimension sets you do, in some dimension sets you do not, even *your* existence merely one of many out there. But what *truly* matters is what you two do in the dimension sets that *you* choose to inhabit.”

Waving behind myself, I noted, “There are Constants, and Variables, *yes*, but there are also *Agents*, who can understand, and step beyond base reactions. You two, or one, depending on how you look at it, are in a better position to be an Actor, or Actress, or Both, than any other, but if you remain *Observers*, poking the very edges for fear of what butterfly-borne tornados you will unleash, you will likely be blown away by the flappings of those around you.”

“Oh, you *certainly* have a way with words, don’t you?” Rosalind remarked, with the hint of a teasing smile.

“I don’t know about you, sister dear, but *I’m* feeling inspired,” Robert rejoiced, with a broad grin.

Looking at each other, they nodded in sync, declaring, *“Let’s!”* and were gone, in the space between moments, as if they’d never existed.

Shaking my head, I walked onto the Cutlass, slamming a fist on the side of the hull, as I toggled the wide doors closed, calling out, “I’m onboard! Let’s *go!”*

“This is going to be a *thing* with you, isn’t it?” Capbie sighed.

I looked at her, confused, as the ship swayed under us, taking off, the turret firing as Newbie took out the airships that had been creeping closer below our landed sightline, and opening a way out. “What? Helping people?”

“Is like I say,” Shotbie stated, her grin clear in her voice, and, from the tilt of her head, she gave me an exaggerated wink. “Seduce!”

<BtK>

Shotbie waited for her friend, as it was time for their bi-weekly dinner, and, while they might have had *great* changes to their lives, that was no excuse to throw out old traditions. Medbie was running late, which was *most* unlike her, and, when she did walk in, seeming lost, and *without* a dish, despite it being *her* turn to prepare one, Shotbie frowned, trying to think of what could *possibly* have her self-controlled, some people might say *over*-controlled, one of those people being *her*, friend in such a state.

It was easy to place an order for delivery, the payout from their last mission *quite* impressive, in a way that would have likely incited *rage* within her breast, and she had a *lot* of room there for wrath, at those above her, had they not already been eaten by the very creatures they *claimed* to curry favor from.

She had long since realized that it was the way of the ‘smart’ to be so *incredibly* dumb, not taking things as they were, like *she* did, but using their intellect to deceive *themselves*, as that was *far* easier than using it to deceive the world, let alone change it!

One only had to look at her friend!

Once she made sure Medbie had her drink, and was *not* going to start the conversation, Shotbie, being the good friend that she was, started it for her! “These new powers, they are quite something! **Smite**, in particular. Striking with ‘Anime Energy’!” she chortled. “*Very* shiny! But also *very* effective!”

“I, uh, yes,” Medbie nodded, blinking, emerging from her own head. “The energy our abilities use are a mix of spiritual, physical, and psychic, though *not* magical. They are useful in of themselves, but are built in such a way that they would be hard to counter *completely*, but also cannot easily be used in *other* paradigms.”

“Ah, *true*, though perhaps we should master our new talents *first*, before we experiment, yes?” Shotbie advised her friend. “Walk, Run, Fly, but not off cliff, I think. **Smite** *very* useful, if very flashy. **Strength** increase, subtler. And **One (Wo)Man Army**… it is odd, like gun not yet cocked, but with need to overcome others in ability by wide margin before it activates, eh, it maybe not *best* of starting purchases.”

That got a smile from the green-haired woman. “You just wanted to be *Rambo*.”

“Who does not? But not First Blood Rambo. *That* man just needed hug,” Shotbie sighed, taking a moment to reminisce on her childhood crush. “Or blowjob! One, then other, I think.”

While Medbie *didn’t* snort into her tea, it was close, and so the older Barbie counted it as a victory. Changing the topic, the younger woman stated, “My **Lay On Hands** is… interesting.” Holding out a palm, tan energy swirled into it, forming a tooth. “I understand why you could *only* purchase the Potential now, as it’s taking my *considerable* training to be able to make *this*, as opposed to…”

She concentrated again, and, beside the perfectly normal incisor, a lumpy, bulbous, *spikey* mass of bone formed.

*“That,*” Medbie stated, dumping both ‘teeth’ onto the table. “And then there’s the *ability* dependent skills, needing to properly visualize it and keep it in my mind as one piece, forming the connecting points, which are a little, well, *sticky* so they can be slotted directly into a wound and bind properly, and, well, keeping my *own* imagination in check to not make any *improvements*, though I *probably* could,” the woman admitted.

At a knock on the door of the room they’d reserved, Shotbie got up and got the food, Burgers and Beer for her, and Coq Au Vin with a light red wine for Medbie, setting them down and looking at her friend. “And how has training been going?”

“It’s… been going,” the doctor admitted. “Better after the last mission, for some reason.”

“Ah, that would be Lee,” Shotbie smiled, her friend’s momentary scowl *not* going unnoticed. “He spent points to turn his shared **Potential Grit** into ***Actual* Grit**, so that we might all reach our new potentials faster.”

Taking a sip of her wine, Medbie offered, “He needs all the help he can *get*.”

“Yes, I agree, is very nice thing for him to do for *us*,” Shotbie noted, a bit *less* enthusiastically than normal. “Your **Disease Resistance** power, how does it work?”

“Oh, well, it’s in a similar vein to the **Body Defense** power Agents with a Premium Catalog have, though without the one-off heal, nor does it work against *radiation* based effects,” the Doctor stated, continuing to explain the mechanics, about *half* of which Shotbie understood, as the larger woman ate her dinner.

When the mini-seminar started to end, the older woman prodded her friend, asking about the Vigors that Medbie had asked them *not* to sell, Lee agreeing to letting her keep a full *crate* of them, enough for *each* of them to have three of the three types available. Technically, as the Officer of their squad, he was supposed to receive *half* of the goods they claimed, according to him, not that Shotbie doubted that, knowing the Company’s general structures. That said, Lee had, as was his nature, as Shotbie was learning, instead distributed the profits from selling off their bounty of loot *evenly* amongst them, also not minding the medic’s request, even though it meant that *he* would be losing out due to it. The amazon had met ‘fair’ Kens before who were acted thus, when following personal rules, but were *particularly* miserly past those specific restrictions.

The exchange rate for the Vigors they had turned in had seemed a little… *low,* until it had been pointed out that the points they were receiving would have been worth almost *two* **Actual Pure Elements** if lumped together, the *complete* version of Boombie’s **Potential** fire-based abilities, or enough to gain *perfect* regeneration to such an extent it became *combat-relevant*, which *was* in line with what little she knew of standard Company exchange rates.

Was it still not the best deal? *Yes*. But short of selling them to a dedicated In-Company Trade Consortium, like the Z-Network that Shotbie had heard a few Agents mention, it was what they were going to get, with their doing it through the *Company* meaning that there was *zero* chance of shenanigans that *wouldn’t* then lead to Enforcers paying the scammer a *personal* visit, as The Company took commerce *very* seriously.

It was also why the ‘Bioshock’ series of dimensions were considered in-demand missions, and the chances of them going to *another* such place anytime soon were *low*, from the way Capbie described the mission-picking system functioning, the woman *furiously* studying the setup none of them knew existed, suspended as it had been during the Continuity War, and, with both of them being *Newbies*, neither had been informed of the procedure.

That, *unfortunately*, meant that the *tripling* of their standard mission payout was likely not to happen again anytime soon, though the 3.9 points they each received were *still* appreciated!

“But you have not *taken* any, yes?” Shotbie checked, as her friend started to wind down once more.

Medbie frowned, insulted. “Do I *look* like someone who would…” she trailed off, as the older woman casually glanced down to her friend’s scaled cheeks, which reddened. “*No*, I haven’t, as they’re made from ADAM, and without stabilizers, which I’ll need to either find a way to buy or make myself, probably the latter *for* myself given my… enhancements, they have all the issues that *Plasmids* do, and I *don’t* have an Agent’s Defenses, though **Disease Resistance** *might* cover it. Ken was… oddly well informed about them. Or *not* so oddly, I suppose.”

Shotbie took a bite out of her third, and final, burger, as the silence stretched between them once more, Medbie mentally tripping and falling into her own head once again.

Finally, finishing her bite of burger, the amazon bit the *bullet*. “Medbie. Something is bothering you. What is it?

*“It’s nothing,”* the other woman responded, quickly, *reflexively*, looking away and rapidly taking a bite of *her* dinner so she wouldn’t have to respond.

The Heavy Weapons Expert waited, finally taking another bite of *hers*, willing to do this for the next hour and change they’d reserved this room for, if necessary.

“Am I attractive?” Medbie finally asked, glancing up at the surprised blonde, then looking down at herself. “I, I know I’m getting older, I mean I’m *twenty-seven*, but we’re regressing to twenty-*five*, physically, and that shouldn’t matter *that* much, and-”

“You are,” Shotbie interrupted, quickly finishing her bite, and cutting the younger woman off. “Barbie on Barbie without Ken, not good, but I not mind you being pole-sister in sheesome,” she added with a smile. “I not mind three Kens ago, when he had prehensile-”

*“Right!”* the doctor cut her off, blushing a bit, the younger woman *still* not being exactly comfortable talking about such things frankly when they involved *her*, after all these years. “But…” she continued, the embarrassment turning to confusion, then *anger,* “Then why did he say *no!?”*

*Ah.*

“Lee probably had his reasons,” Shotbie noted, and, if she had to guess, had *told* her friend them, only to be disbelieved, something the man did *not* like when he was being completely honest, instead of teasing.

As if on cue, the green haired woman spat, working herself up, “He *said* I didn’t like him, but who cares!? That I’d ‘barely talked to him at all’! What does *that* have to do with anything!?”

The older woman blinked, as… “*Do* you like him?” she inquired, confused. “Was under impression you thought him ‘just a Ken’?” *Despite the evidence otherwise.*

“He *is,*” the Doctor agreed, with a momentarily *ugly* twist in her tone. “Someone to look pretty, stay out of the way, and scratch the occasional itch!” A look of dread spread across the green-haired woman’s visage. “Is, is he *gay!?”*

Despite herself, Shotbie snorted. “Ah. No. He is *not.*”

“Wait, did *you* sleep with him?” her friend demanded. “You *bitch!* Why you and not *me?”*

Shotbie *sighed*, as, she truly *did* love her friends, but Medbie had always been… *insecure.*

“We have not,” the older woman reassured the younger. *Though the fact that* ***Grit*** *applied to learning how to kiss was an amusing discovery, as was his willingness to ‘try it on non-combat skills’. His reaction to that, though, suggested… not good things.* “Lee is, how you say, traditional? Wants to take things slow.”

*“Slow?”* the doctor sneered. “He’s a *Ken.* He doesn’t have *time* to take things slow.”

And, sometimes, Medbie could be a bit *more* than insecure.

*“****Lee*** believes he will,” the amazon stressed, glancing at the burger in her hand, and, finding that she was quickly *losing* her appetite, put it down. “And, with Contract***s*** he *might*.”

“Oh, *please,*” the green haired girl replied. “I know optimism is your *thing*, but be *reasonable*. He’s a *Ken!*”

Not *quite* understanding the disconnect at play here, the platinum blonde woman stated, “Yes? He is Ken. Ken that is *supporting* us. That is…” *Rare,* she thought, as the ones that could, usually did not *want* to, and the ones that wanted to, *usually* *could not.* “He is Ken that does not wish to sleep with you, but maybe it is that he not want to be told, what, ‘Lie back and think of Mattel’?”

“Who *gives* a shit what *he* wants?” the Barbie across from her spat, the momentarily ugliness in her voice back, and with friends, as they set up basecamp upon her features. “He’s a *Ken*. A convenient *cock* that lets us *do our jobs.* It’s *cute* he’s helping, but we’ve been doing this for *years,* Shotbie, and we’ll be doing it for years *more*. Him getting *us* the Contracts was smart, but blind squirrels, and *this* way we’ll keep getting better *long* after he’s gone, just like the rest.”

The… *vitriol* in Medbie’s voice took Shotbie aback, as, yes, that was by all means true for *some* of the pitiful excuses for humanity they had played host to before, but others had been kind, been well meaning, been courageous to the point of *death* to save them, like the one that Boombie had fallen for, like the one that *Capbie* had.

The older Barbie had *thought* such a thing was obvious, had made sure to *comment* on it, to point it out to others just in case, but… but there was a difference between hearing, and *listening.* And…

And it was the way of the ‘smart’ to be so *incredibly* dumb, not taking things as they were, like she did, but using their intellect to deceive themselves, as that was *far* easier than using it to deceive the world, let alone change it!

After all the world was much *easier* to manage if all Kens were evil idiots.

Just as Bad Kens found their situations easer to manage if all Barbies were brainless bimbos.

“And perhaps ***Lee*** does not wish to sleep with one that sees him as ‘Convenient Cock’ instead of as *person,*” Shotbie rebuked, a hint of anger in her tone, a core of steel that normally was not needed. “I thought your disliking of Atlantis Ken was that he thought of us, as, what was phrase, ah, *yes*, *‘Bonus Holes’* for him to *fuck*, not that *you* wanted to be one in power to do *fucking* instead.”

The look of betrayal on her friend’s face was, in some ways, deserved, but *so were Shotbie’s statements.*

“But,” Medbie stammered. “But why- but he’s a *Ken!*”

“And you are *Barbie*,” Shotbie nodded, gaze sharp. “Being Barbie not stop *Knifebie* from trying to kill us all because she wanted to be *Capbie*.” Sighing, the amazon stood, grabbing her beer. “Most Ken, yes, *pathetic*. Most Barbie *not*. But Lee is *not* most Ken. Are *you* acting like most Barbie?”

“No, I’m no-” the doctor started to respond, instinctively, *not thinking through her words*, when, from their **Templates**, just as Barbies were *supposed* to be considerate and careful with what they said, she should’ve noticed such a *simple* linguistic trap.

But Medbie was less Barbie than Shotbie had thought.

Nodding, the older woman informed her friend. “We will do this again, in two weeks. In mean time, think on your thinking, and if it one of Barbie, or what you believe *Ken* to be.”

And with that, she *walked away*.

Newbie

Speed Tier 3 p-2

Saving up for Luffy!

Boombie

Pure Element (Fire) P -6

Defense Tier 3 P -2

Speed Tier 3 P -2

Snipebie

Dexterity -1p

Divine Sense P -4

Shooting skill -1p

Moral Strength P -4

Hackbie

Reaction Speed -1

Casting Speed -1

Tier 3 Speed -2

Final Clash -6

Shotbie

Tier 3 Strength P -2

Smite P -4

One (Wo)Man Army P -4

Medbie

Lay on Hands -4

Disease Resistance -2

Rest Banked for Naruto.

Capbie

Reaction speed -1

Battle Genius P -4

Weapon Striking -1

Weak Arts P -4

Kencifer

Grit P -4

Enhancing Aura P -4

Tier 3 Speed P -2