

Chapter 43

Katherine blocked with the cybernetic arm. It was the only thing it was good for anymore with all the holes in it. She'd been lucky she hadn't lost it at the forearm when Alex had pulled a mono-edge knife out of the multitude clipped to his body. He kept stepping to her left, trying to get in a slash at her organic arm. How had this happened?

"Enrick!" she yelled, panic making her voice even higher, hoping he was still around. She should have let him kill Alex earlier, but she'd been so sure she could fight him, beat him.

The file she'd compiled on him, from all the Law reports she'd acquired, had shown he was good, but nothing like this. And that incessant laughter... That man had to have fallen into insanity.

She saw Enrick, in his horrible orange and green jacket, move behind Alex, so she attacked him as a distraction. Her arm took yet more damage in response, but Enrick was in position.

Alex smiled at her as Enrick fired. He ducked as she saw the flash and smelled burning hair. Her burning hair. Enrick's mouth dropped. She didn't have the time to be surprised; Alex came at her again.

She dodged, blocked with her arm. At least now his knife seemed to be just polycarbon; her arm could take that. Enrick aimed again and fired. And fired again as Alex moved out of the way. Enrick fired three times in quick succession, and missed all three times, coming too close to her as she tried to keep Alex in the line of fire.

Enrick fired faster, and now she had to stay out of way as well as avoiding Alex's slashes. He was laughing like a maniac.

"Stop shooting! You're going to hit me."

Alex's knife flashed, and she just got her arm in the way. Metal slid against metal. Alex tried to step to her left, but instead of turning to protect her left arm, she stepped with him, forcing his attention on her.

Enrick was almost close enough. She pleaded with him to hurry; she wouldn't be able to take this for much longer.

Alex ducked her attack, pivoted on a foot, reversed his grip on the knife, and slashed up Enrick's stomach and chest, then across the neck as he turned to block her knife, smiling and laughing.

Enrick's shocked expression faded as blood and his insides poured out of him. He folded back as Alex pushed her hard.

"Help!" The circuitry in her cybernetic arm had stopped sparking many attacks before, and now she could see all the way through it via some of the holes.

Men came to help her, the few who weren't terrified. One was hers, the others dressed in gray armor. They tried to help her. Instead, they all died.

It was impossible for someone to be this good. It was as if Alex was prescient. Just as they'd been about to strike, he ducked or threw himself to the side, or turned to block the blow. Alex would respond with a few

quick motions, and the man would fall down.

She tried to use the distraction to maneuver for the door, but Alex was too quick. Her only attempt to run, where she'd turned her back to him, had resulted in the back of her jacket being cut open. Any closer and it would have been her spine. She spun. She wasn't giving him another chance.

Katherine backed away, but there were almost none of the men left that had come to her help. *Only a few more steps, she thought. The door hadn't been that far.*

She stepped on something uneven, cried out in surprise as she fell back. Someone caught her, pulled her close. She opened her mouth to thank him, but it was forced shut as Alex slammed the knife through her lower jaw and into her head.

He was smiling at her, looking into her eyes. She saw no malice there, simply a man enjoying himself. Her vision faded as someone snuck up on Alex. Maybe someone would avenge her.

I'm coming, Thomas. Please don't be mad at me for failing to avenge you.

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