

[Third Person POV]

It was a few moments before midnight when the darkness finally descended over the usually bustling metropolis of New York.

The air felt unseasonably cool for the time of the year, this just adding to the silent atmosphere that made the residents wrap their coats tighter around themselves as they hastened home.

All around, the bars and restaurants had cleared out, leaving the city in an eerie, unsettling stillness.

An empty city, all save for one abandoned warehouse near the docks, where two predators faced off with a single goal. Kill.

Deathstroke stood tall, his mask illuminated by the light of the full moon. His eyes narrowed and focused, pointed down at the imposing figure in front of him. His cold voice echoed off the walls of the place, "Hello, little bug. We finally met, I know you're probably confused. But don't

waste your energy trying to figure out why I'm here, but if you want some advice, don't waste your last moments pondering that outside your control."

The Black Beetle growled as he fixed the mercenary with an icy gaze. He stepped forward, the air crackling with tension, and his voice carrying nothing but a tone of menace. "Don't presume to know what I think about, human. The only inevitable thing here is your demise at my hands."

Slade almost chuckled at the Black Beetle's bravado. Maybe a few years ago the Beetle would've been able to kill him, but now, as he was today, the mercenary was certain this battle would be a stroll in the park.

Deathstroke let out a chilling laugh as he slowly sunk into a mocking bow, his cold, emotionless eyes locked onto his adversary. His voice as sharp as a blade, he taunted, "Shall we begin?".

The two shifted positions slowly, as if in anticipation, and then suddenly burst into action, lunging at each other with blinding speed.

The Black Beetle rocketed towards Deathstroke, his armor emitting a low-level hum and a powerful bluish light as it shifted shapes, creating an extra pair of thrusters that activated right away without wasting a second. But as the alien hurtled closer, intending to end the fight in a single strike, Deathstroke reacted quickly, catching the Beetle's punch in one hand, before unleashing a right hook that connected on the alien's face with a sickening thwack, sending the Black Beetle crashing into the ground, creating a deep crater.

Deathstroke stood stoically, a cold sneer under his mask as he stared down his still surprised foe. Letting out a sigh, the mercenary shook his head slowly and called out in a mocking tone, "Come on, surely you can do better than that!"

The Beetle growled, as soon enough his body was filled with a low mechanical hum and his armor began to swirl and shift around, rearranging itself into an extensive array of weapons.

The corners of Deathstroke's mouth twitched into a sinister smile as he reached for one of the many weapons secured to his body. His hands tightened around a long,

fighting staff as he stepped forward, eager to test just how powerful the Beetle was before crushing out its last breath.

Deathstroke moved forward, gracefully dodging the Beetle's blasts with the help of his battle staff, before he twirled behind the alien, his staff becoming a blur, as his foot left the ground and he thrust it towards the Beetle.

The Beetle, now having a better understanding of the skill of his foe, dived to the ground dodging the attack as his arms morphed into razor-sharp blades, before coiling his body tightly and launching himself at Deathstroke with a savage upward slash, aiming to shred Slade's chest.

But in a split second, Deathstroke saw the blades coming and reacted swiftly, in an effortless manner, as he brought up his staff and struck the alien on the back of his head, just as the blades were about to hit him, using the force of his strike to jump back.

Then before the Beetle could react. In a blur of movement, the Terminator was upon him, digging one of his boots against the Beetle's chest, sending him sprawling on the floor, before landing one final kick on the alien's face, sending the latter flying into the air, his face meeting the cold ground.

The Beetle's eyes widened and fury bubbled in his veins as he let out an unearthly hiss. Straining to get on all fours as he growled, "All data about you imply you are a human without powers. It seems the data the Light gave us was more than incomplete."

"More like outdated," Slade bellowed, taking slow, heavy steps toward the downed alien.

"So far you have demonstrated strength comparable to that of a Kryptonian," The Beetle said, and he did, his head shot up; his eyes firmly focused on the foe ahead of him.

"Unfortunately for you, I am equipped to deal with such threats."

At this, the Beetle's armor thrummed and he lunged forward, flipping over Deathstroke in a single graceful movement and slicing his arm blades deep into the mercenary's back.

Slade roared in pain, as streams of blood dripped from underneath his suit. But no sooner than the mercenary recoiled from the first blow was he met with a second.

Adapting to the new tempo in the battle, Slade spun his body to the side, narrowly avoiding the alien blades that sailed by his head. Then with incredible speed, he thrust his staff forward, aiming it straight at Beetle's chest, with the jagged point of the staff connecting with a sickening thud, forcing a grunt of pain from the alien's lips.

But Beetle refused to be slowed down. So brushing the mercenary's attack aside, he moved forward, dodging Deathstroke's staff before sending him into the far wall with a point-blank blast of one of his weapons.

Slade's orange-and-blue mask popped off as his head hit the cement, revealing the one-eyed, grizzled old face underneath, who for some reason was smiling.

"Your life ends here," The Beetle declared, aiming one of his blasters at Deathstroke.

The old soldier having no intention of quitting, dove away from the incoming plasma blast, and without missing a beat or momentum, he hurled his staff at the alien's chest, exploding on impact and sending shockwaves through the warehouse, as the mercenary rolled over to the side, readying himself for the next attack.

Taken back by Slade's attack, the alien's head spun like a whirlwind as he gasped in disbelief, being more than shocked at the fact the mercenary's explosive had been powerful enough to break through the armor plating of his protective suit.

Unable to grasp what had happened, he shakily touched his chest, and his fingers came away wet with blood.

"Impossib-"

Then before the Beetle could regain his footing, a kick shot through the smoke of the explosion, catching the alien in the side and sending it tumbling along the floor.

"Do you really think you have the luxury of looking away?" Deathstroke asked as he pulled his katana from its scabbard, before attempting to drive the blade through the Beetle's head.

However, before Slade's attack could connect, the Beetle rolled aside and sprung to one knee, his right arm shifting into a curved metallic blade that met with Slade's own blade with a loud clang.

Slade gave a subtle grunt of approval as he stepped back and brought his katana back to chest level, before lunging

forward with shocking speed, the sharp blade slicing cleanly through the alien's armor, leaving a deep gash in its chest. "That's better, but not nearly enough."

"How can something as primitive as a sword slice through the Reach's most advanced technology?" The Beetle questioned, his tone showing that he was more than certain his suit should have provided more than adequate defense against such a simple ancient weapon.

Deathstroke gripped his katana with one hand, feeling the weight of the weapon in his grip, as he met the alien's gaze with a smirk. "Let's just say my boss likes to keep me well-armed and dangerous."

The Beetle gritted his teeth and let out a low growl before pushing himself off the ground, glaring at the mercenary for a moment, before the two clashed once more for a final time.

The two combatants brawled like feral animals, The Beetle launching a series of blows with his many weapons one after the other, hurting the mercenary, as Slade returned the onslaught with strikes of his own, his movements lightning-quick, with each swing of his blade leaving deep gashes on the alien's skin, splattering its blood on the floor.

However, unlike the alien's wounds that remained in place through the fight, the wounds Slade was receiving would heal almost instantly. The alien could see now that Slade's armor was mostly gone, how the wounds he was giving the old soldier would disappear in mere seconds as if they were never there, to begin with.

"I refuse to lose to a hum-" The Beetle's words were cut off as Slade spun on his heel and delivered a powerful kick to his chest, sending him rolling back, planting at the same time a small explosive of the alien's chest, before taking a step back, detonating it, using his arm to cover his eyes from the explosion that rippled through the air.

Roaring, the Beetle let his baser instincts take over, as without a thought the latter rushed forward, trying to attack the mercenary in a blind fit of rage.

However, with a flip of the wrist and an inhumanly-quick display of swordsmanship, Slade moved forward and drove his blade through the alien's suit, and into the gut of the being beneath.

Silently, the Beetle lurched forward as the blade drove deep into him, his eyes wide with shock, as his blood oozed from his wound and mouth, pooling around his feet.

Time seemed to stand still in that moment, the silence between them filled with the metallic smell of death.

Eventually, Slade withdrew his blade from the alien's chest before bringing the blade down again with precision, slicing off its head, finally allowing the alien's limp body to hit the ground with a thud into a pool of its own blood.

Cracking his neck, Slade stood over his target, eyes cold and expressionless, as he grabbed a cloth from his utility belt to clean his sword, before sliding his blade back into its sheath, once he was satisfied that it was sufficiently clean.

With a triumphant smirk on his face, the old soldier brought his hand up to his ear and tapped into his comm device. "Boss, mission complete," he said, watching as the pool of blood in front of him slowly expanded. "And in case you were wondering, yes, the prototype pills worked as you said they would, a lot weaker than the other ones, but enough to make the job feel... enjoyable."