

Chapter 115: Slice and Dice

As the alarms rang throughout Ferrumus Corp's compound, our team sat back and watched. Our Nyes acted as our eyes as they allowed us to see what was going on around us. The design of the building also helped with the clear transparent windows all around the center of the building. We were easily able to look down into the hallways of the other floors below.

Guards and automated defenses scrambled around. The latter were in much greater numbers, with various battle bots on the loose, while the occasional patrols were much fewer in numbers. Still, each and every single guardsman appeared to be a treasure trove of high-tech cybernetics, so their threat couldn't be measured by their numbers alone.

On the other hand, the robots seemed much more disposable with their lightweight appearance. They were fast, zipping by like a silver flash, but I suspect they were more meant to bog down their foes.

It didn't take long before we began hearing the sounds of fighting and it rapidly grew louder. We turned our attention to the source and spotted snippets of the fighting outside. It was in front of the adjacent building where the main Ferrumus Corp building was.

Several black hooded figures with large frames moved with unnatural precision, shooting down a swarm of gun drones with what appeared to be mini-guns attached to the hands of several members of the hooded intruders. Each shot that was fired had the same stopping power as a typical railgun round.

The drones were able to buy enough time for the nearby guards to assemble with ease, but it wasn't able to change the outcome of the fight. The hooded group appeared invincible, as they barely flinched when they were hit while the guards from Ferrumus were mowed down with ease.

While it took a few minutes at best, I couldn't help but wonder how much ammo was stored in those mini-guns as they fired nonstop. It quickly changed the scenery outside. A mountain of bots and drones littered the ground, occasionally mixed in with the bodies of the guards.

The invaders soon breached the building to continue their attack.

Just as they disappeared from sight, an explosion suddenly rocked our building. I quickly flipped over the feeds our Nyes afforded me and found another team of hooded invaders entering our building.

"Let's stay low. We're not here to pick a fight." I said to my team.

Seeing they all nodded in affirmation, I brought my attention back to the attackers, who were overwhelming all the defenses, along with the bots and guards who went to meet them in the

lobby. Powerful railgun rounds sailed back and forth across the entrance, and the assailants soon proved victorious in our battlefield as well.

I watched as the hooded figures entered the stairway and emerged on the next floor above. They proceeded to briefly clear each room they came across as if they were looking for something.

“We’ll sneak past them when they come to our floor. There’s no need for us to get involved.” I declared.

When they were about to arrive on our floor, we all quickly turned on our camouflage with our Shades and went out of our room toward one of the stairwells.

The door to the stairs slammed open as the hooded figures arrived. We all waited for them to pass through before escaping behind them.

Just as we were about to enter the stairwell, several Ferrumus Corp battle drones rushed out from the other side of our floor. They immediately opened fire, and projectiles whizzed across the hallway. It was inevitable that several bullets had struck Brian, who was taking up our rear.

He grunted and fell face forward, with the damage momentarily dispelling his active camouflage. That, combined with the noise he made, was all that the hooded intruders needed to be alerted to our presence.

When I turned back, the enemy had made short work of the drones and a few were staring in our direction. Their red eyes flashed brightly as we made eye contact, and I instantly realized it wouldn’t be easy fighting these cyborgs. They were likely from a rival corp that was comparable to Ferrumus, and that meant they were decked out in all the high-tech equipment that a powerful A-Class corp could offer.

Just as they pointed their weapons toward us, a bright flash of silvery light dazzled our eyes, and half of them were instantly sliced up into small pieces.

It took a moment before everyone realized what had happened and connected the dots as we all looked over at the lone man standing over the bodies. He had a sword sheathed at his waist with a hand on the hilt. He glared at the remaining hooded figures with undisguised bloodlust.

I would agree it was an intimidating sight if it weren’t for the comical hairstyle the man had. It was just a few strands of long hair that was a popular hairstyle in Ferrumus Corp, for some reason.

Wait...That’s our guide, Kai!

The hooded men asked no questions and immediately fired at the newcomer. His lithe figure wasn’t only for show, as he swiftly maneuvered himself through the hail of bullets at a speed

that made it hard to even keep track of the blur that he was. I couldn't tell for sure, but I believed he even deflected some bullets while moving at such high speeds.

He closed the gap and slashed down an enemy in one swift motion, but what was more impressive was his hair. To my surprise, they weren't simply hair as they came alive and twirled around on their own, slicing apart any nearby foe as Kai went by.

In a blink of an eye, all the hooded men were slain except one.

The last survivor decided to engage him in close combat instead and brought out a vibro sword. Kai seemed to not care whatsoever, drawing his blade to meet the man's. What the results were wasn't a surprise, but Kai's weapons were a different story.

Ferrumus Corp was a major producer of vibro blades, and that meant it was reasonable that they kept the best toys for themselves.

Kai's sword shone with a dull white light the moment it was drawn. When his blade made contact with the vibro sword of his foe, the vibro blade parted with no resistance, as if it were just a toy. Only the sound of heavy metal hitting the ground confirmed it was made of real metal.

My eyes widened at the sight. Vibro blades held up exceptionally well against similar weapons and were known for their durability. Otherwise, it wouldn't be so popular.

"That lanky cyborg is so fast! It seems our guide wasn't as simple as he looked." Thorne stated.

"That is the strength of specialization. Ferrumus Corp has heavily invested in maximizing the effectiveness of using a sword. It is even at the point of being able to match conventional weapons in enclosed spaces with all their augments." I replied.

It wasn't hard to tell that Kai was a crystallization of various high technologies, all aiming to make him a deadly sword master. He zipped by the team of hooded figures, slashing into them with his unblockable blade.

As Andrew saw to Brian's injuries, Kai sheathed his blade and slowly walked towards me.

"Apologizes for the mess. We will have cleaned up in a few minutes." He said in a casual tone, as if it was just a small matter. "Please follow me to some proper accommodations that are free from these pests."

I glanced back and found Brian doing fine as his armor blocked the round, then nodded and followed Kai. He brought us up to another floor and left us in a room identical to our previous one.

Fighting could still be heard every so often, but nothing reached us after that.

By nighttime, everyone quieted and we could see many of their employees outside.

The next day soon came, and Ferrumus Corp seemed to have completely forgotten about the attack, so we quickly departed back to our ship while we still had the chance. I wasn't willing to stay to find out if it was composure or just how common attacks were around here that desensitized them to it.

Priya had luckily spent the night on our ship, watching over the repairs.

When we arrived at the docks, a proper spaceship greeted us. All marks of our makeshift repairs were gone, and the hull looked pristine. It looked different from what it did originally, but it at least gave me the confidence to ride on it.

"Is the performance back to its former peak?" I asked, as I saw Priya standing near the entrance to the ship.

"No way. It's only been a night. We'll need at least another half a day to fully repair it. Expect to pay some fines to the rental company."

Still...Repairing an entire ship in a day or two...That's way too fast.

We soon boarded the ship and departed from Ferrumus station.

My job was complete, and I had already notified Joey of it, too. I could now return and join the fight against the High Gate group.

A part of me wanted to linger around Aegis or another space station. I could use the excuse of evading my assassins while I adventured around, but that wasn't something I could actually do when my company was in danger.

"What are you thinking about while you stare out into space like that?" I turned to find Thorne floating behind me. He handed me a drink packet as he came up beside me.

"Nothing much, just about our next steps."

"Hmm, I see. Well, the pilot girl said we'll be arriving at Aegis soon, so you don't have much time left."

"Did you arrange for our tickets back to Elevate City yet?"

"Yeah, the earliest they had was the day after tomorrow, in the afternoon, so we'll have to spend two nights in Aegis. I booked the same hotel as last time. Is that okay?"

I nodded. "Let's try to spend our time productively while we're stuck up here, then."

"And how do we do that? Last I heard, the High Gate Group doesn't have any permanent presence up here."

“...How about shopping around to prepare ourselves for the fight to come?”

He shrugged and we both silently watched the space elevator grow larger from the frontal cameras.

The moment we docked, I received a call from the rental company. At their insistence, I went to meet them at their office before the day was over.

“Mr.Halls, we have finished inspecting our ship and would like to discuss with you the fee you still owe us after deducting your deposit. Here is the full list of repairs.”

I quickly forwarded the file he sent to Priya to get her opinion.

“...Your repair plan replaces a lot of functional parts. Surely, you don't have to have the exact same type of hull plating and color.”

“As our contract states, we expect to have our vehicle returned to us in the same condition before it left our hands. Please—”

I held up a hand to him.

“Very well. If we're going according to the contract, then we haven't returned the ship to you yet. We still have some time before the appointed time.”

“...”

It wasn't difficult to find out from the repair list he sent me that they contracted the repairs to themselves. The costs were something they set, and I could shop around for a better deal before the time was up. I still had the ship for five days, so I'd rather take my chances at finding a good deal.

I ignored their hastily put-together 'discounted repair rates' and brought my team to go shopping instead. It wasn't a bad time to gear them all up in anticipation of the upcoming fight. The elites that followed me deserved better equipment, and I wanted to search for anything that could benefit our fighting forces.

We soon arrived at the biggest mall in Aegis, called The Central. Various corporation names were plastered out in front of the building, which looked like a pyramid flipped upside down. I didn't bother thinking about how it balanced or supported all that weight and entered the building from the ground floor, where several elevators were arranged in a circle.

I picked the floor for cybernetics and quickly arrived at a bustling floor that was filled with people. They didn't seem like the typical corpo in suits, as they were buff, likely from the security departments.

We could see the entire floor upon exiting the elevator, with all the different brands segregated into their own area. At the center, a spacious clearing that was easily ten times the size of all the

other areas was set aside for one corporation alone. Everyone could immediately tell from the company logo that was plastered around that it belonged to SocialCorp.

My eyes zoomed in out of curiosity to check out their wares up here and my interest was instantly piqued.