

Terra's blood rushes loudly in her ears, beating in time to her pursuers' footsteps behind her. Apparently, the steam didn't hold them off for long. Terra runs faster, dodging the many obstacles in her way. She needs to find somewhere to hide until she can contact the ship.

Terra slows down at the fork at the end of the corridor and turns the corner, barely staying on her feet. She risks a quick glance over her shoulder to check her lead. The gap is too tight. They're going to catch her. She forces her legs to move, but not for long. She runs full force into a solid wall of muscle in front of her. Her arms flail uselessly in the air as she tries to stay upright. Strong arms wrap around her waist and lower her gently to the ground. Her eyes and weapon move slowly up the stranger's tall body.

The man easily reaches six-and-a-half-foot and is dressed entirely in black leather with a hood hiding his features. A gun and a large handled knife hang from a thick black belt circling his waist.

She shuffles back, unsure whether he's a friend or foe. For all she knows he could be with the other three men. Through the shadows, his strange glowing purple eyes lock onto her for a moment before turning towards the men who have stopped behind her. They collectively take a step back and Terra can't blame them. Even the surrounding air seems to have dropped a few degrees in response to the man's arrival. He may not have moved a muscle or said a word, but one thing is clear: Terra is more afraid of him than she is of the men chasing her.

She eases herself off the floor while keeping a close eye on her attackers and the stranger. Terra grips her gun, ready to shoot first if she has to. Time seems to freeze for her as the two parties stare at each other. Hopefully, the new man and her three attackers will decide to wrestle each other and provide her with the chance to disappear. With only one bullet, she doesn't have many other options available.

Unfortunately, the opportunity vanishes as the leader of the gang seems to discover his courage and slowly moves towards the stranger.

'I don't know who you are but this is nothing to do with you. That female broke my damn nose!'

The stranger lowers his hood to display a full metal mask covering his features. 'A broken nose is the least of your worries.'

The attackers pause for a moment. 'You're Nomad?' The man in black stays silent as the leader nudges his companions. 'You're all alone though, ain't you? Hey, Nomad, we'll cut you some slack this once, so how bout you turn around and walk away now. She's mine. She owes me.' He steps closer to the Nomad and sneers up at him. 'Walk away. Now! We'll forget we saw you. You forget you saw us. Everyone's happy.'

The Nomad looks down at Terra for a moment before stepping over her, the creak of leather audible over the other sounds of the station. He stands in front of her like a guardian and silently looks at the group for a moment before speaking. 'I've got a perfect memory and she sure as hell isn't happy.' The stranger's voice sounds distorted due to the mask, which only adds to the air of intimidation surrounding him.

The men laugh. The leader takes another step closer and starts turning the blade in his hand. 'You're serious! In case you haven't noticed, three against one ain't great odds.'

The Nomad says nothing as he slowly takes off his right glove. His hand seems wrong, but she struggles to make sense of what she's seeing. He flexes his fingers and she realises he has a metal hand.

The group of men notice his mechanical hand at the same time she does. The leader's eyes open wide in recognition and the colour visibly drains from his face. 'Shit. Listen, we're sorry. We didn't know she was with you. We'll go. We can forget this ever happened.'

'As I said, I've got a perfect memory.' The Nomad suddenly leaps forward and pulls a knife from his belt. He slices it across the man's throat to open a large gash, then slams his metal hand against the second man's neck. Sparks of electricity run down the Nomad's arm, out of his hand and into the man's neck. The man convulses violently before crumpling to the ground. The Nomad throws his knife at the third man, who follows his friends a second later with the blade embedded in his eye.

The brawl took three seconds from start to finish. If not for the bodies at his feet, she would have said she imagined the whole thing. He turns to face her and the purple tinted shielding over his eyes glows in the dim light. Her instincts kick in. Terra raises her gun and fires. The round hits him square in the chest, but he barely flinches.

Instead, he crouches down in front of her. 'That wasn't very nice now, was it?'

Before she can respond, he moves faster than she thought possible and jams a pressure syringe against her neck. The room spins around her and dark patches appear at the corners of her vision. His glowing purple eyes examine her as she passes out.