

“Go, go, go!” Anders yelled, motioning everyone to one direction.

Alex and Aliana were already heading away from them, Miranda and Mary just behind, with Zephyr catching up. Will watched the golden-skinned man and worried. He and Anders had been in a hushed discussion while in the hold, too far for him to hear. Unfortunately, he could guess what it had been about.

*Plant a knife in Alex's back.* And Zephyr could do it. Will didn't know anyone better with knives.

“Move!” Anders told Will. “I'm not having you stay here and get blown through that when they void the hangar.” He pointed to the closing door.

That wasn't how it worked, but he didn't even try to explain how hangar doors were built to withstand vacuum. He didn't have anywhere enough patience to line up those words for a man who wouldn't bother listening.

Will cast another glance toward Aliana and silently wished her luck before turning and running after the others, with Anders at his side.

“Stay alert!” Anders yelled as he ran through his people. “Crimson screwed things up, and they know we're here. We could have—”

Blasts erupted over their heads. Will grabbed the man he was next to, the only one who hadn't reflexively ducked, and pulled him to a door. He tapped the numbers that dropped on the display and pulled the Lawman inside, running his gun over the empty storage room.

“I think I'm with the wrong group.”

“Yes.” Will peered around the jam. Someone was in the middle of the corridor, lying on the floor. Everyone else was against the wall or in an intersection, returning fire.

“Shit,” the Lawman said and ran out the door.

“No!” Will fired in the corridor, above everyone's head. At least the Lawman stayed down as he grabbed the other's arms and pulled him back.

“Stupid,” Will said as he got back in.

The Lawman checked the other—Milo, Will realized—and his face fell. “He's dead.”

“Yes.”

“You knew?”

Will rolled his eyes, how hadn't he? He thought Lawmen knew those things. The man got to the edge of the door and Will pulled him back.

“Don't.”

“Shouldn't we do something?”

Will pointed to the gun which was still in the Lawman's holster.

“Oh.” He took it out and turned it on.

Will glanced out. It was still going on, but there was less incoming fire. It wasn't like he had anything else to do, so he lined up a few words and asked his question.

“Don't Lawmen know?” He indicated the firearm finally in the man's hand.

“It's been a while for me; I'm out of practice.”

Will raised an eyebrow.

“I've been behind a desk for a few decades.”

Will stared at him. What was a desk-jockey doing here? He hadn't even realized the Law had those. “Muscle?”

“Yeah, I have those.” He pulled a shirt sleeve up to show him.

Will shook his head and raised his gun. “Muscle.”

The man looked at his gun and burst out laughing. “Is that what that means?”

Will raised an eyebrow.

“Hey, everyone here has muscle, even him.” The Lawman indicated Milo, who was probably the least muscular of the group. “I just thought it was about being able to fight.”

“Yes.” Will indicated his gun again, before peering out. Still going on, but it would end soon.

"I thought a fist fight, not that I'm any more useful in those. Fuck, I am so in the wrong group. I should head back and catch up to Alex."

"No."

"Look, I don't belong with you guys. He's just down that corridor. We haven't even made any turns." He began moving, but Will grabbed his arm.

"Stu-pid." He did everything he could to convey all the ways in which it was a stupid idea in just those two syllables.

"Regroup!" Anders yelled. Which meant the gunfight was over.

Will pulled the Lawman along.

"Who'd we lose?"

"Milo," Will said.

"That's a shame," Anders said, actually sounding saddened. "He was shaping up nicely."

"Matilda," someone else said.

"I'm not dead," the woman replied, sounding in pain.

"I can fix that," that same person replied.

"Enough. Mat?"

"I'm down for the count unless someone brought Doc in a pocket. I took Heals and I've sealed the wound, but there's no way I can walk."

"Holies..." the Lawman said and looked pale. Matilda was missing her left leg below the knee.

There was a door next to her and Will went to it. The numbers around it took their times falling into place, but then he had it open. He scanned the unoccupied room and Tim helped Matilda in.

"We'll come back for you when we're done."

She stretched on the bed. "Not worried, Boss."

"Shouldn't someone stay with her?" the Lawman asked.

"Who're you?" Anders asked.

"Victor, Victor Barstone. I'm—"

"Not one of mine, what are you doing here?"

"I kind of got mixed up in the confusion and—"

"With me," Will said, before Anders could throw him to the guards just to piss off Alex.

Anders looked like he might tell him what to do, but even he realized now was not the time. "Keep him out of my way."

"Resheph took one to the head." This got most of them to hang their head. Even the Lawman did it, although there was no way he'd known her.

"Okay, who has the map?" Anders asked. "We need to move before more guards show up." Murray handed him a datapad. Anders looked it over and set a quick pace, everyone falling in. Will kept the Lawman with him at the back, along with Vivianne.

There was another firefight, this one over before anyone on the other side could return fire or, Will saw as they walked by the bodies, hadn't been in a position to do so.

"They were civilians," the Lawman said, sounding sick. "Why kill them?"

"Enemy," Will replied, doing his best not to be annoyed at how naïve the Lawman was. Exactly why had Alex brought him?

"They weren't security; they could just have tied them up."

"Too long."

"Everyone on this ship is the enemy, better learn that fast," Vivianne said. "Armed or not, you don't take a chance on anyone. Even the floor-cleaner can raise the alarm."

"They already know we're here."

"Then the civvies should stay in their rooms."

The Lawman had a point. "Alarms?" Will motioned around them. How come no alarms were sounding?

“Ease up on him,” Titania said, smiling at the Lawman. “Victor’s your name, right Lawman?”

“Victor Barstone, yes.”

“Love the name. Really strong-sounding. When this is—”

“Focus,” Will said. He thought about warning him of how Titania went through men faster than he went through locks, but he didn’t have anywhere near enough words for that.

The next firefight occurred a few intersections later, guards waiting for them. They only lost one—gut shot that, without a medic, would have been a miserable way to die, so Anders ended it quickly. The Lawman took part in that fight, even if his hand shook, making a lot of his shots go wide, and he didn’t comment on the mercy Anders administered.

He did look sick, but he didn’t comment.