

Chapter 110: Extraction Pt.2

Tally (Miranda) - Mercenary

As Tally entered the server room of Sanso Corp, the automated turrets dropped down from the ceiling and quickly snapped their weapons toward her. Her prayers for the guns to deactivate intensified with every passing second.

“Five, four, three, two, one...”

A loud gunshot rang out at the end of the countdown and Tally could only close her eyes in resignation at having trusted the corpos her brother had somehow gotten involved with.

Damn it all!

As she shut her eyes tight, she realized that she felt no pain whatsoever.

Am I already dead? At least it was a quick and painless death...

Her thoughts started to wander about what would happen after her passing. Who would find the credits she had hidden, and how her brother would survive from hereon, but then her world began to shake.

She instinctively opened her eyes to see what was going on, only to come face to face with an unfamiliar man, staring straight at her through a transparent helmet.

“Hello? Aren’t we in a hurry? Can you get on with it already?”

She took a moment to glance around her and found that she was still standing in the same place, inside the server room of Sanso Corporation. The man who had shaken her was in corporate power armor, and a quick look between that and the wrecked turrets gave her all the information she needed to figure out what had happened.

Having gathered her bearings, she jumped into action and dashed toward the terminal that had access to the database.

“You dumb brute! You couldn’t warn me if you were going to shoot out the turrets, not to mention suddenly firing off that stupid gun right beside me.” She complained as she jacked into the network.

“Brute force is a proper tactic that’s been honed since the beginning of time. Just focus on your task and don’t worry about it. I got you covered.”

She snorted at the corpo and ignored him as she focused on her work in the virtual space.

The surroundings were quiet, but her company implants had been blaring out an alarm as soon as the shooting had begun. Tally quickly activated the backdoor program she had set within the company's software when she had initially infiltrated this place and disconnected herself from Sanso Corp's systems.

Once she was done, she could be at ease while she breached into the corporate systems. Everything was proceeding smoothly when more gunfire disrupted her flow, drawing her attention away.

She looked up and found the man in power armor missing, but saw several scraps of what appeared to have belonged to the robotic patrols just outside the room. The shooting rang out again and this time, she could see a dozen security bots firing off their weapons indiscriminately down the hallway, hitting something that flickered in and out of existence.

The flickering soon stopped, and she spotted the man from earlier, soaking in numerous bullets from the bots with his power armor while returning fire as if the enemy's attacks were just a slight inconvenience. When the shooting finally died down, the only thing left standing was the man in power armor.

Dumb corpo war machines. Can't they focus their energy on something more productive?

While cursing corpos in her mind at all the expensive machinery they wasted, Tally never stopped working her way into the database. It took her only two minutes until she got access, allowing her to carry out the job she had been hired to do.

The QG, Amos, was known as a man of the people. His jobs usually entailed helping out the common folks who were under the thumb of corporations, but that also meant the pay wasn't as good as the gigs from other QGs that affiliated themselves with the corps.

Tally still decided to take this job despite that. She was tired of seeing her fellow residents of Aegis dying a slow and insidious death as they were squeezed dry. She thought if she could help by just earning a little less, then so be it.

The job she was hired to carry out this time was to delete and fudge up several records that Sanso Corp had put on their watchlists. Normally in Aegis, once a corp targeted you, you were done. There was nowhere you could run for long, being trapped in the cage that was the space station.

With Tally's completion of this job, whichever poor souls being targeted should now have a chance to escape. The common folks were usually a low priority for corporations, so they shouldn't have backed up their files outside of the local branch.

Once she completed deleting the relevant records, she proceeded to access the more sensitive data on the server and began downloading as much information as she could. The moment she did so, however, another alarm was set off, and strong jamming filled the entire building.

She didn't exactly know of this security measure beforehand, but she wouldn't regret her actions. They needed to make it look like another corp hired them for the job to draw some heat off of themselves. She also promised Amos she would deliver the data, and she had a reputation to uphold.

"Are you done, yet? They're going to start sending a lot more people here soon, and well-armed ones at that!" the man in power armor called out from beside her.

She ignored him and continued working away on her terminal for another thirty seconds before she quickly unplugged from the database.

"Done! Get me out of here!"

Tally glanced around at the aftermath of the carnage that unraveled around her and prepared herself for the bumpy trip out. She expected to encounter quite a bit of resistance from the fast-response teams that were definitely on their way, and she could only hope that they could get out before they deployed heavy weapons to deal with the power armor.

What she didn't expect was the man swooping her off her feet. She quickly found herself being princess carried as the man began to make his exit.

"What are—"

"Stay quiet, and try not to make any sudden movements."

Tally wanted to argue, but hearing the seriousness of the man's tone, she decided to be obedient for now.

She found themselves boldly going toward the staircase to descend from the building. They had made it down two floors when the man's movement suddenly jerked as he turned around and brought them back up to the previous floor. He rushed out of the stairwell and waited nearby for several moments before Tally could hear a lot of movement from the stairway they had just exited.

As if the man knew where the enemies were, he navigated back down the stairway when it was clear, and always hid when guards drew near.

Like this, the duo soon managed to exit the building to the wonder of Tally. A few of the other office workers were definitively in a position to spot them, but they always completely ignored them as they came through. It was only when Tally calmed down a little that she glanced down to find themselves invisible to the naked eye.

Right... this corpo uses stealth tech. How in the world did Pino and the old man get us involved with them?

I watched as the outline of Thorne entered our getaway van, carrying along an unfamiliar person who I presumed to be the mercenary we were extracting.

I was just about to become worried because the surrounding area was getting chaotic as streams of Sanso Corp guards flooded the area by the main roads. Our connection with Thorne was abruptly cut off during the mission, and only Mark made it out alone after a while. Thankfully, we hadn't panicked as we had experienced similar situations before, and they safely returned.

The car tilted to the side as they entered and they soon materialized when Thorne deactivated the active camouflage. I noticed the power armor Thorne was wearing was all scratched up, a testament to the combat he had experienced.

"Get moving," I instructed the driver before turning to the back. "Are you two okay?"

"Yes, we're fine." He replied and glanced over to the other person in a power armor beside him. "Good work in there, Mark. Job well done."

They fisted-bumped as we drove away while the woman awkwardly sat there quietly. It was only when things on the street quieted down that she spoke.

"You can drop me off here."

I glanced around and nodded to our driver, Brian. We had agreed to meet up at Amos' place the next day when things died down first, so there was no reason to have her with us the entire time.

As she left, I got in the back and got back into my power armor I had lent Mark as we made our way back to our hotel.

We weren't going to laze around, though. That would just be more suspicious. I had made several appointments with manufacturers of electronic parts to keep ourselves busy in the meantime.

Our expansion required a lot of parts, especially delicate electronics. All the vehicles we were producing, cybernetics, and even renovating our base needed them. I even plan to construct several power armors later, proper ones that weren't Frankensteins that I cobbled together from various other power armors.

The major manufacturers all operated in space, as that was where the conditions were optimal for their production, so it was an opportune time to negotiate contracts with them directly.

They allowed me to don my power armor as I strolled into the meeting room. It seemed like paranoid corpos were a common breed, and as long as I deactivated the weapons systems, they wouldn't mind me wearing the armor.

“Mr.Halls... a pleasure to make your acquaintance.” The young man in glasses said as he extended out a hand.

“Likewise, Mr. Oyin.”

With pleasantries set aside, he visibly began going through my proposal before speaking.

“I’m impressed with what your company has accomplished in the short time since it started, but apologies. I cannot accept your proposal.”

“And why is that?” I asked with a smile. I knew it wouldn’t be as easy as just asking and they would agree to supply high quantities of their products to me at wholesale prices.

“While I personally believe in the strength and potential your corporation has shown so far, our company has a strict policy in regard to how much we can supply to a G-Class corporation. I can allow for the very top range of what we offer to G-Classes, judging from your profile, but I recommend coming back once your company has been promoted.”

“I see. I’d be happy to sign a tentative agreement right now with the terms of allowing for renegotiation when we are promoted. Is that agreeable?”

He took just a brief moment to think it over before nodding. “Very well, I see great things from your company, so am inclined to accept.”

While the quantity they were willing to allot to me didn’t satisfy all my demands, it was a start, and there were more companies to negotiate with. I just had to be mindful of their relationship with other suppliers.

After concluding my meetings, we retired for the night and the next day, we headed straight back to where we had met Amos.

The same boy led us into the back of their store where the cargo elevator was, and we found Amos sitting in the same position, watching his old-school TV.

It appeared Pino and the partner we extracted, Tally, were already there beside him.

The girl’s mood visibly worsened when she saw us, and she quickly shot up from her seat.

“Our business is done. I’ll leave you with your guests, old man.” She said before dragging the clueless Pino away.

She glared at Thorne one final time before they disappeared from view.

“Amos, we’ve completed your job as promised. It’s time for you to deliver.” I got straight to the point.

“Yes, yes. Would it kill you kids to learn to have some patience? You only have one life, which means you should tread carefully. Examine the risks and rewards first.”

“Old man, we’re not here for a lecture. You—” I quickly stopped Thorne from interjecting lest it only prolong this conversation.

“Hmm...I will do as promised, but I have one condition.”

“...What do you mean condition? We didn’t talk about this before.”

“Correct. I didn’t see the need to, but now that you have proven yourselves so capable, I need to react accordingly.” He lowered the volume on his TV before turning to face me directly.

No matter how he puts it, I couldn’t help but get a little angry, too, seeing how he is adding a condition after we did as promised. I could feel Thorne tense up, along with the rest of our entourage.

“Relax, what I ask of you isn’t something you would have to worry about if you haven’t been lying to me about your intentions. I simply want to be there along with my men when you meet my contact from Ferrumus Corp.”