

A Friendly Meeting

“People like you don’t die right?”

Mason coughed to hide the smile tugging at his lips. Despite the dimly lit alleyway he and his new companion waited in, he had no idea what kind of mods the kid might have been rocking. Besides, he had a reputation to uphold.

“No, I suppose people like me don’t. Not like everyone else at least. It comes with being an immortal.”

The girl stared out at the adjacent street, tricked out cars cutting through the fog and darkness that blanketed the world.

“But you’re not immortal. Not like in the stories anyway. You’re flesh and tech just like the rest of us right?”

Mason raised an eyebrow, but said nothing. Most people, when learning about his prestigious moniker, would quiet down immediately. Out of fear or respect for his privacy he didn’t know. But he always assumed the former. His current companion, however, seemed not to be like most people.

“That’s a shame,” the girl continued, pushing an auburn lock from her face. “Ma tells me death is what makes life worth living, y’know?”

“Your ‘Ma’ sounds like a wise person.” Mason said, checking the aged chrono on his wrist, making note of the stuck minute hand. “A shame none of that wisdom passed onto her kid.”

The girl huffed, her pastel green eyes flashing with anger.

“And what’s that supposed to mean?”

“Exactly what it sounds like. You shouldn’t be here, kid. You’re too young for work like this.”

“Shows what you know,” the girl said puffing her chest out in pride, “I’m almost sixteen. I’m not a kid anymore.”

Mason regarded the girl before him in silence, his assistant AI implant updating her unfinished profile behind his eyes..

“Besides, Mickey’s paying top dollar for someone to scratch this guy and—”

“Alex.”

“Huh?” The girl’s face twisted in confusion.”

“Our target. His name is Alex Schnier.”

“Who gives a bleeding ass what his name is. All that matters is how much we get paid. That kind of money can set a person up for a while, y’know?”

Mason fought the laugh beating against his teeth, pretending to peer down the end of the alley until the feeling passed.

“Kids these days.”

Anger flashed across the girl's face once again. Her pale skin, illuminated in the gloom of the city by a passing car, began to redden.

“How many times do I have to tell you, ‘old’ man, I’m not a kid.”

Mason checked his chrono again, content at the few moments he had to tease the girl a bit more.

“Oh, how could I mistake such a mature woman like yourself for a mere child. Perhaps then, you should regale me with the many trials and tribulations you have gone through in the long sixteen years you’ve been walking this Earth. I have no doubt there are many.”

A thick rouge now fully painted the girl's pallid face. With anger or embarrassment he couldn't tell.

Before either could retort a quiet ringing sang in the back of Mason's mind; an alarm telling him his leisure time was up.

“Banter time is over kid. We have a job to do. Now show me that secret entrance of yours that got you put on this job.”

Prompt: This short vignette arose from a greater, unfinished work of mine and was meant to help with world building as well as help define the voices and attitudes of these two characters.