Sam loaded her gun and threw the door open.

She held her weapon in a death grip and walked further in the narrow passage, feeling her cold sweat that beaded on her forehead and moistened her dark sandy hair as she tried to make less noise as possible with her worn sneakers.

The conduit was dimly lit and clammy, but it seemed to be the only weak point of the otherwise unassailable structure.

The tunnel had been built during wartime, it’d served as a shelter from the bombs and as a quick way to come through the river without catching the attention of the armed forces who patrolled the urban area.

Since the whole structure had been seized by the *Infidels*, who had turned it into a node for the high-speed rail, these tunnels looked like an endless maze of dusty cables and burrows of mice, but luckily a few of them were still exploitable to enter the line without getting noticed.

Sam halted and dried her face up with a flapper of her leather gloves.

Beside her, she felt the reassuring warmth of her sister, who’d leaned a hand against her bare shoulder to signalize her presence.

“How many *guardians*?” - Taryn asked in a dim whisper.

“The node looks defenseless, but three walkers watch over the warehouse, and I’m afraid they’re fully armed” - She recounted, biting her lips in a nervous gesture - “I can’t overwhelm them. I’ll aim to the ceiling to divert their attention, and then we switch to the heavy weaponry”

Her sister slowly shook the head - “If the power network blows up we’ll be trapped in the gallery. We can’t take such a risk”

A thin sheet of rusty metal divided the two girls from the warehouse, but a thick half meter of titanium encased the railway apart from the storage rooms, leaving the door as the only conceivable way to reach it.

Their outdated weapons couldn’t bear a comparison with the powerful artillery that a guardian relied on, let alone three of them.

“If this grenade doesn’t touch the floor we can forget about the mission, ‘cause I was not trained to fight a close combat with those monsters”.

Taryn smirked and grabbed a syringe and a tiny ampoule full of a viscous substance - “Maybe they’re way too armed for a hand-to-hand, but I swear that if this needle touches their vein it will be the last thing they feel on the skin”

Sam explored with her eyes the glassy phial, peering at the ruddy liquid. As soon as her glance landed on the mixture, she could easily recognize it.

“*Essentia mortis*” - Her sister pointed out - “This marvelous has been used by the servants of *Lareth* for decades to put to death the Infidels. It kills faster than guns and inflicts a stronger pain than the hottest flame”

The girl scratched with her hand through her sandy hair, lightly disgruntled.

“Taryn, the Law is clear enough” - She remarked hard-nosed - “We can’t execute an oblivious human being”

“You’d not disdain shooting them in the chest, though, would you?”

For a split second, her glance had pierced Sam with a note of reproach, but shortly afterwards her features softened back and her hazel eyes turned back into their usual dreamy expression.

Taryn patted her younger sister’s back again, trying to reassure her - “You are scared, that’s passable. But you should keep in mind that they kill our loved ones day by day and they steal our beloved earth. They deserve death. Every Infidel deserves it”

Sam hated the Infidels like everyone else.

The way they parasitized the verdant valleys disgusted her, and their subhuman tortures peopled her nightmares every night.

The wasn’t told much about the war, but she knew enough details about those dark times to despise every single man, woman or machine of their damned armed force.

After all, they’d killed thousands of *Believers*. They’d killed her father.

“I want their head as much as you” - She stated emphatically, gritting her teeth - “I just don’t like it *that way*. It’s not human”

Taryn snorted - “They’re not humans. They’re Infidels”

Maybe her sister was right. She knew all too well the way they sowed death and destruction among their people.

“*Death to the Infidels*” - Sam hissed again, receiving in turn a bloodthirsty smirk.

She unleashed a well-aimed kick on the chassis of the sundered the warehouse from their shelter and shattered the metal with a plangent noise.

Likely the mess would have drawn the attention of the guardians, but the structure was so broad and spacious that it would have taken minutes before one of them would have spotted the two intruders.

The girls burst in the huge room, wielding their weapons and cautiously surveying the near spaces to locate the three guardians.

Facing a crossroad, her sister signaled with a nod that they had to split, and Sam assented, plunging into the maze of rusty shelves.

Sam had to suppress the urge to vomit in front of the disturbing sight of the content of those shelves. Every ledge stored a filthier piece of machinery , from prototypes of bioengineered robots to barrels of nuclear waste and even dead bodies, crippled or disfigured by chemicals.

She’d been told about the pitiless barbarity that the Infidels produced in their military labs, but no way she could imagine such a lack of any moral worth.

Taryn was right; They were just good at slaughtering and poisoning.

Sam stepped at a low pace in a lateral aisle of the warehouse, fearing a sudden attack. After a brief moment of tension she heard snap and a muffled scream of pain and knew that the fatal needle killed its first prey, and smirked.