

Unexpected Guest

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Submitted: May 23, 2012
Updated: November 6, 2012

Layer decided to tell Zero about her feelings , but what happens if someone came back from death...unexpected gust.read and findout.it is from girls POV

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1 - A day in navigator's life

: unexpected guest

Chapter 1 : Layer, Do you've a minute?

Lay's POV:

It was usual day at the MHHQ ,when I woke up.., but my few months here taught me that every day can be surprise, but I was so lazy I didn't want to leave the bed, will they didn't page me yet, so I still have like 5 more minutes ..beside I made important decision, I'm going to tell Zero about my feeling, and handle this issue once and for all .I'm going to tell him when we train together later , so I need every second of rest...

My door banged, not in its own, it must be Alia. she's been my friend since I came here, I like her most of the time, but she can be a real pain, and I guess this is one of these times...

The door opened, 'damn' I thought, she came in without invitation and sat at the edge of my BED...

"Wake up sleepy head "she said,

"Remind me again why did I gave you my room's code,wait ,don't you have a boyfriend to wake? "I mumbled from under the sheets,

" Did I mention that he woke me up, and now it is my turn to wake someone? Now get up!"

"No , force me", and I do regret this line ,she just walked of the bed and pulled the curtains soon followed by my sheets. She won this round, but I'm payback person, so just wait for me Alia!

I finally got of my bed heading to the bath room, but I still can sense her victory smile from behind my back, I really need to get back at her some time soon.., " I'll be making us all breakfast, don't be late " she said before leaving...

After breakfast:

Back at the boring work, I hate it, I'm sitting in front of the navigation section main computer. It's been quiet lately, no mavericks attack since what? Week now. I know that I should be happy and all, but the only one around here really happy is X.

Zero and Axl are as bored as me, at least all they had to do is training, tiny bit of paper work, how hard can that be ? And they can sleep until midday, leaving us 'navigators' to do their dirty laundry, completing all missing info on the mavericks archive plus who cares about Vile's eyes color any way?

"Day dreaming Lay?" Alia just asked,

"I wish it was "I reply, "any way I've something I wish you can do for me"

"huh?" I mean isn't obvious that I've a lot to do already?

"Don't look like you've been shot, you don't even know what is it" I blinked in surprise "now listen during my research about the item the tri brought back the last week I noticed there was a missing file from the

mavericks data-base -..." I cut her off.

" hold on a sec, missing files is not my responsibility, not now anyway." I continued "go ask Palette or someone else ..."

"Can you perhaps let me finish? " and she didn't even wait for my answer" Zero was the last one to see that maverick a life, so I was wondering can you go see how much info you can get off him?" did she just said Zero?

"I'm in my way!" I said right before I jumped out of my seat. I was about to leave the room when I saw the way she was looking at me, she knew that there is something going on, but hell, I'm not telling her anything not yet.

Then I Left... I was walking down the hallway when I heard the N.C's (navigation's section) door opened; it didn't matter till I heard Alia shout.

"The Maverick's name is Mushroom, Split Mushroom" then door closed, I stood there blinking for few secs.

'Did I forget to ask about the maverick's name? ...damn! now she got a prove. I reached his room, and then I looked down at myself checking my outfit... 'I'm a reloid with an armor why do I need to check myself? humans program us with weird things sometimes.....at least I can blame humans for this one..' any way I knocked the door. then I waited for a response ..nothing. I knocked again "Who?.." came from behind the door,

"It is me Layer, ..Commander"

"Come in, it's not locked" , 'not locked?, anyone can come in that easy?...odd..!'

Any way I came in and he was wrapped in his blanket, I just walked further in the room and then stopped when I'm close to the bed, 'He is so cute like this... 'I wish I could pull that blanket and just hug him sooo hard, but it can't be... I'm too much of a coward to do so...

"Can I ask you few things, sir..?"

"Sure, just make it quick".

I'll try "There is missing file at the data base....."and then I got all the information out of him (A/N: it is just so boring, so I skipped it) "thanks sir, but there is something I want to talk to you about.. " I took a deep breath.

"Ok, one thing first, what part of the day is it?"

"It is about noon ...sir" ,

"W..what?" then he jumped out of the bed saying "Oh shoot...those suckers suppose to wake me before sunrise"

"You mean your unite sir?"

"Yeah" answering me while changing ' does he know I'm still here? I hope he doesn't ... 'he slipping down in his suit, when he stopped and give me his back with that open zipper, "Layer. Can you..?" pointing at his back,

"Oh ..of course" I reached my hand to that blessed little thing, and oh what A view ! I could stair at it for

the rest of the day.

"I could've do it alone, but I'll get my hair stuck!" he said,
"Yeah, it happens to me all the time". Then I stepped back "I'll be leaving now, sir"
"What about the thing you want to tell me ?"
"You've a unite to yell AT, we'll talk later after training",
"OK, Later then..".
I was going to tell him later anyway.

Later ON (about evening):

At the training room:

It was about time, I asked Zero to train me on some self-defense techniques, and we were here for five hours I guess. I was failing, I couldn't get anything right, damn..

Finally Zero spoke up

"Layer, you suck!",

"thanks, you really know how to cheer a lady up!" I panted heavily "Lets take Five min break ok?"

"o-.." I been cut off by X who just walked in

"Sorry to break in like that...Zero can I have a minute with you?" "Ok " then he said to me

"I'll be right back " I secretly blazed a look at X in disgrace

"Suit yourself, I'll wait in here "...

After couple of minutes Zero came back and he was pale a little, he came toward me and said

"Look Layer I got...um...important thing to do, we'll continue later, Ok?"

"Yes of course" I faked sweet smile, but deep inside I was screaming. Then after he left I throw myself at hared floor of the training room 'I guess today is not the right day to tell him.'

After 2 hours:

At the NS :

Me and the girls were doing, what we were doing earlier, after Zero been sent out in small detecting mission, Alia was keeping an eye on him, but there was nothing serious, until we got call from Douglass telling us to leave whatever we were doing and meet him at the libratory, we exchanged looks, but that call was our ticket For 5 min. break, whatever was the purpose from it.

And we arrived in no time

There was Douglass of course, then not short after that Axl arrived, and X standing there focusing on a capsule with a female reloid in it, and from the look of it he must been there for a while, I couldn't tell anything other than her high due to dark green glass of that capsule...

And before we start our usual wave of questions X spoke up-not taking his eyes off the capsule-
"Everybody this is Iris ..." This must be the surprise of the day.... Wait a minute, who is Iris?

2 - Alia's turn

Alia's POV

'Oh she looks cute' I thought to myself 'did X just say Iris this can't be...or can she be?' "X is she..-" , he cut me off "Shh..just hold it for now"

Then X looked at the screen behind the capsule, which showed 98% before he asked "Which one of you was navigating Zero?"

Layer and Palette both pointed at me ...doges!

"It was me." I answered before I gave the girls my deadly –I'll-kill-you-later-look, because I thought he is going to yell at me for leaving Zero out there alone, but instead he asked "When will he be here? "

"Hmm...Within the next fifteen minutes, I'm sure "I answered.

"Damn, Douglass can't you hold the process back a little?" I automatically looked at screen again and it was 99. Douglass answered.

"No sorry X, ... If Zero doesn't arrive in 5minutes he'll miss her first waking..."

Silence spread in the room and all of us were trying to figure out what was going on when a beep came from the capsule; it had reached 100.

"I believe she's gotten her memory back" said Douglass breaking the silence of the room. The capsule opened up.

X approached to the capsule and placed out a hand to help Iris out. He asked. "Iris, can you hear me?" She finally opened her eyes and blinked few times before saying "X , is that you?" A big smile placed on her lips, as she jumped towards him for a big hug.

'She's so short...!' That was the first thing to hit my mind, 'It's silly though I know, but it's true, I mean she about 1.14 feet shorter than X, who might I add was considered to be short himself.'

Back to what was going on, "You're back!" X said. Iris giggled a bit,

"You bet I am!" I thought to myself. 'Alright an accent!' X held her hand *AGAIN* after breaking the hug.

'Didn't anyone teach him not to hold another girls hand when your girlfriend's in the area? No I guess not ...!'

"Everybody this was our first navigator, she had been ... Umm...Gone for a while but she's back now." I hope that is not all you can say, now he is introducing us to her. Yay. I love being introduce to someone, "This is Alia, my navigator " said X.

"Nice to meet you." She said, I had to look down. I seriously hope we don't talk too much while standing or I'll have some serious back problems.

After they were done, she asked. "Where is Zero?" X volunteered to answer.

"He is-.."

"Right here." Zero said from the doorway, she quickly turned to face him. They stared at each other silently, she began to tear up for some reason, and then she stepped closer to him. She stood right in front of him and froze. 'Oh come on say some thing'.

She looked at the ground then back at Zero who broke the silence. "Iri-.."

'...Ouch, that must've hurt, oh yeah...he's been slapped.. His cheek turned red, poor Zero; No one saw this coming, the short Brunette run out of the room, without saying a word. Zero just leaned back at the wall, watching the ground.

X poked me; I looked in his direction "What?" I whispered.

"Alia, can you follow Iris, she'll get lost"

"W..What? You serious?"

"Alia there is no time for argue, please?" He give me that hopeless look, damn he knows my weak points all too well,

"Ok, but what if she wants to be alone?"

"Do you remember the room that Zero says no one can touch? It is hers"

"I'll do what I can ..." Then I went out past Zero and took a quick look at Layer, she was shocked at the show Iris put on, I wanted to be by her side right now, but... I'll deal with you later X, and Layer...' I'm sorry I'll be back soon I promise'.

I run out, 'Where is she ? ' I thought, but as soon I'm out I spot her at the corner, oh she is crying ...hard

"Oh, hey there."

She raised her face to look at me, and then she dried her eyes quickly "Take it easy you just got in." I started.

"I wish I could (sniff) it's just..." she broke down in tears again 'oh god, please ma'am I don't have all day. I still have a friend to comfort thanks to you, can't you get to the point?' .

"..Seeing him brought back a lot of painful memories .."She said, "Do you feel like staying alone?"

"no ,stay please ...this place change a lot since I saw it last time ..", 'ok I'm stuck ' .

"Maybe because this place got rebuilt couple of times ...come on I'll show you your room" I said.

"Didn't you just said HQ been rebuilt?"

"I didn't know that you've a room till X told me, I always thought it is just an extra room at our floor " She looked a little confused, but hey at least she wasn't crying anymore.

As we reached her room, she stopped suddenly "what is it?" I was curious.

"you sure, it is *this* room?" Odd why is she asking? It isn't like she know where she i-..., she cut me off

"It's in the exact place where my room used to be" Ok she knows then! 'ohhhhhhh, I see ... Zero kept a room for her, but why ? I can obviously see there is something between these two.'

"I believe you know the code then?" She asked.

"Actually. no, but you still remember your old one, right?"

"ok, lets see" then she typed it quick , and the door opened.

"I think you won't need me for a while in here"

"Yeah, thanks "she said but she seemed sad, I'll check on her later, but now I need to go back..

"See you later then" I said before I ran ...

While I'm running I bumped into someone "blind @\$\$", "the eyes are for a reason" we yelled at each other, hold it I know this voice "X..?" I opened my eyes while holding my forehead "Alia..?" he was holding his nose, "sorry..." I said.

He just ignored me, and start walking in his way "I said I'm sorry "It is not the time Alia, Zero just had a fight with Layer ...".

Oh no ..This is why I didn't want to leave the lab ..."Wait, what happened "

"Look why don't you go talk to her, I'm going to look for Zero " , "ok , but we'll have to talk .."

"Later..." We each ran in a different direction...

I went directly to Layer's room, expecting to find her at any shape, she never had a fight with him before, she loves him,....she never told me, but everybody around could tell ..

Any way I reached her room, in normal condition I would just walk on in, but I thought I'd let her know first, "Layer ,sweetie...I'm coming in OK?" not leaving her a chance to reply. I went in, she sitting at bed hugging her knees, I never saw her like this before...so devastated, Layer is normally the joy around, making jokes and making us all feel better I never thought that she may look like this, never.

I went closer, her eyes were open but not looking at anything, almost like dead, "Layer, are you alright?"

I asked. Then I sat down next to her, it wasn't good idea to start asking about what really happened,

instead I tried to calm her down "No man on this earth deserves to die for Layer...not even Zero",

Then she spoke up with her normal tone "I just wanted to ask him about what happened, he said it is not

my business, and being his navigator never gave me the right to interfere about his lifehe yelled at me, he yelled at me to leave him alone", I can see that he hurt her, even though that his was known for his short nerves, I pulled her into a hug so she can know that I'm by her side, she broke down into tears, I never saw her crying before ,and seeing her now broke my heart

"It is ok... it is ok"

And for hours we just sat like that, not saying a single word till Layer pulled away, and quickly she wiped her tears away "Sorry for breaking into you like that" She said.

"It's ok, isn't that what friends for?" I said.

"Yeah I guess so" she replied

"You should've slapped him on the other cheek" I said

"at least he'll look like blushing "

She laughed a little, it was good to see her smiling again, and then she said "Thanks Alia"

"Don't thank me just yet . You'll be there for me when I break up with X, I need someone to let him cry it on his shoulders "I tried to cheer her up a little .even though that it is possible to use her that way...

"I bet that he'll cry his eyes out...from joy" she said , I jumped at her, not really attacking but I thought she was more grounded than that, but she wasn't, it ended up with me in the top of her .

"Oh Alia. I didn't think you are all that desperate" Layer teased, oh she having fun with me now, I don't really care as long as she is smiling, "perhaps you can get off me ,I'm planning to keep myself for marriage, but thanks for offering.. " she continued .

"Ok ok " then I got off , and left her lying apparently she is too lazy to sit up again "thought that X was more...what to say...willing ", 'this girl is not going to drop it tonight '

I pulled a nearby pillow and placed it at her face ,but I still can hear her laugh "Apologize Layer" I commanded, she is saying something but I couldn't make out what it was, so I took the pillow off to hear it.

"Never" she said, 'she is better as I see'

"Ok then I'm leaving "I said " if you want anything. I'll be at X's room" .

Then I walked away with pillow in my hands "of course I'll go there since I'm sure now that I'm not going to interrupt anything" she said, I throw it at her "good night blueberry" then I left her laughing .

I kinda know that it is just a hysterical reaction after all that crying, but at least she got her usual self back.

Next station X's room...

"Oh come on X you promised "I said while jumping at his bed with him sleeping in it.

"Alia please I'm tired...Maybe tomorrow "he answered.

"No. Now".

He buried his face into the pillow 'Silly you think you're going to get rid of me like this?'

I kept jumping "Now now now now now now now now..." I'm such a bug.

"OK ok you win" he finally sat down." What do you want to know?" (A/N: Alia wants to talk, nothing else...)

"What happened with Zero, what did he do to Lay?"

Again I squeezed everything out of him,... "There. Can I sleep now?"

"Ok, you may sleep now.....X, do you think Zero and Layer will get together some day?"

"Nope"

"Why?"

"Cause he is going to go back to Iris"

"That short thing, no way. Layer has bigger odds"

"Don't think so"

"How much do you know about love issues? it is my field, you keep killing mavericks ,you know better

about those ,oh wait I know better than you I'm navigator ..X you're useless" I smiled wildly,'it my first time to face the truth. I'm so happy'

"Sweet heart you can't hold a gun, not mentioning shooting... That's mostly my job"

'Damn he is right, I hate it when he is right ' "But I'm still holding on about my opinion about Layer"

"Ok wait and you'll see...I really need to sleep"

"What? I'm not holding you back, sleep if you want toYou want to bet ?"

"How fast I can fall in sleep?"

"No. Zero and Layer"

"50 dollars on Iris"

"The last thing I need is your money skinny, we're betting on something else.."

"Something like what?"

And under the dark that night we sat our bets on one condition "no one wins till they kiss" I suggested

"Like that is going to hold down anything, but the sooner we get this done the sooner I can get some sleep."

"Deal?"

"Deal. Good night" and he just fall asleep I guess he was really tired.

Any way I need to sleep myself. And tomorrow is always another day.

And who knows what may happenThere is my second chapter, I hope you like it, but who do you think well win the bet X or Alia?

But the bet itself will be revealed on the final chapter.

Thanks again for reading my cute little Fic.

3 - Chapter 3:It isn't Iris's day

Iris's POV:

"Bloody hell..." 'it looks exactly the way I left it' I ran my hand over the furniture 'there's no dust' Someone must've taken good care of my room while I was dead, but who?

"Zero...."I whispered to myself, I guess I was too fast about him..., I must apologize to him, but later. I feel dizzy and itchy. Death is such exhausting process...I went directly to the bed.

I opened my eyes after what seemed like minutes. I don't know how long I was asleep, but I needed to get out of here, and the only place I can go to by myself is the kitchen, so I went there.

Let see, there is Alia and X, but no Zero... "Good morning guys "I greeted the gang as I approached them.

"Good morning Iris" X replied "Where were you the past two days?"

"Huh?" did I sleep for two days?

Alia give him low stare before she said "Don't mind him; it's just a bad joke."

I looked at X who burst into laughter. "Not funny" I said.

Then blue haired stepped in "Good morn-...."she said, she stopped when she spotted me "...ing" she continued.

'Did I do something wrong?', she went past me not saying anything , "You ok?" Alia asked her.

'How come nobody asked me that? I'm the one who's been dead since....who knows when. Nobody told me that too!

"X, how long was I dead?" I asked.

"Awhile" he said.

"Oh come on. How long?" He didn't want to answer, who else can I ask.....Zero, oh I totally forgot about him, "Where is Zero by the way?" I asked.

"You need to stop that some time" Zero answered, I turned around, and he was leaning on the door side

...

My heart beats fast, but it was no time for running away I owed him an apology, I stepped forward. "Zero I'm so sorry about what happened yesterday, it's just..." I looked down.

"It is OK" he said.

Did he just forgive me without even listening to my 3 hour excuse...? Zero still loves me!

I looked up to see his handsome face, I felt tears filling my eyes, and I couldn't hold it back anymore.

I jumped and hugged him so hard "I missed you" I whispered.

"I missed you too" he said wrapping his strong arms around me, I forgot all about what happened as I buried my face into his shoulder.

I snapped back to reality when someone shout "Damn", it was feminine voice, but I ignored it, if I had Zero nothing could bother me.

"Get a room for God's sake" I needed to know who blew this one out, I let go of Zero, that cold tone could be no one's but that blue haired, when I turned to speak to her she said "I'm done" and left the kitchen holding her cup of coffee.

I looked at Zero, but he was staring at the way the blue haired took off. Luckily for him he drew his attention back to me.

"Something wrong Zero?" I asked, he shook his head no, but I was too hungry to argue, so I let it pass, but not all that smoothly..."so, how many times did you died while I was gone?"

Leaving surprised Zero behind I went straight to the fridge, now X's laughing was heard all over the

kitchen.

X stopped all of sudden, but I didn't have to turn around to know what made him stop laughing! It's definitely Zero.

I was deep inside the fridge trying to find something I can recognize, when Zero pulled me out "We need a little more privacy" he whispered to me.

'But I'm hungry!' that was all I could think about, but if Zero wants to go somewhere more private then to heck with food!

"We'll be going now" he said, then left dragging me all the way to his room. After unlocking the door he invited me, or pulled me in to be more specific.

"Oh my..!" I shouted "Look at this mess!"

"Oh god" he said replacing a hand on his forehead.

"You had a time to look after my room, but you couldn't find a time for yours"

"Who told you that?"

I closed the gap between us, and hugged him so tight "I don't need to be told that, no one but Zero care enough to do such a thing", then all of sudden this thought hit me.

"My brother isn't alive, is he?" I pulled away a little to look at his expression.

"No, he is not "answering me "thank god" he whispered, thought that I couldn't hear that.

I ignored his reaction only because I felt his hand making her way to my hair and...Oh no, not again, he took my hat!

"I always hated this hat!"

"Come on, give it back" I pleaded.

Calculating the difference in height between us I came to conclude that I'll never going to see this hat *ever* again!

A strange beep appeared in the room, killing the mood. " What is that" I asked.

"It's a message on my computer." Zero replied as he headed towards his PC, "That's weird"

Within seconds his expression changed "Layer doesn't want to be my navigator anymore." he said. "She sent a request to exchange navigator".

"Who? Oh the blue haired, that's ok I'll resume as your navigator"

"I was a little rude to her"

"So?"

"I'm going to talk to her" He walked away ignoring me completely, 'hello I'm still here!' I mentally shout. I can't believe it, he left,. If I was less self controlling, I would've burned his room down. But sadly I am, so I just walked out.

With nowhere to go or anything to do and all this anger captured inside of me, I let my feet take the lead and go wherever they take me to.

I stopped in front of the laboratory door, that's nice I never had the chance to thank the one -who put me back together- enough, whatever what his name was.

I went in; he was working on something I'll never have the interest to know what it is, "Hi" I greeted.

"Huh? Who let you in?"

"The door wasn't locked"

"Damn, so what do you want any way?"

Why is that cold welcoming? But I went in for a reason..

"I wanted to thank you for bringing me back, I didn't had the chance yesterday"

"Oh...um...your're-..."

"But you could've made me a little bit taller it wouldn't hurt any one,"

"a-..."

"And you could've made me look more attractive too, you know"

"um-..."

"I would've done a plastic surgery, but there is one problem. I'm metal!"

"My apology miss, but I-..."

This time it wasn't me I swear, it is X who came in.

"Hi-....what are you doing here?" he asked me with confuse look.

"I'm here to thank him." Pointing at four eyes.

"OK, but Douglass doesn't like to be interrupted while working"

"Can you both perhaps finish you're little chatting out, I've work to do!" Douglass was upset that's for sure.

"I'm so sorry for keeping you" I give him a sweet smile.

"Yeah, whatever..." he said before going back to work.

That was rude, but who cares I'm out of here, but when I turned around to leave I accidentally trapped over something on the floor heading directly to X. thank God he was so grounded, he stopped me from falling to the ground .

"Sorry" I apologized.

"That's alright, but try to be more careful around here."

Just to make this moment even more wonderful, destiny itself sent Alia to look for X.

"Honey, you forgot-..."Alia began, but stopped after seeing me in her boyfriend's arms.

X let go of me, "Alia, I can explain-.."he said.

Anger appears in her eyes, she moved toward me" Look, what's enough is enough" she said to me in extremely angry tone.

My mind went 'Uh-oh'.

"Taking Zero away from Layer is something I've nothing to do with-.."

X cut her off "but Zero and Layer weren't couple" in hesitate voice.

She glared at him so angrily that he shut up, that's when Douglass shouted "THAT'S IT, EVERYBODY OUT....NOW".

We all went out very calm and quiet, but after we all reached outside Alia turned to me.

"Stay away from my X" she threat me.

Then left pulling X away with her, I felt so bad, it was my first day awake and X now has trouble because of me, Alia hates me, and Zero is running after his so-called navigator who hates me too—by the way—and I've no one by my side at the moment .

"Why the hell did they brought me back!" I cried.Yeah that's all for the third chapter. Again I welcome reviews personal messages, anything just tell me what do you think.

By the way here is a real stupid question: who's POV will be next?

Thanks for reading my fic, See ya all next chapter .

Bye everybody

4 - Axl to the rescue

Palette's POV:

Hello there, this is Pal and this chapter is from my point of view.

Layer left earlier after Zero called her to his office which leaves me with so pissed off Alia, she has been furious since she came back from the laboratory for some reason she won't tell me!

She and Layer never say anything to me they just intend to ignore me most of the time, but what they don't know that I know exactly what's going on around here, I'm a navigator too after all, I 'accidentally' over hear them anyway.

As always I was doing some research about some building somewhere when N.C door opened and familiar figure came in.

"Hello" he greeted.

"Hey Axl" I replied.

He noticed how Alia didn't reply and the way her brows are crossed then asked "what's wrong with her?"

"PMSing"

"oh..." Axl held such a funny expression, Alia raised her head from whatever work she was doing and gave us the deadly glare "say what?"

So we became the object of her anger relief, this is getting scarier by the second.

Now Alia took few steps toward us, Axl hid behind me and said "She said it" he means me "I just came here to deliver a message from Signas!"

'my boy is coward' I thought 'meh', however what he said caught her attention "keep going" she commanded.

"Iris is going to resume being a navigator here starting tomorrow, Signas said you should be able choose how she may help you" Axl spoke as fast as he could so he could flee as fast as he could as well, but no such luck. She caught him by the arm just 2 inches from his sweet escape.

'Poor little Axl he simply have no luck' I thought

He looked so scared and a little pale too, Alia dragged him all the way to the center of the room with ease! Then she spoke "Let me see if I got this right, Iris is coming here?" Axl gave hysterical nod he looks as if he's going to faint, this is some how amusing to me since we don't have much of entertaining here anyway, I'm happy I'm no longer threaten.

Alia let go of Axl who was surprised and somehow happy too

"I don't get it" she stated walking back and forth "why here...."

We watched Alia's weird reaction from safe distance, then Axl decided to leave...again

"Hold it young man" Alia shouted

'not again!' Axl froze in front of the door

"Signas you said ..." Alia turned around to meet the back of the Axl's head "since when Signas lets us

choose our tasks? "

Axl start sweating "And more importantly since when he started to send you?"

Alia got a point there, commander Signas always sends Zero, because he is the only one that is cold enough to ignore our violent reactions and makes sure we don't go after Signas's life.

Alia got Axl cornered terrifying him all over again "Speak up who really sent you?" then she gave him the look that made him crack " it was X, please don't kill me!" he answer.

Alia left him alone, but redhead waste no time he immediately ran away in a manner that made me giggle.

"I'm going to eat his guts and drink his blood!" Alia mumbled

"Oh dear lord, who the poor guy?" Asked Layer who just came back from outside, she looks happy, it has been 5 hours since she's been absent.

" Yeah you save this smile till you here what happened "Alia started

"What happened?" Layer questioned

Alia turned to me and said "Palette you can have the rest of the day off I'll finish for you here" I blinked several times I mean are you kidding me? She is going to throw me away like this? I was about to protest when she stared at me 'Damn she is scary' I better do as she says this time, I've to look for Axl now anyway I need him to help me with something .

Meanwhile:

Axl's End he was leaning against the wall catching his breath after he ran for 15 min to get as far as possible from the N.C hanging on to dear life he smiled 'At least I'm safe now '

He then walked few steps forward so high on happiness he pumped into some one, Axl's first reaction was to protect his head, it became a natural reflex now he has been in this HQ for sometime now he knows how it works here.

However nothing happened, he peeked from between his fingers, he saw a warm smile followed by a light laugh.

"I'm sorry Iris " Axl apologized with slight blush

"Don't worry about it "Iris replied." Hey I remember you from the laboratory , actually this is the best thing happened to me all evening, I'm kind of lost here".

"This used to happened to me when I was new here too"

" we weren't introduced , so what's your name ?" Asked Iris smiling sweetly

"A..Axl" his blush grow bigger.

"So Axl Can you walk me to my room?"

"Sure"

Then they shared a little chatter till they were close to Iris's room

"I..Iris" Axl rubbed he back of his neck

"Yes" she replied

"umm I..heard ..I mean ..you are going to start tomorrow ..working again I mean.."Axl hesitated

"What is it?" Iris looked at him a little puzzled

"I just want you to have this!" Axl handed her an object.

"Oh I can't take it ...it-...." Axl cut her off "please, those N.C girls are dangerous"

Iris laughed softly at Axl's answer "Okay thank you, I'll return it to you later"

Then she tiptoed –since she was a little shorter- and kissed his cheek.

Iris then went inside her room, leaving dizzy madly blushing Axl in the hallway, it wasn't much before he went to his own room anyway.

Back to Palette :

I'm at Axl's room waiting for his return , it is way better than looking for him all over this huge HQ, but he seems to be taking more than usual today.

It wasn't too long before he finally got in , he didn't seem to notice me sitting on his bed , he looks a little flushed and somehow out of it , I took few steps toward him ,

"Are you Ok?" I asked

He jumped in surprise "wha..." he took several minutes before he said "oh Pal..you scared me"

"Scared you?" I always come here, that was no surprise

"Anyway" I continued "sit down Axl I've got something to talk to you about ..."

He did exactly what I told him which was so unlike him too

"What is it" he looks at me suspiciously

I try to act innocent " haha ..um I need you to help me with some thing ..."

"yeah.."

"Oh Axl , I'm in big trouble , one day I accidentally pulled a file from the data base, and after I transferred it to this disc " I pulled a CD from under his bed " I non intentionally erased it, I couldn't rebuilt it , and if I anyone discovered I'll be screwed !!!"

"You did WHAT?!!!!" Axl cried out "Ohhh Palette "

I covered my face with my hands "I'm ..I Don't know what to do " I sounded helpless "Can you please help me?"

Axl looked down, breathing deeply then he finally spoke "this is a dangerous thing you did Pal; and you are still a new Navigator in here..."

I looked at him with teary eyes " you..you gotta help me" I plead

"oh Pal" he stand up and pulled me into a hug " Ok I'll see what I can do " he spoke so softly , " Palette!" then his tone changed a bit " You got to promise me not to get in trouble again "

"I promise"

"Ok" I fetl his grip tightening around me "we'll solve this first thing in the morning"

"First....in the morning?" I repeated looking up at him "Thank you"

5 - Layer & Iris encounter (part one)

Layer's POV

A new morning has finally come, yesterday was a very long day and for a moment I thought it might never end; therefore I came here straight from my bedroom I needed to get my mind of what happened those few last days.

Zero talked to me yesterday in what seemed like an apology and I accepted it, after all this is Zero we are talking about.

Now I'm Back again at the Stupid main computer, It Keep displaying
"Access denied"

It is so weird, it is about that Split Mushroom file I retrieved, there seemed to be another file that popped out of no where, the crazy thing about those is that they don't match the slightest bit!

I was trying to get to the bottom of this all morning, but no such luck, you see since everything is quite we –navigator- should sort the Mavericks archive and fill all the gaps so that their library will be easily accessible and any type of info needed could be extracted easily for to be used in research and updates.

"ACCESS DENIED " it flashed again

I slammed my face hard on the keyboard, it is settled this requires a visit to the old library the main source of those old maverick archive, and that engine is located outside the HQ.

I heard the door opens so I left my head of the keyboard to see who just came in...great Alia

"Hey Allie, what did you do to poor X last night?" possible source of entertainment

"I don't have time now I'll tell you later" entertainment out the window 'meh'

Alia slammed her palms hard on the desk "Layer, I need you to take over Iris"

"huh" is what I'm hearing real...?

"Oh come on, she'll be here any second now, oh please Lay"

I Kept staring at Alia in mix in aggravate and disbelief

"Why?" was the only thing I could think about.

"Cause Lay is more cool and composed" She gave me that cute look , which she rarely uses...it works by the way!

"OK" I sigh

"Thank you" she was out of my sight in no time.

Shortly after that I heard knocking at the door, As Alia said any second...!

"Come in Iris"

Iris came in, and took few steps toward me before she asked "so what can I do?"

My mind working max.Power and max.Speed thought of something, so I went back to my sector got all types of forms I could get my hand on and went back and handed them to her.

"I need you to copy these" I said

She looked puzzled and before she could ask or protest I spoke again "there is that copy machine next door on the left"

She took two steps a head before she turn around to face me and was about to say something

"About 500-600 copy each, thank you" I instantly stated then faked a smile and waved waiting for Iris to leave.

This is like the worst thing I could think about, but I need something to keep her busy for the time being so I can plan my trip to that "search engine" then Iris is Alia's again!

I quickly contact Signas and took his promotion to leave the base, and rushed my way out as soon as

possible, therefore I pumped into Alia.

'Oh dear'

"LAYER!!!"

Alia looks so scary right now "Did you asked her to do what I saw her doing??!"

"A-.."I opened my mouth to answer but she kept going

"I thought you more mature!"

"Oh Alia I'll fix this when I come back"

"You are unreliable Layer" Alia looked down "Hold it!come back.. You said?"

Oh I don't have time for this I was about to react when we heard the familiar bell ring

"The fire alarm?" Alia muttered

We looked at each other "shoot" we said together and we headed full speed to the the copy room as soon as I opened the door and the water fell down like heavy rain. I stepped inside and pulled Iris by the arm out of that room through water and smoke.

After 10 min of soaking wet the water finally stopped I felt rage build inside of me, still holding Iris I said in low voice "could've been any easier task you could possibly do ?" I took a deep breath "You couldn't copy document? Seriously" I started shouting now "even a MONKEY can copy for god sake"

Iris didn't say anything how ever started crying the left, Alia stood their and watched me in confusion.

"I never saw you so angry Layer" she said

Then the near by door of the Palette office opened I observed the smoke flying out of that door and I noticed the terrible mistake I just made.

While I was walking to Iris's room I thought that before I'd easily trace such incidence back to Palette, which I left to Alia to deal with at the moment.

Was my rage just because of Iris's relationship with Zero? Did I allow my emotions to get the best of me? And on the top of that did I let my personal issues get on the way of my job as Navigator?

To admitted, today I failed my title as an s-class navigator. As much as I hate

I arriver at Iris room I took a deep breath to try to fix what happened

I knocked on the door, I heard no answer, I waited few seconds then I knocked again

"Iris...?" I asked

"WHAT!" I heard from behind that door.

"I'm..."I looked down; it was hard for me to say "I'm really sorry"

"..."

"I shouldn't have jumped to conclusions like this, and I'm sorry I yelled like a mad"

"O..ok" I heard

"Um..." the craziest thought of all times just hit me "Iris..? I'll make it up to you" I suggested

The door of the opened, Iris was standing right behind it, and I could tell she was still crying because her eyes were slightly red, she also looked puzzled at my suggestion "how?" she asked

"I've to got check out and an old search engine, want to come with me?"

Still holding that curious look she asked again "where is that exactly?"

"In sealed facility about 300Km from here"

She took few steps out side "So you can kill me and no one can hear me scream?"

It was my turns to look puzzled "huh?" come to think of it she got a point.

"And Have Zero come for my head?" I replied

"Do you want to come or not? " I asked again.

"Okay, I'm coming....I guess"

**

while I was looking at the short brunette walking beside me I was thinking that this might be a good chanced to get to know her; who been introduced into my life all of sudden , after all we started on the wrong foot.

We just interred the old building after passing a series of security codes and scans, and we had a long road a head of us since the information that we were looking for was stored on the fifth floor and we have to walk all the way.

"So Iris, why were you *gone* ...?" I decided to break the silence

She looked a little taken out by my sudden question "Zero killed me"

I cleared my ears trying to make sure what I heard was right.

"Zero did ...*WHAT?!!*"

She looked at me "You didn't know?...I'm sorry I thought you were *his* navigator " she teased

"I AM his navigator!" I replied " but how did this happened ?" I was curious

"It is a long story ..."

"And we have a long road a head of us..."

**

Iris told me everything, Can you believe this? I mean I never thought that we can occasionally exchange formal greetings and now we are talking like best friends, I think I was really acting based of my feelings for Zero and not on Iris's personality.

"Hey you went against him first you can't really blame Zero for your death" I commented

"I can't blame him alone, but he has a great share of what happened "she spoke waving her hands in irritate manner

I giggled she was a bit cute like this.

"Hey what's funny?" She frowned at me

"noth-.." I was cut off by the sensation of something moving in the background I turned around to check it, I pulled my rapier it, was something fast that moved at the ground level a...mouse?

"Ahhh.." Iris screamed

"Hey it is just a..." before I could finish my sentence Iris shot it

"Wow..." I astonish by the perfect shot.

"You see, I'm colonel's sister" she spoke teasingly with a hint of proud, but what caught my interest was the gun she fired "um...is that Axl's?" I asked

"Yes, is this a problem?"

There is another interesting subject to discuss for the next tow floors.

**

We finally reached our target , now I'm only few steps away from my goal, I reached for the door panel and interred the code that supposed to open the door , yeah I said supposed to open because the system rejected it and asked me to retype it and when I did I activated the security system that locked us there by every mean of defense system we ever had , so now I feel like trapped rat, and only when I thought things can started to be better it only seems to be only worse , and on the top of this I think Iris is getting paranoid.

6 - Iris & Layer encounter (part tow)

Iris' POV

When I heard the Intruder alarm comes off It reminded me of that fire alarm from this morning and then my memory flew way back and I remembered the mavericks alarm along with tons of painful memories I couldn't endure, I felt light headed and I reached for support and the nearest thing to me was ...Layer

"Are you OK?" She asked in tender voice

I shook my head no, she pulled me closer and supported me to stay standing.

"Do you feel like sitting?" she asked again

"No I'm fine" I never thought she could be nice, judging by our previous encounters but I guess I was wrong

"What are we going to do now?" I asked

"Nothing we'll just wait for the HQ to send someone over here once they get the alarm, he or she'll be here in 30 min max"

She looked a little over stressed about something "what is it?" I asked her

"...I don't like this , someone has been manipulating the system , this sort of things is supposed to be confidential "

Now that she stated it sounds scary "maybe it is just a system glitch?" I suggested

"glitches may occur but it wouldn't explain how our –recently-dead friend got in"

"Dead friend?" I repeated

"For god sake Iris...the rat!"

"Oh...but I'm still not getting it..."

The new and updated security system shouldn't let a fly in, how would this rat come in if not for someone to let it in?"

Ah...a clumsy hacker!" "

"You are just making it worst"

These are going to be long 30 min ...

Most of the time had passed by now, but I didn't feel much better so I kept holding on to Layer, she didn't seem to mind.

"Who do you think they are going to send?"

"I don't know, maybe anyone"

I sigh, I took a look at Layer who was too busy thinking and worrying, she is not as bad as I thought she was, she's a little short tempered , but she's a little nice too.

I was brought back to reality by the noise of the turn off of the alarm and not far after the door opened Layer didn't seem to care about it, that's when someone stepped in, it was Zero...what a big surprise. He seemed as if he was about to say something but backed off he looked surprised, I wondered what was surprising him then it hit me.

He was looking at me holding onto Layer like a child holding onto his mom this sure is confusing, I blinked couple of times then I instantly pulled back and I blushed a little.

Layer walked past Zero still deeply consumed by her thoughts then she said "Come on, We've to go back to the HQ and get to the bottom of this!"

Totally ignored Zero looked at her direction then back at me, and gave me the what-is-with-her look I shrugged

I went past Zero too following Layer "Wait Layer! Aren't going to get what we came for?"

"No, I'll handle it later, now I've got to find our intruder" still walking she added "come on Iris"

"Are you perhaps willing to explain any of this to me?" Zero spoke who was totally ignored

I looked behind to see his expression, and for the first time I couldn't understand him

"I'll explain everything later when we go back" Layer answered still giving him her back

"I want an explanation right now!" Zero rose his tone, I can obviously see that this is not going to end well.

"I..We don't have time for thi-.." Layer was cut off by Zero

"And can you possibly face me while you are speaking to me" Zero was upset

Layer looked back in mix of surprise and somewhat anger, I stepped back.

She lowered her face so that her hair could cover her eyes completely, she took defensive position as she held her arm, knowing that Zero can tell what others may think by looking at their eyes, Layer was confusing Zero even more, but I wonder if Zero noticed.

"I'm sorry *sir*, but I already made myself clear about explaining every once we get back, and I apologize for not *looking* at your direction" Layer is purposely riling Zero, I hope she know what she is doing.

"Layer! I don't know what's wrong with you but I swear-" I cut Zero off by holding his hand; I couldn't just watch anymore I had to do something.

Zero stopped and looked at me surprisingly

"I can't work with this anymore" Layer's word caught our both attention, I don't know what to do anymore, but likely Zero didn't react to this, Layer walked toward the exit and left us behind.

Same way we came here, we had to walk all five floors to teleport back to the HQ, Layer was walking a little far from us, I was still holding Zero's arm to make sure it wouldn't swing at the nearest wall, because when ever he gets mad or frustrated he punched near by hard objects.

The atmosphere was unbearably heavy and silent, I didn't notice it before but, what happened just moments before seemed like...

'Lovers fight?'

**

Once we returned to the HQ Layer walked straight to the N.C and considering what happened this morning it wasn't where I wanted to be, therefore I decided to stay with Zero.

I looked at him.. he was gazing at the way Layer took 'not again...!'

Zero leaned back at wall looking at the ground "Iris" he spoke

His voice made shiver run down my spine, I knew this tone, he was going to tell me something disturbing.

I slowly turned around, "Yes...?" I answered in weak voice.

"What on earth were you doing with Layer?" I blinked couple of times, how can I possibly respond to that?

"Why, I weren't supposed to?" good answered, I smiled to myself.

"Never mind" he took few steps away

"Zero!"

"What?"

"Why are you being cold to me?"

I took him by surprise, he turned to face me "am I?" he reply innocently.
He is so cute when he is like that, and how I love to take advantage of these moments "Yes you are!...I was brought back 2 days ago and you don't even know where I was yesterday"
He looked shocked as if he just noticed this right now "I'm sorry " he said
He..he apologized ? Something is defiantly wrong with him. I was taken back by his sudden announcements
"Do you want to go out?"
"Of course I do" I instantly answered.
Zero smiled at me, and then we took off.

**

It was about midnight now, couple of hours after we came back, I went directly to my room and head to my balcony and rested my crossed arm on the hedge and sunk my face down into them.
It was like the worst time ever, even though he took me to really nice places Zero seemed disconnected and silent, and when I spoke he barely listened, and on top of this when he escorted me here he forgot to kiss me goodnight. I looked at the city lights from my balcony and sighed.
"Something is not right" I spoke lightly
I heard a soft knock on my door "Come in" I yelled it must be Zero, maybe he realized he should apologize about that lousy date he took me to, and he defiantly should or even better he should make it up for me, I was so caught by fantasies I didn't notice the hand that hit me on the forehead.
"Hey that was not funny Ze....." I stopped when I turned around to see to whom that hand belonged.
"You are not Zero " I said.
"No, I'm not" Layer said "I was wondering were did you disappear."
"I was with Zero" I answered.
"Oh I see" Layer stood just beside me.
"Don't look so gloomy, it was-..."she caught me off
"Son of...what A view!!" She shouted "Zero must've really loved you keeping this room for even thought you were gone" her voice slightly lighter.
Her expression mildly changes whenever she speaks of Zero, but she sure has a good point.
Still how in hell she could have known, I looked at her surprisingly.
"Alia" she answered.
"The blonde"
"No, not Zero...Alia"
We both laughed, "Thinking of it, she can easily be his hell-dimension sister" Layer added. "She is really nice thought....sometimes"
"I think you are nice too"
She was a little taken off "Thank you..."
It was true, I meant it.
"Iris" she said "can I ask you something?"
"Sure"
"Do you still love Zero?"
I didn't see this one coming, I was surprised, but I have to say that it had me thinking.

7 - Sorting things out.

1:30 am

I was at Layer's room, today was very busy and Layer - my second in command – left me all alone, I had to deal with that Palette whom started that fire alarm by accident and burned all our copy machines, then had to clean that mess, after that Layer got me all worried about what happened in information retrieving mission, and she didn't even get what she went for! and then she had me listening to her Zero's unbearable behavior nagging for 3hours straight, it is like she met him yesterday she knows him better than that, but what to say , she had to complain, did I forgot to mention that she made a friend with Iris? Or should I say Zero's girlfriend ...I mean who in the name of ...befriends the enemy? I honestly don't know what's wrong with her circuits; I mean is she going to give up Zero just like that? Now I'm dead beat physically and emotionally, and can not under any circumstances let X wins over me! I had to do something therefore I came here to give Layer boost to continue fighting for Zero only to find her gone! Where in hell could she be?

I was walking back and fourth in her room waiting for her return, but it is really late I started to worry, I decided to give her ten more minutes before start looking for her or have others to do so.

Just now I heard the familiar noise of the door opened, Layer walked in.

"Where in hell have you been so late?!" I shouted

"oh yeah, hey mom "

"Layer!"

"Chill blondie"

Blondie? Did she just called me blondie ?

"What?" she giggled at my reaction, and then she made her way to bed and throw herself face first

"Aren't you going to change cloths at least?"

"Too tired" her face buried down at the sheets I barely heard her.

I followed her lead, only I fell face up.

"I think I'm going to stay here"

"You better not snore!"

"I DO not"

"do to "

"NO WAY!"

"I taped you"

"You WHAT!"

"I knew you won't believe me"

"You are so lucky I'm too tired to beat you up"

"No, I actually took advantage of this fact"

We could have kept it going forever, so I decided to change the subject, or better yet I decided to go back to my original subject.

"Anyway, where have you been?"

"Iris's"

I don't know how many moments took me to digest it "come again?" I sat up straight "you serious?"

"Yup"

"So, you are best buddies now?" I stated annoyingly

She lifted her head up "Are you jealous Allie?"

What? Is she serious? "Layer ! I don't know what's wrong with you; you are usually smarter than this"

"I *am*, but really tired right now, can we talk about this on the morning"

"Whatever" I was so mad at her I decided to leave.

I stood up "Hey! Where to?" she asked shockingly

"X's"

Then I left quietly.

**

On my way to X's I was so frustrated I thought it was better to but my own brain to sleep and stop thinking, I wasn't in state to do so anyway.

I walked depending merely on my remembrance of the road to X's room since it was habit for me to stop a Layer before I go there judging by how many times I've done this, I think made it to X's room with my eyes shut most of the way.

Before the door I sensed the presence of someone else, struggling to open my eyes I looked at who may disturb my dear X at a time like this, other than me that is!

"Oh hey honey" it was no other than X himself who by the way looked like my mirror image.

He opened the door and walked in, and I followed.

"Where were you?" he asked

"Layer's, you?"

"Zero's"

We exchanged looks by our barely opened eyes, and then made our way to the bed then literally collapsed there; I collected myself enough to cuddle with him.

"Why was Zero keeping you up this late?" I asked tracing his chest with my fingers

"Whining like there is no tomorrow"

"What about?" Kept moving up and down playfully.

"And sell out my best friend secrets?"

I had a strong feeling that all this hush-hush because I was something regarding Layer, I felt my confidence 'level up' for the first time in 3days however I had to make sure "not even for me" I nuzzled under his chine.

"Stop that, you know this is not going to get through to me" then he rolled around.

X is gigantic ice cube... however, I used my arm to push myself up enough for me be in contact directly in his ear "stop you say? Wait just till I win that bet, my dear X" I whispered in chilled voice.

"Win? Didn't you know that Zero went out with Iris today?"

It felt like ice build up inside of me, no wonder Layer was so messed up, but this calls for a Alia's special abilities meddling, I trusted Layer to get things going on her own and she failed miserably, I have to do something, I must not lose especially not to X, he simply loses to everyone and it is going to stay that way!! I just can't offered to let him win over me !it is not like that I don't care about Layer, because I care and I care A LOT ,this X thing is just an extra motive, and very vigorous one.

I shut up and hid my face in X's back, but I could sense him smiling victoriously, damn...I really need to stop doing this to others.

**

6:00 am

The crazy alarm went off, I couldn't stand the noise I reached for it and smashed it on the nearest wall.

A reflected shred of the poor device hit me in the eye

"YOU STUPID..." I shouted furiously

"Was that my alarm clock?" X spoke from under the sheets

"I think?"

"OH god Alia this is the seventh this month"

"I'll get you a new one"

"The same way you got me a new coffee machine!"

"Hey I told you it was an accident!" I sat up straight

"Accidentally smashed over the wall like Joe over there"

"Hey I....you named your alarm clock?" I pulled the cover off X's face, I've got to see his expression, he immediately burst into laughter.

"You nearly got me there ..."

"Nearly?" he raised an eyebrow; I looked around for the nearest object to smash it onto his face and didn't notice how he caught my both hands.

"Hey!"

"Your temper thingi needs to get fixed" I struggle to free my hands and I guess X was barely positioned on the edge of the bed therefore we fell to the floor.

"How cute" I said

"How so *not* cute" he reply. I eyed him

He got up and helped me to do so, I'm happy my Sweetheart is such a gentleman , if it was Zero he'd probably leave me at the floorWhat the! Why was I thinking about Zero?...I sincerely don't know what Layer sees in him , sleep lack is really driving me crazy.

"I'll go wake the others, you make breakfast"

"Ok"

Breakfast table:

7:00 am

Deadly silence environment, and it is confusing me!

You see, I can understand why Layer supporting her head by the back of the chair and fallen asleep; that's Zero's fault

And I know Iris is a sleep because she is tired from her 'date ' yesterday which is also Zero's fault

And X's is asleep and nearly drowning in his cereals, again it is Zero's fault

And I totally get why Zeros is sleep and drooling all over the kitchen table it is Karma for depriving 3 people of sleep!

But why is hell is Palette and Axl asleep too?

Anyway we have work to do today therefore I 'accidently' dropped my plate , the noise of the porcelain shattering woke everyone up, I'm possess a mischievous sprite, will, is did the trick ...

**

AT N.C:

Me and Layer decided to dig deep and solve the "mystery intruder" thing once and forever, it was puzzling because the 'Mushroom' file was the only one that's been manipulated and the rest of our data base was left unharmed, which suggest that it may not be very serious after all.

Therefore we used the aid of our top maverick hunters; yeah you've guessed it, X and Zero.

They are seated in front of me and Layer who stayed standing because we prefer to move back and forth while talking.

We agreed that I'll explain every thing from the beginning and Layer'll take over to explain the part of her trip to the data bank due to some deal she made with Zero.

Anyway by the time I finished my part I noticed Zero was a sleep...

I bent down to his level resting my hands on his seat "Are you keeping track here?" I announced.

He regained consciousness "Yeah of course" he answered backing off a little.

X chuckle.

I moved away, Zero leaned to X and whispered something, X smiled, they were acting like fifth graders , I looked over to Layer whom was leaning against the wall, I signed her to take over .

As she was talking I took her place on the wall and watched Zero paying attention like never before, I shock my head

'You still think you gonna win X'

Layer was now done, "I see" Zero spoke

X stood up "I understand your concern girls, but you sure it wasn't just one of you who did it?" he took few steps toward the exit "You check other navigators and if none claimed this, we'll reported this to Signas, till then we shouldn't make big fuss about it"

I stared at X's direction then to Layer whom looked at me also 'was X stating the obvious?'

A name flashed inside my head and I was certain Layer thought the same when I hear her voice synchronize with mine

"PALETTE!"

.

8 - decision making (part 1. a women's aspect)

This was supposed to be girls only POV but, I just couldn't exclude Zero, it is his problem after all :3

Zero's POV:

My head is so missed up, I couldn't clear my mind since this last week, the slightest brain activity can cause me headache.

My mind swinging between Layer and Iris , I couldn't set my mind to either , I can't say that I like one more than the other, in one hand I've got Iris, my angel whom I caused her so much pain and harm both physically and emotionally and she had no one other than me , feeling guilty is not a reason to continue on a relationship, but it is not just guilt, I had feelings for her long ago, but it was some time ago , I'm not as sure anymore.

On the other hand there is Layer I don't really know her for long time, but her confidence and since of independency got me hooked and I really like her, but do I like her enough to over-favor her to Iris.

There goes my headache again.

I finally decided to set my ego aside and use someone's help, the question is whom to ask...

Usually I'd go straight to X, since he is my best friend, or more like my only friend, anyway in this kind of situation I don't think he'll help at all.

Now now whom else could I turn too?

Deep into my thoughts I almost ran into someone, it took me couple of seconds to clear my mind a bit and see who was it.

"Axl..?"

Maybe I can ask him?

Axl wasn't paying attention either, he was kind of distracted and when I called him he flinched.

"Are you alright?" I asked, but it no more than a figure of speech.

He nodded, and then he began to complain to me about something, I wasn't really listening .but Axl is been gloomy and whiny since the 'missing file incidence' which turned out to be no more than curious Palette. Alia and Layer then figured this 'proper punishment' for her, which was basically turning poor Palette into their slave ,more than she already was .

Axl wasn't let out of the hook since he contributed in this, but his punishment was left for X whom had him do his paper work, which was noting compared to what Palette had to do, I know how Alia gets when she have the opportunity to....Alia?

Why didn't I think about this? Before at least I would be advised by someone who doesn't seem like grandson.

I immediately left, leaving Axl behind talking to himself, I couldn't care less anyway.

And as I walked to Alia I could remember the last time she spoke to me 3 days ago.

Flashback

I was sitting on a chair in the middle of N.C , which was pompously position there to set a mood for 'prorate interrogation cession' and I could tell that those girls are really having fun with this, all that is lacking was dim light and they'll be all set, I could have left but sense I had no better thing to do I just sat

there supporting my head with my hand in annoyed/bored manner.

They intentionally slowing everything down, and it took forever till one of them finally spoke.

"So..." Alia stated.

She started to walk back and forth like always then she continued

"Zero, you retired the maverick named 'Split Mushroom' yes or no?"

I raised my hand before I commented "Is this an integration or lie detecting test?"

"Zero!! Don't kill the mood, just play along" She said with a sulk.

'Manic' I thought.

"Ok "I said.

"So, yes or no?"

"Yes"

"Do you still remember all info about him?"

"Yes"

"OK, now can you please explain this?"

Layer approached me with a file in her hand and handed it to me, I checked it out it was labeled "Split mushroom", big surprise...

All the information in it that folder was correct, I didn't know why they were making a huge fuss about it.

"Does anything feel strange to you?"

"No"

"OK" she said.

I was getting a bored by their weird actions, that's until, Layer sat at the hand of the chair and throw another folder in my lap, I was taken by that even weirder action but I took this other folder which was also labeled "Split Mushroom"

I shook my head and in irritated manner, then took a look at this new folder as well, however what I saw made me confused.

"What is this?" I asked

"The original folder" Layer stated.

I stared in awe; this doesn't make any sense "Can any of you explain this to me?"

"Actually we were hoping you'd explain this to us" said Alia.

I was getting bad vibes from both girls who were invading my intimate area, if they were planning to mystify me, it is working.

"This is based on your own paper work Zero" Alia continued.

There is no way I could write this nonsense; I mean Split had green hair? It just not possible!

A passing by Iris with large amount of documents in her hand decided to end my confusion

"Enough already!" Said Iris "It is probably not even Zero who wrote that"

I felt so dump that moment, I wished I could melted into that ground.

"And you had to kill the mood, you buzz kill" Alia stated "You think I didn't know that?"

"huh?"

"anyway all this gibberish can't belong to any other than X"

It is true, I'm amazed how I didn't think of this, after all half my paper work is done by X, if not all of it.

However I could see this is developing into cats fight fast, if it wasn't for certain interfering made by Layer

"Drop it Alia" she said.

Did Layer just stood up for Iris? I was dumbfounded by this new turn of event but not dumfounded enough to not take advantage of the situation and take off, normally I'd be incensed by this kind of lame jokes but, Layer and Iris 'thing' was so creepy I was avoiding both of them ever since.

end of flash back

The N.C was where she must be, but there is always the risk of running into other certain navigators I was trying to avoid.

So I thought I'd go for coffee that may relieve my pain a little, since our private residence wasn't far from the N.C so I went there first.

And I was never luckier in my life, not even when I died twice and come back!

Alia was in the kitchen alone standing right under open cupboard door, the site activated my wickedness so I sneaked up behind her and said "Yo"

Alia leaped and smacked her head, how perfect if only every other thing could be managed as easily.
"WhaaaAHH"

I let out laughter as Alia started to rub her scalp; she gave me her infamous low stare.

"Couldn't help it" I said

I sat at the nearest chair backwards (straddle) to rest my chin at the back of the chair, after I made myself comfortable, I asked "You got a minute there?"

"What do you want?" Alia said, still rubbing her head.

I know she's Layer's friend so she won't be mutual, but at least I got to hear it from a women's aspect, which is better than nothing.

"Help me...?" I started to swing the chair a little.

"Oh help you with what Zero?" Turn around to complete what ever she was doing ,I think she was aiming for coffee like me.

"You are the best navigator I ever had, before X stole you for good"

I could feel her smile before she said "why so sudden"

"Praise a women and it'll get you whatever you want" I answered.

"How predictable" She said shaking her head.

I fixed the chair before I spoke again"

"I need your opinion, not as Layer's friend but as mine"

She turned around holding a cup of coffee "were we ever?" then she handed it to me.

"Thank you, and yeah we were somewhere along the line, but I can't remember anymore"

Alia smiled "Ok I'll help you if you asked sweetly" she said.

"Pretty please with sugar in top?"

"Good enough" she leaned against the cupboard the continued "which one of them you like more?"

I gazed at Alia while sipping that coffee.

"Ok that's wasn't so smart of me, but I had to make sure" she then lowered herself to my eye-level supporting herself by the sides of the chair.

"It has to be hell for you since you are asking me to help, but you know what just ignore your brain completely and let your heart decide for you, then stick to that decision "

Ignore my brain? If only she knew the current state of my neural activity!

"That's all" she said then she stood up again, held her cup and was about to leave.

"That's it? A romance-movie quote? That's your best?" I questioned.

"No" she took few steps toward the exit "I think you should pick Layer"

I picked a spoon I spotted earlier on the table and throw it at her.

She left giggling.

"Thanks for nothing" I yelled.

Alia encounter evaluation: no value what so ever.

Possible action: Make up my own mind or go back to square one (aka X)

X it is then!

9 - : decision Making (Part 2. a love confession and love d

Zero's POV

At X's office :

X was all asleep and drooling all over his desk, so he needed to be awoken, therefore I turned around his office to find the appropriate tool to do so, there was the water dispenser at the corner, I thought it was kind of cliché, so I pass.

Then there was his books, but this was 'too evil' since I was here to ask him to help me.

But something sitting at his desk caught my attention; it was his favorite teal vase with roses in it.

I've always mocked him for having roses on his desk, it was a sissy act by every aspect, I mean he is a maverick hunter for god's sake.

But never before I thought this may actually help me one day, I looked at the water inside the vase I knew it had sugar in it, which made this whole rose's thing even sissier than it already was. Anyway the water in it was a bit yellowish 'perfect' I thought.

I splashed him with my new found 'discovery' which worked very well by the way.

"WHaa.."

X woke in no time, he wiped the 'water' off his face

"Hello" I greeted.

He gave me a low sate he must've picked from Alia, and then he noticed how sticky the substance in his hand and face is getting.

"What is this?" he asked, looking at his hands, then back at me waiting for an answer, which he had gotten just by looking at the object in my hand, I was still holding that vase.

"Zero!" he shout

I instantly put the vase back where it was.

"Not what I meant" he said dumbfounded by my reaction, I smiled, it was easy to get to him even though we know each other since forever now,

"So what do you want?" X said also smiling

I know how he likes to keep everything at his desk clean and tidy, and almost too tidy and he hate when someone even touched his desk, it was his territory. Therefore I always sit at the edge of that desk.

Which was what I did.

"um...Zero..."X started.

"So, X, I've got this problem"

X slammed his forehead "Zero, please!"

I repositioned myself to seek more comfortableness on that desk

"Oh god " he says

"What would you do if you were me?" I said totally ignoring him.

"Do about what?" X raised an eyebrow.

"I was feeding you updates on this the whole week, how can you not know what I'm talking about?"

"Oh "snapped to reality somehow, this wasn't good X tends to give more reasonable conclusion when he is distracted, so I need to get him 'unfocused' again so I began to scratch the surface of desk with my finger nails.

"Whaa" X started screaming.

"X, I want your real, open and straight opinion" X kept screaming and distracted to the limits signing my ideal moment.

"Whom should I pick X?" I asked.

"La-.."He paused for a second the he continued "Iris! You should be with Iris, you love her and you will stay with her" he crossed his arms upon his last words.

"Were you about to say Layer?"

"No, I wasn't!" He reassured.

I already heard what I came here, for and I made my mind to fix this once and for all, and my next distention was the N.C.

N.C (once more):

When I came in I was welcomed by the site of very upset and crying Alia, and it was very strange because she was fine when I met her at the kitchen less than 3 hours ago.

I approached her and put my hand on her shoulder in friendlier manner, but she pushed it off aggressively.

She looked at me with teary eyes, it was rare to see her crying like this.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"It is all your fault you jackass!" she yelled before she left the N.C

Mine? She wasn't the one I was blowing off with every lame excuses that –even with my current low brain activity- could tell that they were insulting any one with decent amount of intelligent.

Anyway I finished my way to where I was heading, that was Layer's sector. When I arrived there, I noticed that the door was slightly opened. So I knocked a little and went in right away since the door wasn't locked.

Layer was picking stuff off her desk, but she stopped when I came in.

"What's with Alia?" I thought I should ask first.

"She'll be fine" Layer answered heading to the door; I was wandering if she'll leave, but instead she locked the door.

I was somehow taken back by that action. If I could only see through her eyes and know what she was thinking.

"It is you who I needed to talk to" said Layer while closing the gap between us.

"huh?"

Layer was now in front of me about 4 inches far when she continued "Commander...I..." she looked down "I'm transferring to another Headquarters "

"Why?"

"I can't work here anymore" Layer slightly shook her head then added "I can't be around you anymore"

"Layer..."

She held my hand "I ...I love you Zero" I could feel her grip tighten "I always did, and I..I though that maybe one day you'll return my feeling"

I opened my mouth to protest but she placed a finger on my lips the said "please don't make this any harder than it already is, nothing you'll say or do will make me stay"

Layer wrapped her arms around my shoulder and hugged me, I stood still, I wished I could actually say something, tell her not leave and speak of what I came here for, but this voice in the back of my head kept scrambling "Iris", guilt restrained me to the point I couldn't do anything.

"It was pleasure working with you Zero, I hope I could stay a little longer" Layer said upon letting go.

She headed toward the door "When'll you believing?" I asked.

"Today , 6pm"

I watched Layer hold her arm before saying "Iris is so sweet, I hope you'll be happy with her" then she

left.

Few hours later:

I locked myself in my desk, I felt really bad about how thing turned out with Layer, but maybe it is a good thing that she decided to leave, maybe now I can be with Iris like before, at least Layer is independent and strong, she doesn't need me like Iris do.

I repeated these thoughts to myself trying to overcome the horrible feeling of all this being so wrong. I pretending to do paper work, that was sitting in front of me, but all what was writing in those forms was Layer's name over and over again.

I looked up at the clock seeing that it was 5:15 now 45 minutes to Layers departure, I hit my head on the desk maybe I'll kill my headache, or maybe if I hit it hard enough I'll lose track of time and find out that it passed 7 or something.

But it served neither.

I looked at the clock again, it was 5:17 great only 2 minutes, these are obviously going to be the longest 43 minutes I ever experienced.

I heard a soft knock on the door, suicidal intruder maybe he or she'll serve to distract me for enough time.

"Come in"

I was surprised that it was Iris who came in, she moved toward me in small steps "Hello" She greeted.

"Hey"

"Zero?"

"Yes?"

"Did you know that Layer is leaving?"

"yeah..." I answered looking at Iris .

"Aren't you going to do something about it?"

Shocked by this question, I couldn't find appropriate answer so I was absolutely oblivious to Iris who pulled me from my seat.

"What are you doing?" I mutter

"Making an action!" she answered.

It was amazing how could those; who I was keeping away from them those past few days could easily move me around, maybe I wasn't just keeping a hold of myself as I used to, this was so overwhelming it needed to end fast.

"Why?" I had to know.

"I'm no fool Zero, I know you like her" replied Iris "so you go stop her from leaving"

I'm still not getting what Iris is implying, so I kept staring at her, she then crossed her arms and turned away from me.

"I already knew how you get when she is mad at you" Iris looked at me then she finished "I rather let you go than live with the shadow of the man who loves Layer"

"Iris.."

"Oh Zero, we had our chance and we blow it, besides I'm not sure if I still love you anymore...oh stop wasting time you don't have"

Iris was considerably close enough for me to lean down and kiss her forehead.

"Thank you" I whispered "you'll always be my first love"

Iris smiles sadly "Go" she whispered.

I quickly looked over the clock hoping it wasn't too late, it was 5:50.

Great 10 whole minute, these are more than enough to get me anymore unless...

"Iris. Do you know if Layer whither be teleported or just taking the public transports?"

"She is taking the front door"

'damn' I'm not sure if I can make it in 10 minutes , but I've got try at least.

Panting heavily before the last door to my goal, I wondered if this all the crazy jumping, running and pumping into countless random people and not having time to apologize decently will all pay off. I opened the door to see X, crying Alia, Palette , few other navigators and people whom don't matter, the I saw *her*, I spotted Layer about to leave.

"LAYER!!" I shout drawing everyone's attention to me.

At this very moment the only thing that separated us was this unreasonably long stairs, so heck! I jumped.

Layer stepped away from the main iterance "Oh Zero"

I walked in her direction. no need to rush anymore, I tried to calm down by the time I reach her.

"You almost missed me " She spoke in her calm tone "It wou-..."

She was talking too much and needed to be silenced, so I pulled her by the waist into what can explain me much better than words.

I kissed her in away I never kissed anyone before, thinking about all the things that fascinated me about her, and how I almost lost her and I wished she could understand.

It took her few seconds to respond but I couldn't feel any happier when she kissed back and I hoped this would never end, will I hoped...

(end of Zero's POV)

(A/N : from here on I thought it would be better to be from X's POV just for the fun of it)

"I...I..I won?" said Alia

"No way!" I yelled , stunned by the sudden change of events, after I was so close from my first wining . I was already planning for replacing Alia's penalty since Axl already done all my paper work. But this..This is plain horrible.

While I was ranting I noticed that the newly "love-dovey" couple were staring at us in non love-dovey manner, I realized that me and Alia killed their perfect moment, I backed off a little.

Layer left Zero's hold and walked toward Alia.

"Did I heard you say...'I won'? "

I didn't have to see Layer's eyes , to discover the way she was gazing at Alia, her tone gave it away.... Anyway.

Alia was reaching for my arm, but I pulled it, Alia has to face Layer alone, the same way I have to..."uh-oh"

I was almost to afraid to look at Zero, God only knows what his reaction may be, but

I did anyway, and I was so relieved I actually did , because he was giving me the 'awkward look' it was annoying but it can't kill anyone.

So I drew my attention back to Alia who was stumbling in her speech , I let myself be entertained by the fact she was being terrified , since I lost to her ,that was until she suddenly declared "I bet because it was the only way to get laid"

'Sheesh Alia I think some one in the next building might not heard you loud enough'

Now I've Zero and Layer both looking at me in that odd way.

"I don't know you man " Zero said to me

"No so surprising for the man who dreams of *Utopia* " Alia exclaim.

Layer backed off Alia and crossed her arm with Zero's then the start walking away, but I could clearly hear them speak .

"So you are letting X off the hook?" Layer asked.

"He lost to Alia, Layer that's punishment enough" Zero replied.

I was never humiliated more in my life; it wasn't long before Alia pulled me by the arm to my unknown future, as if I need more misery in my life.

**

It has been like 4 days now and no one had seen Layer or Zero around the HQ, Axl was as gloomish as ever, he had some problem regarding Palette, they never got back together the same way. Since that 'file' incident, but all in all no one had worse position than the one I'm holding, I thought as I sat at the edge of Alia's private bathtub rubbing her back with her favorite 'lavender' shower gel.

"A little more to the left, slave" she commanded

"Yes your majesty"

I sigh as I thought about all the things she had me do for her, and I swore I'll never cast bets again for as long as I shall live, and then a crazy idea crossed my head .

I leaned forward to kiss Alia's exposed neck to be met by her soap-full hand straight to my face, and now I've got soap burning my eyes.

As I picked a near by towel I heard her voice saying

"You could have been my love-slave for a whole month X, but ruined it now you are 'just' my slave "

I went over to the sink to try and rinse off the soap.

"After this I want you get me my chocolate martini" she commanded again.

"You want to have it in here?"

"Is that an objection I'm hearing?"

"No"

"No what X?"

"No...Your majesty" I sighed.

And I could see that this is going to be the longest 26 day, I'll ever live.

**

Iris was walking to the N.C when she saw a figure moving not far a way from her, she turn around to get a full view of whomever was passing by.

"Are you ok?" she asked after noticing he was all down and depressed.

"Kind of" Axl replied

"You look sad "

"I'm just having a bad time"

"Want to talk about it?"

Axl was surprised by the kind offer, everyone around were either ignoring him or avoiding him, so he was happy someone actually cared to ask.

"Seriously?" Axl asked.

Iris giggled a bit at his answer "of course" after all it was the least she could do to the first person to show a kind gesture toward her, but little she know that it might be a spark for something more.

The End

