

*Porter and James arrived to the area her described after several hours of making their way through the city, that seemed more like a labyrinth now. The twists and turns of the city, made it difficult to tell where they were or how far they'd traveled with the buildings acting as a barrier to seeing beyond where they were. They now stood before an apartment building, the entrance was crushed and there was no way to enter from there. Looking around, Porter spotted fire escape ladders off the side of the building and pulled her gun out to approach.*

Looking the building over, I could have sworn that the entrance wasn't as trashed as what we found coming back to it.

*I've got a bad feeling about this.*

Hearing Porter call my name after she disappeared to the side of the building, I looked around once more and looked the building over. Looking up, I noticed an apartment several floors up, with an open window.

*When did that happen?*

This building was wrong...everything about it was wrong. Backing away from it, I called for Porter after my hunch was confirmed. In the window, there was a face...no several faces and they all stared blankly. Swallowing every bit of dignity I had, I shrieked like a child and ducked as one of the faces came hurling at me when a person was hurled from the open window right at me.

“Holy Shit, what the hell?”

A loud and horrifying splatter could be heard as they hit the ground and literally exploded into a disgusting crime scene right front of me. Squeezing my eyes shut, I could hear Porter's approach and her voice as another splattering sounded on the ground. Sounds of gunshots forced my eyes open and the next thing I knew, I was being dragged by Porter as she ran and continued firing behind her.

Looking behind us, I saw what made Porter take off and looked around for anywhere we could hide. It was monstrous, it looked like the black creatures whose bodies emitted the broken toy sound but, this one was different. It seemed sentient, aware of us in a way the others weren't.

I didn't have much time to think about it, we turned another corner and Porter swore as she pulled out a cartridge for her gun and reloaded it.

"Last cartridge kid, go find somewhere to hide. I'm right behind-"

She stopped mid-sentence and hearing a deep, heavy breathing behind us, I didn't have to turn around to find out why.

Porter:

Hearing the deep and heavy breathing, I turned and without hesitation, fired off several shots into what I assume was the monster's face. It howled with pain, something interesting considering that up until now...we didn't know if bullets affected them. It never affected the dark figures but, apparently these monsters were different...or at least this one was.

The monster swiped angrily at us and shoved James down, I tumbled to the ground myself to dodge its claws.

*We need to get into that building...there's definitely something there.*

Looking up, I saw James climbing to his feet and turning to see the monster while backing away from it towards the wall of a building, I expected fear but that wasn't the expression he had. Backing away further, James watched the monster growl and finally take a step towards him.

*What the hell is he doing? He's going to get himself killed again.*

Looking at the area James backed into, I saw what he was going for and realized at least part of his plan. He must have figured out the same thing about the building because, he he was inching his way back towards its direction. Seeing the opening James created, I started towards the monster and with a little acrobatics, landed on its shoulders and wrapped myself around its head.

It swung and grasped for me, leaving several puncture marks in my back in side as James moved to get out of the way, catching its claws across his stomach in the progress.

*Okay, so what's the plan from here? We're seriously winging this right now. James I hope you figured this shit out completely.*

With the creature still swinging and literally butchering my back down to muscle and bone, I gritted my teeth from the pain. I couldn't recall a single mission I'd been sent to that let me see so much of my own blood. Sure I'd been shot three or four times, stabbed once or twice, but none of that held a candle to what this monster was doing to me...well maybe except for that brawl I got into with the dark figure that originally got me into this mess.

*I swear, I'm going to become a hermit if I live through this and get back home.*

The creature suddenly stopped moving, and dropped forward to the ground, dropping me to the ground with it. James stood there with a manhole cover in his hands, it was broken and exposed a sharp edge that he then drove into the monster's back.

*That's a surprise.*

"How the hell did you do that?"

Looking at me with as cocky but obviously tired, James answered, "Well, those bad days I told you about didn't come without their perks. Those plates and metal parts in me, do more than just hold up my body. I'll explain later though, we gotta get out of here."

*Hell will freeze over before I let this mysterious kid slip out of telling me what the hell he really is.*

"Hold up kid. We need to go back to that building...something tells me that there's something that monster was guarding."

"If you noticed, there was a severe lack of people raining from the sky before we got there. We gotta go investigate it, besides its going to be dark soon and we need cover." I explained, dragging James behind me before he had time to respond.

*We're going to find out what the fuck is going on here.*

Making it back to the building, we navigated our way through the slaughter that littered the ground.

Leading James to the side where I found the fire escape, he showed fear for the first time when he looked up the fire escape and then back at me.

James:

*I'm so screwed right now.*

The fire escape was at least feet above me, and on top of that a rusted ladder that she expected me to climb. Looking back at Porter, she patrolled for monsters in the quickly darkening area. *This literally couldn't get any worse. I've been turned into a scratching post, Porter's out of bullets and pretty injured I'd imagine, it's getting dark, and she wants me to scale this ladder. I think I'm going to vomit.*

“What's the hold up? Get your ass up there, we don't have time for you to be having a panic attack here.” Porter barked, shoving me towards the ladder and looking around again anxiously. Swallowing heavily, I hesitantly began climbing the ladder repeating my mantra for dealing with shit like this.

*Keep looking at the wall, just keep looking at the wall. It's gonna be okay, just keep looking at the-*

“Oh my god!”

I lost my footing at what I glimpsed and slipped down a few bars before Porter caught me and shoved me back to the ladder. Shifting to the side of the ladder, she climbed up to where I fell from. That was the first time I realized she was behind me, and it was shocking how quiet and nimble she was on ladder and the like. She must have done this a lot.

Working to get my panicked breathing under control, I hugged the ladder for support as Porter climbed into the apartment window I saw into.

“James, get up here.”

*I swear, she's more demanding than my mother, even if she has been keeping me alive.*

I willed myself to move up the ladder and climbed in the window, and to cover my mouth to keep down what wanted to come up.

“What is this? Some kind of sick joke?”

Looking around the apartment, I watched Porter meander the room as calmly as she'd been in the last building full of dead people. The room was marked with the strange symbols again that Porter and I seemed to be able to read but, that wasn't what caught my attention. It was us...Porter, myself, and Lisa. Dozens of us, just hanging from the ceiling like shirts on a hanger. All in various views of the deaths we suffered.

It didn't matter to me now that the monsters were going to return with the darkened sky. I looked around the room and saw dozens of others in the same fashion but, they were different somehow.

Entranced by the horrors, I didn't hear Porter speaking to me.

"I said quit admiring the scenery and get in here. They're coming." She spoke, grabbing me by the arm and pulling me inside.

*How is she so calm? Doesn't she see them...see us?*

Looking around the apartment, and following Porter silently, I caught sight of the kitchen, there were more people, and strange tools as well.

*Is this what that monster was protecting? What the hell is this?*

Porter:

Searching for a hiding space, I could feel the questions rolling off James like the scent of a rotting corpse. It wasn't that this place and the horror show inside didn't scare the hell out of me, it was that we needed to hide quickly. If we made it into an area that was actually protected by a different sort of monster than before...we were in for some serious shit if we were found here. Looking up towards the ceiling, I couldn't see any convenient attic spaces like back at Blondie's.

Leaving the apartment was out of the question at least for now. There was no telling what awaited us on the other side. I doubt six bullets is enough to take down any more monsters. Going to the kitchen while James searched for a hiding spot as well, I spotted a strange and sharp instrument...it looked familiar, but more than that, it was a back-up weapon if I had to use the rest of my bullets. Pocketing the instrument, I saw what looked like a scalpel with an exaggerated blade and pocketed that too.

*Well, at least James and I will be armed with something...it's better than nothing.*

Wincing from the pain in my back as the skewering I took, and the unknown threat that lay before us, I knew that we wouldn't be in any shape to fight or run with our blood loss. I was getting tired and I don't think I can go full rodeo with another monster even if my life depended on it.

"Hey, I found a spot to hide in."

James' voice rang out, and turning towards him, I couldn't do much besides laugh a little. Next to the front door was a coat closet, with a crawl space in the bottom. He'd already opened it and climbed in. *We don't have anything to lose by hanging out in there for a while. Besides, it'll give me a chance to check out a hunch I have.*

*The whirling sound of monsters as before could be heard getting louder and closing in on them as Porter joined James in the crawl space. Pulling the entrance to the crawl space back into place, all they could do was listen as the door opened and someone entered. Strangely enough, the whirling sound that they came to associate with the monsters was absent.*