

Chapter 1: The Job That Went Boom (Literally)

Dynasty had one rule when taking a job: don't ask too many questions.

Well, technically, he had a lot of rules. ("Don't get shot" was a big one.) But the biggest rule? If it pays, it stays.

This job? It paid ridiculously well.

All he had to do was steal a high-tech Anexsein device—the Horizon—from inside a top-tier military tank on an Anexsein base. No idea why his employer wanted it, but that wasn't his problem.

What was his problem? Getting it out without dying.

Dynasty spent the better part of eight hours surveying the route the transport would be taking. He knew from some of his old contacts that whatever this "Horizon" was, the top Anexsein brass didn't want anyone to know about it. This was ideal—minimal security, traveling through back roads. Perfect for a classic smash-and-grab, just like the good old days, he thought. As if there had ever been any good ol' days.

The ridge Dynasty was perched on was also an ideal ambush position. The road ran through a narrow valley with a lot of choke points, and because of the proximity to the base, this was a no-fly zone—even for military transports like this (gotta love Anexsein bureaucracy).

"Nothing to do now, but wait, I guess. Man, I should've charged by the hour," Dynasty muttered to himself.

More hours passed. Dynasty was napping, and then that's when he heard it—or rather, felt it—the unmistakable vibrations of a Hellfire Viper. The grinding noise made Dynasty's stomach churn, remembering the many, many, many long hours he'd spent in the same kind of vehicle, transporting some package or VIP himself.

"Good to be on this side for a change," he said with a smirk. "Time to earn this paycheck."

The Part Where It All Goes Wrong

Breaking in? Easy.

Avoiding patrols? Doable.

Hacking open the tank? Took longer than expected, but still fine.

"This is going quite smoothly," Dynasty thought to himself, which may have triggered some stroke of bad luck.

Just then—as Dynasty grabbed the device and walked a few feet away—

BOOM.

The entire tank exploded.

Not a warning shot. Not a small malfunction. A full-blown, fireball-of-death explosion that sent him flying across the base.

“Oh, come on!” Dynasty groaned as he skidded across the ground, barely avoiding a twisted hunk of flaming metal.

Coughing up smoke, he staggered to his feet, dazed.

That’s when he saw him.

A shadowy figure stood in the firelight, a clawed weapon gleaming in his hand.

Dynasty squinted through the smoke. “Hey! Did you just—”

Before he could finish, the figure vanished.

Dynasty stood there for a moment, his frustration building. “Who the hell was that?” He groaned, knowing things were spiraling out of control fast. He glanced at the wreckage, trying to think of an escape route, but before he could even act on it, he heard the unmistakable sound of boots crunching against gravel. Too late.

A pair of hands gripped him by the shoulders, spinning him around and slamming him into the ground.

Dynasty’s eyes widened as he stared down the barrels of their weapons. His frustration boiled over, but there was still that defiant spark in him. “Well, this wasn’t part of the plan,” he muttered, trying to push back, but it was no use.

With his arms twisted behind his back, he was forced into a vehicle. Dynasty gave one last look at the burning wreckage as the door slammed shut. “Just great, arrested on the first day of the job,” he muttered as they drove off.

A Friendly Chat (That Ends in Disaster)

The Anexsein military, being the cheerful folks they were, dragged Dynasty to a top-secret facility for questioning.

A grumpy-looking interrogator slammed a file onto the table. “Talk.”

“Hi, nice to meet you too,” Dynasty grinned, his usual unshaken demeanor still intact. “Look, I know this looks bad, but—”

“This is beyond bad. You destroyed an Anexsein military asset.”

“Allegedly,” Dynasty interrupted, casually crossing his arms.

The interrogator’s eye twitched. “The security footage puts you at the scene.”

Dynasty raised a finger. “Technically, I was at the scene, but I didn’t push the big red ‘Make Everything Go Boom’ button.”

The interrogators exchanged looks. One leaned forward. "Then who did?"

"Oh, glad you asked," Dynasty said with mock enthusiasm. He leaned back in his chair and gestured dramatically. "I saw him."

Dynasty slid a poorly drawn sketch across the table, one that barely resembled anything at all.

The interrogator glanced at it and then back up at him. "That's your best effort? Really? Because we checked the security footage, and guess what?"

"...What?"

"There's no one there."

Dynasty blinked. "Huh. Sounds like your cameras are garbage."

The room fell silent. The interrogators didn't laugh. Instead, they exchanged tight-lipped, serious glances and then left the room to run a background scan on him.

Dynasty leaned back in his chair, looking bored.

A minute later, the interrogators returned, their faces drained of color.

"Uh...you good?" Dynasty asked, raising an eyebrow.

They didn't answer. Instead, they moved toward the table, their hands hovering over their weapons.

"Okay, not good," Dynasty muttered. He could feel it in the air—the shift in the room was palpable, and things were about to get a lot more complicated.

By the time they managed to pull out their guns, Dynasty was already on his feet and effortlessly knocked them out. "Thanks for the lovely chat, guys. But I'll be taking my leave now," he said as he headed out the door.

Too bad for them—he broke out before they could say what they found.

Enter The Clawed Nightmare

During his very stylish escape, Dynasty ran straight into someone who appeared to be a man dressed in black attire. However, the moment he saw the familiar claw, he knew it was the same shadowy figure who'd ruined everything.

Dynasty skidded to a stop, barely avoiding a collision. "Oh. You."

The guy didn't flinch. The dim light flickered off the sharp edges of his claw. He smirked, the faintest hint of amusement in his voice. "Took you long enough to figure it out."

Dynasty narrowed his eyes. With a sharp flick of his wrist, he summoned his sword, the blade materializing in his hand with a smooth hum. Set to stun—the energy crackled along its edge. Taking a breath, he dropped into a classic swordsman stance, ready for whatever the shadowy figure could throw his way.

Without warning, the clawed man lunged with pure, motivated fury. Dynasty reacted, slashing his blade through the air—narrowly missing his face. The fight that followed was a blur of sparks and broken glass. They crashed through multiple walls, the sound of shattering concrete and glass echoing through the halls, expensive-looking lab equipment flying everywhere.

Dynasty blocked a wild strike with his arm, gritting his teeth as he pushed back against the man. “What’s your deal, huh?” he spat. “Are you some kind of sadist?”

The clawed man didn’t respond. It looked like he was too busy enjoying himself. He charged his claw with dark energy and punched forward, the force sending Dynasty tumbling into a nearby console, sparks flying as wires snapped.

With a grunt, Dynasty recovered quickly, darting forward to land a punch square on the man’s chest, followed by a well-placed kick. The clawed man was sent flying across the room. He got back up, looking as if it barely fazed him. He just smiled.

“Enough with the games,” Dynasty muttered to himself, ducking and weaving as the man pressed forward. They were locked in a deadly dance, neither willing to give an inch. Finally, with a well-timed strike, Dynasty sent his opponent crashing into a reinforced door, the metal groaning under the impact as it smashed open into a containment room.

Inside?

A glass tank stood in the center of the room, filled with murky liquid, tubes, and wires attached to it. The faint hum of the tank made the air feel heavier and more unnatural. Floating inside the tank, suspended in the liquid, was a woman.

Her face was peaceful, almost serene, but her appearance was anything but ordinary. The pale skin, the almost ethereal glow that surrounded her—it was clear she wasn’t just some random prisoner. Something about her felt...important. Different.

Dynasty’s mind raced. “What in the world?” he muttered under his breath, eyeing her curiously.

The man slowly rose to his feet, his dark eyes fixed on the woman in the tank. His claws twitched as he muttered lowly, “There she is.” The clawed man’s focus was now on the woman.

“Okay, snowflake, beat it. I found what I wanted,” the man said, acknowledging Dynasty’s white hair while gesturing his hand.

Dynasty grinned, wiping blood from his lip as he took a step forward. “I don’t know what’s going on, but I think I’ll stick around a while.” Positioning himself again in his swordsman stance.

The man clenched his jaw, showing his teeth. With one swift motion, he lunged at Dynasty again.

Dynasty wasn’t concerned about who the woman was, but he sure as hell wasn’t going to let this guy ruin his life and get away with it.

How to Accidentally Release a Mystery Woman

Before Dynasty could process the very concerning situation unfolding in front of him, the military burst into the lab. Their boots stomped in unison as they poured in, guns drawn.

They opened fire.

Dynasty and the clawed figure dodged in separate directions, narrowly avoiding the barrage. The containment tank took the brunt of the impact.

“Watch where the hell you’re shooting!” one of the squad leaders shouted, but it was too late. The glass cracked, a loud shatter echoed through the room, and the tank was destroyed in an instant.

Everyone froze, their eyes locked on the wreckage.

Alarms blared. Liquid began to flood the floor, pooling around the broken glass and shattered equipment. And then—slowly—the woman inside the tank collapsed forward, her body crumpling against the now-empty shell.

She was missing an arm.

Dynasty stared, blinking in disbelief. “Uhhh...She was already like that, right?”

The woman coughed, her breath ragged, and her eyes fluttered open. She looked around in a daze, disoriented.

Before anyone could respond, she suddenly raised a hand—

And reality shattered.

Teleportation, but Make It Horrifying

One second, they were in a military base.

The next, Dynasty and the woman were somewhere else entirely.

Claw Guy? Gone.

The woman, now conscious, was not doing great. She groaned, clutching her side in pain.

Dynasty sat up, still processing. “So, uh...thanks for the escape?”

She didn’t answer. She was too busy bleeding—and also missing an arm.

Dynasty winced. “You, uh...you okay?”

“Fine,” she muttered. “Just...give it a second.”

And then—she grew her arm back.

Meet The Woman Who Falls Apart

Dynasty immediately took a step back. “Okay. That’s not normal.”

The woman sighed, looking exhausted. "We need to leave, we don't have much time."

Dynasty blinked, trying to get a grasp of the situation.

"So who are you?" Dynasty asked.

She hesitated. "I...don't know."

"Great. Because this situation isn't concerning at all," Dynasty said, slapping his hand on his side in frustration.

How to Build a Ship (Badly)

Dynasty's main priority now? Get off this planet.

Unfortunately, his spaceship was currently held together by hope, duct tape, and the foolish optimism of past Dynasty.

The woman took one look at it and sighed. "This is...embarrassing."

"Hey. It works."

"Does it?"

Despite clearly looking ready to pass out, she snapped her fingers.

The entire ship reassembled itself in three perfect seconds.

Dynasty's jaw hit the floor. "Okay. That was insanely cool."

The woman swayed on her feet. "Great. Now I need to sleep for, like...a year."

But before she could collapse, her hand suddenly exploded in a violent burst of energy.

"Ohhh (BEEP)!!" Dynasty watched in horror as the shockwave pushed him back. "What was that!?"

"I'll be fine. We REALLY need to go now," she said, her voice shaky, before her body went limp and she passed out cold.

Beep.

The Great Escape (With Bonus Surprises)

Before Dynasty could ask her literally anything else, the Anexsein military could be seen in the distance. A company mix of soldiers and ships, ready for a small war, was arriving.

Dynasty's instincts kicked in. Immediately, he scooped up the woman and he got themselves into the ship and launched it.

What he didn't know?

Claw Guy had snuck onto one of the Anexsein ships because whoever said that persistence wasn't annoying?

Chaos, Space Battles, and a Bad Landing

Blaster fire. Explosions. General mayhem. The military was not letting them go easily.

Dynasty dodged fire left and right, actively following one of his many rules of not getting shot. But then—bam! Direct hit.

Rule broken just like that with Dynasty starting to lose control of the ship.

With seconds to think of a plan, Dynasty picked the first location that came to mind—a set of coordinates given to him by his new employer.

As he began to lose control, he muttered, "Hope this person we're heading to isn't a total psycho."