

CPU-J01



Joanne

OFFICER DOWN

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*IS THIS THE END
FOR THE FUTURE
OF LAW
ENFORCEMENT?*



CHAPTER ONE

On the outskirts of Londroitian, a large mansion was playing host to a party. High society rubbing shoulders with high ranking mafia members.

Veronica Viaggio, a red-headed lady with sharp green eyes watched the party from above, smirking. “Finally,” she sighed as she gazed at the crowd from the balustrades of her balcony, “I’m where I need to be...”

As she walked down the stairs, people complimented her, gathering around as shady businesses were openly discussed. Her long black gown hugged her body. “Who died?” laughed one brave woman. “One of yours...” Veronica chuckled darkly.

Outside the compound, a beat-up police patrol SUV stopped. The chaperone walked up “Private Party. Got a per--?” he stopped as J01 looked up at him.

“Where is Ms Viaggio?” she asked coldly.

“Err... inside...”

“Thank you,” J01 replied as she drove through the open gate.

“You sure you want to do this Jo?” Claire asked, “You know what she is like.”

“You can stay in if you want... I can handle her,” J01 replied confidently. “Besides, she won’t do anything tonight.”

J01 smirked, looking at the expensive cars parked up, as she parked near the entrance. “Oh no... Wouldn't miss this for the world. But you are going to be bollocked nicely for this!” Claire laughed.

J01 and Claire walked up the stairs towards the front door of the mansion “Wow, fancy place...” Claire looked around in awe. Exiting guests gawked at the two of them. “Sorry we aren't in proper attire for dancing,” Claire taunted as she walked next to J01.

J01's servos whined as she walked inside the mansion. “Ms Veronica Viaggio?” she called out as she scanned her surroundings.

Veronica's eyes widen. She recognised that robotic voice. The lady scowled and walked over to the cyborg. "Yes, officer? Can't you see I am in the middle of an event?" she lifted her arms in exclamation.

"Veronica, your shipment of caviar was found to be fished in illegal waters, you need to come down to the station so we can ensure that you are not aware of this." J01 stated mechanically.

Veronica cringed, annoyed. She knew that J01 had been clamping down on her operations but due to her dealings and arrangements, she had been pretty clear of anything. She knew that this confrontation was just to embarrass her. Gritting her teeth, her body shook as she dropped her 'posh' voice for her normal harsh voice. "You fucking bitch! You've been trying to do this for weeks... get me down to da'station!"

Claire nearly burst out laughing as she looked around at the guests all cautiously leaving. "Nghh - No, wait!" Veronica putting on the posh accent again. "My apologies, getting harassed by this... This robot has been most taxing... Please... Me and my lawyers will sort this out. Please... enjoy the champagne and -"

"Caviar?" Claire interrupted as Veronica started walking out.

"You two are fucking dead," Veronica snarled under her breath.

"I should remind you that you are being recorded ma'am," J01 said. "Anything you said can be used against you."

It was 5 a.m. the following morning. Veronica was clearly seething as she exited the police station and getting inside her limousine.

"I want everything on that robot cunt and her little friend too," she snarled, grabbing a tumbler and filling it with a harsh whiskey. She was hissing as she gulped it down.

"The party went fi-," the driver tried to change the topic.

"The party didn't matter! Do as I say," she growled as the driver meekly replied. "Preparations are under way, Ma'am."

“Claire,” Sgt. Powell ordered coldly. “Leave.”

Claire, barely able to keep her eyes open after a marathon interview session with Veronica and her lawyer, looked up at J01.

“Don’t look at her!” her superior snapped. J01 looked awkwardly away from him as Claire stumbled out. “You’re lucky you aren’t on parking duty!” he yelled as he closed the door shut. He then turned towards J01.

“What the fuck was that? Caviar shipments? Of all the things to do, stirring that pot labelled Veronica Fucking Viaggio on that night. At 3 fucking a.m. I got a call from Judge Macher and then the Mayor’s wife!” Sgt. Powell raged before composing himself. “So, one question before I go mental. Why?”

J01 opened her mouth, “You know what Veronica is up to. You know what she is involved in. This was the best way to rattle her into trying to make a-”

“Allegations,” Sgt. Powell interrupted, holding up his index finger. “You are to not go near Veronica in any police business until I say otherwise! Do you need that fucking hardwired in your brain?”

“No... sir,” J01 replied quietly as two lab technicians monitoring J01 looked around awkwardly. They walked up to the machine and brought her out of the sergeant’s office to her maintenance room.

“You’re going after her still, aren’t you?” one technician asked as they start plugging in her charging and system monitoring cables.

“Oh, of course!” J01 smiled before whirring as she slowly limped forward recharging, entering sleep mode.

Veronica, getting home away from her mansion, put out a message for all of her men. “Everything is cancelled. No more drops, hits, deliveries, whatever, until the robot is dead!”

She slid into a bath, drinking more whiskey before picking up her now vibrating phone. “Well, yes! Don’t leave him half-dead,”

she laughed darkly as she answered the received call. “Just cut off the nice bits and keep ‘em fresh... you are so nice to me. Ciao!” She hanged up, smiling.

CHAPTER TWO

Two weeks passed, and nothing for J01 and Claire to investigate. Couple of missing people carved up in the grisliest of manner, but no evidence was present to directly link Veronica to this.

“Why is it always the shoulder blades and thighs that gets mauled,” Claire sighed as she looked through photos of unsolved gruesome discoveries.

“Not mauled,” J01 observed. “Rather, almost carefully sliced.”

Veronica, carefully cutting into a steak, looked at all the research into the machine that interrupted her recent party. “Oh... she might have a brain,” her lips curled slightly as she nibbled on a sliver of steak.

She took a sip of red wine as she allowed a minor drug smuggling operation halfway across the country. “Need the money to roll in again!” she sighed as she watched security footage of J01. Hours of tapes of her going through Veronica's various warehouses and storage units. The cunning lady was trying to spot an exploitable weakness.

“Viaggio's not doing anything!” Claire yelled as they were out on patrol. “Not even got a sniff of action!” she pouted.

“She'll do something soon,” J01 replied, assuring her partner.

Soon enough, the duo spot some of Veronica's men at a corner. The men spot the cops and desperately entered a car. The car moved immediately, leaving dusts in the air.

“Oh, goodie.” Claire hit the accelerator. The chase scene led them to the docks. Skidding through a locked gate, J01 and Claire cornered the men in their car.

“Lads!” J01 taunted, but was surprised that they merely smiled. One of them handed J01 an envelope.

“You are obsessed with our boss, aren't you?” the other laughed.

J01 gritted her teeth, as Claire checked the car. The men, well away from the pair, were not doing anything threatening.

“All clean!” Claire sighed as J01 backed off, allowing them to leave.

“What's in the letter?” J01 handed Claire the envelope. The latter he tore into it before unfolding it.

“Gotcha.”

Veronica laughed when she heard of the incident. “Still obsessed,” the lady sighed. “That's good, and that's what I needed.”

CHAPTER THREE

Two more weeks passed, and rumours of a large meeting of the mob will take place down in the old warehouse district in Portofino harbour reached the authorities.

“You can't come, Claire” J01 looked down at her partner.

“Like hell I'm not.” Claire defied.

“You could get hurt. There is going to be a lot of -”

J01 was interrupted by Claire. “Shut up Jo.”

J01 couldn't help but laugh before sighing. “Okay... but you aren't coming in with me. You are my extended eyes and ears Claire, you are surveillance.”

Claire sighed but half-heartedly muttered an “Okay”.

“Jo, there is certainly an event happening here,” Claire observed. “I can spot many made men here. We could cut the head off a lot of snakes tonight. Can't see Veronica though.”

“She is the host” J01 smiled, kneeling behind crates. She used her infrared vision to see through them.

“What's the plan?” Claire asked as she observed the mobsters stopped arriving.

“I was thinking disguising myself as a mobster moll and attract one of them made man,” J01 gave a tongue-in-cheek reply.

“Right,” Claire laughed as she rolled her eyes. “I can tell you're more relaxed now.”

Claire watched as J01 cautiously made her way through the back entrance. “I got your feed Jo,” she informed her partner. Texts scrolled up the live feed of J01 walking into the restricted compound.

“Okay, just keep radio silence unless there is something massive you can see,” J01 told Claire.

J01 opened the door, stepped through cautiously. It took a moment for the chatter to die down. Everyone stared at the cyborg as she let out a cheeky smile. “Hi guys,” she announced. “You are all under arrest!”

“Fuck you!” yelled at least five of them as they all started pulling out their guns.

J01 audibly sighed as she unholstered. “Really, guys?!” she exclaimed as she started getting fired at from all angles. Sparks flew as bullets landed on her. J01 gritted her teeth and snarled as she blasted at one mob boss. The guy was thrown back, blood splattering his friends as they hold him for a moment.

Stomping through the large warehouse, the cyborg targeted and fired at the aggressors. Claire, watching through J01's eyes, was amazed at the killshots happening in front of her. “Guess that's what it's like not worrying about getting shot yourself,” she muttered. J01 was blasting with perfect accuracy, ensuring not to waste a shot.

From a corner, someone appeared with a shotgun, blasting her from the side. “Ow!” She yelped before taking him out, gritting her teeth. “That hurt more than I thought it would,” J01 growled, confused as she probed the holes on her side with her fingers. “Superficial... good!”

“J01. There are, according to your scans, five left. You might want to keep some for questioning,” Claire radioed in J01's audio receiver. “No sign of Veronica, though,” she added.

“Understood.” J01 looked around. They were clearly hiding from her now.

One mobster popped out from behind a crate, firing straight at J01's mouth. She grunted in pain, stumbling backward before spitting out the bullet.

“Don't do that,” she growled sternly, firing out at both of the assailant's knees. He dropped down, screaming in pain. “I'll find some paracetamol for you,” J01 taunted coldly.

J01 stomped away searching for the others, holstering her gun. She opened a closet to find a woman huddled over, crying.

“Please...please don't...” she gasped, looking up at J01.

J01 looked down. “You didn't fire at me. Why would I fire at you?” J01 asked gently. “Gianna Ricci... You’ve just had a kid, yeah?”

Gianna sniffled and nodded. “Where is Veronica?” J01 asked sternly. “She is the only reason I'm here, even though I've taken out a few of her... rivals?”

J01 stood up, looking around, slightly confused. From a corner, the sound of a door shutting could be heard.

“And I thank you for that, you robot cunt!” Veronica appeared as she walked down a stairwell. “Is there anything I can do for you?” She asks sarcastically.

“Not resisting arrest would be great,” J01 grinned.

Veronica smiled hearing to that. “Oh please. It's gotten too personal for that stuff, wouldn't you agree?” Veronica continued to walk towards J01. Her heels echoed in the now dead quiet room.

“Yeah,” J01 coldly responded, watching Veronica “So where do you want it? Through that fake sapphire on your chest?”

“Oh! You do have a personality programmed in there. Is it near your hydraulic pump? Or your ass?” Veronica's voice getting lower and more sinister as she walks towards J01. “Or is it in that brain of yours?”

J01 opened up her leg holster, grabbing her gun. “Last chance, Veronica!” J01 loudly stated.

Veronica merely kept walking towards her, holding her hands up to the sides. “Do your worst, you dumb bitch!” Veronica taunted.

“Fine,” J01 growled, lifting up her arm. She aimed her gun, her targeting point highlighted Veronica's heart.

A nanosecond before she pulls her trigger, J01's head twitched. Her vision became violently grainy. “Huh?” J01 grunted, confused.

She looked at Veronica. The latter pressed her chest against J01's gun. “Do it, then!” she screamed before promptly laughing.

J01's head continued to twitch. She groaned as her body trembled as her grip loosened on her gun. "Argh..." J01 groaned again.

"What's wrong, Robo-Bitch?" Veronica taunted. "Did you notice anyone new at work over the last few weeks, or have you been getting yourself all worked up over little old *moi*?"

"Fuck!" Claire exclaimed as she tried to enter the warehouse. Suddenly, she felt a large cold metal object pressed against the back of her head.

"Not today, pint sized." A deep gruff voice boomed. "Boss wants you for dessert."

Claire, holding up her hands, trembled as she started to think of something.

CHAPTER FOUR

“Over the last few weeks I have been able to gather intel on you, J01,” Veronica grandly walked around the twitching cyborg “And my guy managed to find a way to get a new directive into your programming. A nice little hidden one. One that has caused you to freeze up like this. It’s similar to your Directive Four, whatever that is. But this one’s for me... with different results.”

The mob lady wiped the corner of J01's eye, looking at her finger for a moment as J01 groaned, fighting against the programming. She extended her right arm, weakly tapped Veronica's shoulder. J01 screamed out as her back arched, dropping on her knees with a loud clang.

“Bad cyborg. Harming your mistress will not be tolerated,” Veronica taunted as she bent down. She then stood up. “Are you guys gonna come out, or have you all left?” she snarled aloud as the remaining mob bosses and subordinates slinked out of their hiding places.

J01 reached out towards Veronica, swiping at the smirking redhead. “I-I will...” she said, weakly.

“The little engine that could said something similar,” Veronica walked away as one of her men brought out a trolley with tools on.

J01's face cringed with malfunctions and anger, frozen in place as she watched Veronica grabbing a metal pole from the trolley. The latter then walked towards J01.

“Mak-make it count... bitch,” J01 weakly muttered.

Veronica swung the pole at the side of J01's head. Hitting one of the visor generators on the side of her head, it sparked out violently as her holographic visor flickered and turned off. Parts of the device attached to her head broke away, simultaneously letting loose of her tied hair, leaving it in a frayed mess. The impact was strong enough to move J01 from her kneeling position.

J01 gasped out, her body spasming as she helplessly tried to move away from Veronica. Her vision was severely distorted due to the impact. Her body's servos whined as Veronica slammed the sledgehammer down on her hip. Sparks flew out as her left leg twitched violently.

J01 collapsed down onto the ground, gasping out. Her vision was producing static and kept cutting out as two of Veronica's strongmen dragged J01 across the floor, laying her down on her back. J01 looked around weakly as she saw various gang members grabbed a weapon from the trolley. She saw a photographer in the corner, taking shots of her.

Suddenly, a heeled foot rested on J01's chest. “Ladies and Gentlemen. I *fucking* run this city!” Veronica proclaimed. “Thanks to an unwitting robot and my friend inside, you will either work for me or you will be wearing concrete shoes!”

CHAPTER FIVE

J01 laid on the floor, gasping. Her head twitched as Veronica drove the sledgehammer down on her midsection, causing something to pop. Veronica caught a crowbar thrown gently at her as she began to prise at the side where it had dislodged. J01 gritted her teeth as she felt her armour being popped open down at her groin.

“Oh, wow,” Veronica observed menacingly. “The schematics were right. Got yourself a nice little diagnostic port down there... those naughty technicians!”

She then drove the crowbar down on the LED at J01’s abdomen. It cracked and flickered, from blue to orange before powering off.

J01 narrowed her eyes as she watched Veronica panted, gritting her teeth. One of her men walked forward. “Pop that chest off!” Veronica ordered as she grabbed a drink.

The guy obeyed, driving the sledgehammer down on J01's chest, denting it heavily with each strike. Her internal mechanics grinded and crunched as her body jerked with every hit.

J01 groaned with every strike as she felt her chest armour dislodged slightly. Her chest component hissed for a moment.

Veronica paused her ‘business meeting’ with the remainder of the gang bosses as she grabbed her crowbar again, jamming it into the seam of J01's armour. She pulled back on it as the armour popped open, breaking the locking mechanism.

“Oh my,” Veronica paused for a while. J01's large synth-flesh breasts were exposed to Veronica. “You were certainly blessed by those naughty technicians. And I thought the schematics were bluffing!”

The mob lady briefly fondled the synth-flesh breast before jamming the crowbar into J01's side again, peeling her synth-flesh off along with the chest mechanic protector. They fell to the side as her mechanics whined and buzzed louder as they were uncovered. J01's body kept twitching and spasming as one of Veronica's men grabbed a jaws-of-life from the trolley.

“Fire out that data spike and lock it in a fist, J01,” commanded Veronica. J01 unwittingly obeyed Veronica. Her data spike came out of her left clenched fist.

“Now,” Veronica smirked as she glanced towards the man. He started up the jaws-of-life as it slowly cut through J01's left forearm.

J01's head twitched. She gnashed her teeth as she felt the tool cutting and breaking through the mechanics and circuitry. Sparks appeared from both of the cut end. Soon enough, the severed forearm dropped onto the ground, twitching for a moment before the remaining power was drained.

J01 gritted her teeth as her systems malfunctioned. Her HUD scrolled error messages at every corner of her vision. The cyborg, with her vision still severely distorted, vaguely saw Veronica picking up her severed forearm, its data spike locked in the fist. “This”, Veronica waved it at J01, “is gonna look great on my desk!”

Looking down J01's body for the lower diagnostic port, Veronica smirked for a moment before sliding the data spike in. J01's back arched. She shook and writhed as Veronica slid it back and forth into the slot before forcefully ramming it deeper. J01 screamed as sparks popped from the slot and the end of the forearm again.

“Fisted yourself, huh?” Veronica taunted her victim as she withdrew the data spike from J01's lower port, damaged and chipped. “Other hand... Open!”

J01's head jerked as she obeyed. Veronica grabbed J01's gun before slotting it in J01's open right hand.

“Grab your toy, Jojo.”

J01 obeyed before lifting up her weapon. Her vision went more and more distorted as she tried to load up her targeting systems. J01, wincing and groaning in an unimaginable pain, was unable to pull the trigger.

The guy with the jaws-of-life walked calmly around her, placing her arm in the apparatus again before activating it. It cut

down J01's right forearm, whining and screeching as it sliced through the armour and mechanics of J01's arm.

Crunching through the middle, the cutting tool let out a hiss as hydraulic fluids spilled out of J01's elbow. Her hand twitched and spasmed on the ground before eventually seizing up and locking in place, with J01's gun nestled firmly between the fingers.

Veronica picked the severed forearm up. She looked down the gun sight, muttering "*Bang-bang...*" She smiled as she placed the gun-wielding hand next to the previous one.

J01 cringed and moaned as she looked at her arms. Hydraulic fluids spilled out of her stumps as occasional sparks from severed wires appeared. "Still not broken yet, doll?" Veronica asked sarcastically from a corner. "Let's fix that, shall we?"

Veronica turned around holding a large circular saw. She revved it up as she sinisterly walked towards J01. As she came closer, Veronica held the saw up, closer to J01's face.

J01 gritted her teeth, pulling her face away from the saw. A waft of air touched her face. She could sense the smell of the exhaust and lubricant heating up.

Veronica smiled watching J01's reaction before lazily dragging the saw down J01's chassis. Sparks flew as the metal resisted the saw.

The mob lady changed position as she reached J01's midsection. Slowly yet firmly, she pushed the saw down through the helpless cyborg and cutting through the metal, before passing through, slicing through the mechanics inside her.

J01 gasped out before screaming as Veronica cut through everything inside her body; oil pumps, power supplies, anything that was in the way of the blade was severed. J01's body shook. She screamed as the saw hit her spinal column.

The saw slowed down as it hit the spinal column. "Oh, we found something here!" Veronica excitedly proclaimed as she pressed the saw into the solid metal column. Sparks hit everywhere inside J01's body. It heated up as the saw slowly cut through.

Suddenly, the saw lurched down as it cut through something, causing large amount of hissing. Liquids spilled out of the spine.

J01, gritting her teeth as her legs twitched and spasmed, got weaker as Veronica continued breaking her apart.

J01 started screaming loudly again. Her eyes widened as she 'felt' pain. She noticed everything fire up and warning messages constantly scrolling on her HUD. Unable to do anything, J01 weakly writhed in pain.

Veronica lurched the saw down again. It let out another loud hiss as another puddle of fluid emerged from J01's back. The cyborg's eyes rolled back as she was unable to process the amount of pain that was shooting through her body. Her legs kicked out violently as they malfunctioned.

Veronica pushed through the whole spinal column as she pushed into J01's back armour. After going through the spine, this was easy for the now hot and dull blade.

"And now... I have sawn this woman in half!" Veronica laughed, panting as she nudged the body with her foot.

J01's legs twitched as the remaining energy drained out. Her leg holsters opened, shuddered and closed.

"System failure... Unit shutting down to preserve organics, memory and CPU."

J01 groaned out mechanically as her body slowly powered down. "Aww I think I broke her!" J01 heard for the last time as her vision went dark.

CHAPTER SIX

Outside, the man with Claire was getting restless. “Can't understand why I just can't shoot you,” he pouted in dismay.

Claire could see him in the reflection in the window. She watched him intently, observed him stepping around while she simultaneously listened to what was happening to J01 inside. Her eyes widened as the thug turned his upper body away from her, looking around.

Claire immediately grabbed the man's arm. He yelped out as the petite cop dragged him down. His elbow snapped, causing him to drop his gun. Just before he could scream, Claire slammed her forearm onto his temple, knocking him out.

Claire collapsed backwards, exhausted. Her heart was pounding. She needed to get herself together.

She looked through the window. “Oh God... J01, no!” she gasped as she witnessed her partner being cut up to pieces. “There's too many...”

Gnashing her teeth, Claire ducked down to see if anyone was look around inside the warehouse. Quietly, she picked up her captor's gun.

The cop walked around, scouting for a quiet way inside the warehouse. She gently pushed the door where J01 walked through open. No one was in the back room. She then walked over to the entrance to the main floor room. Its door was left ajar.

As she cautiously peeked through opening, she saw J01's body getting ripped apart piece by piece. The only things remaining of J01's core were her upper arms and head, still attached to her dented chest. Claire's eyes teared up watching her friend in such a dire situation, but she could not do anything.

“Gentlemen, we will be having ourselves a little auction of our robot guest here!” Veronica loudly announced as the remaining

members of the audience started to gather themselves back up to watch a cyborg cop being dismantled.

From amongst the crowd, a lean man stormed up towards Veronica. “What the fuck was all that? We all nearly got killed!” He expressed his frustration. “My...My brother-”

“Your brother was in my way. You aren’t,” Veronica interrupted, curling her lips. “That’s why you got the note to hide when shit went south. Your brother's territory is now yours, yes?”

He nodded, still in a mix of anger and grief. “You will pay me tribute every month,” the mob lady continued. “You all will!”

Veronica strutted around the wreckage that was J01. “You all got the notice about what was to happen,” Veronica said in a menacing tone, smirking. “And you told no one. You are all just as guilty as me. I will expect nothing but love and respect from everyone in this room.”

Everyone in the audience stepped back cautiously. Veronica looked at the pile of J01's body parts. Lightly kicking each of them with her feet, she offered, “Two thighs, two calves, two feet and two... biceps. The rest is mine, ladies and gentlemen.”

The severed parts occasionally moved weakly as they malfunctioned and whined. The gun holster on the right thigh opened partially and shut continuously. A bicep monitor pops out of the right upper arm, displaying a flickering warning of a system failure.

“\$50 thousand a piece,” Veronica offered once more, “of our fine public servant. Pay me in a month along with your tributes. You'll get details on them soon enough. Me and my unconscious friend here have some unfinished business to attend.”

The mob members looked nervously at each other. They all heard of rumours about the notorious mob lady. Quickly, each remaining head of a group grabbed a piece of J01 before walking out the door where Claire was sitting behind.

Claire immediately ran towards the exit, looking around desperately for somewhere to hide. She dove behind a crate, watching them all leaving the warehouse.

Clearly shaken at what just happened, the guests were in such a state that they weren't actively looking around. "That was lucky... I guess," Claire sighed as the last of the guests entered their car.

She looked over her shoulder, wondering where the guy she knocked out was. Her eyes widened in confusion. "Where did he go?" she wondered aloud, walking cautiously out from behind the crates.

Suddenly, someone dragged her from the back. "Fucking bitch!" Claire heard the voice of the guy she knocked out. He was hissing in pain, gnashing his teeth. He soon dragged Claire away from the warehouse.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Veronica pushed a USB cable into the side of J01's head where the visor was generated. "Time to wake up, Sleeping Beauty," she softly jested as she went through all of J01's programming to force a reactivation.

With a tap on the screen of her tablet, J01's eyes opened. The cyborg blinked as she weakly looked around her servo's straining. The shut-down at least seemed to turn off her pain receptors and calmed down her malfunctioning body.

J01 looked up only to face Veronica. "Bi-Bitch," she stammered weakly in defiance before Veronica kicked the side of her face.

"I want you active for what will happen next to you, Robo-Bitch," Veronica responded.

Claire was thrown into a shack in the corner of the yard. She groaned as her head hit on the back of the wall inside.

She opened her eyes. Her sight went blurry at first before seeing what was clearly a place where torture happened. Crimson blots stained the walls around her. Dull metal restraints and various tools were all worn-looking and stained with dried blood.

Claire looked up at her assailant, who was bracing his elbow. It crunched as he moved it. "This hurts like fucking hell, girl," he seethed with pain and anger. "I am *so* gonna enjoy this."

Claire pushed herself up to her feet. "You'd think I'm gonna let you," she growled back at the guy as he picked up a large machete. Claire's eyes widen as she dodged the swings of the machete. Every step he made, he let out a bark of pain.

Claire got around to his side and kicked him at the back of his leg. He buckled, tweaking his knee. The man, nearly dropped his weapon, swung the machete wildly at Claire bicep. She screamed out as her uniform was slashed. Blood slowly oozed out and

stained her clothes. Claire held her arm, panted and panicked as she saw a hammer. She picked it up, gasping out as the cold air hit her wound.

The two circled around each other, waiting for the other to make a mistake or attack first. Claire noticed a pitchfork knocked over with its prongs pointing towards them. Just as they encircled some more, the cop threw the hammer at the man's head. He dodged it and laughed just before she tackled him, forcing him to move backwards.

The man let out a painful scream as he looked at his right shoulder pierced by three prongs. His arm was trembling as he finally dropped the machete.

Claire yelled as once again she slammed her elbow into his head, again and again. He didn't go down after the first strike but was slowly worn down by her assault. Eventually he dropped down to the floor.

Claire's eyes watered in anger and pain as she watched him shook and struggled to get back on his feet. Claire pounded the side of his head, knocking him out once again. She panted for a moment before noticing a first aid kit on the wall.

“That... That's handy,” she muttered as she reached the box and opened it, grabbed a tourniquet and wrapped it around her wound. Claire groaned as she tightened it before dropping on her knees, panting.

“Oh shit... Joanne!” She groaned as she stood back up before running towards the warehouse where J01 and Veronica were.

Veronica walked around J01's torso. “Do you know how much you've cost me over the last few months?” Veronica said as she glared at J01. “Couple of million. You tried to bleed me dry. Now, it's time for me to collect from you and your creators.”

J01 looked up at the redhead. She was barely able to stay activated. Her servos were whining weakly. “Even if you des-

destroy me, y-you will be taken down Ver-Veronica,” J01 weakly threatened.

Veronica merely responded by slamming a sledgehammer down on J01's battered body. J01 let out a cry as her body curled around the sledgehammer. The cyborg gritted her teeth as she stared at Veronica.

“You probably don't think I'm a very nice girl,” Veronica smirked. J01, getting her senses together, looked up at Veronica as Veronica knelt down, stroking J01's face and hair. “We could have been friends, you know... I might have had to hack you to make you my friend, but that last stunt you pulled was the straw Jo. The last *fucking* straw.”

Still stroking J01's hair and pulling it back gently, Veronica continued, “You know, when my darling husband was murdered by cops and I took over, I was scared. Then I realised that ninety percent of this job is intimidation. Little rumours of missing ex-boyfriends, a mangled corpse here and there, a Robo-Bitch murdering your competition before she is ripped apart in front of the survivors. Unfortunately, the other ten percent is actually carrying out the job.”

Veronica grabbed a screwdriver and jammed it in a seam between J01's face plate and hair line. J01 cringed slightly as Veronica worked the screwdriver down the seam. There was a light hiss coming from the seam as something was depressurised inside.

J01 weakly looked around for any hope as Veronica first positioned her limbless torso in an upright position and rested it on a crate, and then proceeded to pull away the cyborg's hair. Slowly it came off from her head and dropped down onto the floor, revealing the back of J01's skull. There was a light hum coming from it, as various LEDs blink erratically, a variety of blues, reds and oranges.

“So pretty,” Veronica said under her breath as she observed J01's skull. She then planted a kiss on J01's lips. “Sorry, it's a little tradition I have with all of my meals,” she smiled as she held J01's head and tilted it downwards. At the top of J01's head was a metal plate held by four little screws four little screws.

Grabbing her screwdriver, Veronica turned the screws until the plate dropped down onto the ground. “Oh my God!” She was genuinely excited as she took a peek inside.

J01's HUD went berserk. ‘*Warning: Brain storage has been opened*’ scrolled constantly up on the cyborg’s field of view as she heard Veronica walking away and returning by her side. As soon as J01 turned her head on the side, she saw Veronica turning on a mini stove, altering the flame from orange to bright blue.

Placing a frying pan on it, the mob lady drizzled some olive oil on it. “Shame I haven’t got any garlic,” Veronica sighs as she turned around to look at J01. Kneeling down again, Veronica tapped on the perspex shell around J01's organic brain. J01's face twitched as glitches coursed through her head.

“Any last words, Robo-Bitch?” Veronica smirked.

“Yeah. Leave her the *fuck* alone.”

Veronica’s eyes widened. Someone was resting a hand gun on the back of her head.

“Hands up, don’t even think about giving me a reason to pull it!” Claire barked. Her voice gritted in rage and pain. “Don’t worry Joanne, we are getting out of here, they’re gonna fix you.”

“You took down Gabriel. Impressive,” Veronica applauded sarcastically. “Might have to kill you first next time!”

“There is no next time, bitch. Stand up!” Claire growled as she backed away from Veronica three steps.

Veronica slowly turned around facing Claire, instantly noticing her blood-stained bandage on her arm. “Oh, it must have been a good fight,” Veronica jeered. “So, what now... the three of us staring at each other as my oil burns?”

“Jo... can you contact HQ?” Claire asked.

“Un-unable...to comply... Connection w-with HQ severed since entering warehouse-house.” J01 replied weakly.

“Don't you think she would have done that herself by now?” Veronica again taunted. Claire, tensed up, fired a round just past Veronica head. “Damn it, I missed!” Claire seethed. She looked down again at J01, broken apart and spasming. “Fuck!” she mouthed.

Veronica merely smirked at Claire as she stood and watched her like a hawk. This was her moment. She rushed towards Claire and drove her fingernails into Claire's wound. The cop's eyes widen in pain, letting out shriek as she swung the butt of her gun at Veronica's temple and striking her hard. Blood oozed from her head as she drove her knee into Claire's gut, dropping the latter.

Claire's eyes watered as Veronica reached for the gun in Claire's grip, trying to prize it out of her hand. She bit Claire's hand, prompting the cop to scream and pulled the trigger. A loud gunshot went off.

Veronica backed away, holding her shoulder as she hissed in pain. "Fucking cop!" she muttered in fury.

Claire panted on the ground, barely able to hold the gun up. Veronica reached her pan and threw the hot oil at Claire. She instinctively covered her face, but burned the back of her hand as a result.

"Aargh!" Claire let out a painful scream. In the midst of the commotion, Veronica ran to the exit, holding her shoulder.

"Fuck! Jo, she got away," Claire sighed. Ignoring the pain on her hand, Claire pushed the metal plate on the back of J01's head. "Don't want that falling out..." Claire laughed weakly.

Grabbing a stray mobile phone, Claire dialed a number. "Sgt. Powell, its Claire... we fucked up... Please send a backup team and Future Tech guys to pick us up from the warehouse district in Portofino... Please, she's not looking good... J01, Sir...she's not looking good."

"Everything's gonna be okay, Joanne." Claire assured J01 as her eyes nervously darted around.

Five minutes later, Claire heard cars pulling up outside the building. Footsteps and bangs echoed around them as Sgt. Powell burst through in full combat gear staring darkly at the two of them.

The Future Tech people surrounded J01 instantly and connected her to monitoring equipment, desperately trying to preserve everything that was left of J01.

Claire hopped on the back of an ambulance. Paramedics working on her injured arm pulled out a fingernail from one of her wounds, making Claire wince.

Sgt. Powell approached Claire. She shied away in embarrassment at first. "Report now," he firmly ordered his subordinate. Claire looked at Powell and started telling him what has happened that evening, as J01 was taken away into another vehicle.

CHAPTER EIGHT

J01 felt what was left of her body twitched and malfunctioned. Her servos whined as she could barely see through all of the static in her vision.

She heard another person near her. “Wh-where am I?” she weakly asked.

“Do not worry, CPU J01, you are with Future Tech,” a man’s voice replied. “You are in a vehicle designed to stabilise you whilst we transport you to one of our laboratories. You might feel something inside your connection ports. Do not worry, that is a system that will stabilise your damaged memory and CPU.”

J01 clenched her teeth as she felt two ports plugged into her. This was painful for some reason. She let out a gasp as her vision slowly restored back to normal. All she could see however was the light shining down on her.

“Alright, let’s go! She's stable,” the man who attended J01 shouted.

“Well J01. We aren't in a good condition, aren't we?” he coldly said to the cyborg. “I think the best we can do for now is to back up your data and turn you off.”

J01's eyes widened as she sensed the computer back up her data. “N-No!” she stammered.

“Sorry J01, I’m afraid its protocol.”

Unable to do anything, she saw at the bottom left-hand corner of her vision all of her programs shutting down. As her vision went blank, she let out a weak gasp before she was completely switched off.

--24 days later--

J01’s BIOS loads before her vision came back on. She noticed new elements to her BIOS start-up. Her vision slowly loaded, in greyscale at first before the colour slowly came in.

She looked around. Her HUD showed her arms and legs were disconnected. She could hear the hum coming from all of the computers as she noticed an ice blonde woman walked towards her.

“Hello J01,” the lady said. “My name is Dr. Atkins, and I have been put in charge of bringing you back online and back under heel.”

The doctor looked at her tablet as she read the progress report. “Excellent... we are predicting a 25% increase in strength and 10% increase in mobility. And your body seems to be completed, merely waiting for armour and limbs to be forged.” Dr. Atkins smiled as her face lit up by the glow of the screen.

J01 spoke up. “Under heel?” she asked weakly.

“Oh yes! Well, we've been looking at your track record over the last year or two, and I'm afraid you have been a bad girl and we are going to be researching into ways to control you while allowing you to complete your work. Also, we found things in your memory that are, well, troubling.” Atkins answered coldly. “The problem is that we aren't sure what to do. Do we start anew and lose that experience, or do we leash our dog? I hope you understand.”

“Turn her off, everything seems to be all right for the next phase,” she then commanded a technician. He turned around going towards J01, looking at her before mouthing “Night, night” at her and switching J01 off.

--13 days later--

J01 restarted again. She looked around and saw Dr. Atkins standing nearby. “Hello again, J01,” the doctor said rather cheerfully. “We are about to install a new programme in you. Basically, if you disobey a few direct orders in a row, your system will treat it like breaking one of your prime directives.”

Dr. Atkins smiled as she pushed in two cables in the back of J01's metal skull. A male technician spoke up, “Uploading, in 3... 2... 1...”

J01 clenched her teeth. Her eyes widened as the new programme was uploaded into her head. An intense pain went through her head as she tried to resist the programme from installing.

Dr. Atkins raised an eyebrow as she saw what was happening. “What are you doing, J01?” she asks before cancelling the upload. “This is more troubling than I thought it was. This needs some more work,” she sighed before walking away.