

This story is about how Vakha ended up being a member of Hammers.

Gore warning.

[The Hammers arc] [8] [Vakha's past] [9298]

Rev 2.3 (Last modified on 2019 Sep 4)

A fight to the death, also known as the deathfight, was dirty fight sports between ESPs and hyper humans sponsored by “high class” people from the Bau.

Due to its questionable legality, the sports was mostly hosted on dark side of Moon.

In an abandoned storage building, there was a crudely prepared fight ring made of empty drum storages. There were two men on the ring surrounded by no one but cameras. The men had only boxers on. The two men attacked each other as if they were dirty fighters. They’d kick, they’d punch, and they’d strangle if they needed to.

There was no round in this game. It’d go on until either died or surrendered.

On this particular night, one of the fighters on the ring was Vakha. It was his second fight in a week. He hailed from a middle class household whose fortune had met an unfortunate downhill and his father had to flee for his own safety. His mother also fled the household over a night, leaving Vakha and his two much younger siblings to look after on their own.

Covered with sweats, Vakha threw a punch to his face and his opponent dodged it by hair. His opponent countered which struck a good blow to his abdomen. He

endured the blow with a deep groan and threw another fist toward his opponent's face and it was hit this time.

They changed hits for a while as numerous camera drones around the ring were keeping a track of their movements.

Kicks, high kicks, screw punches and body slamming, the fight went on for good half an hour when Vakha's opponent was down on his knee.

"Surrender!" Vakha shouted desperately while panting. He wasn't exactly in a good shape, either, and wanted the fight to end. However, the opponent's glaring eyes said otherwise.

"So be it!" He bellowed as he continued to fight.

There was no place for sentiments and compassion in this sports. A single loss resulted in too much loss in income, and there was a possibility of being ended up dead if an angry gambler sent a hitman.

An hour later, Vakha's opponent was lying unconscious on the ring. His body was slightly twitching which wasn't a good indication of his well-being. He couldn't care less however. He rose his arms and howled a victorious cry.

Of course, no one answered his celebration and he couldn't care less. He survived another fight.

As he came down from the ring, a man silently and swiftly approached, handing him a cash card. "Good job," He whispered as he handed over the cash card. Taking the cash card, Vakha grabbed a hooded coat on a wall nearby and dashed out of the building.

Bright neon signs and crowded streets; it was a typical view of streets on Moon. Hookers attempting to get customers were also a common sight. For Vakha, none of that mattered as he quickly dashed into an alley between two buildings. In a dark and wet alley, there was a crudely made room with cardboard boxes. It was his home with his two sisters.

As much as he wanted to stay at their original house, it was not possible after credit collectors barged in and demanded him to contact his parents. After knocking out one of their men, he fled with his two younger sisters. Without any money at all, they had to settle down on streets, and the alley was where they ended up.

“Hey girls!” Vakha greeted them cheerfully. “Look what I’ve brought!”

There were two loaves of bread in his arms along with two bottles of water. The pre-teen girls, despite of his cheerful greeting, looked down, and one of them was lying on a wet cardboard.

“What’s wrong with Faina, Taisia?”

The girls were a twin and were eight years younger than Vakha who was seventeen years old at the moment. He was just a few days shy of turning eighteen which was the legal age. Him being a minor legally was the only reason the credit collectors didn’t take him. If they had come a few days later, they would have taken him. It was in fact their intention to take Vakha when he’d turn eighteen.

“She has a little fever,” Taisia told him. The girls had blonde hair and they were disheveled.

“Let me check on her, take these.” Taisia took the breads and bottles from Vakha and he approached her carefully, placing his palm on her forehead.

He did feel a little fever but it didn’t seem any serious.

“Let her rest. We went through a lot,” Vakha said and Taisia nodded.

“Okay,” She replied innocently and asked with the same innocent tone. “Have mom and dad called you yet?”

Vakha took a deep breath as his defiant glare shot at the sky. “No, I told you that they aren’t coming back.”

“But...”

“No buts. They aren’t coming back and that’s final.”

Taisia pouted with tears in her eyes. She slowly retreated deeper into their cardboard home and started to chew a loaf of bread.

Sighing, Vakha told her, "Look, I am going out and see if I can get meds for Faina. Tell her to eat when she wakes up, okay?"

"Okay," Taisia answered weakly.

"Be back soon." And he dashed out of the alley.

Vakha's family was never rich but wasn't poor, either. His father was a director of board at a company and the family didn't really have financial issues, at least he wasn't aware of any issues. As a hyper human, he went to a special purpose school where hyper humans and ESPs were trained by qualified instructors before they'd be hired by government agencies or else.

For him, he wanted to be employed by one of government agencies and wanted to enlist in the navy at one point. For the moment, however, that simple dream seemed a distant away.

"A fever, that's it?" A female employee at a nearby drugstore wondered. "That doesn't help me much. A fever could mean anything literally."

"It's probably just a cold," Vakha said. "She's nine years old and had some rough times. So, just give me something for general fever."

The female employee stared at him with suspicious eyes but eventually gave him a small box of pills.

"That's what you asked for," She said indifferently.

"Thanks."

After getting back to the alley, he entrusted the pills to Taisia and took a nap. He needed the rest. His whole body was screaming for a rest. Just as soon as his head hit the wet cardboard, he started to snore.

His next opponent was also a hyper human. Vakha had no idea what class his opponent was. His class was A and was to be re- evaluated once he turned 18. His raw abilities were, in general, good enough for most opponents but he lacked the experience and know-how which quickly showed as the fight dragged on. His opponent appeared to know exactly how to counter him.

“Damn...!” He moaned as he had to guard himself from concessive punches and kicks. He was becoming hesitant to attack because he was countered every single time. He hadn’t landed a single successful attack on his opponent so far.

Hit after hit..., there were only so much he could guard. His arms were getting numb and eventually he had to attack, only to be countered and took some heavy blows.

The next thing he knew, he was down on the ring, facing down.

“Surrender!” His opponent shouted at him aggressively.

“Oh, the fucking irony...,” Vakha mumbled weakly.

“Surrender!” His opponent repeated.

“Go suck your own dick!” Vakha shouted as he attempted to bring himself up. However, he took a heavy blow to the head and his consciousness went blank.

When he opened his eyes, he found himself in a garbage dump in a place he had no idea of and there were three men standing in front of him from a distance.

The man in middle seemed to be in authority while the other two seemed to be his guards. He popped an e-cigar and then spoke to Vakha. He had a white cowboy hat along with a white formal jacket and pants. Even his shoes were white.

“You disappoint me, young man.”

Vakha had a clue what was happening to him. Whoever bet on him was apparently angry because he lost his bet.

Laughing weakly, he talked back, "That's gambling, you know. You can't always win."

"As with life, obviously," The man in white replied instantly. "But you do what you have to do in order to sway the odds in your favor."

Vakha attempted to move his arms but sharp pains made him reconsider.

"So, what is it that you want from me?"

He popped his e-cigar as he casually answered, "A compensation."

Vakha beamed a defiant glare at him. "Fine, how much are we talking about here?" He was confident that he would not be able to pay whatever price he was going to ask.

The man lowered his e-cigar as he spoke. "50,000ci."

"Bullshit," Vakha split as he told him. "What kind of fool bets that much on a newbie like me? I had mere two wins for fuck's sake!"

"No matter, it's 50,000 credits. Pay or else."

"You know I can't pay. Haven't you done a background check on me?"

The man in white brought his e-cigar onto his lips at which point the top of the e-cigar beamed deep blue LED light. "Yes, I know you cannot pay. And I haven't killed you, meaning I am willing to strike a deal."

"Figures...", Vakha whispered and spoke to him, "What do you want from me? Did the credit collectors send you?"

"I am aware of the financial issues that your family apparently has. However, that has nothing to do with me. I am here merely to represent my client," He spoke earnestly, quickly adding, "Or his anger in this case."

Vakha shrugged and felt pains while doing so. "Fine, fine, just tell me what you want so that I can go home and get some sleep."

The man in white popped his e-cigar once more as he beamed a crooked grin at him. "You shall continue to go onto the ring and continue to fight. However, you shall never win."

Sighing, Vakha gave him a nod at which point he told him right away.

“You are to lose five games and the first of the five shall begin tomorrow night.”

“Woah, hey, wait, I need some time to recover.”

“Young man, you are in no position to negotiate.”

Gritting his teeth, he agreed to the ridiculous deal to write off his unreasonable debt. At first, he figured, it would be easy to grind through five games. However, even losing the first game proved to be really daunting as his opponent bashed on him harshly. Even if Vakha wanted to win, his injuries meant that he had very little chance of fighting back.

There was something else. His opponent never asked whether Vakha wanted to surrender. He literally stood on his neck until he passed out.

By third game, his physical conditions were at a near breaking point and there were more. When he lost his second and third, he encountered further suspicious people demanding him to pay back what his clients lost allegedly. By the third game, his debt had raised to 175.000 credits. He was literally in quicksand of debt.

And when he simply could not drag himself out of the makeshift cardboard home in an alley for the fourth game, he was in deep troubles.

“My, my, Vakha...”

Vakha recognized the voice and the scent of his e-cigar which smelled like cherry. His face was full of bruises and so was his body. Normally, he should have been hospitalized.

“You cannot miss game, my boy.”

Vakha feared this might happen and he hid Taisia and Faina deep in the alley and repeatedly told them not to come out no matter what. He did also tell them to reach out for police, should he fail to make it.

“I can ... hardly lift my finger,” Vakha labored to speak.

The man in white gave a strong accent, "That," and then his tone became normal. "Is none of my concern." He was flanked by four thugs this time who completely blocked the alley entrance. "My only concern." He started to walk toward him slowly. "Is that you make it to the games and subsequently lose."

"Hey, freak... I told you that I can't even..."

Vakha was unable to finish as the man in white kicked his face. "I said," He exclaimed, "That is none of my fucking concern!" He lowered himself and pointed right at Vakha's face. "Now, young man." His voice calmed down. "Stand up and get on moving. I've delayed the game by an hour. You have half an hour to get there."

There was no way he could get there. He knew it. Vakha knew it. Having resigned to fate, he stayed silent and waited for whatever was going to happen.

However, the man in white no longer hit him. Instead, his hateful gaze went deeper into the alley.

"If you can't keep your end of bargain, then you must pay the debt with something else of value," He said with a crooked grin. "Men, search the alley. His sisters should be hiding somewhere here."

"No, you don-" Vakha was kicked as he tried to speak. He coughed blood.

"If you don't like this, stand up and get to the game. You have 29 minutes left."

Vakha growled as he attempted to get up. Slowly he raised his upper body but he could go no further. His hands were shaking too much and eventually slipped.

"Well, well," Sighing, the man in white stood up. "What good are you." He exclaimed at two thugs who were searching the alley. "Find the girls yet? We haven't got all day!"

In a moment, the two thugs returned with a girl each on their shoulders who weren't resisting at all. It was as if they were unconscious.

"What have you done to them?!" Vakha demanded.

"They will be fine," The man in white answered on their behalf.

“Boss, one of the girl has some fever,” One of the thugs informed him.

“We will look into that later. Take’em away!”

“Aye, boss.”

Vakha spewed swearing words at him and was kicked in the face.

“Young man, you do have every right to angry, but I am just a middle man.”

“Fuck you, asshole. Like I believe you!”

“Listen, young man. The debt is swept clean with the girls. They are much more than what you were indebted and I will make sure your other debts are paid.”

With bloodshot eyes, Vakha screamed at him, “FUCK YOU!”

The man in white turned away from him and walked out with his men. “I hope I won’t see you again. Be wiser next time.”

“FUCK YOU, FUCK YOU, FUCK YOU, I SWEAR I WILL KILL YOU ALL!” He shouted at them as they exited the alley who didn’t react to his loud and desperate shouting.

It took him 3 weeks just to be able to stand up. During that time, an unexpected help had arrived. Her name was Tuhina; she was a classmate at the especial purpose institution. She had been delivering him food and water and necessary attentions he required.

When Vakha saw her in the alley the first time, he was crying, lamenting the fact that he was utterly powerless to stop his sisters from being taken away. He recognized who she was but couldn’t care less about her motives and ignored her blatantly.

Tuhina didn’t seem to mind Vakha’s reactions and used her ESP as a form of first aid for his severe muscle spasms which had become worsened with deep bruises all over his body. She healed him until she became pale at which point he dared to ask.

“Why are you doing this?”

She beamed a grin although it was hardly a grin by itself. Vakha thought it was a grin. Her face was deeply pale and he could see tints of blood from her nose and eyes; she was overexerting mildly.

“Why not?” She weakly answered.

Vacantly staring above where he could see a thin line of the dark sky of Moon, he did wonder.

Why not, indeed.

Long story short that was how Vakha recovered faster than he would have if he was left completely alone. He eventually told her what happened to his parents, his sisters and what had happened to him so far.

“Can’t you just call the police? They wouldn’t be help you with your parents but they would be able to help you with your sisters.”

He felt that Tuhina had a point and made a contact with the police. However, because the Bau was involved, they chose to turn blind eyes on the issue. Tuhina suggested calling ENN which again fell onto deaf ears. No one was willing to cross the Bau.

In the end, Vakha chose to do what he could; it was to be the best fighter in the game. If he could defeat anyone, everyone, then he would acquire some form of powers within the circle. Honestly, he had no idea what he was getting into, but he did feel that it was the only way.

Thus, after he made full recovery after three weeks, he entered the ring again. He became a ruthless, calculating, fighter. He won matches in quick succession and swiftly climbed the ladder of the food chain in the sports.

At one point, the man in white appeared in front of him shortly after a match which Vakha won overwhelmingly.

“Hatred is a powerful emotional weapon,” He cited as he popped his usual e-cigar which emitted blue LED light as he sucked its tip. “I’ve seen many kids never make

comeback after their first real ordeal. Grats, kiddo, you overcame your first ordeal.”

He was alone. They were alone in a dark alley where Vakha was quickly running out of an abandoned building where the match was held. A blinking, dying, street lamp was the only light source in the vicinity.

“How are my sisters?” Vakha calmly asked as if he didn’t care a great deal when in fact he did.

The man in white smiled. “You don’t want them back?”

“I can’t look after them right now. Perhaps they might fare better in someone else’s care.”

The man in white made three loud claps. “My word, kid, you’ve got the heart of steel for someone with an age of 18.”

“Make no mistake,” Vakha declared. “I am going to take them back.” Then he pointed at the man in white. “And I swear I am going to rip you into pieces.” He repeated with a more profound voice. “I swear.”

“Whatever you say, kiddo. I belong to the Bau. Nobody messes with the Bau.”

“You will see.”

Snickering, the man in white agreed and turned around to leave. “Yes, we shall see,” He said out loud as he disappeared into shade.

It was true that no one messed with the Bau. Even powerful Ark politicians had little ways to coming over the top if he had to battle the clan. Therefore, understandably Vakha had a hard time in attempting to find allies in his quest for glory.

In a year, he had won 157 concessive marches. As he gained fame, his wallet became fatter and he was able to employ a manager who scouted and gave him information on his opponents. Subsequently, he earned a nickname, the bold. Vakha the bold became his ring name whenever he came onto the ring. He earned the nickname because he was, well, bold. He was bold in his desire to damage the

Bau. He was bold in his desire to climb to the top. He was bold in his aggressive fighting style.

And, while he was no celebrity, the popularity of the deathgame was fairly high Earth and Moon. And, while no official media had coverage of the games, unofficial media outlets supported by the Bau covered the games which local Moon residents had an access to for free of charge.

All of which meant that he had become a recognized figure within the society of Moon.

A female reporter was with her cameraman in front of Vakha who laid down on a massage table with his manager giving him body massages. The manager was skillfully massaging his muscles.

The female reporter spoke to Vakha who was facing down in a hole of the massage table, "If you win your next match, you will be unbeaten for 158 consecutive matches. What is your feeling ahead of the big game?"

"How I am feeling is irrelevant," He proclaimed while facing down still. "I simply must win. There is nothing more, nothing less."

The reporter paid little attention to Vakha's statement and continued as if she was merely asking a list of questions. "You are the only player who so far lasted this long. Any secrets?"

No player in this sports lasted more than a year. Most of fighters broken down physically after few months. Vakha was certainly an exceptional case where he lasted over a year without too many defeats except during his early career. He was well aware of the physical demand from the sports which was exactly why he hired a manager to look after his physical condition. Tuhina checked on him once in a while but she had been busy with her academic duties.

"I am determined to win, that is all," He answer stoically. There was no need for him to speak in any more detail than that. It simply did not matter.

On the ring, Vakha was ruthlessly whacking his opponent. His opponent occasionally counterattacked but he simply did not care to be hit and was only interested in hitting. His opponent's guard eventually broke down as his arms became sore and numb at which point he was brutally knocked down in a minute. Camera drones swarmed around him as he looked down on his knocked down opponent with heavy breath.

'Another game down,' He thought to himself.

When he had won two hundred concessive matches, there was an offer from the Bau.

"A Bau agent approached me with an offer," Vakha's manager, Anthony, told him while giving him a massage.

"Huh," Vakha scoffed, "What offer?" He sounded uninterested.

Anthony informed him that the Bau was willing to offer a large sum of credits to force him an early retirement from the sports.

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?" Vakha stopped the massaging and sat on the table.

"I was told that you are making this whole game boring and they want you to be gone."

"Oh, for fuck's sake, like hell I will--"

"Listen," Anthony stopped him from speaking further. "Take this offer."

Frowning, Vakha uttered, "What?! You can't be serious."

"You know you can't keep going on like this. And I know your condition. You've been ignoring your wounds but it's going to catch up on you sooner or later. And when it does, you will go down for good."

"Knock, knock. Sorry, I didn't mean to eavesdrop." Tuhina was by door. "But he is right. You can't keep going on like this."

“I need to do this,” Vakha insisted firmly. “I need to climb to the top and get my sisters back.”

“You are already at the top of the game,” Anthony talked back. “But you see, this is a niche game with a relatively small target audience.”

“No!” Vakha violently stood up from the massage table. “I have to keep going on and that is the only way to get my sisters back!”

“Do you really think you can get them back now?” Tuhina said, “Do you really think the Bau would just hand them over to you at this point?”

Firing a strong hateful glare at her, Vakha demanded, “What the fuck are you saying?”

“Are you stupid or ignoring the gossips? The rich people from the Bau are into a lot of kinky stuff.”

“What?!” Vakha still failed to grasp what she was trying to say.

“There are a lot of pedophiles among rich Bau men,” Anthony said weakly, “Allegedly”.

For a moment, there was a huge void in Vakha’s head. It took a moment for him to finally come to a realization of what Anthony and Tuhina were trying to tell him.

“No...” He covered his face with his hands. “No...,” He repeated with great sorrow and depression.

“It’s too late for your sisters but you must go on. Take the money and restart your life,” Tuhina told him as she approached. She placing her hands on edge of his shoulders and held firmly. “You should go back to the school and re-try for the certificate. I know you wanted to enter Sol navy.”

Vakha started to sob weakly while his face was covered with his hands. Tuhina gave a nod at Anthony and he left the room.

“Who knows?” She continued with her soft voice. “You could end up being an admiral and could get your sisters back then.”

Vakha's hands clawed and violently took her hands off. His eyes were full of hatred and agony. "The fuckers! I am going at them now!"

Tuhina attempted to stop him but her efforts were in vain as he simply pushed her down. "You..." He pointed at her. "You are one of them!" He bellowed. "Too late you say?! Too late?!" He seemed to have struck back by something and paused momentarily before dashing out of the room. Anthony was waiting outside and caught him.

"Whoa, hey, where do you think you are doing?!"

"I am going to where they are! I swear I will kill them all!"

Vakha was referring to the only place he knew where there were Bau members: Moon Bau division which was conveniently located right next to Moon main base.

"Are you out of your mind?!" Anthony grabbed him by waist hastily as Vakha was storming off. "You are going to kill yourself! Heck, you are going to kill all of us!"

"I don't care! Let go!"

Anthony would not let him go and shouted in response, "I didn't get hired by you to be hunted down and get killed like a stray dog!"

Tuhina rushed out of the gym and grabbed Vakha's arm as well. "You must calm down! Think rationally!"

Nobody messes with the Bau.

What the man in white echoed in his head as he let out of a frustrated and sorrow cry.

Was it really too late? He felt he should have stopped them from taking his sisters away. But at that time, he could hardly lift his own fingers. What could he have possibly done in that situation?

In the end, he accepted the payout which was 2 million credits. Anthony was happy to walk away with a tiny portion of it.

After having retired from the game, he did not go back to the school as Tuhina suggested. Instead, he became a mercenary and worked for a mercenary agency called "Hell's calling" which was based on Moon.

The time was year 9298. Vakha was 31 years old at this point.

He entered a bar. He swaggered through the bar entrance and lobby and sat on a stool by a bartender counter.

"The usual," He said to one of the bartenders.

"Got it," And he answered promptly. The bartender mixed a shot for him and slid it skillfully through the counter which Vakha also caught smoothly. He dipped at it and spent a quiet moment.

"How was the job?" Eventually, the bartender asked him gently.

"The same old, same old."

"Could be worse though, yeah?"

"True that."

As Vakha silently dipped his drink, the bartender placed a small memory chip on the counter and he took the chip just as he put down the glass.

"Here is the pay for the drink." He placed a cash card gently on the counter.

"Thank you for your business."

Vakha had been attempting to find out where his sisters were. It was his primary reason for becoming a mercenary. He wanted to utilize their information network that wasn't overly influenced by the Bau.

Over the years, he was able to obtain pieces of information he needed. He was able to find out that Taisia was on Earth. Whether it was his sister was

questionable however. The memory chip he had just obtained from the bartender was supposed to contain her personal information.

After leaving the bar, he headed straight to his small one-room apartment where he read the content of the memory chip. There weren't a lot of info to be trusted but one thing matched clearly; her age which was good enough for him to decide to pay her a visit.

Even if the woman was his sister, he wasn't allowed to enter Earth. He would need a special permit to travel to Earth and get past its security at shuttleport. For Vakha who had issues with the Bau in the past, there was no way for him to obtain the permit legally because the Bau wouldn't issue a permit for him which meant that he would need to obtain a permit illegally.

Obtaining an illegal permit to enter Earth wasn't uncommon. Those who never went to Earth, those who were born off Earth, generally wanted to see what Earth was like. The Bau made a good profit from such people by issuing expensive special one-time permits to them.

"It's a gamble," Said a shadow information seller who Vakha was talking to in a dark alley behind his favorite bar. "It's not hard to get the permit but the big test will be whether they will recognize you at the shuttleport."

"I am a small fish, probably," Vakha said. "I haven't actually caused any troubles for them. I am willing to take my chances."

The guy nodded in response while taking a deep breath. "Yes, I will obtain the permit and modify it so that it will be in your name."

"The cost?"

He crossed his arms. "The job itself is easy. The risk is high though. If you get caught, I will need to hide, so I am going to need to ask you a handsome amount."

"Fine, the cost?"

"250,000ci."

It was a quarter of a million.

“Go for it,” Vakha responded in an instant.

“I will contact you when I get the permit ready.”

When he got back to his apartment, Tuhina was in his place, watching TV in her undies.

“Hello~,” She casually greeted him.

After she successfully graduated from her institution, she had few offers to work at several government agencies. But she rejected the job offers and eventually ended up as an employee at a small company on Moon.

“The hell, put some clothes on,” Vakha complained as he took his boots off. “This isn’t even your place.”

They weren’t exactly in a relationship or so he thought. Anyway, ignoring him, she continued to watch whatever was on TV.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever, ignore me.” Grumbling weakly, Vakha went to take a shower and came out with only a towel around his waist. He eventually sat down next to her and had his arm around her.

Time healed his wounds somewhat. He no longer had the burning hatred toward the Bau. He still hated them with regardless but, as long as the Bau didn’t meddle in his life, he was fine. Ever since leaving the game, the Bau never meddled in his life. The settlement money was properly deposited and they never bothered him afterwards.

Still, there was never a closure to any of his issues. His parents were still mysteriously missing. His sisters were taken by the Bau and he never found out where they ended up. Tuhina had been telling him to simply move on because no one should mess with the Bau for their own sake.

Moving on was certainly an idea and a valid choice indeed. He certainly had a good future ahead of them. He had a decent job and was a decent mercenary. His captain trusted him for being reliable. And he had a woman in Tuhina if he wanted to push the relationship further. They never had an intercourse even although she had been seemingly provoking him for a while.

He wanted a closure in order to move on. If he could just meet Taisia, if he could just find out what happened to her after being taken away and how she had been doing, he felt he could have the closure he had been seeking for.

“Hey.” Vakha called her out and told her what he had in his mind and he told her that he was planning to visit Earth to find Taisia even though there was a possibility that she may not be his sister.

Tuhina took the news well, at least on surface. She listened to him silently and let out a long sigh.

“I need a closure,” He said. “Surely, you can understand that.”

She buried her head between her legs and scratched her disbelieved hair. “Yeah, yeah, I know,” She said eventually. “I cannot stop you. It’s your life.” She was rational enough to realize that she didn’t have any right to tell him what to do. At least, not at this point when she wasn’t even acknowledged as a girlfriend. She was basically a mere friend at this point. Vakha did promise to come back to her if he had his closure which she replied with a silence and a weak grin.

After he obtained his fake permit, he went to Earth.

Earth international shuttleport, which was known as Washington DC shuttleport to native Earthians, was a grandeur structure. Surrounded by deep green forest, for those stepping onto the planet for the first time, thus seeing the massive greens for the first time, was beautiful enough for their jaws to drop and stay stunned for few good minutes.

Vakha wasn't an exception to this. His jaws dropped. The walls of the shuttleport were all see-thru glasses and there were trees and nature everywhere his eyes went.

"So, that's the greens," He uttered. However, his jubilant mood was soon hammered by anxiousness as he approached a checkpoint.

Under watchful eyes of fully armed guards, a shuttleport employee casually checked Vakha's permit as well as ID. His eyes were fixed at his ID for a moment while he placed the permit through a verification machine.

"Thank you for your patience," The employee told Vakha as she returned his ID and a stamped permit.

He took them gently and beamed back a smile. "Thanks."

"Your permit allows your stay on Earth for two weeks. Please keep that in mind."

"Got it, thanks."

"Enjoy your stay on this beautiful planet."

When he was a distance away from the checkpoint, he let out of a relived sigh and swept off sweats on his forehead.

"So far so good," He said to himself as he proceed to the exit. According to the information chip, a woman named Taisia was living in a city called Seattle which wasn't far from his location. A shuttle service would take only 10 minutes to reach the city.

And in an hour, he was in Seattle. Sun was coming down and, for the first time in his life, he saw real evening.

"Woah, the sky is something on this planet," He remarked as he left Seattle shuttleport. "Nothing like Moon's sky."

The city was full of skyscrapers and the streets were crowded. The roads were busy. It was a sight similar to what he experienced on Moon except, due to the sky, the whole scene felt totally different in a positive way.

However, his mood met a sudden downhill when he arrived at a district where Taisia was supposed to be living.

It was a red district.

With narrowed eyes, Vakha slowly looked around the dark and gloomy district. The street lamps weren't well maintained and neither was the streets. He could see hookers posing for customers outside. It was an eerily similar sight.

"Oh, Gods..." Dropping his head, he sighed. He hoped that the memory chip was wrong and the woman he wasn't after wasn't his sister.

He approached a group of hookers who were wearing skin tight mini dresses that was sort of transparent. He could see their racks somewhat.

"Hello, stud," One of the hookers greeted him charmingly.

"Do you know Taisia?" He stoically inquired.

"Taisia?" Her joyful face came to a stop. "That bitch again? As if she hasn't stolen enough customers..."

Another hooker pointed backwards. "Keep going down the street and you will see Taisia's Heavens. That's obviously where she is."

He handed a cash card to her. "Thanks."

The hookers were surprised to be tipped. They became so happy that they were willing to take him to the place which he promptly declined.

It felt like ages as he walked down the street. He desperately hoped that this "Taisia" was not his sister. He hoped and hoped.

And he dreaded how the world kept kicking him when he was down. When he arrived "Taisia's Heavens", he saw Taisia who were with two men whose hands were on her backside as well as on her chest. They were enjoying her flesh right outside of her shop.

He glared at the sight and recognized that this Taisia was in fact his sister. Her appearance obviously changed a lot since her pre-teen but he could still recognize her. Perhaps noticing the glare, Taisia glanced at Vakha and quickly froze, recognizing who he was almost instantly. She quickly pushed the men away.

“What, are you playing hard-to-get?” One of the men laughed.

“Well, I wouldn’t mind that, either.” The other man agreed and kept a short distance from her while dancing lewdly.

Vakha approached them at once and exclaimed, “Are these Baus?”

The men, who were startled by Vakha’s sudden approach and question, reacted aggressively. “Hey, we paid for our time. Bug off.”

“Are.” Vakha felt as if blood was flowing backwards. “These motherfuckers Baus?!”

“No, they are not!” Taisia exclaimed. “Look, I can talk to you later!”

Vakha made fists and his fists shook badly. He tried really hard to control his burning anger.

“...Fine!” He turned around at once and leaned his back against a nearby street lamp. And Taisia literally dragged the two men into her shop shortly after.

It didn’t take long and the two men merrily left her shop ten minutes later. Taisia turned off the neon sign for her shop and signaled Vakha to come in.

As soon as he entered her shop, he shouted, “Why are you doing this?!”

Taisia shouted back as well, “I had no choice just as you had no choice but to let them kidnap us!”

He looked shocked and hurt at her statement and recoiled a little. With a much lower voice, he asked, “Where is Faina?”

With her face darkened, she answered, “She died. She died not long after we were kidnapped.”

He was loss at words.

“The man in white, he never told me his name,” She continued while slightly sobbing, “But he treated me well. After Faina died, he raised me and sent me to a school.”

According to her, everything was alright until a Bau insider got an eye for her. The man in white had little choices but to hand her over to the man.

“He did resist the man from taking me,” She added, “I do still think he did his best to stop him but...”

After becoming a mistress of the Bau insider, she was abused both sexually and physically. A decade later, she was abandoned and had to settle down in a red district to make a living since she had nothing to begin with.

Vakha felt completely hopeless. He was looking for a closure but instead he got his anger reignited. Despite of his raging anger, he did his best to keep it down in front of Taisia.

He transferred her every credit in his bank account to hers which was well over a million. Taisia was pleasantly shocked.

“You have so much credit!”

“Take the money and get the fuck out of this hellhole,” He said to her calmly.

“Leave Earth. Leave the Bau’s influence.”

Sensing the dark tone in her brother’s voice, she narrowed her eyes. “What are you thinking?” She shook her head slowly as she shook steps back. “No, no..., you are going to attack them.”

His silence confirmed her suspicion. She approached him at once and grabbed his hands. “We just reunited and you are going to pull this on me?! With this amount of money, we can get back on our feet!”

“You can but I can’t!” He exclaimed aggressively in response. “I just can’t go on anymore!”

For him, his hatred toward the Bau exceeded his limit. His hatred to the clan was too deep and profound to simply ignore anymore. He came to Earth to see a closure but instead had thrown an ignited match into his gut full of explosives.

“For the love of God, just take the money and leave,” He told her while she was still holding his hands. Her tears dropped on their hands. “I am done. I am emotionally spent. Even if we leave, I won’t be the same man. I will be as good as dead if I keep this anger inside of me.”

She continued to sob but he had to continue.

“I swear to you that, if I could have, I would have stopped them from taking you and Faina. I swear to the God or whatever the fuck celestial being out there that I had absolutely no choice but let them kidnap you.”

He paused for a moment before continuing.

“It is a sin that cannot be forgiven. It’s been eating me away for decades and I shall pay the price now. Nobody messes with the Bau, they say. We will see because I am going to mess with them!”

In the end, he was able to send Taisia away. He did also entrust her to send a message to Tuhina on Moon to tell her that he was sorry.

Vakha traveled to Australia continent which was where the Bau council headquarters were and he stood imposingly in front of gates to the Bau grand council chamber. There were automated turrets and several guards at the gate. The guards initially did not pay any attention to him because he looked harmless. However, when he started to walk toward the gate, one of the guards warned him.

“Do not approach, stranger. This place is off limits to civilians.”

Of course, he wasn't going to heed the warning. In fact, he was never going to listen any members of the Bau.

"Stranger, I repeat, do not approach or we will be forced to fire!"

"Nobody messes with the Bau, he said," Vakha cited and shouted, "I am going to mess with the Bau!!!"

He drew out his energy blade and dashed toward the guards, instantly killing a guard as he cut him into two pieces.

"Intruder! Intruder!"

Automated turrets targeted him and fired. The guards withdrew behind gates to fortify themselves. Vakha's quick footwork meant that he was able to dodge most of turret fires while deflecting what he could. He eventually destroyed one of two turrets when the guards rearmed themselves with heavy firepower. A tank was also with them which fired at Vakha as soon as the gates were opened but he easily dodged the shot since he saw it coming.

"I am going to kill you all!" He bellowed as he dashed toward them.

He was fully aware of the fact that he was never going to win the battle against them. However, he had to fight them for his own sanity. He had lost too much to the Bau and this was the closure he was looking for in the end.

He battled them remarkably well for an hour where he cut down more than thirty guards along with their solitary tank. However, when Bau reinforcements arrived, the situation changed. Apparently, the Bau council called for an elite squad which were a group of highly trained hyper humans and ESPs. All of them were class A which was equal to Vakha's.

And minutes after the elite squad arrived, Vakha was being chased. Three hyper humans and six ESPs were after him fanatically. He wasn't planning to keep running away but decided to reach an urban area for tactical advantages.

A small town was seen afar and he accelerated further.

“Surrender! And your punishment shall be lighter!” One of the hyper humans chasing him shouted. “You can’t run away!”

He was never going to run away. He was going to cause as much troubles as possible and die. It was already too late to go back or even surrender. He had taken numerous lives already. Without bothering to answer them, he continued to run until he reached the town. He swiftly ran into an alley as soon as he spotted one.

Knowing that ESPs were chasing him, hiding under shadow wasn’t exactly a wise option. Therefore, he kept on moving through the alleys. It was a trick he learned from his mercenary days. It was known to frustrate young and inexperienced ESPs who weren’t used to track fast moving targets through obstacles. Whether it was going to work on them was a gamble.

“There you are!”

A figure jumped down on him from a roof which Vakha was actually waiting for. He had his blade readied already and swirled his body in air along with his blade.

The hyper human screamed as Vakha’s blade cut through his upper chest down to his groin. Blood, along with his internal organs, poured down and the hyper human fell hopelessly and awkwardly onto the ground.

“Nooo!” Another hyper human yelled in panic while Vakha disappeared deeper into the alley. “After him!” He shouted in tears.

For Vakha’s disadvantage, he was running out of alleys to circle around and decided to reach another block. Just as he left an alley and came to a street, there was two ESPs who had barriers on and aimed pistols at him.

“Freeze! Surrender!” They shouted at him.

“Hah!” Vakha laughed as he simply dashed forward them. “Fuck you!” He rammed one of the ESPs with his shoulder. He applied his speed and weight to the ramming and the ESP coughed blood as his barrier cracked. The other ESP fired at him and his lower leg was shot while most missed. ESP’s barriers were highly effective against energy blades which Vakha was fully aware of. Therefore, he equipped his titanium knuckles and crashed the barrier with repeated punches.

“Stop!” The other ESP threw away his pistol and instead cast gravity on him to slow him down. However, it didn’t seem to slow him down as he violently punched the ESP he knocked down and crashed his face, thus skull at once, spattering blood and pieces of bloody brain all over the ground. Turning around to face the remaining ESP at once, he dashed once more and rammed his barrier.

“Ugh!” The ESP tumbled and held his barrier intact. Not for long, however, as Vakha started to break down his barrier with punches. When his barrier was about to shatter, other squad members arrived at the scene, and one of hyper humans slashed at Vakha’s back, causing a deep and long cut on his back.

Gritting to endure the pain, Vakha knew his time was running out. Turning around at once to block the next attack, he realized he was surrounded by hundreds of soldiers who were all aimed at him. He also saw tens of armed shuttles that hovered around the area. Lastly, he saw three hyper humans and two ESPs in front of him.

It was over and he knew it too well.

He loosened, thus relaxed, his body and stood vacantly still. The ESP behind him, whose barrier was cracked, thus mentally damaged, was crawling backwards to create a distance for his survival.

One of the hyper humans pointed his energy blade at Vakha. “This is over. I don’t know what made you to do this but you really dug your own grave.” His confidence voice indicated that it was really over.

“Hah!” Vakha let out of a bitter laugh and said out loud, “Fuck you, all. Fuck you all Bau.”

“Any last words? Or was that it?”

Despite of the grim situation, despite of his wounds, he was not going to give up. He was going to cause as much troubles as possible.

“Make my day, motherfuckers,” Grinning sarcastically, he dashed toward as the soldiers and the shuttles started to open fire at him.

Panting heavily, Vakha was walking down in an alley. One of his arm below elbow was missing and there were visible holes on his abdomen as well as burnt wounds on his chest. His legs were shot so many times that it was hard to see whether his legs were intact. Still he had one good arm and was seemingly cripple-walking against a wall.

He did not know how he made out alive. It was truly a chaotic battle where he did not know what he was doing honestly. He simply ran around like a headless chicken and hoped for the best. It worked to some degree as friendly fires took a lot of soldiers out.

Amid the total chaos, he was able to sneak out. But, as he labored to make out of an alley, he found himself completely surrounded again.

Two hyper humans who survived the chaos had their blades ready, and there were groups of soldiers who were clearly ready to shoot. They were silent, meaning they were serious and were in no mood to play around.

Grinning weakly, Vakha said to himself, "I guess..." He panted as he labored to speak. "This is it..." He stopped and leaned his back against a wall. He frowned painfully as his cut on the back touched the wall. Slowly, he slid down to the ground.

"I... I messed with them good," He chuckled weakly. "Hah, I took a lot out..."

The two hyper humans walked toward him and was ready to finish him. "Nobody messes with the Bau," One of them said. Just when they raised their blades, their heads suddenly fell and rolled on the ground, and the bodies slowly fell with blood spewing out of their necks.

"Nobody messes with the Bau, huh. Have you become that stupid to speak such nonsense?" It was a voice, a confident voice that echoed throughout the area.

The soldiers looked fanatically around to spot the culprit.

"I am here."

The soldiers looked behind them at which point they were sent flying, rather their body pieces went flying. They screamed in pain and panic as they were mercilessly cut down. Not one of them managed to fire a shot meanwhile.

In the end, there was a giant pool of blood and pieces of flesh. There was a person in a robe in middle, seemingly standing on surface of the bloody pool.

It was a crimson robe, a very ... crimson robe.

Seeing the Bau elites as well as soldiers cut down like diseased dogs, tears of joy filled Vakha's eyes. He was truly, genuinely, pleased and overjoyed to see the scene despite of the level of brutality.

"Ahah..." He was close to tears. "The... Crimson wizard..."

Cecil walked toward him who was shedding tears at this point. Vakha had heard of him. He heard of his past deeds which he found very hard to believe. Thus, he chose not to believe the mind-boggling tales associated with him.

But at this very moment, he immediately realized all the surreal tales about him were true and that there was a clear and valid reason why he was referred as "The Crimson wizard".

"Are you satisfied?" Cecil asked Vakha indifferently as he approached him slowly.

"Haha..., of course not..., but..." Tears just poured out of his eyes and dropped through his cheeks. "But..." He was unable to finish and lost consciousness.

When Vakha opened his eyes, he saw a ceiling and it didn't take him long to realize that he was in a bed. He slowly looked around. It was not a hospital room. While he wondered what happened afterwards, he felt too tired and sleepy and went back into sleep.

When he woke up once more, he felt much better. He moved his fingers and cracked them subsequently. He was feeling really good. Most importantly, he felt light as if heavy weights on his shoulders had been lifted. He jumped out of the bed and performed a few exercises. He simply felt really, really, good. He found his wounds as well as a missing limb healed which wasn't hard at all in this era.

Leaving the room, he realized he was in some sort of manor. And it didn't take him to assume that he may be inside of the Klisis clan house that was still standing in Manchester.

Even after the Klisis clan departed Earth, the clan still had the ownership of the land and the manor. Cecil maintained the land ownership as well as the manor. It was public knowledge that the Klisis manor in Manchester was off limits to everyone, even the Bau wouldn't dare entering the zone unless absolutely necessary.

The manor was seemingly empty although he did manage to run into a woman as he came down to the first floor.

The woman was Maeve. "Hello, you are awake."

"Hello," Vakha greeted back casually. "Is this the Klisis clan house in Manchester?"

She grinned brightly. "You've got that right. Welcome to Manchester. How are you feeling?"

He jumped up and down a few times. "Surprisingly good. For a guy who was dying, I am feeling too good."

She chuckled. "You must have recovered well. Cecil is in the backyard, doing his usual bit. Go see him if you like."

"That I will."

"His usual bit" appeared to be just standing still and doing nothing. When Vakha entered the backyard, Cecil was simply standing still and gazing off.

"How are you feeling?" He seemed to have sensed Vakha and quietly asked.

“I am feeling well... I suppose what happened right before I passed out... did happen, yes?”

“Indeed.”

Cecil and Maeve were having a vacation in the manor when they heard emergency broadcast from the Bau channel that there was “a mad intruder”.

“So, it’s okay for you to mess with them like that?”

“Nobody messes with me, not even the Bau,” Cecil proclaimed firmly.

Vakha saw the sarcasm and irony in his statement and chuckled which soon burst into a loud laughter.

“Are you satisfied now?” Cecil inquired once more.

“I still hate the Bau from the bottom of my heart,” Vakha said, “But my burning hatred seems to have subsided.”

Cecil said, “Hatred is a powerful emotional tool.”

Vakha narrowed his eyes. He recalled the man in white telling him the same.

“Your hatred consumed you. You ran into the fire and became sublimated.”

Vakha shrugged. “I am never good with words. But I take that I became better.” Cecil didn’t answer him and changed the subject.

“We are leaving to Venus soon. Do you wish to accompany us?”

Vakha got down on one knee and declared while facing down, “I shall follow you wherever you go. My loyalty shall forever be yours.”

He did mean what he said. In his whole life, he was haunted by the Bau and there was no way for him to score one back from them under normal circumstances. When Cecil massacred the Bau’s dogs, not only did he feel good, he felt released from his burdens. He realized that there was someone else out there who can mess with the Bau at will and still get away as if nothing happened. Therefore, he decided to follow Cecil, for he felt that it was him who liberated him from his burdens.

Thus, Vakha became the third member of the Hammers.

Unexpectedly, Cecil chose to use a normal transport to leave Earth which meant going through Washington DC shuttleport as well as security checkpoints.

The Bau guards at the shuttleport instantly recognized Vakha. The guards whispered to each other but none of them stepped forward and stopped him or Cecil.

And Vakha was all smiles. They, the Bau, were apparently afraid of Cecil. They would have stopped him otherwise.

“Enjoying the moment?” Cecil remarked as they simply walked past a security checkpoint. The guards stepped aside as they walked past them.

He gave him a thumb up. “Hell, fuck, yes.”

Maeve giggled. She bore no grudge against the Bau; she was simply enjoying the moment.

“By the way, we are going to stop by at Moon.”

“Oh?”

“We need to pick up someone.”

Vakha could hardly believe that it was Taishia and Tuhina who were waiting for them at Moon shuttleport.

“Taisia!” Vakha ran to her and grabbed her hands. They eventually exchanged deep hugs. Turning around to face Cecil and Maeve, he wondered, “How did you...?!”

“The Bau was planning to go after them,” Maeve answered instead. “Like or not, they need to come with us.”

Vakha didn’t mind at all.

Tuhina joined the Hammers shortly after they landed on Venus and, thus, became the fourth member.

Fin