Side Story Myth

In a loud, rowdy bar in Porta Nexus, The Drunken Portal lived up to its name. Travelers from all over the multiverse passed through here in between places, one last stop before they reached wherever they were actually trying to go. A hooded figure entered the bar and sat down right away. “Three pints please,” he said, raising his hand. The bartender didn’t react much, just poured the drinks and slid them over. The man immediately started drinking without saying anything else. A screen above the bar played a broadcast from Aion Anderson, reporting on the aftermath of Omnihack’s attack on Frontier. “Ten more Ciphers identified within the government of Kesler…” People watched, but not really. It was more background noise than anything else.

Others entered and left the bar as the night went on, including a blonde woman in a Port Authority uniform. Following her almost like a shadow was another, a gray-haired woman with bangs covering her eyes. They sat down nearby. One of the men laughed, already mid-conversation. “Can you believe it? A crazy conspiracy like that being true.” “Ha. I knew the whole time,” the blonde woman said smugly as she slid into a seat beside them, the other woman sitting next to her. “Oh really now?” the bartender said, amused. “Evening, Operative Fenleigh.” Her smirk widened. “It’s actually Warden

now," she said, clearly pleased with herself.

"Well damn… look out everyone. This one has power now," one of the men said with a laugh.

"Yep," she said proudly, gesturing beside her. "And this is one of my Operatives." The gray-haired woman gave a small nod, saying nothing. "I have to show my newbies around like a good leader," Fiora added, still smug, before turning back to the conversation like nothing had happened. "You know what I think…" she said, leaning in slightly. "They are still out there right now. They just want everyone to think they caught them all. They could be secretly watching us right now, controlling everything. Right, 404?" she said, nudging the woman beside her. She rubbed her fingers lightly against her twin mechanical arms before answering. "Yeah…" The hooded man seemed to notice, chuckling quietly to himself.

"Yeah right… I'll admit I saw some of those vids. Man, that System Administrator guy sure looked tough, but them sticking around after he lost? No way. It's like a beehive. You kill the boss and the whole hive dies or something," he said confidently. The broadcast above shifted to a breaking news segment, showing Natasha Starcrafter signing a peace accord with Roman Virex, formally splitting the Union. "Now there's a real hero," another man said. "If General Starcrafter was there, he wouldn't have stood a chance."

"Are you kidding me? No way. She's the strongest… it's gotta be… um… that Emperor. The one that did the whole deforest-something-or-other. Heard he could punch so hard you'd just stop existing," another added. "Nah, Natasha beat him. Remember? The news said so," Fenleigh cut in firmly, clearly taking a side. "Nonsense. Everyone knows that was Union propaganda. The real hero was Cyrus Steelheart. They reported that later on, remember? A retraction," another man said, just as certain.

"Pft, that guy's a complete fraud. Just saving face after his Empire days. Let's be honest, we all know who the real strongest is. The man just won't die," someone else argued. "Who?" Fenleigh asked,

frowning slightly. “Do I even gotta say it? The Reaper. You saw what he did to this town. I wasn’t even there, but everyone in the multiverse was shook up by it,” he said, lowering his voice just enough to make it sound important. “Pft, yeah right. I fought that guy. He wasn’t so tough,” she replied with a laugh. Everyone turned toward her at once, then broke into laughter, clearly not buying it.

She puffed up her cheeks, annoyed. “I really did! Stupid travelers. He just blew up a bunch of stuff in his stupid glitch mask and we beat his ass!” she shot back.

The laughter settled into something more curious. “Oh… that one. I thought he was fake…” one of them said, second-guessing himself. “No, no, that was the other guy. The one from the Siege. Either way, all of them are pretty powerful,” another added. “Idiots. Didn’t any of you hear the legends? Back in his Empire days… he always comes back. No matter how many times you kill him. Same guy, different outfits…” the man insisted. Even Fenleigh hesitated now. “Maybe you’re…” she started, trailing off as doubt crept in. “I liked the long white hair and eye patch version… he was sexy,” the hooded man added casually, finishing his last pint. He set the glass down with a soft tap. “But you’re all forgetting something,” he said, voice calm now. “The man who defeated him.”

The room went quiet. “…Orion Vesper…” one of them whispered. Fenleigh’s face lit up instantly. “Oh gods, I’ve heard so much about that guy,” she said, leaning forward. “I heard he could bench press a mountain, and like, he beat a million of those hacker guys all by himself, and now he’s the boss of Frontier. Bet he’s a real dreamboat.” She was already half drooling. “Yes, all of that is true,” the hooded man said calmly, “and he is indeed very sexy.” He let out a small, almost wistful sigh. “It’s a shame he’s taken by the Captain.” Fenleigh’s excitement collapsed immediately. She lowered her head, clearly not aware of that part, quietly mourning the loss. Then both of them looked at each other at the same time.

The hooded man tilted his head slightly. “I do believe I like your vibe, Ms. Fenleigh,” he said with a chuckle. “It’s a shame. In the past, I would have offered you a night of passion neither of us

would ever forget." Her eyes practically bulged out of her head. "Take me!" she said instantly, far too eager. "Unfortunately," he continued, completely unfazed, "I am chained by the prison of marriage." He paused, then added with complete sincerity, "The worst part… I've never been happier." Fenleigh deflated on the spot, slumping forward onto the bar counter in defeat as 404 gently rubbed her back.

An awkward silence settled over the room.

Then, from somewhere in the corner. "I'd let that Captain he's with beat me up anytime."

The tension snapped, and the entire bar erupted again, this time into a far more chaotic and questionable debate. The hooded man just smirked. "A round of drinks on the house," he said, placing a heavy bag of credits onto the counter. Conversation immediately spiraled. "What about that hacker girl… what was her name…" one of them started. "You know, the pink one in the guild… man, that's a woman. I'd let her hack my universe and make me never exist…" He leaned back with a satisfied grin as the noise of the bar swallowed everything again.

"Wait… she is a hacker… does that mean… she's with the Omnipack?" one of them questioned. "Are you stupid?" another shot back immediately. "Why would she be out in the open if she was with them? Dumbest thing I've ever heard." "I would like to take Gaius Quintillous to bed personally," someone else added, raising his hand like that had anything to do with the current topic. "The Coordinator they put in prison? Isn't he like nine hundred or something? Man's got wrinkles on wrinkles," one of the others said, laughing. "And each one of them tells a story…" he insisted proudly. "He's just as spry as he used to be. Bet your bottom..."

"Can we talk about literally anything else?" another pleaded, already regretting being part of this conversation. "Doctor Pandora created Multi-Tech!" someone suddenly blurted out, completely derailing things again. "Who the hell is that? I thought it was the Helix guy." A man said. "Helix is pretty sexy too… and Corvus… and The Caretaker…" the same guy from before continued, now fully

committed to the bit. “I think this guy is just into older people…” someone muttered under their breath. “I think the Phoenix is the strongest. No one can beat her,” another added, even though that part of the conversation had already passed.

At this point, people were just talking over each other, none of it connected anymore. “My coworker Bram is the hottest. I want him so bad…” Fenleigh said, staring off with far too much enthusiasm. “Weren’t you just…” one of the men started, then stopped, deciding it wasn’t worth finishing. The crowd completely devolved into chaos. Nothing made sense anymore. Just ranting, arguing, and confidently spreading very wrong information. The hooded man smirked, enjoying all of it. That was until the door slammed open. The room fell silent once more. The man frowned slightly. “Oh dear…”

A woman in a lab coat walked in slowly, the entire bar watching in confusion. “Administrator Lucy?” Fenleigh said, blinking in surprise. She recognized her, but not well enough to understand why she was here. “This is where you’ve been hiding…” she said with a tired sigh. “I wasn’t hiding, I was...” the hooded man started to argue. “Yeah, yeah, save it,” she cut him off. “We are going HOME.” She grabbed him by the arm and pulled him up from the chair, yanking his hood off in the process. It was Loki. The crowd exploded. “Oh my gods, it’s that crazy party god!” someone shouted. Lucy didn’t stop, already dragging him toward the door. “Wait, dearest, why not… one more drink… with you…” he pleaded, trying to lean back toward the bar.

She responded by grabbing his ear and pulling harder. “You promised to babysit the kids tomorrow, and I’m not covering for you again when you’re hungover.” “We can just magic it out…” he tried again. She didn’t even entertain it. “Sorry about my husband, everyone,” she said flatly, continuing to drag him out. The door shut behind them. Fenleigh stared after them in complete shock. Then she dropped to her knees. “I could’ve fucked a god… the god of pervyness! Nooooo!” she cried.

404 watched her for a moment, not even attempting to process that. "…Yeah."