

Legends Row

Chapter Four

As they strolled along, a heavy silence hung in the air, it was Joseph who eventually broke it, his voice cutting through the tension.

"General Frizela told me you got better in sparing." Joseph said, a warm smile on his lips. As a father, he understood the importance of acknowledging Jakob's skills, hoping it would bring some comfort to his son. Upon hearing this, a flicker of a smile tugged at Jakob's cheeks, but he fought against it. He didn't want to give in to happiness, he wanted to hold onto his anger, knowing that it often gained more attention. Remaining silent, Jakob anticipated his father's continued chatter as they made their way into the heart of the forest. This region of the Legion Nation was Jakobs' favorite, surpassing even the training pits. Known as Legends Row, it was the oldest section of the nation, an intracity road network that twisted from the outer gate, cutting through the forest, and leading up to the courtyards.

Jakob and his father stopped for a second, it was routine. Every time they walked the path his father would test him. The path was flanked by a row of majestic trees, towering and ancient, their branches reaching out towards the sky. The spacing between the trees allowed for plenty of room to walk, with statues placed strategically in between. These statues were not ordinary sculptures. They were tributes to the great individuals who had left a mark on the history of the Legion Nation. Each statue depicted a figure of significance, their features carefully carved to capture their essence. As Jakob walked along the path with his father, he couldn't help but feel a sense of relief. The presence of these statues served as a constant reminder of the remarkable achievements and sacrifices made by those who came before him.

King Joseph typically quizzed Jakob about each individual statue as they walked down the path, most of the time Jakob would get some information wrong and his dad would correct him and go into some legendary story that Jakob would love to hear.

“Dad, are you ready?” Jakob said with a short pause, and continued, **“Come on I got this, I got this dad.”**

“I don’t know son, last time you got three wrong, and it took forever to end up back at the Palace.” Joseph chuckled.

“No, I’m serious, I can do it.” Jakob answered with intent.

“Okay, who are the first three statues?” Joseph questioned.

“Cornelia Stryder, she is my great, great grandmother who was killed in The Gorge by the Shadow-Beasts called Scorpius leading to an annual hunt by Legion men to honor her life. The second one is Jade Egan. She was the first girl to win the Iron Maiden tournament and the first girl General in the Legion Nation. The third one is Elbert Bradford he was a Master Ranger that fought against the Syndicate when they attacked the capital, most people don’t know this, but he saved the kings life.”

“How’d, you know that?” Joseph smiled, asking Jakob.

Jakob gave a quick smirk of confidence but truthfully, he was not sure how he knew, the answer just came to him. They continued to walk, and the King named the next three.

“Franklin “Sly Eye” Ferguson who stopped a massacre between the Kanui Blackfoots and the Brutes of Atmas. Proclus Albatius who founded the meat trade and is one of the original members of the Legion Order. Herius Frizela was one of the first three

Generals in the history of the nation. He fought alongside the first Guardian and helped established much of the Legion military foundation.”

Jakob knew most of this information and he was excited for the last three statues near the end of the main road.

“I’m going to quiz you on this next one.” Joseph said with an ounce of disbelief that Jakob would get this one right. They walked directly up to the next statue, and it was different than all the rest. In the statue, there was a man depicted with long braided hair and a feather sticking out of it. He was shirtless, with what seemed to be either paint or mud on his chest and face. In his hands, he held an arrow and a tomahawk. His expression portrayed a sense of intense emotion, as if he were shouting or yelling.

“This statue is of Crazy Sword but tell me what’s his true name and why he was so important.” Joseph gave him a slight hint, but Jakob was silent.

“Hmm what’s his name?” Jakob said to himself, thinking hard.

“Well, I know he was the first Master Ranger of any other nation that could be a part of the Legion Nation. He was Blackfoot a tribe of the Kanui Nation.” He was silent for a bit longer.

“Okay I got it! His name is Pahi Puapule. But I don’t understand why he is so important.” Jakob finished.

“He was the first person to scout of the edges of the Shadowlands. He taught us most of what the Rangers know today about the region and countering the Shadow. We must not forget the true enemy son.” Joseph said finishing in serious tone.

Jakob remained quiet as they turned away continuing to walk the path. At the mention of the Shadow, it gave him the chills and it reminded him of his dream. Together they finally got to the main crossing point between the military district that would lead into two roads heading to the inner city. In the middle of the crossing were the final two statues of this section. They were the largest of any of the previous statues and they were both facing each other.

“You get these two right Jakob and I’ll let you eat some of the elk that Master Hanes caught before the main celebration starts for your birthday.” Jakob stood quiet for a second with more excitement after his dad bribed him with the elk. He knew the answers, these were his favorite statues. But something was different. He felt something. He couldn’t explain it, but he was locked into the gaze of the statues, staring at both faces. Something seemed so familiar. It seemed like he was standing there forever and then abruptly Joseph shook him.

“Jakob are you okay?” He asked.

“Yeah....” Jakob said low, almost unsure about how he felt. He continued, **“The one on the right is Raiden Flint Stryder he was the second Guardian within the Legion Nation, he led the world to great prosperity and united all the nation. Hmmm”** Jakob finished.

“What is it, son?” Joseph asked.

“Something tells me that he fought against, or something called..... The Source.”

“Who told you that?” Joseph seemed concerned.

“I don’t know. It just came to me.” Jakob was looking at the other statue now.

“Who’s the other statue?” Joseph was puzzled, more curious to hear his answers.

“That’s Derrick Stryder, the first Guardian. He walked with Luehtaz in the Age of Hyperion and founded the Legion Nation. He fought in the Ogres Wars, and the line of Kings are named after him. Every person who becomes king, maintains the name Stryder.”

The answer just flowed out of Jakob.

“Wow I’m surprised that you got all that out in one wind. How did you know so much this time son, you’ve never answered that in depth before?” Joseph was intrigued.

“I don’t really know. Much of the older books in our library were written in the native tongue and I couldn’t understand it when I tried to read them.”

Joseph sat down on the end of the stairs that led up to this point, looking back on the path they both walked, and Jakob sat down next to him.

“You really do love these statues son huh?” Joseph asked, knowing Jakob was in a better mood now.

“I do, they are all legends and heroes. They travelled all around Hyperion, doing what they wanted, saving lives, having adventures. I want to be like them some day and have my story told, I want my own statue and then maybe I wouldn’t be made fun of.”

Jakob stopped himself before he told his father more of how he felt inside. Sometimes Jakob felt inadequate, different, and lonely at times, like sometimes people didn’t really understand him.

“Son there have been thousands of people who have lived in the Legion Nation, but only few have status of them throughout the capital and city states. Why do you think that is?” Joseph asked.

“Well, they all did something that made them a legend that’s why it’s called Legends Row duh!” Jakob said with sarcasm.

"It's not just that son. Everyone has the potential to achieve something great. Life will smack every one of us in the face. And then we have a choice. We can either run from it or deal with it. We can either give up when faced with challenges or grow through them, becoming who we are destined to be. Even when the path ahead seems dark, there is always a glimmer of hope. All the people you admire, have dealt with hardships that could have broken them. Yet, they chose to stand tall and face life regardless of how afraid they were. And that’s why they will always be remembered." Joseph finished with seriousness.

“What about the Guardian, they are supposed to be invincible right? They are the most gifted people in all of Hyperion?” Jakob questioned with excitement.

“You are right son. The Guardian does have remarkable gifts, but such blessings do not come without their sacrifices. Every generation, a Guardian shoulders the responsibility of protecting Hyperion and upholding the Light, while fending off the relentless Shadow. But it’s important to know that greatness often comes from the most difficult challenges you face.” Joseph responded.

"Will I have to go through something difficult like that, Dad?" Jakob inquired.

"I can't say for certain, son. That's something only your journey will reveal.”

Joseph finished, leaning in to embrace his son.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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Registration # -TXu 2-433-354

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Cover Design By – Castillo Collective Inc.

Published by – The Art of Reign Productions Inc.

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