

# **The Quarter**

## Chapter Twenty-One

The next morning the boys were woken up bright and early. The day went by fast getting the usual done, till Jerms got in an argument with Danny. Jerms had enough, he was done cleaning and working, till Gary checked him.

**“Your free to do as you want prospect, being a pirate means we are free to luxury. The only problem is, take a look at your crewmates. What will they think when you’re lounging around not pulling your weight and they’re hard at work. You keep what you kill.”**

Jerms apologized to Danny and eventually got back to work. Later in the day the boys were even able to practice some sword fighting with dull blades. Jakob made quick work of everyone; he was handy with the steel. As the ship came to a gentle halt, the settling sun painted the sky with colors of oranges and yellows. Gary summoned the entire crew to the main deck, their anticipation growing as dusk began to envelop the horizon.

**“Mates you know the drill, we shall take the small boats to enter the island, while Art sails the ship to Port Regal. Bobby will go ahead on his own to transfer our currency to the islands coin. Martin will meet us, as we enter.”** Gary announced to the crew. The men began hastily to get everything ready while he continued to explain more details about the island.

**“The entrance to the islands is controlled by the Aristocrats. However, its mostly a front for all ships to be docked and repaired. The man in charge is a representative for the Republic but he is paid off by the Cree to look the other way. Although we must remain vigilant, enemies are always lurking about. The islands are a haven for pirates and there**

are laws to keep it that way. On the water it's open season, however the islands are neutral ground, no killing of each other is allowed once we touch down. Occasionally a fight happens, or someone goes missing but for the most part everything is orderly. Crowns are transferred to our coins to be used on the island to trade for goods, lodging, medical care, drinks, and favors, to maintain our own independent wealth apart from the rest of the nations." After Gary's long rant most of the men returned and stood behind him.

"You four boys are new prospects, along with some other boys around your age you'll soon meet. I will have you know, there are codes to piracy, it's a long list of rules we uphold and respect."

"More like suggestions if you ask me." Art said under his breath.

"You are correct Art." Gary said with a sharp brow, "In some situations we pick and choose, because the first rule of piracy is there are no rules." All the men gave a laugh as Gary said that ironically.

"The life of piracy is chosen, upon that choice you are given, Luxury, Luxury of the life you choose. The choice is not for everyone, the Southern Islands are a magnificent place, home to the finest of Libbie's and adventure to each of your own desires. However, it is still a dangerous place, and you must stay on your pivot if you are to survive. The journey south was a free ride, but now is the time to choose. To stay with us or depart your own way. What say you?"

The men around the boys yelled out, "Aye, Aye captain!"

Gabriel, Smiffy, Jerms and Jakob stood tall and yelled with their arms in the air,

**“Aye, Aye captain!”**

Gary and the rest of the crew stepped aside so the boys could walk to the edge of the boat and get their first glimpse of the island view.

**“Bloody hell.”**

**“I know there’s baddies out here.”**

**“Amazing.”**

The boys stood there in awe, captivated by the scene unfolding before them. Amongst the fading sunlight, a curious scent wafted through the air, a blend of burnt coconut, vanilla, cinnamon, and an exotic spice. As the sun dipped below the horizon, the entire island seemed to come alive, vibrant lights amidst the deep green cliffs and towering palm trees that decked the edges. Suddenly a thunderous explosion pierced the air, sending flows of blue and pink lights bursting forth from the heart of the island, illuminating the night sky in breathtaking display.

**“Don’t worry boys those are fireworks. We light them every day when the sun sets.”**

One of the men said.

**“Let’s get down to the small boats.”** Gary motioned to the boys. He never took his ship to be docked where the rest of pirates did, he had a secret place that only his crew knew about. The remaining crew took the small boats together to pass through the check-in gate that shelled the front of the main islands. The boys grabbed the little belongings they had and followed the men down to sail in. There was a cool breeze from the water as they sailed in. The entrance to the islands were guarded by jagged rocks serving as natural barrier against intruders.

The gate looked small from the ship but now Jakob realized how big it was, on the right-hand side massive ships lined the edge and looked as if the ships wrapped around the entire island.

**“There has to be two hundred ships easily.”** There were ships of all different shapes and sizes, magnificent colors, and unique flags. Jakob guessed there were probably ships from all over the world. The closest ships he could see looked like they were made of bamboo, with dragon insignias on the sails. On the right was a long and narrow ship, that looked like it only had one level and on the front of the ship was a carved figure head of a woman. Three more ships came next that were identical in design, two bronze rams jutted out from the front of the ship and the ships were in pristine condition, with three banks of oars positioned on each side. The last ship in Jakob's view before they were all out of sight was a towering deep black ship. The blackened wood was riddled with cracks and holes, that were a testament to the battle fought and won on the waters of Hyperion. It stood tall with towering masts that reached towards the sky. Tattered and torn sails, that billowed in the wind.

**“Now that's pirate ship.”** Jakob thought to himself.

The boats arrived at a large gate and Jakob turned his focus once Gary whistled. A man popped his head out from the top, he was dressed like a Twelve, but he looked like he hadn't showered in a month. The man had a lady wrapped in each arm with a bottle in his hand and a cigar in his mouth.

**“Gaaar your back! Open the gate!”** The man yelled down.

**“I see you got my gifts.”** Gary stood up looking towards where he stood.

**“And the libbies too Ha-ha!”** He grabbed both below the waist and laughed till he fell back to his seat.

**“That’s the guy I was talking about, we tip him extra, so we don’t have to go through the normal process of checking in like everyone else lined up.”**

The small boats passed under the gate to a shallow cove, and it was an even better view than they had originally thought. This secret haven known only to a select few, was a breath-taking sight of natural beauty and bustling activity. The cove was surrounded by towering cliffs, their rugged faces with lush greenery that flowed down towards the sparkling turquoise water. Schools of colorful fish darted playfully through the water, delicate coral formations, like underwater gardens. Jakob reached down and felt warmth from the water. The lively atmosphere extended beyond the pirates themselves, curious seals basking lazily on the rocks, occasionally slipping back into the water.

**“Be careful with the water now boys, there are gators here, and sometimes a shark or two will makes its way into our waters.”** Gary chimed in. Throughout the water were small homes that were built atop small floats, and on the sandy shores of the cove was a bustling community of pirates. The air was filled now with the smell of hearty meals being prepared over crackling fires as the pirates shared tales of adventures and laughter echoed through the cove. Jakob quickly noticed the sand was black.

**“It can’t be a coincidence, that smell and the black sand. I saw this in my dream.”**

Jakob thought to himself. **“Maybe this is exactly where I’m supposed to be.”** The voice inside finished. Finally, the vessel reached its destination and gently docked. As the crew prepared to disembark, a man approached. He appeared youthful, yet not quite a boy anymore. His brown hair was neatly slicked back, and as he drew nearer to the boat, a deep voice, laced with an unfamiliar accent.

**“Back from the wicked land.”** The young man said with a stern face.

**“Martin!”** Gary smiled.

**“All praise to the most high.”** Martin let his face go and smiled in return.

Gary gave the man a hug and turned to face Jakob and boys.

**“Boys this is Martin Matus, we called him Priest. He used to belong to The Clergy but now he’s one of us heathens.”** Gary joked with Martin.

**“I see the perversion, and the changes made to The Holy text. Their all wicked. Our time will come to bathe in the blood in our enemy’s. Vengeance is the Lords.”** Martin said as he shook the rest of everyone’s hand.

**“Don’t get him started, we’ll be here all night.”** Dukes interrupted.

**“We are of the Tribes of Mata. We are the head and not the tail.”** Martin said as he turned to lead the way from the docks.

**“Anyways, follow me boys, we are going to the spot.”** Gary finished.

Jakob fell in with the rest of them as they walked away from the docks. The boys were stunned. The narrow streets were lined with wooden buildings, their fronts decorated with faded paint and weathered signs. The town hurried with activity as pirates, merchants and locals mingled in chaotic dance of trade, celebrations, and whispered secrets. The dimly lit establishments were filled with sounds of laughter, clinking mugs and lively music played on fiddles and guitars. It was a tune Jakob had never heard before, it was upbeat and made the whole place buzz. Men were lounging around with drinks in hand shooting their choppers in the airs like in was a usual occasion. There were more women than Jakob could even keep an eye on, dancing around,

screaming laughter and smiles on everyone's faces. This pirates cove was teeming with life and activity, it is a hidden gem within the vast expanse of Hyperion. A place offering a sanctuary of beauty and adventure for those lucky enough to stumble upon its secrets.

**“It’s a nonstop party here, best place in the world. I wish we’d never have to leave.”** Danny told the boys, looking back at them. Several people came up to them as they passed through the city, saying hello to Gary. The Cree inhabitants were a mix of rough and tumble characters each with their own story to tell. Pirates from all corners of the world called this place home. Swashbuckling men with eye patches and beards and women who embraced the pirate lifestyle with equal ferocity. As the crew made their way towards the saloon, a gathering of individuals, both men and women, loitered near the entrance. As Gary approached, they instinctively shifted aside, offering nods of recognition. Just as the anticipation in the air heightened, a woman emerged from the saloon with a bald man on her right. The woman had elegantly arched eyebrows that framed her face. Her attire was exquisite, with a touch of sophistication that caught everyone's attention. A vibrant shade of red lipstick accented her smile. On her left cheek, a charming mole added a hint of uniqueness to her appearance. Though petite in stature she radiated a spirited energy that was contagious.

**“To what do I owe the pleasure Mz. Christina?”** Gary asked with a raised eyebrow.

**"Mr. Teach told me you had some business with the Brotherhood in The Turfs. Remember the rules, Gar. No violence on the island. Take care of your problems out on the waters, even though you're my favorite pirate,"** Christina replied, with a playful smile on her face.

**"Yes, ma'am,"** Gary responded respectfully, giving a slight bow.



**"When you're ready for another job, come see me,"** Christina said, shaking his hand and turning her attention to the boys. **"And who might these handsome young lads be?"**

**"Just some new recruits,"** Gary replied casually.

Christina's gaze fixed on Jakob. **"I'll be keeping a close eye on you,"** she said, her tone slightly teasing. After Christina walked away, Gary led them into the saloon.

**"This is our spot."** The building was nearly empty, with only a few individuals scattered about, idling away their time. Here and there one could find pockets of seating arrangements, strategically placed to encourage relaxation and conversation. A flight of stairs led to an elevated patio, offering a commanding view of the entire room below. On the right-hand side, a grand piano stood, its keys untouched, with a man lay sprawled across the bench, passed out. Adjacent to its, a bar top stretches across, manned by a pair of bartenders, diligently serving a steady stream of patrons their preferred drinks of choice. A few steps in and they heard two smaller boys arguing and chasing each other around.

**"You want to play games, river rat!"** A young boy, his hair styled in a sleek ponytail, gripped his knife tightly in his small hand as he raised his voice across the table that stood as a dividing barrier. His complexion bore a rich shade of brown, while his counterpart on the other side displayed a larger physique, with a fair complex.

**"You dirty foot, Kanui trash, go live in tepee."** The larger kid spit towards him. **"Stang Eater!"** He continued.

**"Come here you little white chicken, why you run?"** The smaller boy came back, slashing his knife.

**“Come on then dirty foot, cut me then!”** The larger boy continued.

Ted walked slowly towards them, **“Knock it off you two!”**

**“Cut me then red boy!”** The fairer skinned boy continued to egg him on.

**“You know better Simko. Stop”** Tedrick yelled.

**“Savages, Savages!”** The larger boy laughed and ran around the table.

**“Enough son.”** Ted grabbed the larger boy and smacked him on the back of the head and the two boys fell silent.

**“Wash up and get in your supper clothes now both of you, now!”** Ted wasn't kidding around. Gary stopped them before they left,

**“Let me introduce you to some of the other boys. This is Matt, he is Tidrick's son, but we call him Simko because there's so many damn Matt's”** Gary pointed to the larger boy,

**“And this boy here, well we call him Killshot, he's Kanui Blackfoot orphan that we saved in the east.”** Gary continued, **“Simko and Killshot, these are some of our new prospects that will be saying with us, Tato, Jerms, Gabriel and Smiffy.”**

**“Hope none of you are Stang eaters.”** Simko said looking at Killshot before he ran off the stairs, with Killshot chasing him.

**“Don't mind those two they're always fighting.”** Gary said as he walked towards the bar.

**“There are some other boys around here you’ll meet soon. Larry has twin sons, Jabbarri, and Sefu. And you’ll see two other orphans running around here, Fernando and Cassi.”** As Gary and his companions approached the bar, he found a seat and settled in comfortably. The man with a rich complexion of deep brown, poured a modest drink for Gary and cordially extended his hand in a warm greeting. Next to the man stood a woman small in stature, her blonde hair fell to her shoulders and her pure green eyes stood out. A plump and endearing little dog trotted merrily along the expanse of the bar.

**“Aww my Tiny! Tiny, you want some food huh?”** The bartender grabbed the small dog and was talking to it like it was a person. Gary just looked at him and shook his head while taking a drink from his glass.

**“Que Pasa, who are these Gordo’s?”** The man asked, pointing to the kids.

**“Just some new prospects you’ll have to babysit for me now and then”** Gary responded.

**“Babysit? Please! That kid's more likely to catch gangrene than a break. And the only thing I’m taking care of is my drink and my Tiny!”** The man shot back, grabbing the tiny dog from the bar and pulling it into a tight embrace.

**“Don’t mind him Gary, he’s had to many today you know well take care of them, we always take care of strays.”** The little lady finished.

**“These two are Orly and Tina, they will be watching over you guys any time we are gone on routes, till you’re ready. Grab me the cuts Tina.”** Gary took a final swig of his drinks and Tina, handed him a small plain weathered Cuts, similar to the ones all the men on the crew wore, but it didn’t have any markings.

**“Everyone! gather around, gather round.”** Gary turned his chair around facing the boys and now the room was a little bit more filled as Bobby, Art and several other men returned.

**“Listen up, drinks for the lot of you. These cuts one day will belong to you boys one day if you earn it. Life begins anew tomorrow.”** He held in drink in the air. Jakob looked around as Gary continued to rant on. Jakob tuned out what he was saying for a second. He felt a sudden rush of energy that gave him the chills. The image of himself dressed as a pirate that he dreamed of rushed to his mind’s eye, it felt like the dream was a lifetime ago but now things made sense. Jakobs ears to turned back into Gary,

**“The life we all lead is to escape the normal mundane life. We live,”** Gary declared boldly,

**“Free!”** The men roared, their voices strong and steady.

**“This be just the beginning for you boys, a pirate life,”** Gary proclaimed, with a gleam in his eye,

**“Yo, ho, ho!”** The men thundered, their voices piercing he sky.

**“A journey, it shall be, because it's better,”** Gary's voice filled with conviction and might,

**“To live on your feet,”** the men sang, their spirits takin' flight.

**“Then die on your knees, Drink up me hearties, Yo ho!”** Gary raised his mug high,

**“Yo ho, a pirate's life for me!”** All joined in, their voices unified, reaching' for the sky. The men finished Gary's sentences, as if they were a crew long bound, Jakob, Jerm, Gabriel, and Smiffy stood in awe, their new life they chose.

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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