

Man of Shadows

Chapter 23

After a short refreshing ride down the coastline, they approached the harbor of the city known as Blackwater to meet their Captain. Blackwater had transformed into the main center for all sorts of criminal activities. Over the last seven years, The Colonies had come under the complete control of The Republic and The Anemis of Vanity. During this time, the east had become the place to be. Blackwater had its own rich history, being the very first city in the east. It had been known for countless years of deceit and even some horrifying massacres. The presence of politicians and true religious leaders was almost nonexistent, as the Blackfoot's, Outlaws Gangs and The Brotherhood split the territory, from Blackwater to the farthest east of the Terracintas. Numerous Mayors had either been forced to leave town or met brutal deaths simply for not conforming to their demands. Despite the constant danger, Blackwater thrived as a lively hub for all to eat.

After discreetly parking their Rovers, the crew entered the boat storage facility. This was the familiar meeting spot where the Men of Mayhem and The Brotherhood carried out their weapon exchanges. As War-Chief of the pirate crew, Jakob had witnessed significant transformations within the crew since he first joined. They now held a dominant position in the southern weapons trade market.

The boat storage facility was a vast room was filled with an impressive array of massive boats, each one meticulously propped up on sturdy wooden blocks. The air was thick with the smell of saltwater and the faint scent of paint. Surrounding the boats were numerous storage containers, scattered strategically throughout the room. These containers, varying in size and

shape, held the secrets and treasures of the pirate crew. Some were weathered and worn, showing signs of countless journeys and encounters on the high seas. Others were newer, their metal surfaces still gleaming under the dim lights of the storage facility. As Jakob made his way closer, he noticed a commotion that had gathered the attention of the crew and some familiar faces. Intrigued, he tried to get a better view but couldn't see what was happening. Away from the chaos, laying across several smaller boxes, Jakob spotted Gabriel, now the esteemed Captain of the Men of Mayhem.

In the span of seven years since their encounter in the Hoods of The Colonies, Gabriel had changed from a scrawny boy to a strong man. His once barely visible mustache had matured into a well-groomed beard that defined his upper lip and jawline. Accompanying him was a familiar face, Tiffany, the girl Gabriel had been with prior to their departure to the Southern Islands. Tiffany had taken on the crucial role of distributor for The Brotherhood, and it was evident that they shared a close bond. The crew had always harbored reservations about conducting business with The Brotherhood who were known for the Calcite Dust trade, but it was a necessary alliance that Gabriel skillfully maintained through his connection with Tiffany

Standing beside her were her two formidable bodyguards, Yvette and Vanessa, whose unpredictability far exceeded that of most men. Jerm and Smiffy frequently joked about the legendary tales they'd heard—how Vanessa had once taken down three men in a single fight, leaving them all defeated, and how Yvette had brutally castrated a man for daring to cross her. Together, the three of them formed a fearsome trio, instilling dread in anyone who dared to challenge them. Observing the scene, Jakob couldn't help but feel a sense of unease settle within him.

"Ay, ay, check it out, look who finally decided to show up. What took you so long, jit?" Smiffy jokingly sneered at Jakob as he turned to see who had entered the facility. His hair had grown out over the years, and yet he still wore the red bandana to hold it back and still proudly sported the gold nose piercing, while adding some fresh gold teeth to go along. Jakob did not respond, merely giving a silent nod of acknowledgment. He walked purposefully towards Gabriel. Jakob greeted Tiffany with a nod before they spoke,

"You don't send a bird, you don't write." Gabriel said while sprawled across the boxes.

"Sorry Captain." Jakob came back.

"Where's your shirt?" Gabriel asked, noticing Jakob's bare chest.

"Long story," Jakob muttered, not wanting to delve into the details.

Gabriel rose to his feet, extending his hand to Jakob in their crew's secret handshake, a gesture that spoke to the respect he held for his friend. Jakob's attention was drawn back to the commotion where Dukes was mercilessly punching a man who he held by his shirt. As Jakob focused on the scene, he realized that there was another individual lying on the ground, bound and helpless. A blindfolded woman was frantically screaming in distress.

"Benny, Benny, e 'olu'olu, please!" the girl pleaded in the native tongue.

Meanwhile, the man continued receiving a brutal beating from Dukes.

"Do you have any idea who you're stealing from!" Dukes yelled as he continued to strike the man.

"I didn't do anything man." Benny protested, his face bruised and battered. Dukes slowly approached the woman's body.

"She doesn't know anything, man," Benny pleaded desperately. Dukes pulled out a cutlass from his waist. Benny, realizing the seriousness of the situation continued to plead,

"Okay, look, look it was me, I stole from you, I was transporting the weapons. please man it's not her fault." Benny confessed. His voice filled with fear.

"You're right, Benny. It's not Jasmine's fault. It's yours. You have the opportunity to do right for us. All you have to do was tell us who informed you of our shipment's location and who supplied you with these new choppers," Dukes kicked a nearby box in frustration.

"I can't, I can't," Benny refused to give in.

"He's not listening to me Jasmine!" Dukes grabbed her tightly, forcing her to confront Benny.

"E Benny, e ha'i iā lākou i kāu mea i hana ai me ke kālā!" Jasmine yelled, **"Benny, tell him what you did with the currency."** Gabriel started to walk towards Dukes to take control of the situation, but Jakob held him back, placing a hand on his chest.

"I'll handle it," Jakob assured him. With confidence, Jakob stepped closer, capturing everyone's attention. **"What's going on here?"** he demanded.

"Tato, meet Benjamin and his girl Jasmine" Dukes introduced the two captives. Bobby chimed in,

"Art was driving his route when this scumbag jumped him and shot him right in the head."

"Art? So, he got the..." Jakob voice trailed off before Dukes interrupted.

“The currency, all the weapons, our whole shipment for the Brotherhood!” Dukes confirmed.

“Did we get it back?” Jakob remained poised.

“No, he handed it off before Killshot tracked him down. This greedy bastard was in bed with her when he found him.” Dukes explained, his anger palpable.

“We didn’t find our shipment, but we did find this.” Dukes motioned for Killshot and Simko to bring over a crate. Jakob's eyes quickly caught sight of the emblem of the Legion Nation on the crate. For a moment, he was overcome with a wave of unease, memories of home flooding back to him and buried emotions started to resurface, slowly chipping away at his walls. He opened the crate, his hands trembling slightly, trying his best to bring no notice to his visible unease. The crate was filled with blaster guns carved with the Legion “L” on their sides. However, these were different,

“What are these?” Jakob asked as he examined the weapons.

“These are shell guns. They are not like blasters that use crystals for firing. Instead, they rely on a firing spring to propel the shells. E.M.P’s would do nothing to stop them, nations would be defenseless to stop these kinds of weapons. I have only heard rumors about these shell guns, but I always dismissed them as mere whispers.” Gabriel whistled to pull Jakob and Dukes to the side.

“Arnt the Legion supposed to be honorable, a nation of kings, why would they do shady business like this.” Dukes asked Gabriel.

“You were supposed be King.” The thought popped in Jakobs head. Although he sought to change the subject entirely, diverting the conversation away from anything remotely associated with the Legion.

“Why in the hell would you bring these two here Dukes, these facilities are strictly used to do clean business with the Brotherhood it’s too risky.” Jakob commanded.

“I thought you’d want to teach him a lesson.” Dukes protested.

“And the girl?” Gabriel asked.

“He needed some persuasion to talk.” Dukes said.

Gabriel and Jakob exchange knowing glances, silently acknowledging their mutual understanding and agreement.

“What?” Dukes asked.

“We have to let her go. Dukes think! This girl has brothers, family, people who give a damn about her, you mess with her they come looking for us, they come with Twelves, they come with choppers, The Saracen Brothers, The Syndicate, people we deal with or worse people we don’t deal with.”

Jakob turned back to the two captives, **“Say farewell to Jazmine, Benjamin.”**

“I’ll meet you at the Dauntless.” Gabriel said as he left with Tiffany.

In a swift motion, Jakob removed his leather Cut and passed it over to Jerms, simultaneously revealing a pair of sleek black leather gloves, ready to take on whatever business lay ahead. His mind fully focused on who he had to be.

“ ‘A‘ole, e ‘olu‘olu, e ‘olu‘olu! No, please, please.” Jasmine pleaded desperately.

“I’m sorry Jazz.” Benjamin said, his voice filled with regret.

“Benny, Benny.” A piercing scream escaped the girl's lips as Jakob's grip tightened around her.

“Listen to me, you were never here. Understand! Ho‘omaopopo! Do you understand?” Jakob continued

“Killshot, stay with her till she’s cleaned up and no one follows her.” Jakob commanded.

“Benjamin!” Jasmine begged one last time before she was carried away.

“Jasmine, E kala mai. I’m sorry!” Benny whispered his last words to her.

“Well, well, well here we are Benjamin.” Jakob approached him with a calm demeanor.

“I’m not a rat!” the man defiantly spat in Jakob's direction.

Jakob responded by slapping the man, his frustration evident.

"Do you know who I am?" Jakob questioned with authority.

The man chose to ignore him, deliberately avoiding eye contact. Jakob, determined to make his point, slapped the man once more, repeating his question.

"Do you know who I am?" Jakob pressed, as the man stubbornly averted his gaze.

Growing increasingly intense, Jakob firmly grasped the man's face and demanded,

"Look at me!" His voice deepened and the atmosphere seemed to darken momentarily.

Reluctantly, the man finally met Jakob's gaze and uttered,

""Ke Kanaka o ka Malu. The Man of Shadows ."

Releasing his grip, Jakob nodded in satisfaction.

"Good, now that you know who I am, we are now on the same page," Jakob said, returning to his composed demeanor.

"You and me, we would rather be anywhere but here. I was just with a beautiful woman, and you were just with a beautiful woman. I know I had other ideas of how my day was going to go. How about you? I know you had a plan, someone told you where my weapons would be." Jakob continued, his voice even.

"I can't! The man continued to plead.

"E nana, e nana. Look, look we let Jasmine go, tell me who set this up and we let you walk free." Jakob offered.

"I can't, please, I can't." The man pleaded.

"Inā 'a'ole 'oe e kama'ilio. If you don't talk." Jakob warned. **"You know how this ends."**

"I don't have your weapons, I swear." The man insisted.

Jakob threw a punch, then grabbed the man by his clothes, pressing him against a wall.

"The issue Benny is, it seems that you are experiencing a case of misplaced allegiance. The individuals you are protecting have misguided you into attempting to rob from the wrong crew. They have abandoned you, my friend." Jakob explained, dropping him to the floor and reaching for his gold knife.

“Tell me who hired you and we’ll let you live.” Jakob stood tall.

“A‘ole hiki ia‘u. I can’t.” Benny said, his voice filled with fear.

“Tell me why you were delivering for the Legion Nation?” Jakob asked, just saying the Legion itself bothered him.

“You still have a choice, Benjermin.” Jakob urged.

“Inā e kama‘ilio wau ‘a‘ole palekana ko‘u ‘ohana. If I talk, my family will not be safe. Benny responded defiantly. **“And I’m not afraid to die.”**

“And I’m not afraid to kill either.” Jakob stated firmly as he threw the knife with precision, hitting its target between the eyes. He had the skills of a well-trained killer, but at that moment, a surge of fear coursed through him, triggering memories of his first kill.

"Take care of this mess!" Jakob barked at his crew, channeling his anger as he retrieved his Cut from Jerms and quickly left.

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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