

# **Blackwater**

## **Chapter Twenty-Four**

The day was still in its early hours as Jakob emerged from the confines of the storage facility. The sun hung low in the sky, casting a warm golden glow over the bustling port town. The streets were a hive of activity, filled with merchants haggling over prices, seagulls soaring overhead, and the occasional drunkard yelling on the corner,

**“Repent !The end is near!”**

The hours that followed were a whirlwind for Jakob, his mind consumed by elusive thoughts as he was assigned a mission to locate and intercept the remaining weapon shipments, ensuring no further mishaps occurred. He moved with purpose, his footsteps echoing on the cobblestone streets as he navigated through the maze-like alleys and crowded markets, although his mind was elsewhere.

**"The Legion?"** Jakob mused to himself. Throughout his journey as a pirate, he had made a conscious effort to avoid any connection with his past life. Any hint of his former identity was swiftly suppressed. However, a sense of curiosity began to seep in.

**"I wonder what home looks like."**

Throughout the remainder of the mission, Jakob maintained an uncharacteristic silence, his thoughts were of conflicting emotions and unanswered questions.

**“I wonder if my uncle is involved?”** The rest of the crew, sensing his unease, exchanged concerned glances and whispered amongst themselves.

**"You eva seen him like this before, Martin?"** Smiffy whispered to his fellow crew members.

**"No, I haven't. But like the Lord says, he will be my confidence and will keep my foot from being caught."** Martin replied, his faith unwavering. Jakob dutifully carried out his orders, meeting with the Gamboa Family, the notorious Saracen Brothers, and the Cutlass Raiders. Yet, despite his outward appearance of focus and determination, it felt as if his presence was merely a facade. His thoughts continuously drawn to the image of the girl's face he had unintentionally collided with earlier. The memory of her startled expression and the fleeting connection they shared bothered him. As he delved deeper into his mind, it turned to the Legion once again, the nation seemed to be entangled in the web of arms trafficking. The Legion nation was a painful reminder of his past life that he had worked hard to leave behind. But now, faced with the strange involvement of the Legion, he couldn't ignore the nagging feeling that this mission held a deeper significance for him.

In an effort to uncover the truth, he tasked Killshot with gathering every possible detail about the Legion's involvement, no matter how obscure or vague. Killshot accepted the assignment without hesitation, disappearing into the shadows of the town to carry out his mission. Killshot the once young boy who chased Simko around with a knife, had now become a cornerstone member of the crew and a loyal friend to Jakob. An orphan Blackfoot refugee, he was different than the rest of the crew, a man of few words tied deeply to his heritage with his deep brown eyes, long black hair decked with a single feather and beads, he proudly displayed red straight lines painted on his face with precision. He wore a unique leather Cut decorated with further intricate beadwork and feathers, paying homage to his heritage and the Men of Mayhem. Hours later, as the sun set below the horizon, painting the sky in tones of orange and pink,

Killshot returned, discreetly pulling Jakob aside, signaling that he had crucial information to share.

**"Gene wants a private meeting with you. He claims to know something about the Legion, but he insists on sharing it only with you."** Killshot revealed to Jakob. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Jakob entrusted Jerm with overseeing the remaining pick-up and drop-off tasks while they made their discreet exit. Killshot and Jakob planned their rendezvous with Gene at a hidden pub, nestled amidst the labyrinthine alleyways of the city's darkest recesses. As Jakob made his way through the narrow streets, the scent of damp cobblestones mingled with the sharp aroma of decay, enveloping him in an atmosphere of grit and secrecy. Wrecked buildings loomed overhead, their crumbling fronts a testament to the city's forgotten past.

Finally, Jakob arrived at the entrance of the hidden pub. Its unassuming exterior blended seamlessly with the surrounding decay. The wooden sign, weathered and worn, bore no name or emblem, further emphasizing its illegal nature. A flickering neon light hummed softly above the entrance. Pushing open the heavy wooden door, the air was thick with the scent of aged wood, stale tobacco, and the lingering aroma of cheap whiskey. The walls, decorated with faded portraits and tattered posters. The pub itself was a symphony of mismatched furniture and worn-out upholstery. Scratched wooden tables stood sturdy, bearing the weight of countless glasses and the secrets exchanged over them. The bar, a weathered oak structure, stretched across the length of the room, its polished surface worn thin from years of elbows resting upon it. Behind the bar, shelves lined with bottles of various shapes and sizes, housing a vast collection of spirits to drown one's sorrows or fuel one's ambitions. The patrons, a motley crew of rogues and outcasts, huddled in dimly lit corners. The air was thick with whispered conversations and the

occasional burst of laughter, the sound mingling with the soulful melody of a lone saxophone playing in the background. It was a place where secrets were traded like currency, where alliances were forged and broken, and where the line between right and wrong blurred into shades of gray.

As Jakob scanned the room, his eyes finally landed on Gene, their contact for the evening. The man sat at a corner table, his weathered features etched with a lifetime of experiences. Jakob made his way towards him, the floor creaking beneath his boots. It had been years since Jakob last laid eyes on Gene. True to his word years ago, Gene had accomplished exactly what he set out to do. He had cunningly built his reputation across The Colonies, aligning himself with the powerful Lopez family of the Syndicate and rising to the position of a Head Honcho. Jakob understood that Gene now held sway over every remaining pleasure establishment in the western mainland, and even had influential politicians under his control.

Jakob motioned for Killshot to remain by the door while he entered the private room for his meeting with Gene. Jakob immediately noticed the transformation in Gene's appearance, a clear testament to his authority and control within the criminal underworld. Gene' with a well-defined muscular physique that filled out his perfectly tailored suit. Decorating his fingers were several eye-catching rings, each one a symbol of his status and power within the criminal hierarchy. Gene had transformed into a seasoned mobster, earning respect and loyalty from those around him without needing to say a word. Despite his evolved demeanor, he still retained his signature habit of twirling a toothpick in his mouth, just as he did when Jakob first encountered him.

**"Take a seat, my friend,"** Gene welcomed Jakob, motioning for him to sit. **"Get my friend a drink,"** he instructed the bartender. Jakob couldn't help but ask,

**"Is it safe to speak here?"**

Gene clapped his hands and everyone in the vicinity dispersed,

**"When you own the joint, it can be whatever you want,"** he explained with a sly smile. Curiosity piqued, Jakob asked as he took a sip of his drink

**"Why do you own this trashy joint?"**

**"Always conceal your intentions, my friend,"** Gene replied cryptically.

**"I know what type of places you own, Gene,"** Jakob pressed.

Gene grinned mischievously. **"How do you think I've amassed so much wealth, brother? It's the one thing all men can't resist. Women"**

Cutting to the chase, Jakob asked, **"So, what information do you have for me?"**

**"Killshot informed me that you've come across some unfamiliar weapons, with the Legion's involvement,"** Gene began.

**"Yes,"** Jakob confirmed.

**"Well, the Grand Reserve and the Republic are deeply intertwined. They've been up to something, shifting away from EMP-controlled weapons to prevent anyone from having control over them,"** Gene revealed. **"The Legion has struck secret deals with them, and I've overheard the discussions myself,"** he continued.

Jakob questioned, **"How?"**

**"Loose lips sink ships, my friend. Men tend to spill secrets when they're faced with a pretty face of the women I run."** Gene answered with a smirk.

"Hmm," Jakob pondered.

**"And here's where it gets peculiar. I've learned that Ogres are involved. Rumor has it they've found a new home within the Legion's territory, and there have been numerous reports of Ogres spreading throughout Hyperion,"** Gene divulged.

**"But how do you know the Legion is behind it?"** Jakob probed further.

**"At every deal, there's always mention of a man named Stone. The Legion is on the verge of war, grasping for more control, and they have the backing of Espina."** Gene explained. Angel Espina, a man he long knew was crooked, but Jakob was more interested in his uncle.

**"Isn't Stone their king?"** Jakob inquired.

**"Not sure. The only other name I've heard this man being referred to is The Source,"** Gene revealed, leaving Jakob with more questions than answers. He walked away from the meeting with conflicting thoughts. .

**"It can't be possible, it has to be lies,"** he muttered to himself as he left the pub. He knew Gene too well, deceitful and always playing a wicked game. He was in the pockets of almost everyone. Jakob couldn't bring himself to trust him. Killshot pestered him for more information as they made their way back to the docks, but Jakob didn't want to discuss it.

**"Who cares anyway? It's not my problem. That's not my life. The only thing I'm worried about is my crew,"** Jakob silently concluded, trying his best to move on. Then the voice burst in his head, a message he heard a long time ago,

**“The Source, a creation born from the very essences of Darkness, emerged with a sole purpose, to obliterate the Light.”** The thought sent a shiver of fear down his spine.

**“Could my uncle be the source?”** Jakob questioned in the deep recess of his mind, but quickly dismissed it as a fear rather than truth, he trusted his uncle. For a span of seven years, Jakob had relentlessly forged ahead, barely sparing a moment to dwell on his previous life. He had suppressed his weak voice, determined to keep the past firmly buried. However, today served as a stark reminder that the past refused to remain forgotten, and he made every effort to resist its relentless pursuit. In the nick of time, they managed to reunite with their crew, just as they were preparing to depart for their ship. Jakob rode his Rover along the coast, with the rest of the crew trailing behind, making their way towards their awaiting vessel, still struggling with his thoughts. The ship never docked anywhere outside of the Cree Quarter, as a precautionary measure. Sitting offshore, its stern open and ready to receive the crew's Rovers, the ship provided a sense of comfort to Jakob after the long day. He still felt the same excitement in his stomach that he had experienced when he first laid eyes on the Dauntless, the pirate ship that had become his beloved home.



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