

Uncle Stone

Chapter Thirty-One

Fred turned his attention away from the fallen Tita, startled by the sudden interruption. His eyes narrowed as he tried to make out the figure before him, shrouded in the cover of his hood. Jakob knelt beside Tita, his hood falling back to reveal his face.

"King Joseph?" Tita asked, puzzled.

"It's me Jakob!" Jakob smiled as he helped her to her feet.

"Jakob, how is this possible?" Tita questioned, shaken, and confused.

"I'm here now, that's all that matters." he brushed aside her concerns, his focus on Fred.

"You dare address me?" Fred's interrupted, voice dripped with arrogance, yet a hint of uncertainty lingered. Jakob stepped forward, his gaze unwavering as he met Fred's eyes. A stunned silence settled over. The tension was thick, and the onlookers held their breath, waiting to see how the confrontation would unfold. Fred quickly backed away from Tita, a flicker of fear crossing his eyes. He let out a sarcastic laugh, a mix of surprise and anger in his expression.

"Oh, my, my, Nephew, I'm so amazed to see you." he sneered, eyeing the Ogres. The Ogres drew nearer, positioning themselves behind Jakob. Suddenly, Jakobs men emerged from the surrounding buildings, surrounding both the Ogres and Fred.

"Your rule is over Uncle." Jakob asserted confidently, now that his crew stood by his side.

"Jake, Nephew, surely you understand the weight that comes with being a King, isn't that why you left?" Fred's evil grin faltered as he eyed the approaching Ogres.

“Yield now, and you may leave with your life,” Jakob shot back, his resolve unwavering.

“Ah, Jakob, for you, anything. But there’s an issue here.” Fred gestured dramatically to the Ogres. Suddenly, countless Ogres and Twelves emerged, encircling them.

“They follow me.” Fred shrugged, a wicked gleam in his eyes.

Celeste bravely stepped forward, **“We do not follow you. Jakob is the lawful King, and he is the Guardian!”**

“Uncle, the decision is yours. You can either leave now or face the consequences.” Jakob asserted.

“Why must we fight Jakey boy? I would hate to bear the burden of causing harm to the ones we love. Don't you agree, Jakob?” Fred slyly remarked.

“Why fight, Jakey boy? I’d hate to bear the burden of harm to our loved ones. Don’t you concur?” Fred’s voice dripped with manipulation.

“I’ve moved past my past mistakes,” Jakob retorted, determination surging within him.

“But what about your loyal disciples? Do they know the truth?” Fred taunted, his grin widening.

“Jakob, what’s going on?” Celeste asked, her voice filled with concern.

“Well, well the honorable Jakob, you didn’t tell the truth with them. Perhaps it’s time to reveal who truly bears the guilt for your father’s demise.” A heavy silence fell.

“It was me,” Jakob admitted, shame flooding his voice.

“No, it cannot be” Celeste cried, rushing to his side.

“It is,” Jakob turned away, anguish etched into his features.

“He confesses! He’s a killer!” Fred declared, his voice sharp, eyes gleaming with triumph.

“No, it was a mistake!” Jakob pleaded, desperation lacing his words.

“What would your mother think?” Fred taunted, his smile stretching cruelly.

“The King’s death is on your hands,” he pressed, closing in on Jakob. **“Can you truly deny your involvement, Guardian?”**

“No!” Jakob’s voice cracked.

“You are to be held accountable,” Fred proclaimed, closing the distance between them.

“It was an accident!” Jakob cried, his heart racing.

“Murder of an elected official is punishable by death, according to the Legion’s laws,” Fred sneered, reveling in Jakob’s torment. **“Oh, Jakob, you’re drowning again. No escape this time.”** Fred stepped closer, pulling a knife from his robe, pressing the blade menacingly against Jakob’s throat. The air crackled with tension as Jakob stumbled, fear flashing in his eyes—the scared boy he once was surfacing.

“Ah, this brings back memories. Yes, I remember it well—your father had the same look in his eyes before he met his end. How would I know? Oh yeah that’s right I was the one who ended the King’s life.” Fred whispered just loud enough for him to hear.

“No! You’re a monster!” Jakob roared, strength surging through him as he overpowered Fred, wrestling the knife away and pressing it to Fred’s cheek, drawing blood.

“Tell them!” Jakob demanded, determination burning in his gaze.

“Okay, okay, Jake,” Fred gasped, brushing himself off. **“I killed my brother. I drowned the King! And I’ll kill all of you along with him!”** Fred yelled as the remainder of Fred’s Ogre battalion stepped slowly closing in with weapons drawn. Jakob surveyed the outnumbered situation.

A cry echoing came in from the distance. **“Now!”** A deafening explosion erupted, releasing an electromagnetic pulse that reverberated through the air, disarming both sides of Choppers in an instant. In a pivotal moment, General Frizela emerged on the rooftop with his reinforcements. The atmosphere thickened with chaos and desperation as the attack commenced. Two imposing Ogres emerged, obstructing Jakob's path to Fred. Jakob, fueled by his anger, lunged forward with his cutlass, slashing at the nearest Ogre with a swift, lethal swipe that cut deep into its side. As the creature staggered, he pivoted on his heel, dodging a massive club swung by the second Ogre. With precision and speed, he thrust his blade upward, piercing the Ogre's chest, and watched as it collapsed to the ground.

Meanwhile, Fred made his retreat towards the Palace, accompanied by his army of Ogres. The battle spilled over into the courtyard, onto the steps of the palace.

“Send them back to the Shadows!” Fred's commanding voice echoed, urging his army forward. However, Jakob refused to let Fred escape. Determined to bring him to justice, Jakob seized the opportunity to take the lead, charging his forces to confront the Ogres head-on.

"For the Nation!" Jakob's battle cry pierced the air, igniting a surge of unwavering determination among everyone around him. They followed him intensely, ready to fight for their homeland. In the heart of the raging battle, the clash between Jakob's forces and Fred's army of Ogres intensified. The air crackled with the clash of swords, thunderous roars, and the desperate cries of combatants. Amid the bloodshed Jakob fought with every fiber of his being, cutting down Ogres left and right. His troops followed fighting valiantly, their unwavering loyalty to their leader and their nation fueling their every strike. As the sky opened, torrents of rain cascaded down, drenching the battlefield in a wrath of rain. The storm, a chaotic masterpiece of lightning and thunder. Swords clashed, their metallic melody mingling with the rainfall. Arrows whistled, swift and deadly, they sliced through the air. Fred's forces began to crumble, their ranks thinning with each passing moment. Yet Fred, consumed by his thirst for darkness, refused to concede defeat. He bellowed orders from the steps of the palace, rallying his remaining Ogres, their monstrous forms striking fear into the hearts of their enemies. Seeing the tide turning in their favor, Jakob's forces pressed on relentlessly, fighting in between the buildings, pressing forward to reach Fred. Their coordinated attacks began to overwhelm the Ogres dwindling army. It was clear that victory was within their grasp. Fred let out a defiant roar, urging his remaining Ogres to hold their ground. The Ogres fought tooth and nail, their armor clinking under the weight of the rain-soaked battlefield. While Fred quietly withdrew into the Grand Hall of the Palace.

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.

Copyright © 2024 by Matthew Joseph Reign

Registration # -TXu 2-433-354

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without written permission of the copyright owner except for the use of quotations in a book review. For more information, address: theartofreign@gmail.com

Cover Design By – Castillo Collective Inc.

Published by – The Art of Reign Productions Inc.

www.theartofreign.com