

Aftermath - Path into the Light

DeathMask x Shaina

Von abgemeldet

Kapitel 3: Reflexion

When Shaina awoke that morning she wondered for a moment if the events of this night had been just a wonderful dream, but the soft breathing in her neck and the strong arm wrapped about her told her otherwise. She almost didn't believe that she was now together with DeathMask and even less that she felt completely secure and content in his arms.

Her movements awakened DeathMask who couldn't remember when he had last slept so well, even before Hekate's punishment. It seemed to him that Shaina truly managed to drive away all bad memories, and he realised that he wanted her to stay by his side. He gave her a kiss on the nape of her neck.

"Buon giorno, tesoro."

"Eh, you're scratchy," she complained.

"That happens in the mornings. Scusi." He laid down on his back and grinned, obviously not sorry at all.

"Morning? Uh-oh. That reminds me - I have to go... I have to take care of my trainees."

"Really?" He looked a bit disappointed. Shaina turned around and kissed him, scratchy or not, before she rested her head on his chest.

"Really. How does it look when the teacher comes too late? Speaking of late - what time is it anyway?"

DeathMask closed his eyes and tuned in to his constellation. As he was always aware of its position in the sky, he could exactly determine the time through it. "Half past nine."

"Half past nine?" Shaina looked at him in shock. "That's way after sunrise!"

"Sì," he said cheerfully and held her close.

"Hey, I have to go now! It's all your fault that I overslept!"

"All mine?" he chuckled. "I remember that you participated very actively, too."

Shaina blushed. "It just felt so good," she defended herself and nestled to him. And to be honest, she wouldn't mind an encore at all, even though she felt somewhat tender at the moment.

"Well, then do your duty. But I'll expect you here again right after your training session."

"You *expect* me here? Don't you think you should ask me if I would like to visit you again?"

"Look into my eyes and tell me you don't want to drop by tonight." He smiled at her and caressed her where he knew she liked it best. The unexpected mind-link they shared yesterday had given him some useful insights he could nicely exploit.

"You *are* evil," she sighed and pitied the fact that she really needed to leave now.

"With pleasure," he grinned, but let her go now and put his hands behind his head while he watched her dress. When she was finished, she went to him to give him a final kiss, before she left.

"I'll be back tonight," she promised. "But I expect that you aren't scratchy anymore then, Angelo!" She gave him a stern look, and DeathMask couldn't help grinning again.

Now she had to return to her hut first to freshen up and dress in her training outfit before she could get to her students. She was coming horribly late, she thought reproachfully. Hopefully Silvina had taken over for her, but she was going to face some curious questions about her whereabouts as they would certainly have checked for her in her hut.

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Again she passed through Gemini Temple without running into Saga or Kanon. At this time of the day they might be already in the training area of Sanctuary. Unfortunately this wasn't true of Aldebaran.

"Hello Shaina," the Taurus Gold Saint greeted her with a broad grin. "It seems your ...appointment took longer than expected?"

Shaina flushed visibly. "It's not..." She stopped. She wanted to say 'It's not the way you think it is,' but unfortunately it very likely was the way he thought it was, and she wasn't exactly good at lying anyway. "Yeah, sort of," she conceded, somewhat embarrassed.

"You okay?" Aldebaran scrutinised her and noticed that she wasn't wearing her sash anymore. She appeared a bit rattled, and he was slightly worried.

"Huh?" Shaina suddenly realised what he wanted to imply. "No, Angel- er, DeathMask, didn't do anything untoward." Her blush deepened when she recalled the passion of the night. "Well, as a matter of fact, he did," she said somewhat dreamily, "but I... Damn!" If it had been possible, her face would have gotten even redder. "Forget what I just said right away!" she demanded. "We just spent a very nice evening together."

Now Aldebaran couldn't help but burst out in a big, hearty, booming laughter. "If you want to be discreet about it, you'd better tell him not to decorate your throat with love bites. And by the way, you forgot your sash in his temple."

"Aldebaran, please remind me to kill you the next time we meet - unfortunately I'm in a bit of a hurry at the moment..." Shaina touched her throat and cursed the fact that she had not taken the time to look into a mirror before she left.

"I'm sure you two make a lovely couple," the huge Taurus Saint said, still grinning broadly.

Shaina shot him a withering glance and jogged down the stairs towards her hut. She definitely needed a shower and wanted to get into her training clothes.

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Shaina indulged in an extensive shower while her thoughts continued to revolve around the last night. She still couldn't understand why she had given in to him so readily, but then, she didn't regret it in the least.

Finally she rubbed herself down and changed into her light armour, wrapping a spare yellow sash around her waist.

"Shaina?" a well-known female voice asked.

'Uh-oh,' the Ophiuchus Saint thought. "Yes, Marin?"

"Where have you been? Silvina took over the training for now."

"Well, I sort of overslept." Shaina decided to brew some coffee. She was already late, so another ten or so minutes wouldn't hurt either. "Want a cappuccino, too?"

"Yes, please. - So, you weren't at home and you overslept... Don't tell me you were together with Milo?"

Shaina looked scandalised to Marin. "Not in this life!" When she turned towards the red-haired Saint, the other woman spotted the tell-tale red mark at the side of her throat. Marin giggled.

"Is that what I think it is?"

Shaina blushed. "Yes." She placed a cup of cappuccino in front of her fellow Saint and

Marin put down her mask.

"Thanks. - So who is it?"

Shaina smiled. "The most wonderful man in the world. Strong, handsome, affectionate, gentle, passionate - and he can cook as well."

"I want a name!" Marin wondered who this could be. "Wait, is it Shura?" The Capricorn Saint was known to be a great cook.

Shaina shook her head. "Nope."

"Aldebaran?" That would account for the 'strong' and 'gentle'.

"No."

"Now I'm really getting curious." Marin ruled out Aphrodite as he wasn't interested in women as far as she knew, Aiolia was definitely off-limits, and Camus was so cold all the time, there she could neither see the passionate nor gentle part. Shaka certainly wasn't interested in anyone else but himself and Saga, DeathMask and Kanon didn't exactly fit the description either. Aiolos couldn't cook for the life of him, but somehow she didn't see Mu or Dohko as viable options either. "Is it one of the Silver Saints?"

"No. It's -- DeathMask." She almost said 'Angelo', but caught herself just in time.

"Just a moment, short reality check - are we talking about the same person?" Marin stared incredulously at her friend. "I'm talking of Cancer Gold Saint DeathMask, renowned as excessively cruel and callous assassin and as a sadist..."

"Well, he showed me a very different side of himself yesterday. He even told me his real name, but he said he'd kill me if I'd tell it to anyone else." She laughed.

"Okay, that does sound at least somewhat like him." Marin lifted her eyebrows. "So he actually has another name? And he did tell it to you?"

"Yes. And it suits him." Shaina smiled again and seemed to be aglow with happiness.

"You really are in love with him!" Marin was perplexed.

"Yes." Shaina's cheeks showed a vividly red colour. "I even decided to spend the night with him."

"Are you sure that was a good idea?"

"I absolutely don't regret it, if that's what you mean. Anyway, I told him he'd be a dead man if he would consider our night together as anything else than the beginning of a long-term relationship, and I got the impression he understood."

"Wow. I'm not sure I would have dared to talk to DeathMask that way..."

"Well, I don't mind if he's a Gold Saint or not." In the fight against Poseidon she even dared to challenge the god of the sea on her own, so she certainly wouldn't fear to take on a Gold Saint if need be. "I told him my conditions, he agreed, and thus he is mine now."

Marin laughed. "I bet he was impressed. He values strength and courage, after all. But now you have to tell me everything! Like - he really knows how to cook? I would never have imagined that."

"Neither did I. But he told me he never gets invited, so he had to make do on his own."

"As sad as it sounds, it is understandable. He's not exactly someone one would feel comfortable around - or so I thought." Marin still doubted Shaina's sanity. DeathMask of all men...

"I discovered he's quite different in his private domain - he was really affectionate and gentle." Shaina wondered how much of this was due to his run-in with Hekate in the underworld, though.

"Affectionate and gentle? Now these are definitely no adjectives I would have expected in connection with DeathMask!"

"To be honest - before yesterday I would have agreed with you."

"But now confess - how is he in bed?"

"Marin!" Shaina look scandalised at her, then she blushed again. "Well, I don't really have any possibility of comparison, but I thought he was just wonderful."

"Wait, this really was your first time?"

"Come on, don't tell me you believed the rubbish Milo told about him and me?"

"True, you always denied that anything happened there, but then, Milo can be very convincing..."

"Marin, don't tell me he managed to seduce you?" Shaina stared at her friend.

"Almost. But then I thought about Aiolia and escaped."

"Wise decision."

"Indeed. - But now back to you... So how was it?"

"You are nosy, Marin! Well, I didn't expect it to be so wonderful, I have to admit. He was so gentle and passionate... But then, he cheated. He read my mind to figure out what I liked. No wonder I just couldn't resist him..."

"It sounds as if you were very lucky there."

"I'm really looking forward to being with him again." Shaina smiled. "But I think I should get to the training place now."

"You might want to wear a scarf, though, or you will have to answer more curious questions."

"True." Shaina dug out a scarf of the same colour of her sash and wrapped it around her throat, completely covering the red mark DeathMask left on her. She simply would be doubly hard on her students so that they wouldn't get any funny ideas.

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After Shaina had left, DeathMask decided to get up as well. He was in a perfectly good mood and even more so as she had promised to drop in after training, too. He still couldn't believe his luck - many of the Gold Saints admired the two only female Silver Saints, but the Aquila Saint had chosen Aiolia, while Shaina's choices were never clear until yesterday. And now she was his!

He went into the bathroom and showered. As there were some hot springs in the vicinity, at least the temples of the Gold Saints and the Pope were equipped with running hot water. Today there wasn't any meeting due at the Pope's Temple, so he left his Cancer Cloth in favour of the light training armour that was the usual outfit in Sanctuary, although his was completely black and not the common shades of brown most others wore. Finally he was ready, shaved and his hair styled properly, too.

When he went into the kitchen for some coffee, it recurred to him that they left the kitchen without tidying up the day before. He sighed and began to clear the mess of used pans and leftovers. On the floor he discovered a yellow stripe of cloth, and he smiled when he picked it up and put it onto one of the kitchen chairs. He finished cleaning everything, before he decided to go down to the training area.

DeathMask was looking forward to meeting Milo as he wanted to confront the Scorpio Gold Saint about the rubbish he had claimed about himself and Shaina. On impulse he took Shaina's sash and tucked it into his belt. He absolutely wanted to see Milo's face when he showed him this 'trophy'.

He walked down the stairs. Neither Kanon nor Saga were in their Temple - probably Saga spent his time in the spa at the Pope's Temple as ever so often, and Kanon might be training and/or flirting with the girls.

When he reached Taurus Temple, Aldebaran seemed to be waiting for him already. His position as guardian of the second Temple gave the Taurus Gold Saint a very good insight into all things concerning the Gold Saints as everybody had to pass his Temple on the way up or down and he was one of the few Gold Saints who liked to stay there most of the time.

"Hello DeathMask! You look exceptionally happy today."

"Hm? Oh, Aldebaran." DeathMask caught himself that he was indeed grinning contentedly as his thoughts had returned to Shaina and the passion of the last night. "Well, I am happy, I have to admit."

"Could it be that a certain female Silver Saint is the reason for your current state of bliss?"

"I should have expected that she wouldn't pass here unnoticed."

"So you really are together with Shaina now?"

"Yeah, I guess so." DeathMask was loathe to reveal much of his personal life, but on the other hand, he wanted to make it clear for everybody that Shaina was now off-limits as she belonged to him.

"You guess so?" Aldebaran lifted his bushy eyebrows in amusement.

"Well, as far as I'm concerned, she is mine now, and it seems she wants to stay with me too."

"So you are indeed serious about this. I'm glad to hear that. Shaina doesn't deserve to be used as plaything."

"I agree. And that's why I will have a little talk with Milo now."

"What did he do?"

"He caused Shaina quite some distress, and I will see to it that he will never do that again." And of course he wanted to make it very clear to Milo that the Scorpio Saint had lost to him.

Aldebaran smiled. Now this was definitely a first - DeathMask actually caring for someone else but himself. "Then I should better not delay you any longer. Till later!"

DeathMask gave him a nod and continued downstairs. To his relief, Aries Temple was still empty. Kiki would certainly not have missed to make fun of him.

When he reached the training area, the people eyed him fearfully as usual. His reputation as merciless assassin of Sanctuary still held, even though there hadn't been any such jobs since Gaia revived him and the other Saints after the defeat of Hades. Somehow he felt a bit underused.

Finally, he discovered Milo who was training in a corner on his own. He went to the Scorpio Saint who also wore a light leather armour at the moment. "Hey, Milo."

"DeathMask?" Milo put on a frown. What did the crab want from him? Normally he gave him a wide berth as they didn't like each other at all, and so he didn't think the

Cancer Saint showed up here just for some casual conversation.

"I demand you take back your claim that there was something between you and Shaina," DeathMask said with a dangerous glint in his eyes and without bothering about any introductory niceties. Milo was taken aback. This was certainly nothing he had expected.

"Why should I do that?" Moreover, of what interest was this for DeathMask?

"Because I know it wasn't true and because I don't like you implying that she's a slut."

"Why are you suddenly so interested in Shaina?" Milo inquired, but suddenly it dawned to him. "Just a moment - you cannot want to suggest that you and Shaina...?" He had the impression someone pulled the rug out from under him. So far he had been confident that it was only a matter of time until she would give in to him after all. But this would mean...

"Suggest? Shaina is my woman now and you will stay away from her and refrain from spreading any insubstantial claims." DeathMask looked coldly at the Scorpio Saint.

"And what makes you think it was an insubstantial claim?" Milo was proud of his numerous conquests, so the fact that Shaina always turned him down had rankled him so much that he simply decided to spread the rumour, especially as she seemed to be more or less together with Aiolia who had Marin, too.

"The simple fact that she was still a virgin when I slept with her." DeathMask grinned triumphantly at Milo who appeared thunderstruck. Now this was definitely unexpected - both the fact that she had been inexperienced and that she had given in to DeathMask when she had refused him, Milo.

"You actually..." Milo still stared incredulously at the Cancer Saint..

"Yes. I told you she's my woman now." DeathMask played nonchalantly with her sash. "And I don't intend to give her up again."

"And Shaina agrees with you on this?" Milo didn't want to believe that.

"She does." DeathMask couldn't help but smile at the thought that it was originally Shaina who demanded that he stay with her. "And that's why you are to leave her alone now."

"I think it should be Shaina's privilege to decide if she doesn't want anything from me."

"If you insist?" DeathMask smiled cruelly. It would be amusing to see Milo's reaction when Shaina showed him where she belonged now. He sent a telepathic call to her as even he didn't want to trespass into the training grounds of the female warriors.

It didn't take long, and Shaina appeared. She ignored Milo as she did most of the time

since he spread the rumours of their alleged liaison and gave DeathMask an irritated glare. "Didn't I tell you that I have duties to perform?" To her dismay, she had this funny feeling in her stomach again when she saw him, and it was difficult for her to keep up her angry mien.

When Milo heard this, he grinned contentedly. Obviously she wasn't as fond of DeathMask as he claimed, he thought.

"Yeah, you did. But I wanted to see you anyway." DeathMask smiled at her and caught her in his arms even though she appeared so infuriated. Milo's jaw dropped when he witnessed this, and even more so as the crab didn't get thunder clawed for his move - on the contrary, suddenly Shaina stood on her toes, pulled him down to her and kissed him passionately.

"Nice - you're not scratchy anymore," she finally commented with a smile and caressed his cheek. Then she turned around and looked at Milo as if she had only now seen him. "Oh, hello Milo."

"Shaina! You can't be serious that you chose that crab over me!" Milo said disbelievingly.

"Why not?" She leaned against DeathMask who stood behind her, his arms still wrapped possessively around her. "I want a man for a serious relationship and not one where I'd be just a number in his row of conquests."

"And what makes you think that he is a man for a serious relationship?"

"I know it." Shaina smiled and stroked DeathMask's forearms. Since their mind link, she was pretty sure about him. "But what business of yours is that anyway?"

Milo huffed.

"Any further questions?" DeathMask grinned triumphantly at Milo.

"And this was the reason why you had to drag me away from my trainees?" Shaina turned towards DeathMask again and gave him another angry glare. He should know that she took her duties very seriously.

"Si." She looked cute when she was irritated, DeathMask thought and couldn't withstand the temptation to kiss her once more.

"You idiot crab," she said tenderly and snuggled against him while cursing her inability to resist him. "Unfortunately I really have to return to my duties now."

"But remember, I expect to see you tonight."

"Try to hold me back."

"I think I'm getting sick," Milo said in disgust and teleported away.

"I wonder how long it will keep this time before he tries to go after me again," Shaina sighed.

"I can still kill him for you."

"You mean you'd get into one of these legendary 1000 day wars and I wouldn't be able to see you for all that time? No way!" She smiled at him. "But that's really sweet of you." She gave him a last kiss and returned to her trainees.

DeathMask looked after her and still marveled at the fact that she obviously wanted him as much as he wanted her. As a Saint he knew that every day could bring a battle in which he might perish - or she as well - but he vowed he would hold on to this happiness that he had never known before for as long as it was possible.