

The Price of Peace

Von chelle76

Kapitel 19: Meanwhile...

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Chapter 18: Meanwhile...

Commander Eagle is heading back towards his office when a couple of military policemen approach him. "Sir!" One of the two men yell, causing him to pause and turn towards the voice. "Captain Rider and the other members of the Bismarck crew have taken off in the ship! We believe they are in pursuit of Mr. McCully and the Outriders."

Commander Eagle takes a breath and thinks a moment before formulating his reply, "I am aware that they have taken their ship, soldier. I authorized them to do so."

"But sir," the soldier begins.

Commander Eagle holds up his hand, "Meet me in my office in ten minutes. There is someone I need to get and bring there to inform them of the current situation."

"Yes, sir!" The two soldiers reply and rush ahead of him towards his office.

He stops and turns down a corridor, pausing in front of a door and knocking.

The door opens and a worried looking Robin looks out to see the commander with a serious expression. "C...Commander, what is going on?" She asks looking behind him for the others.

"Ms. Wilcox...Robin, I need you to come with me to my office. Can you leave right now?" Commander Eagle asks.

"Um, sure, sir," she replies hesitantly as she steps out of the door allowing it to close behind her. They walk towards his office. "Commander, what is going on? I've heard all kinds of alarms and such going off."

"That is some of what I want to talk to you about. I suppose I should tell you some of it on the way, so that you aren't blindsided when I tell the soldiers." He glances towards her and sees her nod so he continues, "Mr. McCully was sentenced to death today. As he was being led away, a group of Outriders attacked and took him with them. His last words were basically a threat towards Saber and Ms. Kelly." She gasps in shock. He stops talking as he opens the door to his office and finds several people waiting, including Dr. Izumi. "Ah, good everyone is here, so I won't have to repeat this." He begins after escorting Robin to a chair, "As all of you know, Mr. McCully escaped this morning with the help of some Outriders. Evidently, he made a few friends in prison. During his escape, he made a direct threat to Captain Rider, as well as his fiance. He has made a couple of attempts on their lives already." A soldier raises his hand to speak and the commander silences him with a look. "I am the one who authorized Captain Rider, Mr. Hikari, Ms. Eagle, and Mr. Wilcox to take the Bismarck and pursue Mr. McCully. I am aware that they have some physical limitations, but they are still the best crew suited to pilot the Bismarck at the current time. They are under my directive to attempt to stop Mr. McCully, even if that means killing him. They will land at Captain Rider's home colony after giving due effort to capture or kill Mr. McCully."

One of the military policeman raises a hand, and the commander acknowledges him. "Sir, I believe that they allowed a civilian onto the ship with them. That is in direct violation of intergalactic laws."

Robin gasps, placing a hand over her mouth and the commander nods. "Yes, there is indeed a civilian woman on the ship with them. She is the fiance of Captain Rider and was directly threatened by Mr. McCully. Captain Rider still is not physically up to being on active duty. He still cannot see. His fiance has helped him fight off people before and I think will be an asset as opposed to a liability. She can be his eyes and I believe the others trust her as well. So I have authorized her to be on board the ship. I am currently about to escort Ms. Wilcox back to Captain Rider's estate. I think she will be more comfortable there. I have also increased the number of people guarding his place after the threat was made. I will be staying there as well and I will be setting up a mobile command center from there, so that we can be in constant communication. We will be leaving here in one hour. Does anyone have any questions?"

Dr. Izumi steps forward, "Sir, I can attest that Mr. Hikari, Mr. Wilcox, and Ms. Eagle are all physically able to pursue Mr. McCully, but I have my doubts about Captain Rider's abilities. I have yet to run any of the test on him that are long over due, given that he has continually been reinjured in some way."

"And all of his subsequent injuries were in some way related to Mr. McCully. Either directly or indirectly. As for Ms. Kelly, I have seen her in tense situations with him and she knows him and understands his thought processes. She has fought beside him and helped rescue me when I was pinned down by multiple gun men after being shot. I feel she is more of a help to all of them, rather than a hindrance. Captain Rider knows that we are not responsible if he is injured while in pursuit of Mr. McCully, given that he has not been cleared for any sort of official duty."

Dr. Izumi nods. "I would like to examine him after all of this is over, sir. But I would also like to ask you a few things without the others here," he says glancing to the

other soldiers.

Commander Eagle nods, "The rest of you prepare for battle. Be ready at a moment's notice. Get me a squad together that will leave with me in about an hour to stay at Captain Rider's place. We will meet in the hangars then." The other soldiers leave, and the commander is alone with the doctor, except for Robin, who is sitting quietly watching all of the activity and trying to remain calm. "Now, Dr. Izumi, what is it you want to know?" Dr. Izumi looks towards Robin, and Commander Eagle shakes his head. "She stays. She is aware of the Captain's condition, so it is fine if she hears what is discussed."

The doctor gives her a wary glance but nods, "You believe that Captain Rider's sight is not going to return, is that correct?"

"Yes, that is correct. He has shown intermittent improvement since the initial injury, but it has not ever improved beyond basic outlines and shadows. That being said, he has shown remarkable abilities in spite of the lack of vision. He can still wield a sword, is still fairly accurate shooting a gun, he has taught Ms. Kelly to use a sword and to defend herself. He can also get around on a horse. I think he would be a good teacher, but I know that after this is over, he will never return as a star sheriff. He is resigned to that now. He does not pretend that he will improve more. I am glad he has regained most, if not all of his memories."

Dr. Izumi is quiet for several minutes before speaking. "I suppose the only reason you allowed this is because you know he can function, especially with the woman's help?" Commander Eagle nods. "That and it is personal. I know that technically should be a huge reason to not allow that team to go after Mr. McCully, but from what I've heard about what he has done to the Captain and his fiancée, I cannot fault you for letting them go. I will not raise another objection, sir."

"I just hope that General Whitehawk agrees with you. I know I will get in some trouble for this, but in this instance, I think it is better to ask forgiveness rather than waste precious time getting the proper permission."

"He know that the crew is tight. He also knows that it isn't the first time that one of them has been severely injured and still trying to perform their duties. I believe that on an occasion or two both Mr. Hikari and Mr. Wilcox joined the fighting while technically not cleared medically," the doctor says with a smile. "And yet they are all still here."

"It is because they are the best at what they do. They work well as a unit. That is not something that happens often," Commander Eagle replies.

"If the General starts questioning things, I will talk to him, Commander. I will tell him what you have told me. Perhaps that will be enough to keep any of you from getting into trouble," Dr. Izumi offers.

"Thank you, Dr. Izumi." the commander turns to Robin, "Are you ready to gather your things so we can leave?" She nods. "Good. Let's get going then," he says offering his

hand to her. She gets up with his help and they return to the quarters she shared with Colt and she grabs a bag. He brings one he had packed from his office and they proceed to the hangar area where several soldiers are waiting for orders.

They arrive at Saber's estate with a convoy of soldiers. Thomas comes out to greet them. "Commander Eagle, Ms. Robin! Where are the others?" he asks looking around for them.

"We need to talk. Let's go inside," the commander replies. Thomas nods and starts for the door. The commander turns to the soldiers, "Set up however you need to. Spread out along the grounds so that there are no places that someone could sneak in. There are several buildings that can be used for shelter, but be considerate of the grounds and cause as little damage as possible. The com center will be inside. We had a temporary one set up. I want someone to go and set up one there again while I update the others that live here on the current situation."

"Sir!" the group of soldiers say and they disperse, going about their work.

Commander Eagle heads into the house, catching up to Thomas and Robin. Elaine joins them in the foyer. "Where are the others? Where are Saber and Ms. Kelly?" she asks concern evident in her voice.

"Please, we need to sit down and talk. There have been some, developments that you need to be aware of," Commander Eagle replies leading them to the sitting room where they all take a seat.

Thomas and Elaine look over to him nervously. "Have they been injured?" Elaine asks hesitantly.

"No. Not to my knowledge at least. However Mr. McCully has escaped," Commander Eagle states. Elaine lets out an involuntary gasp. "He directly threatened both Saber and Ms. Kelly. He then vanished with the Outriders."

"Those are the creatures that you have been fighting for years, aren't they?" Thomas asks.

"Yes, they are. Evidently Mr. McCully made a few friends in prison. Some that liked that he had a grudge against Saber. The fact that he has one against Ms. Kelly is just seen as another way to get to Saber," the commander replies.

"So where are Saber and Ms. Kelly now?" Elaine asks.

"They are with the others on the Bismarck. They have left to go after them to try and end this," Commander Eagle replies.

"But Saber can't pos-" Elaine starts to protest.

"He has Ms. Kelly to help him and the others will do all they can, Elaine. From the time I spent with Ms. Kelly, I can tell she thinks things out as he does. If they get in a bind,

they are a good team. They are as safe as if he were sighted, I'd bet," Commander Eagle interjects. "I don't see any one of them giving up until they take care of Mr. McCully, to whatever means they need to use to do so. We need to stop seeing Saber as an invalid or disabled. He isn't. He just does things differently than he used to. He has proven that he is more than capable. I'd be willing to bet that putting the two of them together could be dangerous, especially now that he has openly threatened them."

"They won't stop until he's captured or dead," Thomas states.

"I know. I just hope it doesn't get them hurt worse or killed," Elaine says quietly. "I wish they had gone ahead and gotten married before they left. Then if something happens..."

"I'll do my best to see if we can arrange something, should something happen to Saber, Elaine. I feel that she has more than proven to be loyal to him."

"So what now? Have you spoken with them at all?" Robin asks.

"Not since they left the courtroom. If I know them, they will not risk communication unless they need assistance. They seem to do their best when they remain focused on their tasks at hand and not worrying about what else is going on elsewhere." Robin nods nervously, and the commander continues, "We can however track their position with this computer I've got being set up now. I am thinking about commandeering Ms. Kelly's property temporarily to use as a larger-scale command outpost. She has a good bit of land, so we could set-up temporary shelter and electronic devices there. I would ask to remain here, so that I can keep all of you abreast of any changes."

"Of course, commander. You may stay as long as you wish. I'd much prefer having you close anyways. I do like your idea of utilizing Ms. Kelly's property, I don't think she's got much use for it in it's current state, so you might as well use it," Elaine says as she gets up and heads towards the kitchen then stops, "Oh, commander, should I prepare something for your troops to eat? I could make a stew for them tonight. I don't think I have enough to feed them everyday, but I could tonight at least."

Commander Eagle smiles, "Ms. Elaine, if you are so inclined, I know the stew would be greatly appreciated tonight. After that, they will have ways to prepare food for themselves. I don't want this to become an inconvenience to you."

Elaine nods, "Then I'll go start a few pots. I need to get rid of the meat anyways and get more that's fresher to store. I'll be in the kitchen if anyone needs anything," she says as she leaves.

Robin looks to the commander and starts to speak a few times before sighing and standing up, "Sir, do you honestly think they will be all right?" she asks nervously.

The commander walks over to her and places a hand gently on her shoulder, "Yes, I have no doubt that they will be fine, even with Saber in his current condition. Between he and Ms. Kelly, they have one able body. The others will help as needed. If

I had doubts, I wouldn't have told them to leave," he replies gently.

Robin nods satisfied with the answer, "Thank you, sir. I'll be in my room if you hear anything."

"I will. I promise you that," he replies and she heads upstairs. He sits down on the couch and starts setting up the various computers and communication equipment. After a while the doorbell rings and he gets up to answer it, pulling his blaster out in case of trouble. He runs into Thomas in the foyer. "Let me get it. I don't want you getting hurt if someone breaches our security." Thomas nods and the commander opens the door, his blaster ready. His eyes widen in shock as he is met by General Whitehawk. "Sir?" he says returning his blaster to its holster. "Please, come in," he steps aside and the general enters and is led to the sitting room. "I suppose you're here because of what has happened, sir?"

The general nods, "I have been in non-stop meetings since your team went off after the Outriders and Mr. McCully, Charles. I have spoken with Dr. Izumi and I have quelled the talk of court marshalls and other such penalties. I think the council understands why you allowed them to go. I know they are the most qualified to fly the ship. The thing that I wasn't sure how to handle is the fact that a civilian woman was allowed to accompany them."

"May I remind you sir, that Shinji Hikari and Bill Wilcox were both technically civilians the first couple of times they flew with the Bismarck? It was after they fought against the Outriders on Yuma that they returned to Calvary Command and were officially instated as star sheriffs. Sometimes things happen too quickly and you find it's better to beg forgiveness than fight for permission. I firmly believe that this was and is one of those times. "

General Whitehawk listens attentively as he speaks then watches him for several minutes, "Tell me about this woman, Charles. Who exactly is she? Is she military trained at all? I need to know all I can to be able to keep any of you from legal ramifications from this."

Commander Eagle nods, "Well, her name is Amanda Kelly. She is a local woman who came to know Saber by virtue of applying and getting the job as his...independent living assistant. Her job was to help him learn to function as normally as possible after having lost his sight. He has had on occasion some sight, but not enough to read or anything. I doubt that he will ever fully regain what he's lost." The general nods and he continues, "Anyways, she was selected and began her position here. Saber was rather resistant at first to the whole situation. I wasn't sure how it was going to work out, to be quite honest. She didn't give up though. She decided to try a different approach. She got him to start teaching her things. He taught her how to ride a horse, and eventually he began to teach her self-defense and fencing. She is good enough now that he has bought her her own sword. Not a gift to be taken lightly in his family. Anyways, through a series of circumstances, they began a close friendship. He can talk to her. Perhaps it's because she's not afraid to call him on his attitude, nor is she afraid to tell him off should he deserve it." He sees the look of amusement on the general's face and chuckles. "Yes, it has been quite a show around here. One time,

after she had been here about a month or so, she wanted to prove to Saber that he was capable of doing things, such as fencing. So Thomas suggested that they invite Mr. McCully over for practice. He came and after the competition, he found out that Saber was blind. At that point, he had no vision at all. He seemed to get over the shock quickly and later that evening was telling stories from their youth, much to Saber's dismay, I'm sure. Later that evening, Ms. Kelly was heading to her room and Mr. McCully made an advance to her. She refused him and went on to her room. After a few minutes, he was angry, so he entered her room uninvited and attempted to force himself on her. Saber heard the commotion and went in, grabbing a pistol from his room on the way. He enters the room and figures out what's going on and orders Mr. McCully to vacate the property. He refuses and Saber fires a shot close to him. Mr. McCully shoves Ms. Kelly to the floor and makes to leave. As he's heading to the door he turns to attack Saber and is shot in the leg by April, who had also come to investigate the commotion. The next morning, Ms. Kelly and Saber were talking in the kitchen. Evidently Saber said something that enraged her, so he left on his horse. A few hours later, Ms. Kelly went looking for him and found him. They worked out their differences and became close friends, eventually becoming more than friends. They are now engaged. As for her particular skills, sir, she is the one who came up with the plan to reenter this house after it had been taken. She also took out one of the men shooting at us when we were ambushed. She has a strong will and a good mind. If there was a civilian I'd want on my team, she would be it. She understands how Saber's mind works and can explain what she sees to him quicker than any of the rest of us. So I sent her without hesitation, sir. I should also mention that throughout all of this, she has refused any sort of payment from Calvary Command. She has returned all of her pay vouchers. I figure you should know that as well, as it is likely to come up once they know how she came to be involved in all of this."

The general nods and sighs, "This is quite a predicament, but I trust your judgement, Charles. And I know that the others would not have permitted her to accompany them if they did not trust her. I hope that knowing that will be enough to keep things from being made into yet another legal battle. I will say that I am surprised to hear that she and Saber are engaged. How long has that been the case?"

"They have been unofficially engaged for a couple of months. It was after I returned to Calvary Command this last time, but before they came for the sentencing that they became officially engaged. He has given her his family's ancestral ring. I don't think they have set a date as of yet., he replies.

"How do you mean they were unofficially engaged? You either are or your not," the general asks confused.

Commander Eagle chuckles, "Well, he sort of was talking to us about the situation and how they were sort of becoming more than friends when he inadvertently let on that he hoped to spend his life with her. Ms. Elaine asked if he was proposing, since he directed the statement more to Ms. Kelly than the rest of us. He looked confused for a moment, then nodded. Saying that in a way, he was. She said that she felt the same, but they agreed that they wanted to do it properly, so Colt and Thomas had to go and retrieve the ring from the woman that he had once been engaged to, and that is when this last set of events happened. The fire, the gunfight, all of that."

"Saber had already been engaged before?" General Whitehawk asks surprised.

The commander nods, "He was betrothed as a child. After he was injured and came home to heal, the woman came to call on him and at that time, his memory was still sporadic and he had no vision. She became enraged, accusing him of purposely getting injured so severely to get out of the marriage. She broke off the engagement and left. It took a while for the matter to sink in with him once his memory returned, and when it did, he was upset for a while. But eventually he decided that it must have been for the best. I think it is for the best from what I've heard about the woman."

"I suppose things are done a bit differently here. I never knew he had been engaged."

"He hadn't said a word to anyone, even the others on his team. They were quite shocked as well," the commander replies.

Elaine comes out and stops when she spots the general, "Oh, good evening, sir. Will you be staying with us tonight as well?"

General Whitehawk looks up, "If you have the room for me, ma'am, I would like to stay for the night. I have meetings in the morning, and I feel I might get more rest here, rather than back at the base."

Elaine nods, "I'll get you a room ready, sir. I'll put you next to the commander. That way you can talk and whatnot as long as you wish. Dinner is just about ready. I've just returned from passing out the stew pots. You were right. The troops were quite appreciative. The bread was a good addition as well." She heads upstairs and prepares a room, then after a bit, comes out and they all eat.