

The stormy sea from last night faded from Amber's memory as she woke to the gentle shaking of the ship. Sore from her fights yesterday, Amber dragged herself up to the floor to grab breakfast from the crew's cook. After the successful raid of a rival ship, breakfast has been varied and plentiful for the first time in a few weeks. The chef stopped her as she was eating and told Amber that the captain asked to see her. Amber's smile grew at the call from her adoptive father, as she nodded and got served her meal. As usual the morning after a successful ship raid, Amber partied with the crew as she ate and drank a pint of ale. Her fellow pirates were mostly made up of demonkin. Those born with supernatural gifts but shunned because of the changes to their bodies that developed. Amber still felt a little out of place as an Elf in the crew. Demonkin were common for pirates but elves are a rarity. Amber normally would stay with the crew celebrating until lunch was served but today she excused herself and got up to head to the captain's quarters after she felt filled with food and merry. Amber opened the door without knocking and yelled the captain's name.

"SeaWolf! I'm here!" As Amber screams she can hear scrambling around the corner as the large red-skinned demonkin man she knows as captain SeaWolf appears before her. He needs to crouch to allow the large horns on his head to get under the ceiling shaft holding up the hallway to his quarters. He is dressed more professionally than Amber is used to, instead of heavy armor, combat boots, and a large sword on his back he has a roughed-up suit, dark jeans, and black shoes on.

"Amber, good to see you first mate." SeaWolf comes up and gives a hug to Amber. He does not need to crouch down as he does for most inhuman crewmates as the only elf in the crew, Amber's eleven nature gives her a tall figure that rivals all the demon folk who are a part of her ship. She embraces the hug and waits until Captain SeaWolf ends the embrace to talk.

"So, you called, tell me what you need. We talked before the battle yesterday about having some rest time docked. Does this mean you are telling me where we charted courses last night?" She asks with excitement.

"Yep, I don't think you will like it much though kiddo... We are by EdaCity, where we picked you up all those years ago. I need to parley with the king." The captain drops his smile. "I know you don't like to talk about before we picked you up and you have some bad experience with the royalty but we will be docked there for a day or two. I am keeping our location from the kingdom at least but you should know."

"Oh... you are meeting with the King... What's the reason for the visit, nothing with anyone in the crew right?"

"No, no issues with any crew members. It is top-secret but as my daughter and second in command, I thought I could tell you. He is attempting legislation to finally end the pirate age, closing off docks to unlicensed ships, allowing shoot-on-sight, mandatory citizen ID for trade, and all the like. Would make life much harder and take our spaces even more." The captain loosens his body as he lets out a sigh.

"That's ridiculous. All we do now is stick to ourselves on the sea away from the kingdoms. Pirates have barely touched any nations in recent years. We just treasure hunt and contest with other crews. They have no reason to do any of this." Amber explodes "These idiots should spend more time helping their own kingdoms than worrying about us!"

"Aye.. I agree. This all likely comes from spite. I got the news and was told I could parley about it. We don't have the might to take on a kingdom and can not untie the pirate crews in time so I thought it would be worthwhile to try to talk it out at least."

"Did the other captains get these requests?"

"I don't know, but our battle last night was sailing from another direction and we have not run into more ships. I think it might just be bait for me."

"Why would you go then!" Amber basically screams out. "It's gonna end bad then, you could get hurt and-"

"I need to try Amber. I am not letting the crew die. I can do this because I know you are here to serve as a great captain in my place. This brings me to my next point. When I am with

the royalty for a few days you are in charge. Do whatever you want.” The captain places a hand on Amber's shoulders, “You know I trust you.”

“Captain I have to mention...” Amber silently mutters but the words fail to reach her adoptive father.

“Hm? I didn’t catch that Amber, what are you trying to say?”

“I- I just want you to be careful.” She gives up on her tried confession. Captain SeaWolf obviously notices her reluctance to speak up and puts her in a hug.

“I will, I am not planning on upper-class bureaucrats to be what takes out the mighty SeaWolf.”

“Okay... can I stay with you until we dock, father?”

“Of course, you can, I can beat you in chess a few times before we reach the city.” The captain softly beams.

“If we have a few days, maybe you can beat me once.” Amber smiles as they go to grab the chessboard.

They arrive in the city after a few hours around noon. Amber sees her adoptive father off and then decides to stay on the ship and help conduct the standard procedures for when the crew docks their ship in a new city. When the important work is over, much of the crew decides to go shopping and drink in the local port and leaves Amber alone as she obsessively works on some unimportant tasks. As the night goes on, Amber runs out of tasks to distract herself and eventually finds herself venturing out to the local tavern after no sign of Captain Seawolf's return.

Amber walks away from the ship into the rain as the cold concrete reaches her feet for the first time in months. She is clearly tense as she walks the short distance from the docks to the nearby tavern. Amber has already passed by multiple fellow elves, one would think an elf would relax being surrounded by more of their own kind but being around them again only

seems to worsen Amber's mood. She reaches the tavern soon and is greeted by a table of her crewmates celebrating. Amber walks over to her friends to say hello but quickly excuses herself to go drink alone. A small Dwarf on a stepstool greets her at the bar. He is wearing ripped clothes but has large flowing hair and a beard that is done up very nicely to help distract from his common dinner. He wears a large smile as he greets Amber.

"Hello young lass, what could I get for you?" His deep voice joyously echoes in the bar.

"Something hard and hot on the way down." Amber sighs. The dwarf goes back and mixes a brown drink together. He passes it to Amber and there is an awkward pause until Amber speaks up. "So how much am I paying?" The dwarf gestures for Amber to lean in and she complies

"I recognize you as young Ms. SeaWolf. A powerful-looking elf lass surrounded by a large crew of demonkin, well anyone with an interest in the seas would know it's you. Don't worry though lady, anyone who pisses off that self-righteous king can get their drinks on the house." The dwarf backs away after that.

"Well, unfortunately, we are not here to cause chaos. Captain came on a request from the king. He's hoping to help get the king off of pirates' backs." Amber explains as she takes a large drink.

"He knows that is a trap right?" The bartender replies with a sigh. "No way that underhanded, self-righteous King is just going to let a famous pirate walk out of his castle."

"Yeah, I made that clear many times to my old man." Amber puts her drink down.

"Well if you need more drinks don't hesitate to ask-" The bartender starts to put in a kind offer but ends up being interrupted by a large hand that slaps Amber in the back. Amber turns to see a large red-skinned demonkin behind her. He clearly has had a few drinks already but it's clear to Amber that it's her close friend Malcis. Malcis is wearing a ruffled white shirt, jeans, and sandals. He is carrying his sword sheath attached to his back with no weapon in it. Amber wonders if he left it on the ship or if someone took it from him when the drinking started.

“Amber! Girl, come on have some fun with the crew, don’t sulk around on our first night docked in months.”

“Malcis, thanks for the offer but I’d rather not drag down the mood,” Amber mumbles into her drink. Malcis sees this and points the bartender away and he sits down next to his friend.

“What’s going on Amber? Is it coming back to EdaCity?”

“Yeah... that’s a big part of it. I don’t have many pleasant memories of this city. I’d rather not have stepped foot on its land again.” She shakenly replies. Malcis knows it takes a lot for Amber to lose her composure and feels more determined to comfort her.

“Look, I don’t know your old life, and I don’t want to if you do not want to share. Now though, you are fucking Amber SeaWolf. A famous pirate that commands respect and power as the second in command of the great Captain SeaWolf. You have grown so much since you were younger. Whatever happened here, you are bigger than it now, with friends to help you through. If you can’t overcome your past, that’s fine. You can kick its ass like anything else when we are here at least.” Malcis roars out in support as all the bar looks at him. Amber chuckles and shushes her friend.

“I suppose, I am ‘fucking Amber SeaWolf’ as you put it, and could kick all of my family’s asses though I think that might be counterproductive.” She laughs out in a better mood. Amber notices Malcis raise an eyebrow. He doesn’t push the slip up by mentioning her past but Amber still becomes desperate to change the subject. “Do you think the Captain is alright? It has been a long day already and he’s not back.”

“I am sure he’s fine. He probably talked those royal’s ears out. He got what he came for and then was forced to stay the night out of pleasantries to not ruin everything he worked for. You know how it is with those prissy high-classers. The captain is gonna be jealous of our drinking stories tomorrow.”

“I hope so. Can’t say I trust those assholes up in that castle though. I just want this to roll over and to get back to the ocean.”

“Well, hopefully, tomorrow we will be. Can you do anything about it tonight though?”

Malcis inquiries.

“Well technically I-” Amber tries to reply

“Can you do anything about it tonight that would not make things incredibly worse?” He sighs.

“No...” Amber admits.

“Then come drink with your friends and enjoy the night. We will be off tomorrow before your hangover is gone.” He laughs.

“Fine you got me, I’ll outdrink you all again. Thanks for trying to cheer me up, Malcis. I appreciate it a lot.”

“You’ve helped me out so many times as well, we always owe each other, besides it’s fun to drink with you. I simply wanted to drag you over for that.”

“Heh, alright, drinks are on me, then!” Amber winks at the bartender as she says that to remind him of his unfinished proposal.

The party eventually dies out as the sun is close to rising and the crew merrily head back to their ship. They wake up in the afternoon the next day and all focus on helping their hangovers go away. Still, there is no news from the captain. Amber thinks back to her conversation with Malcis and decides to be calm and wait a day before taking action. Leaving these meetings is hard and rushing in when the captain is still a guest could ruin anything he worked on. Another night passes and no news is heard. Amber, feeling back to a hundred percent, decides to set off to gather information. She instructs some of the more stealthy members of the crew to do the same as the rest of them ready the ship for take-off in case things have gone wrong and they need a quick escape. Amber takes a moment to calm herself before leaving the ship into the uninviting city of stone in front of her.

Amber takes herself around town. She tries to listen in on conversations and moves her investigation closer to the mountain that holds the castle at the edge of town. Amber finds many willing to talk to her. Most conversations start with the peasant yelling about how the royal family has hurt them, tax increases, forced conscription, and clear disgust of their suffering. It's clear to Amber nothing has changed since she was younger if local politics are the same as when she left then everyone living under the mountain hates the royal family despite their class so Amber becomes a bit bolder about who she asks for help. Despite getting help from those in higher positions of power than she would expect they still do not know much of the plans of the royalty. Eventually, Amber is confronted by a large well dressed Elf. He has long blonde hair that goes down his waist. It is almost long enough to hide his pistol holster.

"Are you the girl asking questions about the royal family?" Amber hears as she slowly reaches for the hilt of her rapier.

"What if I am?" She grits her teeth and looks up at the man.

"Calm down hun. I am here to help." He smugly smiles down at Amber as he sees she has her hand on her rapier.

"Sure picked a bad opener then, why should I trust you?"

"You shouldn't! I am a thief! However, I want to see you ruin the plans of the royal family more than anything right now. Ms. SeaWolf." Amber grimaces hearing him recognize her, knowing it's never a good sign when a noble knows in-depth about pirates.

"Why is that then? Not many people who can afford those clothes live under the mountain." The man sighs and puts his hands up before continuing.

"Well, I am new to this whole crime thing. I come from a noble family, yes, but my younger brother was conscripted into a new navy division a few months ago. Made to kill pirates at sea. I know enough that drafted greenhorns would be massacred by even the weakest pirate crew so I joined the thieves guild to try and tear those bastards down enough so they might call this whole operation off." Amber thinks it over for a few moments. She can't come up with an

idea as to why he would lie about that and finds herself starting to worry about the anti-pirate operation already coming that far.

“Okay, I’ll believe you for now. You help me, I will be sure to cause a lot of issues in the castle.”

“Sounds good. I’m new to the guild so I might not be much help but I’ll point you in the direction of the tavern that serves as our base in its after-hours.” Amber chuckles upon hearing that.

“No need man, I know where to head. Thanks.” Amber turns to walk away when the man runs back up behind her.

“I have one more thing to say... The royal family, who have apparently been looking into their missing child for a while now, hired some private eyes. Rumor has it they are a pirate and the cause of all the recent aggravation.”

“God damn it... I was worried that might be the case. Thank you... er, what’s your name.”

“Micheal, names Micheal.”

“Thanks, Michael, I’ll put in a word for that boss of yours. The name’s Amber SeaWolf, I think you knew that but don’t wear it out.” Amber rushes off after that conversation, down to the bar she partied at a few days ago first. She walks in and the same bartender takes notice of her. The bartender quickly finishes the conversation he is having with a small group of cloaked men and waves them away. Amber steps up and sits down in the same seat she was in the other night.

“You’re still here lass?” The dwarf gets in close to say.

“Yeah, you can guess why.”

“I can do better than guess. Rumor has it that a guest of the palace was taken to the dungeon after their first night there. Your captain is still absent?”



“Got it in one, I need a way into the castle. You lead the thieves guild? You have to have an in.”

“Who told you that?”

“Are you denying it?”

“No, I just want to know.”

“Micheal, he had a lot of good information gathered and seemed pretty competent.”

“Taking some initiative eh, good for Micheal finally. Well, I can bring you to the castle gates. Security has been tight the past few days. Got our usual routes covered now. Gates to the castle are the best we can do.” Amber makes a disappointed grunt.

“Well... If you can take me to the gates I can get myself in from there... Would you mind waiting a bit later into the night? The crew is going to reconvene and I'd like to bring a few in here so they are in the loop.”

“Sounds good, meet back in an hour and we will have our transportation ready for you.” Amber nods and leaves for the ship. She is the last to come back from the investigation. Most of her crew didn't find anything more than she did. A few reported there is extra security all over the mountain making it hard to approach the castle. Amber relayed her findings and everyone agreed the thieves guild was the best option however Malcis let out some issues he held with the plan.

“Amber I know you are skilled but storming a castle alone? That's basically suicide!” He grabs Amber's shoulders as he yells at his friend.

“It's not. They won't kill me. Taking captain SeaWolf was bait to bring me out.”

“How do you know that? You know what, I don't care, let's say that's true, isn't that less reason to go, I'll go instead!”

“You can't, you wouldn't get in. They might just shoot you at the gate.”

“Dammit Amber, why are you so different then!” As he yells Amber opens her mouth to speak but trembles as a tear work its way down her face.

"I- I don't know how to tell you all but I'm... I'm going back..." Amber struggles to get the confession out to her friends. Her early memories she tries to repress are flooding back as she forms her sentences. She suddenly feels a warm presence holding onto her as she looks up to see Malcis's red body holding her close.

"I think I put it together, it's alright Amber, Are you sure you can handle this?"

"Yeah... I've been scared of my family finding out but... I know I can handle those monsters." Malcis gives a bit of a smile at that.

"Alright, you go save your dad, and once again we will stay back ready to save your ass when you run into trouble."

"I know you will." Amber smiles and takes a couple of minutes to calm herself down. Her crew puts together a small team ready to sneak their way up to the gates and watch for trouble if things go bad. Once they elect the members of that squad a few of them head off with Amber to the local tavern. Amber and her friends are quickly prepped on the plan. Amber will sneak in with a butcher order from a nearby butchery that sympathizes with the thieves guild. They took a rush order tonight so the guard checks will be shortened in order to allow the delivery to arrive on time. The lack of precision in the checks mixed with the darkness of the night should allow for one person to sneak by on the ride. She will be dropped off a few blocks away from the gates and need to sneak her way up the last stretch herself. During all of this, the backup crew will be made up to look like nobles and slowly make their way up the first few checkpoints under the guise of Micheal's friends until they can get a clear view of the castle. They will be unable to get close to the castle, but if trouble starts there is no reason for them not to fight their way up to assist. Everyone agrees on the plan and it starts immediately after. Amber's ride goes without incident. She is able to stay under a large pile of bags in the back and not be searched. The smell of rotting meat starts to soak into her but besides that uncomfortable stink, she has a relatively pleasant trip. Once the order arrives Amber sneaks out the back quickly before unloading could start. She is in a dainty neighborhood she recognizes and finds a local florist.

Amber tries to use the scents of flowers to cover up some of the rotting stench coming from here and then continues to the castle gates. She arrives with ease as expected, no one in this neighborhood ends up going out late, they all need their beauty sleep after all. On the way to the castle, Amber finds a familiar angle that lets her shine moonlight off of her sword into a high window on the castle. She makes the light go in a circle for a few seconds and then continues back to the gate with no issue. As she arrives at the gate the guards stare at her and hold their muskets at her.

“You are about to be trespassing on castle ground commoner, turn back or be arrested.”

“Oh, you wouldn’t want to arrest me now. The king wouldn’t like a valued guest of his to be thrown into the nasty cells.”

“Please, don’t expect us to believe that. You have one more chance to leave.” The guard takes a step forward.

“HALT PUT YOUR WEAPONS DOWN.” A loud voice booms from behind the gate. As he runs closer Amber recognizes the short elven man with red hair, dressed in a nightgown and panting wildly.

“Prince Ruby, you shouldn’t be out at this hour. Your father would not be happy-” One of the guards starts to lecture but the prince ignores him and puts his hands against the gate.

“My God, is it really you?” The man named Ruby asks in awe.

Amber has many emotions wash through her mind, but somehow they settle on joy.

“Hey bro, it’s been a while.”

Prince Ruby excitedly jumped into catching up with his long-lost sister. It took a few minutes until the conversation finally took a turn into what Amber expected.

“You look a lot different, I hope you are happier now sister!”

“Yeah, I am... out there is a lot better for me.”

“With the pirates?”

"Yeah, how long have you all known?"

"Well I found out a couple of weeks ago, I think Father and Sister knew for a few months, however, they started acting weird when you came up in conversations and then Father started building up our Navy. I thought something was up but I never would have put together you were a SeaWolf!"

"You are not mad about it? Me joining your family's thorn in their side?"

"Yeah, I am just glad you are okay Sister... I think Father and Pearl knew I would be kinder so they held off telling me until I stumbled upon too much myself..."

"I take it that means they are not the biggest fan of mine now? Not like they were before anyways."

"Sister... It pains me to hear that but yes. I can imagine you know why your captain was called in now. Father wanted to catch you."

"I figured, is Pearl in on this plan too?"

"No, our younger sister was not informed but she very much wishes to meet you..."

"Gotcha, I'll be careful moving around. Don't need to start anything with her."

"Are you just leaving then? You just got back and are already leaving..." Ruby looks up with deep sadness. Amber does not sense any anger coming from her brother. She smiles knowing her brother's kind heart did not grow cold over the years.

"Look, Ruby... Thank you for all your help. It honestly makes me feel very happy to see I have someone who cares about me here, but this castle is no longer my home."

"... Why did you leave in the first place, Amber?"

"Ruby..."

"Please tell me if it's about Father I can handle it... I have seen how he is with the Kingdom now that I am older... Pearl too, I've had some suspicions... I'll believe your story."

"Well... from a young age father expected much of me. I was going to be a ruler and he needed me to be one. Mother had passed and he just had us three to find the next future leader

in. He decided I held the most potential and personally saw to my growth. It was not a kind time. I could not live up to father's demands and faced many punishments. Eventually, Father decided I held no use and Pearl was showing more potential. After all that pain and work I was tossed aside. I was desperate though and eventually pleaded for a mission to prove myself and gain my place of favor back. Father agreed and sent me as a spy to the pirates. You know how he views pirates... he sent me on a death mission to see if I would live. Luckily the pirates were actually really nice and decided to take this child on the streets and raise her. Father sent me away. I didn't run to the pirates and I just simply realized I liked them better."

"I didn't know... father likely never saw me worth keeping in the loop... I have been feeling that for a while now. We fight a lot recently. I want to be kind to our subjects and he refuses for whatever asinine idea he holds whether it be wealth, superiority, or laziness, it drives me to the wall. I was holding some hope he was better in the past and I could bring that back but your story proves he always was like this. What are you planning on doing tonight, Amber?"

"I am going to take back Captain SeaWolf, I assume the King will stand in my way and I will take him down if he does not step aside."

"Amber... I agree father needs to go but are you sure?"

"Yes, Ruby, would you be willing to help? I won't kill father if he steps aside but-"

"He won't step aside... You know that." Ruby's face contorted in an incomprehensible mixture of emotions.

"I do." Amber bluntly responds.

"Well... I can give you directions but I don't know if I want to be more involved." There is tension in the air as the conversation finishes and Ruby goes to fetch a map of the castle leading down to the dungeons with the cell Capitan SeaWolf is imprisoned in. Amber makes sure her equipment is in gear and heads for the door. Before Amber walks out she stops and without looking at her brother says,

"You can choose who your family is, it's okay to feel rage at those who raised you ya know? I am glad you are my brother know you are better than that old man." Amber walks out the door before Ruby can respond and starts her infiltration.

The castle is heavily guarded but Amber easily slips past any resistance. The years of playing hide and seek with her siblings in these halls are enough for her to know each dark crease to slip into. As Amber approaches the dungeon she notices there are a lot fewer guards patrolling this area. Amber slowly remembers how dramatic Pearl has always been and the meaning behind the ease of access becomes clear to her. Amber knows her sister is waiting. She walks closer to the dungeon and soon enough she sees a well-dressed elf with straightened black hair sitting on a chair. The elf stands up and walks towards Amber who can clearly see a sword in a sheath around her waist.

"Oh! Sister?" The elf questions in a high-pitched, gaudy voice.

"Hello Pearl, I don't suppose you are here to guide me to my captain?" Amber shakes her head.

"Don't be silly sister, I can take you to father instead. He's in the throne room and would love to have you back."

"My dad is down that hallway Pearl, let me see him." Amber doubles down and tenses up.

"Oh, you think a filthy pirate is your father? Not the man who raises you in wealth, not the man who trained you, not the man who believed in you!?"

"Pearl... you don't understand."

"I don't understand! You are telling me I don't understand and I agree! You don't understand you pirate scum. He trusted you, he worked to better you, he gave you a second chance and you betrayed him! You were his number one choice and you made him settle for me! How could you leave that all behind!"

“Pearl... we don’t have to fight, you don’t deserve to feel like this... I’m sorry I never thought how leaving would affect you.”

“You never did think, YOU NEVER THINK. It’s too late Sister, you left now. I am father’s number one despite his best wishes. I will stay there and I will prove my worth as his right hand by dragging you back to him right now. Once he sees how pathetic you have become and how I have bested you... I will finally be deserving of his praise!” Pearl reaches for her sword, kicks off her heels, and approaches Amber. Amber steps back and draws her rapier, her sister is in an emotional rage at the moment so she should be able to end this quickly without hurting Pearl too much. Amber watches her sister get close and as she brings the sword down to slice Amber’s head open, Amber sidesteps and kicks her sister in the side of her ribs. Pearl stumbles but that does not stop her drive as she rushes back in and goes for a wide swing. Amber blocks the swing by holding the top of her rapier with her hand as it intercepts the blade. Amber uses this exchange to step back out of reach. Pearl predictably comes straight for Amber again, aiming to pierce her stomach. Amber has her rapier slide across the edge of Pearl’s sword, deflecting the blade to the side as she does, she uses the opportunity to rush in and push her sister onto the ground with a force that knocks Pearl out. Amber checks the severity of the wound and after confirming Pearl will wake up without any major complications she takes a moment to stare at her sister on the ground. Amber’s anger toward her father grows after seeing what her sister has become because of that man. She heads down into the dungeon after and is able to quickly find Captain SeaWolf. Peeking out from behind a wall, Ruby is breathing heavily watching what just transpired. He shakes his head a few times and fights the urge to vomit. “Father... How could you turn our little pearl into that... This has gone too far...” Ruby takes off away from the jail cells with a new conviction.

Captain SeaWolf is sitting behind bars in tattered clothing, there are some wounds on him but he seems to be in decent spirits. The captain notices Amber approaching.

"You came, my girl! Your first solo prison break. They grow up so fast." The captain happily jokes upon seeing Amber.

"Captain... I'm sorry, it's all my fault I should have just come clean on the ship at any point-

"It's fine Kiddo, I knew something was up with ya but I never wanted to push. Your past doesn't matter to me or any of the crew. We both choose to be family with everyone because of who they are now."

"But I'm royalty, I'm everything you guys should hate!"

"Aye, but you have become a wonderful young woman, the care I have seen you put into all of us is what I love about you Amber, you have really grown." Amber starts to tear up hearing that. Her adoptive father reaches through the bars to ruffle the hair on Amber's head. "So... uh... do you have the key Amber?"

"Oh no... I don't, but I can try to pick the lock."

"No need to try that, I already did, it's quite sturdy." The captain lets out a chuckle and fishes some broken lockpicks out of his beard. "I assume the King is holding onto the key."

"Yeah, that makes the most sense."

"So, what are your plans for him?"

"I am going to get you out, no matter what... I assume the meeting between you two ended poorly?" The captain laughs as Amber asks her question.

"Great deduction lass! He took me in, we had dinner then he had a knife at my throat telling me all about the history between you two. Sorry, you had to put up with that asshole for so long, I got a few good hits in before the guards came." Amber smiles at that

"Glad you showed him a fight dad."

"Amber... are you prepared to do the same... I don't think that asshole is going to take no as an option."

"Yeah, I have been waiting for this moment my whole life. I can fight."



“But can you kill him?” Amber takes a step back at that and holds her head down. “If it comes down to it, that man may rather have you dead than free from him. If he comes at you to kill, can you respond in time?”

“I- I honestly don’t know... I will get you out of here at least. Everything else I’ll need to decide on the fly.”

“Just open your eyes now and not in the heat of the moment. I didn’t expect an answer anyways, that’s something you will find for yourself if the time comes. Now I’d give you good luck but I know you will not need it my beloved daughter” The captain gives a hearty smile looking at Amber on the other side of the bars. Amber returns the smile, with tears flowing down her face.

“I’ll be right back dad.” Amber turns as she says those words and runs off to the middle of the castle where she knows the king is waiting. She is able to walk down to the throne room with no resistance. Amber takes note of that fact, she’s likely walking straight into what the king wants from her. However, Amber does not care, she will take what she wants this time. When Amber arrives at the throne room door she finds it locked. It’s clear to her that the king seeks to take control of the situation right away by needing to open the door for her. Amber mutters a passionate expletive under her breath as she takes her gun and shoots the lock of the door. She pushes the door open, walking straight up to the middle with more confidence than she expected.

Her father is sitting on a large red plush chair at the end of the room, due to the slow aging nature of elves, she barely notices a difference in him from the day she left as a child. Not even one of his long pure black hairs has started to grey in the decade she has been gone. The king holds a large grin on his face that is easily mistaken for a smile. Amber continues to walk forward holding one of her hands on her rapier while her other hand clenches the still-smoking pistol.

"My precious child has returned to me! Father is so sorry to send you on such a dangerous mission. The brute you have been stuck with all these years is a dangerous, rude fellow. You finally have been blessed with the ability to escape and come home!" The king's voice echoes through the chamber, it's clear he knows the best way to project his voice for the most dramatic effects in this environment.

"Give me the key."

"Now now, no need to be so curt! This is a momentous occasion, the presumed dead heir to the kingdom is alive and back at the castle! We should be celebrating, finally, the kingdom can have the best next in line to rule!" Amber remembers her sister's mental breakdown when they meet for the first time in a decade and her face scowls in response.

"You don't even care about her do you."

"Who? What are you talking about? Those pirates must have done a number to you."

"Pearl. You broke her and you don't even notice." Amber's voice raises as she starts to yell.

"Pearl? No, she has been fine, she attends classes and works hard that's all I can ask. She's holding up fine with all of that."

"You will give me the key now, and I will walk out of here." Amber pulls her rapier out as she moves closer.

"You. Will. Not. Be. LEAVING." The King stands up and throws away his cape to reveal a large greatsword on his back. "Now my beloved child. You can come to stand by my side, take back your right to rule and we can work this whole thing out. You can love your country again and finally be around a caring family. I am giving you a chance to fix everything. I'll even let that disgusting man out of jail for you if that's what it takes." Amber stops her approach at that. She seems unsure for a few seconds before shaking her head and counting the walk up to the King.

"Don't talk about him like that."

“Speak up honey I couldn’t quite hear you, it sounded like you were talking back to your father. Unappreciative of his generosity. Nonetheless, if you refuse, I will, unfortunately, need to end your life here. No need to risk the news of a child of mine being a pirate, what a scandal. My kin with such a rabid, vile, group of nauseating demons. That could never happen!” He scorns and raises his voice. “This is your last chance. If you take another step with your weapon out. You are dead to me, and soon after to the rest of the world.”

In response, Amber loads a bullet into her pistol's chamber and points the gun at him.

“That ‘rabid, vile, group of nauseating demons’ are my family and you don’t get to talk about them like that. I will be leaving here with my father, your majesty.” Amber breaks off into a sprint toward the King. Their faces turn to scorn as the two’s weapons collide with each other. Amber is pushed back by the weight of his weapon. It’s clear from the heart of the greatsword Amber will not be able to replicate the trick she used to beat her sister on the King. As Amber loses more ground she decides to let lose a pistol shot, surprising the King and allowing Amber to finally go on the offensive. She works hard to break the King’s defense but he is not budging so Amber disengages and reloads her pistol in the short amount of time she found for herself. It is not long until the king catches up and continues the fray. This fight goes on for longer than expected, and as time continues it’s clear that both parties are surprised their opponent is not tiring out yet. They both realize they might have picked a more formidable fight than they expected. The King decides he has had enough as he notices Amber’s next attack will not hit anywhere particularly dangerous, he lets her stab him. Amber is shocked as her attack meant to keep pressure finds itself moving into flesh and the King uses this momentum to push Amber back down on the ground. He then hovers over her with his greatsword.

“Well looks like it has to end like this, I gave you the chance my child. I hope you regret mocking me in these last few seconds.” The King lets out a sigh as he lifts up his greatsword, readying it to plunge into his daughter’s stomach. Amber braces herself for the impact but it never comes, instead, a loud bang is heard as the King crumples to one knee dropping his

sword to the side. His leg is oozing blood. Amber turns to the entrance of the throne room to see Ruby shaking holding a rifle. Ruby hobbles up and helps Amber stand up.

"I found my resolve sister... I saw you talking with your sister... I had to do something so I grabbed my weapons and headed over then... I heard the gunshots and knew what was happening and I... I just aimed at his leg and did it." He says as he regains his composure.

"I can see... That was a hell of a shot, Ruby. Thanks." Amber smiles at her brother.

"Another traitor in my family! Just kill me now and get it over with if you want the throne, Ruby. I see I have no place here anymore." The King yells out in agony from both his wounded leg and pride. Amber gets closer to the defeated King and slides his weapon to the other side of the room. She reaches at his neck and pulls off the necklace he was wearing which ended up holding the key to the dungeon. Ruby comes up next to Amber and shares a short period of eye contact with his sister. They both understand what comes next after that moment of connection.

"We are not going to kill you, father." Ruby starts and Amber follows up right away.

"A captive King would be quite the claim for a pirate crew don't you think?" The King shrivels up at that mention, obviously terrified at the notion.

"Now, now sister, we are not trying to start a war here. You can't have the King, but I do not think the kingdom can have this King either if we want to avoid more bloodshed."

"What do you propose then dear brother?"

Ruby turns to look down at the king. "Well father, how would you feel about going out on a mission? You will be announced dead in order to infiltrate the lower parts of the island and gather information. This might seem a little familiar, almost like an older mission you planned, so I am sure you will be great at it! You might learn some empathy even, but you better be successful."

"Don't worry about the Kingdom as well, Ruby can do a great job fixing it up for you down there, and I would love to work with him to bring more prosperity to the sea and your kingdom!"

“Oh, and do feel free to try and attempt your own coup. If you can gain enough supporters for that, you might have actually learned a useful lesson.” Ruby finishes as he reaches down and punches his father's defeated face, knocking him out.

Amber hugs her brother for a long while before leaning out.”

“Well I gotta get back to pops now, he's been waiting down in the dungeon for a while.”

“Please go, I seemingly have just gotten a lot busier anyways. Amber, I'll make sure to dismantle whatever war plans my father has been cooking up, and then I'll be in contact with you... After I drop father in some alley. I have enough friends in high places to know he won't have any more power after his so-called 'untimely demise.' I hope we can help each other out.”

“You already have helped me, Ruby, of course. The SeaWolves will remember the respect you have earned. I'll see you soon then.” Amber waves as she walks off.

Amber easily walks back to the dungeon. She opens her father's cell as they embrace. Amber explains what happened and gets a pat on the back as they are walking out. The captain and Amber end up carrying Pearl's unconscious body to a nearby guest room before they leave. Ruby has already spread the news of the King's death and the new order of things to the castle so the two of them can easily walk out of the front gates. They sneak around the town until they get low enough in the city to meet with the rest of the crew who joined in the rescue attempt and are guided back to the ship with no incident. Amber shares her story as the crew parties hard all night. They set off to the sea first thing in the morning, Amber stays at the back of the ship as it sets sail. She watches EdaCity grow smaller in the distance and for once she is excited to visit her childhood home in the future.