

*mentions of alcohol, excessive profanity*

Everyone was on their knees, forced to bow by the force of gravity as the world beneath their feet heave upwards. The only sounds that anyone could hear was the sound of the wind rushing past their ears and the sounds of Azaels wails as he cried out desperately for his sibling who had fallen to the depth bellow.as time passed however the crushing weight of gravity seemed to cease, and as the roar of the wind died down so too did Azaels screams, slowly turning into sobs as he stopped struggling under his sibling Black Jack's grasp, realizing it was far too late to save his sibling Astril.

As the people slowly started to stand up, Black Jack slowly got off of Azael, however he was still a blubbering mess as he cried and clutched the ground.

“I'm sorry...” Black Jack said softly as he looked at his sibling, there was nothing but pain In his eyes as he spoke.

“Why...? I could have saved them.” Azael croaked out through clenched teeth, pain and anger clung to his voice.

“You would have fallen with them... I couldn't-” Black Jack tried to explain, but he was silenced as Azael wiped his head around. His teeth bared as he yelled at Black Jack.

“I could have saved them! We could have both made it!” Azael yelled.

“You would have both died! You think I wanted to see Astril fall? They were my sibling too! I wasn't going to sit around and watch two of my siblings fall off into oblivion!” Black Jack yelled back at this brother.

“You son of a bitch!” Azael yelled as he lunged at Black Jack, but as he managed to grab onto his jacket, they were pulled apart by Leto as she ran over.

“That is enough! Stop it, I've already lost one child, I don't need to lose another!” she yelled as she pushed the two apart. Pain racked her voice, yet despite that she was keeping it together as best she could. There was a moment of silence as they all stood there, only broken when Azael started to cry. As he was about to fall to his knees Leto ran over to him and quickly caught him as he crumbled into a sad crying and screaming mess. His wails continued once more as he cried out the name of his sibling, as his rage turned to grief, Black Jack could only watch on.

He saw that look In their eyes, it was nothing but pity, and he hated it. He hated the way they looked at him, feeling bad for him, it reminded him of how weak he was, that he was forced to

make a choice. He only turned his head away, unclipping his wings from his vent sockets, he let his vent wings open up, and with one swift leap, he was off.

“Hey! Black Jack, wait!” Price called out as he ran towards where Black Jack once was, stopping as he neared the edge of the island's edge. Price cursed to himself as he turned around, spotting Thes In the crowd.

“Thes! Please, can you help me follow Black Jack?” Price asked. Thes seemed hesitant but nodded, as he opened his wings, Grabbing Price as they took off after Black Jack. Tracking him down wasn't much of an issue, as given the direction he had gone, there was only one place he could have gone.

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Black Jack slowly landed onto another floating island, this one surprisingly large and mostly intact. It was what remained of Sealight village, but now it was entirely empty. No ichor beasts, no people, just the sound of the wind as Black Jack walked into the town he once called home. The remnants of the wall that once protected them from the beasts had crumbled, along with the many earth shelters. Walking into the main town it wasn't much of a sight to behold, as many buildings had collapsed, only a few houses and shops remained. He continued to walk through the ruined streets as he came across a small house just on the edge of town. The house, despite its disheveled appearance, was still mostly In one piece. He paused before he slowly walked inside, the boards that made up the stairs creaked as they threatened to break under any more weight.

Black Jack seemed to almost be in a trance as he walked inside, the now messy and broken interior didn't bother him as he made his way to the living room. There was broken glass almost everywhere, as countless picture frames were strewn about all over the floor, some still on the walls. The pictures held photos of his family, his mother Leto and his many siblings. This house once belonged to his mother, given to him and his brother Odin to live In when she moved out to live with The Farmer, but now it was nothing more than a broken mess. Black Jack didn't seem to care as he plopped himself onto the couch, laying down with his feet elevated by the arm rest as he stared up at the ceiling, left with nothing but his thoughts.

Did he really do the right thing? Could he have saved Astril? Or would he have risked his own life as well? Was it right of him to stop Azael? The thoughts haunted him as he laid there. He sighed as he put an arm over his face.

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Thes made his descent as he dropped Price off a few feet above the ground before landing himself.

“Thanks, it's probably best if you stay here, I need to talk to him alone.” Price said as he started to make his way through town, but Thes stopped him.

“Not to be rude, but why are you so insistent on talking to him? I never took you as the type to really mingle with others.” Thes asked, causing Price to sigh and rub his temples.

“It's... complicated. I know he's just some guy who brings me shit I can sell in my shop but- ugh look just stay here alright?” Price grumbled as he walked off, leaving Thes confused as he watched Price walk off.

Price walked through the streets quickly, knowing exactly where he would find Black Jack. He stopped in front of the house, taking a deep breath before he made his way inside. He opened the door and made his way into the living room, being careful not to step on the glass. He stood behind the couch, leaning down and resting his arms on the back. He looked down at Black Jack, starting at him and feeling a twinge of sadness for him before he spoke.

“Feeling miserable all by yourself?” He said in a bit of a mocking tone, but trying to make a bit of light of a tense situation. Black Jack only moved his arm slightly to glare at him before moving it back over his face.

“Why are you here Price?” Black Jack muttered, his voice cold, causing Price to frown.

“Because I'm worried about you.” Price said, a bit annoyed at the question.

“That's a first.” Black Jack muttered.

“Look I didn't come all this way for attitude dude.”

“Then why did you even come in the first place?” Black Jack said as he sat up, he sounded annoyed. “I don't need anyone's damn pity. I made a choice and that's that, and I have to live with it.” Black Jack said as he grabbed a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket.

“Fuck sake Black Jack- this isn't about you! Your sibling just fell off into Everything knows where and you're here thinking about how “oh I don't need anyone's pity” Stan you sibling could be dead!”

“Shut up-”

“People are upset because of them, this isn't just about you-”

“I SAID SHUT THE FUCK UP!!” Black Jack yelled. “You think I don't know that? No shit this isn't about me, but that doesn't mean I'm not in pain too. I just don't want people coming to me saying sorry for something they didn't have a part of, people who didn't know Astril telling me how hard it must be, you don't think I know that? Huh?” Black Jack yelled as he stood up. “and I especially didn't need nor ask you to come here, why the hell even are you here? Because you feel bad for me? Don't give me that shit.” He said as he turned his back to Price as he took a drag of his cigarette.

“I don't feel bad for you Stan, I came because I care about you and I didn't want you doing something stupid!” Price shouted. There was a long pause of Black Jack took a long drag, before glancing at Price.

“Since when do you give a shit?” Black Jack asked, and Price paused.

“Because you aren't just my employee Stan.” Price started. “You came to me when this all started, you saved me when my store got swallowed by the fissures, we fought off those Ichor beasts, we hung out when times seemed their darkest... why can't you get it through your thick skull that I'm your friend?” Price said as his claws dug into the sofa. Black Jack only looked at him for a moment before turning his head back around.

“You really didn't have to come.” Black Jack said, his voice seemed to soften a bit as He spoke.

“Yes I did. If I didn't I know your dumbass would have started drinking and wandered off the side of this island intentionally.” Price said, his tone becoming more calm. “Look, I'm not going to sit here and make you talk about your feelings, I know you're the kinda guy to find your relief in the bottom of a bottle and an empty pack of cigs, I'm just here to make sure it's not at the end of the 11th bottle and 5th pack.” Price said softly.

Both only stood there in silence before Black Jack spoke. “How did you get here anyway?” He asked.

“Thes, he's waiting for us now... we should probably get back... more than likely with the beasts gone we can start moving people back here, but we'll need as many wings helping us as we can to make that happen. You think you can stay sober enough to do that?” Price asked, waiting for a response. Black Jack stood there before turning around.

“I suppose so... but once we get everyone back I'm drinking till I can't feel.” Black Jack muttered as he started walking to the door, but Price stood in front of him.

“You can drink till you're blue in the face and pass out, but you're not drinking till you're *that* drunk.” Price said sternly, making it clear he wouldn't move till Black Jack agreed. Black sighed.

“Fine...” He muttered, causing Price to crack a smile.

“Don't be so down bud, we can drink together, because boy has it been a day.” Price said, causing Black Jack, if only for a moment, to crack a smirk.

“No shit.” He said as the two both walked out of the house. As they walked back out to the main street, they looked around.

“Didn't you say Thes was here?” Black Jack asked as he looked around.

“Son of a bitch did he leave?” Price asked as he looked around, causing Black Jack to laugh a little. “You know if he's gone you'll have to carry me back right?” Price said as he crossed his arms.

Black Jack was about to fire back, only to be cut off by the sound of a door opening, followed by a familiar sound of a bell. Both turned their attention to the bakery, and there in the entrance was Thes, his mouth full of doughnuts, as well as the many in his arms. All there only stood there for a while before Black Jack spoke.

“Aren't those... the old doughnuts from the display case?” Black Jack asked.

“Dude how old are those?” Price also asked. Thes quickly swallowed.

“Shut up!” He shouted before he opened up his wings, taking off with his hord of doughnuts. The two now left alone just watched him fly off, before turning to look at eachother. They paused before they started to laugh uncontrollably.

For the first time since all this had started, for only a moment, all of the pain from that day had melted away, even if it was just a brief fleeting moment.

“Allright, come on, let's get back to the others.” Black Jack said as he stretched out his wings. Price nodded.

“Yeah... let's go back to the others.”