

AU KAZ BREKKER:

Kaz and his Crows helped essentially save everyone's lives with Nikolai and his crew when The Darkling threatened to, and to an extent did, expand the Fold to get to Alina and Mal as they were trying to find a way to destroy it and *him*. After everything had settled and The Darkling was no more than a mere nightmare and Alina was successful at tearing down The Fold with Mal, Inej, Nina and Zoya's help, Kaz found himself seeking out his Wraith, who was praying to her Saints in the chapel. After giving her a moment of silent contemplation and to put his own thoughts together, they shared some stiff words. He decided to give Inej a little piece of information in regards to finding her brother and possibly the rest of her family; something that he was looking into for her over time. Kaz truly wanted to help Inej get some sort of closure she had been seeking, especially since as he put it his brother wasn't ever coming back and therefore he would never get the closure he sought out after, but for her maybe there was still a chance. Shortly after giving the info to her, Kaz was finally able to crack a little bit and become vulnerable in his own way at least, as he pleaded with her to stay with him and they could possibly go look for her brother and parents together. Reinforcing the thoughts about her that he'd kept stifled and buried down for so long. This time he put them into words and actually said them; *that he wanted her*. Gently grabbing her by her wrist and lightly caressing with his gloved thumb where the Menagerie tattoo once was on her, slowly moving his hand upwards. Inej of course put him on the spot by challenging him and wanting to know if he was ever going to be able to touch or kiss her without having his armor, which was his clothes and gloves that he used to avoid any accidental or intentional physical contact with anyone, including her. When he couldn't give her an answer, he instinctively pulled his hand away and taking that as her answer, Inej departed from his presence for the last time. She had gone off with Mal, Tolya and the others who chose their own paths now that they didn't have to fight for their lives or to help tear The Fold down. They all discussed and agreed on and now had a shared purpose, to go hunt slavers and to hopefully find Inej's family in the process. That was what she chose to use her share of money she got from the job Kaz had put them all in and risked their lives to see through. She now had a greater purpose, something other than Kaz Brekker, his biddings or even Ketterdam. She was free.

Meanwhile Jesper, Nina and Kaz had all gone back to Ketterdam to continue on with their lives, a little bit richer nonetheless, although it did feel empty without Inej. Her departure was something that they *all* felt deeply and not just Kaz.

While back, Kaz had tried to help Nina get her own happy ending with her Fjerdan, Matthias Helvar by trying to get him out of Hellgate with a pardon but Pekka, although incarcerated thanks to Kaz outwitting him, saw that it never happened. It was a bit of retribution towards Kaz for fucking up his life and putting him in the hell hole. Nina's own dream was to travel around with the love of her life (Matthais) and experience things being free herself, but it was snatched right out from under her before she could even close her eyes to blink. Therefore the Heartrender continued her tenure with Kaz and what was left of the Crows. Jesper had his life with Wylan, while also still remaining at Kaz's side, Wylan as well. They were probably the only ones who got their happy ending out of everyone. Jesper also started to embrace more and

more of his Materialnik abilities (specifically, Fabrikator/Durast) instead of hiding it, that was more in thanks to Wylan no doubt and induced dream about his mother.

Life had carried on as it often did in the Barrel, and Kaz had to adjust his own life without his Wraith; using his portion of funds he received to fix up the Crow Club as a bit of a distraction, if his mind was kept busy he wouldn't have time to think about her. Besides he always wanted to make it better than what it was as it had potential to be better than the competition around him. The motivation was also to make it better than when he gave the old deed to Heleen prior to their little adventure and to wash away any remnants of Pekka's grubby hands. Kaz also got more employees and worked in conjunction with the new owner of The Menagerie, someone Inej used to know well. Giving work to numerous girls who sought honest work, one that didn't involve selling themselves. Things have been quite successful for him, he had his remaining Crows, a successful restart to things and perhaps he can start to forget Inej.

Kaz and Nikolai had also kept in contact and remained on good terms with one another. Periodically the latter would call upon the Crows for help with jobs here and there which lined their pockets so who were they to say no? Especially to the future King of Ravka? Prior to Nikolai and Alina's coronation ceremony, the soon to be new Ravkan King had sent word to Kaz that he was sending his sister, Rhaenyra to Ketterdam to be under Kerch protection (and subsequently Kaz's). Nikolai had felt that things would get much worse before things got better especially with the different nations starting to become restless, more so with the Fjerdan's as he explained. Kaz ultimately agreed to house her and keep her safe as best as he could. Offered to even give her work at the Crow Club if she wanted to. However, when the young woman didn't arrive when she was scheduled to, he and his Crows were about ready to go and search for her themselves but she miraculously came to them exhausted and frail.

Kaz had Nina tend to Rhaenyra most of the time, since she seemed to get along with her and her female presence was much needed for certain things he couldn't help with. Jesper and Wylan would often be the errand runners for him until Rhaenyra got settled in more. He didn't want too much attention to be put on her in the public eye since she was royalty.

Relationships:

Kaz recognized Rhaenyra from when Dreesen and Nikolai had him and Jesper brought in for questioning about Alina, but he didn't think anything more of her aside from the fact she intrigued him slightly. It wasn't until later that they had met up again when he and his Crows came to the rescue of Nikolai and his friends when The Darkling's newly powered Grisha attacked. Rhaenyra had managed to save Kaz when one of The Darklings Nichevo'ya had tried to come after him, Wylan and Nikolai.

Much later when she came to him in Ketterdam, they had started to grow close. After a few more months of being around her, Kaz had begun to develop feelings for Rhaenyra but he wasn't sure if she would reciprocate them given their huge background differences so he kept it to himself for a while.

Note:

Inej is no longer in this timeline after they helped tear the fold down as she went off to hunt slavers and find her family. So it's just Kaz, Nina, Wylan, Jesper and now Rhaenyra.

I will add on later as things come up! So stay tuned.