My Kingdom for a Pig

by thefuckistevvs

Summary

It should be an easy job.

That's what Mako kept saying to himself. It should be easy. That's what they told him, too.

Notes

HELLO! Maybe I shouldn't be doing this, considering I still have the other fic updating and I like to write one shots. But I wanted to write this, so here we go!

This is, basically, Prince AU. Jamie is the prince, Mako is the Knight that is his bodyguard. Things will happen and its going to be gay.

Based up on this tweet by Fingurken!

I used to tell myself I wasn't the person to like AUs. well, I was wrong, so HERE I GO. This will be multi chaptered. I hope to update at least once a week!

Thank you for reading and I hope you like it!!!!
See the end of the work for more notes.
Pulled Pork

It should be an easy job.

That's what Mako kept saying to himself. It should be *easy*. That's what they told him, too. He finished up suiting up, polished and elegant armor shining bright under the sunlight. It was the finest armor he had ever laid his eyes on, and it was *his*. Tailored specifically to fit him, which was a necessity considering his massive size. Mako looked at himself in the mirror, completely suited up for his assignment.

It should be easy.

"Sir Rutledge," a voice called out from beyond the door. It opened slightly, a maid peeking through it. She looked slightly nervous, most likely due to Mako himself. He was not only very tall, but had a very impressive girth. Even underneath the armor, his muscles were very visible. He also had multiple scars on his face, which made him look even more intimidating. "A-are you ready?"

"Yes," The young maid flinched from Mako's deep's voice. "I am ready. Thank you. Can you show me the way?"

"Yes, yes of course!" She awaited for him outside of the room, and Mako had to crouch to be able to exit he was too tall. The maid smiled nervously, still unsure of how to act around him. He found it amusing, quietly following behind her through the pristine hallways of the castle.

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"Excuse me?" Mako took another sip of his mug of beer, the giant glass looking like a normal one on Mako's massive palms. He looked straight at the knight sitting in front of him.

"A bodyguarding job, in the castle." The knight replied. His posture was perfect, golden armor shining under the light at the tavern. He was very out of place in that environment- the walls were grimy, the clients looked ragged at the edges. Missing arms, eyes and fingers, chatting amongst themselves about their latest fight. It was a warrior's bar, and sure everybody had noticed when the Knight in Shining Armor stepped in, and they all were surprised to hear he was looking specifically for Mako Rutledge.

Mako Rutledge, one of the most savage warriors. Or, at least he was- Mako had stopped being a warrior a while ago. Age, he used as an excuse, but in reality he would just take some hit jobs here and then. Killing targets was easy, and it kept him on his toes. When the Royal Knight had asked for him, Mako supposed that they've caught up to him.

A proposal to work at the King's Castle was very, very unexpected.

"A Bodyguard?" he took another sip of his beer, savoring the taste. "Shouldn't you get an actual knight to do that?"

"This is a special job," The Knight leaned forward if only very slightly, hands still on his lap. "You are not a stranger, Mako Rutledge. We are very aware of your reputation as the strongest warrior in the Kingdom."

Strongest Warrior in the entire Kingdom? that's a new one. He normally didn't pay attention to things
as his reputations, but made sense. His massive size and strength helped, surely.

"Who is going to be my charge?" Mako went straight to the point- he didn't like to dabble.

"That is information I am not allowed to disclose at the moment."

Mako figured the person must be important. Maybe a diplomat, or one of the King's researchers. Some politician. The thrill of the surprise excited him for a second.

"If you do accept, you will be housed in your own private quarters in the Castle. You will be paid a very generous amount, and you will live comfortably." The Knight leaned back on his seat once again, looking straight at Mako in the eyes. "You will be expected to follow your duties as a bodyguard, protecting your Charge with your life."

Mako stayed silent, gaze fixated on the Knight. He thought about it- he wasn't that young anymore, and being a hitman was interesting but in the end, one day he would slip up and he would be caught. On the other hand, being someone's Bodyguard just sounded so... demeaning. Following some diplomat around making sure they didn't get killed was so... boring. His lips twitched as he took another long drink from his beer.

"How much money are we talking about?" Mako finally said. The Knight had said it would be a "generous amount", but he knew better than to trust people that already lived comfortably. The Knight blinked, and quietly pulled something from the bag he was carrying.

He pulled a big satchel out of it, its contents clinked metallically. He dumped it on top of the table, and it clinked hard. Mako took it in his hand and it felt heavy; opening it he noticed it was full of gold coins. Mako's eyes slightly went wide- it was far more than anyone had ever paid him for anything.

"That is just a small fraction of what you will be paid every week for your services." The Knight stood up, catching attention from everybody around them. "Please, keep the money. Consider it a bonus, for agreeing to listen to my proposal. If you do accept, you know how to contact the Royal Guard."

It's true, he knew. He had been jailed a couple of times before by them, due to improper conduct. Drunken brawls, basically. He didn't say a thing, watching how the Knight exited the tavern. As soon as he left everybody stared at Mako, who looked back at them, daring them to attack him. They all got the message, going back to their own conversations and drinks. The bag of money was heavy on his palms, and Mako toyed with it. He took the last sip of his drink, leaving the table and placing a gold coin on it. He had a lot of thinking to do.

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"Your things have been delivered to your sleeping quarters. You'll have time to settle on them at the end of the day." The maid cheerfully said. The image of her escorting Mako was a funny one, being twice her size taller. "If you ever need anything, please don't hesitate to call us, Sir. You are a guest of this Castle, and will be treated as such!"

They passed through many doors, and Mako's felt curiosity and excitement as to who he was going to protect. The secretiveness of it was strange, but it was probably some high tier politician.

"His Majesty himself would like to have an audience with you, before you begin your work as a bodyguard, sir."

The King himself? That's odd. Mako thought he would just be talking to a general, not the King. Just
who was going to be his charge?
They arrived to the throne room, the maid stopped just before they went through the doorway. She turned nervously to face Mako, looking up at him. "The King awaits for you, sir."

"Thank you, miss."

The maid blushed a bit, bowed slightly and left from where she came from. Mako sighed, stepping inside the throne room to face his Majesty.

It was the first time Mako had seen the King in person. He was older than Mako and looked like it, blonde hair, thick eyebrows and a short well groomed beard. He looked very... regal, is the word Mako was looking for. He kneeled at his presence, as he should do he guessed. He wasn't much for formalities but he was standing in front of THE King. He could afford to suck it up for the moment.

"Please stand," Mako obeyed, unsure of how to proceed. "You must be the new bodyguard. Mako Rutledge, is it not?"

"Yes, your Majesty."

"I've been informed of your reputation among the land. I hope you have the abilities needed for this job."

"Your Majesty," God, that was weird to say. "I assure you, whoever my Charge is, I'll protect them with my life."

It felt so weird to be talking like that, as if his voice wasn't made for saying such things."

"This is a very personal job for me," The King said, leaning forward in his throne. "Failure to perform your tasks will result in execution."

That caught his attention. Mako blinked, and simply nodded. He felt strange, and for a moment he felt like an idiot for agreeing to such a thing. Oh, well.

"I understand, Your Majesty."

"It is starting to get late, I would like my general to have an audience with you tomorrow at first hour. Then your responsibilities as a bodyguard will start." The King scratched at his chin. "You have not met your charge, have you?"

"I have not, Your Majesty. That information has not been disclosed to me."

"Very well. It is time to know who you will be protecting." He looked at his right, at one of the maids that was awaiting for orders. "Could you bring him in, please"

The woman nodded, quickly excusing herself. About two minutes passed before a shrill young voice could be heard, and Mako eyebrows knotted.

"Oi! I'm comin'! ya ain't gotta repeat it! I ain't a child!"

Oh, no.

"I- I'm sorry, his Majesty -"

"I know! I heard tha' first time! I'm going!"

Oh, no.
That voice was familiar. A lot of people around the area knew it, the shrill annoying young voice. It was one of the most annoying sounds to ever exist.

"Jamison, show some respect once in your life, will you?" The king called.

The prince, Jamison Fawkes finally stepped inside the room, being almost shoved by one of the maids. He was tall and thin, very well dressed. His hair was as blonde as his father’s, freckles decorating his very pale cheeks.

Mako felt dread on his stomach. No wonder they never told him he was going to be the Prince’s bodyguard- had he known, Mako would have said no. Prince Jamison Fawkes had the reputation to being, in no other words, a spoiled asshole.

He had a tendency of escaping the castle and wreck havoc on the city, throwing parties and generally just being an annoying jerk. He had never encountered him personally, but heard stories of people that have had to deal with cleaning up his mess.

Jamison was a disaster. A disaster now he had to babysit.

Great.

"What is it?" The Prince asked, cracking his knuckles.

"Remember how I said I was going to get a bodyguard to protect you, Jamison?" The King motioned towards Mako. "We've already hired one. Mako Rutledge is your new bodyguard, and he will make sure you are safe and secure."

Jamison wrinkled his noise, staring annoyed at Mako. "I ain't need no bodyguard." His hair was messy and bushy, as if he had just gotten up from a nap.

,"We've talked about this, son. You need-"

,"I at in no danger- you are being ridiculous? I don't need some old man to follow me around!"

The King sighed, tired. He rubbed his eyes, but then sat straight and spoke.

"If you want me to continue funding your life, then you will accept having a bodyguard."

Mako saw how Jamison tensed, eyes wide and annoyed at his father. He bit his lips, and looked at Mako, angry. Then back to his father.

"Fine," He sighed. "I'll humor ye. Whatever."

"Good. Now, don't be rude, go and introduce yourself."

"He knows who I am. Everyone knows who I am!"

"Jamison,"

Jamison groaned, annoyed, making his way towards Mako. The Prince was very tall, probably the tallest person Mako had encountered. He still wasn't taller than Mako, however. He approached Mako, rolling his eyes as he introduced himself.

"My name is Jamison Fawkes, son of James Fawkes the third. A pleasure to meet you." His voice
was annoyed and bored, barely making eye contact with Mako.

Mako tried his hardest to hide his annoyance, breathing through his nose. Should he kneel? He decided not to.

"Mako Rutledge. A pleasure to meet you, and to work with you." He hissed between teeth, already feeling how difficult this new job was going to be.

"Damn, you're big aren't ya?"

"Jamison,"

"What! I didn't say a thing!"

They were about to engage in a verbal battle, until a maid carefully approached the King.

"E-excuse me, your majesty, Lady Angela has arrived..."

"Perfect," The king sighed, and turned to Jamison once again. "Sir Rutledge, you can leave now. I'll leave everything on your hands now. Jamison," The Prince turned around, eyes fixated on his father. "Do not make his life difficult."

"Fine, father." He snarled the last words, as if he was challenging him. "See you tomorrow, Mako."

The prince exited the room, ignoring the maid that had accompanied him previously.

"Mauve, please show Sir Mako Rutledge to his sleeping quarters."

"Yes, your Majesty. Please, come along?"

Mako nodded, first turning to bow at the King once again.

"Goodnight, sir Rutledge."

Mako followed the maid around, passing along many corridors. "Your room will be situated right next to Prince Jamison Fawkes'. Your belongings have already been placed inside. If you need anything, do not be afraid to ask, Sir!"

They stopped at one of the rooms, the doors glistening white. The maid bit her lip, and lowered her head. "This is the Prince's bedroom. Which means, this is your bedroom!"

Another set of doors, elegant but not as pretty as Jamison's. Mako's opened them, the handle diminute on his massive hands.

It was a gigantic room, decorated with paintings and very fancy furniture. The carpet looked nice, as well, and the bed sat on the opposite wall of the room. There were so many different htings to look at Mako didn't know what to focus on first.

"Would that be all?" The maid asked nervous. Mako nodded.

"Yes, thank you."

"My pleasure. Goodnight, sir."

The maid hurried away, and Mako closed the door behind him. He sighed, as he started to explore the room. The dresser was already full of his normal clothes. There was a small desk on one of the walls, with paper and books. There were other things around, some useless decorations that didn't catch his attention too much.
The door on one of the walls lead to a bathroom, he found out after opening it and peeking inside. He was pretty much fit to live there in comfort.

Mako started the process of taking off his armor, placing it on the stand beside his bed. There were swords and other weapons as well, next to the stand. In case of an emergency, he guessed. After several minutes of taking it off, Mako plopped down on the massive bed. It could hold him comfortably, surely having noted his massive size and weight. He turned off the lights, staring at the ceiling of the room as he attempted to drift off to sleep. He sighed when he heard what sounded like snarls on the other room.

He was a bodyguard now.

Worse,

He was the Prince's Bodyguard.
Morning came fast, and Mako was awakened by the sound of a door slamming on the room next to his. Mako sighed, rubbing his face against the soft pillow, silk sheets gently enveloping him. He had to admit, it was the best sleep he had in years. It was slightly spoiled by the fact he still was Jamison Fawkes bodyguard.

Mako groaned. He needed to get up.

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"Sir Mako Rutledge, good morning."

The general's armor was a different color from Mako's, he noticed. Mako's was white, a color he found to be odd but didn't ask much about. It isn't until he realized that everybody else in the castle was wearing either golden or silver armors that it caught his attention.
"Good Morning, General," Mako greeted politely.

"I heard you already met your charge." The corners of the General's mouth twitched slightly, probably trying his hardest to not smile.

"I have."

"You now know why this is a very delicate job." His voice was stern and serious, pale blue eyes staring up at Mako. "Failure will mean execution. Is that clear?"

"It is clear." Mako was taller than him, so any attempts from the General to intimidate him were unnoticed.

"As the Prince's bodyguard you must know some crucial information. Are you aware of the Prince's reputation on running off and doing as he wants?"

"...Yes. I am aware." Mako tried his hardest to not roll his eyes. Everybody knew that the Prince Jamison just liked to break stuff and party in the city. It was charming to the young adults of the area, but for people like him it was just straight out annoying.

"This information must not leave this room." The General's gaze was intense, eyes locked with Mako's. "We have gotten threats from enemies. Threats directed specifically to the royal family."

"The Prince."

"He does not know about the threats. His Majesty requested us to not tell him about it. He does not want the Prince to worry."

Maybe that's what he needs, Mako thought to himself as he nodded.

"Is there an actual risk of assassination? Isn't there a chance that these are just empty threats?"

"It is the Prince- we cannot afford to not take threats seriously, and from now on, neither can you. Every little threat against the Royal Family will be taken very seriously."

Mako blinked. Made sense, it wasn't like it was just any random politician- it was the Royal Family. And now he was going to protect part of it. Great.

"For his protection, he shouldn't leave the castle grounds. The Prince... he does have his ways, however. In case that does happen, you'll have to protect him and bring him back as soon as possible."

"So," Mako huffed. "I became a overpaid babysitter."

Once again, the General tried his best to not laugh. "You will have an array of weapons you can choose to use to do your job appropriately. As an ex-warrior, I expect you are familiar with most of these?"

Propped against the walls were several weapons of different kinds. Swords, lances, daggers, arrow and bows- so many different weapons. Mako eyed at them. "I am familiar, yes."

"Pick whatever you are comfortable with. After this, your job will officially begin. It's early, the Prince is attending his morning classes. I must go back to my duties."
Mako nodded, letting the General pass next to him. The General stopped at the doorframe, turning towards Mako one last time.

"Congratulations on your new job."

He didn't know if he said it with sarcasm or not, and he once again wondered what the hell he had gotten into as he was left alone in the room. Mako sighed, walking over the vast array of weapons at his disposition.

There were many, of all kinds. He carefully tried to decide which one to pick. They were great quality, too– forged by the best blacksmiths with the perfect measurements, unlike the shit he had to deal with before. Mako bit his lip, he was a bodyguard now, wasn't he? He needed the appropriate weapons for the task. Protecting somebody... He wasn't good at long rage weapons. Mako rather have close combat. One of the weapons caught his attention as soon as he entered the room- a big, heavy morningstar. Mako grabbed at it, playing with its weight in his hands. He swung it in the air a couple of times, memories resurfacing. Mako smiled, tying the morningstar to his belt. It hung comfortably, and it made Mako feel like a youngster once again.

Why stop there? He was comfortable with the morningstar, but it wasn't exactly elegant. He let himself be excited, smiling contently as he picked up one of the swords. In the blade was imprinted the Royal Guard's crest; the blade looked extremely sharp. Now this was a weapon worth for the bodyguard of the Royal Family. It was heavy and sharp, he sheathed the sword and placed it on his back. The weight felt good, made him feel professional. As an afterthought, Mako grabbed one of the sharp daggers. He tied it to his waist along with the morningstar for easy access. Finally content, Mako was making his way to the door when he caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror.

Mako didn't recognize himself at first. He looked far too... good. He was used to wearing ratty clothes, and just leather armors back when he was a warrior. He looked like a soldier, a Royal Soldier. It brought him back memories of when he was a child, playing with wooden swords, looking up at the Soldiers and wishing he could become one of them some day.

Better late than never, right?

Mako sighed. Maybe this wouldn't be as bad as he thought.

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The castle was massive, it took Mako a while to find his way through it thanks to the helpful maids that gave him directions. Apparently the Prince had multiple classes per day, classes that normally he would skip just to do whatever. Its not like their teachers could stop him- he was after all, the Prince. It seemed Jamison had decided to go to class that day, however. He reached the classroom just after the class ended, it seemed. The teacher, an old man exited the room with a bunch of books under his armpit. He gave a curious glance towards Mako, but didn't pay much attention to him. The teachers and staff must have been informed of his job as a bodyguard.

Prince Jamison exited next, and he stopped to stare at Mako from head to toe. The prince was looking elegant and regal, it made him look sharp and dangerous, in a way. He scowled at Mako,
"Shit, guess me father was serious, eh?" Prince Jamison rolled his eyes. "About this whole bodyguard deal."

Mako stared down at him. Prince Jamison was very tall, but no one was taller than him. Tall and very lean, the total opposite of Mako.

"So, ya gonna follow me or what? Just gonna follow me 'round all day?" His accent was interesting, and Mako had never heard it before. He did remember that the Prince, studied abroad in another land. That's probably where he picked up the accent. "Ya gonna be my new shadow, huh? A new babysitter?"

"I'm your bodyguard, your Highness." He wondered if he should address the Prince as Highness. Prince Jamison rolled his eyes. "Please- that's what they all call me dad. Just call me Jamison, or Jamie or somethin'."

Mako wondered about it. Should he be so casual with him? Probably not, not yet, anyways.

"Damn, you ARE big, aren't ya?" Prince Jamison's eyes traveled to Mako's belt. "Ye already all geared up, huh? In case any bad guy decides to just kill me, huh!" He smiled wide, shiny white teeth showing.

"I am here for your protection, Your Highness."

"Yeah whatever," Prince Jamison sighed. "What's today's schedule?"

Mako shrugged. He wasn't informed about his schedule, and he didn't really want to learn it. He was a bodyguard, not a damn nanny. Yet.

"Sure, okay. Uh, ya hungry? I ain't haven eaten nothin' all day. Let's go, I know a nice pub in the city-"

"You are not allowed to exit the castle grounds."

Prince Jamison laughed, waving his palm in the air. "Ya passed tha' test, big guy! Dang, yer a good bodyguard!" He then proceeded to laugh loudly. Mako didn't know if he was being serious or not, about it being a 'test'. Prince Jamison didn't push it, so he guessed it was just his weird sense of humor.

"Come on, big guy. Let's get somethin' tha' eat." The Prince started walked, but stopped to turn at Mako. "Don't worry- I ain't goin' nowhere. Just tha' kitchen. Or ain't I allowed to do that?"

Mako blinked, shrugging. The Prince bit his lip, looking at him carefully. "Ya ain't a big talker, eh mate?" He once again smiled goofy. "No matter, I'll talk for the both of us."

That is what Mako was worried of, to be honest. He held his breath as the Prince giggled, leading they way. Mako followed behind closely.

"Ya first day 'ere, heh? How ya likin' tha' castle?" Mako was going to reply, but was interrupted by the Prince. "Too big, if ya ask me. That ain't necessarily bad! I remember I would explore it as a lil' tike. Before I left to study abroad, eh? Came back, it was just as big as I remembered! I feel it even got bigger!" He extended his arms for emphasis.

Mako opened his mouth to speak, but was interrupted once again. "I still get lost, sometimes. So if ya
feel lost or somethin', no biggie- happens to all of us! Well- ya ain't going to get lost no more. Unless I get lost. Cus yer followin' me, roight? So we'll get lost together!"

Mako sighed, making sure the Prince finished speaking to take a breath and start talking, but he got interrupted again.

"In fact, I started drawin' a lil map of tha' castle, ya know. It was so fun! It got details an' stuff, but it ain't of use cus I always forget to bring it with me- I gotta remember to bring it with me, eh? Well, I don't get as lost as I used to, aha!"

This was unbelievable. Mako figured he had to stop talking at some point. He wasn't wrong when he said he would speak for both of them. It was ridiculous.

They entered the castle, and it was strange to see all the people running around. The maids looked at both of them, mostly him. His white Armor sure stood out in comparison to the others, not to mention his size. And the fact that was following behind the Prince. Every single thing about Mako was worth noting. He was normally used to the stares, but these were different kind of stares.

"Oi, roight 'ere!" The Prince stopped at a big doorway, waving his arm and pointing as he stepped inside. "This 'ere is the dining room. If ya ever want tha' eat anythin’ ye can come here and ask anyone to make ya somethin’. There's always gonna be someone around." He stopped, thinking for a second before continuing. "Unless it's like, way past midnight mate. Everyone's asleep by then. So ya only can eat snacks or whatever is lyin' around. Can you cook? Do ya know how to cook?"

Used to it, Mako opened his mouth but was instantly interrupted. "Ya ain't gonna have to cook here! we got chefs. Yeah- they make anythin' ya want! Breakfast chefs, lunch chefs, dinner chefs- anythin’. There ain’t a specific hour tha’ eat. Just whenever ya want. Unless it's a big event with me father- then we all gotta be here and eat together. Oh, guess ye'll be eating when I eat, though, roight?"

How could one person talk so much? It was absurd. He wondered if the Prince realized just how much he talked.

"Anyways- let's eat!" He plopped down in one of the chairs without much care. Mako sat in front of him, the chair creaking a little underneath his weight. For a moment he was worried the chair would give out underneath them, and it seemed the Prince caught on his concern.

"No worries, mate. These are made to hold up a lot of weight! The Duke, who was way heavier than ya sat in one of those and it broke- so after that, they made ’em super strong!" Well, that made him feel better. He still was careful about it.

"Good morning, your majesty. Would you like to have some breakfast?" One of the maids approached him. The Prince just placed his feet on the table, looking up at the woman.

"Yeah, I would light scrambled eggs, with toast an' bacon on the side, eh? Make it about three eggs. An' use all tha' egg. No 'only whites' bullshit. Hey, ya want anythin'?"

Mako was slightly startled. It was still early and he hadn't eaten anything. He looked down at himself, and saw his armor. He decided it was the moment to spoil himself a little.

"Eggs," he said. He thought for a bit, and added "Ten eggs. Sunny side up. Sausages on the side. And Toast. Orange Juice, please."
The maid nodded. "Will be out in a couple of minutes," she said quietly as she bowed before hurrying to the kitchen.

"Ten eggs? Guess ya are big for a reason, ha!" The Prince laughed, taking off his feet from the table and leaning over it with his elbows on the surface. "Ya spoilin' yerself on yer first day aren't ya! No biggie, when I came back from boardin' school, did tha' same. Place fed you fuckin' scraps."

Mako snorted very silently. The Prince had finally gone quiet, but started to play instead with the knife at the table, making small holes on the tablecloth. It seemed that if he wasn’t talking, he had to be doing something with his fingers.

How annoying.

Eventually their food came, the maids placing the plates of food in front of them. Prince Jamison just started eating, grabbing spoonfuls of the eggs and shoving them into his mouth in a weird manner. Weren't Princes supposed to be graceful and elegant? It looked more like a toddler eating.

Mako turned to his plate. The ten eggs were carefully arranged, toast and sausage lying on the side. The food was steaming, it had just been finished being cooked. Mako grabbed a fork and placed one of the eggs on a slice of toast, leaning in to bite at it. The yolk broke, and he sucked at it.

It was delicious. Those were the best eggs he had tasted in his entire life. Mako kept biting down at the toast, finishing it. He changed his attention to the sausages, using fork and knife to cut it into pieces before eating it. It was spicy, but not spicy enough to hurt his tongue. The oil of the sausage was hot, but felt good on his mouth.

It was so, so good. Mako continued eating his breakfast, trying to remember every rule about etiquette at the table. He figured he would have to learn about actual table manners at one point, but considering the Prince was breaking every small rule Mako knew, it probably didn't matter at the moment.

"Ya look like a dangerous guy," the Prince took a drink from his glass, almost slamming it back into the table. "Ya been a bodyguard before?"

"Was a warrior," Mako replied. He was slightly surprised Prince Jamison actually let him speak for once. "Haven't been in some years."

"Oh, makes sense. I haven't seen a soldier like ye around 'ere. Ya do look more like a warrior."

"There aren't really much warriors like me, neither," Mako wondered if he should have said that, but it was obvious. He was big and strong- it was no secret. He never encountered anyone like him, not even during his warrior days.

"One of a kind, eh? That's okay." Prince Jamison went back to gorging himself, leaving Mako to eat with his thoughts.

One of a kind.
"...And these 'ere are the castle gardens. A lot of events are held 'ere, and inside on the ballroom. Real fancy!"

The gardens were decorated with many fancy flowers and trees, and the grass looked perfectly groomed. Mako was amazed at the size of it, but it seemed everything on that castle was massive.

"I wanted to give ya a tour, but the castle is way big, aha. Guess ye'll have to learn as ye go!"

Their "tour" was just Prince Jamison getting a bit lost a couple of times, showing Mako the hallways, the way to the throne room, the ballroom and the Castle Gardens. Mako slightly appreciated it, he knew he was going to get used to the castle but for now he felt diminutive in it.

A first.

"Come on, lets wander a bit-"

"Lord," one of the servants caught up to them. He looked slightly out of breath, probably from trying to find them. "His Highness requests your presence in the throne room."

"My father? Again?" Prince Jamison scrunched his nose. "What for?"

"His Highness wishes to speak to you about the upcoming ball. "

"Oh, right. Ain't there one of those every year?" He turned to Mako.

"It would appear so," Mako knew there was a ball every year, where politicians and royalty would hole up in the castle and do who knew what. It was a big event, and people prepared for it months in advance but he never cared for it. He would just roll his eyes whenever the young men and women talked about how excited they would be to see the pretty lights from afar.

"Aight, okay. Thank ya mate, we'll be in our way."

The servant bowed, and excused himself. Prince Jamison was already making his way towards the inside of the castle, not before looking over his shoulder towards Mako.

"Ya ever been in a ball before? It's like a big dance."

"I have not."

"Well, me neither- does it count if I was a lil' tyke? It was before i was sent away."

Prince Jamison nudged at Mako, his elbow poking slightly at his armor. "Guess will be first time for both of us, eh big guy?"

Prince Jamison smiled, and continued his way towards the castle. Mako huffed, following behind.

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Mako felt weird being in presence of King James Fawkes once again. This time was different, too; instead of meeting him in the throne room, they had gone back to the dinning room, the King sitting at the head of the table. Prince Jamison sat far from him, but close enough to still hear the King’s voice. Mako stood behind Prince Jamison, gaze fixated on the wall as he listened to every word.

"You remember the ball that has been thrown in the Castle every year, Jamison?" The King stared down at his son, the Prince simply occupying himself with the tablecloth.

"Roight, tha' ball. What 'bout it?"

"This will be the first ball you will attend after coming back home from your studies. This will be
Mako guessed the Prince's escapades to town didn't count.

"You will appear as Prince of the land. This is a very important moment, Jamison. It will be the first time you are presented in high society."

"Ain't that a thing only princesses gotta do?" He started bouncing his leg up and down. "Be pretty an' groomed to present themselves to marriage candidates, or somethin'?"

"You must act like a Prince, and that includes having Court Manners, a Royal presence and the like. You'll begin taking classes to improve your social skills."

"Pbht, please, I am very social!"

The King sighed, and turned his gaze towards Mako. "Could you please assure he gets to his classes? This is very important to me."

Mako nodded. "Yes, Your Highness."

"So ya will be my new babysitter. Great," Jamison huffed out annoyed, but didn't fight it.

"The Royal Ball will be held in December. We've already begun preparations for it, so you might see the Castle busier than usual."

Three months? Sounded like enough time to prepare. Mako wondered if he was going to have to take some classes on manners and etiquette. He was the bodyguard, so maybe he just had to look elegant.

"A winter ball," Prince Jamison looked over his shoulder and to Mako, smile spreading over his face. "Should be fun, huh?"

Mako blinked.

"Yes. It should be fun."

Three months were far enough to prepare.

---

The Prince classes started that same afternoon. Mako was given a sheet with the Prince's schedule, and a part of him felt a little insulted. Oh well. Etiquette classes, dance lessons, Court Manner studies- everything he needed to not accidentally insult some politician. It was dancing lesson time. Mako stood by the door as he observed the class. He had a personal trainer along with other dancers. It was pretty boring to just stare at all of them and at how they instructed Prince Jamison to stand and dance. The Prince was very tall, so it was difficult of him to adjust to the height of his instructors.

"Damn, hold on-" The Prince would try to follow, but it was difficult for him. He would legitimately try to do it, but he wasn't too graceful.

"Do not worry, my Lord. It is your first lesson. You will eventually get better." Said the instructor, bless her patience. The Prince bit his lip, annoyed look on his face.
"Whatever."

It was already dark out when the lesson had ended. Prince Jamison ended frustrated and annoyed, barging out of the room as soon as the class finished. Mako followed closely, the Prince's pace being fast unlike earlier that day.

"Fuck dancing. I hate it," He said, barely audible. Prince Jamison slowed his pace until Mako caught up to him, positioning himself behind his charge.

"Hey, ya know how to dance?" He pointed an accusing finger at Mako.

"No, sir."

"See? A Folk like ye don't need to dance. Dancing is stupid."

Mako frowned. "It's a ball. You will have to dance."

"I know, I know! It's just..." He waved his arms in the air. "Whatever. Let's go and-"

"It is late. You must wake up early tomorrow, for your classes."

"I liked ya way better when ya didn't speak, mate."

Mako frowned, mouth twitching in annoyance. He let the Prince walk away, for some seconds, then followed behind him, keeping his distance.

Congratulations, Mako, he thought as he followed the Prince, the young royal making wild movements with his hands. You became a babysitter.

He sighed. He had three months to prepare. Things would be okay.

"Okay," They stood outside of Prince Jamison's room. The Prince rubbed at his forehead, tiredly. "Tha schedule says, uh..." He picked at a folded piece of paper on his pocket, smoothing it and staring at it. "Etiquette an' Manners- that sorta stuff. Fun."

He stared up at Mako in silence, an incredulous stare.

"I cannot believe me father hired a bodyguard." He rolled his eyes. "Protection? Please. Ya are here just to make sure I go to my lessons, aint that roight?"

Mako took a deep breath. "I was instructed to protect you. That is my job."

The Prince groaned. "Whatever ya say. Ye'll eventually get tired and leave, like tha' others."

Mako blinked. He thought he was the first bodyguard the Prince ever had. He was in no mood of asking, already tired of the Prince's grating's voice.

"Okay, whatever. Let's see how much ye last." He opened the doors to his room. "G'night, bodyguard."

The Prince closed the doors to his room, and Mako stood in front of it for a couple of seconds. He sighed hard and deep, making his way to his own room. The walls weren't too thin, he guessed in case someone broke into the Prince's room so he could hear. However it meant that he was listening to the Prince's cursing. Once again Mako sighed, as he started to take off his own armor. Without armor and weapons on him, Mako rolled his old shoulders feeling them pop and crack. His
eyes fell on the clock at the wall- it was just ten PM. He would have to wait a couple of hours more. Mako sighed, sitting on the small desk that was placed against one of the walls. He took the schedule they gave him, already crumpled and dirty. There were many blank books he could use, and tools to write.

Interesting. Mako picked one of the books, one with a pale pink cover. He opened it, writing down the Prince's Schedule, along with notes. He blinked, and started to write things that came to mind. Notes about the castle in general, about the King, and about Prince Jamison. He blinked. He wrote everything he knew about him for the moment.

Prince Jamison Fawkes the First, son of James Fawkes the Third. Twenty three years old. Almost two meters tall. Blonde hair, amber eyes. Freckled.

Mako bit the pen.

Brash. Annoying. Talks a lot. Can't keep quiet or still.

Mako sighed. He stopped for now, closing the book and putting it back. He glanced up at the clock, and it was almost midnight. Mako stood up, stretching his muscles before he opened the window of his room, and stepped outside.

What a big security flaw. He noticed it the first day. He would point it out in the morning.

It was time.

Mako felt slightly uncomfortable at how easy it was to sneak out of the castle. Or maybe he was just very good at sneaking out. Back in his warrior days, even if he was massive in size he still was very good at sneaking around, escaping from places with tight security. This was no different. He made it out of the castle without no one being the wiser, and he made his way to the inner city. Even though he was very recognizable by his sheer size Mako was wearing a dark cloak, it at least helped him blend in with the darkness of the night. Mako was familiar with the alleys of the city; it didn't take him long to get to the particular one he was headed for. He stepped inside the alley, and into the shadows. He sighed, and awaited.

"Thought you wouldn't come," A voice called out. Mako lifted his gaze to see two cloaked figures approaching him.

"It's a long way from the castle."

"Sure is, Mako." They took their hoods off, their old scarred faces showing. One of them was missing an eye, and the other had a nasty scar on his nose.

"Peter, Murdoch." Mako greeted them.

"Mako," Murdoch, the one missing an eye said laughed softly. "Thought you would be too comfortable on the Castle, as a new bodyguard."
"So what," Peter approached Mako. "Did you finally find out who you are going to be bodyguarding?"

Peter and Murdoch used to be warriors too, but then they got old. They turned to kill for profit, but they weren't as good as Mako. He didn't keep much contact with them, except for this time in particular.

"I don't get it, Mako. You said you wanted to retire. Why would you accept to do this, then?"

"To retire, I need money. This will give me money." Mako crossed his arms on his chest.

"So, how's it going be? How are we going to do this?"

Mako leaned in closely, and the other two followed paying intense attention to him.

"There will be a Ball, in three months- the Winter Ball. You will be able to pick your target. After that, You will pay me half of what they pay you-"

"Half?!" Peter chimed up.

"Half. Or there won't be a deal. You will pay me half. Whatever you do with that is not my problem."

"We don't even know how much they'll pay us for your charge," Murdoch questioned worried. "What if they don't want whoever you are protecting? Do you even know your charge's rank?"

"Yeah Mako- the King ain't gonna pay ransom for some random diplomat, and no other kingdom will want them. How do we know we have a deal here?"

Mako smiled. "I guarantee you, you won't have any issue finding someone to buy for this one."

"Oh, right? Why so?"

Mako's smile just grew wider, his teeth shining under the moonlight.

"Because Prince Jamison Fawkes is my charge."

Chapter End Notes

What can I say? Mako likes to plan for the future.
They had three months to prepare, he would get his money, and he would move to the mountains, in a cabin, away from everything and everyone.
A perfect life.
He smiled to himself, the thought enticing. Just three months and that's all.

Mako starts to learn what it is to be Jamison Fawkes bodyguard.

I have no idea how I did it, but here comes another Update! To tell the truth, I wanted to update as much as I could, because next week I go back to working at the office so I won't be able to write as much as I want. So this week was "WRITE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN", so here it is, another chapter!
I am having a LOT of fun writing this, which is also why its ready now. i just!!! love it!!!!!!

Happy new year! or, like i like to call it, Happy "this fucking year is almost over oh my god" holiday! 2017, please, im BEGGING you.

Once again- my apologies for wonky English. My proof reader is away.

Thank you so much for reading!!!! Love you guys! I hope you like it!!!

The trek back to the castle was silent.

He had left Peter and Murdoch to plan how they were going to kidnap Prince Jamison. He didn't care- he was just going to make it easier for them. They had three months to prepare, he would get his money, and he would move to the mountains, in a cabin, away from everything and everyone.
A perfect life.
He smiled to himself, the thought enticing. Just three months and that's all.

Sneaking inside the Castle grounds had been as easy as sneaking out. Peter and Murdoch wouldn't have too much of an issue at their task if Castle Security was this bad. He didn't bother entering his room via window, if anyone spotted him Mako could just say he got lost on his way to the kitchen. Which, funnily enough, he managed to wander into.
The kitchen was massive, bigger than Mako's old home. It made sense, it was the kitchen used for huge banquets whenever there were celebrations in the castle. He was deciding between taking a late
snack, when he heard one of the refrigerators' doors slam.

Prince Jamison had slammed the fridge's door, holding bottles of soda, along with what Mako though were some cups of pudding; also, a bag of potato chips hanging from his hand. He could barely hold everything. He was making his way out when he noticed Mako staring at him, and almost dropped his snacks.

"Oh- hey. G'night," Prince Jamison said sleepily. "Ya followed me 'ere?"

He looked tired. Prince Jamison was wearing the same clothes he had the last time Mako saw him, but was no longer wearing his coat. His button shirt had some buttons opened, the collar crumpled and out of place. Mako also noticed he was barefoot.

Mako blinked. "Yes."

"Ya look like ye were ready to go out," The Prince was eyeing at his cloak, and Mako shrugged. "Thought you might have tried to get out of the Castle Grounds. Armor takes too long to put on."

Prince Jamison made a half nod, satisfied by Mako's lie. "Nah, just was hungry."

Mako glanced up at the clock on the room. It was almost three in the morning. "It's too late to have a snack. You have to be up early tomorrow."

"Whatever," The Prince huffed and ignored him, walking past him and into the hallway. "Ya ain't my dad."

Mako huffed, as he followed Prince Jamison back to their rooms.

Three months. Then, he would be free.

---

For someone that had gorged himself in soda and snacks in the middle of the night, Prince Jamison seemed decent the next morning. He did seem distant on his etiquette lessons, but that might be just his personality in general. Mako didn't care, as long as it didn't make his job more difficult. Like with dancing lessons the previous day, Prince Jamison complained and huffed about his current lesson. He rolled his eyes at every motion, but followed the motions to bow, handshake, salute and other movements that Mako didn't recognize. It was so weird to see someone being literally taught manners, but he guessed they had to learn from somewhere, right? They even placed books on top of his head for him to walk with. How cliché.

"How many of these damn classes do I gotta take?!" Prince Jamison yelled at the end of his lesson on table manners. They had placed all those forks and knives in front of him, it was like something out of a fairy tale.

"Next is your language class" Mako opened the folded paper on his pocket, with the schedule. After a while he was going to memorize it, but had to use the guide for now.

"Language? The hell is that 'bout?"
"It will make you speak properly," Mako pointed at his with a fat finger. "No accent, I assume."

"I can get rid of me accent whenever I want," he snarled.

"Then why do you speak like that?"

"This is how tha' locals spoke where I went to study abroad, mate. I grew there, what did ye expect?" He grabbed a cereal bar from his pocket, ripping it open and eating it. For all the manners he just learned he didn't show any.

"It Isn't very royal like, the way you speak."

"Oi, the fuck ya know? Ye ain't look like royalty to me, mate."

Mako's fists tightened, fingers digging into his palm.

"Yer just a backwards commoner. Ya of all people don't have a right to sayin' if I'm bein' regal or not!"

Mako took a deep breath, and let it out through his nose. He felt his fingers digging harder into his hand, and softened them. Prince Jamison stared at him, awaiting for his reaction. Did he want him to get angry? Mako wanted to punch the little shit, but was sure he would be execute if it came to that. Maybe that Is what he was after.

He took another deep breath, and started counting from one to ten. Prince Jamison kept staring at him, waiting.

"It is in your schedule for you to take this class," he rolled his tongue. "your Highness."

Prince Jamison stared at him carefully for a couple of seconds, and blinked.

"Fine." He dropped to his seat, leg propped up the table, cracking his knuckles while staring at the wall awaiting for his next teacher to arrive. He didn't pay attention to Mako, or anything really as he busied himself on playing with his fingers and cracking his wrists.

Mako could not wait for the Winter Ball to come.

---

Language class was... interesting.

Repeating tongue twisters, practicing enunciation, repeating words over and over again until they were pronounced correctly; just learning how to talk and to try to get rid of the Prince's accent. He didn't like the accent, but Mako had to admit that the Prince was right- how did they expect him to not have an accent, when he grew away?

It was not his problem, anyways. Mako just busied himself by taking out the pink book he had gotten from his room, writing down everything he thought was worth noting as the lessons went on. Notes about the teachers, the area, the classes in general.

He lifted his eyes from the book when he heard a snarl. Prince Jamison grabbed the books balancing on his head, throwing them to the floor.

Mako went back to the page where he wrote about him.

He sighed, putting away his book.

Not only did Prince Jamison have to attend etiquette lessons; his schedule still had normal classes, such as history and politics. Mako noticed something interesting—while the Prince would complain as much as possible, roll his eyes and huff at the previous lessons, during these classes Prince Jamison would keep quiet, write notes and God Forbid, be interested in the topic at hand. He didn't pay much attention to it.

It has been already four days since Mako started his new job, and every day was just as the other. Make sure the Prince would go to his lessons, make sure he would go to sleep every night and repeat. Prince Jamison would snarl, yell and huff at the mandatory classes, but he would always ultimately attend. He would also talk and talk to Mako, but the bodyguard had already learned how to tune it out. The Prince didn't notice, anyways. It was the end of the fourth day, and before they headed to their bedrooms Prince Jamison stopped by the kitchen, fetching a bottle of apple juice and a muffin. "Ya want anythin'?" he asked Mako, shoving it in his mouth. He always stopped for something to eat before going to bed, Mako noticed.

Mako nodded, grabbing an apple and a water bottle. Mako started biting on his fruit while they walked back to their rooms. Prince Jamison waved his hand on the air, not turning to Mako before he uttered out a "G'night" and closing the door.

Mako sighed, finishing the last of his apple as he got inside his own room. He started the process of stripping off his armor and he knew he should go to sleep, but wasn't tired yet. The man rolled his shoulders, and they popped gently. Having following the Prince around was annoying, but he hadn't had a decent work out in a while. He decided it was the time to do some simple exercises.

He started with push ups, taking off his shirt for them. Mako huffed as he did a couple of series, eventually losing count and just continuing the exercise. It made him feel more relaxed, the way his sweat began to roll down his shoulders and neck. He wondered if he could get a punching bag somewhere. And stick on it a drawing of Prince's Jamison's face. He smirked at the thought. Mako stood up, and went to the closet. There was a bar there, and the idea of pull ups came to his mind. He quickly discarded it, considering he was far too heavy and it probably wouldn't stand his weight.

A weak sound from the other room snapped him from his thoughts. Mako kept still, trying to identify the noise. He heard glass rattling- a window frame. Quickly and quietly, he approached the his window only to see Prince Jamison already making his way through the gardens, cloaked.

Mako sighed, quickly putting his own clothes on along with a cloak, picking up his dagger and morningstar as he squeezed his way out of his own window. He chastised himself for having forgotten to inform the staff about how insecure the windows were.

The bodyguard followed him closely, wanting to catch up with the Prince so he could drag him back to the Castle, but the little shit was too fast. He had already managed to sneak out of the Castle grounds, entering the city with ease- he was no stranger to escaping.

He went deep into the city, going through streets and alleys Mako recognized but he wasn't too sure to where he was actually going. Mako used the time to wonder what would happen to him if the Prince got hurt.
The bodyguard wondered if the threats made towards the royal family were real. As far as he knew, the Royal Family gets threatened all the time, they are the Royal Family after all. Peter nor Murdoch had anything to do with those threats, so whoever was behind them just had a different agenda than them. For what was worth it, the two ex-warriors were just two people willing to sell the Prince to whoever offered more money. If the threats were real and the Prince god killed, there would be no money for him. Mako had to be careful of that.

Mako blinked, noticing that the Prince had stopped. He opened a metal door, slipping inside. He groaned- he recognized the place.

He quickly made his way inside, closing the door behind him. The place reeked of alcohol, loud chatter and music. It hurt his ears, and he hissed at the bright lights inside. God, he was old.

The pub was full with people, most of them younger than him. He stood out big and old, but no one actually paid attention to him, everybody too busy drinking and chatting amongst themselves. Mako looked around, trying to find Prince Jamison. Even if he was taller than most people, there was far to many movement for him to properly spot him.

Mako sighed while making his way towards the patrons, slowly shoving them out of the way and checking if Prince Jamison was any of them. They looked at him confused, with angry looks in their faces that he kept shoving the youngsters aside.

Youngsters? God, he was so old.

He was starting to get severely frustrated until he heard a shrill laugh. Mako lifted his gaze, spotting a tall hooded figure just at the other end of the bar. He huffed, making his way towards the lanky figure.

"Ya won't believe what me father did now," Mako focused on the grating voice and the strange accent, ignoring the other voices and hollers. Prince Jamison was with other two people, both of them as young as him. One of them was a young woman, long hair and pink tattoos on her face (how bold); the other was a young black man, long dreaded hair. They were drinking, staring up at Prince Jamison and laughing. "he hired me a goddamned nanny!"

"Did he really, now?" The girl asked, and Mako was approaching steady, shoving people out of the way. People were started to get agitated, but he paid no attention to it.

"Well, he's supposedly a bodyguard or somethin', but me dad is exaggeratin'. He just wants someone to keep an eye on me!" There goes that annoying laugh again.

"Does he know you're here?" The man laughed, taking a long sip from his drink. Mako was closer now.

"Nah. Moron was too busy doin' workouts or somethin'- slipped right under his nose!" Mako was now standing behind him, and both the Prince's friends stared at him with wide eyes. The Prince didn't notice, taking a drink from his beer pint and lifting it in the air. "What an idiot!"

Mako grabbed his arm while it was still in the air, his palm engulfing's the Prince's skinny right arm. The Prince instantly tensed, eyes going wide. "Oh, is that so?" Mako said, loud enough for them to hear.

"M-Mako?" The Prince replied, startled. He attempted to yank his arm away but Mako had a very firm grip. "H-hey mate! How- uh, how's it goin'?"

"Holy- uh, that's your bodyguard?" The girl said still staring up at him. He was easily thrice her size- she was very short.
"He's... very big." The man said, swallowing spit. Mako saw as his Adam apple bobbled in fear.

"Good evening," Mako greeted, still holding Prince Jamison's arm above his head. "My name is Mako Rutledge. I am His Highness's bodyguard."

"N-nice to meet you!" The woman laughed, but still was visibly nervous.

"Hey mate, Uh, do-do ya want a drink? I'll pay!" Prince Jamison tried to wiggle away but it was useless- Mako would not let go.

"We need to go back to the castle," Mako's voice was calm but boy was he pissed. The frantic chatter behind him did not help, the voices getting louder and louder. "Now."

"But- I just got 'ere! I was just- I was catchin' up with me friends!" He used his other arm to point at the two youngsters. "Me father won't let 'em get inside tha' castle! How am I supposed to chat with 'em?!

"It is not my problem," He noticed the other man looking behind them, at the people who were yelling, confused. "My job is to protect you. You are at risk here, and we must leave."

"Risk! Risk of what?! Getting' wasted?!" Prince Jamison snarled. The woman followed her friend's gaze, half standing up to look behind Mako, brows knotted in confusion. The screaming became unbearable, and Mako turned his head to look behind his shoulder. People were yelling, running around panicked. Some were trying to pry the door open, but couldn't. The smell of... something reached Mako's nose. "Wait- do ya smell th-"

It happened so fast. One moment he was holding Prince Jamison's arm, and not letting him go. The other, a huge flash of red flooded his eyes. On instinct Mako enveloped himself on the Prince, using himself as a shield. There was a loud bang after the flash of light, and his back was hot and in pain. Broken pieces of wood bounced off his massive back, and people started to yell frantic. Mako's ears were ringing and he felt the Prince shake underneath him. He was like a bear trap, tight and dangerous. After making sure that he wasn't dead, Mako finally opened his eyes. The building was full of smoke, it made his eyes water. Mako took a deep breath, the air hot and polluted. He let go of the Prince and he stumbled back, Mako had to yank him by the arm to stop him from falling. Prince Jamison's eyes were glassy, in shock. His friends were in the same state, dirt and sooth covering them. They had ducked under a rock table, avoiding the debris that had managed to reach the end of the room.

The scream hadn't subdued, and Mako turned around. Then he saw it.

The bar was engulfed in flames, a gaping hole on the wall. Smoke spilled from it, the fire very quickly spreading over the rest of the bar. People laid on the floor, dead and broken, burnt to death. The smell of something was replaced by the smell of burnt bodies. The survivors were screaming, crying and trying to claw their way out of the building but the door was stuck. They were trapped, the fire engulfing everything.

Mako saw. Mako calculated how much time he had before the flames completely engulfed the place.

Five minutes. They had Five minutes.

Mako rushed practically running towards the stuck door. He gently but quickly shoved the people aside. With his bare hands he gripped at it, and pulled, but it was still stuck. No, not stuck- someone
had locked it from the outside. As he pulled at the door he quickly scanned the room, trying to see if there was any other way out.
This fucking shitty pub—Mako remembered he hated it because it had no fucking windows.
Goddamn.

Four minutes.

His mind was frantic. He roared, muscles bulging and twitching underneath his tunic. With one strong pull, Mako managed to tear the door open from its hinges along with its locking mechanism. He threw the door aside, and people were already shoving to get out and get free air. The fire had reached the ceiling, and pieces of the wooden support beams were falling. Goddamn shitty pub with its stupid "rustic" theme.

Three minutes.

Mako lifted his head, feeling relief when he saw Prince Jamison and his friends were already rushing towards the exit. He stood there, awaiting for them. The support beam above them gave out, crashing against the floor along with part of the ceiling. The girl and the man were fine if startled, but it blocked the Prince's path. They screamed.

Two minutes.

He was instantly by his side, shoving his friends away so they would get away. They did so, and he attempted to pull at the debris with his bare hands but it was too hot. There was no other way to get out of there. Mako pulled out his morningstar and yelled at the Prince to get back, swinging it and slamming the weapon against the debris. It creaked, bits and pieces flying and hitting him on the face but he kept doing it, getting the debris loose enough for him to pull at it with his hands. There was a small opening, just wide enough for the Prince to squeeze through.

A minute.

The Prince tried to crawl through it, getting stuck at the middle. With a huge palm Mako grabbed at his wrist and pulled. The Prince hissed. There was no time. Mako shoved the prince under his left arm, the right still holding his huge morningstar. The ceiling began to crack and burn above them, and Mako ran as fast as he could.

About thirty seconds after they got out, the building collapsed on itself, a heap of fire and rubble. Mako huffed, hot and sweaty. He noticed he was carrying the prince like a sack of potatoes, so he helped him up. The Prince blinked, rubbing at his sweaty face in shock. Mako was also in shock—he could barely process just what happened. People were wailing around him, yelling and sobbing as they hugged close. The smoke polluted the sky, the stars hidden.

The authorities were already there, probably made their way since the explosion happened. Mako took a deep breath, feeling his back sore. He was tired, but this was nothing compared to the other stuff he has done back in the day.

"Fuck..." He heard a startled voice. Looking down, he saw Prince Jamison staring at the wreck of the building, eyes wide. "Holy... holy shit."

Mako huffed. Yeah, holy shit indeed.

Medical services were already taking care of people, everybody still afraid and sad. Mako stared at the fire still burning strong.
"It was deliberate."

Mako blinked, turning to stare at the Prince. His cloak had some holes on it, the edges of it burn off. He used it to cover himself up. He had a snarl on his face.

"There's a lot of alcohol in pubs, maybe it started as a small fire. An accident."

"No," He hissed. He saw journalists already piling up, being blocked by the authorities. The Prince slowly placed himself behind Mako, hidden. "This was deliberate. Someone did this."

"How do you know?" He stared at the fire. How could he tell?

"That smell. It was- it smelled like gunpowder." Mako's head whipped around, staring at his small charge. "Bars don't have gunpowder. They don't- why would they? That would be stupid."

"It wasn't a big explosion, though."

"Who cares," the prince shrugged. "Just needed enough tha' set fire to tha' place. It was all made of wood- and look at it. If it wasn't for ya, we would be under tha' rubble. This was deliberate."

Mako blinked.

"We... always come to this place- well, used tha' come 'ere. People know I like it 'ere."

An attempt.

Mako turned to stare at Prince's Jamison's friends. It seemed he noticed this, negating with his head sharply.

"No, no. Why would they be with me if they were tha' culprits?"

"That's a good excuse," Mako pointed out. "The old, 'it wasn't me- we were there'."

"They didn't even know about ya- if ya hadn't... we would've-"

His voice broke. Mako stared at him, and he shook his head once again. The Prince's eyes were glassy and red, frame slightly shaking. For someone that had been really close from death, he sure was keeping his composure. Just like he in his lessons.

Mako bit his lip. "Not them, then."

Prince Jamison sighed deeply, noticing how the journalists were already pointing at him, and screaming. Mako put himself between them, blocking their view of the Prince. He was still pretty shaken by what just happened. Even if they wanted to leave, the only road out was blocked by the authorities and the journalists.

"Did," He sighed. Mako looked at him. The Prince stood straight, attempting to keep his presence. "Did many people... die?"

Mako recalled seeing up to twenty corpses, not counting the people that got stuck in the inside when it collapsed.

He hesitated. "No."

Prince Jamison took a deep breath, and smiled to the journalists who hollered at him, their fingers pointed at him as they wrote down on their little notepads.
"Liar."

Chapter End Notes

Mmmmm, smoked ham.
Kangaroo Kebabs

Chapter Summary

They stood on the throne room, awaiting an audience with the King.

Chapter Notes

Threats stop being just threats, and Mako has to be more careful.

Hello my name is Andy and I like to post chapters at weird ass hours of the night. Here goes another chapter!!! I am really seriously enjoying writing this!!! This is the first time i've ever written anything related with royalty themes and the like. I am having SUCH a blast, and I hope you too are having one!

This chapter gets a lit bit gorey and visual, just a heads up.

No proofreader this time either- I promise next chapter i'll have a proof reader to check on these.

Thank you for reading!! I hope you like it!!!!

By the time it was sunrise both of them were already back at the Castle. Mako had the privilege of shoving people out of the way as they returned to the Castle Grounds, specially pesky brown nosed journalists that just kept trying to get words out of the Prince. Through it all, Prince Jamison seemed serene and unworried until they got inside the Castle. Then, his shoulders sagged, back hunched while groaning, rubbing at his eyes. Medics instantly rushed at them, making sure they were fine. Mako's back was slightly burnt, but nothing some ointments couldn't fix. Prince Jamison was unharmed, so Mako had at least succeeded on his task.

They stood on the throne room, awaiting an audience with the King. One of his Guards had come to them informing the pair that his Majesty wanted to talk with them immediately. They were drenched in sweat and soot, and reeked of smoke- they didn't even had the chance to change clothes.

"How did you know, about the gunpowder?" Mako broke the ice while they were still waiting for the King to show up.

He shrugged, and Mako didn't push it. At least not for now, anyways. He was starting to doze off while standing up when the King finally decided to appear. Mako stood straight, clothes still with holes from the fire. Prince Jamison didn't look any better, his fancy clothes torn apart and with scratches on the elegant fabric.

The King looked exasperated, and while he still looked regal Mako could obviously tell he just got out bed. His eyes were red and swollen, beard was ungroomed and his clothes were wrinkled. He had never seen him like that, or imagined he could look like that.
"Evening, gentlemen," his voice was stern, powerful. Mako blinked, slightly amused at how he sounded so important while looking so tired. "Guards, could you please stand outside for a minute?"

The Royal Guards did so, leaving the three of them alone in the room. The King stared at Mako, with tired and angry eyes. "I believe I hired you to prevent these scenarios from happening," his voice was low and commanding.

"I attempted to get a hold of Prince Jamison but was not able to." Mako's voice was stern, serious. He stared right at the King's eyes. "I saved the Prince and other people from death on the fire."

"Is this true?" His tired eyes turned towards the Prince, who was staring at the floor. He nodded casual, not raising his eyes to meet those of his father's.

The King took a very deep breath, and stared right at Mako. "Very well. Could you please wait outside, while I speak to my son?"

"Yes, your Highness." Mako replied, bowing slightly with his head and turning to leave the room. Just as he exited through the doors he saw the Prince staring back at him over his shoulder.

Mako stayed at the other side of the door, and whatever they were talking about he couldn't hear. He heard some loud voices, but he couldn't actually make out what they were saying. Several minutes passed until he eventually dozed off, standing up and propped against the wall.

He was eventually awoken by the sound of steps coming out of the throne room. He rubbed at his tired eyes as the Prince left the throne room. The young Prince rolled his shoulders, rubbing at his forehead tiredly. He glanced at Mako, and awaited for him to get to his side before they started walking towards their rooms.

A couple of hours had passed, and it was time for the Prince's lessons to start. He sighed, rubbing at the back of his neck. "Dress up- we gotta get to tha' first lesson."

"You just almost died." Mako pointed out.

"Get used tha' it." He smiled weakly, as if he was trying to find the humor on the situation. "There are gonna be lots of threats. Like the one that made 'em hire ya."

Mako blinked, not saying anything.

"Yeah, I know. I had tha' idea, but me father just confirmed it now. Not surprised, honestly," He sighed softly. "I just didn't think it would be like, now, get it?"

Mako huffed. He really didn't get it, and it was weird the young man was so unamazed by the fact that he was threatened. But he was right, it wasn't surprising at all.

"Wonder who did it," he smiled. "Other politicians? Rebels? Who knows! Just someone wants me dead, heh?"

Mako said nothing, once again. What could he say?

"Guess we will eventually know, huh?"

They reached their rooms and Mako so wanted to sleep, but he needed to suit up. The Prince took a deep breath, turning to his bodyguard. "Thank ya, for back there."

"It's my job. Literally."
He giggled softly. "Well, good job. If it wasn't for ya, we would all be dead." He sighed. "See ya in a bit."

After that, the Prince entered his room. Mako sighed, going into his respective chambers, taking off the ruined clothes and throwing them to the ground. He was so tempted to just crash into his bed, but so was the life of a bodyguard. He put on his white armor, along with his weapons and went outside. The start of a new day.

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"Would you like some coffee, Sir Rutledge?"

Mako turned around, facing the maid. She had pushed towards him a little tray cart, with some elegant snacks, some ceramic plates, cups and some coffee pots. Mako rubbed at his eyes, realizing how tired he was as he saw the Prince continuing to butcher the art of dancing.

To the horror of the maid, he took an entire coffee pot and chugged it.

It was still very hot and it slightly burnt his tongue but it was what he needed to wake up. He placed the now empty pot back on the tray, and the maid just stared at him with a mixture of horror and amazement. She weakly pointed at the small tarts, and Mako took one. It looked hilariously small on his giant fingers, the tart decorated with kiwi and strawberries on the top; he ate it in two bites, savoring the sweet flavor.

"You're getting better, my Lord," the instructor had told the Prince. He probably was too tired to complain and bitch about having to dance, and he just rubbed at his eyes tiredly. There was still some coffee left that Prince Jamison could drink if he wanted, and he probably really needed it too.

He took another one of those little tarts, this one with powdered blueberries on top of it. He ate this one in one bite, the sweet cream filling soothing his burnt taste buds. He proceeded to just observe the dancing lessons and while the Prince still stumbled and did some awkward movements he sure improved since day one.

The day went on quietly, the young Prince too tired to yap as he normally did; not only that but he just seemed... quiet in general. Less fidgety and jumpy, and he barely spoke the entire day. Mako was honestly thankful for this, even if himself was on the verge of passing out due to exhaustion. He noticed how the maids would talk and whisper whenever they came near, not due to him but due to his Charge. One eventually approached them, flustered and red faced. She handed the Prince a newspaper, averting his gaze. "My Lord, I- I think you should see this,"

Prince Jamison grabbed the newspaper, smoothing it with his hands. Mako looked down on the newspaper, his eyes falling on to the first page- the main story.

Assassination Attempt – Pub Explodes in attempt to kill Prince Fawkes, it had a picture of the Prince on its first page, burnt clothes and full of sooth and dirt. Prince Jamison sighed, crumpling the newspaper with his hands and shoving it against the ground.

"...Thank you," he hissed out, and the maid nodded and left in a hurry. He tossed his arms to the air, exasperated. "Great, another scandal! And this one got dead people in it, too! Just what I need!"
yelled out as they continued walking, reaching the armory. They were early for the next lesson, so Prince Jamison basically dragged himself to the small table with snacks and coffee. He grabbed one of the cookies, shoving it inside his maw and almost swallowing it whole.

Mako knew that this had happened before. He had read newspaper issues with the Prince's face on the front page, most of the time was about how he trashed a pub, or how he threw a hue inappropriate party in the city. This was different- this was an actual attempt on his life.

"Got to keep appearances, me dad says. 'Don't get yourself killed', He says!" Those Language classes were sure having effect on him, since the Prince managed to perfectly mimic the King's voice.

"You should be safe inside the Castle Grounds." Mako pointed out and got a groan as a reply. The Prince went to serve himself another cup of coffee, adding a lot of sugar and milk to it. He took a large drink out of it, sighing softly when he finished.

"I thought ye would be quittin' at this point," he mentioned, taking another drink from his coffee. "Near death experiences would make most quit."

Mako shrugged.

"Ye're so weird."

"Why's that?" Mako had already drank an entire pot of coffee, but they still had half the day to go so he served himself in one of the small cups. He liked his strong, no sugar and no milk. The bitter taste always woke him up.

"Apart of yer huge size, ye don't seem very bodyguard material, mate. I mean- ya were never even a guard, were ya?" He drank down the last bit of his coffee, slamming the cup so hard on the table it almost broke. "Yer just a random huge-ass commoner, aren't ya? Did ya even go to a school or- or somethin'? There gotta be some guard school, roight?"

Mako huffed.

"I mean, what if some ass just comes and tried to kill me? What ya gonna do about that? Ya know how to fight? Ye seem too big to do it gracefully."

"Did you forget I literally saved your life last night?"

"Roight, but- that was an' explosion. What if, what if some asshole comes and shoots me with an arrow or somethin'? Are ya ready for that?" His voice broke, and Mako wasn't sure if it was because he was so tired or another reason. He didn't want to know, to be honest. He didn't appreciate the fact that this kid was questioning his abilities, specially since he saved him from a horrifying death. What right did he have?

"What were ya, before this?" He asked, as if he had any right to know that.

"No one," Mako huffed out. He stared at ceiling, wondering if all that money was really worth having to stick with this kid for so long. Soon, he would be staring at the sky, far away from here. That should be worth something.

"Wow, that's sad, ain't it? Don't ya wanna be someone?"

"No." He really, really didn't. Mako just rather be by himself, happy and content without having to worry about people murdering him, or selling him out like Prince Jamison should be worrying about.
"What are we even waitin' for now? What's on tha' schedule?"

"Fencing class."

"Oi, that's new. It's gonna be one time per week eh? That sounds interestin' an actual sword an all. That'll be fun!" Mako could tell there was still uneasiness on his voice.

He sighed, spotting the door opening and the General of the Royal Guards coming up to them, with a person in tow. A woman about his age, and Mako felt like he knew her. He couldn't recognize her, however so he just brushed it as seeing her in a pub somewhere in the past. The woman was clad in protective gear, and a sword at her side. Her hair was blonde and curly, and she had a striking scar on her cheek. She looked over to Mako, but then turned her attention to the Prince.

"Good afternoon, My Lord." The General addressed the Prince who just waved. "Apologies for the wait. Your new instructor is here, Ma'am Alice. She is a fencer with astounding references, and she will teach you."

"Greetings, My Lord." She bowed, and Mako felt something tickle at the back of his neck. "I have taught many soldiers, many generals and now, I will teach you the art of fencing."

The Prince tried his hardest to not laugh, and Mako had to admit it was a little corny. But it seemed everybody in that place was corny, except for the Prince himself. He stuck out like a sore thumb in a place full of luxury, with his eccentric accent and weird manners.

"I have other duties to attend to, please continue with your daily schedules." The general then turned to Mako, nodding. Mako nodded back.

As soon as he left, the Prince cracked a smile. "So? Where's me sword?"

"For now, My Lord, we will practice stances. Eventually you will have your own sword, like this one," She unsheathed her foil, the thin blade shining under the light. The Prince eyes sparkled in interest, mouth agape in awe. Mako snorted softly.

"Lets go to the practice range, My Lord; then we can start."

Prince Jamison nodded with excitement, following Alice out of the armory. Mako followed suit, getting into the indoors practice range. It was a big arena, with dummies propped against the walls, as well as bullseyes for archers. The area was empty sans the three of them. Alice unsheathed a wooden sword from her hip, and put it on the Prince's hands. "For now, we will practice with this for your proper stances."

"Alright!" He proclaimed, grabbing it with greedy hands. They went to the center of the range, and Mako stood against the wall observing them. He caught the woman occasionally glancing up at him, pale eyes observing him carefully. He ignored her, but was curious as to why he felt he knew her. He tried to remember, but just couldn't recall it. It started to really bug him, but there was nothing he could do. It would come to him eventually.

"This is the proper stance, in fencing balance is very important. Keep your back straight..."

Mako got distracted, thinking about the previous night. He wondered how the Prince even knew about gunpowder and its smell. It was such a tiny thing, but it made him think. He took his book out along with his pen, and began to write what happened the previous night. The explosion, the gunpowder- everything and every little detail he could remember about the night. He had no idea of how many people were after the Prince's life, as far as he knew it was just whoever bombed the Pub. Going out to the city was not an option anymore, lest anyone decide to be
brave and try to attack.

He sighed. Mako hoped the Prince understood the dangers of going to public. Probably not.

He sighed, as he continued to write on his little book. He got bored, so he started drawing little cartoony piggies on the corners of the papers, and on the blank ones. Round piggies. Fat piggies. Piggies with curly tails. Heart shaped snouts.

"Wot- like this?" He lifted his gaze to see the Prince practicing his stances as Alice corrected him; he was much taller than she was so it looked pretty comical.

"How many people have ya trained? I think I'm too tall."

"Do not worry, My Lord- I've trained people wider than you, with more girth. Soldiers, Warriors- this will no be challenge to me."

Warriors?

Mako put away his book and pen, staring at the woman. She trained warriors?

His eyes got wide as he finally recognized the woman.

Mako broke on a sprint towards the woman while unsheathing his sword; the woman eyes widened in understanding. She smiled, staring at Mako as she opened her mouth, words spilling like poison from a vase.

"Long Live the Prince."

The wooden sword clattered against the ground. Prince Jamison's body contorted forward in pain. The woman pulled out her foil, letting the Prince fall to the ground clutching his torso in pain.

"Duke Ian sends his regards." She waved her Foil, blood splattering on the floor in little drops. Mako ran at her, she was far too busy making a scene that he managed to catch up with the woman. She jumped away from Mako's grasp just barely.

"I remember you, you used to be a great warrior. Didn't know you became a Royal Dog," she sputtered as she kept dodging Mako's grasp, his sword swinging in the air in an attempt to get at her. "Hard to forget a folk like you."

Mako didn't reply to her retorts, snarling instead. The woman jumped backwards already attempting to escape. Her cloak swung around and Mako was able to grab at it. He dragged her back with a hard pull and she was already swinging her foil with her right hand. Mako grabbed her right shoulder as he dragged her, and twisted it hard until he heard it pop.

The woman screamed, her arm hanging limp at the side. She continued kicking so Mako brought her closer. He thought of killing her, but they could get information on who she exactly was later, so he decided to just immobilize her. He pulled her in, and he wrapped his thick arms around her torso. He squeezed hard, her ribs cracking under him. She screamed in pain even after Mako let her go, and she slammed against the ground, whimpering and twitching. Mako sighed, content with how she wouldn't be able to move now.
Oh, the Prince.

His stomach went cold as he left the woman be, his gaze falling on the crumpled figure on the floor.

Prince Jamison was sweating, lying on his side his left elbow slightly propping him up. His hands were pressing against the wound beneath his chest, somewhere along the ribs. She may have aimed for his heart, but he is far too tall she missed. He looked like a damn mess, blood spilling dangerously from his wound to his pale freckled fingers and into the floor. His blonde hair was sticking to his sweaty forehead, his elegant clothes crumpled and ruined.

He was staring up at Mako, shoulders rising up and down and attempting to not freak out. It probably was hard, with a hole on his torso. He gritted his teeth, swallowing his spit and pain. He laid on the floor, blood still pouring. He looked so fragile and terrified, his golden eyes staring up at Mako, waiting for something—anything.

"It's okay," Mako said, finally. He kneeled in front of him, one palm resting on the youngster's shoulder. "It's okay. It's going to be okay."

"You-" He hissed, his hands pressing harder against his wound. "Don't- know that."

Mako started to feel something like panic, his fingers shaking a little. He forgot about the money, about the ball, about selling Prince Jamison—those things stopped to exist, his title as a Prince was nothing but just a formality. This was a boy, who was dying.

"It's going to be okay, I promise."

He needed to get help. Mako stood, but Jamison's weak whimpers made him stop. "Don't- don't leave me- Mako! Please-"

Mako grit his teeth. He quickly kneeled, scooping the Prince on his hands. The boy whimpered at his touch, pressing at his wound even more. Mako practically ran towards the door, but first stopping where the assassin was. Making sure she wouldn't go anywhere, he stomped on one of her ankles hard, successfully breaking it. She had already passed out of pain, so didn't make a sound. He proceeded to kick open the door, slipping outside.

Jamison was breathing heavily, his cheek pressed against the white armor. He breathed through his mouth, hissing and shaking. "Easy- it's okay, you're okay," Mako breathed out. He wished he knew where the first aid was, though he probably needed more than just first aid.

"I need a medic!" he eventually screamed, his deep intense voice rumbling across the hallways. He had no idea where to go- what if he went somewhere and it was the opposite direction? He didn't want to take the risk, but Jamison's breathing became more and more labored. "I- we need a medic!"

He tried to soothe the boy, his mind racing to find a solution. "It's okay- Jamie, Jamie look at me."

The kid looked up, his eyelids sagging and in the verge of passing out. His hands were completely coated on his own blood, his expensive shirt ruined. "Jamie- look at me. Keep awake- don't close your eyes."

Jamison weakly nodded, but it was inevitable- he went limp. Mako could see he kept breathing but he felt that kind of horror he hadn't felt for decades, prickling at his neck and making the hair in his arms stand.

"Oh my God!" He heard a high pitched voice scream. The maid had dropped whatever she was holding, hands pressed against her mouth in horror.
"Bring the guards! The assassin is inside!" He roared. She frantically nodded, her face pale and sick. More maids gathered and along them guards- good enough for Mako. The maids quickly ran towards where the medics were. Every second felt like a damn eternity to Mako, his jaw clenching and eyes stinging.

Lucky for them, the medical wing was actually pretty close from the Practice Range- practical reasons and all. It still felt like ages for Mako, who almost torn down the door leading to it.

"There has been an attempt!" He screamed, his voice making the windows shake. The nurses looked as horrified as the maids but acted quickly as the others went to fetch the doctors. He carefully but quickly deposited Jamison's body on the stretcher the nurses shoved next to him. They began running towards the emergency section and Mako followed without even realizing.

He saw how they pulled Jamison's hands off himself, letting him see the wound on his body. It looked like melted jelly, meat looking like the steaks he normally ordered for himself at the pubs. Revolting. They shoved him in one of the rooms, nurses and people who he assumed were doctors beginning with whatever they were going to do. They shoved his expensive clothes to the ground, falling stained and ruined.

Mako felt far away, like he was looking everything through a blurry glass. He saw how they injected the prince with various liquids, cleaning his wound and stabbing him with other tools he didn't recognize. It felt like slow motion, the way they began to pump things into him, how they all were quickly methodically putting his hands on him, his pale frame stained with blood, his ribs sticking out of his flesh.

He didn't realize when one of the nurses gently nudged him. Mako blinked, turning to stare at the man.

"Excuse me, Sir, You- er, you must leave-"

Mako stared at him for several seconds, processing the words. He nodded, slipping out of the empty room with the nurse following.

"Sir, are you okay?" He looked nervous. Mako was used to it. "Are you hurt-"

"No," Mako flatly said. The nurse nodded, slipping back inside once again.

He stood alone outside of the room, other nurses who were tending to other issues trying to not stare at him. How couldn't they? The scene had been quite dramatic. Mako took a deep breath, and approached one of the nurses.

"Please inform me of any news."

"Y-yes, Sir. I will." She gripped at the roll of bandages she was holding.

"Thank you," he nodded, making his way out of the medical wing. There was a wall mirror near one of the entrances, and Mako inadvertently took a glance of himself before going through the doors. He stopped, further examining his reflection.

His polished white armor was coated in blood, dripping to the floor. His massive hands were coated in it, already starting to dry. He felt so depraved.

Mako stared at himself for a couple of seconds, his heartbeat increasing. The realization that he had called The Prince not only by his first name but by a short nickname hit him, but he didn't care. The kid- the **Prince** was dying. And no one heard, anyways.

He went through the doors, finally. He quickly approached from where he came from the walls
shaking around him. It felt as if each one of his steps broke the tiled floor, his fists heavy and hot. There were already lots of guards piling at the outside of the Practice Range, surely awaiting for their General. Mako didn't know if he outranked them or not but to be honest he didn't give a shit- he just shoved them apart, entering the room once again. They all stared at his stained armor, the blood of their lord on his hands.

Guards were surrounding the woman, and Mako shoved them aside. If they were saying anything, Mako ignored it. He could feel his ears buzzing, his throat knotting as he saw the woman staring at him from the floor, incapacitated.

Mako grabbed her from the throat, and lifted her above the ground. She hissed in pain attempting to claw at him but failing.

"Who are you?" He hissed, his grip on her tight. She stared at him, then at his bloodied armor. She smiled, her thin lips twitching at the edges since she was still in obvious pain.

"Seems you lost your heir."

He stared up at her, his eyes drilling holes on her skull. She kept smiling, even though she could barely breath. Mako had no idea for how long they were in that position, until someone called out to him.

"Sir? Sir," it was the nurse from before. He didn't stop staring at the assassin, her smile still sharp and disgusting. "We have news of the status of Prince Fawkes."

Mako felt his jaw clench, his the mouth of his stomach going cold.

"He is stable, sir. They are still working on him, but he will be safe."

He felt a huge weight lift off his shoulders, and smiled when he saw the woman had stopped her smile.

"Seems you're bad at your job."

Mako let her crash against the ground and she screamed loudly. Guards were already making their way to surround her again. Mako passed the General on his way out, who just silently stared at him. They said nothing, but the General just stared at him with deep eyes. Mako didn't falter, until the General was the one that disengaged his stare.

Good.

He made his way towards the medical wing once again, ignoring anyone who stared at the blood on his hands.

He needed to be there when Jami-

He needed to be here when the Prince woke up.
Mako chugging coffee was based on real life events. It was me I chugged a lot of coffee.
Chicken Alfredo

Chapter Summary

If the Prince dies, the Duke will be the next in line to the throne.

Chapter Notes

Politics, explanations, and some mixed feelings.

Hello!!! Here's another chapter of Prince AU!!!! god I love writing this fic so much.
This chapter has some exposition, so it isn't really action-y, but a month has passed since
Mako became Jamie's bodyguard, and things are changing.

Turns out, after witnessing someone almost die your thoughts about them change a bit.

Did i mention i love writing this??? because I do.

Thank you for reading and I hope you like it!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Duke Ian Wellington.

Brother of Amanda Wellington, the woman who eventually wed James Fawkes, and became
Amanda Fawkes and became Queen. About a year after their wedding, they had a child- Prince
Jamison Fawkes the first.

Duke Ian had always wanted to become future King of the land, and wedded with a woman whose
name Mako can't remember, and they got pregnant with a child. Both mother and baby died at
childbirth, making Prince Jamison Fawkes the one to become King after his father passes.

If the Prince dies, the Duke will be the next in line to the throne.

Mako sighed, sitting right next to Prince Jamison bed. They were still in the hospital section in a very
elegant private room. It was decorated with fancy flowers, chairs and decorative pillows that served
no purpose apart from looking pretty. Mako took a glance towards the Prince, the young noble still
sleeping. His chest was completely bandaged, his frame slowly rising up and down with his gentle
breaths, and he looked so small.

Stabbed right on the liver, he was told. He lost a lot of blood but it wouldn't be fatal, the Doctors told
him. Mako took a deep breath. He had cleaned his armor with a rag the kind nurses gave him,
scrubbing the blood of it. It wasn't enough however, traces of blood still shining on his white armor.
He traced his thumb across the smears on the armor, a sick feeling rising up his chest.

Mako grumbled, going back to writing on his pink book as he tried to remember every politic fact he
knew.
After Duke Ian's wife and child died, Queen Amanda fell terribly ill. She died when the Prince was five years old; there were rumors as to what actually happened but she 'officially' died of a strange illness. After her passing Prince Jamison was sent to a boarding school in Australia. The sons of many politicians were sent there, as far as Mako knew. People talked, assuming Prince Jamison would never come back, that he would be assassinated while abroad. Political tensions grew between the King and the Duke, but nothing came out of it apart from passive aggressive gestures to each other. At least, until Prince Jamison Fawkes returned.

Then, the threats and attempts became very real.

Mako never asked who Peter and Murdoch planned to work for, but maybe it was the Duke? Unlikely- the Duke would prefer the Prince dead rather than kidnapped. The assassin did mention Duke Ian, so he probably sent her. Mako sighed. He wasn't one to care about that kind of stuff, if they left the villagers and himself alone. Now he had to be involved in this political fiasco, so he better learn as much as he could. He pinched his nose, putting away his book and pen. It has been a very, very long day.

He reclined on his sofa, the poor furniture creaking underneath his weight. It has already been many hours since the incident and yet Mako still felt uneasiness on his stomach; it was quiet, way too quiet. He used to welcome it, but the quietness of the room just made the hairs on his neck stand. Being in the Prince presence without him talking was outright disturbing, and Mako didn't like it.

What was he talking about? Prince Jamison was incredibly annoying- he should welcome the silence.

Mako rubbed his eyes, figuring that he was going to have to sleep there for the night. Even if Prince Jamison was okay it was better if they let him rest in the medical wing for now. The Prince stirred slightly, moving his head to rest against the pillow and facing Mako. The bodyguard stared for some seconds, but then turned his face around to stare at the yellow flowers instead. He doesn't need this.

The sun was beginning to set when there was a very faint knock at the door. As Mako stood up the door opened, a Royal Guard peeked his head inside, nervous and unsure look on his face. "Sir Rutledge?"

Mako nodded, approaching the Guard. He was younger than him, but older than the Prince. Mako towered over him easily, but again he did that with everyone. "Hello."

"I have orders to inform you, Sir... the Assassin, she refuses to speak."

He huffed- of course she wouldn't say a thing.

"She... She says that she will only speak to you, Sir."

That's... odd. He barely knew the woman, he didn't know why she would have such a strange request.

"Hmm..." He looked behind him, to see the Prince sleeping peacefully.

"The General has agreed with you going and speak to her. Two guards will be stationed outside this room, to keep His Majesty safe."

Mako turned, and yes in fact there were other two soldiers already at the door. He felt strange about
leaving his charge, but he supposed it was okay.

"Alright," he sighed, following the man.

His steps were heavy, echoing hard against the tiles of the hallways of the castle. Mako was practically exhausted, not having slept ever since last night's fire. And now this. He was, so far, a shitty bodyguard.

They reached a room at the other side of the castle, slipping inside Mako saw the vast numbers of guards inside of it, whispering amongst each other. They all stared back at him, but Mako didn't know what to make of it; he was unsure if they were staring due to what happened earlier (him drenched in blood was not a normal sight), or because the woman called for him? He didn't care in the end, he realized. He just wanted to get this done with.

"She is inside." The General approached Mako. He looked exhausted as well. "The woman refuses to speak to us. I'll be inside with you- make her talk. She has been tied up as well, so she won't be of any trouble."

Tied up? That was excessive. Mako made sure to break her bones so she couldn't move.

"Shouldn't she be checked on by a medic?" Mako grumbled. The General frowned immediately, voice rising and shoulders tensing.

"She will be attended by a medic when we get our answers. Now, lets enter, shall we?"

Mako stayed silent, following the General inside the little metal door. He had to crouch to be able to enter, and had to squeeze through it a little as well.

The room was small and dark, with only one old lightbulb hanging from the ceiling, lightly moving back and forward. At every corner stood a guard, staring at the center of the room. The woman, the assassin was tied up against a metal chair. Her face was pale and bruised, her broken limbs tied tightly against her. She looked in pain, eyebags under her tired red eyes. Mako guessed tying her up was more of a torture than a means of restraint.

The woman smiled and blinked slowly.

"Oh, it's the Bodyguard." She twisted her neck slightly, face scrunching slightly in pain as she moved against her bounds. "Knew you would come."

Mako just stared at her feeling how tense the atmosphere was. The guards were all staring at him, and he felt their eyes heavy on his skin. He sighed, looking down at the woman. He stare deeply at her eyes and she softly tilted her head.

"Well?" She asked, white teeth shining with the light "Don't you want to say anything?"

"You requested me here. I thought you were the one that wanted to talk to me."

"I don't trust any of them," she roughly said as she pointed with her head towards the guards around them. "You are the only one i feel I can trust."

"I don't know you, and you don't know me. Why do you pretend we do each other?"

"We don't know each other, but I know you, Mako. You were a warrior- a great warrior, at that. What happened? What made you choose this boring lifestyle?"

"That is none of your business." This was getting annoying. "You said that Duke Ian sent his regards. Did he send you?"
The woman laughed. "Maybe he did, maybe he didn't." She licked her lips.

"If the Prince dies, then Duke Ian will be next to the throne. It would make sense for him to send me to kill the Prince, right?" Mako stared at her not making a sound, without moving. His gaze was still fixated on her, his face unreadable. "Yet, it would also make sense for a third party to send me, and say Duke Ian sent me, right? Provoke a civil war between the Royal Family, for someone to use the opportunity to take the throne for themselves. Mmm..."

She had a point. Mako's mind immediately went to Peter and Murdoch, but the idea was to steal the Prince- not kill him. At least, not for now. Besides, they didn't trust anyone that wasn't each other or Mako.

"I was a great warrior, you know. Do you remember?" He stared at her.

"I recognized you from several years ago. You were one of the few ones with a foil. Nothing more."

"My golden years... those were your golden years as well, weren't they?"

He didn't say a thing.

"We grew old. We had to get a job somewhere- this is mine. And yours?"

Her smile was wide and sickening. She knew something, or at least she pretended she knew about it. He didn't care at all, he wouldn't give her what she wanted.

"I am the Prince's Bodyguard," his words were strong, deep. He stared hard at the woman, her smile faltering. "Nothing more."

She fell silent, her eyes looking at Mako's stained armor.

"How did you manage to slip inside the castle so easy?"

The assassin laughed. "You need to strengthen your lines. It was not hard at all."

He sighed loudly, he had enough of that crap. Mako turned around to face the General. "Is that all you need? I presume she won't say anything else."

The General nodded and Mako immediately made his way towards the door.

"Have fun at your new job," the woman laughed as he exited. He ignored her, closing the door behind him after leaving the interrogation room. He noticed the other guards staring at him but Mako paid no attention, making his way towards the infirmary.

---

As soon as he arrived to the Prince's room the other Guards left their posts. Mako paid little attention to it, entering the room to continue his job.

"Oh, hey," The Prince softly greeted. He was awake, but seemed still groggy and tired. He shifted under the covers, slightly propping himself up in the bed and wincing at the movements. "Wondered where ya ran off tha'. I thought ya maybe quit."
"I had business to attend to." Mako sat once again next to the bed, the sofa creaking softly.

"Business? I am yer business, ain't I? Ya gotta take care of me an' stuff." He laughed. "Ye're shit ar yer job."

"Doctor said that you will have to take it easy for now."

He stayed silent for a while- strange. Mako looked at his face, and realized he was staring at his blood stained armor. The Prince shifted, averting his gaze from the armor.

"Who sent her? Was it my uncle?"

"We don't know for sure."

"Eh, roight."

"You seem okay for someone whose uncle may be plotting to kill him."

It may have been a little bit rude to say that but Mako knew he was right. Even if they had no idea if it was really the Duke, Prince Jamison was strangely fine for someone that was stabbed.

The Prince shrugged.

"You were almost killed."

"Gotta get used tha' it. I knew that when I came back 'ere I would get targeted. I mean, I am tha' Prince! It makes sense everyone wants tha' kill me." He smiled wide, resting his head against the pillow and giggling. "Occupational hazard an' all. Hope yer ready for it!"

"It's late," Mako sighed out trying to ignore the whole 'I'll get used to attempted murder'. "You need to rest."

"What 'bout ya? Ya goin' to got to yer room or somethin'?" He didn't complain about resting, his eyes still tired.

"I'll stay here."

"Ya don't have to."

"It's my job. I have to."

Prince Jamison smiled weakly, letting out a soft "ha".

He quickly fell asleep, his body relaxing and breathing quietly. This... felt better, Mako noticed. Having seen him awake and talking eased him in some strange way. It was still so weird to be in the same room as him and it being so quiet, but it definitely was an improvement.

Mako started to slowly fall asleep, his armor slightly uncomfortable but not enough to prevent him from drifting off. Eventually, he fell asleep.

Blood flooded his dreams. His beautiful white armor was drenched in blood. It wasn't his blood.

Not his blood.

The Prince. He was dead.
He woke up, slightly startled. It was already the middle of the night, moonlight shining through the window and into the bed. He felt at ease when he saw Prince Jamison sleeping peacefully on the bed. Alive.

Mako took a deep breath, letting his tired body relax.

Three months. Just three months.

---

Two weeks have passed since the incident with the assassin. Prince Jamison was now healed and he went back to his normal schedule. Mako had been informed that the assassin had been executed due to her attempt on assassinating the Prince. They didn't manage to find out who exactly she worked for, unfortunately. Mako shrugged- they would eventually know.

The King has been very quiet himself, strangely enough. He expected to be reprimanded the same way he was back when the Pub burnt down, but nothing happened- as far as he knew he hadn't even talked with the Prince.

"He has a lot of political issues to deal with." The Prince said, twirling with the fork on his hand. He sunk it on the plate. "He's probably tryin' tha' figure out who sent that woman."

Mako’s fork sunk on his food as well. It was pasta but unlike spaghetti, flat and thin covered with creamy white sauce. Not tomato, no- it tasted creamy and milky. He stabbed one of the fat pieces of chicken with his fork, bringing it to his mouth. It tasted buttery, pleasant on his tongue. Ever since he moved in the castle he has eaten like a noble- he would normally eat either at the sub par pubs or food he cooked himself, and while he wasn't a bad cook per se he didn't have the energy to cook anything that wasn't mediocre spaghetti.

"He's comin' to tha' ball, my uncle." The Prince said as he shoved some of the pasta into his mouth, white sauce covering his thin lips. "Him and a lot bunch of people."

"Do you trust him to come here?"

The Prince shrugged. "If he don't come then tensions might raise even more. Speculations start. Besides, he may not have done it. We ain't sure of nothin' yet." He took another bite, cleaning the sauce off his mouth with the back of his hand. Mako wondered if the etiquette lessons were really working. "Besides, I got ya, big guy!"

Mako felt something on his chest at these words but he ignored it, choosing to eat the pasta. It tasted cheesy, but in a good way.

The rest of the dinner was uneventful, with Jamison speaking and talking about his classes. The things he learned in Australia, the people he met there, the lands they were from. Mako didn't realize he was paying attention, even if Prince Jamison liked to laugh while he still had food on his mouth. What a child.

The night was over, and so they returned to their rooms. Before the Prince slipped inside however, he turned to face his bodyguard. "Hey, I don't think I ever thanked ya, did I?"

"For what?"
"Ya know, savin' me couple of weeks ago. Stoppin' that woman."

Mako blinked. "It's my job."

"Well, roight, but just wanted to say thanks." He smiled softly, then replaced by a shrill annoying giggle. "See ya tomorrow, mister bodyguard!"

He entered his room, shutting it behind him. Mako sighed as he entered his own room, proceeding to do his night routine of taking off his armor and slipping into something far more comfortable. His pink book was full of so many notes he had been writing about everything those past days, including wherever Duke Ian had been behind the attacks or not. The corner of the pages had little piggies he drew himself, and also notes about Prince Jamison. Mako sighed, putting the book on his desk and grabbing a literature book. He started reading before going to sleep- it was far better than just obsess with his notes.

He leaned down on the huge mattress, letting out a content groan as his weight sank. The sheets were very comfortable and silky, feeling great on his rough skin. The book was some historical fiction romance novel. The author descriptions of how she thought Royalty was like made him laugh a little. If only she knew the prince. In the book, the Prince was elegant, well mannered and quiet. He was kind and dreamy, everything Prince Jamison was not. Mako continued reading it anyways, basking in the author's descriptors of the peasant woman elegant clothes, her silky pastel colored dresses waving through the air along with rose petals. How cliché.

The Peasant woman in the book was about to meet her lover, the prince and she was excited. Mako turned the page when he heard some strange noises coming from the room next to his- the Prince's room.

He put the book on his gut, paying attention to the noises. They were soft, like if someone was rummaging through clothes. The shuffling continued, and Mako ignored it to continue reading his book. Mako immediately put his book down when he heard what he thought was a very low moan coming from the other side of the wall. He stared at the wall itself, another moan coming out of it. Mako stood up very quietly, making his way towards the wall and pressing his ear against it, and the noises were louder.

It was Prince's Jamison room, and he heard loud panting, soft pleased whimpers from the other side. Something in his stomach lit up when he realized what he was listening to.

And yet he couldn't stop listening.

He assumed he was pressed up against the wall as well, hearing the soft jerk of flesh and the panting. Occasional moans spilled from his mouth and it made Mako's cheek burn. He pressed his ear against the wall listening carefully. He tried to imagine Prince's Jamison on the other side. Was he clothed? He probably was. He imagined him in the elegant clothes he wore that day, his back pressed against the wall. His long fingers wrapped around his shaft (Was it big? Thin?), pumping and caressing himself. He heart a soft thump against the wall and Mako assumed he jerked his head back a little too hard. He imagined his lanky body, lips parted and eyes closed as he continued with his pleasure.

Silently, Mako's fingers crept up to his pelvis, his shorts already tenting, member half hard. He thumbed himself, head pressed against the wall. His forehead pressed against it, thick fingertips
freeing his thick penis from his shorts. Mako swallowed, the soft moans from the other side just making him more eager. The mental image of the prince flashed on his eyes, no longer clothed. He had only seen him naked with bandages and blood, but he tried to imagine him soft, lustful.

Mako twisted his fingers, caressing himself softly at the head and the base of his own dick. His hands were soft, imagining the supine body at the other side of the wall. The sounds the Prince made were enough to make his heart grow, his cheeks reddening. His breathing was hard he noticed but Mako tried his hardest to not make a sound, the Prince's breathing becoming more and- he was close.

He pumped himself harder, his thighs tingling and his stomach coiling. He licked at his lips and he heard the sweet soft release of the person at the other side. The Prince whined in pleasure, and Mako had never heard his voice like that- needy and lusty, heavy breathing coming from the other side as he basked on his own release.

Mako imagined him, splayed next to the wall, skin shining with sweat and pleasure, his dick throbbing as it softened.

And he wanted that.

Mako bit his lip as to not make any sound, ropes of cum shooting from the thick head of his penis. He tried to control his breathing, not wanting to make a sound that indicated he was still there, cum covering his palm and making it sticky. He swam in his own climax, eyes opening and staring at his own mess.

Mako silently stood up, going to the bathroom to clean his hand off the cum. His stomach began to sink as the cold water cleaned his cum, the temperature prickling his calloused skin. Done, he slipped quietly into his bed shifting underneath the covers.

His intestines twisted, realizing what he had done. He had only known him for a month, and now this?

He erased it from his mind, ignored the way he imagined his body to be like. It was not part of the plan. It would never be part of the plan. He wouldn't let it be part of the plan. Mako brushed his face harshly with his palm, wrapping himself underneath his covers as he closed his eyes and forced himself to drift off to sleep.

In two months, his plan would come to an end. And there was nothing that would make him change his mind.

Chapter End Notes

B)
Chapter Summary

Pancakes. Fluffy, thick and soft. A pile of pancakes, with butter between each pancakes, the top of the pancakes covered with delicious heavy maple syrup.

Chapter Notes

It's an important day, and Mako spends it with the Prince.

Hello! Here's the new chapter! I had a lot of fun writing this one. I don't really got much to say apart that I am super enjoying writing this and I am super super thankful for everyone that reads it and likes it. Thank you!! you guys inspire me to keep writing awh.
I hope you like it!! Thank you all for your nice comments ;w;

Fun fact: Beef Stroganoff is made on a slow cooking pot, so i guess you can say its a slow burner
...yeah.

I hope you like it!!! Thank you for reading!!!!!!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Pancakes. Fluffy, thick and soft. A pile of pancakes, with butter between each pancakes, the top of the pancakes covered with delicious heavy maple syrup.
It tasted really good. Mako had a very big pile of pancakes, neatly stacked one on top of another. He cut through them with a knife, delicately so he wouldn't make much of a mess.

Prince Jamison's pile was smaller than Mako's but it was messier. It had pancakes thrown everywhere, with maple syrup drowning them as well as butter- it was more buttered syrup than pancake at this point. He would shove the food messily into his mouth, spreading maple syrup on his lips.
Mako went back to staring to his pancakes. The events of the previous night lingered on his mind, but he ignored the thoughts. It was nothing, just him jacking off. If the Prince just happened to be jacking off at the same time then it was just a coincidence- that's that.

Prince Jamison took a drink of his glass of milk, still focusing on his messy breakfast. "Wanna do somethin' today?"

Lessons and the like were put on hold that day. The entire castle seemed more solemn, and Mako knew why. It was the anniversary of the Queen's death.

He didn't mention a thing to Prince Jamison, lest he accidentally say something very insensitive. Everybody in the kingdom mourned her death as her subjects, but this was her son. He didn't seem much different however, perhaps just a little bit less hyperactive than always. He shrugged,
motioning he didn't really have plans for the day.

"Well, its tha' first day off we got since thee stupid classes started, I fell behind some personal projects. Wanna work on that today, ye don't mind?"

"I don't." Mako drank from his cup of milk. He was curious about what 'Personal Projects' the Prince could be working on. Besides, if that kept the young Prince busy, better for Mako.

"Aight then! We'll be headin' off after I finish, okay?" His eyes got very wide for a moment, and he leaned forward excited. "Oh! I'll show ye all me projects!"

He went back to eating the messy pancakes. *Fun*, Mako thought, as he finished drinking the last of his milk.

---

"It ain't too far from our rooms- it's on a different floor, though!" Prince Jamison cheerily said as they walked through the castle. It has already been a month, but Mako still felt lost whenever they walked through it. He had managed to memorize the corridors they always took, but the building was far too massive. There was still so much to explore.

They reached the end of a corridor, climbing through the narrow staircase- it was so narrow Mako could barely fit through it. It spiraled into the second floor, leading to even more corridors, and at one side was two huge doors. Prince Jamison stopped at it, fishing a small silver key from his pocket and unlocking the doors.

"When I got back from Australia, I asked me father to give me a room where I could do shit in. He gave me this room- I ain't too sure what it used tha' be before, but who cares, eh?"

He finished unlocking the doors, pushing them open with both his hands. They creaked loudly and the Prince had to push with his entire body to open them. Mako helped, using one hand to finish opening it with no problem.

"Thanks, Mate!" The Prince gingerly said as he proceeded to enter the room. "Do ya mind closin' tha door? don't like maids sneakin' up on me."

Mako did so, closing the door easily behind him. He turned around, eyes widening as he saw in full view the room.

It was very big, about the size of the training arena. It was divided by different sections with plywood, plastic and metallic sheets, and even pieces of cloth. There were many tables scattered along with shelves, many materials on them. At first Mako couldn't find sense to it, but after a few minutes he realized that it was organized: each section was to a different subject- Chemistry, cartography, carpentry- one entire section had all of its walls covered with blueprints and designs of god knows what. There was so much to observe, Mako didn't know where to look at first.

"What... is this?" The bodyguard asked, staring at the room taking it all in.

"It's me workshop! 'ere is where I work on me personal projects. Pretty neat, eh?"

"You..." Mako approached the section that was dedicated to cartography. Huge maps hanged from
the walls, with little notes elegantly scribbled around the edges. Inking and drawing supplies laid on
the table along with a map that was on the process of being finished. Mako resisted the urge to touch
it with his fingers, knowing that it would probably get ruined if he did so. "You did this?"

"Yup! Got taught how tha' at Australia. That and, well, all of this." He motioned to the entirety of the
room. "Pretty cool, huh?"

Mako nodded. He was, honestly, astounded.

"Oh, let me show ya somethin'!" He grabbed Mako's hand and almost dragged him towards the
correct station. The table was full with vials with bright colored liquids inside. Weird shaped vials
and bottles, tubes that bent over like slinkies. The tables had burners on them, hooked up with gas
hoses to the wall. It looked like a typical chemistry lab, the walls on that section covered with
drawings of formulas, and hand drawn elemental tables.

"Remember how ya asked me how I knew that smell was gunpowder?" Mako nodded. "I ain't a
stranger to chemical reactions."

Prince Jamison grabbed a pair of googles from the table, strapping them on. He threw another pair at
Mako, who silently put them on. He was slightly worried why he needed them, but he didn't want to
risk it.

"Gunpowder is mostly made to make explosions of tha' destructive kind. It is very dangerous, but!"
Prince Jamison put on some security gloves, then he pulled a vial from the shelf with very little black
powder on it. He opened it, pouring some of it on a glass. "If ya use tha' right amount, along with
other ingredients, it can have a complete different reaction!"

Mako observed very carefully as the Prince grabbed more vials with different, bright colored
powder. He sprinkled them on the same vial. His face was lit with joy, eyes wide as he poured more
bright powder, his lips widening in a bright smile. It was as if he was in his element, creating
something out of nothing. Mako couldn't stop staring at his face, his freckles scrunching up as he
continued to smile.
Mako blinked. He diverted his attention to the vial itself, trying to ignore that warmth crawling up his
belly.

"...What are you doing?" He asked, staring at how the Prince shook the small vial so the powder
would mix.

"Ye'll see. Explosions can be controlled- even be very small, eh? Well, look at this!" He placed the
vial on the floor at Mako's feet, grabbing matches from one of the many shelves. He lit it, letting the
lit match fall into the vial. By reflex, Mako shoved the Prince back just before the match landed on
the powder. When it did, the glass exploded, a cloud of en smoke emanating from it with very bright
lights flooding the area. Mako stared at it with wide eyes, the bright lights shifting into the ceiling
until it completely dissipated.

"Whoa!" Prince Jamison said from under Mako, patting him on the arm gently. "No biggie, big guy!
I told ya it was controlled! I was just showin' ya what I could do. Impressive, huh?"

Mako kept staring at the smoke, and then at the floor. It left a very small scorch mark on the spot it
was at.

"...Yes. It's impressive. You learned this at school?" He got up, helping the Prince up as well.

"Well- sorta. We learned tha' basics, ya know. I just started tha' fool around with some of the
chemicals—figure out what made what when ya put it together... just playin' with it, ya know?"

Mako didn't, really. He stared at the walls that had a lot of formulas, notes, drawings of different elements and he couldn't understand it. He tried to, attempted to make a little sense of what was scribbled on the wall but he just couldn't. He stared at the Prince, realizing that the young man could.

"Set tha lab on fire many times, heh. What can ya do." He scratched at his head.

Mako was unsure of what to say, still impressed by the young man. Prince Jamison eyes lit up, staring up at Mako. "Oh! Let me show ya somethin' I built!"

He dragged him once again towards another section. This one was full of metal, wires and other things that Mako couldn't really recognize. It all looked like junk to him, but the Prince had it laying out on his table, so it must be important. Blue prints and screwdrivers were scattered on the table, and the Prince shoved them aside. On the center of the table sat what looked like a strange gun, but it was very big and bulky. It looked like it was made to shoot balls rather than bullets.

"It shoots oranges," the Prince intercepted, picking it up and toying with it. "Built it in me free time- i gotta fix it up and make some changes, but I mostly used it tha’ shoot paintballs at other students back at Australia!"

"Sounds dangerous."

"Sounds fun!" He replied back. The Prince sighed, looking down at the weapon on his hands. "You... like it?"

Not only did he like it- he was outright impressed. He had to admit he did not expect someone like Prince Jamison to be so... he couldn't find the word. He didn't think the young man was capable of making all of this, to create those gigantic maps at the walls, or to create that weapon out of nothing. The explosion he saw too, the bright lights and everything else. It was-

It was brilliant.

He was brilliant.

"Yes." He answered truthfully. "This is very impressive."

"Well- ya know, I was tha’ first in me class, always. Teachers hated me, though. Would set everythin’ on fire, aha."

Mako couldn't help but chuckle.

"Ah! There's a chuckle! I don't think I ever heard ya laugh, big guy. Was thinkin' you weren't physically capable to!"

Mako felt something, he didn't know what, crawl up his insides. It wasn't uncomfortable, but...

It wasn't exactly welcome.

He stared down at Prince Jamison, his amber eyes staring up and smiling.

The feeling was most definitely not welcome.
"Hey, want some tea?"

Before Mako could reply the Prince placed a small teacup in front of him. Mako stared at it, placing his book away and taking the teacup. It was ridiculously small on his very large hands, the Prince chuckled at the fact.

"It looks so tiny!" The Prince said before plopping himself on the table. It was a small wooden table on the middle of the workshop, where Mako had decided to sit while Prince Jamison set to work on his projects. At first Mako had stared at him work, but when that strange feeling stirred his intestines he got out his romance book and read where he left off the previous night. No need to humor those stupid thoughts.

He put the book away, and blew a bit on the cup before he took a sip of it. It tasted very sweet and milky.

"It's milk tea! Love it," The prince giggled as he took a drink of it, savoring the hot beverage. "Pretty good, huh? What kind of tea ya like?"

"I've only had lemon tea."

"Oh, mate! I gotta show ye! I have so many kinds! This is me favorite, but there are so many other kinds ya gotta taste! I'll show ye, okay?"

Mako shrugged.

"Ey, hold on," He dug on his pocket, taking out a small pocket watch. He stared at it, his face expressionless (which was weird, for him).

"Ah, it's almost time," He sighed as he shoved the clock back into his pocket once again. By the look on his face, Mako guessed what he was talking about.

Every year on the anniversary of the Queen's death, there was an event. A memorial, where they would launch fireworks into the sky. To Mako, it was just another event but this was the Queen's personal family, they definetly took it different.

"You want to attend?" Mako asked, the Prince scratching his eyebrows.

"Sorta- but I don't wanna be around so many people, roight? Fucker's will be like oooh, I'm so sorry! She was such a nice woman!" He scoffed. "Of course she was nice... she was a beaut! Nicest woman ever..."

He shook his head, taking a sip of his tea. "Nah, I got a better idea. Finish yer tea and I'll show ye."

Mako did as told, finishing his tea quickly. Once done they exited the workshop, Prince Jamison locking it with his key once again. Mako wasn't sure why exactly he locked it, but he probably felt better with the privacy.

"Aight, follow me, I'll show ye somethin' pretty cool."

He followed his charge, going through corridors into another set of stairs. These were old, and seemed to keep going for many floors. He followed the Prince through the stairs, climbing more and more floors. Mako lost count of how many they had climbed, at one point going through more corridors that he couldn't recognize. He hoped the Prince knew where he was going, because he sure
got really lost.

"We're almost there!" The Prince said, reaching to one end of the corridor and pulling open a metal door, which led to more set of stairs.

"Where are we going?" Mako finally asked, not too content with how many stairs they have been climbing. Prince Jamison started to climb them, the metal stairs narrow. Mako climbed behind him, and they had to use both feet and hands to get to the top.

"You'll see!" He laughed and Mako was starting to get very annoyed.

They reached the top, leading to yet again, another door. This one was small and Mako saw a glint of light on the other side. The Prince opened it and for one second Mako was blinded by the sun. He rubbed his eyes, the fresh air hitting his face and making him shiver slightly. He opened his eyes once again to follow the Prince who was already outside. He exited the door, and he noticed they were on the actual rooftop of the castle. It was breathtaking, looking to his right and seeing the scenery. He could see almost the entire city from there, the fields, the clouds- it was amazing.

"Pretty cool, huh?" The Prince kept walking through the roof, going through the path he knew so much. "Found this out couple of months ago, makes a killer view!"

Mako was distracted with the view, following the Prince carefully afraid he was going to fall. It was a longshot, but they were pretty high up.

"Come on, Mako! The sun is beginning to set!"

And he was right; by the time they reached the spot Prince Jamison was heading to the sun was beginning to set. The Prince sat at one edge of the roof, his skinny legs dangling off the edge and kicking playfully. Mako followed, sitting on the edge as well with his feet dangling in the air as well. He felt weird, still anxious that they were so close to the edge knowing that if they fell from that height it would be their death.

"That's where tha' ceremony is takin' place." Jamison pointed at some spot underneath them. They could barely see it, the ceremony being held on the castle gardens. He could see a lot of people gathered there but from their position Mako couldn't identify any of them.

"Shouldn't you be there?" Mako asked as the crowd parted itself, one figure walking through the path. It was probably the King.

"Nah. I got leeway, ya know. Cus it's 'traumatizin' and all that."

Mako huffed, unsure of what to reply to that.

"Oh, it's about tha' start!"

They keep quiet, but even so they couldn't hear what anybody was saying. There was a massive gathering of people, the sun setting as who Mako assumed was a priest was speaking. It was... solemn, in a way, and even the Prince was quiet and staring down. The sun had completely set letting the night settle in, and after several minutes the service stopped. The Prince shifted on his seat, sighing as he paid attention below him.

"This is tha' good part," he exclaimed as they started to prepare for the next event.

Lights were turned on, small rockets launching into the air and exploding in several bright colors. It looked like Prince Jamison's explosions earlier that day, except these were bigger and louder. The
Prince stared at the fireworks content, a bright smile on his face as they continued to explode on the sky.

"Me mum loved fireworks, ye know?" He sighed. "She loved tha' bright colors."

He fell silent, more fireworks going off on the sky. It was pretty dark already, but every flash of color illuminated their features with hues of different colors. Mako turned to face the young man, the Prince contently staring at the explosions of neon colors. His features were alight with the different shades, going from pink to orange to green and blue, many colors of the rainbow which made him look bright in the dark. Mako quickly turned his head around to stare at the fireworks instead.

"Ya know," The Prince very quietly said, Mako barely heard him. His voice was more somber than normal. "Let me tell ya a secret, ya bein' a cool mate an' all."

Mako continued to stare at the colors.

"Do ya know what illness me mum died of?" He whispered. Mako paid attention but didn't say a thing, letting the young man finish. It was obviously a touchy day, and he was going to let him unload whatever he wanted to say.

"That's roight. No one knows. Ya know why?" A knot formed on Mako's stomach. "She was killed."

Mako turned around to face the boy. He was still staring at the fireworks but his face was stern, serious. His brows were furrowed as they were illuminated by the fireworks.

"Poison. I know it. I learned it in Australia. Same symptoms." He bit his lip, the bangs of the rockets resonating on the sky. "Me dad knows too. I think. He has to know. Mom was poisoned and died, just because of stupid politics."

"Who did it?" Mako asked, and he saw how the boy's mouth morphed into a vicious snarl.

"I ain't sure. I got me ideas. Could be anyone- rebels, me uncle," He bit his lip so hard Mako saw a bit of blood drip off it. "Me father."

"You think your father-"

"I don't know. I ain't sure. Everyone got their reasons to kill off me mum. I ain't got proof to judge. That's what I'm tryin' to figure out, but..."

The Prince sighed, closing his eyes and reclining his head back. Mako wasn't sure how to feel about the information- it made sense someone poisoned the queen, but who did it? Why exactly? Politics weren't exactly his strong suit, if there was an obvious answer he couldn't see it.

"Lord-"

"Oh, please. Just call me Jamie! No need to be formal and all."

Mako huffed. He wasn't sure if that was a line he wanted to cross. Maybe it was worth it.

"Jamie-"

Something whistled on his ears, and he felt the hair on his arms stand up.
"Did ya hear-"

Another sharp sound whistled on his ears, and Mako saw for a second the glint of something silver. The people below them started to scream as more arrows soared through the sky, mostly aimed at Mako and the Prince. He saw how the Royal Guards below immediately guarded the King. By the number of arrows there had to be far more than just one archer. They needed to get out of there.

"We need to leave!" Mako yelled, standing up as one of the arrows landed just at his feet. The Prince quickly crawled back while still sitting and Mako had to grab him by the arm, one of the arrows hitting Mako in the chest, bouncing off on the armor. "Come on!"

Mako dragged Prince Jamison away by the arm, the screaming from below them. He heard the whistling of the arrows around him, and a wet sound. He felt Prince Jamison's become heavier while he hissed. Horror spread through Mako's body while he turned around to assess the damage. The Prince laid in the floor, cradling his right leg. An arrow pierced it, the tip sticking out of it. There were more arrows coming.

"Close your eyes," Mako ordered as he placed one heavy palm on the boy's leg holding it steady, the other one carefully but quickly breaking down most of the wood that stuck out. The Prince wailed but Mako ignored it to do the same with the other sticking part. He would have pulled the arrow out but he had no medical experience and no time- they would have to do.

"Fucking- Jesus, Mako!" The prince cried out but the man was already back in action.

"Hold on!" He ordered as he crouched with his back to the young man. Prince Jamison climbed on it, letting his bodyguard give him a piggyback ride. Mako practically ran towards the exit of the rooftop, he didn't even notice the arrows couldn't reach them anymore.

"Fuck- it hurts!" The Prince buried his face on Mako's nape. "It bloody fucking hurts!"

"You'll survive," Mako huffed as he continued to race carefully towards the door. Prince Jamison kept squirming, his head buried on Mako's hair.

"Ugh! It fucking- Augh!"

Mako finally reached the door, squeezing carefully through it. Climbing down the stairs was difficult for some reason, even though Prince Jamison weighed practically nothing to him.

"Are you," Mako huffed, he was running out of breath for some reason. "Are you hurt somewhere else?"

"N-no, just tha- shit, just tha fucking leg."

"Give me directions, I don't know my way on this floor." They finally reached the bottom, but it wasn't necessary for the Prince to give directions- first aid and royal guards were already awaiting for them outside the door.

"He got hit on the leg," Mako said as some doctors approached and examined from afar the Prince's leg. "Nowhere else."

"Come, quick!" The group surrounded them, directing Mako where to go.
Reaching the infirmary on that floor wasn't too difficult. Once the reached it they placed the Prince in one of the beds, cutting down his pant leg to start examining the tissue. The doctors looked far more relaxed than when he was stabbed with a foil previously.

"Your leg will be okay," one of the doctors said as they cleaned the wound and began the procedure to remove the arrow. "You'll have to use crutches and the like for a while, Lord."

"Well that’s- Holy shit, Mako!"

The bodyguard was startled, noticing how the Prince was staring at him with horror. His long finger pointed at Mako's side, eyes still glued to him. "Your arm-"

Mako stared down at his left arm, eyebrows frowning when he saw the problem. At the juncture of where armor stuck with armor, in the little spot where there wasn't metal an arrow was logged in his skin. He didn't even realize when it happened and it didn't hurt, but it explained why he was more tired than usual- he was slowly bleeding.

"Huh." He motioned. The Nurses were already approaching him to take care of it, but Mako simply took it with one massive palm and pulled. The nurses gasped in surprise, while the Prince just stared with wide eyes.

"Sir, please let us tend to the wound!" The nurses begged.

"It's not big deal." There was still blood pouring out of the wound, but it wasn't that important.

"Please- we insist!"

Mako shrugged, taking off that part of the armor, thick arm underneath. He sat on the bed next to the Prince, letting the nurses tend to his wound.

"Lord- we will pull the arrow now, it will hurt."

The Prince grimaced, already squirming on his place. The doctors began taking the arrow out, making the boy hiss in incredible pain. His hands tried to find purchase on the sheets, clawing through them as he wailed.

That same unwelcomed feeling on Mako's gut was back. Without thinking, he offered his palm up to the boy. The Prince looked at it, and grabbed unto it, his palm minuscule in comparison to Mako's. He screamed as the arrow continued to be pulled, his fingers digging into Mako's skin. It didn't hurt him, even though Jamison was grabbing hard.

"We're almost done, Lord."

"Shit! God- Fuck!" He grabbed harder unto Mako, and he let him. He screamed for several seconds until finally the doctor finished pulling the arrow.

Jamison sighed tiredly, going limp into the bed. He continued to hold unto Mako's hand, but now it was soft.

"We will stitch the wound now." The doctor said but Jamison was already ignoring him, too exhausted. He turned around to face Mako, his face red and with tears.

"Are you okay?" He asked Mako. The man turned to see how the nurses were pretty much finished with his small wound, he didn't even feel them stitching it.

"Yes."
"Ya were hurt."

Mako shrugged.

"Sorry ya got hurt."

"Occupational hazard." Jamison giggled softly at that. "It's okay."

"Nah."

Mako sighed. Outside the room Guards were running around, and the Prince shouted to one of them.

"Hey, you!" The guard stopped, staring at the Prince with wide eyes.

"Yes, my Lord?"

"Did anyone got hurt? Is everyone okay?"

"Yes, my Lord. We are trying to look for the archers, but everyone is fine."

Mako noticed how Jamison let out a relaxed breath that he was holding. "Good. Ye can leave now."

He laughed as the Doctor continued to stitch up his leg.

"What a perfect day to end tha day."

Mako took a deep breath, closing his eyes as he finally began to feel the very faint sting on his arm.

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"Was there any reason for you to be in the roof at all?"

The Prince rolled his eyes, squirming underneath the sheets of the hospital bed. Mako stared at him, and then to the King. The man looked tired, with bags underneath his eyes.

"We just wanted tha' see tha fireworks." The Prince sighed out, not looking at the King directly. "Not big deal."

"No big deal? You were a perfect target for archers. They shot you. You were hit!"

"Even if we were down there, we would've been easy target! They were on tha' ground floor! It ain't me fault!"

"You are unbelievable, Jamison." The King rubbed his eyes.

"Gee, ya don't even care I got shot at, do ya?"

"Do you think I want you to die the same day your mother died years ago?!"

The Prince shot a glare at the King, slowly averting it after some seconds.

"I have far too much to take care off for you to do this."

"We would've been shot anyways..."
The King took a very deep breath, trying to ignore his son. Mako fought the urge to smile, instead pressing his thumb against the wound on his arm. It hurt barely, he would be fine the next day. The King stood straight, regaining his calm.

"Jamison, I am very busy lately. I've invited many politicians to come during the ball. They shall start coming on the timespan of this month, including Duke Ian."

"Oh, ya mean tha' man that is tryin' to kill me?"

"Jamison, currently everything is very tense. I do understand why you are upset, however even if I do not want him to come here to not invite him would make matters worse. So, I expect you to treat him with respect."

"Roight..."

"Very well. The Doctors said you are free to rest on your respective rooms. You can rest tomorrow, due to your leg."

"Oh, gee, thank you dad." The King very slightly rolled his eyes. It made him look more... human, in a way.

"Sir Mako," He huffed out, already tired. Mako stared at the King.

"While I am upset that you allowed my son to get into such dangerous situation, I do admire your quickness to tend to the situation. Thank you."

Mako nodded. "It's my job, your Majesty."

The King nodded, and left. Prince Jamison sighed very dramatically, kicking the covers off himself and sitting up.

"Come on- I hate it here. Let's go to our rooms."

Mako nodded, helping him up and into his crutches. They very slowly made their way through the hallways, he tried to offer the Prince help but the young man just hissed and told him he could do it his own damn self.

What the King said lingered on Mako's mind. It was a pretty obvious security issue- he should have thought that standing on the rooftop was very dangerous for someone that was being targeted by assassins. Why didn't he think of that?

Mako was starting to realize he maybe was a really bad bodyguard. If he wanted his target to survive, he needed to be more careful from now on.

"Can you make it inside?" Mako asked as he opened Prince Jamison's room. He shrugged it off.

"Nah, I'm fine. Just a scratch!"

For some reason Mako began to believe that the Prince was acting though for him. How endearing. He let him, waiting until he closed his door to make his way inside his. He could have written what happened that day on his little pink book, but decided not to; he was too damn tired. He just shoved off his armor into the floor, not even bothering to put on his sleeping clothes and just crawling into his bed.

He laid on the mattress, attempting to go to sleep. There were too many thoughts on his mind, his body far too tense to go to sleep. He tried to set them all aside and just go to sleep, but he couldn't ignore it. Well, time to try something else.
Mako thick fingers wrapped into his groin, already starting to stroke himself softly while he laid on the soft bed. He caressed himself from base to head, trying to get himself hard. It didn't work as much as he expected it to, only getting half hard with too much work.

He sighed, but wasn't going to sleep without this. He started to think about things he would expect would get him off. His mind lingered, eventually wandering into last night, the soft moans he heard. How good the prince sounded, and how good he must have looked like. Mako sucked in a breath as he felt himself go hard, the image of Jamison's sweaty body pressed against the wall, touching himself-

Mako stopped on his tracks, eyes opening. There was no way he was going to do this again. He sighed in frustration, taking his hand off his boxers. Fine. He would just have to go to sleep hard, he guessed.

Except he couldn't sleep at all, still hard from thinking about it. In frustration he shoved his hands down his boxers, stroking himself quickly. The image of Jamison mid moan made him come silently, pumping himself as his body finally relaxed. He reached for the napkins at the side of his bed, cleaning his own mess and tossing it away. It was until then that Mako finally started to drift off to sleep.

What was this kid doing to him?

Mako snarled. He would not give up on the plan. If he had to shove those unwelcomed feelings down his gut, then so be it.

He still had a job to do.

Chapter End Notes

Oh, Mako.
Another day, another headache.

Thanks to the doctors in the castle, Prince Jamison's injury healed quickly. A week after the attack and his leg was almost completely healed up. He still used a fine cane to help him walk, but Mako thought he just used it for the hell of it.

"This place is gonna be swarmin' with people soon," Prince Jamison sighed as he tapped the floor with his cane. It was elegant, made of beautiful wood. It was very pretty, but it wasn't what Mako expected royalty to have if he had to be honest- he expected something incrusted with precious stones and gold. "A lot of people to be wary of, eh? Aha!"

Mako still couldn't understand how he could be okay with the situation. The Prince was right, however. So far his bodyguarding hasn't been too... stellar. So far the Prince had been stabbed and shot at, so he needed to be more alert. They were still about two months away from the Winter Ball, but no one had arrived yet. They had just finished one of the Prince's lessons when a Royal Guard was waiting for them outside.

"My Lord, His Highness has news to deliver to you," the Guard said solemnly. The Prince squinted his eyes and cocked one of his eyebrows, slightly confused.

"Wassit?"

"Duke Ian will be arriving tomorrow night."

Mako blinked. He turned to face the Prince, and he saw a hint of a twitch in his right eye. The Prince
took a very deep breath, and smiled wide.

"Aight. Thank ye for informin' me." He turned to face Mako, smile still in his face. "We have break next, don't we?"

"Yes," Mako said sternly. The Prince nodded, as he dismissed the Guard. He once again turned to Mako. His face was... strange. It looked tight, and barely holding his smile.

"Could you please be my acquaintance for a moment?"

Oh, wow. That was weird. Mako blinked and nodded, head cocked to the side trying to figure out what the hell the Prince was going to do. Quickly. The Prince, cane and all started walking somewhere- his movements were quick and stiff, Mako could tell he was really upset.
The Prince reached a metal door, and he opened it. Inside seemed like a vault, boxes piled up with words scribbled on them. The Prince opened one of the boxes, and took a plate off it. It was covered with dust, it looked old and not too valuable.

"These are used when for some reason commoners come an' eat," the Prince inspected the plate on his hand. "Well, not these in specific- these are pretty old, an' useless, roight? So we keep 'em 'ere."

Mako stared as the Prince just sighed, inspecting it close. "They ain't worth nothing."

He proceeded to slam the plate on the ground.

The ceramic shattered loudly and in millions of pieces scattering through the ground. Mako was slightly taken aback, when the Prince grabbed another plate and slammed it against the ground again.

"Would ya mind closin tha' door?" He smiled sweetly to Mako. He obliged, still surprised by what was happening.

As soon as Mako closed the door, the Prince growled as he started to smash every plate he could grab. Eventually, he just used his cane to throw the box into the ground, the contents spilling into the floor. Most plates broke, but he insisted in smashing them with his walking cane, growling and seething as he did so. Mako just stared as the Prince let his anger out.

"Fucking 'Ell!" He yelled, ceramic smashing into shards glittering on the floor. "Fucking asshole! Fucking- Fucking murderer! Bloody 'Ell!"

It lasted for several minutes, the Prince just smashing and destroying everything that he could reach. He looked furious, at one point just stomping them with his feet until the plates were nothing but dust.
The young man began to pant, trying to calm himself down after his little tantrum. He took a very deep breath, his shoulders sagging as his face finally relaxed. "Roight. Okay."

He ran a hand through his hair, and stared at Mako. The Bodyguard opened the door, and they both slipped out. He didn't say a thing, but he felt the Prince's stare.

"Gotta have a healthy way to let anger out, eh?" The prince laughed, still on the process of calming down. Mako couldn't help but let out a chuckle- it was weird, but he preferred that to running around on town making parties and the like. "So, we gotta get ready, Mako."

His smile tightened again.

"My uncle is comin'."
The next day was, to say, stressful. Activity in the castle was high, preparations made to accommodate Duke Ian and to welcome him in the castle. Mako learned from listening to the Guard's gossiping on the hallways that the Duke's arrival was very sudden, and it was pretty obvious. Prince Jamison himself looked pretty tense, tapping the floor with his cane repeatedly. They were sitting in the dinning room, having a view of all the things that were being dragged inside and outside the room to decorate it appropriately.

"Come on," The Prince said as he stood up from his seat, already making his way to the exit. "Let's get outta 'ere".

Mako followed him, noticing just how angry the Prince really was. His tapping was strong and loud, his shoulders tensed and Mako could have sworn he heard him grumble.

"You seem tense," Mako called out loudly as he kept following. The Prince used his free hand to gesticulate, waving it in the air frantic.

"Oh, really? I didn't notice!" His voice dipped with sarcasm but Mako said nothing.

They eventually ended outside on the garden, and the Prince just went to one of the benches and sat down a bit forcefully. He let his cane drop to the grass not caring about it as he put his face on his hands.

Mako stood behind him, letting the Prince grumble with his head between his hands.

"I swear tha God I'm throwing meself off tha rooftop."

"They'll fire me if you do that." The Prince chuckled, and Mako wasn't sure himself if he was serious or not. It seemed like the appropriate thing to say. He felt slightly better when he laughed, too.

"I don't want that man here at all."

Mako got closer, practically directly behind the Prince. He loomed over him, the Prince's shoulder sagging and staring at the grass below him.

"And I gotta be civil an' stuff. Be a 'Prince', get me?"

No, Mako didn't get it, and he would never understand. He wasn't a noble and would never be, so its something that he would never have to worry about.

He moved, sitting on the bench next to his Charge. The Prince didn't say a thing, still rubbing his forehead with his thin fingers.

"Tha man is tryin' tha kill me, and I gotta be nice tha him."

"Politics," Mako replied softly. The Prince chuckled again, but he sounded more tired than amused.

"If I do make it to my crownin' I'm gonna exile 'im."

"If?"

The Prince laughed. "Well, I gotta be realist. I mean , it ain't like you aren't a good bodyguard, yer great!" Mako felt guilt at this. He was absolutely not a good bodyguard, and the cane that was on the
gras was proof of that. "But maybe eventually somethin' is gonna happen which we can't really stop, ya know." He sighed, sadly. "Like me mum."

They both stayed very quiet, the birds chirping in the garden. It was such a morbid thought, too. Mako knew how it was to not know if you were going to survive the next battle or not, but that was his choice- he chose to be a warrior. The prince was born into this- he didn't choose not knowing if he would survive adulthood.

Mako lifted his palm, placing it on his bony shoulders. His hand was massive, completely compassing his back. He gently squeezed him.

"I won't let you die."

The Prince smiled even as Mako retreated his hand. The Bodyguard felt like he went to far, but the Prince didn't seem to mind, so he ignored the feeling as they stared into the garden.

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Guards were positioned on Throne room, awaiting. Mako stood next to the Prince, who stood next to the King at his throne. The Prince didn't have his cane anymore, said he didn't need it even though Mako could see how he slightly limped while walking.

They were perfectly still, the Prince's hands behind his back and anxiously tapping against each other. Mako had his hands on his sides, head raised and awaiting as well. The entire place reeked of anxiety.

The doors to the throne room opened, and everybody immediately perked up. A Guard (with different armor, Mako noticed) entered the room, alone. He straightened up, and spoke.

"Duke Ian Wellington." He announced, just in time for more Guards to enter the room, and behind them, a man.

His clothes were very elegant, perfectly tailored to him. The man was tall and lean, but Mako could tell he wasn't skinny the way the Prince was. His hair was platinum blonde and his eyes were blue, skin very pale.

"Greetings," he saluted. His voice was sharp and dangerous. Mako noticed the Prince visibly tense when he spoke. "It has been a while since I've been here, has it not?"

"Duke Ian," the King greeted loudly. "Welcome. It has, indeed, been a long while."

"Since Amanda died, no?"

The room fell very quiet, and Mako saw how Prince Jamison shoulders tensed.

"...Yes. Ever since."

"I would have come before, but..." The Duke made a motion with his hand. "Life got in the way. You do understand, right?"

"I do."

"I wish I had the time, but politics. You know."

"I understand."

"I appreciate you sending the invitations every year, however. Very professional of you."
The King’s mouth twitched.

"Duke Ian, I am very glad you were able to attend this year."

"Why, of course. How could I miss it? After all, it's the first Winter Ball my dear nephew Jamison will attend." The Duke's gaze turned to The Prince, smiling wide. His white teeth shone under the lights and Mako couldn't help but feel uncomfortable. "How was Australia?"

"Educational." Prince Jamison smiled sweetly. He seemed very calm, considering the circumstances.

"This is your first big even since you came back, isn't it? Aren't you excited?"

"Very."

The Duke chuckled, his eyes turning to face Mako.

"It seems you have new security? Is there any specific reason?" His smile was very wide, and Mako felt something in his stomach. It crawled up his spine and stayed on his nape as the Duke intense blue eyes stared at him.

"Duke Wellington, you have already been informed of the situation with Prince Jamison at this point," The King replied sternly. "Due to the threats turning real, we hired a personal bodyguard for him."

"Ah, true. Well, has it helped? I heard there was a commotion a week ago."

Mako decided he wanted to punch Duke Ian Wellington in the face.

"You must be exhausted," the King interrupted before anything happened. "We can discuss pressing political issues later. We still have time before the Winter Ball."

"Yes, we do. I would like to set up a meeting this evening, actually. Talk about some pressing matters." He turned to face the Prince. "You should come as well, Jamison. You need to get familiarized with these procedures."

Prince Jamison blinked very slowly, taking a deep breath. "Will do."

"Wonderful. I await to see you tonight. Now, if you excuse me..."

After leaving the throne room the King just sighed, rubbing his temple with his left hand. The Prince sighed very dramatically.

"Can I-"

"No, Jamison. You cannot." The King stood up, facing both Mako and the Prince. "You need to get ready for tonight. It will be very... intense."

"Fine. Come on Mako, we gotta get 'ready', whatever that means."

The Prince stormed off, and Mako followed closely behind. He said nothing, even when the Prince was limping quickly through the hallways.

"Was that civil enough? Ya think that was a good impression, huh?"
His limp was slightly getting worse, but he didn't do a thing. Mako's attention diverted to his leg, but kept quiet.

"Keep civil- I'm gonna lose my mind 'ere! I'm gonna- I'm gonna- shit!"

His limp leg gave out under him. The Prince tried to find leverage on the wall but it wasn't enough. Mako was quick enough to catch him under his arms.

"You need to calm down." Mako helped him stand straight, and the Prince sighed at his leg.

"How am I supposed tha? Tha man is tryin' tha kill me!"

"I know," He said softly as he let the young man wrap his arm around his neck. Mako had to hunch a little to let him walk. "But you are just hurting yourself. You need your cane."

"I don't need shit! I am perfectly fine."

He shoved Mako's hand away, using the wall to stand straight. "I don't need anyone's damn help."

"You need-

"I don't need a thing! I gotta get ready, that's what!" The Prince hobbled away, but Mako followed anyways. "I can't let that piece of scum think he is smarter and better than me. I can't-"

He abruptly turned towards Mako, his face twisted in anger (and pain).

"Stop following me! I don't bloody need ya!"

"It's my job."

"Well, I am tha' prince, and I order ya to stop following me!" He lashed out. "Ya have to respect my authority!"

"I do not answer to you. I answer to the King."

"Eat shit."

Mako stared down at him. The Prince just seethed, showing his teeth in a snarl. His shoulders were rising up and down in anger. Mako kept staring without saying a thing. He would normally feel anger and want to snap his skinny neck, but this time was different.

"I don't give a shit," the young man sighed, turning around and hobbling away.

If he wanted to be petty, Mako would have asked him if the young man wanted assistance, but saved it instead. It was not the time. There was a pang on his chest when he saw him hiss everytime he tried to walk.

"Prince-

"No, no. I'm fine." He sighed. "I'm fine."

Mako blinked. The best he could do was to trust him.

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"Wonderful, it seems we are all here?"
The stood next of the circle table. It was made of very elegant wood, and a very detailed map on the center of it. There was also a plate of canapes on the table but they remained untouched. They stood besides their chairs, as the Duke arrived to the room. He had his own personal bodyguard it seemed. Lean and big, but no bigger than Mako (no one was), muscles toned and with a harsh face. He seemed about his age. The both stared at each other's eyes for a second, until the Duke spoke once again.

"We haven't had one of these in a long time, eh? All of these politics, we've done it with people representing us, but not ourselves. Isn't that funny? Well," Without waiting the Duke pulled his chair and sat down, the rings on his fingers shining. "Shall we begin then?"

The King sat, and saw how the Prince struggled a little to sit due to his leg, but he still refused to use the cane.

"Are you alright, Jamison? I noticed you have a slight limp-"

"I am fine, I simply tripped the other day, is all." It was unnerving, just how different his voice sounded.

Mako found interesting how there were no more people there apart from them- he expected there to be general, economists- other people. But, again, it was the first time he witnessed one of these reunions.

The King was about to speak, but the Duke interrupted him by talking first.

"First of all, I just want to say how amazed I am at the current state of the Kingdom." His pearly smile was wide and annoying. "You have surely kept it the way Amanda governed it."

"Is there anything in specific you would like to discuss, Duke Ian? You are the one that requested this reunion, after all." The King's voice was stern and firm.

"Straight to the point like always, James. I am glad to see you have not changed. Alright, alright. I'll go to the point."

Mako noticed his smile disappeared, replaced by a very subtle smirk. He saw the Prince tense, as well as the King.

"While I am glad to see how the Kingdom has fared, I do feel like it is time for our territory to expand." He pointed at the map of the kingdom and its surroundings that sat on the center of the table. "If we do want to have power over other nations, we must expand our land. As it is, while our lands are plenty we do not have the amount of resources and power that we could have over others."

The room felt very silent. It was the King who spoke first.

"We are not lacking of any resources. In terms of everything we are doing perfectly fine as it is. We can get our production to increase and have a better supply, but we do not have to worry about not satisfying a demand."

"As we currently are, we could afford to get stronger. We are facing the possibility of invasion any day now, there is always that threat. We need to have stronger kingdom if we want to stop that from happening." The Duke tapped the map with a finger. "We need to make sure that if anyone dares attack us, we are ready for it. We need to make everybody know that we are ready for any attack."

"Ian-" The King took a deep breath. "Duke Wellington, there are currently no threats against the kingdom. Of what enemies do you speak of? We have a great relationship with our allies, and we are currently are not at war with anyone. You are speaking out of paranoia."
"Is that right? If I am just 'speaking out of paranoia'," he made very exaggerated air quotes "Then why has your son, the Prince, been a target for assassination?"

The Prince's eyebrows furrowed slightly. Mako licked his lips.

"There are always enemies to the throne. Every Kingdom have them, and the ones that don't will have them. We do have tensions growing with lands from afar, however this does not mean we must start a war with our allies- we must strengthen our bonds with them. Not sever them by invading their land."

"People will believe you are weak. This is why Jamison is being targeted right now. You need to make yourself more powerful, to get better military power."

"Our Military is powerful enough, Duke Wellington. We do not need to make it stronger for threats that do not exist yet."

"Oh," The Duke flashed once again that uncomfortable smile that made Mako want to punch him in the face. "Are you telling me, you are absolutely one hundred percent sure these men would follow your every single order?"

Mako could basically feel the anxiety growing in the room. The air was thick, Prince Jamison gripping his hands on the edge of the table tightly.

"Duke Wellington," The King's tone was very serious, dripping of a mixture of anger and horror. "Do you know something I do not?"

"I don't know," His smile went wide, as he picked one of the canapes on the table, bringing it close to his lips. "Do I?"

He took a bite of the canape, the wood creaking by just how hard the Prince was gripping at it.

"There is no need to start a war over nothing," The Prince finally spoke, attracting the Duke's attention. "We have been able to solve our own problems before. It is not the first time someone in the royal family has been threatened, and it won't be the last. It aint- it doesn't mean we should-"

"Excuse me," The Duke interrupted the Prince with his hand on the air. "I am sorry, but why do you believe you have the authority to comment on this situation, Jamison?"

The Prince blinked slowly. "I am the Pr-"

"You are just a boy. A kid who just came back from Australia, that hasn't even been in this place for a year. What right do you have to weigh on this?"

Mako saw how the Prince took a very deep breath. "This is the kingdom that I will rule one day, Duke," Mako had to stop himself from chuckling at the seething hate on the Prince's voice. "And you did invite me here, so I have a right to talk as much as you do."

"Rule this kingdom? Please, it has been few months since you are here, and you have been on the brink of death more than once. Do you truly believe you will survive until coronation?"

"Is that a threat?" The Prince's voice was low, dangerous.

"It is merely but an observation."

The Prince stood up suddenly, about to speak or act- Mako wasn't sure. However instead he hissed
in pain, his hurt leg buckling underneath him. Quickly Mako helped him stand up, wrapping one hand underneath his armpit and propping him up.

"Oh, but how can you become a King?" He sneered. "When you can't even stand?"

Mako felt the Prince tense, and the young man gently shoved him away. He Mako saw from his position how the Prince leg was getting damp with blood. He moved forward, but the Duke's bodyguard saw him and pressed forward as well.

"Enough!"

The King stood up, slamming his hands on the table. All of them instantly went quiet as they stared at him.

"This has gone for too long. Duke Wellington, while I do appreciate you coming here, I will not tolerate you trying to take my decisions. We will discuss this in a more civil manner later, in a manner that is not implying my son will die. Understand?"

The Duke smiled wide. "Understood, Your Highness."

He stood up, waving for his bodyguard to follow him. "This has been interesting, but you are right. It is late and we must rest. We will continue this conversation and other issues another day. Good night."

They were walking towards the exit, but Duke Ian turned to face the Prince.

"Perhaps by then Jamison will learn not to speak when the adults are talking."

Silence remained in the room until he left. The Prince let himself fall on the chair and rest his leg which was now slightly bleeding. Mako thought that he probably ripped some stitches open.

"I," The King stood, staring at both of them. His eyes were unfocused and tired, not looking at the Prince in the eyes. "I apologize."

Without saying anymore, the King left and Mako was left alone with the Prince.

"Mako," he laughed pathetically. "I'm a mess, eh?"

"You're okay."

"Look at me," he pointed at his leg. "Can't even endure an arrow."

"You're just a person. No one can-"

"Ya did." The Prince sighed. "Ya got shot at and ye didn't even notice until a nurse told ya. But me-look at me."

"It's okay. You're okay."

They stayed in silence for a while, until the Prince rubbed his face tiredly.

"Can ye... can ye help me go to me room?" He sounded so small and weak.
"Yes," Mako instantly replied. He let the Prince wrap his arm on his neck, helping him walk through the hallways. He still had to hunch, but Mako didn't mind for some reason.

The trip was made in silence, as they reached their rooms. The Prince sighed, opening the door to his room and tiredly speaking.

"Can ye help me inside? And, well, check if I didn't tear anythin’?"

Mako felt something in his stomach. Some mixture of anxiety and excitement. Ridiculous- he was a damn grown man, he wasn't a child for him to feel this way. He ignored those feelings, but he also didn't think before he spoke again.

"Yes."

Stupid, Mako thought.

Stupid, stupid Mako.

He helped the Prince inside, taking a look to the room.
It looked like the Prince's workshop, with books and papers thrown around. It didn't look dirty, but it wasn't too organized either. As if he was always working on something. Drawings and maps hung on the walls, along with designs. Books were spread around.
It was messy, but not outright disgusting. Strange- Mako thought it would be a pig pen.

"Come on, there's me bed."

The bed was against the wall, the wall that divided his and Mako's room. Mako felt his cheeks tingle when he realized that's where the Prince laid, touching himself. And Mako imagined himself on the other side, listening and-
He shook his head sharply trying to ignore that. He pushed it deep down, as he helped the boy reach his bed. He sank on the silky sheets with a tired sigh as he started to pull his own pant leg to assess the situation.

Mako kneeled, to inspect the leg. A little bit of blood seeped through it, but the stitches were fine.

"You put too much pressure in it. You don't need to get it stitched again. It needs new bandages, however."

"Good, I guess." He tiredly replied. "Oi, can ya get me tha bandages? They're on that shelf there."

Mako obliged, taking the bandages on his huge palm and making his way towards the bed once again.

"Aight, I got It." Mako negated with his head, instead taking the bandages himself as he started to get the leg ready to cover it. "Mako, It's okay."

"Don't worry." Mako whispered, his huge fingers cradling the Prince's leg. He quickly cleaned with a rag, the pale flesh slightly damp under his touch. He took the bandages, carefully covering the wound tightly enough for it to be comfortable. His leg was skinny, diminutive on Mako's palm.
When done, he gently let go of the leg. "How you feel?"

"Better, thanks." The Prince smiled. Mako nodded, getting up.

"You need to rest."

"Ya, I'll go to sleep. Don't worry. I'm okay."

Mako once again put a palm on the Prince's shoulders, squeezing it lightly before making his way outside.

"Goodnight."

He was near the door when the Prince called out to him.

"Mako," he softly called. The Bodyguard turned around, to see a tired Jamison sitting on the edge of his bed, a gentle smile on his face.

"Thank ye."

Mako's skin tingled.

"It's my job."

He closed the door, and made it into his room. He quickly tossed his armor on the floor, sitting at the edge of his bed with his face buried in his palms.

Stupid, *Stupid* Mako.
Chapter Summary

Mako was ruined.

Chapter Notes

More interactions, and a development.

Hello!!! This chapter came up a bit faster than i expected, but tbh its mostly cus I had so much FUN writing this!!! I am super super duper excited about this chapter, and after these the next ones will be super duper interesting too!!!! I am so super excited to be honest!!!!!

I hope y'all like it, and Thank you for reading!!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was pretty obvious that Prince Jamison wasn't the only one stressed out by the Duke's arrival. Mako had noticed that everybody was just as tense as the Prince; the maids were jumpy and tired, the guards annoyed and biting their lips in an attempt to not say something rude. He had witnessed the Duke interacting with the servants, and it made him want to break his skinny fingers off. Yelling at maids and cooks for whatever reason he seemed fit- the man was the live embodiment of the rich man stereotype.

"...So, we gotta greet every person that comes, well not ye- I gotta." The Prince was telling him about how the Ball was going to go, and what he had to do. He was talking about greeting nobles and the like, something that sounded very boring. "I'm supposed to know all tha names and who they are, but they're too many! Me teacher said that there will be someone tellin' me tha names of whoever important I greet."

"That will surely help." Mako replied back as they kept walking through the hallways.

Because of Mako's insistence the Prince was walking with his cane. It eased Mako's heart anyways, seeing the young man limp so much made his chest clench uncomfortably. He told himself it was because he didn't want his product to be damaged before delivering it.

Yeah, right.

"Ya are gonna have to stick with me all night. It is gonna be just pretty borin' honestly. Just a bunch of rich people dancin' and eatin'."

Mako wanted to point out that the Prince himself was "rich people", but he kept it to himself.

"It's gonna be weird, too. Everyone will be fawnin' all, 'Oh my Lord! How was Australia like? Oh, are you excited for coming back home?' 'Terrible!'"
Mako laughed at the Prince's perfect posh accent. "Oh my Lord, have you heard about Duchess Emily and her new dress? It is just too uncomfortable to look at!"

The Prince did a ridiculous pose, imitating those nobles he was mocking. Mako couldn't help the loud laugh he let out. He noticed the Prince's cheek reddened as he smiled very wide. Mako pretended he didn't notice, but it was useless. The young man didn't comment on it though, so he just ignored it.

"I could try and learn those names too," Mako broke the weird corny silence. Lately he had found himself speaking more than before.

"Nah, ye aren't even supposed to speak tha me. These guys- they got tha weird idea that bodyguards are just like shadows and not like, actual people, roight? So they will be like, 'oh my Goodness, why is he talking to you?' Thanks for tha offer, though."

Mako blinked. That was true, wasn't it? Normally Bodyguards were just silent and were like shadows. He was able to speak to the Prince like they were equals, which he suddenly realized was gross insubordination. He guessed he was lucky the Prince really didn't care.

"So ye are gonna have tha be a little silent. Hope ye don't mind."

"I am silent. It's okay."

"If ye say so..."

They kept walking until they heard the sound of something smashing against the ground. Mako was about to say something about it, but a too familiar voice was heard yelling.

"You idiot!" Duke Ian hollered from the other hallway.

Both Mako and the Prince sighed very loudly as they got ready to get involved into a ridiculous argument. The Prince fastened his pace, his cane tapping loudly against the tiled floor. Mako followed him close, catching up to the Prince as they turned the hallway to see what the commotion was about this time.

As they both expected, it was the Duke who was screaming. A terrified maid stood in front of him, her head bowing down and shaking. A broken flower base lay at her feet, completely destroyed and with the flowers spread on the floor.

"You imbecile!" The Duke screamed, the bodyguard that Mako had seen at the previous reunion was there too. He never left the Duke's side, and never spoke either. Eerie. "What is wrong with you?!"

"M-my apologies, my Lord-"

"Don't you dare speak back to me! Who do you think you are?! You cannot speak to me!" He violently waved his arms around, and Mako for a moment thought he was going to punch the maid.

"It was an acci-"

"Do not speak to me!" He jabbed her hard in the shoulder with a finger. The Maid flinched, but didn't say a thing. "I will get you fired! I will get you imbecile kicked out of here! I -"

"You will do nothing."
To Mako's surprise Prince Jamison interfered first. He stepped forward with his cane and a straight posture as he approached the Duke and the poor maid. "You have no authority- you are a visit, not a resident in this castle, or have you forgotten?"

"This is your father's castle, not yours, Jamison"

"True, but it's not yours either."

The Duke did that smile again, the one where he stretched his lips so wide they went white, his teeth showing like a dog about to rip someone apart.

"Now, what is the problem?" His smile was sweet, knowing that he was annoying the hell out of the Duke. Mako smiled, feeling proud at how the Prince stood, his back straight and not letting anything get to him. It was, if Mako had to admit, a little bit attractive. He pretended he didn't just think that.

The Duke grabbed the maid by the arm rather forcefully, causing the young girl to yelp. He dragged her in front of him, his nails digging into her flesh.

"This idiot maid got my clothes wet by dropping a vase at my feet. She ruined my clothes! The Idiot didn't realize I was walking behind her, and she crashed against me and dropped it!"

"Are you serious? Are you seriously wailing and moaning for some stupid wet clothes?" The Prince abandoned his well manners for a second, making the Duke get even more annoyed. "Do you really have nothing else to do but harass the workers?"

"She needs to be more careful! I am the Duke, and you will respect me!" He basically shouted at her face. The Prince basically stepped forward and separated them, grabbing the Duke's arm rather forcefully.

"I apologize for the Duke's behavior. You can have the day off, and if anyone asks, tell 'em i told ya so, roight?" The Prince smiled sweet and genuine to the young woman, she nodded nervously and practically ran away from there.

The Duke now grabbed the prince forcefully at the shoulder, his nails digging at the youngster's flesh and dragging him close. The Prince was taller, but he dragged him down at his level.

"How dare you question my authority, mocking and humiliating me in front of the servitude?! Do you not know your place?!

Without warning Mako yanked the Duke off the Prince which only prompted the Duke's own bodyguard to press a sword at Mako's throat. Mako stared at him, practically daring the idiot to do it. However, the man didn't falter, the tip of the blade still pressed against his thick neck. Mako let go of the Duke, who simply brushed his shoulder as he stared at Mako in disgust. The sword was sheathed once again, but the man's eyes kept staring at Mako.

"Uncle Ian, you have no authority in this place and you know it very well." The Prince stood straight and imposing, shoulders tense and with his mouth turned into a snarl. "You are the one that has to learn your place. Just because you're the Duke doesn't mean you get to do whatever the hell you want."

"You have no manners." His swords slurred like poison. "I cannot believe my beloved Amanda birthed such a disgusting thing as you."
The Prince gritted his teeth hard and Mako did too. He felt anger on the Prince's behalf, wanting to grab the Duke's head and just twisting it until it came off his body. His fingers twitched at the desire of break his little neck, but he saved it. He wasn't a warrior anymore.

"Well, guess what?" He stepped closer to the Duke, now inches away from each other. "She did. And I'll be King. And you will stay away in your little piece of shit corner of tha land, angry, cus ye will never have power. And there is nothing ye can do about it."

The Duke smiled again, his disgusting teethy smile.

"Yet."

Mako's hand angrily grabbed at the Duke's shoulder again and he was ready to throw him across the room if it wasn't for the sword pressing against his throat once again.

"Mako!" The Prince called out. It wasn't an angered tone, but a concerned one. He sighed, taking his shoulder off the Duke.

"Your new bodyguard, eh?" He scoffed. "You need to train your dog more. Needs to learn its place."

Mako saw how the Prince bit his lip so hard it almost bled. The Duke turned around and faced him, staring up with an annoyed face.

"I heard about you, and what has happened since you were hired. You are terrible at your job."

Mako stared down him without emoting, wondering if this is how hound dogs felt when they were barked at by chihuahuas.

He could see how the Prince got angrier by the second. The Duke just kept trying to loom over him, even if Mako was considerably taller than the man.

"If you were my bodyguard, You would have already been not only fired- I would have had you decapitated by your terrible job!" He attempted to shove Mako, but he was so heavy he just slapped at his armor instead. "You are a terrible bodyguard!"

Mako started to feel his stomach cold because technically, The Duke was right. He was damn terrible at this job. He was no bodyguard- he was a warrior. He was better at killing and breaking things rather than protecting them.

"Just look at you- what are you really, huh? Some pig farmer they picked up from the outskirts, huh? You big idiot? You uncivilized swine. Look at you, you are so fat and massive I wonder how you can even stand without sweating right now! You are so fat-"

Now, it was the Prince the one that grabbed the Duke by the shoulder. He shoved him against the wall, his fist raised close to the Duke's face, able to stop himself from hitting him on the mouth.

"Do not bad mouth my bodyguard. Ever. I am the Prince, and I have the authority to have you executed if I want to."

"You know very well you can't. You could start a war."

"Well," The Prince hissed his words slow, as his hands let go of the Duke. "I am just a stupid child, am I not?"

Mako noticed that, while the bodyguard didn't do a thing he had his hand on the handle of his sword,
ready to attack. Mako bit his lip in anger.

"You better watch yourself, Prince Jamison." The Duke pointed a skinny finger to Mako one more time. "Your disgusting bodyguard will get you killed one of these days, and then I'll be King."

The Duke began to walk the opposite directly, raising his hand and commanding his bodyguard to follow.

"Come on, Cyril." The bodyguard, Cyril, followed quickly without even exchanging a glance with him or the Prince.

The young man took a deep breath.

"M' sorry 'bout that." His fingers ran through his hair. "He is a fuckin dick. Ye're great at your job."

Mako took a deep breath, the image of the Prince shoving the Duke up against the wall was burnt into his mind. The Prince so far hadn't lost his temper, but the moment the Duke badmouthed him he did. For him. For Mako.

He sighed, rubbing his eyes tiredly.

"It's okay," he replied back to the Prince. "No big deal."

"Come on, we gotta go. Gotta get the list of people that will attend."

Mako nodded, and they continued to walk as if nothing had happened. The Prince was already too stressed and tired, he didn't say a thing. But Mako just kept reliving the events in his head again and again.

"You stood up for that maid." Mako said calmly, still walking. The Prince sighed, rubbing his face.

"They're nice. They get paid tha clean and stuff- not tha get yelled at by me idiot uncle. I may be annoyin', but I don't think I'm better than them."

"Not too many do that. They don't care." Mako sighed. He had to deal with many noblemen that treated him like shit only because he didn't happen to be born in luxury. "They treat us like our lives are nothing."

The young man shrugged. "It ain't right. It shouldn't be like that."

Paintings of previous monarchs adorned the walls, generations of the Prince's ancestors. They wore imposing capes and crowns, weapons in their hands as they loomed over them. The Prince stared at them as they passed, his eyes fixating in every single one of those men in the walls. He looked so small in comparison.

"I am not like them."

Mako stared down at him, the young man doing nothing but staring at the paintings. "I know I aint, I knew it for a long time. I knew it back in Australia, and I know it now. I ain't never gonna be like 'em."

"That doesn't have to be a bad thing."

Prince Jamison stared up at him, with curious eyes. He may wear elegant clothes but he was just a young man.
"What do ye mean?" He pointed at the paintings. "I aint- I mean, I don't got what it takes to become like 'em."

"Everything changes and evolves. Nothing stays the same. We can't have the same kind of men governing forever, it's ridiculous to think that."

Mako pointed at one of the paintings, a burly bearded tall man. "Just because you are not like them it does not mean that you aren't a good person. Maybe that makes you better than them."

Jamison stared up at the painting and then at Mako. His eyes were wide with something Mako could only describe as hope. "Ya really think so?"

Mako shrugged. "You just need to be a good person."

The young man's smile was soft, his hand patted Mako's softly a couple of times. "Hope yer right."

The way he smiled made Mako's inside stir. Why did he even speak? He could have let him wallow for all he wanted. The need to make him feel better was something Mako hated. Just why did he care? The sooner the Ball came, the better.

---

Another day has passed and Mako was sitting up on his bed, his little pink book in his hand and a pen on the other. The feelings he have had for the past days were just outright ridiculous and shameful. He was a grown ass man, all of this was just stupid an unnecessary.

Which is why, he, a grown ass man, was about to write a list of The Prince's good traits and his bad traits. His logic was that he would surely understand how actually really annoying the Prince was and this stupid crush would go away immediately. That was easy. He could absolutely do that.

One of the pages was labeled as "Bad", the other as "Good". He bit his lip while he began to write on the "Bad" side.


He felt like he should add some traits on the "Good" Side, so it wouldn’t seem so cruel.

Smart.

That seemed like an understatement. Intelligent, brilliant in many ways Mako didn't imagine. Subjects Mako would never dream of even understanding, Jamison understood with ease.

Kind.

He was perhaps the first noble that didn't treat civilians and commoners like utter dirt. He was actually very kind to Mako. He has had his outbursts, but Mako let them go. He understood, in a way.

Attractive.

Maybe that was just... subjective. But the way he smiled, and the way he beamed whenever Mako
laughed- it was so nice. His eyes looked up to him like he was the most important person in the
world, staring up at him with utmost adoration. His hair was shiny and nice. The way-

Mako threw the book to the other side of the room.
Frustration ate at him, and he was losing his damn mind. He had no idea what he was going to do.
Well, he knew. He was going to sell Jamison up, and that was it. He would learn how to let it go
later. He had to, there was absolutely no other choice.
Mako picked up a book next to his bed, another of those romantic novels he had suddenly fallen for.
They were cliché and ridiculous, but they were a good escapism of his ridiculous life.

He wasn't too far from where he left off the previous night before he heard the too familiar shuffling
on the other side of the wall. Mako sighed, trying to ignore it; the last thing he needed was to listen to
Jamison jerking off- it didn't help his current emotional dilemma.
So, Mako set on ignoring him. Just a regular night with him reading a normal book. No big deal. He
could ignore the soft moaning that came from the other side of the wall, and he could ignore the
thoughts of Jamison's slender figure splayed on the mattress. He could absolutely ignore it.

He continued to read his book as Jamison just kept rubbing himself on the other side.
Mako heard some whimpering, and paid little attention. He could hear the weak voice of the young
man.

"Mako..."

Mako instantly dropped his book to his lap, his eyes focused on the wall.
He probably imagined it, there was absolutely no way-

"Mako...!"

The man practically rushed to the wall, his book long forgotten on the floor. So many thoughts raced
through his mind, and his groin too. He slipped a hand on his underwear, every insecurity forgotten
as he started to stroke himself. He imagined himself there with the Prince, him grabbing those ribs
and hips with his big fingers, pressing into the pone. Mako pictured the way his skin felt under his
calloused digits, softly pressing his soft pale neck, he just wanted to lick at his collarbones softly and
suck on his ribs and press his jaw and and and-

He came silently, his hand coated on his own semen. He hated himself for it, for what this boy was
doing to him and for what he was allowing to happen. He hated the way that it clenched into his
stomach and clung into his ribs, the way that boy looked at him with so much love an adoration.

Well, time to ruin his night.

He could hear that the Prince still wasn't done, so Mako quickly got up and cleaned himself before
quickly putting a night shirt so he didn't look so bare. He exited his room and quickly went over to
Jamison's, knocking rather quick and loud.
He heard stumbling inside, and the sound of Jamison falling off the bed. Mako suppressed a chuckle,
as he heard frantic running towards the door.
Jamison opened the door, a pink blush spreading through his face and ears. His eyes were glazed,
sweat rolling down his face. He smiled awkward. Mako noticed he was wearing just regular
pajamas- an old shirt and a pair of baggy pants. He was sort of disappointed that he wasn't wearing
some silk robe or something. He couldn't see his crotch but if Mako had to guess, there would be a
tent on his pants.

"Is- somethin' tha matter, Mako?" Jamison said trying to not freak out. Mako smiled, trying to
pretend he didn't just hear Jamison masturbate to him.

"I thought I heard something. Just wanted to make sure you're okay."

"Yeah- yeah mate, I'm apples! I'm just- thinkin aloud and writin' stuff down. That's probably what ya heard." He gave a dorky toothy smile. "No biggie."

Mako nodded with his head. "Okay, then. Good night."

"G'night, Mako." He smiled before closing the door, almost slamming it really.

Mako smiled to himself as he went back to his bed. The shuffling and moaning on the other side of the wall never returned, and he slept in pretended peace.

---

The incident of the previous night wasn't mentioned at all. Mako wasn't even sure if the Prince did it on purpose. Did he even know that the walls were so thin? Maybe not.

But what if it was on purpose?

Probably not, if it had been on purpose then he would have invited him into his room, right? Or something else would have happened. Instead he was flustered and surprised that Mako had knocked at him at such a time, it was probably most definitely not on purpose.

Probably.

Mako shook his head, trying to forget those stupid thoughts.

"Okay, Lord Malcolm," he passed the paper to Mako. "This one got many lands on tha' west. He is old and make lots of weird innuendos that have tha do with farmin' or somethin'. Gets drunk real fast."

They were sitting on one of the balconies in a high floor. The Prince was sitting against the stone railing, his legs hanging from the balcony and into the air. Mako did the same, his stubby legs hanging comically off the railing.

They were going through he list of people that were going to attend and whom the Prince was going to have personally greet.

"This is uh, Ma'am Charlotte. Forgot what she does. Doesn't matter, as long as I remember her name."

Mako would have scolded him but there were far too many people. He looked through the papers, trying to keep a mental note of each one of those individuals. The Prince insisted he didn't need Mako to remind him (and that it would give Mako more trouble for what it was worth), but he still wanted to know. Something about calming his nerves.

"None of these people matter." The Prince sighed dramatically as he just shoved the papers away. "These people just have too much money, they ain't got no idea what to do with it."

"It is a boring chore," Mako sighed as he secured the papers so they wouldn't fly away.

"Why do I gotta greet 'em? it ain't like they're happy to see me!"

"Why do you say that?"

"Heh, it's obvious! I know what they talk about me," The Prince snarled, wrapping his hands unto
one of the beams of the railing. "If me own uncle speaks tha me like that, I know they probably say worse things 'bout me."

The Prince stood up, forgetting the papers and just staring into the horizon.

"I ain't sure. I hate hangin' out with them. I hated hanging out with all them snotty boys in Australia. Ya know what they talked 'bout? About how many horses they got, about how many lands they owned..."

He stared at Mako as he got up, curiosity in his eyes.

"Where did ya grow?"

Mako's mind told him to not answer, but he still spoke anyways.

"In a farm," He sighed as he stared at the horizon as well. "My father was a farmer. That's where I grew up, tending at it."

"Did ya like it? Growing up in a farm?"

Mako took a deep breath. "A lot."

"Maybe we can go and visit it later!" The Prince smiled, eyes beaming in genuine joy. "I would like tha see where ye grew up."

Mako shook his head. "It's been abandoned for a while. There is nothing there anymore."

"Oh," the Prince said with sadness in his voice. "Sorry."

"It's okay. Things happen. I visit every once in a while- make sure people haven't wrecked it too much." Mako leaned over the railing, huge hands covering it completely. "Haven't been there in a while."

"Oh, we can go check it out!" the Prince beamed. "If yer okay with that- we can go and check it is still standing."

Mako sighed, smiling gently. "That would be nice."

"We can go after tha Ball!"

Mako's smile disappeared, replaced by something clinging into his spine. As with most of his feelings, he shoved it deep into his gut.

"Hey," The Prince called softly. Mako turned to face him, but the Prince's eyes were fixated on the horizon. "Thank ye."

"What for?"

"Y'know," he saw how his cheeks were turning a pale shade of pink. "Ya been helpin' me a lot. Not only savin' me life, but by listenin' me bitch so much about it." He took a deep breath. "Helpin' me deal with my uncle, and that."

Mako exhaled by his nose loudly, closing eyes as he as still staring at the Prince.
"It's my job."

Then, the Prince turned around to face his bodyguard. His bright eyes practically glowed at the light of the horizon. Mako's heart was beating hard as the Prince's hands went up to touch his armor, traveling up slowly as they continued to stare at each other.

"It isn't."

Mako felt how everything slowed down. The way the Prince's hands traveled up to his thick neck, using it to prop himself up. He had to tiptoe, closing his bright eyes as he placed his lips on Mako's. Mako didn't move. He just froze as he felt the thin lips against him, soft and warm. Mako had no idea how much time passed—time was nonexistent for him at that moment. He laid still, feeling how the Prince's hands retreated awkwardly.

The Prince suddenly stopped, separating himself from Mako. His face was flush, refusing to stare at his bodyguard in the eyes and instead just staring at the floor. His lips trembled, trying to find the words.

"I-" He almost choked. "I apologize for— for that." His voice was different, not his regular voice but the one he used when speaking formally. Mako's head was full of white noise.

"I must leave— you uh, don't have to follow me. I can find my way to my quarters," he choked as he bent to pick up the papers they were studying earlier. Mako was still very still, turning his head to see the Prince with the papers on his arms, making his way to the exit.

Normally, Mako was a smart man. Driven by plans rather than his own heart.

_Normally._

He gently grabbed the Prince by the shoulders, prompting him to drop his papers. He softly turned them around, the Prince's back pressed against the stone railing. Mako didn't speak, simply staring down at his charge. The Prince—_Jamison_ stared up at him, his eyes intense and lovely. His soft hands traveled to his face once more, scooping Mako's thick jaw. This time, Mako was the one to close his eyes. He was the one to lean down gently. He could smell Jamison's hot breath, his delicate fingers digging into his silver hair softly.

Mako pressed his thick lips on Jamison's soft thin ones. He rumbled, from deep inside his body when he opened his lips to let his tongue enter Jamison.

Mako was _ruined._

Chapter End Notes

_God help you, Mako Rutledge_
Chapter Summary

Everything was ruined.

Chapter Notes

Mako still likes to pretend he has everything under control.

HEY, HELLO. First, some words. I am absolutely flabbergasted at all the nice comments i've gotten so far!! I love you guys so much, I am so glad. Thanks a lot. I am so so so glad you guys like this story, and I hope you continue liking it. I will reply to ALL your comments! It is just like, 1:40 am rn where i am so.. i'll do that later I'm sorry HAH.

Thank you so much for all your support, guys. and all the nice fanart i've gotten. i am over the moon!!!! I do this for u, guys. Thank u . Love you!!!

Thank you so much for reading this!! I hope you like this chapter!!!
The knob of the doors leading to the balcony began to turn.

In a very swift movement and with impressive strength for someone his size, the Prince shoved Mako away from him. The surprise of it made him stumble back, almost tripping on his own feet. He was still full of surprise when a maid poked her head out, totally unaware that they were making out some seconds before.

"Excuse me, my Lord." Mako rubbed at his face trying to make his blush disappear. The lights were low, so he hoped it wasn’t noticeable. He saw how the Prince was struggling with staying decent. The maid didn't seem to notice anything was amiss. "His Majesty requests all of you for dinner, along with the Lord Duke Ian."

"Oh, goddamn dad." He rubbed his temple, as Mako just grabbed the papers thrown on the floor. "We'll be there in a few minutes-"

"Er, actually..." She rubbed her neck nervously. "I was... requested to bring you... His Majesty was worried you would outright not come otherwise."

The Prince made a guttural frustrated noise, pulling at his hair. Mako wanted to do the same, too.

"Okay, then. Let's go. Mako er, are ya... ready?" He smiled awkwardly, trying to contain whatever he was feeling that moment. Mako nodded fast, the heat of their kiss still present on his chest. The Prince nodded strange as well, both of them looking unnatural and awkward. The maid looked at them strange, but didn't comment on it. It was pretty impossible for her to determine what was going on.

They followed her in strange silence, not even exchanging looks on the way to the dining room. Mako couldn't help licking his lips, savoring the taste.

Actually reaching the dining room completely ruined his calm mood, however. The Duke was already there along with the King. Jamison fidgeted on his place, but put a smile on his face and sat down, Mako standing right behind him. Mako completely admired how good the Prince was at this.

Surprisingly enough for everybody involved, there were no fights that dinner. The Duke just resorted to talk about his riches, his horses and his lands. Jamison smiled through all of it, listening to the man just complain and talk about his ridiculous problems. He saw him twitch but didn't comment on anything. Mako sighed, looking at the table and trying to tune out all the annoying laughter coming from the man.

The dinner was soon over, the dessert placed on the table. It was a strawberry Cheesecake, gooey red jam like substance covering the surface along with pieces of strawberry. It looked delicious, and it made Mako's mouth water. He sighed, paying attention to a random point of the wall as the dinner went on.

"I must say, this was a very pleasant evening. Despite our earlier confrontation." He stood up, cleaning himself off. "I am very glad you could be mature, Jamison."

Oh, how he wanted to snap that little head off.

He left, and the King was talking to the Prince about something. Mako didn't pay attention, the events from earlier flooding his mind.
The Prince kissed him, and he kissed him back.

Jamison kissed him and Mako kissed him back.

This wasn't necessarily the end. This was just a deviation of the plan, that was it. It didn't mean a thing. It wasn't like it was the first time Mako had made out with someone only for it to end in nothing. There was going to be a lot of money involved, he couldn't ruin this opportunity just because he was acting like a teenager. The plan would go on, and he would get over this ridiculous sensation.

So Mako made a decision. He would still go through with the original plan.

He was so engrossed in his own thoughts that he didn't notice when the King had left. the Prince simply tapped at him, and Mako absentmindedly followed him. It was pretty late, and the day had been really... emotional, so they were going straight to bed. They didn't have a chance to talk about each other about what had happened previously, with so many maids and guards running around making sure things were in order. The Ball was happening soon, so their hands were full.

Things were hazy for Mako. He could barely focus on anything, just following the Prince as they made their way to their rooms. He didn't even notice when they arrived, his eyes focusing on the door leading to the Prince's room.

"Um," the young man said, turning around. He seemed to want to say something, but there were people walking around. It was not the place, not the time. He bit his lip, looking up at Mako uncertain.

"Here," He presented his bodyguard a plate. It was a piece of the strawberry cheesecake- Mako had been so engulfed in his own mind that he didn't notice him picking it up. He blinked as the Prince shoved the plate on his hands.

"Saw ye eyein' tha cheesecake... it's real good, so I thought ye would want some."

Mako was speechless, staring at the little pastry on his hands. He looked down at the Prince, his fingers softly going through his hair.

"Thank you." Mako finally let out. The Prince smiled wide, his cheeks turning a shade of pink.

"So anyways, g'night."

"Goodnight."

He entered his room, leaving Mako outside with his cheesecake. He sighed, making his way into his own room. He placed the plate on the desk, ignoring it as he started to take out his armor. He didn't hear a sound from the other room- good. He didn't need distractions.

He was extremely tired, so he just went straight to bed. He stared at the piece of cheesecake still sitting on his desk, but pretended it didn't exist. Instead, he just closed his eyes, waiting until sleep took him in.

He woke up in the middle of the night, the cheesecake still staring at him from its place. His stomach rumbled, and Mako sighed. He stood up, taking the little place to his bed. It was room temperature now, but it was still very delicious with a creamy taste. The strawberry was good and it tasted sweet on his tongue, refreshing. His stomach appreciated it, feeling better now that it actually had something in it. He finished the slice, sighing as he set the plate aside on the bedside.
Then he fell asleep, dreaming of a silky and cream filling, soft and warm. It felt good, and different.
He hated it.

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The next morning had been strange.

Everything was the same as always. Their routine hadn't changed, doing different chores and lessons for the Prince while everybody kept preparing for the Winter Ball. However, something was strange between Mako and the Prince. He could sense it, sense his big yellow eyes digging into his back when he wasn't looking.

Who was he to judge? Mako was doing the same thing, after all. He would just stare at his charge whenever he had the chance, trying to figure out what he was thinking. They haven't had a chance of being truly alone, so if there was anything he wanted to say to Mako he didn't have the opportunity.

Mako was just going to ignore it, to just pretend nothing happened the previous day. With any luck, the Prince would do the same. If he said anything however, Mako was going to gently turn him down- say that their relationship was just merely professional.

Yeah. Yeah he can do that. He would absolutely do that if it came to it.

With that plan in mind, Mako felt at ease. He no longer had to worry about what he was going ot say- he was big and intimidating, he just could tell the Prince to piss off, and he would have to do it because Mako said so. Well, maybe be a little more gentle, but even so the Prince would have to deal with it.

The day went on as expected, nothing interesting happening; it seemed that even the Duke kept to himself that day. Mako was grateful for that, he didn't want to deal with that little snob, he already had enough on his mind as it was.

"Hey, I'm hungry- wanna a snack?" The Prince said as he entered the kitchen room. Mako followed, seeing how the Prince had grabbed already a small pastry and shoved it into his mouth without care. Mako sighed, making his way to grab a pastry himself. He noticed the room was empty- strange.

He grabbed one of the pink small muffins on the table, but before he could grab it he felt skinny fingers tugging at his collar.

The young man pulled him down quickly, pressing his mouth against Mako's. The man was so surprised, he stood there in shock once again as the Prince's lips kissed him gently. His mouth tasted like sugar.

This was the moment. He would shove the Prince away, tell him that they couldn't keep doing that, and let it die. Then, the problem would be solved. It was easy, and that's what Mako was going to do.

Mako did not do that.

His hands were on Jamison's skinny hips, his thumbs pressed against the elegant fabric. He felt his skin twitch under his touch, the little gasp from the young man lighting him on fire. He let it happen, guiding Jamison into his mouth softly until the doors creaked open.

As the previous day, they both retreated back before the door was fully open. The worker didn't suspect a thing, paying no attention to them as he simply started to clean the kitchen.
Jamison smiled at Mako, taking another bite of his pastry covering the corners of his mouth with
sugar. Mako wanted to lick it off him, but instead he just took one of his own, tasting it softly in his mouth.

Tasted like strawberries.

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Things couldn't have gone worse. Instead of pushing him away and telling him to stop like he had planned, Mako just let it happen. Again. And again. And again.

Every little opportunity they had of being alone it was the Prince the one that initiated it. The one that leaped to meet his lips, and to kiss him. Mako rarely reciprocated, but he didn't stop it. He let it happen, every time telling himself that next time, surely next time he would put an end to this insanity. And Yet he never did, savoring those little kisses they had when they were alone with each other.

The entire week had passed that way, hiding like teenagers to kiss each other, and without talking about it. It was like an unspoken rule, or it probably was just simply they didn't have enough privacy to do so.

Mako didn't know how to react. At this point, he ignored the spark he felt on his belly with every kiss he got, excusing his actions with the plan. Make him trust you, he thought. Make him think that you wouldn't sell him. Make him lower his guard.

Whatever he did, the outcome would be the same anyways. Rupert and Murdoch probably already have someone to sell the Prince to. The plan was already in motion and there was nothing he could do to stop it even if he wanted.

Which he didn't want. Mako was still going to sell the Prince, and then this ordeal would end. No big deal.

"Mako," The Prince called out, snapping him from his thoughts. He stared down at him, confused. There was no one in the area, but normally they didn't actually resort to talking, Jamison just liked to go straight to the kissing and that was it. Mako had to admit he admired that.

"Yes?"

The young man shifted on his feet. It was late, and it had been a very busy day. They couldn't have any kissing session, and it made Mako savor it more. However he just looked tired.

"...Nothin', I'm just tired. Wanna call it a night already?"

Technically it was still early, but Mako shrugged.

"Sure, let's go."

Their walk towards their quarters was quiet, but it was kind of a different kind of quiet, the one that clawed at Mako's throat with anxiety and anticipation of the unknown. The Prince seemed to be anxious as well, his eyes darting from side to side.

"Want to talk about something?" Mako asked, his voice soft. The Prince didn't even look at him, staring at his feet as they kept going.

"Not here," he whispered. "Private."

Whatever that meant, Mako felt it wasn't going to be good.
"Okay."

The rest of the trip was quiet, their footsteps echoing through the hallways along with the workers walking through them. They didn't pay attention to them, but Mako still felt wary. He expected one of them to stop, point at them and yell how they knew what they were doing. Nonsense. No one knew.

They had finally reached the Prince's room, the young man stood in front of his door, turning around to face Mako.

"Can ye help me check out me stitches? I can't get a good view of me leg, I ain't limpin' as much as before, but just tha make sure?"

Mako blinked. An excuse. He hadn't said anything about his leg hurting that day, but he followed along.

"Sure."

The Prince smiled, and it warmed Mako's heart. He followed inside, unsure of what the young man's intention was.

As soon as Mako closed the door behind him, the Prince turned around to face his bodyguard.

"We need tha talk."

"About... what?"

"Ye know about what."

Well, straight to the point.

"I just..." He ran his fingers through his blonde hair. "I just, I mean. I like ya lots, right?"

Mako just stared at him.

"I like ya lots. I didn't know I could like someone this much. And I do! Ye... ye're not like every person I met. Yer different, in a good way. And also yer, I mean, yer gorgeous mate."

Mako scrunched his nose. No one had really called him that- he was not an attractive man. His face was rough, with scars from his warrior days. His face was not "gorgeous", it was strong and intimidating, made to inspire fear on people.

"And ye could have anyone ye wanted. I know that! But," he scratched his nape. "If ye leave or say that ye don't want to do this anymore, I would get it. I mean, I understand! Don't think that just cus I'm tha prince I'll jail ye or somethin' for not wantin' to do this."

There was a lot for Mako to process on that sentence. His mind focused on him having the perfect excuse to say no, he does not want to keep this going. He could stop it once and for all.

"Why would you think that?" He asked first. He was curious as to why the Prince thought he wouldn't want to be with him.

The Prince rolled his shoulders. "I ain't good. I know me. I am annoyin', I ain't pretty- I'm just weird. I am not someone's first choice for anythin', or last choice for that matter."

Something unpleasant sat on Mako's stomach.
"That's not true."

"Everyone thinks I'm annoyin' even ya, when we first met."

"Yes," Mako stepped forward. "But then I got to know you."

"Oh, please." He sighed. "Are ya tellin' me that my personality ain't gonna keep ya away?"

"I have stay near you. It is my job."

"I know its yer bloody job!" The Prince loudly hissed. Frustration was on his features, and he was tired. "Ye know very well what i'm talkin' about. Ye don't have to be like this and ye know it."

"Like what?"

"Stop that! Ya know like what! Ye don't gotta be so sweet, bein' all 'Oh I understand', bein' all nice and listenin' to me talk about my problems. Ye don't gotta, and yet ya do. That ain't ya bloody job. Ya job is to make sure I don't die."

"Jamison," he was going to touch him, but felt weird. Just saying his actual name rather than his title was extreme insubordination, and normally he would be punished by it. And yet, nothing happened. Jamison just stared at him with wide eyes.

"Ya don't gotta do this. If... if ya thought you had to, cus I'm tha prince- forget that." He stared at his feet. "I don't want to force ya to do something ye don't wanna."

Mako placed his hands on Jamison's shoulders. He stared down at him, softly.

"Do you... want to stop?" His golden eyes stared up at Mako, awaiting.

Yes. that is what his brain screamed at him to say, a small part of him still foolishly believing he had control of the situation.

His big palms scooped Jamison's chin up, tilting his head back. They stared in silence for minutes, Jamison's freckled face pink with blush. Mako got his face close, feeling the hot breath on his thick lips.

For the second time, Mako was the one to initiate the kiss. His hand carefully caressed Jamison's cheeks, but his gloves didn't permit him from actually feeling it. Without breaking the kiss, he took them off and let them fall to the floor. His calloused finger stroke his cheek softly, feeling the soft skin. Jamison's eyes were closed, feeling the sensation of Mako's calloused digits stroking him softly.

"Does this answer your question?" Mako breathed on his mouth. Jamison let out a soft moan, his arms wrapped around his bodyguard's neck. They explored him, his neck, his stubble chin, his scars—everything Jamison could get his hands in he touched, trying to memorize the sensation of Mako's face.

"You're unlike anyone I've ever met." His teeth grazed Jamison's neck, and Mako felt a shiver run his spine. "In a good way."

Mako very softly caressed Jamison's lips with his tongue, feeling his crotch heat up at seeing how demure the young man looked.

His mind disconnected from his body when his hands started to dig under Jamison's coat. He could
feel his skinny ribs poking through the cloth, rubbing at them with his thumbs as they continued to kiss. Their motions became hungry, still gentle but more passionate. Mako's thick tongue breached Jamison's mouth, tasting everything the young man could give him. His cheeks were burning, his fingers just softly pressing against the ribs.

At one point, they ended up on the bed. Mako had very gently shoved him on it, still kissing him while being above him. Jamison hands were greedy, touching and rubbing at Mako's face, neck and hair, starved of touch. Mako let him, his own hands undoing the many buttons of the Prince's coat. He softly opened it (Careful, those were expensive clothes) and gently shoved them to the floor. The Prince's torso was bare, milky white and freckled. In the middle of his ribs laid the scar of the assassin that had stabbed him, and it made Mako's stomach turn. He leaned down to it, pressing a gentle kiss to it.

"Mako..." His hands were starving, attempting to touch Mako underneath the armor. He was needy and greedy, awaiting to touch more of Mako's skin. His elegant pants were tenting with his erection. "Shh..." He sighed into Jamison's skin, his lips very gently grazing Jamison's torso. "I'll make you feel good."

Jamison gasped as he felt those lips travel towards his ribs, leaving gentle kisses on it. His skin was so white, his fingers caressed his abs and his ribs as he kept kissing down his torso.

"Mako-" His fingers were tangled on Mako's silver hair, trying to find purchase on anything. Mako continued, his erection already pulsating with need. They both were too greedy and needy- taking off his armor would take way too much time and the mood would surely have died by then. Instead, he just took off his pants with one hand. His dick felt the fresh air, and Mako rumbled at the feeling. "I- I-" Jamison was jelly on his hands, his hips slowly twitching up in want. The hand that wasn't palming himself pulled down on Jamison's elegant pants and underwear, freeing his member.

Mako stared at it- he had imagined it so much, pressed against the other side of the wall and imagining how it was. Jamison's wasn't as big as he was, but he wasn't necessarily too small-average, but it still made his guts burn. It was already fully erect, and Mako took a couple of seconds to admire the sight beneath him.

The Prince, the Prince of the land laid on the mattress, panting and drooling with his eyes closed and face pressed against the elegant sheets. His hands were seeking purchase on it, clawing the silk of it. His white body was small and thin, diminutive in comparison's to Mako's massive everything. It made his stomach clench, his finger very carefully stroking one of Jamison's prominent hipbones.

He gasped for air, his hips thrusting up wanting for more of the touch. Mako licked his fingers, lowering himself just above's Jamison's penis.

He very gently licked the head, and Jamison had to bit his fist to not wail. He continued, going from the base to the head, one hand massaging his inner thighs softly. He would shift from kissing his member to kissing and licking at his inner thighs, the white soft skin contrasting with his dark harsh lips, every sound and twitch he made delicious to Mako.

"I'll make you feel so good," he whispered against his thigh, his tongue licking at it, making it's way up towards Jamison's dick.

He was a panting mess, his thin hands grabbing at Mako's ponytail attempting to ground himself, back arched against the mattress. And Mako hadn't even started yet. He softly licked it, his tongue pressed against the underside of it. Jamison panted like a dog, head
tilted back as far as it could go and rubbing harsh against the sheets. Mako used both his hands to lift
his hips gently, his mouth completely engulfing Jamison.

It was like an explosion. Jamison silently screamed, mouth open wide as he attempted to move his
hips and thrust, but Mako didn't let him. His hands were at Jamison's thin torso, engulfing it
completely as he sucked and swallowed around the man. He was easy to swallow, his mouth big
enough to deepthroat him.

"Mako!" He gasped, his hips grinding against Mako's face attempting to find his own release. His
knuckles were red from all the gripping, body red in ecstasy. He looked like he would die of
pleasure, his member pulsating hard in his mouth.

Mako started to jerk himself off, his release coming close as well. Jamison opened his eyes, locking
his gaze with Mako.

He was beautiful.

Jamison's eyes rolled to the back of his head, mouth open in a silent scream as he came. Mako
milked him, swallowing everything Jamison gave him as he helped him ride his orgasm. Tasting the
Prince's cum brought Mako to his own Orgasm, thick ropes of cum shooting from his dick and into
his palm. He kept pumping, finishing up his orgasm as he released Jamison.

He looked like a mess, his body heaving heavily, drool sticking to his dick. With his clean hand,
Mako gently patted his head. Jamison nuzzled into it weakly, still panting as he relaxed.

"You okay?" Mako asked, paying outmost attention to Jamison. He nodded weakly, smiling toothy.

Mako looked down at himself and saw that there was a mess on his palm. Normally he would have
just smeared it into the sheets but those were very expensive sheets, he didn't think that would be too
nice at all.

Jamison smiled, pulling himself out of the bed. "Help ya with that."

He leaned over his bedside, pulling a box of napkins from it. He gave some to Mako, who used them
to clean himself up like nothing happened. Jamison did the same to his own dick, cleaning the drool
off it. Before Mako could say anything about what happened, Jamison pulled himself up to another
kiss. This was more intimate, the Prince tasting himself through Mako. It was deep and soft, in a
way. It made Mako remember those old days when he was young and full of life.

"Thank you." He said against Mako's lips. Mako placed a heavy hand on his lower back, stroking
softly.

"I'm here."

They stayed like that for several minutes, until he felt Jamison smile against his skin.

"I'm real hungry, mate. Want somethin' from tha' kitchen?"

Mako wouldn't say he was necessarily hungry, but he wouldn't pass the opportunity to eat
something. He hadn't actually eat anything decent all day.

"Sure" Mako smiled back. Jamison stood up, putting up his pants and the clothes that were on the
ground. They were a little bit wrinkled, but it was no big deal. Mako made sure he looked decent as
well, looking at himself from a mirror in the other side of the room.
"Oh, hey!" Jamison called out. He had what seemed like a very stale bread on his hands. "Forgot had this one 'ere. Ya want one?"

"I am not eating stale bread. For how long has that been there?"

Jamison shrugged. "If ya don't wanna, then I'll eat it."

"I want something fresh from the decent, not something that has been in your room since God knows when."

"Chatty!" Jamison said, taking a bite out of the bread. He swallowed it, but his nose crinkled up in disgust.

"Bad?" Mako snorted.

"I ain't got no idea how long that was there."

Mako chuckled as Jamison just cleaned the sugar off his mouth. He was making his way outside the room, opening the door and looking around. No one- good. It seemed no one had been the wiser to their sexual adventures.

He stepped out into the hallway, awaiting for Jamison. "Come on, eat something decent." He called out.

"H-hold on a sec, mate..." Jamison voice suddenly was low and weak. Mako immediately turned to see him cradling his stomach.

"Wh-"

"Tha bread was just rotten, is all." He smiled. "No biggie."

Mako blinked, staring at the young man as he made it out of his room.

One step. He heaved.

Second step, he almost fell.

Third step, he crumbled.

Jamison was on the floor, shoulders rising up and down as he started to vomit. Mako quickly rushed to him, turning him around. His body went stiff and cold at the sight.

Blood poured out of Jamison's mouth like a cascade. His nose was bleeding as well, drool bubbling like a rabid dog.

Poison.

Mako shoved his fingers inside of Jamison's mouth, making him puke the remains of the bread. He retched into the floor, his vomit mixed with blood and bubbling acids from the bread. His small body kept twitching, trying to hold unto anything. Mako kept him close, screaming for help as he held his small body in his arms.

"Jamison, stay with me," Mako choked out, his fingers cradling his white face, pale from the poison. "Jamison, please-"

Jamison grabbed at him with a shaky hand, pulling him close and attempting to not lose himself.
"Jamison," he pleaded to someone. His screams had already attracted the guards, along with nurses. He saw them approach them.

"Please," he whispered.

"Please."
Mako had witnessed many people die. He had seen them die quickly, the light of their eyes fading as they bled out in the floor. Quick and horrible deaths, he was even the cause of some of those deaths. He always figured that is how he was going to die, dying a horrible quick death.

He used to believe it was the worst way to die- sudden without even being able to comprehend what was going on. But this... this was worse. This was worse in a way Mako had never experienced before.

He sat next to the hospital bed where Jamison laid. His breathing was shallow and labored, his tiny chest rising up and down painfully. The young man's skin was already pale but now he looked sickly pale- his face looked like a sheet of paper on the verge of breaking. His eyes were sunken, lips white. Mako couldn't stand staring at him for too long, but he also couldn't look away.

"Poison," the head doctor was explaining to the King. His Majesty had bags under his eyes- he looked exhausted. "He ingested little of it, and we managed to purge it out of his system. Time was key here. Otherwise, he wouldn't have survived."

Mako didn't want to think what would have happened if Jamison had just eaten it like normal. His eating manners were pretty bad- he just resorted to shoving the entire pastry on his mouth whenever he ate desserts. And yet, he took just one bite. He was so thankful for that.

"The poisoned bread was in his room... he took only one bite, which is why we were able to react. One more bite and he would have died almost instantly."

Mako sighed quietly, staring over Jamison's weak form.

"I do not understand," The King's voice was strong and stern. "How did this happen? Who put it there- how come this happened?!"

"There is an investigation being conducted right now, Your Majesty. The General is going to be
leading it."

The King sighed, rubbing his face. He turned to face Mako, his face excruciatingly worried. "Mako, where were you when this happened?"

"I was in my own room, your Majesty." Mako sighed softly. "I heard the door opening, and something falling. When I came out, he was already on the floor."

It wasn't the truth, but Mako wasn't about to tell the King that he was eating the Prince out.

"You don't know where he got the food from?"

"No, your Majesty. I don't recall him taking it from the kitchen at all."

"Someone that has access to his room planted it. But that is just about every maid."

The King stared at Mako with tired, angry eyes. He could tell that the King suspected him; he didn't blame him, he was tired and his son has been poisoned.

"If I had wanted him dead, I would have let him die the first time he was attacked." Mako quickly said.

The King closed his eyes, thinking. He scratched at his stubble, clearly on the verge of losing his mind.

"Is he going to survive?"

"I..." The Doctor sighed, closing her eyes and taking a deep breath. "If he survives the night, he will be out of danger."

"If?" Mako said without even realizing. It spilled out of his mouth so easily, like melted wax.

"There is a very high chance he won't survive the night. We... we did everything we could. There is nothing more to do, but wait."

No one said a thing. The silence was thick like honey, putrid and engulfing. It tickled the back of Mako's throat, the intensity of it. They didn't move, digesting the situation as much as they could. It made Mako's tongue heavy, his fingers twitching as he just stared into the distance.

"I'm sorry."

Mako didn't notice when she left, leaving him alone with the King and his son. The King was very, very quiet. He wasn't a man of too many words, but this was just different. His shoulders were hunched, his imposing regal frame now small and weak.

"I..." His breath hitched. He sounded extremely vulnerable, something Mako had never witnessed. The King took a very deep breath, trying to compose himself before speaking.

He walked over Jamison's bed, staring at his son's terrible form. Mako could only imagine how it felt; his wife had been killed already- to lose his son the same way he lost his wife.

"We must make preparations." He stared at Mako, trying to still seem like he was in control of the situation. "For the worst case scenario. There is a lot to do, in case he-"
He went very quiet. His hand brushed his son's hair carefully, afraid he would hurt Jamison by just touching him. Mako didn't know what to do or say, so he said nothing.

"I need to go." Mako didn't know if he was speaking to him or to Jamison. He didn't face Mako, still fixated on Jamison lying on the bed. "Stay with him."

"Yes, your Highness."

He stared down at Jamison for some more time, until he left. Mako would have thought nasty things of him- about leaving his son to die, but he was too busy with his own misery.

The room was pretty big, but it Mako felt like it could barely hold them. His fingers were shaky, palms sweating. His amour felt uncomfortable and too tight on him, compriming his chest and lungs. He could feel his heart beating hard against his chest, his breathing echoing in the small room. It hurt, his insides twisting and knotting at the sight of Jamison in the bed. The Prince looked so small and frail, like he would shatter at any second.

He was going to die.

He didn't want to think about it, but Mako had to come to terms with the fact that Jamison was most likely going to die that night, in that bed, next to Mako. How could this happen? Mako wasn't supposed to get this close to the job. He was supposed to just make sure Jamison survived long enough until he was taken away by his associates. That's it. He had done worse- he had killed people for money, he had fought with other warriors until there was no one else but him standing.

He never had to get close to those people, however. He didn't even bother humanizing them, if he had to be honest. They weren't people, they were just targets that he had to eliminate to get enough money to eat for the day. He had made the mistake of getting to close to the Prince, and now he had to suffer for it.

Why did he care? It wasn't like his plans had changed. Up until the point Jamison got poisoned he was still going to sell him out, wasn't he? After that Jamison would probably be killed. The only difference was that Mako wouldn't receive his share of the money for the kidnapping.

The money wasn't in his mind at the moment. Something else, something different- for the first time in his life he didn't care about the money at all. He hadn't thought of the actual kidnap in fact, he hadn't changed his decision but he didn't actually think about it.

It didn't matter anymore. He was going to die.

Mako took a deep breath. Jamison was going to die.

He wished he didn't care as much as he did. Those amber eyes, the little touches, the look of adoration in his face that Jamison made whenever Mako laughed. Gone. It would all be gone. The way his face lightened when he smiled, the freckles on his pale face. The adoring way he showed him all his notes and studies, his creations.

Gone.

He was a god damn fool, that's what he was. He was a damn idiot for letting this happen, the way his face burnt and he felt the guilt in his skin.

Mako scooted closer. The Prince looked in pain, his lips slightly parted while he struggled breathing.
Mako took one of his hands, limp and cold. It was so small in his huge palm. It was freckled, long fingers as pale as his face. Mako rubbed the back of the hand with his thumb, gently massaging. He wasn't even going to pretend he was still in control anymore. Everything had gone to shit, and it was all garbage. And he liked it. He liked how it felt to sneak around and kiss him, he liked the feeling of having him under him. Mako had come to love the uncertainty of everything.

Except this.

He brought Jamison's palm close to his face, kissing his palm softly. His lips softly kissed at the back of his palm, at his knuckles, and each of his fingers.

"I'm sorry." He whispered against the freckled skin on his lips. "I should've... I should've done something." He pressed Jamison's lips palm against his forehead. "I should've protected you."

There were a million of things he should have done before, things he should have said but now it was useless. He would never get to say those things, he would never get to see those eyes again. He squeezed the hand on his grasp tightly, his breath hitching at the realization of how cold and limp it was. Mako leaned in the bed, elbows pressing against the mattress and slightly sinking it. He still had his hand between his palms, cradling it like a treasure.

Mako looked around, making sure he was truly alone. It was silent, no one bothering to entering to the private room. He leaned close to the young man, kissing his forehead softly.

It was the least he could do.

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His face was pressing against the Mattress softly. Mako stirred slightly, savoring those sweet seconds of bliss before he realized where he was, or what was happening.

Then, he remembered. He had fallen asleep at some point in the night, still cradling Jamison's hand. He jolted up, sitting straight with the hand still on his grasp. His tired eyes stared at Jamison's form in the bed, illuminated softly by the sunlight passing through the blinds.

He wasn't moving.

Mako pressed another soft kiss to his palm, and he felt it stir. He opened his eyes, to realize Jamison was breathing. Steady, slowly- like he was asleep and nothing more. Mako took a very deep breath, all the guilt and stress instantly lifting from his shoulders. He pressed the hand tightly to himself, filling it with small kisses and taking in his scent. He very carefully put the hand down, his other palm ruffling Jamison's blonde hair.

The door opened softly, the doctor from last night slipping in. She sighed in relief at the situation, walking towards the bed.

"He survived the night." She said, staring at the Prince's sleeping form. "He will still need to be held here for observation, but the worst passed. He will be okay."

Mako nodded, tired. His eyes stung, finally letting the exhaustion take over him. "Thank you."

"His Highness has been informed. He has been busy, so he hasn't been able to come here. But..." She shrugged, staring at the floor. "He has many things to do. He is the King, after all. It's understandable."

Mako didn't care. He was too tired to be angry, to be honest. "Right."
"You can leave if you want. There are Guards outside of the room." Were there, really? he hadn't noticed. They hadn't made the attempt to even enter the room or anything. "I know it has been a rough night."

"I'll rather stay." He instantly said. The Doctor nodded, and left. The moment she left, Mako began touching him again. He brushed his cheek with his big thumb, leaning in and kissing the corner of his mouth. Jamison stirred slightly, but didn't move aside from that. Mako kept caressing his face, a small smile appearing in his face.

It then turned into a scowl. Jamison was alive.

There was a lot of thinking to do.

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The most difficult thing he had to do that night was leave Jamison behind. He spent the day at his side, only leaving when he was absolutely sure he was okay. It still made his eyes sting, his nose stuffy and gave his goosebumps. Jamison would be okay. He was in good hands. He would be okay.

Had it been for Mako, he would have stayed there all night as well at his side, giving him small massages on his hand and face until he awakened. But he had things to do.

Slipping out of the castle hadn't been difficult. It sat wrong in his stomach just how easy it had been, but he didn’t think on it for too long. After all, it was necessary for him to do what he wanted to.

He had taken off his armor, too. He was a big bastard, but the armor made him stand out even more if that was possible. He covered himself in a dark cloak and went out to the town. The streets were pretty much empty and the people that were out didn't pay much attention to him. They didn't want to fuck with him, so they just tried to ignore his presence.

Mako had a pretty good idea of where he had to go.

He made his way towards the sketchy tavern. The moment he stepped inside, some people glanced up to him but quickly went back to their own business. Mako could smell the smoke and alcohol in the air. It brought him memories.

He shoved those feelings of nostalgia away as he spotted his targets on the other side of the tavern in a dark corner, talking to each other with pints of beers on their table. Mako very quickly walked over them, his footsteps echoing loudly on the tavern. The men instantly recognized him, smiles spreading to their faces.

"Rutledge! It has been a while, eh?" Murdoch said cheerfully as he took another drink from his beer. Peter laughed the same, taking a drink out of his own pint.

"Ya got somethin' to say, Mako?" Peter exclaimed loudly.

Mako groaned annoyed.

"We need to talk." He pointed towards the door. "Outside. It's about our little deal."

The men smiled at that, immediately following Mako to the outside of the building.

"Good news for you, Mako." Murdoch said as they exited the dirty alley. "We already got someone to hand the kid over. We nab him, get paid, and we all scram out of this place!"

"It wasn't that hard to get someone. You were right- they offered far more money I knew existed!"

Both men laughed jovially. Mako stared at them in silence, awaiting for their outburst to end.
"Do ya have any intel or somethin' that can help us, Mako?" Murdoch said, still smiling.

"The plan is off."

They all remained in silence for several minutes, their smiles twitching on their faces.

"Pardon me?"

"The entire operation, the plan is off. It won't happen."

"Mako," Peter chuckled nervously. "What are you talking about? We- we had everything figured out. We had a plan on what to do. We- it's a lot of money!"

"Did something happen? Did someone offer you more money?! Do you have ANY idea of how much money it is?!"

"The plan," He hissed, standing his ground and loving over them. "Is off."

"Oh, you became a royal dog, then?" Murdoch ventured. He took a step forward, snarling in anger. "You think you are too good for us, now? You became what you just wanted to be as a child? Is your armor shiny, Mako? Are your weapons good? Is your employer a good man?"

Mako just stared down at him without moving or emoting.

"We will do it, wherever you want it or not. Do you think we need your help with this? You think you can stop us?"

Mako chuckled.

"You will not do such thing."

"And why is that, Mako?"

Mako grabbed Murdoch's head with his palm, quickly slamming his face against the brick wall next to them. Blood sprayed everywhere as he let him fall to the floor. Peter lunged at him with a knife, how funny. Mako grabbed his arm and twisted it so far until it crunched sick, bending in an unnatural angle. Peter screamed in pain, wailing and trying to jerk himself away. Mako dropped him as well next to Murdoch.

"I said," He loomed over the men, both turning to face him. "The plan is off."

"They'll kill us," Murdoch sobbed through the blood of his face. "Our client- they'll kill us if we don't."

"I will kill you if you do." He lifted Murdoch by the collar of his shirt into the air, his thumb pressing his healthy eye dangerously. "I already took your eye before. I can do the same again, unless we are clear."

"He will kill us!"

"Are we clear?"

"Mako-"
"Are we clear?"

They nodded slowly and messy, tears coating their disgusting faces. Pathetic.

"Good." Mako let Murdoch fall violently to the floor.

"It was good making business with you." Mako calmly said as he walked away, without looking back.

That should do it. He still had a lot of planning to do, to make sure Jamison was truly safe the day of the Dance. He had the feeling both Murdoch and Peter weren't going to give up on their scheme of stealing the Prince away, specially if they were serious with their client killing them. He easily made it inside the castle once again, entering the room where Jamison was sleeping. The nurse that had been watching him looked at him with a tender smile.

"He hasn't woken up, sir."

Mako sighed. That made him happy, in a way. He would have felt like shit if Jamison woke up without him at his side. The nurse excused herself, leaving the room quickly. Mako sat beside him once again, looking at him sleeping peacefully. It didn't occur to him until that moment that he should have probably killed Murdoch and Peter, to make sure they wouldn't harm Jamison. He needed to be prepared to kill their client as well if it came to it.

There were just too many things to prepare for, it made Mako's head hurt. That and the fact that he hadn't had a good night rest for the past two days. It didn't matter, though. He would figure it out. He had killed so many people in the past- killing some more wouldn't be an issue. Not if it was to protect Jamison.

Mako was deep involved in his thoughts, when he heard some soft whimpering. He turned his head in time to see Jamison softly shifting, turning his head around. His eyes were unfocused, but he quickly spotted Mako and smiled very weakly at him.

"Hey," His voice was very raspy and sounded hurt. Mako shuffled his hair softly.

"Don't talk. You're still weak."

"Should've thrown tha bread out, eh?" He chuckled. Mako knew that Jamison just wanted to lighten the mood but he couldn't help feel his stomach go cold.

"It's okay Jamie," he softly whispered as Jamison drifted to sleep once again. He softly caressed his hair, thumb rubbing his scalp in circles.

"I won't let them touch you."
"Hey,"

Mako perked up. He was starting to fall asleep, book slipping from his hands when Jamison called out to him. The young man looked better than before, already a week and half having passed since the poisoning.

The Prince was out of danger but he still had to rest as much as possible. They had moved him to his actual room, for him to feel more comfortable and because he was starting to get antsy in the hospital room. It should be okay, if he took his medication as indicated. As his bodyguard, Mako was to keep an eye on him. He could technically do it from the outside, just sitting next to his door. No one complained at the fact that he preferred doing it inside his actual room, though- extra security he called it.

"Hey," Mako replied back, rolling his shoulders. "How you feeling?"

Jamison stirred in his bed, having just woken up himself. He sat up on his bed, rubbing at his face tiredly. He looked tired, but at least it was way better than a couple of days prior.

"Feelin' drowzy." He sighed, stretching. "How many days has it been since, well-"

"Ten days."

"Whoa. Really?" He scratched the back of his neck. "It feels like... less."

"You were in and out the first few days."

"Roight... makes sense." He awkwardly kept rubbing at his neck, thinking. "Can't remember nothin' of what happened."
"You can't?" Mako asked curiously.

"I mean- I remember I ate tha bread, then... My stomach really hurt," He clutched his belly with his hands, squeezing it slightly. "Like, it started bein' a normal hurt but then became worse and worse, and... I remember bein' on tha floor. Barfin' blood and stuff." He sighed, letting go of his torso to clutch at the sheets gently. "I remember ya, loomin' over me."

An uncomfortable silence followed, awkward and sad. Jamison watched the sheets carefully, as if he was afraid of looking up at Mako.

"I was real afraid for a second there. I thought, ya know. I thought I was gonna die, and in such a stupid way, too!" He lifted his arms in the air, moving them wildly. "Here lies Jamison Fawkes tha First, son of James Fawkes- died cus 'e ate a poisoned bread!"

"King Richard drowned on his own pool about a hundred years ago," Mako said trying to make Jamison feel at ease.

"It ain't matter! it is still stupid!" He sighed in frustration, rubbing his face with his hands. He laid down on the bed once again, his head pressed against the pillows. "I hate this."

Mako shifted uncomfortable on his seat, putting the book he was reading on the floor and placing a hand on the mattress. "It's my fault too."

"Nah. Ya were tha one to tell me to not eat stale bread. I did it to be funny and... well, look at what happened!" He sighed, placing his small hand on top of Mako's. In comparison he looked so diminutive. "They 'aven't found who did it yet, eh?"

"No, not yet. They are supposedly holding an investigation."

Jamison stuck his tongue out, blowing on it and making a 'pbhhht' sound. "They ain't gonna find a thing. It could've anyone."

"Anyone could enter your room before. But," Mako pulled a key from one of his pockets, showing it to Jamison. "We're now the only ones allowed to get in here. For security."

"Oh, sweet. Ya would've think that would have been done before, though."

"Well, it didn't really occur to us."

Jamison laughed at that, already making Mako feel better about it. Even if the Prince was healthy now, it still pained him to see that this happened. If he had done something...

...nothing would have changed, anyways. He would have never thought of the bread being poisoned- no matter how much he tried to think about it there was probably nothing he could have done to prevent it.

Which made him feel even worse.

"I was scared, too."

Jamison turned to face him, still covered by those blankets. His amber eyes stared up at him with intensity, quiet.

"What?"

"I thought," Mako gripped at the sheets beneath his palm. "I thought I was going to lose you. The
doctors said that you- that you wouldn't survive the night." He sighed deeply. "It's my fault, too. I am
your bodyguard, and you've almost died many times already. This shouldn't have happened."

Jamison softly scuttled closer to Mako, taking his huge hand in his palms. He gently rubbed circles at
the back of his hand, massaging it.

"It ain't yer fault." He brought Mako's palm close to him, his lips brushing against the knuckles. It
sparked something under his skin. "I'm a handful."

Mako sighed, letting Jamison kiss his palm weakly. His lips brushed over every individual knuckle,
softly kissing it. Mako wished he wasn't wearing his gloves right now, but didn't want to take the
hand away from the young man to take it off. He felt content, Jamison's closeness just being enough.

"Ya think my uncle did it?" He asked softly, so low that Mako could barely hear it.

He cradled the giant palm, as if Jamison was trying to seek solace in it. "I 'aven't seen him... since I
woke up. Have ya?"

Mako remembered.
He hadn't seen the Duke (or even thought about him) when he was in the brink of death. He didn’t
care- more important things were on Mako's mind. The noble decided however, to show up after it
had been confirmed that Jamison wouldn't die.

"Hello," The man greeted from the entrance of the room, his bodyguard looming behind him like a
shadow. Mako didn't say a thing, staring at the Duke as he made his way inside of the room. "I heard
what happened."

Mako, once again, didn't reply. Jamison was beside him asleep. He barely looked alive, face still pale
and sickly looking.

"Well, it's a shame." He stared down at the sleeping Prince. "There were already preparations
scheduled in the event of his passing."

Mako really did not like the implication of those words. Was he saying it was a shame Jamison
survived? He couldn't tell. He was so exhausted due to the entire ordeal, his brain couldn't make
connections at this point. He resorted to scowling instead.

"It is his own doing, after all. I heard how it was that he was poisoned. What a fool." He shook his
head still staring down at Jamison. "You know? Sometimes the world gives us signals, don't you
think? All that has happened before, and this. Don't you think this is a signal of what we should
prevent?"

Mako's scowl grew bigger.

"Perhaps it is inevitable for him to die. Maybe, it wouldn't be such a bad thing."

Mako immediately stood up. He very easily towered over the Duke, and he had to stop himself from
just grabbing the man and hurling him across the room.

"I believe you need to leave."

"Oh, but what disgusting manners. Don't you know who I am?" He replied back, offended. Mako
growled.
"I do not care who you are," Mako replied lowly. He saw out of the corner of his eye how the Duke's bodyguard was staring right at him. "You just threatened my charge, so either you leave or I will make you leave."

"I am the Duke. You could start a war if you touch me."

"I am sorry, but I am just uncivilized swine. I do not care about any of this political garbage."

For the first time since he got there, the Duke seemed nervous. He swallowed, attempting to scowl at Mako but failing. He just turned around and left the room without another word, leaving along with his bodyguard. Mako couldn't relax until he was sure they were truly gone, sitting down and sighing as the chair creaked with his weight. He stared down at Jamison, still asleep.

"He..." Mako sighed, letting Jamison cradle his hand. "I am pretty sure he did."

"Great," Jamison face fell when he heard this. It mustn't be easy when your own family wants you dead.

"I wish I was strong like ye," He ran his hands over every single one of Mako's fingers, rubbing at them and amazed at their size. "No one would want tha mess with me then. I would be able tha fight back. But I'm weak."

Mako moved his palm, caressing softly Jamison's blonde hair. The young man nuzzled into it, closing his eyes and relaxing. "Physical strength isn't the only way to be strong." Jamison opened his eyes, amber staring back at Mako. "Anyone can have muscles. You are very smart, and that's not something everybody can be."

"I ain't smart," He sighed sadly. "I poisoned myself."

"You can be a little too irrational at times, but you are still very smart. You need to pay more attention, though." He ruffled his hair softly. "Wouldn't want to lose you."

"Awh," Jamison whispered. "Ya care about me."

He did. He truly did. He hadn't care about someone this much for years, and it was such a nice feeling. He didn't want it to go away. Mako scooted from the chair he was sitting into the bed. Jamison moved back to make space for him, as Mako laid on his side facing the Prince. His heavy frame and armor sank the mattress but the young man didn't care, scooting up to be closer to him. Mako wrapped his arms behind him, dragging the Prince closer and up against his armor.

"I..."

Mako wasn't good with words. He really wasn't. For such a big bastard as him, sometimes talking wasn't easy at all. He rather be intimidating, he rather have no one approach him and try to talk to him- he wasn't used to being so close to someone.

"It's okay," Jamison pressed his face against the smooth armor. "I know, big guy. Ya don't gotta say a thing."
Something warm spread inside Mako's chest. He looked down at Jamison, hands wrapping around his waist and rising him slightly to his level. He stared at his eyes, at the freckles on his pale face, like stars on a night sky.

His lips gently touched Jamison, and the Prince turned into jelly. He let himself be touched and kissed, his soft hands softly touching Mako's jaw. He bit Jamison's bottom lip softly, one hand cradling the back of his blonde head.

Jamison began to grind against Mako's body, but it must have been uncomfortable for him due to the armor. Mako wished he wasn't wearing it, too.

"I want you," Jamison whispered on Mako's ear, and it was hot and made awful things inside of him. He wanted him, too. He wanted everything he was, everything he could give. Make him his. That would be nice. "All of you."

"Eager."

Jamison sighed, kissing every bit of flesh he could reach. He was like a fire, burning hot all over the place. It had been a long time since he did this, but not that long. Jamison was another issue, though.

"You've ever done this?" He whispered to Jamison, his hand creeping up to his own ass. He cradled it, fingers pressed close to his hole. Jamison's breath hitched, throat bared to Mako. He pressed himself closer against the armor. "You ever had someone like this?"

"N-no," he whispered, face pressed against Mako's thick neck. "Been sucked. Sucked some people off. B-but never done this... that."

Oh. Well, then they had to start slow.

"It'll be slow, we won't go full yet." He whispered against Jamison's ear. It made the young man shiver. "We'll start with fingers, okay?"

"Fingers?" Jamison said with annoyance, until he saw Mako's fingers. "Yeah, okay. Fingers sound good."

"You got some lube here?"

"Nah," Jamison laughed. "I haven't been with no one since I came back from Australia."

Mako chuckled. Well, that could be easily fixed- he had some lube in his room. When he brought it from home he didn't think it was going to be very important, but now he was thankful.

"I'll be right back," He said, standing up from the bed. Jamison rolled into his back, hands behind his head pillowing it.

"I'll be waitin' for ya!" He giggled. Mako laughed, opening the door and exiting the room. He felt the chilly breeze on the hallway as he made his way, closing the room behind him. He was about to step away, but something nagged him.

He turned around, locking the door behind him. It was until then that Mako went to his room to retrieve the lube.

Quickly returning, he opened the door and closed it once again. He locked it from the inside- they didn't need some maid interrupting them. Once he turned around he almost dropped the bottle of lube, his eyes blinking rapidly.

"Why, hello my bodyguard."
Jamison laid bare on the sheets, his legs spread and leaving nothing to the imagination. His head was propped by a pillow, his cheeks red. Mako's cheeks reddened as well, smiling at the sight.

"Look at you," Mako began the lengthy process of taking off all his armor now. Jamison stared at him with wide eyes, never seeing Mako bare. He bit his lip savoring the moment. "You pretty thing."

He slowly took off his armor, letting it drop to the floor with a soft thud. Soon enough he was completely naked, and Jamison sat up to fully take him all in.

For a moment Mako became very self conscious. He was very big, way bigger than Jamison himself. His armor made him look intimidating and strong but he didn't have it. It was just him, and his skin. Jamison examined him with loving eyes, lips slightly parted.

"Mako..." he whispered, face turning even redder, his body twitching in excitement. "You're just—wow mate. There ain't words for just how good ye are. Ye're—wow! ye're gorgeous!"

Mako, the grown-ass man, began to fluster.

"And ye're... so big, ya know!"

Yeah, yeah he was. This is why Mako couldn't be taken just randomly- he needed to taste the waters with Jamison, know if he truly was able to take him.

"I want all of that," Jamison bit his lip. Mako chuckled, sitting on the bed besides the young man. The Prince was already scrambling to touch Mako, his hands caressing Mako's bulging biceps. He pressed against them, thin fingers reeling into the feeling. "I can take it."

"Let's go slow."

Mako cupped his jaw, diving in for a soft kiss. Jamison tilted his head back, his fingers softly rubbing against his powerful pectorals. Mako let him, his own hands pressing gently against Jamison's muscles.

He was smaller, hell- his palm could engulf his torso easily. It was a new feeling to him, and it sparked something inside of him. Jamison was ready— he kept almost clawing at Mako's skin, his naked body rubbing against his belly. All the friction was shooting to his groin, already feeling himself getting harder at every small movement Jamison did.

Mako pressed a huge finger against one of his nipples, and Jamison moaned into it. He was already panting, and they had just started. It was weird- it had been a long time since Mako was with someone this eager.

Everything about Jamison was sharp, his ribs and hipbones sticking out prominently. Mako wanted it all for himself, keep Jamison close and never let go. He wrapped his hands around his thin torso, lifting the man and quickly dragging him to his naked lap.

Jamison gasped, but let himself be dragged. His face visibly flushed when he was on top of Mako's naked thighs, his legs spreading as much as he could. Mako could feel how vulnerable Jamison was, fully exposed and with his erection pressed against his thin belly.

His thick hand pressed his lower back, dragging the Prince closer. They were both quiet, panting softly. It was so intimate, the way Jamison closed his eyes and bared his neck, head tilted back as he just relinquished on the closeness.

"You've never done it?" Mako whispered. Jamison bit his lip.

"Only me fingers, sometimes- ya know, but—" He moaned as he felt Mako's hand coop his ass. "Never anythin' else."
Okay, they could start with that. Mako handed Jamison the lube, helping him spread it on his thin fingers. He didn't have to explain— the Prince knew that he wanted him to open himself. He did so, Mako observant of his reactions as Jamison breached himself. He steadied him with one hand on his hip, thumb rubbing at the protruding hip bone. Jamison rocked into his fingers, eyes half opened and panting hard. His free hand rubbed against his chest.

Mako couldn't contain himself. With his free hand he pressed his thumb against his nipple, squeezing it and pressing at it. Jamison gasped, erection twitching.

"I- I think, I think it's okay now," Jamison gasped out. Mako's erection pressed against Jamison's softly, and the young man grind against it. It made Mako groan, his hands grabbing the lube and coating his fingers on it.

It was cool and a pleasant feeling. With one hand still steadying Jamison, he pressed his fingers on the rim of his hole. It leaked lube, open and wide. It wasn't wide enough for Mako's cock, however. He tested the waters, the tip of his finger breaching him slowly. Jamison gasped, pressing his forehead against Mako's shoulder.

"You okay?" He whispered, rubbing his hipbone. Jamison nodded against his skin.

"Big," he said breathless. "More."

Mako obliged, slowly breaching him with his index. It was a steady and gentle, making sure he didn't accidentally hurt Jamison. The young man squirmed against him, panting at the girth of Mako's fingers. Once he was deep inside of Jamison, he stopped.

"How you doing, kid?" He rubbed at the small of his back gently. Jamison chuckled weakly, his hands grabbing at Mako's naked body.


Mako smiled, pressing a kiss on the kid's temple. He started inserting the second finger, making the young man squirm and wiggle as well. He didn't ask him to stop, so he kept going. The tightness around him felt good, the thought of it around his own cock making him twitch with excitement. Jamison's walls fluttered, squirming warm against his fingers.

He was starting to lose his mind, as well. Inserting the second finger took less time than the first one, and soon enough when Jamison was comfortable with it he started thrusting them in and out. Jamison let out needy sounds, mouth wide open against Mako's skin. It made the large man thrust upwards, his massive cock rubbing against Jamison's.

"A-A-" Jamison was already running out of breath, and so was Mako. He placed a thin hand against his shoulder, straightening up his back and biting at Mako's jaw. "Another."

Three fingers? Mako would have objected, but it seemed Jamison was able to handle his two fingers— why not try with a third one? After all, if he were to really take Mako's cock, he would need the three fingers.

He pressed the third finger, slipping inside of him with ease at this point. Jamison shuddered, but before Mako could ask him if he was okay he nodded wordlessly. He opened his legs as wide as they could go, his hands on Mako's shoulders for balance.

Jamison started to ride his huge digits, his cock already leaking precome as he bounced up and down the three digits. Mako was in the verge of drooling, the image of his thin body covered in sweat and jumping on his fingers making him want to shove him to the floor, and fuck him right.
He let him, though. Just knowing that he had managed to get that reaction to him was enough, his cock leaking precum as well as it pressed against Jamison's own erection.

"F-fuck, Mako-" He hissed, still bouncing up and down the fingers. His hips rolled back and forth, slender figure twitching in pleasure. Mako pressed his fingers against his ribs, pressing Jamison close to him as he gently nipped at his neck.

"And those are just my fingers," He whispered against Jamison's ear. The young man let out a breath, hot and sticky. His cock twitched against Mako's, swollen and velvety. "Just imagine yourself in my own cock."

"You look so good like this, pressed against me." He kept talking, trusting up and down his massive hips against Jamison's pelvis. The young man could barely contain himself. "Imagine how good you will look under me."

"M-Mako, fuck- I-"

"You think I didn't notice?" Mako's voice was hot, leaving Jamison gasping for more as he kept bouncing up and down Mako's palm. "Your bed pressed against the wall? You whispering my name as you touched yourself?"

"I-" He moaned at Mako's sudden thrust. Jamison looped his arms around Mako's thick neck, letting the large man wrap his free hand on both their erections. He didn't pump, just pressed them together making Jamison shudder at the sheer size difference. "I-"

"You naughty thing. Whispering my name, like it belongs to you." He squeezed at their dicks.

"I thought ya- ya would say somethin'-"

"Why would I?" He placed a soft kiss on Jamison's jaw. "The thought of you made me came harder than I've done in years."

That did it for Jamison. He closed his eyes, his arms tight against Mako's neck as spurts of cum shoot from his cock. Mako kissed him in the mouth, still bouncing him up and down to help him ride his orgasm. Jamison became limp and quiet, so quiet Mako was about to get worried until the young man opened his eyes.

"Let me return tha' favor."

Before Mako could ask him what he meant, Jamison got up from his lap. The lube dripped from his thighs, leaving his place in Mako's legs as he kneeled in front of him. He opened Mako's legs softly, scooting over his erection.

Jamison licked at the base of it, his slender fingers massaging his inner thighs. Mako goaned from deep inside, his legs opening even wider to accomodate the young man. He felt Jamison's sigh as his tongue slowly licked at all the base, sometimes abandoning it to press soft kisses at Mako's powerful thighs.

It was so gentle, no one had been that gentle to him in his entire life. The way his tongue dragged from the base to the tip of his dick, pressing against the thick vein with adoration.

Jamison stared up at him as he took the tip into his mouth, his jaw opening wide to accommodate him. It felt like heaven, his teeth scraping against the skin soft enough for it to feel good. He did mention he had been sucked and had sucked people before, and it showed. Mako curled his toes as the young man continued to take him in, the tip of his dick touching the back of his throat.

The realization that Jamison had received and given oral at an school for nobles hit him, and he
almost chuckled at the thought of princes and rich boys sucking each other off. What would their parents think?

His train of thought was broken when he felt Jamison swallow around him. It was such a nice feeling, he didn't even think of holding his head in place and mouth-fucking him. Maybe later, for now he dove on the feeling of that tongue and lips around his shaft, ready for him.

Mako looked down, and Jamison was staring lovingly at him.

It was too much. In reflex, he pushed himself off Jamison's mouth just as his orgasm hit. His cum shot inside his throat but also spilled on the young man's face, thick ropes of semen decorating his face like one of those ugly abstract paintings around the palace.

For a moment he thought Jamison would be upset, but instead he laughed. He licked at it, finger scooping it and swallowing it provocatively in front of Mako.

"Better than any medicine."

Mako ignored the cheesy line, picking Jamison up by the armpits. He placed him soft on his lap, fully making out with him. Their tongues danced, savoring the taste of each other as their erections began to soften. It was good enough. Jamison could truly take him. Honestly, Mako would have done it now. He would have just shoved him against that bed, and take him. Maybe wait until they both could be hard again- but they both needed to rest. Jamison was still in bed rest, and he was still his bodyguard- his health was his number one priority.

Besides, he was very tired.

He wrapped his arms around him, gently tipping them on the bed. It wasn't a massive mattress, but it held both of them nice and cozy. Mako had one arm wrapped around Jamison, still kissing him deeply as the other wrapped the covers around them. The door was locked, so he wouldn't have to worry about anyone catching them. They could relax.

"Did-" He gasped against Mako's mouth, cheek pressed against the pillow. "Did I do good?"

Mako kissed him in the temple, his finger's brushing against his sweaty hair. His face was sticky due to the cum, but Mako didn't mind (it was sort of his fault, anyways). His hand pressed Jamison against his belly, keeping the Prince very close.

"You did so good," He felt Jamison relax under his touch, drifting to sleep. "You did great."

He kissed him once again in the cheek, as sleep was starting to take him as well.

Considering his plans had gone to hell, Life wasn't so bad.
It was the screaming that woke him.

Mako practically jumped off the bed. He didn't bother even putting his armor on instead snatching up one of the swords next to his bed. He made a run for it not registering even exiting his room, making his way to Jamison's door. It was locked like always, but Mako didn't even hesitate into ripping the door open, destroying the lock. He burst in with sword in hand in front of a very surprised Jamison. An Unharmed, surprised Jamison.

"Oh jeez, Mako- ya almost gave me a heart attack!" The young man yelled as he clutched the curtains of his window. "What's wrong?!!"

"You..." Mako was starting to calm down, looking around the room. Nothing out of the ordinary. "You yelled."

"Oh, sorry mate." He giggled nervously, pointing to the outside of the window. "I yelled a bit, cus I got so excited! Look! It snowed! It's snowing!"

It took Mako a bit to proces those words. Of course it was snowing. It's winter. It always snows, every year- at this point in his life it was more of an inconvenience than something to gawk at.

"Yeah. It's winter. It... snows on Winter."
"Nah- i know, but-" Jamison pressed his face against the window like a kid. "It doesn't snow in Australia at all! I haven't seen it since I left!"

Oh. Mako felt a little bit guilty now- of course he was going to be excited about snow. He huffed, dragging his free palm across his face.

"Sorry, I startled ye, eh?" He once again laughed nervously. "I got too excited, sorry!"

"It's okay, don't worry. I broke the lock."

"Oh," Jamison giggled loudly. "No worries. Easy fix." He chuckled, leaning in to give a quick peck on Mako's lips. The bodyguard flustered, worried that someone would have seen them. He didn't hear horrified gasps, so they were cool.

"That's pretty hot, though."

Mako shoved him playfully. Jamison wrapped his fingers around Mako's palm, smiling brightly at him.

"What da ya say, we get out and play in the snow?"

---

When Mako was younger he loved playing on the snow. He remembered making snowmen, playing snowball fights and just generally messing around with it. Now that he was older he just didn't really care for it. It was kind of an inconvenience even, having to walk through it when he ran errands. Jamison reminded him of when he was a child. He suited up and practically ran outside, hands immediately clawing at the snow, touching it and gasping at how cold it really was. He didn't care, grabbing at it and throwing the snow into the air like it was confetti.

The Prince had fully recovered from the poisoning attempt, and it was as if nothing had happened. He quickly reverted back to his normal personality. If anything, Mako noticed he had become more cautious- for one, he stopped eating literally everything that came across his hands. While Mako was glad that he was taking more measures to take care of himself, something deep inside of his chest squeezed at the thought of him being more careful.

The way the Prince was kicking the snow around though made him feel at ease, the urge of grabbing him and kissing him right there in the middle of the royal garden grew. But Mako contained himself, instead watching Jamison get familiar with the snow.

"Ahaha!" He hollered, pressing the cold snow against his face and rubbing it. "I missed this so much! I love this!"

He threw himself to his back, moving his arms in the snow to form snow angels. Mako approached him, Jamison's happiness being outright contagious.

"Everythin' is hot and trash in Australia! This is so much better than a sucky beach!" He laughed hard once again, until he just laid on the snow contently, staring at the sky above them with a goofy smile on his face.

Mako took a look around. The Winter Ball would take place in three days, and he could see numerous workers already setting up everything in the garden. They didn't really have much privacy, which bothered Mako. Oh, well- they could find the time later.

He felt a hand touch his knee, and he looked down. Jamison was staring at him lovingly, but grimaced and let go of him when he saw workers running around. The young man groaned, pushing
himself up. His jacket and pants were full of snow, but he didn't care. He probably welcomed the fresh cold.

"Ain't got no space 'ere, huh?"

"They are getting ready. The Ball will be very soon."

"Roight, I know..."

His mood dramatically changed. Jamison bit his lip, uncertain and quiet as he shifted in place. Mako wanted to touch him- but it may be seen as inappropriate.

"...Hey-"

"Oh, I got an idea!"

Jamison ran towards the edge of the garden that lead to the forest, away from the workers around them. Mako hurried after him confused, until they reached the wall separating the garden from the forest.

"What are you doing?" Mako asked, as Jamison tried to find a way to climb up the structure.

"These woods are empty- we should go an' explore!"

"And make you a very potential target?" Mako pulled him gently, far from the wall. Jamison grunted, pointing at the wall.

"We ain't gonna be that alone! There are guards and soldiers around tha' perimeter. It'll be fine!"

"Still-"

"What is going on?"

They both turned around, the General staring at them.

"I saw you two at the edge of the garden- is something the issue? Are there any mysterious individuals lurking around?"

Mako was about to reply that no, there aren't, they were just talking about the forest but Jamison spoke first, not giving Mako time to say a thing.

"Good mornin' general!" He smiled bright, bending slightly in an attempt for a greeting. "I wanted to show me bodyguard Rutledge 'ere tha' forest. He was worried about bein' a target, but I told 'im the perimeter is safe and secure by yer guys, ain't that roight?"

The General stared at Mako, face unfazed. "This section of the forest is guarded by my men. While it is better to be cautious, safety should not be an issue."

Jamison smiled and nudged Mako's side with his elbow in a playful manner.

"See? Told ya! Thank you so much, General. We are gonna' spend tha' rest of tha' day in tha' forest!"

The man nodded. "Understood, your Highness." He turned to Mako, nodding and left.

"Come on come on come on! Let's go! I haven't been in tha' forest in years!" He practically dragged Mako towards the wall, immediately trying to climb the structure.
"There's a door over there," Mako motioned with his finger.

Jamison laughed, dropping from the wall and practically running towards the gate. It was small, guarded by two men that just let them pass without any issue. Mako had to slightly squeeze through the opening, but thankfully didn't scratch his armor. He was slightly proud that after all this time he had managed to keep it unscratched.

"Have ya ever been to tha forest, Mako?" Jamison asked, strolling through the field along with the snow, the trees surrounding them.

"Yes, every year." His heavy footsteps left prints on the snow, leaves and twigs crunching beneath his feet. "Not this one. Commoners aren't allowed into this forest, so I went to the south forest."

"What did ya do there? Did ya hunt?" Jamison pressed his hands against the trunk of a particular thick pine tree, staring up at it.

"Sometimes. I preferred lumberjacking."

"Ya lumberjacked? that's so impressive! With an axe an' everything?" He slightly kicked the tree, but it didn't even move. "I bet ya can just pick these trees up and pull 'em out with yer hands alone."

Mako chuckled at the idea.

"I missed this. I remember we would go on picnics with me mum and me dad, when I was a kid." His hand gently caressed the tree as he continued to stare at it. "I was all alone in Australia. No snow, no nothin'. It's nice bein' back home. Even if nothin' is tha' same."

Mako reached behind him, pulling Jamison closer to him. He leaned down to kiss him in the forehead, the young man's skin cold.

"Things being different is not necessarily bad." Mako muttered, his nose pressed against Jamison's hair, smelling it.

"I guess," Jamison scooped up some snow gathered in one of the lowest branches of the tree, spilling a bit from his palm. "I got ya, after all, roight?"

Mako was about to say something until Jamison pressed the snow on his face. It caught him off guard, the coldness spreading through his face and some of the snow even getting into his nose.

"Ahaha! Sorry mate!" Jamison laughed as Mako swept the snow off his face. "I couldn't resist!"

"Hmm," Mako leaned down to scoop a big snowball on his hands. Knowing what was coming, Jamison started to run away, taking long strides in the snow. He was slow, so Mako was able to throw the snowball and nail him on the back of the head.

The impact made him gasp and fall into his face and into the soft snow. Mako was about to run towards him, but Jamison just quickly scrambled to his feet with a lot of snow on his hands. He threw it but it wasn't shaped, so it just fell pathetically into the ground.

"Aw," He whined while Mako gathered more snow and shaped it into big balls. He threw them to Jamison, the young man had to duck to prevent them from hitting him again.

"Ahaha!" The Prince now made proper snowballs, small ones. He threw them at Mako, and while they landed they just crashed against his armor and just disintegrated. Mako chuckled, throwing another oversized snowball at Jamison. It landed on his face once again, making him lose his balance.
"Not fair! Yer's are huge!" He ran, still laughing and practically prancing around the snow. "Try to get me!"

Mako followed, slower due to all the snow. He hadn't had an actual snowball fight in decades, and in other circumstances he would have just stood there and ignored him, but this was Jamison. What was he doing to him? Mako was changing so much thanks to him. Or, rather- he was starting to remember things about himself that he had forgotten long ago. It was... nice. He started to get anxious when he couldn't find Jamison, or hear him. The forest was supposed to be protected- but so everyplace they were when Jamison was attacked. What if something happened? What if he had been attacked already? This was a bad idea. This had been a terrible idea. How could he have been so stupid? How could he-

A lot of snow fell into his head, completely drenching him from head to toe. He winced at the cold, feeling the heavy snow fall into the ground and some of it settle at his shoulders.

"Aahahaha!"

He looked up, to spot Jamison clinging to the tree directly above Mako. He was laughing, radiant, the sun shining behind him and making him look like he was glowing.

"Got ya real good, mate! Aahaa!" He laughed so hard, he slipped off the branch and plundered into the snow. It happened so fast Mako didn't manage to catch him.

"Jamie-" He kneeled next to him as Jamison propped himself up on his elbows. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah mate- I'm okay. No worries. Just got tha air knocked out of me lungs a bit- no biggie."

Mako helped him up, still giggling all the meanwhile. "Hey- is that-

Jamison ran once again towards whatever he had seen. Mako sighed, following behind the young man.

"Look at this! Wow!"

Jamison stood beside a frozen lake. There was a cabin that seemed abandoned at the other side, but apart from that it seemed to be undisturbed.

"Look at this, it's frozen solid! This is amazing!" He tapped at the ice with his foot, testing it. It didn't seem to budge so Jamison stepped on it, spreading his arms wide to balance himself.

"Jamie- be careful, it can crack." Mako loudly said as he approached the edge of the frozen lake. Jamison just carefully stepped on the ice, sliding off it.

"Nah mate, it's as thick as concrete! It can even hold ye, I bet!"

Jamison started to slide off the ice gracefully, making circles and loops on the ice surface. Mako was impressed, focused on the young man as he moved.

"I took an Ice Skatin' class in Australia. We got an Ice rink, at least 'till one of the rich kids fell and almost died by breakin' his head on it. I ain't got no skates, but the principle is kinda tha' same."

He stopped at the center of the lake, hands on his hips proudly.

"Come on, Mako! Get on the ice! Have some fun!"
Mako hesitated, looking at the ice carefully.

"Don't worry!" Jamison started to jump up and down on the ice, the surface didn't get damaged at all. Who knows. Maybe it would be fun.

He tested the ice, pressing one foot on the edge. Wasn't the edge supposedly the weakest part? He remembered something like that, but the ice remained the same. Adventurous, he stood completely on the ice. It didn't creak at all, strong beneath his feet. It must have been really frozen solid, but Mako was glad. Slowly and steady, he made his way towards Jamison, careful to not slip.

"Ya never ice skated before?" Jamison approached Mako, putting his arms around his thick bicep. The bodyguard didn't want to admit it but he felt so weak, barely able to walk in the ice.

"No. Don't have the body for it."

"Don't be silly- anyone can skate! Ya just need tha coordination." He snuggled himself on Mako's chest, wrapping himself with his thick arm. He pressed his cheek against the cold armor. Mako wrapped his other arm around him.

"This is nice," he whispered. Jamison sighed against him, his hand caressing Mako's jaw.

"Yeah. It's nice-"

Mako slipped, falling full into his butt on the ice and dragging Jamison down with him. They both gasped in surprise, the ice beneath Mako's creaking and breaking with the impact. They both plundered into the ice cold lake, the freezing feeling hitting Mako in the face and up his nostrils. He choked on it, his lungs filling with the freezing water. He was sinking fast due to his armor, the cold water nipping at his skin painfully. Mako twisted on himself, afraid. He uncurled his arms to start swimming.

Jamison. He dragged Jamison with him.

With burning eyes he saw the young man clinging to him, still in shock due to the freezing temperature. Mako had to get them both out of there, one arm curled tight against Jamison as he attempted to swim up. He broke the surface of the water, coughing wildly into the breeze. It hurt how cold the air was against his wet skin. He brought Jamison up the water, the young man spitting water and shaking. With his free palm he grabbed the edge of the ice, but it crumbled beneath his fingers as well. He cursed loudly, attempting once again. The ice started to break down into several pieces, floating above the water. Mako threw Jamison into one of the big pieces, the young man curling into himself and shaking violently.

"M-M-Mako!" He sputtered, grabbing his palm and trying to drag him to the surface, but he was far too heavy.

"You'll shatter the ice!"

But he didn't listen.
Somehow, even though Jamison was way weaker and smaller he managed to pull him into the ice. Mako carefully levered himself on it, terrified it would break down underneath him as well. It held together surprisingly, gasping as his old lungs started to sting. Jamison lowered himself down the water, using his hands as paddles to bring themselves close to the shore. Mako barely registered this, still dizzy and nauseous from how cold everything was.

"Come on, M-M-Mako, c-come on," Jamison shivered, dragging Mako to his feet as they reached the shore of the lake. Drenched and freezing, Mako followed, his lips trembling. He was shaking. His teeth clattered, and he felt Jamison's small frame shaking as well.

"T-t-tha c-cabin, c-come on,"

Slow and steady, they reached the small wooden cottage. Jamison attempted to open it, but his small hands were shaking far too much, unable to even grasp the handle. Mako punched it open, but he was to out of it that it didn't shatter just slamming against the wall of the cabin. They made it inside, Jamison closing the door behind him.

"F-fuck, fuck- f-f-fuck-" Jamison stuttered, hands wrapping on himself. "Th-th-there's a f-f-fire place,"

Sure enough, Mako saw that there was a fire place on the opposite wall. It was a small room, with a huge bed, a fireplace and a table on the middle of it. Jamison quickly scampered towards the fireplace; whoever left it years ago forgot to take the firewood and matches to light it. Mako slowly made his way to the Prince, his skin hurting.

"Fuck! Come on!"

The Prince struggled, but he managed to start a small fire with the wood. It burnt, the flame increasing. The young man immediately stretched his hands near it, gasping in comfort as he felt the warmth spread to his limbs.

"Oh, good- that's good," He said in bliss, clothes still drenching.

"We're soaking wet- we need to take these clothes off." Mako huffed, already taking off his armor. "It's dangerous."

"Y-yeah," Jamison replied as he quickly peeled his drenched clothes off, throwing them near the fireplace so they would dry out. Mako took longer time, having to take off his armor. The clothing he was wearing underneath was drenched, but it wasn't too much. It should dry fast. He placed them next to the fire as well.

Mako sat down next to Jamison in front of the fire. It felt so good on his pained skin, and he grumbled in pleasure. Jamison scooted next to him, his still cold body pressed against his naked skin. They were fully naked, but at the moment they just wanted to get warmth.

"Are you okay?" Mako whispered, his big palm running down's Jamison's naked side in an attempt to warm him down. The man shivered, pressing his cheek against Mako's gut.

"Y-yes. I'm fine." He laughed softly. "Just real cold, ya know?"

"Sorry I dragged you down." Mako pressed him a bit harder, wanting to get a real feeling of him.

"Sorry I made ya get on tha' ice." The Prince's hand ran up Mako's thigh, trying to find purchase. "I should've let ya alone. Should've listened tha' ya."
Mako scooped his face gently, tilting his face up. He kissed him very softly, their cold lips clashing and gently kissing each other. It felt so nice, relaxed and relieved.

"This is good," Jamison whispered into his lips, hands grasping at Mako's pectorals. "Bein' here, with ya."

"Yes. It's good." He traced his lips across Jamison's jaw, his fingers gently stroking his back. "Real good."

He kissed at his pale neck. Jamison's breathing hitched, burying his head on Mako's shoulder.

"I'm sorry I dragged us 'ere, ye were roight. It was dangerous."

Mako just held him tighter against himself, huge lips pressing soft kisses on his shoulder blade.

"Both our fault."

"We're terrible for each other," He smiled, breathless. Mako placed a kiss on his shoulder. Considering Mako's intentions when he started working in the castle, Jamison was completely right. They were terrible for each other- Jamison bringing back thoughts and emotions that he didn't expect to experience again.

"We are."

Mako dragged him to his lap, opening his legs to accommodate the skinny man. Their crotches touched, Mako's pelvis rubbing against Jamison's, both of them moaning and getting harder. Jamison tilted his head back, baring his neck.

Mako bit at it, sucking into the flesh as their hips grind together. Jamison gasped and wriggled but made no effort to scurry away. The flesh was bruised now, red and purple with Mako's bite marks.

"Sorry," He whispered into Jamison's neck, hand scooping his ass and dragging him close.

"Shouldn't have done that."

"I like it," he sighed gently, smiling with his eyes closed.

Mako did it again, this time biting slightly on the young man's collar bone. Jamison squirmed, gasping and arching into Mako's gut.

"I like it, I like it a lot. Mako, I-"

"It's okay," Mako whispered, his hands just touching him gently. He felt so nice, so good. Mako wanted to keep touching him forever, until there was nothing left to touch. The urge to just keep him close grew, and Mako just kissed at him softly with his thick lips, just basking in the feeling of his smooth skin on his chapped lips.

God, what was happening? Everything about Jamison was so intoxicating. It was like a curse. He was willing to throw everything he planned to the trash, for him. For this man, this young man grinding against his lap and kissing his neck like Mako was the most precious thing in the world. He loved him back. No one had loved Mako back in a very, very long time. Despite everything he was, Jamison loved him back.

"I, I want to, hmm-" Jamison didn't need to end the sentence for Mako to know what he was talking about. Mako wanted it, too. A lot. He kissed him on the lips gently, scooping his neck and squeezing it lightly.
As tempting as fucking in the floor was, Mako knew it wasn't a good idea. He broke the kiss, kissing Jamison on the temple before standing up. He went towards the bed, checking the mattress and the covers to check they weren't rotten. They looked pretty clean, if only full of dust. Mako started to push the bed itself towards the fireplace. It was still cold, and they needed all the warmth they needed. Besides, having sex right next to a fireplace just sounded plain good. He quickly set it next to the fire, at a safe distance. Jamison was already climbing on it, naked and erect. As he sat and made himself comfortable Mako crouched down to his own clothes, finding the little vial of lube. He was thankful he didn't lose it when he fell on the lake.

"Oooooh, yer always ready..." Jamison laughed. Yeah, he was. If he learned something from his youth is that it never hurt to be always prepared. He handed the cool vial to Jamison.

"Open yourself."

"I want ye inside me." Jamison clarified, just in case they had a misunderstanding.

"I know, but I need you to open yourself first."

Jamison smiled, his face already flush. He sat on his knees, presenting himself to Mako as he coated his fingers on the thick liquid. He reached behind himself, as he started to slip his digit into his ass. Mako stared at him hungrily, reaching to pump his own erection slowly. He greatly enjoyed the show, the ways Jamison's breath hitched and the way he tilted his head back. It went on for some minutes, until the Prince panted and stared at Mako.

"I-I can take ye."

Mako smiled, coating his fingers with the lube. He gently shoved Jamison into the mattress. He stared into his face as he slipped his index into the man. Jamison gasped softly, his hands grabbing at Mako's shoulders and digging.

"You okay?" Mako aske as he kept still.

"Yes, yes. It-it just feels so good."

Mako continued, slowly but steady. It didn't take long before he was knuckle deep inside of Jamison. He moved his finger around, curling it and stretching the young man. He then introduced another finger, slow and steady. Eventually, a third, and at this point Jamison was begging with mumbled words.

"P-please, Mako, please-" He gasped, back arching and on the verge. His dick was starting to leak, and if Mako took too long, he would probably come right there right now.

"Jamison," Mako whispered to his ear. "Are you ready? You have to say you are ready."

"I am," He panted. "I'm ready, God- I'm ready."

"If you suddenly don't want to, yell stop and I'll stop," Mako sighed as he bit Mako's ear lobe gently. "Tell me to stop."

"O-okay mate, don't stop- please, please please please-"

Mako placed his tip on Jamison's hole, it touching the thight ring of muscle. Jamison moaned loudly, and so did Mako. He shoved the tip inside of him, groaning as he breached the man. Jamison moaned loudly, hands scribbling for purchase on the sheets of the bed. He panted loudly, and Mako caressed his cheek.
"Do you want me to keep going?"

Jamison nodded, swallowing until he started to beg. Mako gripped Jamison's hips, sinking deeper into the man. Slowly, gently- he savored every little twitch and pleasured noise Jamison made. It lit a fire inside of him, something full of love. Eventually he was fully sheathed inside of him, balls deep. Mako let Jamison adapt to it, getting used to how it felt. Mako caressed his torso, feeling the skin stretched to the limit to accommodate him. He stared, looking at the bulge visible through the skin.

"God," Jamison whispered, noticing it. "I feel like I'm gonna burst. I-I'm gonna fuckin' burst."

"You want me to stop?"

"No," He smiled, weakly, fingers tracing gently his stretched skin. "Good lord, no. It- I'm burstin', stuffed. Full of you. It's-it's good."

He stared lovingly up to Mako, his freckles like constellations, eyes like the burning fire in the fireplace, burning and cracking, full of life.

"I ain't ever gonna be alone again."

Mako choked something- he didn't want to say tears, because he wasn't crying. But something inside of him just burst and spread through him, choking him in a different way. It was raw, it was something that he didn't know how to call. He closed his eyes, trusting very slowly. Jamison started to gasp, gripping the sheets and arching his back. He bit his lip, head pressed back against the mattress as his stomach shifted. His insides- he was changing, because of Mako. Mako was changing him, and it was something he didn't know if he could deal with. Maybe it was too much responsibility. Maybe he should stop thinking and move.

"F-fuck! Fuck-!" Jamison wailed, drooling and letting his tongue lol out as Mako took him. He moved slowly at first, his pace slowly increasing as he paid outmost attention to the man underneath him.

The Prince's body was flushed and sweating, the small freckles outstanding more than normal. His thin body looked good at the light of the fire, warm and beautiful. Not only did he see him with love, but a deep part of Mako realized what he was doing.

He was fucking the Prince.

A man like him- a warrior, an assassin who did nothing but murder, who broke things and destroyed them was fucking the Prince. The Prince. The total opposite of him, a symbol of purity and nobility, and he was the one that was doing this. He was the one that was on top of him. Shoving inside of him and making him wail in pleasure. Him, a commoner, a man that never expected to raise from a civilian status. It set a spark on him, full of lust and ecstasy. This was so wrong. If the King found out, he would be beheaded. It was so wrong- so controversial. His hands were made for destroying, and he was touching the Prince's rib. He was caressing his throat, kissing at his skin. His thick lips were so different from Jamison's smooth skin. It was such a taboo, a morbid thing that many think about but never say it. And he was his. All his. For Mako alone, and no one else.

He increased his speed, his hips shoving in and out.

Maybe he was a fetish for Jamison, as well. Letting someone so low, so dirty to fuck him. To completely take him. Was that a thing? Maybe. But Jamison- he looked at him different. Mako knew
what eyes full of lust were like, to be seen as nothing but a fetish. Jamison wasn't like that. He was full of genuine love, the sex was just second. It wasn't just pleasure - it was something else. Something deeper. Something that cut and burrowed deep inside of Mako and stayed there.

He fell deep.

He didn't know how to use words. His lips did the talking, by just brushing against his skin, and his mouth. So gently, so strange. He kissed Jamison in the mouth, gently and full of love. It ruined him and built him up. Made him someone completely different. It wasn't so bad.

"M-Mako," the Prince looped his hand around Mako's thick neck, shoving his face against Mako's broad chest. "P-please-"

Mako kissed his Adam's apple gently. Jamison came with a silent yell, his fingers digging on Mako's flesh. His cum coated his belly and Mako's, warm and thick. Mako felt his walls shift and squeeze, Jamison's body going limp but still holding tight to him, weak noises coming from him as Mako continued to thrust into him.

"Please, Mako," Jamison was almost sobbing, and Mako was about to stop until Jamison whispered against his ear, warm and toxic. "Please don't leave me."

Mako closed his eyes, holding Jamison close to him with one arm wrapped on his back. It was useless. Mako was a different person now, his hips thrusting deep and staying there, deep. He came loudly, his hips jerking as he came deep inside Jamison.

They both gasped against each other, nuzzling and just holding each other gently. Mako gently laid on the bed, slipping out of Jamison as his cum spilled into the bed. Whatever, it was abandoned. Jamison was in front of him, pale face red and sweaty. He smiled weakly, still panting.

"Please- don't leave me. I don't- I don't want to be alone anymore."

Mako sighed, holding him close and burying his nose on Jamison's hair.

"I won't let anything happen you."

The Ball was close.

Mako's warm soft feeling in his gut shifted, images of him dealing with his associates fresh in his mind. The reminder of what he was going to do dug deep into his belly, getting rid of all those warm feelings he felt. It dug inside of him, crawling through his spine and biting his neck. It settled on his gut, the memory of his previous plan. It was sticky and cold, making his skin numb and go cold.

"Jamison, I won't let anything happen to you. I will protect you with my life."

The Prince looked at him, unsure of why he suddenly started to talk about that. He smiled, nuzzling against his broad chest, small and fragile in Mako's hands.

Mako would protect him.

Or else.
Caviar Dip

Chapter Summary

The day finally came. That night, there would be a Ball.

Chapter Notes

The big event finally arrives.
HELLO!!! Hi!!!! Not gonna lie, i feel terrible- this was supposed to be done at the start of the week and stuff, but to be honest i got really really sick this week so i nursed myself back to health.... Sorry! but this chapter is extra special and close to me so i hope its enough to make up for that.
I hope you like it!! I super enjoyed this. I hope you do, too!!!

Thank you for reading!! I hope you like it!!!

Snow kept falling steady from the sky all night. When he fell asleep, Mako could see the snowflakes making their slow fall through the window if he craned his neck enough. It would snow all night, he figured.

He was awoken by the soft sunlight hitting his face. He sighed softly, rubbing his face gently with his hand. The sheets were so warm, and he didn't want to get up at all. He rather spend all day on the bed. He heard soft shifting beside him. Mako lifted the sheets gently, Jamison sleeping at his side and curled with his back against his gut. Mako sighed, putting the sheet back in place and covering Jamison's lithe body. The young man groaned softly, but didn't make an effort to get up. Having Jamison's key to his room (and one for Mako's room, too) was very helpful, he had found out. So far it seemed no one suspected the little thing they had going on.

He lifted the sheets once again, placing a huge hand on the Prince's back and gently nudging him.

"Come on, Jamie. We need to get up."

"Piss off!!" He mouthed, pressing his face against the pillow.

"Your father will want you to get ready as soon as possible." It seemed strange to refer to the King as other than His Highness, but Jamison didn't mind at all.

"Roight, ugh."

Jamison very slowly crawled out of the bed, torso slipping from the mattress and into the carpeted floor. He dramatically slumped to the floor, groaning all the way down as he crawled for a few feet like a cat, until he got up and stretched. Mako rolled his eyes, taking a glance at the window once again. It wasn't snowing anymore.
The day finally came. That night, there would be a Ball.

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"Aight," Jamison said as he adjusted his coat. It was winter, and even if they were indoors it was still chilly. The Prince's attire was normal (well, as normal as he could be), they didn't need to begin their actual preparations until later that afternoon, so they had time to just hang around.

"Hey- look a that!" The young man said as he pressed his face against one of the windows. They were on one of the top floors, so they had a pretty good view of the town.

The castle Gates were wide open, letting all the royalty enter through it. It was like a parade, the townspeople gaping and celebrating with colored banners and flowers. Mako never understood it- why should he be interested in a bunch of rich white men celebrating just how right they were? And yet everybody seemed to be in love with it. What a waste of time. Well, it seemed he was now part of it.

"Those are a lot of people," Jamison mouthed, nose pressed against the glass. "Bet me dad wants me tha' greet every single one of 'em."

" Probably."

"I don't know any of 'em! Last time I met 'em I was a wee kid!"

"You are going to be the celebrity of the night," Mako said with a soft laugh. Jamison just groaned, tapping the glass lightly. "After all, you came back after so many years."

"Gonna have tha' tolerate 'em all night." He smiled, tapping Mako lightly on the arm. "At least I got ya at my side."

Mako smiled at that. Until he realized that it meant that he would have to also deal with rich snobby pricks all night. Oh, well. All part of the job, apparently.

"Have you managed to remember all their names?"

" Eh, most of 'em. Can't blame me for not rememberin' like two thousand names."

He patted him in the shoulder, lightly. They were in public now so he couldn't just be as affectionate as he as. Lucky for them he wasn't into public displays of affection, anyways. "I'll help you."

"Ya remember 'em all?"

"No, but maybe I remember the ones you don't."

Jamison laughed. His fingers graced Mako's arm, but retreated them as he saw maids running around busy. He bit his lip, scowling. The castle was way busier than usual, and no wonder why.

"Come on, lets go someone more... private, eh?"

"Oh?" Mako chuckled softly. "Something in your mind?"

"Well, ya look like a big guy... aren't ya hungry?" His eyes looked up at him as he licked his lips.
Mako smiled with lust, already savoring it. "I got a meal just fer ye."

"I am, actually, pretty hungry." The man whispered. "Perhaps you can help with that?"

"Why, yes. Why don't we go to my quarters-"

"Your Highness?" One of the workers interrupting the Prince mid speech, but it didn't seem that he knew what they were talking about. Jamison sputtered, turning around surprised at the new person.

"Uh- yes?" He asked shyly, still caught off-guard by being interrupted mid-pick up line.

"I was instructed to get you ready for tonight." He smiled, as other people approached him. Seamstresses. "We need to start already if we want to be ready on time."

Jamison fought his instinct of rolling his eyes, and just smirked. "Alright. Let's go, then."

They followed while Mako said curses in his head. Today was going to be a really busy day it seemed. He wasn't too excited about the idea of the Ball itself, he was never too good with huge groups of people. He followed closely behind him, the seamstress already talking to Jamison about what he could use for the night.

Mako's original plan came to mind. Now, he should have been thinking about how to escape the castle, gather his money and then leave to live a peaceful life. That was the idea. And yet at this moment it became nothing but just an afterthought, something that wasn't on his mind anymore. The possibility of something happening to Jamison crossed his mind. He had made very clear what would happen if his ex-associates attempted anything. They knew Mako wasn't someone to fuck with, so he fully expected them to have learned their lesson.

Yeah. Mako smiled at that. They probably were doing something else. They wouldn't dare go against Mako's wishes. After all, they knew very well he could easily kill them. He would still stay at his side, however. There was nothing wrong with precaution.

The room they reached was very big. It was practically a wardrobe, with elegant clothes hanging. Expensive accessories and shoes also filled the room, along with many mirrors. Everything needed to dress a Prince up was in that room.

"Okay your Highness, we will try some outfits to see what suits you better, okay?" The man beamed as the seamstresses were already picking jackets and pants to dress him with. Mako stood at the side, enjoying the show. He may not be able to have sex, but he would at least have a little show with it.

Jamison was starting to undress, his naked pale torso facing Mako as the seamstresses picked up his clothes, putting them aside. Mako was greatly enjoying his current position, until another seamstress approached him.

"Sir Rutledge, we were instructed in dressing you as well."

Mako blinked.

"Excuse me?"

"His Highness requested us to give you appropriate attire for tonight's event, sir."

The main designer walked up to them, leaving his helpers give Jamison clothes. Jamison just stared
at him, with a funny smile in his face, enjoying Mako's situation.

"Why, yes. We must work on you as well. Please take him to the next room, I'll be there as soon as I can."

"I-" The seamstresses were already trying to drag him to the other room, but Mako felt panic rising on his chest. Him? Dressing up? Having other people dressing him up? It all was ringing on his head, and he had just wanted to get out of there immediately. "I am his bodyguard, I must not-"

"Do not worry, it's this room over here. the door will be open,- and besides, do you think we could do anything to stop you?"

The designer was even thinner than Jamison, albeit shorter. It was true, Mako could crush him with one palm. His assistants were tiny and young, so they didn't seem to be a threat. He didn't want to leave his side, not only worried about the security issue but because he just didn't want to dress up. But it seemed it was useless, as Jamison waved him goodbye as he was dragged to the adjacent room.

"Please take off your armor, we will be back in some minutes."

Mako felt out of place with so many elegant clothing and accessories. He wanted to tell them to go fuck themselves, and that he would wear his armor to the ball but it would just be outright unnecessary drama. He was a grown man, and he would deal with suddenly having to go almost naked for a bunch of strangers, and wear fancy clothing to a stupid party. He sighed as he started to take off his armor. He wondered if there was something even big enough for him to wear. He didn't look good in fancy clothes- he would definitely stick out like a sore thumb. After a few minutes he took his armor off, he had become pretty expert in taking it off fast. Sure enough, the designer came in the room accompanied by some of his assistants.

"Alright, let's begin."

He felt the man's eyes on his skin, staring up and down as if he was dissecting every inch of his body. Mako's lip twitched. The last thing he needed was some guy nitpicking every aspect of his body.

"You are bigger than anyone I've ever seen." He scratched at his skin. the man was very sharply dressed, fashionable. Mako knew nothing about those sort of things, but even he could tell that the man was wearing expensive elegant clothes. "No problem, I know we have things here that can fit you."

Mako wondered if there was really something that big.

"Is there, really?" Mako said, looking at the clothes hanging with incredulity.

"Of course- if there isn't, we'll fix something for you."

"I really doubt it." He was starting to get pissed off. He was not like the other people around him, and it was obvious. Mako was big, ragged and worn all over due fights. These people were small and fragile, not having done any work in their lives. They were different breeds.

"Everybody has the right to look good."

Mako's mind stopped, staring at the man as he kept going through the huge clothes hanging from the racks. The man sighed, holding huge jackets and raising them in the air to examine them closely. "I know you aren't a noble, and were not born into this position. I didn't, either- worked my way here."
He walked towards Mako, holding the elegant jacket close. He scrunched his nose and got back to the rack, examining more. "Most of these people don't know what a life of work is. If anything, you're better than them."

Mako was slightly stunned. He wasn't really sure what to say, so he just stopped complaining. The designer gave him a really big shirt, and a jacket, making motions to his hands to try it out.

"I..." Those clothes were very expensive looking- Mako would have never thought of wearing something like that ever. The fabric was soft and felt good under his calloused fingertips. "I don't think I'll look good in this."

"Nonsense. Everyone can look good- it's just a matter of finding the right thing."

Mako stared down at the clothes in his hands. He sighed. He hoped the man was right.

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Mako sighed, rubbing his thick palms together. A lot of time had passed since they started dressing him up- it had been quite a difficult task, considering his massive girth. It wasn't easy to make him look anything less than intimidating. The designer had been very nice to him, not complaining about the size or about how he had to make some final arrangements to accommodate him. Mako appreciated that.

Honestly, he was very thankful. But it's not like he was going to say that.

The Prince was summoned somewhere else, to speak with his father before the Ball. It made Mako nervous, but he was told to wait for the Prince to arrive. As far as Mako knew the ball itself already started. Everybody was already chatting and talking amongst themselves, or whatever they did in those type of events. He could hear the music and the voices from where he was, awaiting for the Prince to arrive. His entrance would be important- the grand event. Mako felt nervous, for some reason. He had pushed all those thoughts about his previous plans and was just anxious about the event himself, like a teenager.

Lately he had been feeling and acting way younger than he actually was.

He kept playing with the collar of his coat. He was wearing a grey waistcoat with golden buttons. The fabric seemed delicate but could hold his gut without it making uncomfortable for him, which he thanked. It had taken them a while to find something big enough for Mako to wear, but after some final touches and thanks to the seamstresses it had been possible.

On top of the waistcoat he was wearing a navy blue tailcoat, with two tails at the back of the coat. It remained open, as those are supposed to be worn. The tailcoat was adorned with golden details and buttons. The fabric was thick, but comfortable. It made Mako feel weird, wearing such expensive clothes. His expensive pants and boots looked good on him, but it still was just straight out different. He hoped he didn’t look like a fool.

He started to play with the hem of the cuffs of his suit. This was ridiculous, being so nervous like this. He still had a job to do, and it was to make sure Jamison would be okay through the night. He could do this. It was just a dance, and that's all.

"Hey- sorry to keep ya waitin'.” A familiar voice called out. Mako's attention immediately turned to the source, as the Prince stood at the other side of the hallway, staring right at him.
Jamison was wearing a dark red coat, big golden buttons traveling from his pectorals to his waist. It had golden decorations, intricated and beautiful. Shoulder tassels hung elegantly, string delicate and elegant. His coat was closed one, ending at his waist. It was a tailcoat, like Mako, but instead of the tail being long and parted into two, it was shorter that it was one piece. His pans had decorations at the sides, rich patterns made from the golden string.

Jamison had worn elegant clothes in the past, but that was different. He looked regal, beautiful. A shadow of the royalty he was born into, the lights washing over him and his sharp features. It was different. His bright smile reminded Mako that despite all his clothing, despite how he looked on the outside with those expensive rich garments, he was still Jamison in the inside. He could dress like them, but he would never be *them*.

It was unreal. Mako couldn't understand it. It made his chest tighten, but it didn't hurt. It was a feeling of something pleasant, something that made him beam as he saw him. Jamison laughed, nervously. He walked towards Mako, fidgeting and feeling strange.

"I... ain't used to wearin' these things. this is... just too elegant," Jamison laughed as he grabbed the collar of his suit a little. "I must look like a fool, eh?"

"You look gorgeous," Mako bit his lip and made a face when he realized what he just said. He felt blood rush to his cheeks, feeling like a total idiot. Jamison eyes went wide, smile crooked in a nervous childish way.

"Th-" his voice was shrill, caught off guard. He coughed, clearing his throat. "Thank you." He looked Mako up and down, amber eyes searching through his body.

Mako felt so exposed, embarrassed. What was he thinking? Jamison was lithe and beautiful, lean and handsome. Mako was big, terrifying- far too old and everything wrong. It was stupid for him to believe that he could be anything else, to look anything but good. He looked ridiculous. He looked like- he-

"You look gorgeous, too."

Jamison fingers trailed up Mako's waistcoat, feeling the texture under his fingers. He wasn't lying- Jamison said that with the outmost truth in his heart. His eyes stared at up him in loving adoration. Mako looked down, suddenly not feeling so bad. It was stupid. Such a fearsome individual like him, feeling like something good and beautiful. That's how Jamison made him feel. Mako leaned down, kissing Jamison right in the temple. It was chaste, but it was such a loving gesture. Something he normally didn't do. Jamison melted into it, his hands scooping Mako's jaw and caressing his stubble.

"It's time, mate." Jamison laughed, as Mako stood straight again. "Time to give 'em what they've been waitin' for."

The young prince took a deep breath, straightening up and adjusting his collar. "Come on, we gotta get there when the announcement is given."

"There is an announcement?"

"Yeah, some... presentation. I'm gonna be presented, and then me father will be presented too. It's- it's stupid. But eh, customs and shit."
Mako chuckled. They walked through the hallway towards where the stairs descending to the ballroom were located. They waited behind a curtain, and Jamison grabbed Mako's hand anxiously.

"Ye actually gotta wait downstairs. I'll descend in a minute-"

"What if someone-"

"I'll be fine. There are guards everywhere! Ya don't gotta worry, Mako."

Mako bit his lip, but the way Jamison looked up at him with security made him change his opinion. Okay. If there were many guards around, then it should be okay.

"Alright," He squeezed Jamison's hand. "See you in some minutes."

"See ya, mate!" Jamison giggled as Mako made his way downstairs. It wasn't a long trip, but he rushed through it to get to the ballroom sooner. The fastest he could assess the situation, better.

He entered the ballroom, bright lights briefly blinding him. There were many, many people in it- all of them dressed with elegant garments and clothes, dresses that reached the floor and dragged a little. Coats that costed more than his old house. Adorned with jewels in their hair, golden flakes on their cheeks and the like. He was a stranger there. An outsider.

Some of them came to realize Mako was standing there. They stared at him with their blue eyes and white faces, staring up and down to him. It seemed they wanted to mock him, but Mako stood tall, muscles bulging underneath his coat. They realized, and they turned to the other side to critique him amongst each other. Good. It seemed they were at least slightly smart.

Mako ignored them, instead making his way towards the stairs. He remained close, as the royal announcer in front of the room. He cleared his throat, gathering everybody's attention.

"Prince Jamison Fawkes the first." He called out, and moved out of the way. Sure enough, Jamison started to descend from the stairs, back straight and hands behind himself.

He was impressive, his presence massive and beautiful. Mako smiled when he saw just how Jamison descended. All focus was on him, and they probably wanted to gossip, to say awful things, about how awful the Prince was. But he didn't let it get to him. He stared down at them and descended.

"His Highness, King James Fawkes."

The King followed soon enough behind his son, and he looked far more regal and older. They both descended, and people clapped at his presence. Mako didn't care. He very carefully looked at Jamison, who made his way down unharmed. He looked directly at Mako, cocking his head towards him to indicate it had gone perfectly.

Mako smiled. Maybe this stupid ball wouldn't be so bad.

Once their entrance had been made, Mako reunited with Jamison at once. People got near them, women and men with elegant accessories on their faces and fingers. They smiled, showing their white pearly teeth and manicured nails. They all acted as if they knew him personally. It made Mako feel strange, the way they just gawked at Jamison like he was some sort of oddity. But then they turned to him.

"He is my bodyguard, Mako Rutledge." Jamison smiled with that smile he had learned to give.
"He does not look like a regular bodyguard." They all said. Mako knew what they were talking
about. The other bodyguards, they all were well groomed and born into the position, not just a man
they hired because he was so good at killing.

"That makes him so good at it, in my opinion."

"Does it, really?" Their tongues snarled, just staring up at Mako.

"I'm still alive. So, it does." His smile was sharp, indicating at them to stop. Most of the night was
like that, meeting snobby nobles, shaking their hands and look at their stares. They bore unto him,
but every time Jamison defended him, returning their stares with a snarl.

"Hello, Jamison!" A familiar voice called. Mako sighed deeply as the Duke made his way towards
them. He looked elegant as well, with very expensive rings and clothes- more expensive than
normal. The Prince winced, but kept his calm. "What a wonderful party, don't you think?"

"Indeed it is. It is just as I remembered it to be." His voice was calm and low, but Mako knew
Jamison just wanted to punch him in the face.

"Jamison, have you greeted the young maidens yet? I suppose you and your father have talked about
them, as well."

Mako glanced at Jamison, his lip twitching.

"This is not the time to think about that event. We have plenty of time, after I spend more time in the
country. After all, it hasn't even been a year."

"Why, yes. But you are young, and you need to have in mind who you will marry to keep your
lineage." The Duke smiled ear to ear. "It is not suit for a Prince to not have at least a prospect for
marriage."

"There is still plenty of time to decide that," Jamison said, more forcefully. "It is not necessary for me
now- my father will still rule for many years to come."

"Time passes, dear Jamison. And as it does, your desirability disappears." Mako felt his fist clench,
fingernails digging into his nails. "It is not wise for a solitary man to rule, they say."

"Does that mean that you will finally leave my family alone?"

Mako tried to not laugh as the Duke's face twisted in annoyance.

"All things come to an end, Jamison. I would be more careful if I was you."

Without blinking, Jamison leaned close, eyes big and bright.

"Sure enough, dear Uncle. And If you are not careful, you could come to an end soon enough, as
well."

"Is- is that a threat?"

"I don't know," he kept smiling, standing proud and tall with his hands behind him. "Is it? I've been
merely talking to you the same way you've been talking to me all this time. It is your decision as to
how to interpret that."

The Duke stayed still, the corner of his lips trembling. He stared up at Mako whom did not react,
instead just stared down at him.
Without saying anything else, he left, probably to bother someone else. Jamison sighed, shoulders slightly slumping when he left.

"I wanted to punch him in tha' damn face."

"Me too."

Jamison laughed, but something ate up at Mako's belly. He ignored it, instead staying at Jamison's side. They greeted people, talking to the as if they were old family friends. Mako stood silent, always at Jamison's side. He wouldn't say a thing as they all spoke to him, glaring at Mako as well. He could take it. He would take it.

He couldn't take it. The way they all asked if any maiden had caught his eye. The way Jamison laughed and said he was unsure, how all the ladies were pretty enough. How he had to think about it, who would be a better marriage candidate. Someone with money. Someone with pride. Someone who would breed a good child.

He was a Prince, it was his duty. He would become king and needed a strong lineage, to keep the pure blood running. Mako couldn't do that. Mako could never do that. He couldn't bring a good lineage- his whole relationship with the prince was taboo enough. If he was found out, he could be even executed.

"Young man, why haven't you been thinking about your future bride?" One of the old rich men asked of him. "I do know you haven't been around for a while, but it is the perfect age to start thinking about your lineage."

"Well," Jamison laughed softly. "I've been busy."

Busy.

Had Mako been holding him back? If it hadn't been for Mako, would Jamison marry someone and continue his lineage? It pained him to think so, but the Duke was right- not having a heir was a very bad strategic move. People die when there isn't a heir. Jamison wasn't the King then, but he would be. Adding more time to the fact didn't mean that it wasn't a fact.

Jamison would come to the realization that Mako was nothing but a time waster. Soon enough, he would wed a healthy woman, and their lineage could continue.

Everything else was just gibberish to him. He stopped paying attention at anything else, only at Jamison. The way his features lightened up, the way his mouth moved and showed his white teeth.

What was he thinking?

The dance was about to start. Couples dancing. The Prince dancing with the young women. It was tradition.

And so it started. The music blared on the background, violins and pianos playing elegant music Mako didn't care for. The beautiful gowns swinging in the air, making beautiful patterns as their wearers danced. It was colorful, and beautiful. The Prince dancing with them, switching partners every once in a while. His hands on their waists, his face concentrated as he remembered the patterns, the women staring up at him.

It was too much. Mako had to leave.

He made his way out with no one being the wiser. He was tall and massive, but everybody was so busy staring at the dance that no one paid attention to him. He didn't care. He made his way to the
outside, where there was no one around. He eventually made his way to a balcony leading to the
garden, in the second floor. It was snowing, snow coating the balcony floor. Mako didn't care about
the cold as he leaned against the railing, his palms gripping the rail.
He was illuminated by moonlight as he became aware of everything.

Mako had been a damn fool. What did he expect? Did he expect some sex would make him happier?
Jamison Fawkes was the Prince. He would become the King of the land, and would have a healthy
lineage, as it should be. Did Mako truly believe that there was something else for them? That they
would be happy forever, marry and ignore the fact that Jamison would marry a common man?
Or did he expect them to escape the life of luxury and live in a farm? What right did Mako have to
drag him from his good life to one of dirt and blood?

Did he really expect anything at all? He hadn't thought of it. Mako enjoyed the sex, enjoyed the
thrill. Not only that, he truly enjoyed Jamison. Physically and emotionally. He didn't want to call it
love but what else could it be? What made him throw his plans through the window, and expect him
to throw away his life to be with him?
He was such a fool. He was such a damn fool. He couldn't believe how stupid he had been.

He gripped the rail very hard, feeling it crack underneath his palms. He hadn't felt such intensity for
someone in a long time. He had already expected to die alone. He was okay with it, and suddenly he
wasn't anymore. Not when he had already met Jamison.
How stupid.

"Mako?"

He turned around instantly. Jamison stood there, at the door. The snow was already starting to pile
on his shoulders, his hot breath visible. "Are you okay? Ya suddenly disappeared."

"Had to take some fresh air."

"Okay," Jamison made his way next to him, his hands touching the cold stone rail and staring down
to the garden.

"Aren't you supposed to be there?" Mako mentioned.

"Been dancin' and greetin' everyone. Can get some minutes for meself, mate." His eyes traveled up
to face Mako. "What about ye?"

Mako huffed.

"I do not belong there."

Jamison stared at the horizon.

"Ye do." He leaned over it, crossing his arms on top of the rail getting comfortable. "Because I say
so. I am literally tha' Prince, If I say ye belong, then ye belong." He snarled. "Fuck anyone who says
ye don't"

"Jamison," Mako said. His voice was deep and sounded worried, but he refused to falter. "You need
to think about your future."

"Oh," he softly said. "Is that why ye left? Cus' people talked about me havin' a bride?"
"You need to get married, and have a heir. I can't give this to you."

"I know." He didn't face Mako, still staring ahead.

"There is no future for you with me."

Jamison took a deep breath, closing his eyes. He opened them again after few seconds, still not looking back at Mako.

"I'll make one."

"That's not how it works."

"That is how it works, Mako. That is how it will work. That is how I'll make it work."

"Jamison, we both know that this is no future for you."

"I fuckin' know that!" Jamison snapped at him, turning now to stare at him. He stood tall, but still was shorter. Didn't seem to stop him from snarling at Mako. "Ya think I haevnt thought of this?!"

"You cannot waste your future for a fling."

"Fling?!" He screamed. Mako knew that they were far enough from the ballroom and that the music was loud enough for anyone to hear, but it still put him on edge. "Ya think this is just a fuckin' fling? Ya think yer tha' first only one i've been with? Tha first?! Tha one and only?!!"

Mako was stunned. He tried to say something, anything but Jamison spoke over him.

"I knew very damn well since I was younger what would happen. I know what I am! I know I would probably have no biological heir! I know this! I aint bloody stupid!" He rubbed his face with his hands, leaving his cheeks red. "Ya tha' first person i've ever considered leavin' all this for, and ye think yer a bloody fling?! Am I just that for ye?! Ya get off shaggin' tha young prince?! Is it a fling fer ye?!"

Mako stared at him, staying still. He didn't know what to say.

"Yer different. Ye... Ye look at me like no one else has. Everyone sees me as a screw up, someone who ain't good at anythin'. Ye make me... make me feel like I'm worth somethin', not just my riches." He rubbed the back of his neck. "Ya make me feel like a good person."

Mako fell silent, slowly approaching Jamison and placing a huge palm on his shoulder. "You are a good man."

Jamison pressed his cheek against the back of Mako's hand, closing his eyes.

"Jamison," Mako almost choked on his words. "You make me feel like I am worth."

"Ye are," He said, softly, kissing the skin on Mako's palm. "Ye are worth every single rich I have, and more."

Mako leaned down, kissing him deeply. It was soft but passionate. It wasn't rough like their other kisses, but it was full of love and care. It's what they needed- something with love and gentle. Jamison laned into it, his palms grabbing at Mako. They separated, breathing shallow.

"Ya ain't a fling. I'll make sure this works. I'll do," He pressed a peck at the corner of Mako's mouth, eyes still closed. His eyelashes tickled Mako's cheek. "Ye are the most important thing I've got. I'll
make sure there is place for ye. Even if I have to decapitate all of these nobles by meself, with me own hands. I'll do it. That's how important ye are to me."

Fuck. This boy had no right in being like this. Mako had never met someone like him, someone so gentle and so powerful. And this kid strolls in, and is like this. It was his ruin. It was his demise. Everything Mako used to think he was – it was a lie. This is who he was now. The person to be melted by those words.

"Hey," Jamison whispered softly. He grabbed Mako's big hands, placing them on his hips. Jamison placed his hands around Mako's neck. The bodyguard suddenly realized what was happening and slightly panicked- he didn't know how to dance.

"Relax," The young Prince said. Mako did so, and let Jamison guide. He followed every step careful to not step on the young man. Their dancing was soft and guided. Mako was too busy staring at his own feet, he looked up to stare at his lover.

Their eyes locked, and Jamison was smiling. His cheeks were red due to the cold, but he didn’t care. Mako smiled as well, his cheeks burning as Jamison lead them. His hands gripped softly at Jamison's thin waist, letting him lead.

He had seen Jamison dance before not only during his classes, but before he left the ballroom. His dancing was precise, but didn't have passion behind it- at least not compared to how he was dancing at that moment. His movements were soft, his face full of joy as he stared up at Mako. They started going faster, but Mako didn't care. He let Jamison skilled hands lead him, touching his big palms and leading into their balcony. He got the rhythm and soon enough didn't need much of Jamison's help. They waltzed in the balcony, snow falling into their clothes and faces as the moonlight shone down on them. Mako spun him around, grabbing at his waist and bringing him close. Their gaze was intense between each other, only unlocking to keep dancing. Mako kept him close and secure, his feet catching up with every single one of Jamison's movements.

They danced until their noses went cold, their cheeks burning hot and until they started to pant. Even so, they didn't want to let go. They kept twirling, the snow covering them as they left footprints in the snow covered floor. A while had passed, but none of them had realized neither cared. Mako twisted Jamison around one last time, pulling him back and lifting him to eyelevel, spinning around. They stared at each other wordlessly, hot breaths reaching each other lips. They kept staring, intimate and powerful. They didn't know who made the first move, but they kissed. It was cold and beautiful.

"You're beautiful," Jamison whispered against him, still being held. "Yer so damn beautiful, ye know that roight?"

Mako sighed, fingertips cradling Jamison's cheek.

"We need to get back." It hurt to say, but they both knew it true. It was Jamison's party- he needed to get back. Jamison sighed, and nodded.

Mako put him back on the floor and softly walked inside, both of them smiling but not saying a thing. It wasn't necessary to say a thing. Snow spilled from their hair unto the floor leaving a white trail.

"I am thinkin' how tha' deal with this," Jamison said. Mako knew what he was referring to, their current situation. "Don't worry- I'll figure it out. I know how tha get what I want."

Mako smiled. He truly believed that if someone could deal with it, it would be Jamison.
"Well," the Prince said as they slipped back inside the ballroom. Everybody seemed happy dancing and drinking, chatting amongst themselves with the music. They didn't seem to even notice them. "No one noticed. Ain't that great!"

Mako nodded, back into his stoic bodyguard persona.

A loud clink was heard repeatedly- someone was banging a class with a spoon. Everyone turned towards whoever was making that sound. The Duke stood in the center of the room, a glass of wine on his hand and a spoon in the other to attract attention.

"Excuse me, I would like to make a toast!"

Everybody stared at him strangely, but no one said a thing since he was the Duke. Mako and Jamison made their way to get closer, away from the doors.

"What is he thinkin'…?" Jamison whispered to himself. Mako had his eyes set on the man.

"To the Royal Family! Let this be one of many events where we can enjoy Prince Jamison presence!"

People cheered at this. Jamison bit his lip.

"Let this bloodline rule long this land! Let it be fruitful and just!" He raised his glass to the air. "For Prince Jamison!"

Everybody cheered, lifting their glasses.

"Long Live the Prince!"

A loud bang reached Mako's ears, bleeding into his head. It made him blind, as if white noise had fused into his brain. It burnt through his skin, making him crumble unto himself.

He only heard screaming.
There was so much screaming. Women and men screamed for their lives as they ran to the main exit. Mako could barely make the shapes out, all the women in elegant dresses and the men clutching their pearls and garments. He saw from the corner of his eye how the Duke had been taken away by his own bodyguard, along with the King. The King screamed something at him, but Mako couldn't understand as the smoke got thick and heavy.

Jamison.

His eyes snapped open, looking below him. His first reaction had been to grab Jamison and shield him from whatever happening. The young prince laid below him, clutching at Mako with a terrified look on his face. He was safe.

"Mako?!" He yelled, snapping out of his shock, and then his eyes trailed to behind Mako, towards the ceiling. He slowly turned his head, feeling how it buzzed and stung with pain.

The ceiling had partially collapsed, small pieces of rubble still falling from it. Smoke emanated from the fracture, and as he looked around Mako realized there was smoke and rubble on fire around him. An explosion. The pain in his head was from rubble falling on his head- made sense. The explosion hadn't been strong enough to destroy more than just a bit of the ceiling, but it still had been an explosion. An attack. An attack on Jamison.

"We need to leave," Mako whispered as he stood up. His head throbbed and Jamison whined in worry for him, but Mako shrugged it off. They needed to leave now.

"Come on- come on!" He pressured as he grabbed Jamison rather roughly by the wrist and running towards the exit of the ballroom that lead to the outside. Everybody had already left- they had
wandered behind for far too long.

The huge doors started to close from the outside before they got to them.

"Wait- stop! Stop at once! I have the Prince with me!" Mako hollered, but even if his deep voice echoed through the huge room and definitely outside, it kept closing. Someone had closed it from the outside, knowing that they were there.

"Shit!" He yelled as he stopped on his tracks. Well, time to take the long route.

"Come on- let's go!" He yelled once again, dragging Jamison behind him. The young Prince was too shocked and out of breath to say anything at all, instead just following quietly.

There were other ways out of the room, but none of them lead to the outside. They would have to take a longer route.

"Stay close!" Mako yelled out. They were far too in the open in the ballroom, they were an easy target.

He made a beeline for stairs Jamison had descended from at the beginning of the night. Jamison stopped, tugging at Mako who came to a halt. "Mako, wait-"

Something slammed and crashed against the floor at their feet. Mako jumped back shielding Jamison from the explosion. The vial burst into flames, chemical feelings filling up the air. It wasn't a big explosion, but it blocked the stairs in a wall of flame.

"Let's go!" Mako went to the opposite direction, trying to find a way out. More vials were thrown from above, Mako was too busy to figure out where they being thrown off from. They exploded in fire, but none of it had reached them yet thankfully.

"I know! Over here!"

Jamison pointed to a small opening near them. Mako ran fast towards it still holding Jamison close, avoiding the fire balls that where thrown at them. Whoever was throwing the small bombs had terrible aim, thankfully. They slipped out of the ballroom and into one of the many hallways. It was narrow, with elegant decorations around. Among them was a knight's armor holding a sharp sword. Mako took it as they passed, testing if the blade was real or If it was merely a decorative weapon. It seemed real, so he took hold of it. Apparently he would need it.

He heard a slight explosion near. It didn't sound too powerful, but any kind of explosion was dangerous.

"It's gunpowder! Gunpowder and-and other chemicals!" Jamison yelled behind him, rubbing his nose. "It- chemical explosions are far deadlier!"

Mako grunted. He wasn't exactly sure how that would help them at the moment, but Jamison was probably just too shocked to think straight. Mako himself wasn’t entirely sure what the plan was apart from protecting Jamison. He couldn't recognize what hallway he was in, so leaving would be like traversing a labyrinth. There was no time.

"We know you are here!" A far too familiar voice shouted out from one end of the hallway. Mako stopped, gritting his teeth. Of course. Of course it was those idiots. Of course they dared defy his orders, even if it meant a violent death. And, oh, what a violent death that would be. Mako could taste it.
There was a door on the hallway. That could do for now. Mako opened it harshly, making sure that the inside was safe. It appeared to be a supplies closet, with some forgotten furniture such as old couches or some broken statues they hadn't gotten rid of yet. Mako shoved Jamison inside, but the young man grabbed at his bodyguard collar in an attempt to stop.

"Mako-"

"Jamison, you need to stay here." Mako placed his hands on Jamison's shoulders, looking straight at him in the eyes. The young man was sweating and pale, terror painted on his sharp features. "I will close the door, and I need you to block it from your side. Do not come out until I tell you to, alright?"

"Mako, I want to go-

"It's too dangerous, they are after you. I'll stop them. Jamison, please." He cradled Jamison's cheek with his large palm. Jamison took a deep breath, and nodded. "Okay."

Mako closed the door and waited some minutes, listening how Jamison huffed as he shoved things to block the door from his side. Good. He would be safe in there.

Now it was time to butcher some vermin.

"We can make this easy! J-just come here, and we won't hurt you!" Mako recognized that voice- Peter. If Peter was there, Murdoch surely was.

Mako growled. The man sounded scared and pathetically unsure. It made his guts boil in anger. He silently followed the voice who didn't seem to approach. Hopefully Murdoch was there as well, and he wouldn't have to hunt him down.

The hallway made a turn but before he proceeded down to it he heard faint footsteps. He pressed his broad back against the wall, waiting for the person to step through.

A large figure appeared in his vision and Mako did not hesitate. He used the hilt of his sword to punch the person on the face, causing him to yelp in a mixture of surprise and pain. Mako stepped over, punching him once against on the face and sending the large man to the floor on his back. He grunted, holding a large sword but he didn't even attempt to use it. As soon as Peter laid eyes on Mako he crawled back while cradling his face.

"M-Mako-"

The Bodyguard did not wait. He grabbed him by the neck and slammed the smaller man against the wall, getting the air out of his lungs. Peter dropped his sword, pleading eyes staring at Mako's as he was about to beg for his life.

"P-please! You don't understand! They'll kill us if we don't do this!"

"And I thought I told you I would kill you if you did this. Or did I not explain myself enough?"

The man squirmed, his lips twitching and blubbering. "B-but, Mako! You were part of the plan! What happened?! You can still do it! We can do it with you! There is no need for this!"

Mako raised his fist, ready to strike once again.

"N-no! Wait! Listen!" His eyes were almost bulging out of their sockets. "Our client, they offered more! Thrice the original price! Y-you can have a third- two thirds!" He sounded desperate. "Two thirds! Mako, it is an amazing deal! You can get your cabin, away from everything like you wanted!"

Mako snarled.
Three thirds?
Thrice the original price?

"…” The corner of Mako's mouth twisted. It seemed Peter was sensing Mako's vulnerability.

"Come on, Mako. It was the original plan! This isn't lie you. You always followed plans. You- you aren't a bodyguard- you are a warrior! A killer! You kill for money! This is who you are!"

Mako dropped his gaze to the floor, closing his eyes and thinking.

Very slowly, he let Peter go.

"A-Aha! See! I knew you would come to your senses!" The man patted Mako's shoulder. "Come on, Murdoch is waiting for us."

"How many are there- is it just you?"

"Yes. We had to sneak in- and no one believed us when we said we had this deal, so its just the two of us. Well, three now!" He said excitedly.

"Who is your client? You never told me."

"Oh, well. We don't technically know. We talk to them via a third person. They uh, they offered a lot of money. Didn't tell us who they are, though. We are supposed to give this third person the kid, and then he'll give us the money."

"Ah," Mako sighed, smiling. "So we don't know the client? Who is this third person, someone we know?"

"Wears a mask. Can't really tell. We'll meet him at the woods, at the graveyard that burnt down some years ago" He smiled up to Mako now though, all the worry washed over his face. "Mako, after this we can finally retire and have good lives! We won't have to kill no more! We can finally get what we want!"

Mako chuckled, placing his huge hands on his shoulders.

"Yes, Peter. We can finally get what we really deserve."

Mako snapped Peter's neck until it faced back.

The man slumped to the ground dead in a heap. Mako sighed, touching and trying to smooth the collar of his coat. His chest was burning- he needed to get back to Jamison and find Murdoch, fast. Mako was surprised that he hadn't heard the man yet.
Taking a look at Peter, Mako didn't see any explosive material on him. It probably had been his partner the one to throw all those bombs on the ballroom. This could be bad.

He practically ran towards Jamison's hideout, stopping in his tracks.

The door had been busted open.
Mako slipped inside, and there had been signs of fighting. The furniture was tipped over, some pieces broken. He could see the statue that had been blocking the door laying on a rubble at the side of the door. And Jamison was gone.

"Oh, no," Mako whispered under his breath. He ran down the hallway to the only place they could
have gone to, paintings and decorations having been taken off the walls in a probably fit of desperation by Jamison. "No, no, no."

He was desperate. He could feel his heartbeat on his ears, his chest beating excruciatingly fast as he made his ways through the hallway. Everything looked the same, he couldn't make out where he was or where he was going. Where was Jamison? Why did he have to be so bloody stupid to leave him alone? He needed to find Jamison. He had to find him, otherwise he would- he would-

"No- Mako!"

He heard Jamison shrill scream and it snapped Mako out of his thoughts. He could tell where it was coming from, and he could follow it. He kept listening to Jamison's struggles, his calls for help that kept being muffled. He had to find them. After many agonizing twists and turns Mako eventually ended up upstairs. He was losing hope, but every time he lost trail Jamison would make a sound lough enough for Mako to hear. He would keep going until he reached a familiar place.

If he had been younger he would have called it destiny. Maybe it was destiny fucking with him. He had cornered the attacker on the balcony, where Jamison had first kissed him. Mako tried to not dwell into the implication. Murdoch was holding a dagger to Jamison's throat, his hand shaky as his eye widened in horror when he spotted Mako. He looked rougher than the last time Mako had seen him- he was still sporting an eyepatch, but his face seemed to be red with scars, and his lips were awfully scarred as well. His Adam's apple bobbed as he kept eye contact with Mako.

Jamison was biting his lips, his eyes wide and staring back at his lover. His hands were holding tight at Murdoch's tick arms, holding unto him. He was taller than Murdoch, but he was being forced to hunch in a painful way. His throat was red and angry due to the proximity of the knife.

He expected the man to say something. Mako was waiting for it, waiting for him to spew the truth about Mako's original plans. Why wouldn't he? He was in the perfect position. He would try to reason with him just as Peter did, but the man didn't say a thing. He just nodded and twisted his head, terrified.

Mako looked at him in confusion as Murdoch's fingers gestured wildly. What was he doing?

Murdoch opened his mouth, and Mako suddenly understood. Someone had cut his tongue out, and now he couldn't speak. The knot on Mako's stomach disappeared, realizing he wouldn't be able to say a thing about his previous plan.

The man pointed at Jamison, nodding and gesturing. Even if he couldn't speak Mako could sort of understand- he wanted to make the same point Peter did. A glance at him Mako could see how there were bags of powder and vials of flammable chemicals at his waist. He needed to proceed very carefully.

"Drop your weapon," Mako said, sternly. The man shook his head frantically, eyes wild and fearful. "I have already killed your partner, it is no use. You are cornered. There is no way out of this."

Murdoch's eyes got wide once again, staring at Mako and then the floor as he realized what was happening. He snarled, pressing the dagger harder against Jamison's skin. A drop of blood rolled down Jamison's neck, the young man whimpering and biting his lip.

It enraged Mako, but when he took a step the blade just pressed harder against Jamison's skin, a little bit more of blood dripping. The man angrily snarled, his face pressing against Jamison's, very close and showing his teeth, willing to do anything like an animal. He didn't know what to do, the screaming from everybody below them flooding his ears.

Everybody was escaping underneath them. They were directly above the crowd, but Mako doubted
they could see or hear them. He was running out of time.
Murdoch still was pressed against Jamison, taunting Mako. Everything felt like slow motion for him, the way Jamison looked to his attacker, the way the Prince lifted his hand in one swift and quick motion, thumb digging deeply against Murdoch's one healthy eye.
The bandit squealed like an animal, letting go of Jamison and cradling his face. Jamison immediately leaped towards Mako who was already expecting him with open eyes.

Then, Murdoch slipped and crashed against the ground.

His vials burst, his body immediately bursting into flames. Jamison was halfway from reaching Mako when the chemical fire reached Murdoch's gunpowder pouches.

The explosion was violent and loud. Mako grabbed Jamison by the left arm and pulled at him quickly but the explosion was far too fast. It threw both Jamison and Mako throw the air back to the inside of the castle. Mako felt something hot searing through him, but he couldn't make sense of what was going on. He was floating, violently thrown back towards the other side of the room. The windows exploded violently, the carpet lighting on fire as well as anything close to it. The Balcony crumbled instantly, the stones and foundations falling to those below it. Mako heard screaming as the hot stones landed at the visitors, but he couldn't truly understand what was happening. He had been thrown through the air and landed into the opposite wall.

It took Mako a while to focus, the edges of his vision blurred while his head throbbed in pain. He heard screaming from below. His ears were ringing painfully.
Speaking of pain, the left side of his face hurt fare more than anything else on his body. He couldn't register it, just bringing his fingers to touch his cheek only to retreat them when he felt the hot burning pain. He couldn't concentrate.

Jamison.

He snapped out of his confusion, scrambling to his feet. Everything around him was in flames, but it would die out soon. He hoped. He didn't care. He struggled to stand, realizing that his elegant suit was now completely ruined. Unwearable. Shame.
The suit was not important. Jamison was.
He huffed and coughed, his old lungs struggling to breathe. He scanned the room, and he saw him.

Mako approached as quickly as he could (not very) the man. Jamison laid in a smoking heap on the floor, having crashed against the wall as well. Instead of leaving a crater like Mako had done, he bounced off and landed at the floor.
Mako immediately knelt at his side, his mind still too hazy to completely understand.

"Jamison," he called, softly pressing his fingers towards the man. He was lying on his right side, bruises and scrapes decorating the left side of his body. Mako could tell even on his state that Jamison was breathing, softly but breathing. That was good.

Mako took a deep breath. Jamison was alive. He was alive and hopefully unharmed, somehow. It was a miracle. It was a god damned miracle.
Carefully, Mako turned Jamison so the young man would lie on his back.

Mako almost retched. Then he did. He actually vomited when he saw it.
Prince Jamison laid on his back. His right arm and leg were gone, meat hanging from it like pulp. He could see the bone poking out. His white skin was red, shredded into strings of meat and muscle and into the nothingness. They were gone.
Chemical explosions were far more dangerous.

Mako wanted to touch him, to cradle him close. To sweet him in his arms and carry him away, to be there with him. But he couldn’t- it was too dangerous. Jamison would be in so much pain. He wanted desperately to just touch him and he couldn’t.

"Jamie..." He whispered, the blood leaving his face. He felt his body go weak at the sight of it, at the state of his Prince. He caressed his face gently as the smell of blood reached his nostrils.

He lost consciousness, the last thing he saw being Jamison's peaceful face.

And he dreamed.
Beef Broth

Chapter Summary

He dreamed with fire.

Chapter Notes

Mako wakes up.

HI! I wrote this one in ONE DAY! good job, us. It's late and Im tired so i dont got much to say, apart tht this chapter is kind of pretty emotional heavy and kind of a lot happens. from now on its gonna be a lil sad but dont worry!!!!! there is always sunshine tomorrow!! until it rains or something, Idk.

ANYWAYS, I hope y'all like this one!! I enjoyed writing it a lot!!!

Thank you for reading!!!! Hope y'all like it!!!

He dreamed with fire.

It didn't burn him. It enveloped him from head to toe, his entire being. Every inch of his skin was covered in fire. His insides, too. He felt it travel up his gut, his spine, his muscles- every single atom of his body was nothing but fire, raw. Destructive. Destroying everything he ought to protect, the things he had sworn to keep safe he could do nothing but destroy them.

He did this.

Mako woke up abruptly, sitting up immediately. His entire body hurt but more specifically the left side of his face. Everything was far too overwhelming to him, the room around him spinning in circles. He knew he was lying in a bed but didn't register what was happening. Mako tried to jump out of the bed, swinging his legs and arms around trying to get out. He was so frantic he got tangled with the bedsheets, but he continued to scream and try to get off the bed. He felt many hands attempting to push him into the bed as they screamed at him to calm down. They weren't strong enough to stop Mako, he was throwing punches at the nurses who could barely avoid them. He threw everything he had at his reach, the furniture, flowerpots- anything he could grab was fair game to throw.

One of the nurses jabbed a thick needle on his arm, and Mako felt the hotness of the liquid inside spread through his body. He tried to fight it, but his muscles went numb and he couldn't keep it up. The nurses approached to restrain him properly, and Mako's vision went black.

He finally fell unconscious once again.
This time he dreamed with his old home, the farm. He remembered feeding the pigs as a young child, patting and hugging the little animals. They would give him kisses with their snouts, and Mako remembered the soft moist feeling of their noses pressing against his skin. He laughed at the sensation.

Not only the pigs, but the chickens too. Memories of holding them in his arms surfaced. Picking their eggs up in an attempt to help his parents.

One day he saw the royal soldiers march across the road. He stared at them, tall and radiant. Their armors were beautiful, a sign of power. Mako imagined himself in that armor, powerful and mighty. He clenched his fists, looking at the men as they marched through the road. Maybe one day, he could be one of them.

He was standing in the arena, his body full of blood. Not his. Never his.

Being a warrior was supposed to be temporary. It was supposed to get him money to help his sick mother. But he was **good** at it. He kept winning again and again. He got the money he needed, and kept going. The thrill of the fight was too delicious for him, it was far too intoxicating to just stop. The first time had been traumatic, terrible. Mako didn't sleep for days. The second time, it was okay. The third, it had become an addiction. Those used to be the best days of his life, until now.

At his feet was something, small and dead. It was lying on a pool of his own blood. Mako stared at his hands, full of blood.

Not his. Never his.

This time he didn't freak out when he woke. Even if he had been aggressive he couldn't have done anything- he was tied to the bed with chains. He squirmed a little and pain traversed through his body. He grunted in pain, still groggy due to the drugs.

"Sir," a nurse called out. Mako turned to face her. She looked terrified, sweaty and exhausted. "My apologies. We were defensive, we had to... we had to tranquilize you."

Oh. Mako felt terrible, had he hurt anyone?

"I'm..." His voice was hoarse, and it hurt to speak. "I'm sorry."

"You didn't hurt anybody, if that was your concern." She didn't seem upset, just overworked.

Mako sighed. "Can you let me go?"

"No. not yet. I'm sorry."

"I understand."

He could hear the noise of people running outside and shouting medical orders to each other. Everything seemed like chaos, probably the reason the nurse was so exhausted. His head began to hurt, overflooded by the memories of what happened before he had passed out. He clenched his eyelids shut as he started to relieve the events. His mind replayed every single second of it, from where Jamison was being held hostage to him finding him again, half dead and- Mako sucked air through his teeth. His entire body trembled in pain.
He had to know.

"The Prince. What... what is his status?"

The nurse replied immediately and mechanically. "He will survive."

Mako felt a huge weight lift off his chest. Jamison was alive. He hadn't remembered the fact that Jamison had seemingly lost his limbs, Mako would forget until later. For now, he was just content that the Prince was alive.

"Sir," The nurse softly called. Mako turned his head to face her.

The woman looked on the verge of tears. Mako was pretty sure she just wanted to unwind from whatever was ailing her. He didn't care. It's not like he could do anything about it- he was literally tied to the hospital bed.

She stared at him. She opened her mouth and closed it a couple of times, whimpering softly. Mako didn't know what was going on, but just kept staring at her awaiting for whatever she had to say. "Sir,"

Mako blinked, realizing how the girl was now silently sobbing.

"The King is dead."

---

King James Fawkes was dead.

The King had made his way out of the Ballroom in time while being escorted by his personal bodyguards. They were standing directly under the balcony Mako and Jamison were at, just when it exploded. The debris fell not only on top of them, but other nobles that were unfortunate to be around. The rocks had buried the King and his bodyguards. As far as Mako was told (and he believed it), every single doctor tried their best on saving him. The surgeries lasted several hours, but, ultimately there was nothing they could do.

The King was dead.

The news hit Mako like a bag full of bricks. It made him dizzy, and he almost threw up. His brain was drowning with thoughts of what this meant for the Kingdom, what this meant for him, for Jamison. The King had died. The King was dead. Jamison now would be the King. The nurse didn't allow Mako to move until she was truly sure that he wasn't going to freak out due to the news.

"I need to make sure the Prince is okay," Mako said. There was nothing he wanted more than to make sure Jamison was alright- he had to see him.

The nurse sighed and undid the chains. She didn't even bother to press him about it, she still was too emotionally tired to care about what was going on.
"You should be okay," the nurse explained as she took the chains away. "Your wounds are in the process of healing. Do not strain yourself. You..."

She held the chains in her hands, avoiding to stare at Mako's face. "The left side of your face has been burned."

Before she finished her sentence Mako was already reaching for the hand mirror next to the bed swiftly lifting up to his face.

His left cheek was burnt, leaving a significant scar that went from his lip to below his eye. He was lucky it didn't reach his eye, otherwise he would probably be blind from it. He traced his fingers down the scar and it sting. He felt numb, not being able to fully understand it.

He blinked, placing the mirror down. One more scar to his face. A reminder of what he had done.

"We can give you medicine to make it heal better. But it will... it will scar." She sighed. "I'm sorry."

"It's alright," Mako huffed. He didn't want to dwell into his messed up face. As soon as he started to take off his gown the nurse left without another word. He let her, the young woman was probably close to having an anxiety attack due to the current events, and he couldn't blame her. The entire situation kept circling on Mako's mind, and even if Mako didn't personally like the King and wasn't a country man like other men, the entire situation made his stomach flip.

Mako didn't put his actual armor up, and the tailcoat along with the waistcoat he was previously wearing was ruined, garbage. The pants were slightly messed, but he could still wear it along with the shirt he was wearing underneath it all. He quickly buttoned himself up, big fingers clumsily fidgeting with the buttons. Mako's breathing was quick and panicked, he actually had to stop himself to take deep breaths to continue.

Once dressed, he quickly left his room. Nurses and doctors were running around, some crying and others with bloodshot eyes as they tried to make sense of the situation. He hadn't actually asked if someone else had died or gotten hurt, but he guessed he would find out later.

It was chaos. Every step he took there were people crying on the floor, people holding each other as they took the news of their King's passing. Mako grabbed a young man, his eyes red and cheeks puffy from all the crying.

"Prince Jamison room, I am his bodyguard."

The man stared at him for several seconds. He nodded and pointed to the direction he was coming in. "In-in the last room."

"Thank you," Mako let him go and the men started to sob.

Mako ignored the people wailing. He had never seen anything like it, with everybody in such a terrible mental and physical state. Most of the workers were crying, but others were running with medical supplies on their hands. He ignored it. He tried his best to ignore it, walking straight towards his goal.

The more he walked the less people were crying. He arrived to the room, nurses standing outside and staring at him. They also looked exhausted, but they seemed to try their hardest on containing themselves.

"Sir Rutledge, you're his bodyguard right?" One of them asked. Formalities were out of the question at the moment, none of them gave a shit if they didn't use the proper terminology for each other. Mako didn't care.
"Yes."

"The doctor is inside. She will explain everything."

Mako blinked. Normally the nurses weren’t that straightforward with him about Jamison's condition. "Me?"

"There's... there is no one else to tell."

The silent was heavy. Mako nodded and opened the door.

"Oh, God..." one of the nurses said as Mako stepped, and he heard soft sobbing as he closed the door.

There were actually many doctors inside, but one of them had a different lab coat than the others— their boss, probably. All of them looked as tired as everybody else. Their bodies were smeared with blood, their hands deep covered on it. Bandages laid on the floor covered with blood as well. The doctors were cleaning each other off, throwing their gloves on the already dirty floor. They were so exhausted that the severity of the King's death hadn't caught up with them, it seemed.

He finally set eyes on the bed at the center of the room. Jamison laid in it, his chest rising up and down slowly like he was sleeping. His body was covered in bandages that were damp with his own blood, white skin bruising.

Mako slowly approached him. And he remembered. He remembered that he threw up. He remembered the exact image of why he had thrown up. The image of all that blood underneath Jamison, and the minced meat that was in place of his limbs.

God, he had hoped it was just a dream.

And yet Jamison laid there. His arm was gone, the limb cutting off just below his elbow. The wound had been cauterized properly it seemed— he guessed, he had no idea. But his right hand was gone.

Mako remembered kissing his right palm, the meat of the thumb, pressing his lips on the back of that hand and letting it touch his big body.

It was gone.

His ears were full with buzzing as he saw the sheets. Jamison was covered in a thin sheet but the lump where his right leg should be was gone. There was no knee, either, it got cut off above it. Mako could hear his heartbeat on his ears. The corner of his vision went black, his fingers twitching as Jamison laid in the bed, broken. Damaged. Torn apart into being less than he was. Into that. Into something Mako had seen as a warrior. Something that shouldn’t have happened. Never. Not to Jamison. Never to Jamison. Not to Jamison.

And it was his fault and he knew it. He had done that. He was the one that took his limbs away. Mako wanted to rip off his own arm and leg if it meant bringing Jamison back his. He would do it in that instant. He would give himself away for this because Jamison didn't deserve to be cut to pieces for something Mako did.

Mako did this. It was his fault. Everything he had done had lead up to the moment and the consequences of his actions were staring at him in the bed.

It was his fault.

It was his fault that Jamison had been broken. It was his fault the King was dead. It was his fault Jamison would never touch him with his right hand that he would never kiss his right hand that he would never get to kiss on those beautiful digits that Mako had come to adore, the ones that would lovingly caress his lips like Mako was the most beautiful thing in the world but how could he be? He
did this. He did this. He was nothing but scum because this was his fault.

A hand to his shoulder snapped Mako out of his thoughts. He could barely focus on the doctor staring up at him. His vision was blurred, and he heard her voice as if it was muffled. His mouth was full of cotton barely able to understand that she was speaking to him.

"I'm sorry?" He asked, shaking his head trying to get rid of those clouded thoughts.

"The Prince will survive," The doctor repeated. She didn't seem to care that Mako wasn't all there, since she seemed completely out of it as well. "We couldn't save his limbs... we did our best to keep as much tissue as we could, but..." She clenched her eyes shut.

"We tried our hardest." She wasn't only talking about the Prince now, she was talking about the King and his death. Mako sighed. There were far too many things happening.

"I believe you."

She seemed to relax due to this, but there was still that lingering feeling of raw guilt.

"What's next?" He asked, not exactly to her but to himself. He didn't know what would happen now.

"There are great mechanics that can create great prosthetics, he will have to take a lot of medication and will take a while for him to wake up. The Prince." She stopped herself, biting her lip and staring down. "The _King_ will have to learn how to cope with the process of losing a limb."

That was a terrifying thought. Jamison, becoming King. Not because Mako didn't think he could do it, but because it was Jamison. Just some hours ago he was dancing and kissing the young Prince, and now his father had died and now he was going to become a king.

King Jamison.

Mako nodded. He didn't know what the process was, but he knew there were royal advisors and the like to help them out. What would happen to him? He was his personal bodyguard, and he guessed he would keep his job. But that was literally on the bottom of his concerns. There was so much going on, and he just wanted Jamison to be safe.

"Can I stay?" He didn't care if people thought something about him and Jamison. Jamison's father had just died, so he didn't need an excuse to linger with Jamison at this point. The doctor approved, and they all slowly left. Mako dragged a chair to sit, staring at Jamison as he slept.

The day passed excruciatingly slowly, people crying and sobbing outside. Doctors would occasionally come and check on both Jamison and Mako's state. The night passed as well, and even though the Doctors and Nurses urged Mako to rest he outright refused, staying next to Jamison the entire time. He awaited and awaited until Jamison would wake up. Someone knocked on the door, someone Mako had seen around the castle before but wasn't truly sure of who he was. He was wearing expensive clothes, but the man himself was sweating and in a tired state as well as everybody else. Mako left Jamison's side to go speak to the man.

"Sir Rutledge, is it?" The man looked up. He was about Mako's age, bruised and with dark circles under the eyes. "I would like to present myself. My name is Victor Haller, I am part of the royal advisors for the King. I... I do understand right now is an incredibly hard time for you and the young Heir. Let it be known, that me and my men will take care of everything in regards of funeral for his Majesty, and we will handle coronation for the Prince."

"He will be made King, then?"
"Oh, yes. Jamison is the only heir to the throne. He will be made King. As I said, we will make sure everything is ready." The man sighed, adjusting his clothes. Mako wanted to dislike the man because he wasn't in the mood of dealing with old noblemen, but This man actually seemed decent and prudent enough to assure Mako everything would be okay. "This is an extremely hard time for all of us. I just wanted to let you know that you will not have to worry about the organization of these events."

Mako blinked, slowly nodding.

"...Why am I being told this? Shouldn't you wait for the Prince to be awake?"

Victor sighed. "He will not be in a good state of mind. Sir Rutledge, you currently are the one that is in charge of Jamison's well being. He is an adult so you are not his guardian, but think of it as being similar to one. Unless, of course, you decide to quit."

Mako twitched. "No, I will remain in this position."

"Thank you so much, it is truly a great feat considering these hard times. Now, if you excuse me, I have a lot of things to deal with. If you do have a question, please do not hesitate to seek me out."

"Thank you."

With that, the man left. Mako truly felt grateful, and at least he didn't have to worry much about the process. He returned to Jamison's side, awaiting for him to awake.

Another full day passed. Jamison had whimpered and squirmed on his sleep but it wasn't until another day that he fully woke up.

Mako stared in silence as the young man shifted, moaning and whining as he opened his eyes. Jamison looked groggy, and it made sense. He still was slightly drugged with painkillers but he at least seemed to make sense of the situation.

His face instantly brightened when the first thing he saw was Mako, but then his smile fell when he saw Mako's left cheek.

"M-" he coughed, his voice pained. "Mako, yer face..."

Before Mako could say anything Jamison attempted to lift his right hand to touch at his face. The young man instantly noticed something was wrong, eyes widening and staring at the empty space where his right hand should be.

"Jamie-"

"Oh."

"Jamie, please-"

His left hand touched his stump, hissing in pain at how it hurt to touch it. Then, he noticed his right leg.

Jamison ripped off the sheets off him, staring at his broken body. He started to hyperventilate, clawing at his skin with his existing hand. Mako was forced to grab his wrist and pull it away.

"Jamie!" Mako yelled, and Jamison stared up at him with wide terrified eyes.

"Mako- I-" He kept staring down at himself in pure horror, not fully comprehending. "I-"
"It's okay," He thumbed at the back of Jamison's left hand in a soothing manner, tracing circles on with his finger. "It's okay. You will get prosthetics- Jamie, it will be alright."

He sputtered, staring down at his nonexistent limbs, and then back to Mako. His eyes were red and on the verge of crying.

"Okay," He breathed down, trying to calm himself down. "Okay."

Wailing could be heard outside of the room, which caught Jamison's attention instantly.

"What...?" Jamison was sweating, lower limp trembling. "Mako, what...?"

There wasn't going to be any moment that would make it comfortable for Jamison to learn the news.

Mako put Jamison's left hand between his huge palms, staring sweetly at Jamison. He heard more wailing outside, crying and sobbing. Jamison tried to ignore it, his big eyes focused on Mako.

"Jamison," He took a very deep breath. His insides were shaking, and he felt shivers go down his spine. "Your father..."

He swallowed. Everything slowed down for him.

"Your father has passed away."

Jamison stared at him without saying a thing for a very long time. He looked at the door, the wailing and screaming still prominent.
Mako held Jamison closely, the young man pressing his face against Mako's chest as he openly sobbed. He screamed and wailed, his hand gripping at Mako's flesh seeking comfort. He cried and shouted, cursing, screaming until his throat went raw.
He let him, holding Jamison in his arms. Jamison's screaming settled on his gut, a reminder of everything that had happened.

And it was his fault.
The days passed like a nightmare. Jamison would constantly wake up, yelling and screaming, panting at the memories of the bomb. Mako would have to cradle him close every time, assure him that everything was okay. That he was safe.

True to their word, the paperwork and the arrangements for the King's funeral were taken care of, so Jamison wouldn't have to worry about a thing in regards of arranging his own father funeral. At least he wouldn't have to go through that. During this time Mako didn't leave Jamison's side for not even a moment, not even for his check ups. The nurses were forced to work on him in the same room as Jamison, but Mako did not care. He would not leave the Prince's side, not after this. Not after what he had done.

Mako couldn’t tell how many days passed since the attack, but every minute dragged. It was excruciating. Jamison spent most of his time sleeping, recuperating. The nurses would administer drugs and painkillers that kept him unconscious most of the time. And yet, when he was awake Jamison wouldn’t say a thing. He would stare up to the ceiling and do nothing else. Mako wanted to say something, but he had no words. What was he supposed to say?

A week had passed since the Ball. Mako was resting, hand grasping Jamison’s remaining as they both slept. He had a light sleep, interrupted by the light knocking on the door. His eyes shot open, first instinct to look down at Jamison. The young man was still sleeping, undisturbed.

“My apologies,” the man whispered, half his body slipping on the room. It was Victor Haller, the royal adviser. He was far more relaxed than when Mako met him for the first time, but the man still looked tired with dark circles under his eyes. “May I speak to you, sir Rutledge?”

Mako sighed, gently putting Jamison’s hand at the man’s side and standing up. He rubbed his face as he made his way towards the man. He was still wearing the ragged clothes he had worn the first time they had met, but he didn’t care. The man didn’t look to clean either, his face unshaven with dark stubble already appearing, hair messy and clothes not too pristine. Mako guessed Victor was having his own issues to deal with after the King’s death.

“Hello, good afternoon.” He shook hands with Mako, a firm grip despite his tiredness. “I’ve come to
Mako grumbled. He didn’t want to think about any of those things at the moment, even if they were of utmost importance.

“All arrangements have been made, and the body has been preserved so it can last for a few more days until we bury it proper. Considering the situation we tried to have the burial as soon as we could, but in these cases it has been a little difficult, you understand.” The man took a deep breath, toying with the collar of his coat. “The funeral will be taking place tomorrow. Normally the Prince should be the one to attend, but…”

“I will be attending,” a hoarse voice called. Both older men looked at Jamison’s direction, the young man already making his way out of the bed. Mako immediately rushed at his side with the intention of shoving him back in bed, but Jamison shoved him away.

His flesh hand was pressed against the bed to keep his balance, and the image was just… grizzly, to say the least. It was bizarre to see the space where his arm and leg should be, and there being nothing. It made Mako’s stomach drop.

“Your Highness, with all due respect, currently you are not in-”

“I said I will be attending.”

Mako said nothing, unsure if he had a right to say anything. The situation was very tricky and complicated, and Mako himself didn’t know what they should do. A flurry of emotions stirred his guts, wishing he could know the answer of what he should say.

“Your Highness, we must talk.” Victor entered the room, closing the door behind him. Mako stood beside Jamison in case he needed more support, but kept his distance. “The situation currently is very dire. There are far too many things we must attend to. The Royal advisors have been taking care of most of it, but I need to talk to you about a very important decision.”

“What is it?” Jamison asked, his voice cautious. Mako guessed it was going to be something about the coronation, or the funeral. However he was caught off guard by the actual topic.

“We must talk about your physical limitations.”

They both stared at Victor, Jamison biting his lip and letting him talk.

“Nobody outside the castle knows about your status. We’ve talked, and we have come to the conclusion that it might not be a good decision to let outsiders know about your… accident.”

“Are you serious?” Mako said a little too loudly. It hadn’t been even a week since Jamison lost his limbs and apparently no one would know? It was a little bit too crude for him.

“Unfortunately, I do know how tasteless this is. However, this can be shown as a sign of weakness by other parties. It is… It is a lot to ask, and I am aware. This is why the final decision will be given by his Highness.”

Jamison just stared down at the stumps on his body, still healing underneath all those bandages. His face was twisted into deep concentration, as if he was trying to figure out what to do with his lack of limbs.

“Your prosthetics are on the process of being made. If you do intend on attending the funeral, they will not be ready. You will have to be driven around with a wheelchair. This will make it harder to
hide your wounds.”

Jamison took a deep breath. “We can’t take chances right now- showin’ any sign of weakness will just give any asshole that wants tha’ throne to give ‘em an ego boost. Okay. I ain’t showin’ ‘em what they did to me.”

Mako sighed. It was Jamison’s decision, after all, but there was something just so sick about it all.

“I will attend tha’ funeral. I don’t care about bein’ wheeled around. I just got in an accident, roight? We can give ‘em that excuse that I’m still too weak, they ain’t gotta know I’m missing me limbs.”

“Jamison,”

They both looked at Victor when the man referred to him by given name. Mako couldn’t recall anybody doing that apart from the Duke and himself. He didn’t care, but it was… strange.

“I am deeply sorry about what happened to your father. I knew him. He was a great man, and you shouldn’t be in this position. If there is anything we can do…”

“Thank ye, Jamison said, diverting his eyes from Victor’s gaze. “Ye’re a good person.”

“...Tomorrow will be the funeral, I will send someone to take care of your appearance and to instruct you both on what to do. Farewell.”

With that, the man left. Jamison still stood beside the bed, and was shaking visibly.

“Jamie, you need to lay down.” Mako said gently, helping the young man into the bed. Jamison remained awfully quiet as Mako very carefully laid him down the mattress, worried of accidentally touching a bruise or a scratch. Jamison let out a sigh as he laid down on the bed, gazing into dead space.

“Jamie,” He sighs, thick fingers ruffling the young man’s hair. Normally Jamison would lean into it, close his hands and purr at the touch. Instead, he was quiet and still. “Do you want to talk?”

“No,” he immediately said, his remaining hand cradling Mako’s huge palm, his thick fingers curling around Jamison’s cheek. “Not… Not now. Later. Not now.”

Mako nodded silently, letting Jamison’s fingers trace circles on his skin. His eyes were glassy, blinking slowly still staring at the wall as if he didn’t want to see Mako.

“I’m sorry,” Jamison finally said, whispering. Mako leaned in close to him, his hand still cradling Jamison’s face. The bodyguard was confused by what he meant.

“Why?” Mako said equally low, his face being very close to Jamison’s. The young man choked back a sob, swallowing it and taking a deep breath to calm himself down. He still refused to look at Mako.

“Yer face,” He breathed out, pressing his cheek against the mattress. “Ye got messed up tryin’ tha’ save me. I’m… I’m sorry. It’s me fault ye got messed up.”

Mako was stunned. After all he did to Jamison, and he was the one that felt sorry, that had that guilt eating at him. It wasn’t fair. He shouldn’t have to go through all of this, and he was the one feeling guilt. It’s not fair. Mako wanted to vomit, it was far too overwhelming.

“Jamie…” Mako sighed, his big hands very gently turning the young man’s head so he was staring at him. Jamison’s eyes focused on Mako’s scar, his features twisted in guilt and sadness. “Jamie, look at
His amber eyes locked with Mako’s, wet and on the verge of tears.

“I’m fine, the only thing I care about is for your safety. That’s the only thing I’ve ever cared of.”

Liar. But Jamison took it. He swallowed down his tears even as Mako took his left hand and kissed the back of it softly. Jamison’s remaining hand very carefully touched the scar, already having healed. It would be permanent. Mako took a sharp breath when the wound stung slightly.

“Does it hurt?” the young Prince asked.

“A little. But it’s okay.” Mako cradled Jamison’s face close, their foreheads touching. “Do you hurt?”

“Yes,” Jamison didn’t need more specifications, he knew what Mako was referring to. “Painkillers deal with most of it.”

Mako cradled Jamison close until the young man slept again, his bony body feeling light and broken. He didn’t ever want to let him go.

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Once again they had to be dressed up in an appropriate manner for the funeral. The same designer that had dressed them for the Ball helped them get ready. With Mako it was a little hard to get something good that fit, but in the end he got a double breasted formal black coat with golden buttons. He was amazed that it actually managed to close around him, but wasn’t in the mood of asking if they had to alter it or if it was the original size. He saw himself in the mirror, and he looked very elegant. Even with the scar on his left cheek. He touched it, staring at himself, judging. He was the one that should have been hurt, not Jamison. He wanted to say that the scar would be a reminder of what had happened and his sins, but Jamison’s presence was enough to ensure he wouldn’t forget.

“Okay, I’m ready.”

Mako turned to see Jamison sitting on the wheelchair. He had been dressed as well, a black military coat, with golden buttons and dark pants. There was a strange uneven lump where Jamison’s right limbs should be. The prosthetics weren’t ready yet, so they had to stick literal wooden limbs where his should be. They were ugly and full of splinters, but they only needed to create the illusion of something actually being there. It wasn’t like Jamison was actually going to use them. His face was full of make up so the bruises and cuts weren’t as evident, but had some bruises to show that he had been attacked. Giving them an excuse of why he wouldn’t be standing up, Mako guessed.

“This is ridiculous. I can stand.” Jamison said, eyes red. Mako didn’t say a thing, simply moving behind the wheelchair to get ready. The funeral would start in about an hour, and even though they didn’t have to Mako wheeled him to where they should be. Maybe looking at people moving around would make each other feel better.

“Wait,” Jamison said. Mako stopped dead on his tracks. “Um…”

“Do you need something?”
“I… I got a request.” His voice was low and unsure. “I… Mako, can… can ye take me to see… to see me dad?”

Mako blinked.

“Jamie-”

“I know, I know but, I mean. Tha’ last time I saw ‘im alive was… was at tha’ Ball. And- suddenly he’s gone. I just… I wanna say goodbye to ‘im. Before tha’ funeral. Without all these people.”

Mako took a sharp breath. He didn’t even know if that was allowed- but who would say a thing? Jamison was the prince, soon to be King. it isn't like they would scold him for visiting his own father’s corpse. He wasn’t going to be the one to deprive him from one final goodbye, after all Mako had done the same when his parents died. He could sympathize with wanting one final reunion.

“Yeah, okay.” He said as he changed their direction towards the morgue.

They were both very quiet as they made their way, silence making the trip feel far longer than it actually was. Outside of the morgue stood two guards, surely protecting the body. They didn’t even have to say a thing for them to let them pass. It was obvious why Jamison was there, and they wouldn’t interfere. It was only natural for him to want to see his dead father. The room was awfully cold and bright. He expected the body to be in a table or something, but it seemed that it was ready to be taken to its own funeral. At the center of the room stood a casket. It was very elegant, with golden decorations that Mako did not doubt were made of actual gold. It had patterns made from the gold, the elegant wood shining under the lights. Fit for a King.

Mako approached slowly, but something occurred to him. The King had died crushed underneath debris- maybe it was not a good idea for Jamison to see him in that state. He wouldn’t forgive himself if he saw his own father an horrifying mess.

“Wait,” Mako said as he stopped, approaching the casket to make sure the corpse was presentable. Jamison didn’t say a thing, probably guessing Mako’s intentions.

He took a sharp breath as he opened the lid to it, waiting for the worst.

For a man that had been crushed by debris, the King didn’t look as horrifying as Mako expected. His face was pale with sunken eyes. Mako could tell that a lot of makeup was applied to him so his face wouldn’t seen as bruised, and while he thanked it anyone could tell it was makeup. He looked below the neck, and his body seemed stuffed in a weird way just like Jamison’s non-existent limbs. They probably used stuffing and the like to make the body look normal it was broken so much. The rest of the body looked well preserved. Mako was slightly surprised that it was in such a good state a week after the King’s death, but they surely used preservation methods to make it last longer.

He sighed softly, going back to Jamison and wheeling him close to his father’s body. The casket was the perfect height for Jamison to be able to see inside of it without having to stand up from his chair. Jamison gasped very softly, staring at the inside. Mako took a step back, crossing his hands behind his back as he let Jamison have a little of privacy. It’s the least he could do.

Jamison stared inside the casket for a very long time. He didn’t say a thing, simply stared. Eventually his flesh hand was raised, touching his father’s face slowly.

“He…” Jamison swallowed his tears. “He was never a really affectionate man, ya know?”

Mako grunted, letting Jamison know that he heard him.
“Even as a little tike- I think ‘e was just bad at it? Didn’t know how to show how ‘e felt.”

Mako recalled the night Jamison was poisoned, and it made sense. The King didn’t know what to say or do, instead leaving. He didn’t know how to handle himself.

“Me mum- she was different, ya know? She wore her heart in her sleeve. She was big and affectionate, a real beaut.” Jamison sighed, still staring at the corpse.

“I used tha think he shipped me to Australia to just get rid of me. That he didn’t want to deal with the child of ‘is dead wife. It was too much tha’ see me mom in me every day. And… Idunno. Even when I came back, I used tha’ believe the same. I even thought he was tha’ one that poisoned mum and eventually killed ‘er. Heh.” His chuckle was sad, as if he was trying to lighten the mood. He failed.

“But, ya know what ‘e said? Tha’ last thing he said to me?” He sucked air through his teeth, keeping calm even though Mako could tell his body was trembling.

“He said, ‘I am really proud of you, Jamison’.” He could barely contain himself, hunching and pressing his forehead against the casket. “‘Y-you will be a great King…’.”

He wheezed, still refusing to cry. Mako kept away, feeling like he had no right to say anything. He pressed himself on the wall, the guilt creeping up his spine.

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There were too many people at the funeral. Nobles that had attended the Ball and people Mako guessed were royalty from other lands. Far too many people for a funeral, Mako thought. It brought him memories of his father funeral, him being alongside his mother. And then hers. He had to bury her alone.

A child burying a father was the natural outcome. It was supposed to happen, and yet it didn’t make it less painful. Having so many people around couldn’t be comfortable for Jamison, either. The entire ceremony the young Prince did not falter. He didn’t stand up due to the obvious lack of limbs, but it had been announced that he was still recuperating from his wounds.

Mako stood at his side every second of it. The ceremony was long, prayers being chanted by the priest. He attempted to pay attention to what was being said, but he couldn’t. Mako noticed how almost everybody present was crying, others just outright sobbing and yet Jamison stood firm, unbreakable. Mako didn’t know if it was a good or bad sign. The ceremony eventually ended. Even though the King’s body had been preserved Mako noticed how the casket remained closed, perhaps tradition? He didn’t know nor really cared. After the religious ceremony had been conducted they made their way towards the royal cemetery.

It was starting to freak Mako out just how Jamison didn’t say a thing, but he didn’t want to push the young man to speaking. They were still in public after all, and Jamison wanted to present himself as this unbreakable man. Mako would do his best to help him.

The same people that had attended the previous religious ceremony were present for the burial itself. The same priest said some words as the casket was lowered to the ground. Mako turned to face Jamison who kept staring as his father was swallowed by the dirt. Mako himself felt his muscles tighten, emotion starting to overwhelm him. He dug his fingers at his leg, trying to remain calm.

Thousands of flowers were left at the grave. Everybody left, and Jamison was the only one there along with Mako and some royal advisors. Jamison remained on his wheelchair staring at the ground without saying a thing.
“Jamie, it is time to leave.” Mako said softly. He could have just wheeled him away, but he felt this would be just too disrespectful. He waited until the young man nodded softly to take him away.

As soon as they left the cemetery, it started raining.

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“Sir, your Highness,” an old woman called to both of them as they entered the castle. Mako recognized her, she seemed to be the boss of all the maids. The woman was older with greying hair, tired and tall. She very gently approached them as soon as they slipped inside.

“We have been told that you can move to your chambers to rest, instead of being in the hospital. We’ve already moved all your things to your new room.”

“New room?” It was the first thing Jamison had said all day that wasn’t part of a script or a chant. Mako was curious as well as to what the woman referred to with “new room”.

“Oh, sir Victor told us that... um. Well, your status will change soon, and there will be a coronation for his Highness to ascend into Kingdom. Your... your chambers will change to the Royal one.”

“My father’s room?”

“Y-yes.” She seemed awkward and nervous. Mako did not blame her. “There is also a room on the side that is connected to the Royal room- it is for the King’s personal bodyguard. His Highness bodyguards also perished in the... incident, unfortunately.”

Mako felt like shit when he learned that. He hadn’t bothered to ask, so it was the first time he heard of it. He wondered if anybody else had died during the attack.

“So that can be your room as well, sir Rutledge.”

“I...” Jamison stared with wide eyes. “I understand. Thank you.”

She nodded and left. Mako stared down at Jamison but the young man seemed more surprised than anything. Once again he remained quiet, not wanting to stir Jamison’s emotions. They silently made their way to where their new bedrooms would be.

It was a quiet ride. Despite all the chaos and all the condolences from the past day, now it was as if they were the only ones in the castle. It was nice. Mako had started getting tired about everybody approaching them with their best wishes. What Jamison needed was tranquility and alone time.

“I never even asked ye,” Jamison sighed tiredly. “I never asked ye if ya even wanted to keep bein’ me bodyguard, after everythin’ that happened.”

“Of course I want to, you know that.” Mako said without hesitation.

“Yeah, but... Idunno, a lot of things have happened and-”

“Jamison, my dear boy...”

A horrifyingly familiar voice called out just as they were outside Jamison’s new room. Mako hissed lowly as the Duke approached them. Mako hadn’t seen him at the ceremony, but of course he was around. A deep part inside of him wished he had been one of the casualties.

“Uncle... good afternoon.” Jamison greeted with a calm, tired voice. “I didn’t see you at the ceremony, did you attend?”
“Of course I attended! How could I miss the funeral of my late’s sister’s husband?” He loudly proclaimed, with a voice far too cheerful for the situation.

Mako noticed that the man had no bodyguard in tow. The Duke immediately noticed Mako stare, and explained. “Oh, I told him to go eat something at the kitchen. It has been a very long day, after all, and he needed a break. It seems, sir Rutledge, that you do have your hands full at the moment.”

Mako huffed. He was so not in the mood to deal with this piece of shit, and it seemed that Jamison was feeling the same.

“I just wanted to say, Jamison. I am very disappointed in you. You didn’t even stand and conducted the proper traditional procedures for the funeral… you, his son…”

“I am wounded,” Jamison hissed, still trying to keep his calm proper accent in check. “I literally cannot stand up, Uncle. It is why I have to use this wheelchair.”

“Not even with crutches? Just how wounded are you to not be able to stand up for your dear father? Oh, I don’t want to know what he would say to his offense, to know his own child wouldn’t follow tradition on his own funeral!”

Mako was gripping the handles of the wheelchair so hard they started to creak. He was ready to tear the man apart, the only reason he didn’t do it was for Jamison’s sake.

“Uncle, I have had a very long day. If you ex-”

“And there you go, interrupting and being rude again. Jamison, when will you ever change?” His tone was condescending and mocking, and it made Mako’s blood boil. Jamison just bit his lip until it turned red.

“I know I should not speak ill of the dead, but Jamison. Your father was a fool. He died, letting his young son that has no idea how to run a kingdom lead. What could he be thinking? He must be so disappointed in you. Your father was an idiot for letting-”

In an instant Jamison leapt from his wheelchair and into the Duke. They both fell into the ground harshly as Jamison started to tear apart the Duke’s clothes, his nails digging deep into his skin as he had the intention of tearing the man apart limb by limb. It was terrifying. It looked like a hyena, attempting to tear its prey throat with his bare teeth.

The Duke screamed kicking and punching just as Mako finally reacted, quickly reaching over Jamison and pulling him off his screaming Uncle. The man scrambled to stand up, cradling his torn clothes and red lines on his face and throat. He was sweating, face red and terrified.

“You fucking animal! What have you done?! You tried to murder me! Do you know who I am you little vermin?!”

Jamison said nothing, hissing lowly and baring his teeth as Mako held him upright. Interestingly enough, his fake limbs did not get yanked from him- He wondered if the Duke noticed that they were wooden.

“I can declare war! I can tear your little miserable kingdom apart and take it for myself! I will do that!”

“I would like tha’ see ya try.” Jamison’s eyes were glassy and distant.

For the first time, the Duke seemed truly terrified.
“If this is how the next King will be, I truly weep for the future of this kingdom.” He adjusted his clothes, staring at Jamison in the eye. “Be careful, Jamison. This Kingdom will be mine. You need to watch your back. From what it seems, Regicide seems to be popular these days.”

With that, the Duke left, gasping for air and shaking like a leaf. Mako huffed, as he helped Jamison unto the wheelchair again and opened the door to their new room.

What did this mean to them? Jamison just attacked the Duke. The man could very well declare war, but from what it seemed he was all bark and no bite, wasn’t that like the third time he said he would declare war? The bodyguard didn’t want to worry too much about it. Jamison sighed as they finally entered the room, immediately ripping his clothes off and tossing them to the side as Mako closed the room. He didn’t even take a moment to examine how massive it was, or all the elegant decorations that adorned it. He was focused on Jamison who took his useless wooden limbs and threw them across the room as well, leaving himself bare apart from his underwear.

Mako could see how he became more relaxed, his body softening as he got off the chair and started to hop across the room towards the bed. Mako immediately followed him trying to actually help him.

Jamison slipped and fell into the soft carpet, gasping and clutching at his stumps. Mako tried to approach him but Jamison just kicked him in the gut for his efforts.

“I can fucking do it myself!” he yelled, attempting to get up but being to weak to do so. He kept slipping and falling, his frustrating building up until it was no more.

“Fuck!” he screamed, just before Jamison curled underneath himself and started to sob. His body shook, face pressed against the carpet as he wailed, tears pouring from his eyes as he just clutched against the soft rug. “Fuck!”

He had lost himself. The entire day he had been holding his tears, his feelings. Ever since the accident Mako could tell that it was all building up inside of him, festering and wriggling into ugly things. He couldn’t keep it anymore. Jamison was only human, and it poured out of him like a cascade, sobbing and crying as the carpet went wet with his tears. He wailed and wailed, his throat going raw. Mako approached him slowly, huge palm gently touching Jamison’s naked and bruised back. The Prince let him, so he tried to console him as much as he could, eventually just pulling him into an embrace right there on the floor. Like a child Jamison clung to him, sobbing loudly against his chest. He cried for hours, all the anguish and desperation pouring out of his body as he finally let it free. Mako did not complain, holding and petting Jamison through all of it.

It was so morbid to him, what he was doing. Consoling the victim’s son. It was disgusting how he just held him in his arms as he cried and weeped about something Mako had done. It was all his fault, it was his fault Jamison was not whole and it was his fault his father died and yet, And yet, he laid there, holding him softly. Listening to his cries, being the anchor that Jamison needed to hold on to reality, being the support the young man so desperately needed.

And yet,

He felt something inside of him grow, something disgusting. Something that fed on the tragedy, that fed on how horrid it was what he was doing. On how it was that those hands that were grabbing at him, those thick fingers that had been inside of him and that were rubbing loving soothing circles were the one that would have cracked his neck, and that would have sold him without any hesitation to the ones that killed his father.
He would never be able to wash the blood off his hands.

Mako closed his eyes and, for the first time in decades, he prayed.
Blueberry Pancakes

Chapter Summary

Things had been quiet.

Chapter Notes

The slow healing process.

Heyo! This is a short chapter, and its honestly kind of mostly filler, but has some comfort and stuff!! just some fluffy thing we needed after all that drama of the previous chapters. It's short and sweet! Thank y'all for reading and I hope you like it!!!!!!!

Things had been quiet.

Mako was very thankful of the fact that it seemed everybody understood that Jamison needed some time to be alone, to process everything that had happened. So far everyone has been understanding, and Mako didn’t even have to deal with the Duke, even after Jamison probably beat him up.

He needed to remember to congratulate him for that.

Now it was his duty to take care of Jamison. It had always been his job, but this time it was far more personal than when he started. For one, the young Prince had not left his new room since they got there, a couple of days ago. He spent pretty much the entire time asleep, barely eating. Mako gave him space, he didn’t want to rush anything.

Another morning passed. There was the usual knock on the door leading to the bedroom, and Mako stood up groaning to get to it. He poked his head outside, and a kitchen helper was there, plates and trays on his hands.

“Morning, sir. Breakfast is here.” At first the helper had been nervous when he was tasked to bring food to them, but since he didn’t actually get to see the Prince it seemed he was more relaxed.

Mako took the trays, thanked him and closed the door. As always, he placed one of them next to the bed, opening the tray and smelling the food. Blueberry pancakes with syrup on top, bacon at the side and two sunny side up eggs. There was a jar of orange juice as well. The smell made Mako mouth water, but it didn’t seem to stir young Jamison, still bundled up in many layers of sheets.

“Jamie,” Mako softly whispered, huge hand placed on the pile of sheets. He very gently shook it, the lump moving and shifting slowly. “You need to eat breakfast. You haven’t eaten since yesterday morning.”

“Fuck off,” Jamison slurred, grabbing the sheets and enveloping himself more on them.
“Come on,” Mako didn’t want to, but he grabbed the sheets and pulled at them. Jamison tried to fight him back but he would never compare to Mako’s strength, who ended up almost ripping the sheets off the man.

Jamison grunted, lying on the bed. He laid shirtless, soft red pajama pants to cover his lower body. The right leg of the pants had been tied by Mako, so it wouldn’t end up flailing around. Jamison rubbed at his face, attempting the motion with his right arm, the arm that didn’t exist anymore. He groaned when he realized it once again, placing his limp arm on the mattress.

“Here,” Mako said as he helped Jamison sit up against the pillows. The young man sighed, letting him move him around.

He placed the tray on Jamison’s lap, standing up and grabbing his own tray and going back near the bed. He sat next to it, tray on his lap as he examined his breakfast.

It was practically the same as Jamison’s, except that it had sausages and far more food than Jamison. He started to eat his own food, looking at the young man carefully. He had tried to feed him before by hand, but the only thing that happened was him getting bitten. He still had the marks on his finger. So Mako just let Jamison try it himself.

He could tell Jamison tried to grab everything with his right hand, grunting softly and switching. It was hard to watch, but he did it slowly enough that there wasn’t much of a mess. They both ate in silence apart from Jamison’s noisy eating. It was slightly uncomfortable.

“How are you feeling?” Mako finally said, taking a bite out of one of the sausages, the oil seeping into his tongue and feeling good.

“M’fine,” Jamison took a mouthful of pancakes, syrup running down his chin. Just like normal. He licked at it with his tongue, at least the parts he could reach.

“Are you having any pains?”

“Mm,” he huffed, taking a mouthful of eggs before he even swallowed the pancakes. The yolk broke, coating his lips in even more mess. Mako said nothing.

“We have to be careful with infections, do you feel strange? Do you-”

“Shut the fuck up!” Jamison said with a mouthful of food. He let the fork drop into the plate and took a swig out of the glass, carefully placing it back as he grabbed the fork and continued to eat. He was upset due to Mako’s babysitting but at least he was eating something, and it was also the first time he was talking so much ever since the accident. Mako couldn’t help but feel happy at these developments.

Once they finished eating Mako took Jamison’s tray away, placing it at the side. He was going to help Jamison clean up from the mess he made himself, but Jamison was already doing that with his good hand and a napkin he grabbed from the tray. He silently cleaned his face, sighing when done.

Without a word, Jamison simply tucked himself into the bed, creating a cocoon of blankets. It pained Mako to see him that way, but he didn’t know how to help.

He placed a hand on Jamison’s shoulder, gently but the young man flinched.

“Mako… sorry I just-” He almost whimpered.

“It’s okay, I understand.” He retreated his hand. He would give Jamison all the time he needed- it was the least he could do.
He woke up startled, eyes wide open lying on the bed. Something awakened him, but he couldn’t tell what. Mako stared at the ceiling while lying on the sofa still in the Prince’s room. He could have gone to sleep to his actual room, connected to the main bedroom where he could be alert of everything, but he didn’t feel right, not yet. Jamison didn’t say a thing, he just curled into himself and fell asleep pretty much immediately.

Mako was trying to figure out what woke him up, thinking it might have been just a random spasm until he heard whimpering and hissing. He jumped off the couch ready to attack, but he couldn’t see nothing in the room illuminated by the moonlight seeping through the window. The whimpering continued, loud and hurt. Mako approached the huge bed to see the lump underneath the covers shake and shift softly.

Very carefully he put away the sheets, pulling them back to reveal a shivering sweating Jamison. He was curled into himself, his remaining hand gripping at his right stump. He looked miserable, a crumpled pile of bones and skin. It looked like he was in pain from his destroyed limb. Mako couldn’t understand it. How come something that wasn’t there anymore hurt? The body probably missed its limb, but it was eerie. He was told about this by the nurses and doctors, but didn’t remember it until that moment. Mako sighed, crawling into the bed carefully, pulling Jamison close to him.

Jamison awoke startled, wide eyes staring at Mako. He relaxed when he realized who it was, but seemed exhausted and confused.

“What…”

“Shhh,” Mako massaged the stump softly, big digits rubbing circles into the still-healing skin. At first, Jamison tensed immediately but relaxed when he felt the soothing motions of Mako’s fingers. He close his eyes, head lying back on Mako’s thigh as he kept massaging the tender skin.

“Better?” He asked, still massaging the skin. His other hand went down his leg stump, massaging as well. Jamison squirmed a little, but leaned into the touch purring softly at it.

“Yeah…” Jamison sighed, the worry and pain washing off him. He pressed his cheek against Mako’s thigh, breathing softly as Mako continued.

“Tell me if it hurts like that again, I’ll help you with that.”

“I can do it meself.” Jamison fought back just for the sake of it.

“I know, but I want to help you. Are you going to let me?”

“Yeah, okay.” He sighed, like he wasn’t even in the mood of arguing.

They continued to lay like that in silence, until it seemed like Jamison had fallen asleep. Mako patted his hair softly, feeling the sweat from earlier. He was about to place him back into the sheets, but felt a bony hand holding unto him.

“Sorry I’ve been a dick, mate.” Jamison whispered so softly Mako could barely hear it.

“It’s okay, Jamie. I understand.” He did. He truly, truly did. He knew that it sounded like empty words, an empty promise of understanding something that hadn’t happened to him but Mako truly
understood how severe this situation was, and how time was crucial.

“Still, I just… Thank ya.”

Mako hummed, still patting his hair. He leaned down to press his forehead against Jamison’s and feeling his warmth. He could feel Jamison’s breath on his face, warm and shaky. Mako separated his face a little, bringing his lips to Jamison’s forehead. He kissed him there, his cheeks, kissing down his jawline softly. His lips lingered just above Jamison’s lips, very gently kissing his thin mouth. Jamison welcomed him, gently and careful. His left hand pressed at Mako’s chest, traveling upwards to rest at the back of his head. It wasn’t like when they kissed full of passion and action- it was gentle, lovely and quiet. It still lit a fire on Mako’s stomach. Carefully he placed him on the mattress again, positioning himself on top of Jamison and deepening the kiss. His hand traveled to his torso, rubbing on his chest. Jamison started to pant into his mouth, hand gripping Mako’s hair a little bit more roughly.

His lips traveled to his neck, nibbling at the skin gently, jolting when he felt Jamison gasp at this. He continued, lips trailing on his warm skin down his shoulder.

“Mako-” He sighed short of breath, hand retreating and staying on Mako’s chest with a little pressure. Mako kissed his collarbone, fingers starting to dip beneath Jamison’s underwear.

“Mako, please-” His panting became frantic, but Mako realized it wasn’t pleasure. “Please, stop-”

He immediately did, taking his lips and hands off Jamison in an instant. He panted, staring down at Jamison worried he had accidentally hurt him.

“Are you okay?” He sighed, about to touch Jamison but retreating his hands when he realized this might not be a good idea. “Are you hurt?”

“I don’t- I don’t want to.” Jamison seemed to be worked up with anxiety, palm rubbing at his face. “Not here. Not now- not here-”

“What’s the problem?” He wanted to fix whatever it ailed him, lying down next to him on the bed but not too close to the young man, worried he would upset him.

“Mako,” he turned around to look at him face to face, his eyes wide open. “This is me dad’s bed, we- we can’t fuck here, me dad used- he used tha sleep ‘ere, we just… we can’t.”

Mako blinked.

“That’s… Okay.” He said, but Jamison could tell immediately that Mako thought it was kind of weird.

“It’s- fuck off, it ain’t weird.”

Mako pursed his lips, unsure.

“Jamie-”

“What if I told ya to have sex in yer mom’s bed, huh? Wouldn’t that make you upset?!?”

Yeah, okay. He had a point. He wasn’t going to force him, anyways. They could change the bed later on.

“I don’t really wanna fuck right now, either. I…” He sighed, hand tracing circles on his stump. “It
ain’t only tha’ bed. I ain’t in the mood.”

“I understand.” He took his hand, thumb caressing Jamison’s knuckles. “Take your time.”

He nodded, tired. Mako whispered a soft “Come here,” and grabbed him with both arms, pulling him close in an embrace. Jamison pressed his face against Mako’s neck, safe and secure.

Mako felt safe, too.

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Steam escaped from the shower as he got out, skin still slightly moist even if he had put his clothes on the bathroom. He could have used Jamison’s bathroom, but he felt a little uncomfortable about it. Instead Mako went to his respective room to take a shower.

“...Yeah, I need ya to do me a favor,” Mako heard voices in the other room. He went there to see Jamison standing with a crutch, barely able to balance himself but doing it. He was talking to one of the maids, who looked up at him and seemed to struggle to not stare at his stumps.

“Your Highness, you want us to... change the mattress and sheets?” She cocked her head, slightly confused.

“Roight, exactly. I need ya to do that.”

“Is... there something wrong with the mattress and sheets for your Highness to request a change?”

“These- me father slept ‘ere. He...” He sighed. It seemed like it wasn’t just the actual sex, but something more. “It’s weird- It still smells like ‘im. And... It brings back memories. Can ya- can ya just please do that? Don’t throw ‘em away, just- put ‘em somewhere safe?”

“Of course, your Highness. Will do right away.” She bowed, and scuttled away. Jamison sighed, turning around and being slightly surprised when he saw Mako.

“What?” He asked, hopping towards one of the couches and flopping down on it, crutch leaning on it.

“You okay?”

Jamison shrugged. “It does remind me of me dad and- that’s weird, eh? It just... I guess one way to process it.”

“Yeah.”

He fell silent, staring down at his stump. The skin was still tender and healing, but it was already scarring.

“How do you feel?”

“I still- I can’t process it, mate.” Jamison doesn’t take his eyes off the stump. “Like, I’mma wake up and me arm and leg will be there, like nothin’ happened. Or like it will grow back, like that’s a thing that happens.”
He laughs, in that half-hearted way.

“I ain’t feel it yet. I ain’t realized that it’s gone. And I know that at one point I’ll know, one point I’ll realize it and I will just, I’ll crumble, ya know? And there is nothin’ I will be able to do about it.”

Mako got close to him, hand on his shoulder. “I’ll be here when that happens, and I’ll help you process it.”

He sighed, a soft smile on his face. “When can I get tha’ prosthetics?”

“You need to wait for your skin to heal completely. It'll be more weeks.”

“Well, fuck.” He giggled. Mako kissed the top of his head, and Jamison smiled once again.

“And… tha’ coronation?”

“…They’re taking care of that. It will be in some months, they will wait for you to heal and get used to your prosthetics.”

Jamison looked down at the floor, grumbling. Mako sat down on the couch next to Jamison, hand on his thigh.

“You have plenty of time. Don’t think of it for now. Just worry about healing.”

“Yeah, yeah- I got my own nurse to help me, eh?” He laughed, leaning on Mako’s shoulder with his hand on top of Mako.

Mako smiled, even if he felt something inside of him churn. The remainder of it being his fault did not go away, seeping.

He nodded, and smiled.
Pot Roast

Chapter Summary

“I love you”

Chapter Notes

Jamison obtains few things.

Hello! another chapter!!! I am having so much fun with this. I really appreciate all the support and love tbh i love y'all ok...!!!

OKAY GUYS, i've been asked this a couple of times. What time period does this take place in?

When I started writing this story i didn't have a specific time period in mind. Back with Ugly and the Beast, i was very faithful to that sort of things. This one is... ambiguous. I hope you guys dont mind, but the idea is that its kind of a mesh. Think of how in Final Fantasy there is magic, medieval elements and also technology. think of t that way. Hopefully this answers your questions!!!! the mesh of technology and medieval tropes and stuff was 100% my intention.

Thank you for reading!! I hope y'all like it!!

Mako had just finished putting on his armor when he heard soft noises coming from the room, along with Jamison’s voice. It was the first time he had worn his armor in a while, ever since what had happened. It had been dented and broken, but the blacksmith had done an amazing job to repair it. It looked good as new.

It should be okay if he didn’t wear it, but he felt like a need to it. Jamison had been holed up in his room for a while now, and wouldn’t get out until he got his prosthetics ready. And yet, there was still that need. Maybe just brandish it for today, make himself believe things were back to how they were.

Mako saw his reflection on the mirror, eyes focusing on the scar on his cheek. He sighed. No matter how much he tried to, he would never forget it.

More sound from the other room snapped him out of his thoughts. He stepped inside, as he saw maids placing sheets on the new mattress. Others stood around with armfuls of pillows and more sheets.

Meanwhile Jamison sat on an individual couch. He had slid off it until his spine was bent awkwardly, half his butt hanging off the sofa. He was in pajamas, this time a loose old shirt covering his torso. He had a glass of wine in his remaining hand (who gave it to him…?).

“Heyo, Mako.” He said, lifting the glass lightly, the contents sloshing around. Mako approaching him ready to take the wine away.
“You shouldn’t be-” He cut himself off when he realized just how casual he was being to him in front of the maids. They didn’t seem to care, but the last thing Mako needed was rumors spreading around.

“Relax, mate. It ain’t wine- it’s cranberry juice. I know I can’t drink shit while I’m on meds.”

Mako bit his lip, unsure. Jamison lifted the glass and Mako took it in his huge palms, and took a sip of it. Sure enough, it was juice. Why the hell he was drinking out of a wine glass was his guess.

“It looks good,” Jamison said as if he was reading his mind, straightening up on his seat so he could reach to the glass once again, taking a sip out of the juice.

“Your highness?” The Maid clasped her hands together, smiling ear to ear. “We have finished setting up your quarters, is there anything else your Highness needs?”

“Nah, that’ll be all. Thank ye,” he smiled, dismissing them. They quickly left, and Jamison gulped the last of his juice in one go. “Roight,”

He crammed the glass on the cushion, balancing himself upright ready to test out the new mattress and sheets. Mako offered his hand to help, but Jamison slapped it away.

“I got it,” He hissed, practically hopping the few steps to reach the bed. Once next to it, he jumped into it, rolling himself into his back and spreading his limbs. “Much better.”

He stared up at Mako, suddenly realizing that he was wearing his armor. “Oi, what’s tha’ reason?”

Mako shrugged. “Looks nice.”

“I dunno, mate. It looks better off ya. Anythin’ looks better off ya, ahaha!” he tapped the bed quickly with his palm. “Talking off, why won’t ya take it off, and climb up tha’ bed?”

Mako couldn’t help but let out a chuckle. “You’re awfully happy today.”

“Well, there ain’t no reason tha’ be upset all the time, eh?”

While Mako really liked the fact that Jamison was in a much better mood, he was worried. The sudden shift was slightly worrying to him. Mako himself was starting to get tired of being in that room all day. It was so emotionally exhausting.

“Come on, big guy. Make my day.”

To be honest, at the moment he really didn’t feel like it. He chuckled, patting at his armor. “It took me a while to put this on, I am not taking it off this early.”

Jamison laughed, shifting along with the sheets. “Not feelin’ like it right now, eh? That’s okay, I wasn’t really in tha’ mood last night, either.” He scratched at his skinny belly.

Mako sighed, sitting down in the couch where Jamison was sitting before, first grabbing the glass of wine and putting it aside somewhere else.

“I’m bored,” Jamison blurted out after some minutes of silence. He propped himself up, sitting up on the bed. “I’m losin’ my mind ‘ere.”

“Hmm…” Mako sighed. Jamison wasn’t someone that liked to lay in bed all day, despite his current situation. But he was still supposed to be on bed rest, but he could sympathize with him. Mako himself was starting to get tired of being in that room all day.
“Tha’ coronation… that’s bein’ taken care of, roight?” He asked, his mood shifting. It seemed that Mako wasn’t the only person trying to have everything go back as normal.

“You shouldn’t worry about that. It’s going to be taken care of.”

“Ya keep sayin’ that but-” He hung at the edge of the bed, his legs hanging from it. “How am I not supposed tha’ care about it? I’m gonna become King!”

“Hmm,” Mako huffed, unsure of what to say.

“I don’t think I’m ready for it.”

Mako wanted to tell him to not worry but he knew those were basically empty comforting words. But what else could he say?

“I am sure you will do a good job.”

“Ya lyin’.”

“It is true. I believe you can do it.”

He heard shuffling, and saw how Jamison moved to lay on his side, staring at Mako. “Ya really think so? I ain’t nothin’ like those before me.”

“I told you that’s not necessarily a bad thing. Maybe that’s what this place needs.”

“Roight, I guess…” he turned once again, now his back facing Mako. He sighed, wishing there was something he could say or do so he would feel better. But he understood he had to wait and be there for Jamison.

After all, what else could he do?

There was a knock on the door that surprised both of them. Jamison sat up once again. “Come in,” He loudly exclaimed as Mako stood up. It wasn’t too formal for a bodyguard to just be sitting around.

“Hello, good morning, your Highness.” It was Royal Advisor. Mako hadn’t seen him since the funeral, after the man had assured them that they didn’t need to worry. “And good morning, sir Rutledge.”

“Hey,” Jamison squawked, waving with his hand. “What’s up?”

Mako quickly noticed how Jamison used his normal voice with the man, rather than his ‘elegant’ one. That was odd.

“We have excellent news, sir. Your prosthetics have arrived, and are ready for you to use.”

Mako blinked a couple of times, as Jamison jumped out of the bed in excitement, only to get tangled on the sheets and fall into the mattress. Jamison just chuckled.

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Nurses and doctors were all around the room. Mako thought that they should do this on an actual hospital room instead of Jamison’s room, but what did he know. It was probably for his comfort. The doctor was holding a big metallic box, decorated with intricate patterns.

“These were made by the best engineer in the Kingdom, your Highness. Not only are they functional, but they had been made to look as aesthetically pleasing as possible.”

“Yeah, yeah…” Jamison said with a nervous voice, Mako could tell he was feeling a mix of anxiety and anticipation.

“It will take a while to be able to use them as good as you used your biological limbs, your Highness.”

Jamison bit his lip, but nodded. The doctor proceeded to open the box. The metal shone under the light, bright and powerful. The new limbs laid on top of a velvet cushion inside of the golden box. They were made of silver, with gorgeous patterns on the metal. They replaced everything Jamison lost at the time of the explosion.

“Okay, how does it work?” Jamison said, his fingers tracing the forearm of the silver prosthetic.

“These are designed for easy use, your Highness. It is only necessary for you to put them on.”

“Yeah… yeah, okay.” He looked at the arm, taking it with his hand. He examined it closely, his Adam's apple bobbing as he inspected the metal. It had leather straps at the end to secure to his skin. He sighed, aligning the prosthetic with his stump. Mako could tell that he was shaking slightly he was so nervous.

“Okay,” he finally said as he pushed the prosthetic on. His eyes went wide at the sensation, but Mako couldn’t tell if it was pain, relief or something else.

“Now, you need to strap these into your arm.” She helped him, indicating Jamison how to properly loop the leather belts around his bicep. Once secured, she stepped back. “Attempt to move your finger, as if it was your flesh hand.”

Jamison stared at his artificial hand, his brow furrowing. He gasped slightly as his fingers twitched a little. He moved them around very gently, the fingers slowly coming to life.

“How…?” Mako whispered out too loudly. He had never seen technology like that.

“It- it detects me movements- roight? Like, when I try tha’ move me fingers, the muscles inside of me bicep move, and it detects tha’ movement, so the mechanical fingers are the ones that move.” Jamison stared at his fingers as he wriggled them around.

“That is right. This method is non invasive, so it will not be necessary to perform procedures to connect the prosthetic with the body nerves.”

“Roight- this means I can just put it on and off whenever I want, eh? Amazin’- I’ve heard of this sorta tech, but never put me hands on one. I would love tha’ see the blueprints for this… heh, I ain’t need ‘em. I can probably figure it out by lookin’ at this.”

Mako was amazed at how much Jamison knew about the mechanism of the thing, but also noticed the Doctor was staring down at him, slightly concerned.

“Don’t worry, I ain’t gonna put it apart. Thing is too pretty- I can surely make it out by just lookin’ at it.”
“Your Highness,” her face became less concerned. “How does it feel?”

“It’s… it’s weird. I see ‘em movin’- but it’s weird tha’ not feel it.” He sighed. “Whatever. Let’s try with tha’ leg.”

“Your Highness, you should get used to your hand before-”

“We ain’t got too much time, tha’ sooner I get used tha’ this all, tha’ better for everybody.”

Jamison grabbed the leg with his flesh hand, and it seemed to be the same kind of prosthetic as his arm was. It had belts to strap the metal to flesh, but it seemed a bit more complicated than the arm one. He would have to use both hands.

The explosion took everything just above Jamison’s knee, and the prosthetic would provide them. The Doctor crouched to help strap it in, showing Jamison how to. Once ready she once again stepped back, waiting for Jamison to get used to it.

“Now, carefully-”

He didn’t listen, instead moving his foot, then leg. He wriggled it, and started to do soft kicking motions.

“Feels… odd. Lifeless.” He whispered out, still moving it slightly and changing directions, trying to get used to it.

“You will have to use these for short periods- please your Highness, stop!”

Jamison was already on his feet, balancing himself in an attempt to walk. He almost fell, but Mako managed to catch him before that happened, placing him back into the edge of the bed.

“Your Highness, it is a slow process which you must respect- you can hurt yourself-”

“There ain’t no time! Coronation will be in less than a month, and I gotta learn how to walk on these!” He once again attempted to get up, but Mako put a very heavy hand on his shoulder, pinning him.

Tension was in the air. Everybody stared at both the future King and Bodyguard, not daring to speak of the sheer audacity of the action. How dare he. He was the bodyguard, how dare he. Mako felt his heart on his throat. What would they do now? What were they going to say? What would they-

“Thank you, sir Rutledge.” Jamison chuckled, weakly. “Me memory is so bad I do forget I instructed ya tha’ do everythin’ ye could to keep me safe, eh?” He turned to the doctor, winking while laughing. “Even breakin’ some rules, but hey, I mean, ya know what a cheeky guy I am. It’s tha’ only way to keep me from doin’ something really stupid, eh?”

“Y-yes, your Highness.” Everybody seemed far more relaxed at this, but even so Mako retreated his hand. They all sighed calmly, the tension dissipating from the air.

“Now Doctor, where were we?”
“I’m sorry.”

Mako’s voice was weaker than normal. It was low and kind of sad. Jamison stared at him from the bed, his right prosthetic opening and closing his fist. It was an exercise the doctor recommended him to do sometimes, so of course Jamison was doing it nonstop.

“Eh? What for?”

“For what I did. I forgot there were people around, and-”

“Oh. That.” Jamison signed, but Mako didn’t feel like he was angry at the man. “Mate, I should be tha’ one apologizin’ for that. I’ve been too caught up by this, I ain’t even thought of what we’re gonna do about our situation.”

Mako wasn’t going to fault him for that, considering everything that has happened the past few weeks of course Jamison wasn’t going to think about them being “official”.

“It’s okay. I just forgot-”

“Listen, I wasn’t kidding with what I said that night, roight? I will make it happen, and no one is gonna say nothin’ about it. What are they gonna do? I’ll be tha’ damn King!” He laughed, but sighed at the end of his chuckle as if he remembered just why he was becoming King all of sudden.

What a mess. This isn’t how things were supposed to be at all, and there were just so many things they needed to fix but god if he wanted to ignore it all.

Jamison sighed, shifting on his covers as he started to get off the bed.

“Where-”

“Piss off, I’m takin’ a leak. Ya ain’t gotta take me- I’m a big boy! Ahahaha!” He stepped off the bed, wincing when he attempted to stand.

“Jamie-”

“Piss off! I can do this, I gotta practice!” He took few steps, and seemed to be able to get the hang of it for a couple of small steps. He looked like a small child, re-learning how to walk. His steps were uneven, trying to feel just how strongly he had to press his foot on the ground.

Mako stood up, on guard. He wished Jamison would just listen to the doctor, but at this point it was obvious he just wasn’t going to. So, he just made sure he wouldn’t fall into his face.

It was a very slow process, But Jamison managed to get himself to the bathroom.

“Leave the door open,” Mako called. Jamison laughed, and closed the door even though Mako was not kidding.

He would be lying if he said he wasn’t waiting for the sound of him falling on his ass, but Mako was surprised (And glad) that it never came. Instead, water flushing, and Jamison coming out of the room. “See? No big deal, ya drongo. I can do it meself.”

“Okay,” Mako sighed, giving into Jamison’s personal victory. “How are you feeling?”

“Perfectly fine! Like I didn’t lose a- fuck!” He didn’t step right with his prosthetic, and he lost his footing. Mako was fast enough to catch Jamison before he fell, but it seemed like Jamison was more
embarrassed rather than thankful.

“God damn!” He yelled, trying to regain his footing. He swatted Mako’s hand away, lifting his arms for balance, but he still wasn’t used to his new hand, so it looked weird.

“Fuck, I can’t- Shit!” Jamison lost his balance once again, but Mako was there to pick him up. Jamison winced, and Mako noticed how red the skin was under the belts.

“You overdid yourself.” He whispered, gently picking the young man up.

“I gotta try, otherwise how am I gonna get used tha’ these?!”

“You can hurt yourself. You need to take care of you, too.”

“Gkt,” Jamison growled. He seemed too tired to even fight Mako, so he just let the man take him to the bed.

“Let’s take these off, okay?” Mako traced his finger over the belt.

“Yeah, fine. Okay.” Jamison sighed dramatically, sitting up. He attempted to undo the belt of his leg, but his fingers were not trained yet. He pinched his skin by accident, making a small cut and a bit of blood spilling from it. “Ow!”

“Here,” Mako helped him, undoing the leather belts on his leg. Very gently he pulled the prosthetic off, and he already saw the red skin. He was not used to using it, so it was adapting. Too much use, and Jamison would be hurting himself. Mako already saw the scars angry and pink.

“Ah…” Jamison moaned contently, relief washing over him when the pressure was gone. As much as he didn’t want to admit it Jamison knew that he was overdoing it, but his stubborn personality made him go on. Mako was in love with that, but at the moment he wished he would just stay put for a second.

Next he helped with his arm. His fingers were gentle, carefully unlooping the belts around the muscle. Once again, Jamison sighed in relief when the pressure was gone. Mako grabbed the prosthetics, and put them back into the box. It was late, and it was time to call it a day he figured.

“Thank ye,” Jamison sighed, his fingers rubbing at the stump of his arm. “I really need tha’ get used tha’ these, though.”

“I understand, but you won’t achieve nothing if you hurt yourself.”

“Awh, ye care about me,” Jamison giggled. “Gay.”

Mako couldn’t help but laugh. Whenever he heard Jamison laugh, it was as if everything he did went away. Like things were back to normal.

“It is my job.” Mako laughed, ready to take off his armor. He had like wearing it for one day, but wondered if it was necessary.

“Oi, really? Is it yer job tha’ fuck me stupid, too?”

“It’s a perk. No dental plan, though.”

“What! Ye should quit.” Jamison scooted close to Mako, his cheeks slightly red.

“Who am I going to protect and fuck at the side, though?” Mako fingers caressed Jamison’s hair. He
purred into the touch.

“Maybe a pretty princess, one with long hair and pretty eyes.”

“Your eyes are the prettiest, though.”

Jamison’s eyes widened, smiling silly. “Ya mean it?”

“Yeah.” He scooted on the bed while still wearing the armor. It was a little bit uncomfortable, but he didn’t care. “The prettiest of the kingdom.”

“Well, I am royalty.” He sighed into Mako’s mouth, his cheeks red at the proximity.

“And you’re mine.” Mako closed the gap between them, his lips touching Jamison’s. He still was gentle, his big hands trailing down Jamison’s skinny sides. He could feel his ribs underneath his shirt, his thumb gently pressing them, getting gentle moans out of the young man.

“You’re mine, too.” Jamison sighed into him, pressing his face against Mako’s neck.

So it was going to be one of those nights. Mako didn’t complain, at the moment he was so full of… something. Something soft and lively, that ran through his veins. He was so happy, just for one second he could forget everything.

“Help me here, bud.” He giggled breathless. Mako stood up, beginning the lengthy process to take off his armor. Jamison eyed him, licking his lips at the sight.

The damn thing took too long to take off, however. The moment Mako was free of it, Jamison was lying on his side, propped by his stump. His free hand was already rubbing himself softly, his thumb pressing over his red head. Mako sighed, feeling himself harden as well.

Mako climbed into the bed once again, feeling how comfortable the sheets were on his skin. He pulled Jamison close, his lips already kissing the pale freckled skin. The young man moaned as Mako kissed the skin of his neck, his lips traveling down to his collarbone as his hand cradled his spine. He left a trail of wet kisses on his skin, making Jamison squirm underneath him. The little sounds he was making were going directly to Mako’s crotch.

“What’s the plan, Mako?” he giggled, kissing Mako’s jawline.

“Do you have a specific request?” Mako sighed out, lower lip caressing his chest.

“Not feelin’ up tha’ bein’ fucked, tha’ be honest.”

“Okay…” Mako kept kissing his skin, while he tried to figure out what they could do. He had an idea almost instantly.

“Wait here,” Mako whispered wetly into Jamison’s ear, getting up and making a beeline towards the dresser with the lube. By the time he was back Jamison laid with his thighs spread, his red swollen cock erect and already dripping. His skin had a red blush, sweaty with anticipation. It made Mako’s heart flutter.

“What’s the plan, Mako?” He tried to slur out in a sexy way. He failed, but it was still endearing.

“It’s like fucking, but not actually fucking.” Mako got himself between Jamison’s legs, taking the bottle of lube and coating his fingers with it. He lowered his head, kissing the soft flesh of his inner thighs. Jamison squirmed but made no effort to move away, gasping and moaning at Mako’s hot lips. He started spreading the lube on the flesh of his thighs, and Jamison made a soft sound sound.
“Shhhh,” Mako whispered into his skin, and Jamison seemed to trust him. He placed his head back, moaning loudly at the mixture of soft kisses and lukewarm lube. Mako then coated Jamison’s dick with it, giving it a few slow strokes. His huge thumb pressed at Jamison’s leaking cock, the young man hissing and twitching.

“M-Mako…” he whispered. Mako placed a kiss on the crook of Jamison’s thigh.

The Bodyguard scooted over to Jamison’s side, gently turning the man so his back faced Mako. They spooned for a minute, his tongue tracing circles behind Jamison’s ear.

“Get ready…” He whispered hot, and Jamison let out a whimper. Mako positioned himself, his big cock pressing against the back of Jamison’s thighs. The young man craned his neck to look at it.

“I’ll fuck you between your thighs, so keep them pressed together for me, okay?” he pressed a kiss at his neck. “It’ll feel-”

Jamison couldn’t contain himself, laughing against the sheets. “Ya big softy. I’ve done this already.”

“Really?”

“Back at- at that school. Never fucked no one, didn’t get fucked but- like this- yeah. We- we did this, couple of times.”

“You naughty little thing,” He shoved his cock between Jamison’s legs, bottoming out in one thrust and caressing the underside of Jamison’s dick. The young man squirmed, letting out a breathless moan as he felt great. “You did this before, huh? Someone like you. A prince, doing this kind of things. A man of your pedigree…”

He thrusted again, and Jamison leaned his head back into Mako. Mako’s huge arm looped around Jamison to keep him in place, thrusting in and out his thighs. Every movement made them moan, the sound of flesh slapping together almost as loud as their whimpers and moans.

“What would people think,” Mako huffed, his skin feeling tight as he kept fucking into his thighs. “A commoner like me, fucking you like this? Leaving you like a wreck? What would they say?”

“Let them talk,” Jamison whispered. What Mako intended to be just some sex talk seemed to bring something deep inside him. “They’ll be jealous, of me- they-they want ya, cus ye are beautiful.”

God, fuck. Why did he have to be like this? This is the how he ruined Mako, in the first place. Just being like… like that. What gave him the right?

“I love you,” He whispered into the pillows as Mako fucked into him, moaning breathlessly. The bodyguard heard it, kissing his neck and shoulders. “Fuck- Mako, fuck, I love you, I- I love you, I-”

Mako wrapped his arms around Jamison and brought him as close as he could. He kept fucking him, but it felt personal. It was personal, before. But now, it felt like he was hanging into the world. Hanging to the only thing that mattered.

“I love you too.”

Then, he came. He felt a bit embarrassed, like he was some kind of young man that came with pretty words. But, fuck it. It was true. Somehow that little shit of piece Prince had become his entire world and more. Because of him, he could feel like maybe, just maybe Mako was okay.

“Ah… give me a hand, eh?” Jamison giggled breathless. He realized that he hadn’t come, but
Mako’s spunk was all over Jamison’s torso. Oops.

He gently turned him around, tail trailing down his stomach until he reached his cock. He licked at it, taking the cock into his mouth in one go.

With just one suck Jamison was already coming. He milked him, his tongue lapping at everything the man could give until Jamison was nothing but jelly.

He scooted back to Jamison, looping an arm around him and keeping him close.

“I meant it,” Jamison sighed, his face pressed against Mako chest. Mako smiled, placing a kiss on his forehead.

“Me too.”

---

Before he noticed it Mako had fallen asleep cradling Jamison close. It was the middle of the night, he could tell by how pitch black everything was. Mako heard soft whimpering, and it was then when he realized that he was alone on the mattress.

He got up instantly, his eyes scanning around the dark. He could see the dark tall figure, crumpled at the center of the room.

Mako immediately rushed to turn on the lights, the light bulbs coming up to life.

Jamison laid in the middle of the room, crouched into himself. He was wearing the prosthetics, his limbs messy and red. He somehow put his prosthetics on, the leather wrinkled and hurting his skin.

Mako immediately took them off, and he saw some blood on the leg.

He overdid himself.

“Jamie…”

"Fuck off!" Jamison hissed, shoving Mako away. He grabbed the prosthetics, attempting to put them once again. It only hurt his skin, his red flesh swelling from the extended inexpert use of it. "I- i don't need no fucking help. I can fucking do this myself, thank you."

"Jamie."

"Fuck off! How else am I supposed tha' fuckin' learn?! How else am I gonna keep tha' fuckin' secret from fuckin' everyone?! If- If I don't fucking learn th en I will be even more of a goddamn target!"

"I."

"Shut th... shut tha' fuck up. I just," he abandoned the prosthetics, the metallic limbs lying pathetically at his lap.

“I have to learn," Jamison hissed, fingertips pressing at the stump of his leg. "I fucking... I just-"

Mako wrapped him in a hug, and Jamison tried his hardest to not cry. The joy he was feeling previously was gone, instead leaving him a disgusting emptiness.

The silver prosthetic shone under the light, the specks of blood shining bright.
“...Then you will kneel, here.”

“Oi, like this?”

“Yes, your Highness. You will take the Oath. It isn’t too hard, to just say ‘Yes, I do’ to everything the clergy say.”

“Okay, okay.”

“Then…”

Mako stood with his back to the wall. He paid attention at how Jamison was instructed to conduct the crowning ceremony. It would still be a while, but it was better to start getting ready. The royal advisor was the one instructing Jamison on all the steps needed, carefully helping the young man.

He sighed as he stared. It had been a couple of days since the Prince had gained his mechanical limbs, and he seemed to be doing better at them. However it is still was tricky, and he would slip or not calculate his steps.

“Darn,” Jamison spouted as he almost slipped. “These things are annoyin’ tha’ get used tha’.”
“That is why we must do this training. Normally I wouldn’t suggest it, your Highness, but considering your condition it is better for you to memorize all the movements.”

“Yeah, yeah, I get it.” The young man sighed, staring at his mechanical fingers. They glistened under the daylight. “How long will tha’ entire process take?”

“It will be lengthy, your Highness. About two hours, and that is not counting the celebration afterwards.”

“Two hours? I gotta have these things for two hours? I can barely stand half hour!” He touched his suit with his mechanical fingers, as if he was relearning how to move. “I really gotta get used to these.”

“Don’t overdo yourself, your Highness. The last thing we need is your wounds getting worse.”

“Yeah, well,” Jamison giggled, getting close to a table near them. He grabbed the bottle in it, opening it and about to take a drink from it. “We ain’t got much time, eh?”

Mako tensed up as he saw Jamison take a swig out of bottle. The young man noticed, sighing and waving the bottle on the air towards his bodyguard.

“Relax, it ain’t alcohol- it’s sparkling cider. No alcohol. See?”

“Mm,” Mako nodded as Jamison just took another swig. Not very royal of him to do so.

“There will be a big celebration afterwards, with food and-”

“No offense, but I ain’t really in tha’ mood for parties. Considering what happened last time! Ahaha!” He took another swig out of the bottle while the other man tensed. It also made Mako uncomfortable, but who was he to complain about how Jamison was handling his own turmoil?

“Is it really necessary for us tha’ be there?”

“It is… highly encourage, your Highness. It is the celebration of your crowning.” The man, Gabriel, seemed to be understanding, but his job was to guide Jamison through the event. “There will be maximum security. The ballroom has been repaired, too.”

“Eh… well, if I gotta…” He looked straight at Mako, and winked. “I at least got me bodyguard tha’ protect me, eh?”

Mako said nothing. This Royal Advisor, Victor, seemed to be more relaxed than everybody else in his own way, treating Jamison like he was part of family and yet still formal. Jamison didn’t seem to mind him ever since he presented himself at the hospital, and that was okay for Mako.

“Okay,” He placed the bottle on the table once again, stretching his muscles. “Let’s get back to it, yeah?”

“Yes, your Highness. From the top…”

---

Who would have thought that a simple rehearsal would be so tiring. It was emotionally exhausting to
see Jamison struggle with his new limbs, but Mako felt calmer when he noticed Jamison had gotten better at using his prosthetics. That kid was very stubborn, but he was worried he was overdoing it.

They arrived to their chambers once again, Jamison slightly limping all over the way. He would curse every five steps or so, inspecting his leg and stomping a little, still trying to gauge how much strength he needed to put in every step. “Damnit,” He would shake his leg, and make some small steps. “Ugh.”

“Need help?”

“Nah, just- give me a sec, eh?”

Mako opened the door leading to the bedroom and Jamison hobbled inside. He took some short steps, then long as he kept staring at his feet. “This is so weird.”

“You are doing great, Jamison.” Mako stepped aside as the young man kept walking, until he jumped on the bed. He sighed contently, rising the pants on his right leg as he started to unscrew it.

“It ain’t hurt as much, either.” Once he finished unstrapping it, he placed the leg next to him and reclined on the bed.

“Excuse me,” The royal advisor knocked on the door. Jamison propped himself up on his elbows looking at the man.

“Hey, what’s up?”

“I do not wish to disturb you, your Highness. But tomorrow we will have rehearsals as well, unless of course, you do not feel well.” He motioned to the prosthetic next to him.

“Ah, I’ll be fine. Ye don’t need to worry about it.” He giggled.

“Very well. Have a nice evening.” He turned to Mako and bowed his head a little before he left.

“Night, Victor!”

Once the man was away, Mako closed the door. He sighed as Jamison seemed to play with his right hand, instead of taking it off like his leg.

“Did you know him before?” Mako asked. He was curious, after all it seemed like Jamison was far more familiar with the man.

“Yeah- ever since I was a tyke. Honestly, He is like an uncle- well, one that ain’t tryin’ tha’ steal tha’ throne off me! Ahaha!”

That explained it, then. Mako felt comfort knowing that there was still some semblance of familiarity for the young man. He was still worried, though. His mood seemed to shift from being calm to being a ball of anxiety. And today seemed to be stressful for him, as well.

“Hey,” Jamison called softly, still lying on his bed. The man also seemed tired, but Mako could tell he was far more exhausted of staying indoors all the time. “What’s eatin’ ya?”

So many things, if Mako was honest. The guilt of everything that has happened still ate away at him, and it was impossible to ignore. He would have to live with it forever, Jamison’s state would be a constant reminder for the rest of his life.

“I’m worried you are overdoing it.” He said as he pointed with his thick finger at Jamison’s
prosthetic.

“Hey, relax. This one is a bit easier than’ me leg.” He wiggled his fingers around, perplexed. “It’s so weird. I can’t gauge me strength.”

Mako reached over the prosthetic, taking it on his hand. His huge palm was big on it, his thumbs caressing on the decorations of it.

Jamison sighed softly. Mako knew why. He was no stranger to how it made him feel, to kiss his hand. To kiss the soft flesh of it with his huge lips, thumbs tracing circles on the back of it. Mako got the metal close to his face, and kissing the smooth silver. It was cold and hard.

“I ain’t feel a thing…” Jamison lamented. His metallic fingers scooped Mako’s jaw, his thumb pressing against huge lips. “I can’t feel at all.”

The young man swallowed, face looking away from Mako, lamenting the loss of flesh. Mako used his free hand to cradle his head, his palm cradling the metal hand against his own face and feeling it’s harshness.

“It’s you. That is what matters.”

Jamison stroked Mako’s cheek, but his fingers pulled at his skin a little too harsh. He flinched a little, and the Prince cursed softly.

“Shit- sorry mate. I can’t tell me strength with these.”

Mako giggled. He didn’t mind a bit. Jamison stared at him lovingly, glazed eyes fixated on his face as his mechanical fingers traced over his cheek, his jawline, his lips. The metal digits landed on Mako’s scar from the explosion. The fingers very carefully traced circles over the damaged skin. Jamison couldn’t feel the texture of the smooth, healed over scar tissue, but Mako felt the coolness of the fingers on his face.

“Sorry.”

“For what?”

“For… for this, Mako. Yer face…”

“It’s okay. I don’t care. Do you?”

“No. I don’t. Ye’re…” Jamison sighed, as if he couldn’t believe what he was seeing. “Ye’re flawless, mate.”

“So are you.”

Jamison pressed a little bit too harshly, but Mako knew it wasn’t his intention. He was still getting used to the fingers. He smiled at the sensation.

“I ain’t hurtin’ ya, right?”

“No, you aren’t.” He smiled, his thumb sweeping around Jamison’s cheek. “You could never hurt me.”

“And ya would never hurt me either, roight?” Jamison sighed out.

Mako leaned over, kissing him deeply in the lips. It was soft and warm. Jamison’s arms wrapped
around his thick neck as he let himself being taken away. Mako lips brushed against his jaw, pressing himself close to Jamison in a lovely, warm embrace.

“I would never hurt you, Jamison.”

Oh

If he only knew

But yet

Mako closed his eyes, cradling him close and hoping to wash his sins away.

Chapter End Notes

Oh.
Steak Tartare

Chapter Summary

The following weeks went out, fortunately, without a hitch.

Chapter Notes

It is time for the coronation.

Hello! I didn't think i was actually going to finish this chapter tonight, but oh here we go, ahaha.
It is like 1 am so I don't have much to say, apart that I love y'all and thank you for your support!!!

Thank you for reading and I hope you like this chapter!!!! Thank you!!

The following weeks went out, fortunately, without a hitch. Every day was full of the same routine- Prince Jamison rehearsed the crowning, would practice walking around and using his prosthetic and then rest. It had been an excruciating routine, Jamison getting more and more antsy at having to stay in his room, and relearning just how to walk.

But Jamison was stubborn. Mako got to see how he would force himself to walk until he bled, would force himself to write with his hand again and again until he got it right. It was equal parts admirable and horrifying. Mako wanted to beg him to stop, to take it easy, to please take care of himself but Mako was not a good talker. Not only that, but no matter what he said Jamison would just not give up.

He loved that about him.

It was time, now. The weeks had passed, and it was the day of the coronation. It was the day Jamison would become King.

“Okay,” Jamison said to himself as he inspected his figure on the mirror, making sure his clothes were in place. He adjusted his gloves that hid his hands, and looked at the legs of his pants. You couldn’t tell that he was wearing prosthetics, just according to the plan. “Alright.”

“Nervous?” Mako asked. He was donning his normal armor- they had suggested him wearing an elegant outfit as well, but considering the last time that happened Mako rather wear his uniform in case something happened.

Which he hoped it wouldn’t. Both his ex-partners were dead, and there hadn’t been any incident in the past weeks after that, but Mako still couldn’t feel like he could let his guard down too easy. What if something happened and he wasn’t ready? What if it killed Jamison? He just couldn’t take the risk.

“Is there appropriate security? There needs to be guards at every corner, we need-”
“Sir Rutledge, I can assure you that we’ve taken care of every measure in regards of security for today’s event.” Victor replied calmly at Mako’s questioning. “We’ll make sure nothing-”

“That’s what you all thought last time. And look at what happened.”

His words were dry, and perhaps he went too far considering his “official” position. But Victor simply nodded- he understood Mako’s worries.

“I understand. Security has been tripled. We will make sure nothing happens.”

They better, or Mako was going to kill them all.
Funny how he felt so entitled of Jamison’s well being, considering, well, everything.

“It’ll be okay,” Jamison said as he finished adjusting his clothes, turning around to face his bodyguard. “I got ya after all, eh?”

Mako made a very small nod. He could tell Jamison was nervous by the way his fingers shook. His clothing was regal, a military jacket with golden decorations and white pants. Fit for a coronation.

“Okay, then. Are we ready?” Jamison asked to Victor, the man nodding.

“Yes, your Highness. We are ready to start.”

“Okay,” Jamison sighed, patting his mechanical hand. “Let’s get this over with.”

---

The ceremony took place in the church the palace had sticking in one side. Mako didn’t even know there was a church, the castle was so massive. It was huge and beautiful, with stained windows with gorgeous silhouettes that casted light down to them.

A priest stood, chanting words and reciting from a book. Other priests stood at the sides of the main one, staring and chanting as well. Jamison was in front of them on one knee, as he listened. Mako wasn’t paying attention to what was being said, his mind was focused on Jamison himself and on their surroundings. He was alert for everything that could constitute as a threat.

“Will you to your power cause Law and Justice, in Mercy, to be executed in all your judgments?”

“I will.”

Mako stood at the side of it all, with a good view of Jamison and the priests. Everybody was fixated on him, and Mako felt so strange. He wanted to say he was proud, but he wished this hadn’t happened. The circumstances of it all were so abhorrent.

“All this I promise to do. The things which I have here before promised, I will perform, and keep. So help me God.”

He didn’t quite catch what Jamison was promising to do, but it was probably stuff about Justice. The cape Jamison was wearing was big, trailing behind him. It had a fluffy white section, and the rest was silky red. Fit for a King.

Mako couldn’t keep attention at the rest of it. He saw the motions once again, like he did several
times before when it was just a rehearsal. He honestly wished it would be over soon, so Jamison wasn’t so exposed. But he would be King now, this would be his life now—being exposed to everything. Mako just had to be there for him.

He didn’t realize when it was done. He only knew when he saw Jamison stand proudly, oversized crown on his head and specter on his hand.

He was now King.

---

The consecutive celebration was…massive. It was even bigger than the Winter ball had been. It took place in the same ballroom, elegantly fixed to the point where you couldn’t tell the place exploded some weeks before. Everywhere he walked Jamison had his crown and scepter with him, his long cape trailing behind. Mako stood close by, looking at every interaction he had with the guests. Ambassadors, political figures that Mako didn’t recognize were all congratulating Jamison but offered condolences due to the circumstances of his coronation.

It was the right thing to do.

“Excuse me your Highness, what are your thoughts about the current political climate between our neighbor kingdom?”

“Your Highness, how do you plan on dealing with those pesky revolutionaries at north?”

“Why, your Highness. What are your thoughts on boosting the economy for the nobility of the Kingdom? Do you have any ideas on how to tackle that situation?”

It made Mako worried the fact that these people would launch politically loaded questions at Jamison as if they were random commontalk. The way they giggled when they talked about those “pesky villagers”, or the way they chuckled whenever they mentioned how they wanted to raise taxes so they could get more money out of it—

Mako gulped, tuning it all out. His eyes focused on Jamison, who would give fake smiles he recognized so much and would give strong answers that would shut them up. He was different from all of them, different from those blue blooded animals that cared for naught but their own money.

“My apologies, but all of these topics are far too complicated to just talk here in the middle of a celebration, are they not?” Jamison smiled, his white teeth showing a readiness to bite anyone’s head off.

Oh, how he loved him. The way he made those blue bloods squirm uncomfortable was a sight that made Mako want to kiss his jaw.

“Here is hope you reign will be longer than your father’s.”

Mako had to swallow the urge to roll his eyes when he heard the Duke’s voice. Jamison smiled sweetly, however.

“I do hope that I will be able to continue his job in protecting our Kingdom.” His voice spilled venom, and Mako knew Jamison wanted to punch him in the throat. “I hope we can set aside our
differences so we can work together to bring harmony to our land, uncle.”

“Oh, aren’t you so above it all? You think you are better than everything.” The Duke hissed, but it seemed he noticed that they were in a very public place, so he stepped back. “Enjoy your reign, your Highness. Be careful it does not end too fast.”

He left, and Jamison sighed softly.

“When the hell is he going to leave this damn place? He’s been ‘ere for too long…” He whispered softly, and Mako was the only one that heard. Hopefully after this they would get rid of the man for a while. At least there wasn’t a fist fight this time, as much as Mako wished there was.

“I’m tired,” Jamison sighed once again, as he walked greeting people. “How long till it ends?”

“More hours.”

“Ugh, can’t I just disappear? Me leg and arm are hurtin’…” Mako could tell since some minutes ago how Jamison started to limp a little.

“It is your own party, I don’t think you can just leave like that.”

“I’m tha’ King, I should do whatever the f- er, whatever I want.”

Mako chuckled softly at this.

The night kept going, greeting people and answering questions. People danced as well, and Jamison would have participated as well if it wasn’t for the fact that he had his prosthetics, and hadn’t even tried dancing. They managed to excuse this by declaring that the new King was still in recuperation and could not do too much physical effort.

Many beautiful women danced with their elegant dresses. Women that were daughters of men in power, women from other Kingdoms.

“They’re my bride prospects,” Jamison pointed out to Mako as they saw them dancing elegantly. “I’m supposed tha’ marry one of ‘em. Someone from another Kingdom, to unite tha’ lands. Or someone in power, so I can have even more power.” He chuckled, as if it was a game. “But it ain’t happening.”

“Hmm.” Mako couldn’t help but mutter.

“I’ll deal with it, don’t worry about it.”

Mako was fixated on those pretty women dancing, beautiful dresses swirling around. No matter how much he was in that world Mako felt like he was never going to understand it.

More hours passed, more greetings, more dancing until it finally ended. The King had been excused and escorted through the hallways by his personal bodyguard, sighing as he dragged the cape behind him.

“Beautiful ceremony,” Jamison said. “I was nervous, but it was just repeatin’ what we went through weeks ago.”

“Hmm.” Mako felt exhausted in several ways.

“I still can’t believe it happened! I mean… Can ye?”

“Yeah. Yeah, yer right. I’m just… I’m too tired to figure out that it happened at all, aha!” He patted the crown at his head. “But I got plenty of time tha’ figure it out.”

“Your father would be proud.” Mako blurted out. He supposed it was the truth.

“Yeah… I guess. Yeah, he would be.” Jamison sighed tiredly as they reached their room, Mako opening it with the key on his pocket and opening it, letting Jamison enter first. “Thank ye, mate.”

He closed the door with the key behind him, when he turned Jamison was staring down at the scepter in his hands. It was elegant, made of gold and beautiful gems. He sighed as he passed his fingers through the surface of the gems.

“When I was a tike, I always wanted tha’ play with this. But me Dad said that nah, I had tha’ wait. Till I was old.” He let the scepter fall into the carpeted floor as if it was useless garbage. “I don’t want it anymore.”

“Jamie-”

“I don’t want this,” He took his crown and let it fall uselessly as well. It bounced on the floor before it kept in place next to the scepter. “I don’t want any of this.”

“It’ll be okay.”

“No. No it won’t. Ya heard them all there!” He turned, his cape dragging behind. “Ya heard how they all talk about everyone! How they all just- those are human lives! Those are people they sneer and talk about like they are just assets and animals!” He walked up to Mako as he started undoing his coat. “I ain’t becomin’ one of ‘em.”

“You are not. You are not like them, Jamie. You are better. And that’s why you will be a good King.”

“The entire system is messed up.” He placed his hands on Mako’s gut. “I’ll fix it. I’m gonna fix it all.”

“You need to rest. It has been a tiring day. How are your leg and arm feeling?”

“I’m fine,” He hugged Mako, his arms not being able to reach to the back the man was so massive. “A little sore, but fine.”

“Good. You need to rest.”

“Yeah, fine.”

Mako leaned over, to give him a kiss on the forehead. Jamison leaned into it, sighing softly and with love. Mako let him be, going to his own room to start taking off his armor. He was far too tired to think about what Jamison had said, or what would happen in the future.

After he finished putting his armor in its respective place and being only in his underwear, he heard a soft voice calling from the other room.

“Oh, my bodyguard…”

Mako recognized that tone of voice and quickly his tiredness was replaced by lust. With gusto he walked over to the other room, and Jamison was lying naked on his bed and without prosthetics. Well, almost naked apart from the elegant cape that was tied around his shoulders.
“You don’t have a problem wearing that while naked?” Mako pointed out, remembering the mattress incident some weeks ago.

“Brand new, mate. I asked. More elegant and more modern than me dad’s- so no worries about that.”

Well, fair enough.

“I am your King now, you know. Ya gotta do everythin’ I say.” He smiled, his cheeks reddening as he stroked himself. Jamison’s cock was already hard and red between his legs.

“Really? What is it that your Highness wants me to do?”

“Ugh, never mind, don’t call me that. Feels odd.” Jamison scratched his belly lazily. “Just… get here. Undress and get on tha’ bed, on yer back.”

Mako chuckled as he pulled down his underwear. He now stood naked in front of his King, stroking his cock lazily. Jamison patted the surface of the bed, rolling off it for Mako to lay comfortable on top of it. He laid on his back, still half erect.

“Don’t move,” Jamison whispered, sweet as honey. “I’ll make ya feel good.”

Mako closed his eyes as he felt Jamison’s hand softly taking him on his palm. He stroked slowly, his lips kissing at Mako’s jawline. The older man raised his hand to touch Jamison and bring him close, but Jamison stopped.

“No touchin’ big guy,” He giggled. “I am tha’ boss for tonight, got it?”

“Yes,” Mako breathed out. Jamison giggled as he continued to stroke him softly. Mako swallowed moans as Jamison did his work. He felt the skinny man climbing on top of his belly, the soft cape behind him and caressing him on his skin. Mako opened his eyes to see Jamison propped up on his gut, rutting against him.

“I just- I just need tha’ relax a little, eh” He smiled, getting into position to let himself sink into Mako. The tip of Mako’s cock rubbed at Jamison hole, something that made both of them moan. Mako could tell Jamison was slick, having already prepped himself open for his lover. “I just want tha’ make ye feel good, too.”

Mako smiled at that, and at the feeling of Jamison slowly sitting on him. He felt the hot tightness of Jamison’s insides, slick and gentle. He leaned his head back to savour the taste, his fingers gripping the soft sheets underneath him as he felt the twitchiness that was his lover.

“Ah,” Jamison whispered after being flush with Roadhog, jerking his hips forward and moaning loudly. Mako bit his lip, resisting his urge to grip at Jamison. He looked so good, his belly tight with his intrusion, lips parted open and cape around his thin frame. It made him look like a King. God, it made him look like even more than that. The glow of his skin as he rode him, the delicious sounds he made with every single movement.

Oh God, he wanted to touch him. He wanted to grip him tightly and close, to hug him and keep him close forever. He wanted to let him know he was more they all would be, more than those blue blooded idiots that didn’t care for nothing. He just wanted to let him know he was better than them, and would always be. That he was going to be there for him. Oh, he wanted to touch him so.

He sighed, and Jamison felt him.

“What’s up?” Jamison giggled, his hair sticking to his sweaty forehead.
“Please…” Mako looked at him with adoration in his eyes. “I- I want to touch you.”

This surprised Jamison. It took him some seconds to answer he was so touched. “Ye can touch me.”

Mako’s hands shot up to Jamison’s hipbones, pressing and feeling the skin. His skin was like a drug to him, it felt like it was on fire. Like every part of Jamison’s being was nothing but fire. The Cape moved along with him with every movement.

His big hand wrapped on Jamison’s back, pushing the young man into his gut to keep them close. Jamison let him, burying his face on Mako’s big chest as the older man started fucking into him. He felt his hips twitching in pleasure, close to the edge. The wide cape was now covering both of them like a sheet, the silk tickling his naked skin.

“Oh, fuck.” Jamison said before he came, mouth open against Mako’s sweaty chest. Mako rode him out of it, thrusting into the man quickly as he reached his own climax soon. He kissed Jamison in the mouth as he milked himself, feeling the waves of pleasure overwhelm him.

They were oversensitive, still together. Mako wrapped his arms around Jamison, tipping them to the side so now they were both on the mattress. He disengaged from a limp Jamison, who just sighed as he felt the separation.

“Thank ye…” He chuckled softly. “I needed that.”

“I needed it too.” He gave him a soft peck on the lips. “You need to take this off.”

“Can’t- one hand!” Jamison laughed as he raised his stump. “Give me a help?”

Mako chuckled as he did so, unwrapping the cape from Jamison’s shoulders.

“Oh, no.” Jamison said from his place, and Mako was confused. The young man pointed at one spot on the cape, where cum had gotten into.

“Oh, damn.” Mako reacted. Jamison reached over it and looked at it.

“Let me clean it up,” Mako took it once again, stepping off the bed and into the sink. He ran the cold water into the cape, cleaning the semen off it. He didn’t expect to completely clean it but he hoped it was good enough so the maids couldn’t tell it was cum.

“Well,” Jamison laughed from his bed as Mako inspected the wet cloth. “If that ain’t good luck, I don’t know what is.”

Mako looked at it, and he couldn’t help laugh at the absurdity that was his life in that current moment.

But, despite everything, he wouldn’t change it for anything.
After the crowning, things were a little hectic. Jamison was now King, and while the coronation had been nice and elegant there were still bureaucratic processes that needed to take place. Things to sign. People to talk to.

Victor guided him through every step making the process way easier, but even so it was still tedious to Mako.

“Okay, that is dealt with.” Victor rubbed his old leathery hands together, picking up the documents Jamison had just signed. The young man sighed, scratching his chin tiredly. “Hopefully, this is the last piece of paper you had to sign for the moment, your Highness.”

“So, what’s next?” Jamison said as he lazily rubbed his eyes.

“I have arranged the meeting with some noblemen you have to meet. Princes and Kings from the adjacent Kingdoms, so you can get to meet each other and your goals.”

“I already met ‘em before, at tha’ party- I know who they are. Is that really necessary?”

“Yes, your Highness. This will be a political gathering. It might seem unnecessary, but it's mandatory.”

“Yeah, I guess…” He sighed, standing up and cracking his back on the process.

“The reunion will take place in His Highness Burgundy Castle. Departure will be tomorrow, the trip will take one day and a night in carriage. I will accompany you along the way, along with your bodyguards and more security.”

“Awh, guess we gotta pack! Aha!” Jamison said, a pang of tiredness on his voice. Mako could tell that he was genuinely excited, but still tired nonetheless. It was going to be a long trip, but perhaps being somewhere else for a while would be a distraction for the young King.
That night as soon as Jamison got to his room he marched to the bed and threw his body into it. He groaned against the silky sheets, rolling over into his back and putting both hands underneath his head.

“I am so bored.”

“Mmm,” Mako hummed, closing the door behind him with the key. As much as Mako agreed, and as much as he wanted to lay next to Jamison they needed to get their things ready for the upcoming trip.

“It’s all sign this, sign that- and it ain’t even nothin’ important. Just stuff to make tha’ legal transition and stuff!” He sighed deeply. “At least we gotta get out of tha’ castle for a while.”

“You’ll get to do King things soon, I hope. This is just the transition.”

“Roight.”

“Come on, we need to get everything ready for the trip.”

Jamison groaned but got up, going towards his giant wardrobe. It was like another room altogether, very similar to the one where they have been dressed by the royal designer before. It had numerous elegant clothes, all fit for Jamison.

“Aight, let’s see. What do you think I’ll look handsome in?” He grabbed a velvety coat from the rack, placing it in front of himself. “Maybe somethin’ like this? Make ‘em go, oh goodness! I can’t believe tha’ new King is so handsome!” Jamison laughed.

Mako jiggled, crossing his arms. “Rather see you in nothing at all, your Highness.”

“Oh!” He placed the coat on the rack once again, then placing his hands on his hips and cocking his pelvis a bit. “Ain’t ya bold!”

He grabbed a navy blue coat from the rack, his fingers caressing the golden decorations. “Would ye imagine that? Tha’ King is naked! The scandal of the century!”

“Acturally,” Mako got close to Jamison, who let the expensive coat fall to the carpeted floor. “I rather not. I don’t want them to know how you look like naked.”

“Oh, a little possessive, are we?” Jamison giggled, biting his lip while smiling. His cheeks were already reddening.

“You know,” Mako whispered, his face nuzzling against Jamison’s cheek. He breathed hot against his ear. “I should bite your neck, leave a big mark there. Let them know who you belong to.” He kissed the meat between his ear and jaw, feeling the young man shudder under his touch. “Let them know who the King belongs to.”

Jamison said nothing, instead just jiggling like a lovestruck fool. Mako nipped gently at his earlobe, smiling when he felt Jamison’s knees go weak. He ran his hands up and down his lithe frame, feeling how Jamison’s fingers were already caressing his sides softly.

This was nice.

“Come on, we really need to get ready.” He said, kissing Jamison’s jaw.

“Aw, fine. But then we can have some fun, eh?”
“Sure,” Mako patted his shoulder, letting go of him to get closer to the rack of clothes. “I still like your clothes better on the floor, though.”

He could hear Jamison laughing loudly behind him, a smile creeping on his face.

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The sun had started to rise when they started the trip in the carriage. Jamison, Mako and Victor were traveling inside of the elegant cabin. The cabin was a red color, golden decorations on its surface. It looked expensive and elegant, big enough to house the three of them comfortably for the entire trip.

The inside was furnished with white cloth, the seats were big and white, sturdy enough to hold Mako’s weight, and comfortable to sit on. It was very elegant compared to the last carriage Mako had been on about a decade ago, it didn’t have a ceiling and it was made of questionable materials. This was on another level, however. The Carriage itself seemed the size of a small room. They were surrounded by more guards on horses through the entire trip. At first, Jamison had stared to the outside of the window, looking at the changing surroundings. He soon got bored, sitting next to Mako and picking at the threads of his coat.

“How long did ya say this trip was gonna take?” He sighed, crossing his legs. Mako tapped his own thigh as he stared outside.

“We should be arriving tomorrow morning, your Highness.” Victor replied. “We won’t stop until we get there.”

“Will be hell.” He replied, sighing. “Ya know who is gonna be there?”

“King Burgundy and his wife, and their children. Duchess Estella will be there, as well. King Leopold should be there… the rest aren’t necessities, but like to be in those type of reunions as well. Your uncle, the Duke will be there-”

“Oh come on!” Jamison sighed as he sprawled his arms in annoyance. “Tha’ guy just left tha’ castle and ye say I gotta see ‘im again?! Can’t I get a break?!”

“I am aware of everything that is happening with him. However, we do not have any concrete proof that he is behind your assassination attempts, so we cannot do nothing for now.”

“I’m tha’ bloody King, can’t I just exile him or somethin’?”

Victor made a pained face. They all knew what was really happening, but they were entirely sure, and they could unleash a war if they weren’t careful. They didn’t say a thing, feeling the thick anxiety in the air.

“...I get it, I know.” Jamison said solemnly. “Can’t do a thing. I know. Gotta wait till tha’ right time.”

“I will be there for whatever you need, your Highness.” Mako said softly. Jamison looked at him, smiling and nodding. It was such a small gesture from Mako, but it seemed to get the job done. Victor nodded, approving of Mako’s encouragement.

Mako was getting already anxious thinking on how long the trip would be. He didn’t even know how Jamison would be able to stomach being still in such a tiny room for so long. At one point, the
young man sighed as he reached for his pocket, pulling out a small rubber ball. He squeezed it gently with his prosthetic hand, then applying a bit more of pressure.

“Doctor said might help me figure out me strength on me new hand,” He explained to Mako as he continued to squeeze. “It’s still weird.”

Mako was about to say something about it, but he remembered the other’s man presence in the carriage. Victor was reading a book, thick reading glasses perched on his thick nose. It didn’t seem like he was paying any attention to them, but even so- it was better to not risk it.

It pained him, to be so close to Jamison but unable to touch him. He wanted to congratulate him for having such a fast recovery, for being able to walk without a limp. But instead he swallowed it, looking outside of the window as they traversed the path. The route they were traveling through was supposedly a secured one. It went through the woods, until it crossed the border and into the next Kingdom. Easy.

Mako sighed, his mind occupied by the woods outside. Winter had just passed, the snow slowly melting away to let Spring. The fields would be full of beautiful flowers and colors, Mako could already smell the pollen in the air. He was deep in thought when he felt something soft at his side. Mako turned his head around and saw how Jamison had fallen asleep and slumped on Mako’s side.

At first he panicked a little, his gaze jumping to Victor. The old man had fallen asleep as well, his book abandoned in his lip and head lolling low on his chest. Mako took a relaxing breath, looking down at Jamison. He raised his thick finger, very softly caressing the man’s jaw. He felt his belly warmth when Jamison just nuzzled against him, asleep. To help him sleep easier, he closed the drape on the window, reaching over to the other side of the carriage carefully, and closing it as well, making the inside of the room dark. Perhaps this trip wouldn’t be so bad, Mako thought as he started to fall asleep himself.

He didn’t dream, but it was comfortable. His face was pressed next to the window, on the comfortable cushioned wall. He could feel his body relax, and it felt nice. Mako woke suddenly from his relaxed nap when he felt the carriage slow down. He looked around him, and both Victor and Jamison were still asleep.

Weird- he didn’t feel like much time passed. He heard muffled sounds on the outside, and some choked gasps. Something was going on. Something really bad.

Mako stiffened as he heard the wailing of a horse. It woke up both Jamison and Victor, who gasped and stared around in horror. Mako put a finger in front of his lips indicating both of them to be quiet, his other hand traveling to the hilt of his sword. Silence. He couldn’t hear a thing from outside for several seconds. His muscles were tense, beads of sweat rolling down the back of his neck. He bit his lip, trying to guess from what side they were going to attack first. If they attacked his side, he would be ready. If they attacked Jamison’s Side…

Just as he was thinking his strategy the window next to Jamison was broken from the outside, hands roughly slipping through and grabbing at Jamison’s arm, attempting to pull him out of the carriage. Jamison gasped in surprise as he was quickly pulled, but Mako was just as quick. He grabbed his torso and pulled him close, ripping him from their attacker’s grasp. The hands retreated, but as soon
as they did Mako felt the window on his side being broken as well, a hand trying to pull at anything.

Mako grabbed the hand, pulled it inside until the attacker’s face was inside the carriage and then punched him right in the face. He felt something crack under his knuckles and blood was already starting to spill from his nose. Mako pushed him outside, as the only door, which was on his side was starting to being pulled from the outside.

“Ask from the windows!” Mako shouted at them, kicking the door open.

It opened, but didn’t actually broke. It made the attackers stumble backwards, as Mako stepped quickly outside and closed the door immediately, securing Jamison and Victor. Now he could focus on the attackers.

There was the man he just punched lying on the grass, unconscious and bleeding. Apart from him where other four men, covered in leather armor; their faces were masked, only their eyes visible. They were holding swords already covered in blood, and Mako could see bows on their back. He could see the corpses of the horses and the guards at the corner of his eye.

Assassins.

“We are here for the King,” The one closest to him said, sword in the air. It dripped blood. “Step aside, and we will forgive your life.”

Oh, what a funny joke. It took Mako a lot of willpower to not laugh right there.

“Over my dead body.”

“As you wish.”

They ran at him at the same time as Mako unsheathed his sword, lifting it above him to block the frontal attack from one of them. Other two attacked from his side, but Mako swirled around to block one, elbowing the one behind him in the face. The fourth one leaped and tried to attack him from above.

Mako lifted his fist and punched him in the gut. The man stumbled to the floor, cradling his stomach as the other three got ready for another attack, running in circles away from Mako. They were readying their bows and shot at him.

He just had enough time to throw himself into ground, the arrows landing just behind him and sticking to the wooden door of the carriage.

He bit his lip, quickly rolling over as more arrows shot at him. He kept rolling away, using the first opportunity he had to leap up, his sword in hand. However, not one of them was on sight. His gut went cold when he realized he let the carriage alone.

Mako dashed towards it as fast as he could, feeling his heartbeat on his ears. His harsh breathing echoed through his body.

There was no one outside of the carriage, he positioned himself in front just as four arrows made their way towards him.

One sunk just above the window.
Other lodged itself just next to it.
Another arrow struck Mako on his shoulder, in the unprotected meat just between his armor plates.

The final one grazed Mako’s cheek, making it’s way towards the inside of the carriage through the broken window. He heard a faint gasp as it landed.

Mako ignored the arrow on his skin, immediately turning to ask Jamison if he was okay.
Yet the moment he turned around he felt something burning at his arm, pulling him away. Mako looked down to see a chain looping around his arm, and pulling him. Another chain looped around his other arm, pulling him to the other side. From behind, another chain looped around his neck, the attacker pulling hard. His windpipe was being crushed, as they tugged hard until Mako was thrown into his back harshly against the grass. They pulled at him like he was an animal, ready to be butchered.

The fourth person was quickly making his way towards the carriage, sword in hand to kill Jamison. Mako roared loudly, his arm muscles bulging as he pulled hard at the chains binding his arms. He pulled so hard the attacker at his right was dragged in the air, letting go of the chain. Mako threw the chain at his left, using it as a whip to slash the attacker on his left at the face. The man bled, letting go of his chain, hands in his face immediately.
With the chains still looped around his arms, Mako used them as whips to hit the attacker trying to get inside the carriage. He hit him from the back harshly, the leather opening along with his skin. The man hollered as Mako got up, but the chain tied to his neck was still there.

“Off, pig!” The man yelled as he tugged at the chain. Mako grabbed the chain with his hands, yanking it harsh along with the man. He dangled on the air, his feet attempting to kick at Mako until the bodyguard placed his huge palm on the man’s neck.
He felt delight when he saw the terrified look on his face just before he snapped his neck in a swift movement. He let the corpse fall in the ground, getting his sword and quickly slashing the throat of one of the assassins that was already readying his sword.

Mako felt a slash at his abdomen- not too deep or dangerous, but infuriating nonetheless. He turned to see the one he slashed in the face, the meat pink and angry. Mako roared as he stabbed the man in the chest, deep until the blade came through his back. He pulled his sword, letting the man choke on his own blood as he puked it on the grass.
He turned at the carriage, but it was still closed. The one he had struck on the back was already running away.

“Not this time,” Mako still had the chains looped on his thick arms, which he used to whip at the man. It struck him on the leg this time, forcing him down while crying. Mako quickly went over him, his book on his back just on the wound he had caused.
The man cried out in pain, his screams horrifying. Mako pressed the boot down, lifting his sword and stabbing him through the neck with it until he stopped moving.
Mako sighed after he killed him. He heard rustling however- he had forgotten the one that he punched in the face.
He immediately turned around and saw how the last survivor opened the door to the carriage, sword on his hand.

“No!” Mako screamed, running and ready to use the chains tied to him as whips, but he was too far away. It wouldn’t work, it wouldn’t-

He saw how something pierced the attacker’s shoulder, the tip of the rapier piercing just between his shoulder blades, piercing his heart. He stumbled back, falling to the ground motionless.

Mako’s eyebrows arched, as he quickly made his way towards the carriage, stepping over the corpses. He covered the door with his massive body, looking at the inside.
Victor had his hand in his heart, the other clutching the back of his seat. He looked like he was in the
verge of a heart attack. Mako eyes jumped to the other side of the carriage. Jamison was clutching a rapier in his right arm, the tip covered in blood. He was staring down at it, and at his arm. An arrow was logged on the prosthetic part of his arm. Jamison stared at it, as if he had forgotten that it was not made of flesh.

“I-

“There was a rapier in the, uh. Behind tha’ seats. I suppose for, for occasions like this, eh?”

“Your Highness,” Mako reached over to his arm, making sure that the arrow had pierced metal and not his actual flesh. “Are you okay? Are you hurt? Did they hurt you?”

“N-no. I’m okay. Just-” He looked at the sword once again. “A bit surprised. I never had to, uh-”

“Kill.” Mako said, pulling the arrow out and rolling the sleeve of his jacked up to inspect the arm. The prosthetic seemed fine, apart from a very small hole.

“Yes.”

“You get used to it.” He said, looking up at Jamison in the eyes. It was very intense, how they stared into each other eyes. The young man was still shocked at what had happened.

“Mako, your shoulder-”

Mako remembered there was an arrow logged into him. He pulled it out, easily. “It’s okay.”

“We need to leave,” Victor said as he finally regained his composure. “We cannot go to the meeting like this- we need to get back. There has just been an attempt on your life, your Highness.”

“Right- it- that’s a good idea.”

“The driver was killed,” Mako pointed out.

“No worries, I know how to drive one of these. I just hope there aren’t-”

“There won’t. If there were to be, they would be up ahead, not from where we came from. If anything happens, I will protect us.”

“...Okay,” Victor said, getting out of the carriage nervously. The poor man was shaken to his core, probably not having witnessed an assassination attempt this close to him. He quickly got on the driver seat, taking few seconds before the horse started to move. They turned around, making their quick way towards the castle once again.

“Are you okay, Jamie?” Mako felt more at ease now that he was alone with the King, the young man still in shock.

“Yeah, it was just- Idunno. I didn’t expect it. I was ready for it, obviously but- I just didn’t expect it.” He stared at his hands, as if he realized he had killed a man.

“It’s okay,” Mako pressed his lips on Jamison’s forehead, cradling him close. “I’m so proud of you. You did so good.”

“Are… you okay?” He asked Mako, his face pressed against the man’s dirty armor.

“I’ll be fine, as long as you are okay.” He whispered, keeping him close.
Jamison nodded, but didn’t say a thing. By the time they arrived back to the castle, Jamison had fallen asleep in Mako’s arm. It pained Mako having to pry him away as they arrived, having to continue hiding their relationship. Jamison slightly woke up, whispering to Mako’s ear.

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay,” He pressed a chaste kiss on his cheek, just as he heard people getting close. They would open the curtains and the door, and would see them. “I know you can fix this.”

He let go of Jamison as the door opened, Royal Guards and doctors already trying to get inside. Instead, Jamison stood up and walked out, being surrounded by people making sure the King was okay.

Mako sat inside the carriage, looking at how they all dragged Jamison away just to make sure he was alright, just to make sure he wasn’t truly hurt. Mako closed his eyes, and took a deep breath.

When he made his way outside of the carriage, there was a Guard there, looking at the damage on the carriage. He stared at Mako, who stared back at him. He had a frown on his face, looking up and down at Mako in what seemed to be anger.

“You are a terrible bodyguard,” He hissed before leaving Mako by his own, swallowing his swords.

He was slightly shocked, but swallowed after a while.

He knew it in his heart that it was the truth.
In the end, the meeting between the monarchs was cancelled. No one was going to risk Jamison being attacked again. They’d gotten lucky, coming out of the attack unscathed, but it meant someone was still out there, still preying on the young king and ready to kill.

“It could have been anyone. Now that you are the king, you have to be ready for any person to attack,” Victor told him.

It was true. Mako wanted to think of a certain individual being at fault; however, now that Jamison was the king of the land, having to dodge attacks and be always ready was going to be part of his life, now more than ever.

So, the meeting was cancelled. Mako was fine, his wounds easily tended to. But he couldn’t shake the feeling of unease in his stomach, the words of that guard echoing through his head.

“You are a terrible bodyguard.”

Mako knew it to be true. Hell, at first he was going to sell Jamison to someone else. The young man had been stabbed, shot at, almost drowned and exploded while Mako was supposedly taking care of him. He’d almost died. He had lost his limbs because Mako wasn’t good at his job.

He guessed he was better now—Jamison was safe and sound. But couldn’t he have been better since the beginning? He knew how to kill people, not protect them. Had he been better, Jamison would be in a different position now. None of this would be happening.

“Hey,” Jamison’s voice and his hand on Mako’s shoulder brought him back to reality. He hadn’t noticed he was about to walk into a wall. “Ye alright?”

“Yes, I was just—” He shook his head. “Just a bit distracted.”
“Heh, busy day, eh! We got attacked, ya killed a bunch of guys…” Jamison smiled, but it was a nervous one. He clearly was still in shock.

“Come on…” They ventured into their quarters before they actually talked further.

As they entered Jamison’s room, the young monarch kept pretending nothing was wrong, acting as if everything was okay.

“Are you okay?” Mako asked, with concern in his voice.

“I killed a man.”

Mako took a deep breath. He had forgotten how it felt the first time he killed someone. It was something he would never want to live through once again, and to know that Jamison was living it now made his chest ache.

“I mean—I know I had to, and… it still…” Jamison rubbed his face with his flesh hand, pinching the bridge of his nose. “I can’t stop thinkin’ about it.”

“It will take a while. It feels awful. It feels like you had no right. But, Jamison,” he grabbed him by the shoulders firmly, “you had the right. If you hadn’t done that, you would be dead right now.”

Jamison took a deep breath, his hands resting on top of Mako’s palm. “I saw ‘im. I mean—I’ve almost died before but this… I saw ‘im die. And it was because of me.”

“You defended yourself.” He cupped his giant palm on Jamison’s face, and Jamison nuzzled against it.

“Please don’t leave.”

It was such a heartfelt request. Normally he wouldn’t say a thing and Mako would stay in his room just because—it was an unspoken thing.

“Of course.” He kissed him on the forehead, and felt Jamison tremble.

That night they slept together, but there was no sex. Jamison clung to Mako for safety and comfort alone. Mako kept him close, one hand wrapped around him and nudging him further.

His steady breaths reminded Mako that he was alive, and that he would be okay. They would be okay.

Mako kissed his scalp, falling asleep with him cradled close.

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If Jamison was still in shock, he didn’t show it. He was far too busy.

Even if the meeting with the noblemen had been cancelled, Jamison had quickly become a busy man. Reunions with important men and women to meet them personally, to agree to work along with them to keep prosperity in the kingdom.

Jamison didn’t seem to enjoy it. His shoulders were tense, and he kept biting his lip and nodding, just trying to get everything done with. Mako could easily tell that he did not like those people. It amused Mako, knowing that their king was nothing like those snotty noblemen. He was better than them in
any sense of the word.

“I don’t care.”

Mako looked up from his feet, his gaze fixated on Jamison. There was no one else in the room. The last meeting had happened and the lord he had just spoken to had left.

“Did—did ya hear these guys? One after the other, they just—I don’t care!” Jamison groaned, slumping against the back of his chair. “Did ya hear what this one said?!”

“No.” Mako had to admit, he wasn’t paying much attention to these meetings. After a while, they kind of blurred into the same thing.

“This guy—ya know who he is? He is like, he owns a bunch of farms and a lot of trade an’ crap. Ya know what he says? He is like, Oh! Perhaps with yer help we can figure out how to subdue any sort of nonconformity there are in terms of tha’ workers—can ye believe that?!”

Mako approached him closely, as Jamison kept rambling on.

“All of these idiots—they are all tha’ same! They come ‘ere tha’ greet me, and are like, they just wanna keep rich and be rich forever, insultin’ everyone that just didn’t happen ta’ be born rich like ‘em. They all feel so good, so powerful only ‘cus their dad is rich and they were plopped straight into this kind of shit.”

He groaned in frustration, hand running through his hair as he calmed down. “Do I seem this… awful?”

“No. You are different.”

Jamison sighed, his back sliding off the chair in a terrible sitting position. “I hope ya right, cus I wouldn’t stand meself.”

One more meeting for the day, and it was it. They could finally rest.

“Lady Regina Ludey, daughter of Lord Ludey, your Highness.”

Mako knew the name. That woman owned her father’s textile business. She owned not only that, but many other things, but it was the reason her family rose to nobility by her grandfather.

“Yeah… make her come in.”

Lady Regina Ludey entered the room swiftly, her elegant clothes drifting around her in the finest silks. Her own brand. She was in her thirties, but somehow looked far older even with all the makeup on her face. Her eyes fell on Mako, and she scoffed a little, only to turn to Jamison and smile sweetly.

“Our Highness, I don’t believe we’ve met yet, have we?” she greeted, bowing. “You surely do know who I am, however?”

“Lady Regina Ludey, daughter of Lord Ludey. Owner of Ludey textiles, and other things.”

Jamison repeated in a bored voice as he watched her. He had met so many businessmen this day, another one didn’t seem too out of the ordinary.

“I am so honored to be able to meet you, your Highness. My father’s company had such tight ties to the royal castle, hopefully we can keep these ties with your government. I look forward to working
“Actually, your Highness, I come here with a proposal for you,” she said sweetly, her curly red hair bouncing up and down as she moved her head.

“This is only supposed to be a meeting to get to meet each other, Lady Ludey. If you wished to talk about something else you should have scheduled like everybody else.”

The woman was slightly taken aback, but she quickly puckered her lips, baring her chest in what seemed an attempt to flirt with Jamison. If she only knew.

“Why, your Highness, it is just but a quick chat between friends, nothing wrong with that.”

“We just met today.”

“Our families have been friends for generations—surely we can just talk.” Before Jamison could say anything the woman continued to speak, pearly white teeth shining. “I would like to request money from the royal budget to expand our business and trade routes. We can expand our territory to other kingdoms, finally, and it will bring great business to my—our company.”

Jamison blinked twice, his expression the same.

“We already have the budget planned out for the year, and I do not plan on spending more money on this kind of thing. There are far more things that we need to take care of, like public roads, health, and education—what makes you think you need our money? Your family is very well off.”

“Well, your Highness,” she seemed more nervous now, “I was just considering... If this idea does not take off as we desire—it could hurt our business, and I simply cannot afford to have my father’s company go down and lose money in case—”

“In case it doesn’t work. So you rather use money that is aimed at actual citizens and people from this land only to sell your fancy textiles?”

Her eyes widened.

“No. If you do want this, do it with your own money. I know your family, and even if this idea of yours doesn’t work I know you have enough to get by, and to rebuild your business. You do not need the castle’s money.”

The woman’s soft demeanor disappeared quickly, replaced with a sneer. “The castle has never had any issue giving us money when we needed it. Your father—”

“Is not here any more, and I am in charge. So what I say, goes. So, Lady Ludey, unless you have something of actual importance to add to this conversation, I suggest you leave immediately.”

The woman narrowed her eyes, clearly offended. Her face twisted into anger, and she turned around and left in a huff, her expensive heels clashing against the ground.

As soon as she left the room, Jamison sighed and rubbed his forehead.

“Fuckin’— did you fuckin’ hear that?! ‘Oh, I know I am filthy rich, but I need more money! Just give me fuckin’ money!’ Ugh! I hate this.”

Mako couldn’t help but laugh at the absurdity of it. He chuckled lowly, and Jamison chuckled as
“This is ridiculous. Can’t believe these fuckin’ people.” He rubbed his temple. “I do need ta’ check out our fuckin’ budget, too much shit going to unnecessary garbage. Gotta fix public shit before we waste money on fuckin’ military and tha’ sort of crap.”

“You’ll do fine. There is plenty of time to fix that; see what really needs resources.”

“I already got an idea but, I ain’t sure. These fuckin’ people ain’t lettin’ me think, anyways.” He rubbed his eyes, lazily. “Come on. I’m tired, let’s go.”

“Yes. Let’s.”

Mako admired the audacity Jamison had. At one point he knew he really hated it, but now he loved it. It was aimed at the right people. The image of the woman’s shocked face was still in Mako’s mind, and it made him laugh.

“I hate rich people.”

“Jamison, you’re the richest person alive.”

“Well!” He waved his arms in a joking manner. “I ain’t like ‘em! I ain’t believe I am tha’ hot shit! Well, I do, but not cus I’m rich!”

“I understand,” Mako chuckled.

They were both tired, but it was a good tired, as they both reminisced about Lady Ludey’s stupid surprised face.

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“...It is of utmost interest for the other kingdoms to ally with you and strengthen our military force across the land.”

Another day, another meeting. This time it was a reunion with the general of the kingdom’s military. The man was old and rugged, scars decorating his face and massive body. Mako noticed the man stared at him constantly, most likely impressed by Mako’s own scars and size. He could see the man was a warrior such as he was in his youth.

“I understand what the situation is, however.” Jamison tapped his fingers on top of his thigh. “We already have enough military resources as it is—I say that we even have far more than we need. Is it really resourceful to spend so much attention into something we got so well covered, when there are far more things to take care of?”

It was still weird to hear Jamison talk without his Australian accent, but it was a necessity for him to being taken seriously by the nobility. He had great intellect, too. God, it did things inside of Mako’s guts.

“Your Highness, military power is the most important power the Kingdom possesses. It is needed to defeat our enemies and—”

“I believe it is to protect our people?” He sighed, lazily. It looked like he was at the verge of falling
"asleep. “You want me to increase power, but there are yet no threats against our Kingdom.”

“It is to be able to defend ourselves, your Highness.”

“Well,” he pinched the bridge of his nose. “This isn’t—the kingdom does not need military power. I appreciate your suggestion, general, yet however, I feel that there are things far more important to take care of than making everybody fear us.”

The man became slightly agitated.

“Your Highness, with all due respect, with the manifestations and protests happening—”

“Whoa, hold on.” His accent came back, only briefly. He coughed, pushing his demeanor back. “What are you talking about, ‘protests’?”

The man gulped, as if he realized he said something he shouldn’t. He shook his head quickly.

“In—in case of, your Highness. We cannot let—”

“There are protests? There are manifestations across the land?” He leaned to the side to face Mako, face twisted in concern. “Did ye hear about this?”

He blinked. “It is not uncommon for there to be protests, your Highness. I’ve witnessed some before I was employed.”

The general stared at Mako, bewildered, but whatever—he was given “permission” to speak.

“Okay, well, obviously there are some things I gotta think about.” Jamison’s accent was back. “I thank ye fer yer time, General, yet it seems there are far more important things to tend to.”

“But—your Highness, what about my propo—”

“I do not have enough information ta’ make a decision at tha’ moment. So if ye excuse yerself, that would be swell.”

The man nodded nervously, making his way to the exit, defeated. Mako supposed that the man realized just how much he’d screwed up now.

As soon as he left the room Jamison stood up and faced Mako once again, arms spread out in surprise.

“Protests?! Manifestations?!” He ran his fingers through his hair. “Why did I never hear ‘bout this?!!”

“I… supposed you knew. It is not uncommon.”

“What—what do people protest about? Why are they mad?” He approached Mako quickly, but he seemed far more concerned than angry. “Ugh! Why does no one ever tell me anythin’!”

“Jamie—”

“No, fuck.” He started pacing in circles around the room quickly, his hands moving wildly. “These fuckin’ idiots only want me to fuckin’ follow orders, stupid bullshit, and I am never… fuck!”

He stopped in his tracks, yelling. “VICTOR!”

Jamison even went as far as to open the door and holler into the hallway. “VICTOR!”
The old man practically ran towards the room, entering in a panic. His hair was slightly undone, beads of sweat already rolling down his forehead.

“Y-yes your Highness, is—is there an issue?” He caught his breath. “Has your meeting with the general—?”

“Victor,” Jamison walked over to the man, his anger slipping through the edges of his being. “Have you been hiding things from me?”

“Wh—what are you talking about, your Highness?”

“General Morris just slipped something about there being protests and manifestations across the land—is that true?”

The man eyes widened, uncomfortable. Mako walked slowly to be closer to them, as Jamison looked down on Victor. “Are you hiding this from me?”

“I, uh,” He cleared his throat, trying to regain his calm. “As a prince, we were told to not bother you with these kind of issues. You’re far too busy to—”

“Well—hey. Fun fact, I ain’t a prince no more. I am the king of the land, and I want ta’ know why ye didn’t tell me about this.”

He shook his head, worriedly. “Your H-Highness, we did what we thought would be better for you.”

“How is it good for me? How…” He took a very deep breath, and was silent for several seconds, eyes wandering up to stare at the ceiling, thinking. Victor stared at him, nervous, waiting for him to speak. “It’s okay. Okay. Thank you Victor. I’ll—I’ll talk to you later, to organize a meeting.”

“A meeting? With whom, your Highness?” he asked.

“You and the other Royal advisors. You who apparently decided what my life was gonna be like. Get it?”

He blinked very slowly.

“Yes, your Highness. I await for your… for your word on it.”

“You can leave now.”

Victor nodded, and left quietly.
Mako could see how tense Jamison was, his body shaking. He took a deep breath once again, rubbing his face with his palms. He was tired.

“I need ta’ do one more thing,” he said to Mako. “Come on.”

Jamison exited the meeting room, making his way through the hallways. Mako had no idea where he was going, but it seemed like Jamison was looking for someone in specific.

“Ah!” Jamison exclaimed, when he found one of the young maids carrying a basket of clothes in her arms. “Hey—hey you! Hey!”

The young girl gasped and almost let her basket drop. She nodded, waiting for the king’s orders. Mako noticed that it was the girl who had been yelled at by the duke months ago.
“Hey, what’s yer name?” Jamison smiled down at her, friendly, warm.

“M-Melissa, your Highness.”

“Melissa, I got a real important task for ye. I need ya to go down ta’ town, and get at least one newspaper per publisher. For a week. Then bring ’em to me, roight?”

The girl’s eyes were wide, and she was about to say something, but Jamison interrupted her. “If ya need help ye can get as many people ye want—ya don’t gotta worry about gettin’ into trouble, just tell ’em King Jamison told ya tha do it. Oh and, if ya need any gold—” He picked something from his pocket, a bag with several gold coins, and gave it to the girl. It was heavy, and it clinked in her hands. “Use whatever ya’ need, I know it’s a bit too much—so keep whatever remains, roight?”

Her eyes went even wider and she let her basket of clothes drop to the floor. “Ah—I’m sorry, I—”

“It’s okay, don’t worry. But yeah—can ye do that for me?”

She nodded very quickly, her face red.

“Aight, thank ye luv, see ya in a week.”

The girl pretty much ran out of there, but soon returned, grabbing her forgotten basket as a smile spread to her face. She took it away and then left the room.

“Newspapers?” Mako had to ask. It was such a specific request.

“If these morons ain’t gonna tell me what is goin’ on in ‘ere, then I’ll find out meself.” Smart.

That night, Jamison couldn’t rest. He kept pacing on his room from one side to the other, in his underwear. Mako observed him, but he didn’t say a thing. His eyes wandered around, thinking and sometimes nodding his head before continuing his walk.

“You look tense,” Mako noted.

“I am tense. Just found out these bloody people keep shit hidden from me.” He bit his lip, staring at the carpet on his room. “I ain’t got no idea who to trust roight now.”

“You can trust me,” Mako said softly, and saw a small smile creep on Jamison’s face.

“I know.” He smiled. Mako couldn’t help but smile back, knowing that he made Jamison feel better. “I wish everyone ‘ere was like ye, Mako.”

Mako chuckled. Wouldn’t that be a treat.

“I just… How can I fix this if I ain’t know how things go? Things are gonna start changin’ around ‘ere, I’m tellin’ ya. I’m tired of these snotty people actin’ like I am just a child.”

“I am sure you will, I trust you. I believe you can do good for this place.”

“Yer so noice to me,” Jamison walked towards Mako, giggling. “What would I do without me handsome bodyguard, eh?”

“You would lose your mind.” Mako sat up on the edge of the bed as Jamison approached him. He placed his skinny hands on Mako thick shoulders.
“Mate, ye are the one makin’ me lose me mind.”

Mako closed his eyes as Jamison leaned down and kissed him. Even if it was lovely, Mako could still feel just how tense and anxious Jamison was. He was going to fix that. He placed his thick hands on Jamison’s hips, fingers running up and down his skinny frame. Jamison giggled under his breath, squirming at the touch.

“Let me take care of you.”

“When have you not?”

Mako picked him up by the waist, lifting him from the floor and tipping them over the bed. Jamison’s legs hung off the edge, tingling as Mako’s digits caressed his naked skin softly.

“What ya got planned?”

“Just trust me,” he placed a soft kiss on Jamison’s inner thigh, “your Highness.”

Jamison moaned, his hand seeking his own genitals. Mako stopped him gently, kissing the back of his hand. “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of it.”

He wanted Jamison to relax, so he considered taking off the prosthetics. His fingers touched him in the right shoulder, but hesitated. “Can I…?”

“Yes,” Jamison moaned breathlessly. Mako kissed him on the stomach, easing off the belts and eventually removing his prosthetic. Jamison sighed in contentment, the skin around his prosthetic slightly red. Mako proceeded to do the same with his leg, carefully taking it off and putting it aside. Jamison already looked far more comfortable, but Mako was just starting.

He continued to give soft kisses and massages on Jamison’s thighs until Jamison was a moaning mess. He could see that the young man was already half hard—it seemed he really needed some stress relief. Very carefully, Mako turned Jamison over so he would lay on his stomach.

Jamison buried his face on his arms, breathing deep as Mako kept kissing and caressing. Every little moan and gasp made him go on, from his ankles to his ass. He started to massage his ass, thumbs spreading him wide open.

“Mmmm,” Jamison hummed, pressing his face against the mattress. Mako kissed at the soft skin, his tongue caressing around the rim. Jamison instantly gasped, gripping the sheets underneath him as the tongue pressed further, slipping fully inside of Jamison’s hole. Mako gripped him by the hips, pressing and grinding the young man as he continued to lick. He could hear Jamison howling, moaning without abandon. Mako felt his cheeks redden, licking inside of his lover’s walls. He sucked, bobbing his head in and out, tongue-fucking his asshole. His teeth grazed over Jamison’s skin, one of his hands traveling down to jerk Jamison off.

It was quick. It was lovely. Jamison thrusted into Mako’s palm, coming into it and orgasming under Mako’s touch. He let the young man ride it, the tension leaving his body like steam. He quickly became limp as Mako pressed a kiss on Jamison’s ass cheek, lovingly patting his thighs.

“Better?” he whispered, drool spilling from his lips.

“Mmmm.” Jamison rolled around, dragging Mako close. He was going to kiss him, but Mako had just eaten his ass out, so he stopped him. “Awh, come on.”
“I must taste like ass.”

Jamison laughed hard, not believing what Mako had just said.

“What about you?” he said, ready to crawl onto Mako’s lap and return the favor. “Let me—”

But Jamison looked like he was on the verge of falling asleep.

“It’s okay, I’ll take care of it,” Mako said.

“Love you.”

It was just how casual it sounded, the way he said it, that made Mako’s heart swell. He caressed his cheek lovingly, just as Jamison fell asleep. “Love you too.”

He got up, going directly to the bathroom to tend to himself. He jerked off quickly into the toilet, relieved and tired. He proceeded to wash his mouth, washing the taste of Jamison away.

Mako stared at himself on the mirror, his fingers caressing the burnt flesh of his cheek. It was a reminder of the things he had done, but it also made him hope for the future. Looking back at Jamison sleeping peacefully, Mako felt his guilt slowly wash away. He trusted him. He trusted Jamison to make everything better for them.

And he would trust him forever.

Chapter End Notes

"Eat the rich!"

Mako proceeds to eat out the rich
Chocolate Chip Cookies

Chapter Summary

The air was hot.

Chapter Notes

Jamison has a plan.

Hello! There is a new update, yay! Thanks a lot for my bro Nami who is my beta reader. Thank you dude!!

I'm going to take a quick break from writing after this- Work has me absolutely exhausted, so yeah. It won't be too long! should be like a week before I start writing. I'm just a bit too tired, I hope you understand!!

Reminder that now that I have a beta reader, chapters will take a bit longer to be posted! rather have quality than quantity! thank you!

The air was hot. Mako’s skin was burning, beads of sweat rolling down his limbs and into the mattress. He breathed hard, his big thumbs pressing against Jamison’s sharp hipbones. He rubbed at them. Jamison’s moans were delicious, his sharp breathing going straight onto Mako’s dick.

It had been a difficult week. They have had to deal with too many idiots that just wanted money, money, and more money. The stress was getting to Mako as well, and he could feel himself getting more tired by the day. However, Jamison was planning something. The young man had many of his maps and books transferred to his bedroom. He would spend all the free time he had tracing things on the paper, circling important spots of the country. Mako let him be. Even if Jamison tried to explain it, he probably wouldn’t understand the deep political rooting of it all.

The stress would be too much. They were still adapting to the change from prince to a king, and it made Jamison (and Mako) antsy. They’d found ways to relieve the tension—Mako teaching Jamison how to spar with his rapier, sitting back and stare into the gardens, and this. They were both yearning for it, the delicious contact between each other.

“Come on,” Jamison pleaded, his biological hand running up and down Mako’s chest. The young monarch was propped on top of Mako, just under his belly button. He gasped, grinding his hard cock against Mako’s belly. “Come on, please.”

“You open up?” Mako huffed, his hands rubbing over Jamison ribs, his thumbs pressing his nipples. They were hard, and it made Jamison’s breath hitch.

“Yes—come on, Mako, please—”
“Turn around,” Mako breathed, heavily. Jamison did so, his thin toned back facing Mako. “Ride me.”

Jamison gasped, spreading his legs until his hole was directly on top of Mako’s thick tip. The young man leaned his head back as he sunk in, whimpering and moaning for every second of it. Mako had to fight the urge to just grab him and fuck him into place, his hands gripping at the sheets underneath him.

“F-fuck,” Jamison whispered, his ass flush with Mako’s hips. Jamison started to ride him slowly, rolling his hips up and down, but it was too slow for Mako. “F-fuck me. Destroy me. Mako, come on.”

That’s all he needed. He grabbed Jamison’s arms, pulling them towards him. He was still wearing his prosthetic, which helped. His back arched beautifully as he gasped and moaned. Mako started to buck his hips up and down, still holding Jamison’s arms tightly behind him, pulling at him. He could feel his hot tight walls, clenching around him.

He turned his head to the side, towards the mirror on the wall. Mako could see Jamison’s profile while he was being fucked, his belly bulging with Mako’s thick cock. It burnt him, making Mako thrust with abandon.

Jamison howled, twitching in pleasure as Mako came inside of him, cum spilling from inside and onto his thighs.

Mako sat up, lazily thrusting still inside, as Jamison was on the edge of pleasure. He kissed his neck, softly.

The young man gasped and came all over his belly and thighs, still pierced by Mako.

He fell limp into Mako’s chest, panting hard as Mako eased him off his softening cock, and sat him on his lap. Mako rubbed his shoulders, his own stress vanishing.

Jamison looped a hand around Mako’s thick neck, dragging Mako down into a kiss. It was soft, and Mako tipped them over onto the bed before letting him resume. It was lazy and nice.

“Feelin’ better?” Mako kissed Jamison’s lips, a small chaste peck.

“Mmm, yeah.” Jamison nuzzled under the sheets. “Shit ain’t so bad if we get ta’ do this.”

He was right. This wasn’t so bad.

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A week had passed since Jamison asked the maid to pick up newspapers. Jamison’s room was full of them, all spread out and tossed carelessly. He had instructed the maids specifically to not clean his room, lest they throw away the newspapers.

The room looked like it was just regular work room. Newspaper clippings were glued to the walls, strings and pins tied to them. Maps also hung from there, with newspaper clippings and things scribbled on them.

Jamison would stare at them a lot, thinking to himself and muttering. He would scribble things down, paste them on the wall along with the others, and keep going. Meanwhile Mako read the papers; he hadn’t had a chance to do so since he was first employed to be Jamison’s bodyguard, but it didn’t seem like much changed. There were riots and protests around, the reasons similar to before he
became a bodyguard.

He always thought that politicians just didn’t care, but Jamison did. He read the newspapers, wrote the locations, and would paste them in the wall. He was frantic, carefully examining every word and every person involved. He would then go quiet for several hours, his face pasted to the wall.

“This doesn’t work.”

Mako looked up from his newspaper, putting it down along with the others. The piles were massive. “Sorry?”

“This. All of this, it doesn’t work.” He pointed at the map, the newspapers—everything, gesturing to the entire wall with his arms. “The system. The system doesn’t work, Mako.”

He ripped out some of the paper clippings off the wall, throwing them into the ground. “It does not work! It just—it fuckin’ doesn’t work!”

“How?” Mako stood up slowly, going to Jamison’s side.

“All of this. Every single aspect of this. Economics!” He ripped papers from the wall. “Social!” He ripped more, throwing them behind him. “Cultural! Health! Education! It—it doesn’t work!”

He left the wall bare, save for the one map of the kingdom. “It does not work. We took everythin’, us! We took everythin’ from ‘em!”

Jamison was pointing at the spot where the castle was. Mako simply stared.

“Can you fix it?” he asked, at last.

Jamison stared at the map, his fingers twitching. Mako could see his eyes jumping back and forth on the wall.

“I don’t know. I don’t—” he scratched his head. “I don’t know how. We—we gotta gut it. Gut it from the center but—I don’t know how.”

“You’ll figure it out. I believe in you, Jamie.”

“It’s gonna take a long time. I—” He went quiet, pondering. He snapped his fingers, grabbing more newspaper and starting to glue it to the wall once again, but this seemed to be different. He had something else on his mind. This was different from the other wall of newspapers clippings he had. He was formulating a plan.

“Okay.” Jamison started to run around. “Okay, let’s see…”

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Whatever Jamison had planned, it seemed the young man had already started it. The first thing he did was to gather the royal advisors to have a meeting with them. Mako had an idea of what the meeting was going to be: to call them out for hiding such obvious things to him.

This would be entertaining.
“Listen,” Jamison said as he stood. The young monarch had discarded his elegant accent, just talking with his normal Australian one. In front of him was a round table where the old men who called themselves royal advisors sat. Victor was among them, at the other end of the table, opposite of Jamison.

“How ya know why ye’re here?”

“You wish to speak to us about information we’ve kept… hidden from you, your Highness.” Victor spoke. None of them seemed surprised by this, so the man most likely informed them beforehand.

“Ya got that right, eh.” He rubbed his face, as if rage was building up inside of him. “Ya know, I don’t get it—did ya do this with me father, too? Kept ‘im on tha’ dark? Made ‘im think everythin’ was perfect and pretty? Or is this just somethin’ personal?”

The room was terribly silent, the men looking at each other nervously.

“We... Your Highness, considering your age and your lack of experience, we agreed that—”

“’We’? And who is ‘we’ in this case?”

“T-the royal advisors, sir. We decided to keep information from you, to make things easier—”

“Did my father tell you to?”

The silence was thick, uncomfortable. Several seconds passed before Victor spoke.

“Your father asked us to keep information from you during your studies. It was the plan. However he… after his passing, we decided to keep on restricting information, your inexperience—”

“Fuck inexperience!” Jamison slammed his fists on the table, making it shake. The glasses of water that were on the surface shook as well, one of them toppling over and spilling. “I am tha’ goddamn king—how much time did ya think ye could hide information from me?!”

For such a room full of old people, they sure didn’t speak at all. It seemed that they were anxious, but they did nothing to fend Jamison words off.

“Well, since ya ain’t tellin’ me shit, I got information from somewhere, anyways.” Jamison crouched down, picking a pile of newspaper which then he proceeded to throw into the table, scattering the newspapers on its surface. “Ya ain’t gonna keep me in tha’ dark no more.”

“Sir, you need to understand our predicament, we were worried—”

“Ya know what is curious?” Jamison interrupted, almost laughing. He crossed his arms across his chest. “These—some of these things, someone gotta make decisions for ‘em. I sure as hell never approved any of this garbage. Not the taxin’, not tha shift in budget—I ain’t did nothin’ of this. So, who did so?” He lifted his head. “Can anyone ‘ere explain, who is it that approved all of this?”

One of the men stood up. Fat and short, peppered oily hair. “Your Highness, in cases like this, it is up to us to decide—”

“Oh so you admit it? Ya admit ya did this? All of this?” He pointed at the scattered newspapers. “Ya really got guts to do this sort of shit.”

With his right arm and a quick motion, he swept the newspapers off the table. They landed on the floor with a loud thud, and Jamison put his hands on the surface of the table once again.
“Things are gonna change ‘ere, gentlemen. I ain’t gonna tolerate any of this anymore. I got plans to change this—ta’ fix all of this, so ya either gonna shut up and do as I say, or ya can get out right now. So, what d’ya say?”

Mako looked around the room and it seemed that no one made the notion to move. Jamison chuckled, shaking his head.

“Guess that solves it, eh? Good. So, let’s talk business, roight?” He flashed a toothy grin, terrifying, sharp canines showing. “After all, it seems ye’re all about business.”

The meeting lasted hours, Jamison explaining all of what he wanted to do with the kingdom. He was bombed with questions every five sentences in, questioning his intentions, logic—everything. Every time they interrupted, Mako wanted to snap their necks.

Jamison became agitated by it, at the verge of losing his calm. However, he would compose himself and keep going.

“I want ta’ help people—”

“We must protect ourselves first, your Highness. We cannot show weakness—”

“Humanity ain’t weakness, mate. We should try ta’—”

“You want us to spend the budget on these things? What about our trades? What about our military?”

“Ye ain’t understandin’. What need do we have for an army if we ain’t got healthy people ta’ protect?”

It would go back and forth like so. Jamison stood his ground, not faltering a single time. It became exhausting for all of them, including the royal advisors.

And so the meeting ended. It was late night, and they all just grew angrier at each other, frustrated and exhausted. Jamison was tense, his shoulders shaking with all the stress.

Mako was pretty tired himself, so going straight to sleep seemed like a good idea. Silently, they walked towards their bedroom.

“Long day,” Mako broke the silence as he opened the door, but felt strange. Looking past his shoulder he noticed he was alone, no Jamison in sight.

Mako tensed—where was Jamison? Had something happened? The last time he checked Jamison was following, just a minute ago—did something happen in that one minute he had his back turned?

He took a deep breath. Getting worried like this wouldn’t help at all. He needed to find Jamison.

His heart was in his throat as he tried to find Jamison, or make a sense of what was happening. His mind jumped from one bad scenario to another, hand gripped tight on the hilt of his sword as he ran. Where was Jamison?

Mako ran past one of the rooms, but stopped. Something caught his eye in the wide open room, so he quickly returned to peer in.

It was the balcony that faced the inside of the ballroom, the stairs from the side leading towards the ground floor. Jamison was leaning over the balcony, looking at the floor beneath them.
Mako felt like a huge weight lifted from him. He quietly entered the room, making his way to stand at Jamison’s side. The young man noticed him, but didn’t stir.

“Hey,” Mako muttered, leaning on the railing and looking down as well. The room was impeccable—you wouldn’t guess it had been bombed before.

“Hey.” Jamison replied softly.

“You scared me. You shouldn’t leave by your own and not say.”

“...Sorry, mate,” he apologized, placing his chin down on the railing. “Tha’ room was open and, idunno. Kind of wanted ta’ take a peek. See how it is at this late hour of tha’ night. Guess I got too distracted.”

“As long as you’re okay,” Mako lightly rubbed his shoulders.

“It’s late. Very late. Almost everyone is asleep.” Jamison breathed out a tired sigh.

“Jamie,” Mako’s hand rubbed circles on Jamison’s back. “You are right to be angry. Everything that happened… This is okay.”

“Is it? I ain’t know anymore. They were lyin’ ta’ me, to me face…”

Jamison leaned further on the railing.

“I can’t trust no one.”

The young man grabbed Mako’s thick hand, bringing it to cup his cheek. Mako felt his face burn, letting Jamison nuzzle against his palm. “Ye are the only one I can trust.” He placed a kiss on the crease of the palm, right on the meat of the thumb. “Thank you for that.”

“You’ll find more people you can trust. You aren’t alone in this world. There are more people like you.” His fingers caressed Jamison’s cheek.

“Heh. Even so.” He just smiled. Mako’s presence seemed to be just enough to calm Jamison down. It warmed Mako’s heart. He only wanted to see him happy and relaxed. Mako would do anything so Jamison could be happy.

They stood like that for a while, simply lightly embracing each other. It was tender and welcome.

“You know,” Jamison muttered, orange eyes staring up at Mako. “Back in winter, and when it was tha’ coronation—I wanted ta’ dance ‘ere. Dance with ye.”

Mako hugged him close, his hand at the back of his head.

“I just wanted ta dance ‘ere. Dance proper, like it should be done. But…” He took a deep breath. “I’ve been a coward.”

“You’ve done what you had to. I trust you to make the right decision.”

“I am making the right decision. I will tell everyone at the next meeting. It’s in two days. I’ll tell them about you and—I am the fucking king—I can do whatever the fuck I want. You.”

Mako tipped his chin, pressing a kiss on Jamison’s soft lips. He wanted Jamison to do what he needed, to do whatever was necessary at his own pace. If Jamison thought it was time, then it was time.
“I’ll be with you no matter what decision you take.”

Jamison grabbed him by the collar and dragged him down, kissing deep. The young man bit his lower lip, tongue slipping inside of Mako. Mako wrapped his thick arms around him, leading him down the stairs to the ballroom.

“What—”

“Let’s.”

Mako didn’t have to say anything else; Jamison let himself be led. They broke the kiss only to walk, Mako’s thick hand engulfing the young King.

Even if it was night, the windows on the walls of the ballroom let enough moonlight in to make the room shine. It was pale, beautiful.

Mako wasn’t a really good dancer. Jamison was, his hands locked with Mako as they danced slowly under the moonlight. Jamison’s pale skin glowed beautifully under the light, in an ethereal way. Jamison smiled sweetly at him.

...And stumbled a bit, biting his lower lip in frustration.

“Tch,” he said, regaining his balance as they kept going. Mako said nothing, waltzing on the ballroom.

Once again, Jamison almost slipped.

“Ah.” But he shook his right leg a little, and continued like nothing happened.

A third time, and he still tried to ignore it. Until he slipped and almost fell; would have, hadn’t Mako grabbed him tight.

“Jamie—”

“Fuck!” he hissed, slamming the sole of his right shoe on the tile. “I—I used to be good at this.”

The realization of why he wasn’t good at dancing anymore hit Jamison like a brick wall. Mako could see how Jamison’s face paled and his eyes widened, letting go of Mako and running his hand on the leg of his suit pants.

“Fuck- Mako, I’m so sorry, I—” He squeezed at the fake leg and turned away from Mako in shame.

“I—I used to be good at this, but—but now... This was supposed to be good and fun but I can’t fuckin—”

“Jamie,” Mako turned him around softly, his big palms traveling from his shoulders to Jamison’s hands. “It’s okay. I don’t mind.”

“But it isn’t good. I ain’t good anymore, I—”

Mako took Jamison’s right hand, peeling the white glove off it. The young man remained quiet as Mako very carefully and slowly took it off, dropping it on the floor. Jamison’s prosthetic white hand shone in the light, and Mako pressed his thumb against the palm of it. The long slender artificial fingers twitched, and Mako kissed them individually. He knew Jamison couldn’t feel it, but the gesture made Jamison’s face redden.

“You’re always good. No matter what.” Now Mako was the one that pressed Jamison’s right hand
against his cheek. Jamison gently pressed at the skin with his thumb.

“But I—”

Mako pressed a kiss against the palm once again.

“You trust me, no?”

Jamison sighed, a broken sound. He was most likely trying to repress his tears. Mako grabbed him by the hands once again to dance, and he pressed his thick lips against Jamison’s cheek.

“You’re beautiful.”

Jamison smiled, his face red with embarrassment. Mako lead the dance, letting Jamison slip and stutter as much as he would. He didn’t say a thing, only dancing with him under the moonlight.

They waltzed, alone in the world. Jamison pressed his face against Mako’s chest, closing his eyes while his bodyguard led him around. It was inexplicable, how it felt. How everything was happening, the way it made Mako feel alive.

“Mako,” Jamison whispered against his chest.

They stopped, dead center of the ballroom. The moonlight seeping from the windows was angled to perfection, illuminating them both. They stared at each other for several moments, bathed in silver light.

It was mutual. They both aimed for the kiss, their lips meeting halfway. It was desperate and full of passion, Mako’s hands touching Jamison’s ribs through his clothing. Jamison’s hands ran over Mako’s neck and hair, caressing the softness of it.

It was hungry and natural. Just like they were.

Mako could feel Jamison whimper under him, body trembling in need. Mako moaned as well, Jamison’s soft lips intoxicating. Jamison clung to his neck, bringing Mako closer to him, guiding his face to his neck. Mako understood, his teeth scraping against the skin there. It made Jamison groan in pleasure, head leaning back, letting Mako nip at him more. It was beautiful, the way he gasped and moved underneath his lips.

Jamison kissed at his neck as well, giving small pecks to his thick skin. It made Mako squirm, biting at his neck slightly harder. It left Jamison out of breath, pressing the bodyguard against him.

“Mako, please. Mako—” He sounded like he was on the verge of intense pleasure, or sobbing. “Don’t leave me.”

“I’ll never leave you. I’ll be here for you, always.”

He bit him on the lower lip, to make his point clear. That just made Jamison groan, weak in his knees. Mako scooped him up, pressing him against his chest. Jamison kept nipping at his ear as Mako made a beeline towards the wall. He pressed Jamison against it, leaving him pinned against it, feet floating above the floor.

Big hands delicately pulled away buttons, until Jamison’s bare chest was visible. He pressed soft kisses to his freckled chest, Jamison’s whimpers going straight to his cock. He could see Jamison was hard, too, his erection pressing against the fabric of his pants.
“Check in yer—yer right pouch.”

Confused, Mako kept pinning Jamison against the wall with one hand, the other digging through the pouch. A small bottle of lube was inside, and Mako couldn’t hold back his laughter.

“Prepared?”

Jamison shrugged. “Gotta be ready. See, it helped us now.”

That it did. Without further thinking, Mako pulled Jamison’s pants down slightly, until his ass was hanging in the air. He gave the bottle of lube to Jamison to spread on Mako’s hands. Jamison obliged, spreading the cold lube on his thick fingers until they were coated. He kissed him on the neck, hand going down to his ass, caressing the rim of his asshole.

This was risky. This was the most public place they had ever had sex in, but it was the middle of the night. No one was around, they were safe. It was their place. It was Jamison’s castle. It was theirs.

One hand slipped inside, and Jamison bit his lip to stop himself from screaming. Mako massaged inside, fingering Jamison as his lips worked his naked chest, leaving soft bite marks on the pale skin.

They were both eager. One finger turned into two, scissoring and spreading until Jamison was leaking precum. Mako swiped his tongue on Jamison’s tip, making the young man squeal.

“Ma...ko…”

He yanked his pants down so his dick could be free. Mako had to nudge the armor out of the way a little, his thick dick showing. He was also leaking. He lifted Jamison until he was above his dick, very slowly pulling him down until the tip breached him.

“Ah- fuck-” He whispered, arms wrapped around Mako. He kissed him intimately. It was so soft, far too gentle. Mako kept lowering him down slowly, until Jamison was fully impaled.

“I love you.” Mako whispered on his ear. “I love you, Jamie.” He rolled his hips up and down slowly, pecking at Jamison’s mouth, chin, neck... Any place he could touch he kissed. “I love you, I love you.”

Jamison legs wrapped around Mako’s torso as he gasped, tears falling down the corners of his eyes.

“Jamison, don’t leave. I love you.”

Jamison came first, and Mako did so seconds later. It spilled down his thighs, making a mess on the floor and on Jamison’s belly.

They would clean up soon. Mako had some napkins in his pouch, as well. That didn’t matter for now. For now, they embraced each other, close and warm, while Mako was still inside of Jamison.

“You’ll be my king.” Jamison whispered into Mako’s ear. “You—you’ll be at my side, every time. I won’t let them do otherwise.”

Mako kissed him again. He couldn’t get over how soft it was, how personal.

“I can’t wait.”

---
It was the middle of the night when they returned to their bedroom and slept. They overslept, but Jamison was the king, and it wasn’t like the royal advisors were going to scold him—they were far too anxious to be around Jamison.

Mako woke up first, his stomach rumbling. He figured it was time to wake up. His armor took far more time to put on than whatever Jamison wished to wear, so he let the young man sleep. He finished putting everything on, leaning down and kissing Jamison on the forehead. Jamison stirred, whimpering under the covers.

“Hey, it’s late?”

“A bit, yeah.” Mako pressed another kiss on his forehead. “I’m going to the kitchen to get something to eat. You want something?”

“Not hungry.” He rubbed his face tiredly. “Gonna work all day with the maps and newspapers and stuff—you don’t mind, eh?”

Mako had gotten used to the days being working through them, and one more day didn’t mean much for him. If it was what Jamison needed, then he didn’t mind.

“Be right back,” he said.

Jamison grunted, wrapping himself further in the blankets as Mako slipped outside of the room.

The hallways were quiet, the sound of his footsteps the only thing audible. He saw some workers walking here and there, but nothing out of the ordinary. The silence rang in his ears as he made his way towards the kitchen.

It had a lot of activity, mostly people cleaning the area. It seemed like there was a huge mess of soup and other types of food on the floor.

“Ah—excuse me, sir.” One of the cleaners confronted him. “Currently the kitchen is closed. We had a little accident while cooking—I hope you don’t mind? Can I give you an apple or something?”

Mako thought about it, but he decided not to. Maybe he and Jamison could have dinner earlier—that was a nice thought. Instead, he made his way towards the room again, taking his time, admiring the hallways.

He never noticed how beautifully decorated it all was.

Mako took a deep, relaxing breath, finally reaching Jamison’s room again.

“Hey, there was an accident at the kitchen—”

But the room was empty.

It was as normal, with newspapers in piles on the floor, notebooks on the desk, and the map propped on the wall... but Jamison was gone. Mako instantly panicked, trying to find any signs of struggle. He was about to start screaming for Jamison when someone tapped his arm from behind.

He turned so quickly he scared the poor girl.

“Ah! Um—I’m sorry, Sir Rutledge—er—” She was flustered. “His Highness requested for me to tell you something?”
Jamison was okay. Mako took a deep breath, his soul returning to his body.

“His Highness said he was going to be at the throne room, and to please get there as soon as you could. I tried to find you but—”

“It’s okay,” Mako assured her. “I’ll be there.”

She nodded, and left. Mako thought it weird—It was Jamison the one that suggested working. Perhaps he changed his mind. Still, he obliged, closing the door behind him and making his way to the throne room.

Jamison hadn’t spent much time there, before this. Said how it was still weird, being where his dad used to be. A mixture of not wanting to be in the shadow of his father, and just missing him. He understood. Mako tried to give him as much space as he needed.

The doors to the throne room were closed, so Mako simply opened them. He didn’t bother knocking, but as soon as he entered Jamison called out to him.

“Close the door.”

His voice was stern, different. It dripped… something.

Mako did so, trying to spot Jamison.

“Hey, you left,” he said. “Thought you would stay and work all day.”

“Mhm…”

This was unnerving Mako. He still couldn’t find Jamison, until he saw him with his back towards Mako, behind the throne. He was turned around, his face looking at the floor.

Something was wrong.

“Jamie…?”

“Mako,” He stepped out from behind the throne, facing Mako. The way he spoke was the same way he would speak to those politicians, the noblemen he hated so much. His posture was the same, tall and regal, but not in the way Mako liked. It was wrong. Something about him just seemed wrong.

He was holding a pink book in his hand.

Chapter End Notes

Oh.
He knew he had to get rid of the book.

The moment Mako accepted he’d developed something more than just a friendship with Jamison, he knew the book had to go.
Mako considered burning it, but it would make too much of a mess. The smoke would attract people, and questions would be made.

Instead, he ripped it apart. He tore the pages out, tearing them in pieces until they were unreadable. He ripped every single page, throwing the ruined book into the garbage, shoving more items in it like apple cores, other papers, and more trash to hide his deed.

A huge weight lifted off his chest after he got rid of the evidence of his previous plan. No one would be the wiser, and Jamison would never find out.

And yet, the young man stood in front of him, with the book in his hands.

It was held together with tape, the pink cover dirty and muddied. Mako’s mind jumped miles, his stomach going stone cold.

He had destroyed the book, and yet Jamison had it in his hands. He destroyed it, why was he holding it? Someone had put it back together. Someone dug through the literal trash and put the goddamned thing back together.

He should have burnt it.

Jamison stared at it, without saying anything. His thumb caressed the dirty cover, his eyes focusing on it alone.

Mako was frozen in place. He could hear the heartbeat in his ears, feel his fingers shaking. There was a knot in his throat. He had no idea how much time had passed.

Eventually, he spoke.

“W—”

“Took a quick shower, when I got back in me room, I…” Jamison swallowed. “It was on me bed.”

More silence.

“I don’t know who put it there. It—it’s torn apart. Someone put it back together, all of it.”

Mako didn’t know what to say.
“Ya know...” Jamison laughed nervously, his eyes still fixated on the pink book. He opened it, his fingers moving the pages. “I read all of this and I thought—this can’t be roight. This—this all a lie. All of this. There is no way Mako wrote this, even though it got yer name in it. It just couldn’t eh? It was a big, fat, fabricated lie.”

He closed the book, but still didn’t do a thing. His gaze was fixed downwards, not even trying to look at Mako. “But then...”

Jamison let out a sad laugh.

“I remembered ya writin’ on it. Saw ya scribbling down things, while I was at me classes, or doin’ somethin’. I—I thought it was cute. Maybe a diary, roight? So I didn’t say a thing. Jus’... I thought it was just cute, ya know.” His voice started to break. “But...”

Jamison went silent. There was so much space between him and Mako, he just wanted to get over there but his legs were not working. He was still, so still it physically hurt him, but no matter how much he tried he couldn’t move.

“...How could you?”

Jamison’s voice was small, barely audible. He was on the verge of tears, and Mako finally moved. He took one step but immediately stopped when Jamison raised his head, his gaze full of hatred and venom.

“How fucking dare you?! What is your fuckin’ problem?!” He gestured with the book in his hand, waving it wildly. It flapped in the air as Jamison bared his teeth—a threat. “Ya fuckin’ planned this from tha’ beginning! It’s all ‘ere—Ya—God damn, Mako, ya planned it all!”

“Jamie—” He took another step, but Jamison snarled, body contorting as if he was about to attack Mako. It terrified Mako to his very core, and Mako stopped once again.

“Don’t ya fuckin’ talk to me, how dare ya! Ya fuckin’ liar!”

Jamison started to pant loudly, shoulders rising up and down. The man was on the verge of losing it. “It was all a fuckin’ ploy! All this time—ever since tha’ fuckin’ beginning...”

“But I changed.”

For the first time, Jamison looked up at him. His eyes were wide, sharp features twisted into anger. His freckled face was red in rage.

“How much?”

Mako blinked in confusion. Jamison kept staring at him, body tense like an angry animal.

“How much were they gonna pay ye for me?”

“Jamie—”

“How much?! How much is me life really worth, eh?! For ye to keep savin’ me and prevent me from dyin’, even though ya really hated me, then I must be very expensive! How fucking much am I worth?!”

“Please listen to me—”

“Fuck you!”
Jamison threw the book at Mako’s face. It slammed against his nose, the seams ripping apart and pages flying all over the air, and onto the floor. His plans, the reasons he hated Jamison, how he was going to sell him out—all spelled in front of him, at his feet. Jamison just stared at it, panting.

“Look at this. Just…” Jamison nudged one of the papers with his foot, covering his mouth as he stared at the floor.

“This is what I am worth to you? Is this… all of this, this is just—”

Mako stepped closer, carefully. Jamison didn’t move, staring down at the papers. He wanted to be closer, to touch him. To keep him close and beg him to please forgive him, that he had changed, that he—

Mako had to tell him.

“I… I wanted to. I am—was a mercenary. But I changed. You changed me, Jamie.” His hands rose up slowly, reaching towards Jamison’s face. “You—”

Jamison moved away from Mako’s touch.

Mako had to swallow the choked noise that came from his throat.

“You fuckin’ liar,” Jamison spat out. “You were using me. That day, that… That kiss,” Jamison clenched his fists, biting his lower lip harshly enough that a little blood oozed out of it. “Ya were getting me to trust you, so you could…”

He gripped at his hair and pulled hard, letting out a pained whine. “It was all a trick! It was—everything was a lie! Ya fuckin’ lied to me so ya could fuckin’ sell me!”

“Everything changed! I am not that man anymore. I—” The words kept spilling from Mako’s mouth, unable to be stopped. “I did a terrible thing, a horrible mistake, but I’ve been trying to fix it—”

“Fix it?!” Jamison stepped back, pointing a slender finger at Mako. “How tha’ fuck ya tryin’ to fix all of this?! All of what you’ve done?! Do ya understand just what tha’ fuck this means?! What ye did?!”

“I—”

“Fuck you! Who tha’ fuck ya think ye are?! Ya fuckin—ya fuckin’ pretending that ye were supportin’ me, that ye were—” He covered his mouth with his hand, hyperventilating. “And I let you touch me, I let you… fuck! What the fuck is yer goddamn bloody problem?! What is yer—Do ya get off it?! Do ya get off manipulatin’ me?! Is this some sick game for ye?!”

“I love you!” Mako yelled. He attempted to approach Jamison but the young man just kept backing away. “Jamison, I would do anything for you, I would—”

“How am I supposed ta’ believe ya, eh?! What is this is just another one of yer ploys to sell me?! Ya said that fuckin’ bullshit before, and ya sure were still plannin’ on sellin’ me out! How ya expect me to fuckin’ trust you?!”

“I killed those men! I killed them to protect you, at the Winter Ball!”

“Your fuckin’ partners in crime! Ya were gonna fuckin’ sell me to them! Ya—”

A sudden realization hit Jamison, his face paling. He cradled, then grabbed his hair, forcefully
pulling, his entire body contorting forward in horrifying realization.

“This is your fault. All of this—this is your fault.”

He went on to grab his right arm, touching his prosthetic, squeezing. “This is your fault. All of this, all—”

His eyes went wide as he stared at Mako. He’d lost it, teeth completely bared. The soft features that Mako loved so much were twisted in a way he had never seen before. It aged him, made him look wild and horrible, not himself.

“You killed my father.”

Mako’s heart dropped to his stomach. His knees faltered, and he had to struggle to keep standing up. He gasped for air, mind racing.

“No, Jamie, I—”

“This is all your fucking fault! You fucking killed my father! You fucking—My father is fucking dead because of you!” he hollered, screaming and spitting. He pressed tighter against the prosthetic, losing any sense of himself. “And—and you fucking—you fucking comforted me! You fucking were there for me! For something that you goddamn fucking did!”

His body moved wildly, from one side to the other. His nervous ticks had multiplied by one hundred, fingers twitching and teeth biting into his bloodied and bruised lip. It was a new level of grotesque.

“My father is dead because of you! My father is fucking gone! My fucking limbs are gone! This is—This is fucking your fault! All of it!”

He kicked the papers still spread around the floor, sending them flying.

“This was all yer damn plan! Ya damn fucking planned all of this! I would be more goddamn fucking expensive if I was a king, heh?! Is that right?!”

“Jamison, no! This was—Everything is my fault, but I didn’t—It isn’t what I wanted. I wanted nothing of this, I only wanted you to be safe. I wanted you to be okay, I—”

The moment Mako touched Jamison shoulder the young monarch pulled his rapier from its sheath. He pressed it against Mako’s neck, the tip not piercing, but still pressing. Mako stayed very, very still.

“Don’t you fucking touch me.” His eyes were red and puffy, mouth twisted into a snarl. “You… you fucking… I can’t believe you.”

“Jamison,” Mako’s voice was choked, but he was holding back the tears. The way Jamison stared at him was something straight out of his worst nightmares. His mind traveled back to the way he’d tenderly held Jamison the previous day, the way the moonlight illuminated his face so softly, a look of adoration in his eyes.

It was gone. It was all gone, and it was his fault.

“‘I believe in you’, heh? ‘You’re better than them’…” He spat on the floor. “The fucking nerve.”

Mako was as still as a statue, not even daring breathe loudly. It hurt, the way Jamison’s face stared at him. The way his eyes, red and wet, glared up at him.
“It was all a lie, wasn’t it?” Jamison choked, licking his dry lips in an attempt to not cry. “Everythin’, up to now… it’s a lie, isn’t it? It is all a lie.”

“No.” Mako whispered softly. “I love you. I would die for you, Jamison.”

“Then die,” Jamison whispered, pressing the tip of the rapier harder into Mako’s neck. A bead of blood poured from the small puncture wound, but Mako let it.

It was what he deserved. It was all his fault. Jamison was right—because of Mako, Jamison had lost everything. He had lost his arms, lost his father—he lost his entire life, and his dignity. This should have never happened. Mako should have never gotten so close; he should have never let himself fall in love with Jamison. It was his biggest mistake, and he deserved to die for it.

If dying would make Jamison content, if it could bring him peace from what Mako had done, then he would die.

But the blow never came. He just felt the burn at his throat.

Mako opened his eyes. Jamison was sobbing, gasping for air as tears flowed freely from his eyes. His cheeks were red, as were his eyes. He wouldn’t stop crying, his entire frail body shaking as he held the rapier to Mako’s neck.

He continued to sob as he covered his face with one hand, sobbing into his palm. It was loud and messy, full of despair and horror. Mako was still, resisting the urge to touch him.

“Leave…” he choked out, shoulders hunching into himself as he kept crying. “If I ever see you again, I will murder you. I—I—” A pained sound came out of his throat.

“Jamie—”

“Leave!” He swung the rapier once again, pointed at Mako. His entire frame was shaking, but he still pointed it straight just like Mako had taught him to.

Mako eyes were getting red, guts twisting in shame and guilt and something more. He wanted to puke. He wanted to cry. There were so many things he wanted to do that he couldn’t, no matter how much he wanted it.

“I cannot believe it,” Jamison said, staring straight at Mako’s gaze. “I almost gave away my kingdom for a pig.”

Mako closed his eyes, shame filling every corner of his being. He nodded, before turning his back on Jamison and leaving. He did not look back.

He left of the room. The hallways were empty, not a single soul around. Even if there were, he probably wouldn’t have noticed. He still didn’t look back as he arrived to his room automatically, his hand reaching for his bag of things. He didn’t even notice what was inside, he just took it and left.

His body felt numb as he got out, continuing to walk forward. His mind was full of white noise. Nothing made sense. It felt as if he was watching his own body from the outside walk towards the entrance, reaching the main door and leaving.

He probably was asked questions, but he didn’t notice. He didn’t care. Mako couldn’t remember if he said anything—maybe. He didn’t care.

Mako kept going, forward and forward, the edges of his vision blurring with everything, the colors
smudging against each other and leaking into the rest. They twisted, moved and twitched, the buildings moving, but Mako didn’t realize, didn’t care.

People stared at him, he knew this. He felt their eyes bearing holes into his back, but they were nothing. Nothing but shapes and smudges. Who were they to judge him? Nothing but rectangles and colors and shapes. They were nothing to him. Nothing that would matter. Nothing would ever matter to him.

He was aimless. He didn’t know where he was going. Mako walked without thinking, the shapes and colors becoming more blurred and indistinguishable as he unconsciously reached his previous house.

Mako found himself attempting to open the front door, but it wouldn’t go, so he ripped it open. He didn’t care. He closed it behind him, dropping the bag of whatever he was holding and making a straight line towards the bed—his old bed.

It was still there, and by this point nothing made sense—nothing was made of shapes, the shapes had transformed into blots and into nothing but explosions of noise and grey and white colors.

His ears were burning with intensity, and he suddenly was on the bed. He didn’t take off his armor, the metal bits digging into his gut and his skin. Mako stared at the other end of the room. The shapes and forms twisted and danced in his vision, mocking him, calling him pathetic for what he had done.

Mako started to openly sob, his tears falling into the pillow below him, fists grabbing tight into the sheets underneath him.

He was alone.
Mako woke up several times. He’d closed his blinds, so no light seeped into his room. It was dark and quiet. Every time he woke up, he would blindly move and take off a piece of his armor to throw it to the ground below where it clanked harshly. One by one he removed them all. His sore body complained from having slept with them on, but he didn’t care. His mind was still a tired haze as he stripped himself, until he took away the last piece bound to him.

It bounced uselessly on the ground, and Mako was finally free of the weight of it. He shuffled on the bed, finally able to properly lean on it. The room was still quiet and dark, and he didn’t stand up. Instead, he wrapped himself in the blankets and went to sleep once more.

He would wake up for some minutes, but he didn’t get out of bed. He would ignore it, and simply go back to sleep. He doesn’t know how much time passed since he got there and now, but his body started to feel sore from lying on the bed so much.

Mako eventually got up. He didn’t even know why, just his body working on its own. He stood, his bed creaking when he relieved it from all that weight. His toes touched the cool wooden floor, creaking with every step he made as he approached the bathroom.

After pissing, Mako rubbed his eyes. He went through everything that happened.

Jamison had found out about his secret.

Jamison was about to kill Mako, but didn’t.

The more he thought about it, the more it hurt. Mako dug his fingertips into his temple, as if he was trying to dig them into his brain to take the memory away. It was too fresh, raw and painful. He didn’t want to even think about it.

Instead, he opted to walk around his house. He hadn’t been there for several months, so he wanted to see if everything was in order.

Back when he was hired as a bodyguard, he didn’t even bother to take the furniture out of his house,
because he knew he may need it in the future. Eventually, he forgot about it. Everything seemed in order, however—nothing was out of place. Exactly the same as when he left it, apart from the thick layer of dust.

He was at first slightly surprised no one had attempted to steal anything from inside, but then it made sense. Everybody in town knew who he was, and knew better than steal his stuff. They knew he would snap their little necks like they were nothing. It brought him slight joy, the fact that even after so many months, everybody still respected and feared him like that.

He sat down on the couch, a cloud of dirt floating up at the motion. It clung to his body, but he didn’t care.

It was quiet—nothing had been so quiet in such a long time. Normally the background was full of Jamison’s laughter, his golden eyes focused on Mako—

He took a deep breath. He couldn’t do this to himself. He needed to get a grip on reality, decide what to do.

The bag he took with him when he left the castle lay at his feet. Mako sighed, pulling it onto his lap and opening it. He looked at it for several seconds, until he decided to just dump its contents on the little wooden table in front of him.

It was gold. It was all the gold he had been given while he was hired. Mako looked at it shining on the wood. He didn’t do the exact math, but he was pretty sure he could live comfortably with all the money gathered in there. He would never have to work another day in his life.

He left it on the table as he made his way to the kitchen. Aimlessly, he didn’t think as he opened the door to the pantry. There was nothing inside, obviously. Even if there was, it would have been long rotten.

Mako sighed, making his way towards the bed once again. There was nothing for him in this house, and he didn’t want to face loneliness. He’d rather sleep his life away.

He went to the bed, slipping in once more, and fell into deep sleep.

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He wanted to remain in bed for all of eternity. It was the only thing he wanted. Every time he woke, he felt that disgusting feeling in his gut—he wanted it gone. He wanted everything gone. And yet he knew he had to get up. His stomach was rumbling, he hadn’t eaten since… since he got there, which he had honestly no idea when that was.

Mako groaned, standing up. He was a damn adult, he couldn’t lay depressed in bed for the rest of his life. He needed to get back into his life, whatever it was now. He needed to move on from that spoiled king.

Just thinking of him made his heart ache.

Mako sat on the couch once again, and the gold he had left in the table was still there, undisturbed. He could do this. He needed to remember how to get back on track with his life.

When his father died, Mako had at least his mother. Then she fell ill, and passed away. Mako was in a similar pit of depression back when this happened, and he tried to remember just how he managed to go through it.
One small step at a time. Get out of the house. Do something, but just don’t stay in bed like a sick dog all day. He could do that. One small thing today, one tomorrow... and soon enough, he’d be back on track.

Mako grabbed some of the gold coins. He looked at himself in the mirror, but he looked like a mess. Going over to his wardrobe, he was thankful he didn’t bother to take all his clothes with him to the castle. He was pretty sure Jamison was burning down every single thing of his at the moment.

He sighed, painfully. He needed to stop thinking about the young monarch, but every single little thought brought him back.

Mako changed clothes to something better, more comfortable and less wrinkled. He was thankful the moths hadn’t gotten to his clothes, so they were still wearable. Once he was ready, he got out of his house. The sky was cloudy, and the smell of rain was in the air. He took a deep breath.

He immediately regretted stepping outside, but he was a damn grown man and he was going to the goddamn market to buy groceries.

His thumb caressed the golden coins in his pocket, and after closing his door he ventured forward.

Mako was afraid that people would notice and approach him. It was a stupid fear, considering no one had ever done that before. They knew who he was, and they knew that he was the royal bodyguard—if they had any curiosity, however, they didn’t say. His massive size and reputation prevented anyone from daring to venture forth. Good. He didn’t want to talk to anyone.

He bought oatmeal, rice, beans—general things that weren’t hard to cook and that didn’t require too much attention. The last thing he wanted was to spend his time cooking. When it came time to pay, he simply placed a gold coin on the counter—the woman eyes widened, and Mako told her to keep the change. He didn’t care.

On his way back to his house, Mako took a glimpse at a newspaper stand. He made counts from the date on the paper, and realized two weeks had passed since he had returned. He was about to buy one of the newspapers, but decided not to. He couldn’t bear to read anything about Jamison, good or bad. Even thinking of his name made Mako’s heart ache in pain.

He felt at ease when he returned home, closing the door behind him. He let the grocery bags drop, his things rolling out and onto the floor. Then Mako realized he probably shouldn’t have done that, so he started picking them up once again, sighing during the process. It was so stupid, everything.

Once he actually put the groceries away in his pantry, he grabbed the instant oatmeal, putting some in his bowl and then pouring some milk on it. He grabbed a spoon, and started to eat. He stood in the middle of his kitchen, in complete silence apart from the sound of his mouth.

He didn’t want to think on it. As soon as he was done, he put the empty bowl on the sink and retreated to his bed. Mako fell asleep without any thought on his mind, head blank as sleep consumed him.

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It took him some more days to venture outside of his house once again. He stood in the doorway, and saw his little garden. It looked terrible, unwatered and full of weeds. Mako wasn’t a person to keep a nice garden, but he felt like he should do something about it. But on the other hand, he didn’t feel like it.
His mind jumped to the old farm his parents owned before they died. Another unhappy memory he had to push out of his mind.

Mako scratched his chin. Maybe just sweeping around would give him something to do. There was honestly no reason to ever do anything again—he had enough to survive until he died, and to just do that was very tempting.

One part of him wanted to stop being such a moody asshole, but another part of him just wanted to crawl into bed and never get out.

He opted to clean his house a little. Mako grabbed a broom and started to sweep around all the dust that had gathered in his house. It was a half assed job, not bothering to reach under the furniture or corners, but it at least looked a bit more decent than when he first arrived.

Mako sighed after finishing it, propping the broom against the wall and looking at the floor. It was still dirty, but it looked far better.

The silence was deafening. Mako wasn’t used to everything being so quiet. It wasn’t until that moment he realized just how much Jamison’s voice filled whatever room he was in.

He missed it.

Mako scratched the back of his neck. The sun was starting to set but he didn’t want to go to bed yet. It felt strange, not wanting to really leave and yet not wanting to stay.

He made a decision.

Mako took some of the golden coins, and went outside. Even after many months, he still remembered how to get to the pub from his house. It didn’t take him long before he reached the place.

Mako stood in front of the door, and could hear the noise coming from the inside. He hesitated at first, his hand hovering just above the doorknob.

It had been a very, very long time.

He took a deep breath and opened the door.

Mako entered and tried to pretend like everything was the same. People looked at him like people tended to do because of his size and presence. But they diverted their gazes almost immediately. Good.

He sighed, getting to the bar. He would have sat in one of the stools but he had no idea if it would hold his weight. The bartender nodded at him, placing a pint of beer in front of him. Mako nodded back, taking the glass in his hand and taking a sip.

Bitter.

“The chairs on the tables can hold your weight,” the bartender said, without making eye contact. Mako would have normally have punched him for that comment, but something inside of him just didn’t react. He took his glass and retreated to the table that was the farthest away from everybody else.

He sat down, taking another big gulp of his beer. It was even more bitter, but it moved something in his belly.

Everything was so familiar to him. Like the old times.
The memory of Jamison laughing, drinking a sip of beer before making weird faces saying how bitter it was, burned in Mako’s mind.

He gULPED down the entire beer in one go, slamming the glass on the table. It was time to drown his memory.
Weeds overran the place, crawling up to every foundation that they could reach. What used to be paths were now gone, grass covering the gravel that used to be there.

Mako stood in front of his abandoned little house. The paint was peeling off, leaving the walls almost bare. It was in worse state than he imagined it. The outside was overgrown, the windows cracked, the door torn open.

He sighed. It has been several years since he had been on the farm—since his mother had died, actually. There was no reason for him to stay in that place.

It used to be beautiful, full of healthy animals and crops. His father and his mother worked hard every single day. They had harsh days, but it was a good childhood. Mako was happy.

Then his father died.

A heart attack, they were told. He was old and overworked. It happened; it was part of life. That’s what he was told, at his funeral. It was normal, it was natural.

It didn’t make Mako less upset.

His mother took on his father’s chores, and even when Mako helped, it was far too much. She was old, and got sick. They sold the animals, and Mako tried to take care of the crops, but it was not enough.

So he started to kill. He was good at it, too. Very good. Good size, amazing strength—he made a name of himself in the arena.

But no matter how much money he won, his mother still died.

And then he left. There was nothing else for him in that place.

Mako didn’t expect to ever return, but something just got over him. An itch. Or just straight
loneliness—whatever it was, now he was standing in front of his old farm house.

He stepped inside and found the building bare apart from dust and leaves. He had gotten rid of all the furniture and gotten better, way back when. He didn’t want to be reminded of his past. He was a new person. A new Mako.

He walked around the empty house, memories of his childhood rushing to his head. He sighed at just how horrid it was now, empty, broken, and abandoned.

The animal pens were empty, and had been for a very long time. He could remember the smell of the pigs, how they would gather near to Mako for food.

He missed it.

He stayed in that place for several hours, doing nothing. He walked every inch of the house, where the crops used to be.

Once it was night time, he left, leaving his old house behind. Just as before, there was nothing there left for him. He had to move on.

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Mako was spending most of his days on the bar. He had become a regular in it once again, drinking and drinking until he couldn’t see straight and made his way home. Better than sitting in alone, wallowing in misery. At least now there was booze in it.

He always sat in the corner, not bothering anybody. He took a sip of his drink, the bitter taste spreading over his tongue.

Mako sighed as he took a breath, relaxing on his seat. There were a lot of people on the bar that day, getting drunk and eating. Mako didn’t care, as long as they didn’t bother him and kept his glass full.

“Hey—hey you!”

Mako didn’t pay attention, simply taking another drink out of his glass. He didn’t think that they were talking to him, so he just ignored.

“Hey—I’m talking to you!”

He lifted his gaze to see a muscular man looking at him, one finger pointing in Mako’s direction.

“I know you! I’ve seen you, you’re—” he walked towards Mako, stumbling, as he was quite drunk. “You used to be a royal guard, huh?!”

The bar went silent. Mako’s grip on his glass was so hard he almost broke it, cracking the handle. He looked back at his drink, taking a sip out of it.

“You are! I saw you! Biggest motherfucker I’ve ever seen!” He laughed while the other patrons stared at him. Mako didn’t humor him, ignoring the drunken man while getting drunk himself. “What are you doing in a place like this, eh?”

Mako could tell everybody was paying a lot of attention to that question in particular. No one dared to ask it, but they all wanted to know. The environment became very awkward and uncomfortable, people shifting in their seats and looking at their glasses, no longer talking.

Mako just took another sip from his beer.
“So what, huh? You quit? Too bored babysitting someone, huh? Better stay here and get shitfaced? Aha!” He was getting uncomfortably close. “What was it like, huh? You had to follow his sorry ass everywhere?”

Mako didn’t do a thing. He could feel all their eyes on him, waiting, expecting for something to happen.

“You dog! That’s what you became huh! A military—a military dog!” He laughed loudly, his foot stomping on the ground. “You filthy animal! You were someone and now look at you! Ahahahaha!”

Mako didn’t care. He kept ignoring him. He would have snapped his neck for that offense, but he was far too old and too tired for this stupid shit. He just wanted to take his damn drink.

“Hey mate, shut up,” said one of the man’s friends. He seemed to be more sober than his muscular friend, trying to defuse the situation. “Stop bothering him.”

“You worried? I mean—l-look at this piece of shit! He used to be someone, you know! Look! Now he’s a dog!”

Mako took a deep breath as he kept berating him, but it didn’t affect Mako. Maybe it was true. He used to be someone, but now he was just some random guy in a bar getting shitfaced. So what? He had the right to, damnit.

“Stop it, man! Shut up!” another one of his friends shouted, but it seemed the man was too far gone into his ranting.

“Why did you quit, huh? Did it get too boring for you?!?” He slammed the table with his hand, shaking it. Mako had to take the pint to prevent it from falling. “I bet that guy was a piece of shit huh! I bet you got too fucking tired of him, and following his sorry spoiled ass!”

“Stop, man, that’s the king—”

“I don’t care! He is an idiot! Little idiot that can’t do a thing! He is a fucking piece of shit—”

He couldn’t finish the phrase before Mako’s palm was wrapped around his neck. He lifted him from the ground, holding him up for some seconds before throwing him against the ground once again, breaking the floor.

Everybody stared silently as the man laid on rubble on the wooden floor, unconscious. Mako didn’t expect anyone to try to fight him at all, but even if they did, he was ready for it. ...But it never happened. His friends just turned back to drinking, uncomfortable and nervous, but everybody was staring at Mako.

It was far too overwhelming. He stepped over the man, leaving some gold coins on the counter for the bartender.

“Sorry for your floor,” he said as he slipped by.

His blood was boiling, adrenaline rushing through his body. He wished someone would have stopped him. Mako had hoped his friends had tried to fight him, for someone to have stepped in. But they let him. They let him go, but Mako had so much anger in himself he wanted to destroy everything. He wanted to stomp on the man’s skull until his brain leaked out of his ears.

He took a deep breath, trying to breathe out his anger. He needed to stop this. He needed to stop being so angry when someone talked about… him that way.
It was the past. It was done. It wasn’t like Jamison would hear him and welcome Mako back with open arms after what he did.

Mako took the long route home. He needed to clear his head.

It was already darkening, his footsteps audible in the cool weather. There were a lot of people gathered in the newsstands, but at first Mako ignored it. He didn’t care about anything. It wasn’t until he saw way too many people gathering, newspapers in their hands and gawking at them.

Curiosity overcame him, so he went to one of the least crowded newsstands and gave a coin to the man, grabbing a newspaper from him. He didn’t actually care to read it right there; the commotion of people was too much. He would read it when he got home.

It took him several more minutes to make it back home, still buzzed from the alcohol. He sighed, sitting on his couch and stretching, before he grabbed the newspapers. The first thing that caught his attention was the date, and from it he could tell that two months had passed since he had been fired. He groaned at that; time passed strange now that he was at home without doing anything. His eyes focused on the headline.

His fingers ripped through the newspaper without noticing it. They dug holes on the paper, tight between his digits.

“King Fawkes has officially become Engaged.”
Rice

Chapter Summary

His mind went blank.

Chapter Notes

Mako makes a decision

Hello! New chapter!! We are getting to the REALLY good part of the story... well honestly all of this has been so good for me to write HEHEHE. i just love it so bad, and I hope you guys love it as well!!

REMINDER, now that I have a beta reader, the chapters might be a little bit more late than normal!!

Thank you for reading!! I hope you like it!!

shoutout to my bro nami for beta reading!!

His mind went blank. When he came to his little coffee table was in shambles. Splinters of wood littered the floor.

Mako’s hands were shaking, the newspaper crumpled uselessly on the floor. He took deep breaths, trying to get his heart rate to go back to normal.

However, his mind was full of static, no matter how much he tried to compose himself. He dragged his palm across his face, feeling its heat. He needed to relax. He needed to calm down. He needed—he needed to do something.

Mako took another deep breath. This wasn’t working. He got out of his house and slipped into the night, taking a deep breath. The cool night air filled his lungs, but it was still too much. The edges of reality blurred together, and he had no idea what to do.

Jamison was going to get married.

Oh fuck, Jamison was going to get married.

Even thinking about it stirred his guts. It was such a horrifying thing, it crumpled him up and made his insides slosh around and burn with a mixture of hatred and despair.

Fuck.

He went inside again, but ignored the newspaper and the destroyed table. He went directly to his bedroom as white noise still flooded his ears. He ignored it all, tucking himself to bed and pretending it wasn’t there.
Mako forced himself into an uncomfortable sleep. That night, he didn’t dream.

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He stared at the ceiling for several minutes without actually thinking a single thing.

Morbid curiosity overwhelmed him. Jamison was going to get married, and as much as it pained him and made him want to throw up, a disgusting part of Mako wanted to know who he was going to marry.

Mako knew he shouldn’t read it. He knew he shouldn’t pay attention. He knew it would destroy him more than anything else in the world, and yet his brain screamed to do it, a self-destructive tendency he didn’t know what to do with. It was the same thing he’d had when he was young, the one that made him get upset on purpose, that drove him into doing things that he knew would make him upset.

He stood up, that destructive drive overcoming him. As he entered the living room he saw the destroyed table still in place. He was going to have to fix that sooner or later. Later, he decided. Instead he picked up the crumpled newspaper, smoothing it with his hands before he dared to read the actual article inside.

Mako took a deep breath, opening it and reading the actual description.

Mako didn’t actually bother reading the background or any other things—he was only interested in whoever Jamison was going to marry.

Princess Bianca Keaton. There was a photograph of her in the newspaper.

Her skin was as white as snow. Big blue eyes, with thick bushy eyebrows. Her nose was thin and small. Her white face was decorated with freckles; thin pink lips. Her hair was pitch black and short-uncommon from a princess. There was a small crown on top of her face, and she looked young, about Jamison’s age.

She was beautiful, honestly. But wasn’t all royalty like that? Beautiful, flawless people you wished you could be.

He sighed, reading on about her, but he just skipped over the words. He didn’t care. He didn’t care if she was the youngest of her siblings, or the fact that she had gone to a boarding school in Australia. He wanted to rip her photograph to shreds.

That wasn’t fair. That girl had nothing to do with any of it, she was only a woman that was now to marry the king, and would become queen. Mako had no right to wish her ill.

But he wanted to, so much. He wanted her to disappear and Jamison to appear on his doorstep, and tell Mako that he forgave him. He wanted to be back in the castle and touch Jamison’s skin and kiss his lips.

Now she would be the one doing that with him, and it burnt him. He couldn’t even stand looking at her picture anymore.

Mako dropped the newspaper, sighing as he sat on the couch. It was barely morning and yet he wished he could go back to sleep. It ruined his mood like he knew it would. He rubbed his face with his hands, pressing at his eyelids with his fingers. He did this to himself.

He got up from his couch, making his way towards the kitchen. He took a metal pot and put it on the
fire, along with some water. It was early, and maybe some cheap coffee would help. He sat at the
table at the kitchen as he waited for the water to boil.

Jamison was going to get married. He was going to marry a pretty princess, and they would have one
or more children, and they would govern for a long time.
Mako didn’t know why he was so surprised and hurt. Part of him knew that this would happen. It
was something he always knew was going to happen. No matter how much Jamison promised it
wouldn’t, a part inside of Mako always knew. It was natural. It was logical. It was what was
supposed to happen.

But fuck, did it hurt. It hurt so much for it to actually happen.

How did this happen? He was a warrior. He was a grown man, and he was letting his feelings for a
youngster destroy him from the inside out. Somehow this kid had wiggled his way into his heart.

He stared at the table, glaring at one of the indentations on the wooden surface. The water started to
boil, bubbling up and spilling out of its pot.

Jamison had moved on.

Mako gripped the table, hard. Jamison had gotten over Mako already and gotten himself a fiancé. He
was going to get married, and meanwhile Mako was almost catatonic. Him, the grown man, the
adult, the one that should have moved on immediately, the day that it happened.

This boy had changed him for the worse.

He turned his face to see the pot was almost empty, all the water boiled away. What a mess.
Everything was a terrible mess.

He stood up to grab the pot and put it away, his hand grabbing at the metal without thinking. It burnt
his hand and Mako immediately dropped it. It clanked on the floor, and Mako stared at it as his hand
burned.

This wasn’t supposed to happen. He was supposed to have sold off that spoiled kid, and at this
moment he’d be in a cabin somewhere in the woods, relaxing, never having to deal with this stupid
shit in his life. But instead he was here, heartbroken because of a monarch.

It was still daytime, but Mako didn’t give a shit. He slipped into his room and into the bed sheets.
The less awake he was, the better his life was.

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Mako didn’t venture out of his house until it was necessary. He cleaned the mess he made with the
coffee table, and by clean, he meant mostly just gathering the wooden pieces and dumping them
outside of his house. His days consisted of waking up, eating and then going to sleep. Occasionally,
he would visit his farm.

He had to go to the market. He had run out of food, and as much as he’d rather spend his days inside
his house, he actually needed food to survive. It seemed like he still had some will to live left inside
of him, considering he actually ate instead of wasting away.

There were a lot of people in the streets today. Mako wondered if he had forgotten a festival or
something, and cursed himself for not checking. He’d rather not have so many people around him. It
was unbearable, and he wanted to swat all of them away. He hurried to the market and bought
everything he needed to survive the next week.
Rice, beans, milk—he had enough money to buy actual fancy things, but Mako didn’t care. The less he had to cook, the better.

He was holding his bags as he tried to make his way towards home, but the main road had closed by now, people gathering at its edges.

Mako huffed, curious, but not enough to actually ask. Instead he just sighed, trying to walk around the blockages and find a way home.

His height allowed him to see what was happening just as people started to whistle and holler. Mako turned his head around to see what all the commotion was for.

A very elegant carriage surrounded by soldiers passed by, beautiful horses pulling it. It was decorated with white decorations and symbols from another kingdom, a symbol Mako had recognized before.

Princess Bianca was inside.

He didn’t notice himself dropping the grocery bags at his feet, his things rolling around. In a daze, without knowing what else to do, he kneeled and picked them up. The cheering and screaming from the people around him fell on deaf ears. It was nothing to him. He tried his best to not look at the carriage that had Jamison’s future wife inside.

He finished picking up everything and turned away, to anywhere. He couldn’t afford to be near that woman, even if he couldn’t see her. He just walked away.

It took him a while to actually arrive back home. He had to take many detours. Anything to avoid people. He didn’t want to face anybody.

He returned to his sad pathetic world in his house, and as always, as the pathetic man he was, he put his groceries away and went to bed, ignorant of the cheering and the events on the outside world.

It was not his world anymore.

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Days passed and Mako did nothing but stare into his food.

His life had become a pathetic mockery of what it used to be. The man who he used to be. It was nothing but this, doing nothing but sleeping and eating and sleeping again, not living, barely surviving.

That day he decided to go to his old farm once again. It was something that made him feel peaceful, nostalgic for a time he was a better man, or at least was better at pretending he was.

He missed it. He missed his previous life, and now that he looked back, he wished he’d never taken that job to become Jamison’s bodyguard. His life would have turned out for the better, he was sure of it, if only because he wouldn’t have to deal with what he was currently feeling.

He missed working the land, tending to the crops and the animals. His farm was now ruined, and he would probably be able to build anything in it unless he spent far more time trying to repair it. It was a lost cause. An unfixable part of his childhood.

Mako knew he had to move on.
A farm. A new one, with pigs and chickens. Crops he could tend himself. A personal farm—he probably wouldn’t need to sell things to survive, but the idea was far too tempting. It was where he came from, and it was where he should go back to in the end.

Mako thought about it. He probably had enough money to start a farm, but then dread filled him.

He couldn’t build a farm there, not next to the castle where Jamison lived with his new lover. No, he couldn’t. He would never move on, no matter how many pigs he bought or how many crops he tended. He wouldn’t be able to ever move on from Jamison.

He sighed as he left.

The thought swam through his head as he made his way towards his home. The castle loomed over him, an ugly reminder of what he had lost.

Something inside of Mako snapped. It was something like resolve, something that burnt hot as he made his way towards home. He entered quickly, grabbing the bag of golden coins he had gotten from working in the castle. He poured all of them on the kitchen table. There were so many they fell into the floor, making metallic rattles.

It would be enough.

Mako couldn’t move on where he was currently, but that was okay. The castle and living basically in the same town where Jamison lived would be an ugly reminder for the rest of his life until he forced them out. He would force them out himself.

If he wasn’t going to move on, he would force himself to move on.

Mako grabbed a bunch of coins, way more than enough, and made his way out. He needed to go to the train station.

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Mako sat at the bar, drinking his pint of beer calmly from his preferred corner. Strangely enough, he wasn’t immediately kicked out when he entered, considering the fact that he knocked out a guy few weeks ago.

While there were still ugly reminders of his past all everywhere around him, Mako had found a new resolution. The bitter taste of the beer now was welcoming, warm and tender instead of a reminder of what he had lost.

Soon he would leave this wretched town and this wretched country. He had bought a ticket to another country, away from this one. He would leave in a week and would finally be able to rebuild his life.

He had enough money to get a house and build a farm. Live comfortably. After all, since the beginning that had been his end goal—to live somewhere peaceful, away from everybody’s bullshit.

Mako had already packed most of the things he needed. It was only a matter of time before he left and never came back.

Mako took another sip of his beer.

It would be the newest and last chapter of his life. He needed this. He could keep going with his life instead of wasting away like a rotten corpse in his home.
He decided to spend most of the day in the bar. He was comfortable, with not too many people and a calm environment. The music was low and he actually for once enjoyed the low chatter among the patrons. He was at peace.

Then the door swung open, a small figure seeping through it and almost falling. Immediately all eyes fell on the figure, who gasped and panted in exhaustion.

Mako ignored it, going back to his beer. It was strange, but not too out of the ordinary. He saw from the corner of his eye how the woman closed the door shakily, her clothes messy and limping through the bar. He didn’t see her face, but didn’t bother.

Unfortunately he could hear her footsteps approaching.

Mako grunted, wondering why a random woman was going to approach him now. He didn’t take jobs since he became a bodyguard, but it was normal before for people to ask him to perform jobs. He would decline—he didn’t need that kind of shit right now.

“S-sir Rutledge.”

The voice was familiar, and it made Mako immediately turn towards her. His brows knitted when he recognized the woman.

Mako couldn’t remember her name, but it was the young woman Jamison had paid to retrieve the newspapers months ago. She was panting, hair sticking to her face and beads of sweat (And blood…?) rolling down her face. She could barely stand, exhausted from what Mako guessed was running around. She had to prop herself up with the table Mako was sitting at.

“S-sir!” she could barely speak, she was panting so much. Mako stared at her and her ruined clothes without saying a thing, not knowing what was happening or why this woman was at this bar, speaking to him. “Sir...”

“You worked at the castle,” Mako said silently, putting his pint down. “Didn’t you?”

“Y-yes, I’m sorry, I—”

“Take your time.”

“No! There’s—there’s no time!” she yelled, her messy hair flying all over her face and frame. She looked like she was in the verge of tears. “I was told I could find you here! Please, you need to come with me!”

Mako blinked, confused.

“What do you want?” he asked, without any care. He didn’t have time for any cryptic messages.

“There is no time! Please!” she begged, but Mako didn’t budge. He wasn’t going to be dragged to God knows where.

“If there really is no time, then go straight to the point. I do not have time for unnecessary crap.”

Technically not true, considering he was just drinking in a bar, but she didn’t need to know that.

Her face twisted into a look of desperation, but she kept calm as she attempted to find the right words to get Mako off his seat. She looked around, carefully, so no one else could hear her as she leaned close to Mako to whisper her panicked words.
“The castle is under attack.”
Mako stared at the woman, who was staring back at him. Her eyes were wide and desperate, sweat rolling down her face. Her shoulders rose up and down in exhaustion. Mako looked around, it didn’t actually looked like anybody heard them- otherwise there would be more of a reaction.

He took a sip of his beer.

“Well?”

“Well, what?”

“Aren’t- aren’t you going to do something?” Her voice raised, but still low so no one would listen.

“Why should I? I was fired.”

“Are you-” She was on the verge of screaming but stopped herself. “I know, but we need your help!”

“Like I said, I was fired. I do not work there anymore,” He stood up, leaving money on the table as he made his way to the outside. He had enough being reminded of what happened months ago. “The King himself left that very clear.”

“You don’t understand, You have to- wait!”

Mako ignored her. He left the bar, not looking back.

If the Castle was being attacked, then that was not his problem. The Royal Guards could take care of it. The castle was full of them- he was not necessary at all. He doesn’t even know why the maid decided to hunt him down.
Maybe it was one last cruel joke from the universe, mocking him for what he lost.

He chuckled. There was no need to be so poetic.

“...Please! Don’t leave, I-” He could hear the woman chasing after him, making her way through people. Mako ignored her, trying to occupy his mind on other things.

He had everything ready for his trip. The train trip was going to be long— he should get one or two books to read on the way. He should stop at the bookstore. That sounded pleasant.

“Mako Rutledge!”

Mako kept going. The woman managed to catch up with him, blocking his path— or at least thinking she could block his path at all. Mako could just easily pick her up and drop her off the side and nothing would happen. It would be cute, except that it was incredibly annoying.

“You need to help-”

“I don’t need to do anything at all.” He loomed over her, and she started to fidget nervously but stood her ground. “His Highness has many men under his command, I am sure that they can take care of whatever is happening in the castle.”

“You don’t get it!” She screamed, and immediately looked around her. No one was looking in their direction, which was good he supposed. Whatever was happening, she obviously didn’t want anybody to know. “I- we can’t talk here, I beg of you- ten minutes- five! Five minutes. then you can decide if you want to help or not!”

“Why do I have to humor you? I have no obligation to the castle.”

“You have an obligation to your King. As a Citizen, as a-”

“No.”

That was all. He walked away, without looking back. He wasn’t going to get roped into this. So there was an attack to the castle. So what, Jamison had enough guards to be protected. He was the King now, so he had plenty of security around. He was safe. There was no need for Mako to get back there. It’s not like Jamison even wanted him there.

The woman ran up to him again, trying to physically stop him this time. This was getting incredibly annoying, who the hell did she think she was?

“Move.”

“Sir Rutledge,”

“I said, Move.”

She stood her ground. Very few people have done that, and he had to admit that maid had guts. It’s not like it would get her anywhere, however.

“There is a coup happening.”

“A,” Mako blinked. “A coup?”

“We,” She looked around. “We can’t talk here. Come on,”
Mako felt in a daze. He followed the woman to an alley, away from everybody. His brain was still trying to process those words, and what exactly meant.

“There is a coup happening, right now. This instant. It—” She was trying to keep calm, but she was looking desperate with every second that passed.

“What do you mean? Who— who is—”

“It was an inside job,” She almost sobbed. “It just- I can’t—”

“Tell me how it started, right this instant.”

“I—” She took a deep breath. “I don’t know. I wasn’t there. I was in the servant quarters and, Guards came in and they rounded us up. They- they said that we needed to stay calm, but- they said that his Highness, the King, he- he wasn’t going to rule anymore. That they would take care of that. To not panic. But there was panic. People panicked. How could we not?

“Then… there was screaming. Guards running outside. They started to attack us because we didn’t comply. Some- some of us managed to escape but, everybody is on it. The guards, they- they were all in for it. They all are trying to kill him. They all want to kill him!”

“What about the royal advisors? Everybody else?”

“They are all in for it! They all were waiting for this to happen! Everybody is attacking! It’s a Coup! They want to kill him! We-we, the staff, the servitude- we’re the only ones that don’t know anything about it. We didn’t- I didn’t know!” The woman was sobbing now. “We hid and- I managed to escape and- and, I was told to look for you. And- please, we need to help. If we don’t do a thing, the King is going to die!”

It took a while for Mako to process all that information. All the guards. Every single one. The people that were supposed to protect him… He had no one.

“Every single person in the castle,” he whispered, the reality of it being far too horrifying.

“They’re… this is madness.”

“This is why we need your help. We all need your help.”

“I was fired. Do you know why? Do you know what I did?”

“I don’t care. We- we don’t care. The King, he is in danger. And-”

“How do you know you can trust me? For all you know I am also part of their little coup.”

“There… there is no one else. I know but- It’s a risk I needed to take.”

Mako finally remembered her name. Melissa. She stared straight at Mako, her young face tired and red with tears and blood. Somehow she managed to get away from the castle and was willing to go back.

“I know you’re different. You and… and him. The King. Fawkes. You’re different from everybody else. Why do you think we fought back when we heard they wanted to kill him? Everybody treats us like dirt, but- but you. You know how it feels to be treated like less! I know, and- and the King, he treats us like actual people. That’s… that’s why I trust him. And you. I trust you.”
Mako kept staring down at her. The alley felt small, crushing him. It was far too much to handle, too much information in such a small time, something that shouldn’t matter to him anymore. He didn’t want to be roped into this anymore. He decided to move on. He wanted to move on, and yet there she was, a girl that was tempting him to go back to what he left.

“You don’t know what I did.”

“Please help us. I- I don’t know what else to do.”

A part of him told him that it wasn’t his problem. Mako would move away, and then Jamison wouldn’t be his king and it wouldn’t be his problem anymore. He had no duties to him. This woman couldn’t do anything to drag him there- she was tiny, and would never overpower him. He could walk away and let Jamison deal with his own life.

And yet.

A fucking coup, everybody was in on it. Every person Jamison had trusted to protect and guiding where now in the process of incarcerating him, or even worse- executing him.

It was a disgrace. They had seen him grow, they had taken care of him and for what? All for that. To kill him. Murder him and to get the crown themselves, all a ploy for power. That is what it all was. Damned Jamison, who gave a fuck about him- he was in the way for what they truly wanted, and that was the power.

It made him sick.

Jamison, who had tried so hard to make things right and who had everybody’s best interest at heart, to be murdered and thrown away like nothing.

He would not let them do that. They had no right.

“I…” fuck, his heart squeezed at the thought of going back again, the thought of seeing Jamison. But he couldn’t let them. He couldn’t. “Okay. I’ll help you.”

The woman started to silently sob, probably out of joy.

“Thank you. Thank you, so much…” She hiccuped between sobs.

“I have to go to my home and get my weapons and armor.”

“I’ll follow you,” she said, probably still not convinced that Mako wouldn’t escape. He didn’t mind.

Mako was grateful that the romantic part of him didn’t get rid of the armor. He wore it all the way from the castle to his home when he was fired and didn’t have it in his heart to get rid of it. If Melissa was right and even the guards were against Jamison then he would need heavy power to counter them- he would need protection from every angle.

He put on his armour as fast as he could, retrieving his weapons as well. Melissa was still there when he exited, staring at him with hope. Mako felt uncomfortable at it, so he averted his eyes.

“How will we get in?” he asked, trying to ignore her eyes.

“I managed to squeeze in through the walls, but um- I… don’t think you’ll fit.” She nervously cupped her face with her hands, rubbing her cheeks deep in thought. “You can’t just walk in- they’ll recognize you…”
Her eyes lit right up. “Is there a chance they will think you also want to kill him?”

Mako thought about it. How would they know if he wanted in or not? For all they knew, he was fired and Mako wanted in on the opportunity to kill Jamison. Perhaps the best way to get in was by hiding in plain sight.

“Okay. You squeeze back inside the castle, tell them help is on the way.” Saying that was weird to Mako considering he was the *only* help that was coming in. It chilled him a little, but he had the strength of about a hundred men, hopefully that helped.

“What is the plan?” She asked, as they started to make their way towards the castle. There was no use in sitting and talking- they had little time.

“I’ll get in. Try to avoid guards and I’ll try to locate Jamison, his Highness. I’ll try to sneak him out of the castle.”

She nodded. It was a solid plan in paper, but Mako didn’t even know if Jamison would let him help, after all.

He could only but pray.

It didn’t take long for them to be in vicinity of the castle. From the outside it seemed normal, nothing weird happening. Entering from the front door might not be a good idea, but there several other doors.

“That door doesn’t seem to be guarded,” Melissa pointed to one of the doors, a small one that, if Roadhog recalled correctly was used to for the service. He climbed the gate, also surprisingly not guarded (All the action must be happening on the inside, he assumed).

“If I’m seen-” She choked up. “I have to leave now- you’re on your own. There is a secret passage which I am sure is not being guarded- I must enter there, then…”

“It’s okay. Go. I’ll take care of everything.”

She nodded, her eyes puffy and red. “Thank you. Thank you- for everything.”

She didn’t let Mako reply before she ran off. Mako took a deep breath, grabbing the flimsy doorknob and turning it, opening the door.

Into the castle.
Mako stepped inside the castle, not knowing what to expect. The hallway was small and cramped; he could barely fit in it. He made his way through the narrow hallway, the sound of his footsteps and breathing the only audible things.

His mind was already jumping all over the place, trying to figure out where he should start to search. The castle was massive. There were far too many rooms and sections to search individually—he needed to be smart about it.

The ground floors were most likely going to be full of guards. Jamison would probably be in the upper levels, hidden away somewhere.

He reached the end of the hallway, and there was a wooden door. He slowly opened it, peeking his head into the outside.

There didn’t seem to be anyone around, and that was good. It seemed like a normal day, if Mako had to be honest. Well, apart from the fact that there was no one running around—he was used to seeing at least one or two people doing chores.

It was eerie, almost like it was haunted. Mako was about to step outside when he heard footsteps, prompting him to shut the door quickly and press his ear to it.

“Has anyone found anything?” A voice called from outside—one of the guards.

“Not yet. They’re trying to get into the throne room floor, but there is rubble blocking the stairs, as if something exploded in it!”

Mako licked his lips, listening. He would have to go to the upper level, it seemed. He waited for several minutes, opening the door and peeking outside. The room was clear. He hurried out, paying
close attention to his surroundings, attentive for any footsteps or incoming guards.

He was forced to hide a couple of times with upcoming guards, but nothing came out of it. They weren’t looking for Mako, after all, so it was easy for him to conceal himself even with his size.

It wasn’t too long before he reached the second floor, which is when he finally found someone. The guard stared at him with wide eyes, recognizing him, but oblivious to Mako’s intentions.

Then the guard took his sword and valiantly (but stupidly) brandished it in front of Mako.

“He’s our target!”

He attacked, but Mako was faster and bigger. The guard seemed young, probably still new at this, without too many fighting skills. Mako took advantage of that and grabbed his wrist, twisting it until it snapped. Mako used his other hand to cover the guard’s mouth and muffle his screams while Mako twisted his neck until it cracked. The guard fell, bonelessly, to the stairs.

He needed to move; they would soon discover the corpse.

He continued making his way up, and then mentally chastised himself when he realized that, while the guards might believe he was there to kill Jamison, they would probably believe he was competition.

How stupid. Now they would be after him, too. Nothing he could do about it anyways, so he needed to find Jamison quickly.

“Healt!” a voice called out. Mako’s stomach went cold as he turned around. More guards, three this time, running towards him with their weapons in hand. “Halt! What are your intentions?! Do you attempt to steal our—”

Before he could finish his sentence Mako cracked his knuckles, suckerpunching the face of the closest to him. He fell backwards, nose bursting with blood, as the others attempted to attack. Mako unsheathed his sword and sliced away, connecting with the one at his right and punching the other one in the gut, kicking him back as he stabbed the one on the right in the shoulder.

These guards were weak, and they just fell, defeated, without too much fight. It didn’t feed the itch Mako had in his stomach, the one that wanted to see more blood—but he needed to shove that deep down inside himself and get to his goal. As much as he wanted to, he couldn’t just kill all the guards.

Well, maybe. But not now. He needed to find Jamison.

Mako kept moving, cautiously, until he reached the stairs leading to the next floor. The throne room was on the fourth floor, and he hopefully would find Jamison there. The memory of the guards saying how the floor was blocked returned to his mind.

He would have to try to figure out a way to get on the upper level. From what he heard, there were a lot of passages around the castle for the servants; secret tunnels and the like. Perhaps he could use one to reach the upper level, but he didn’t know where to find them.

An idea popped in his mind. He recalled seeing how the maids used doors on the walls to move the laundry to different floors so they wouldn’t need to physically carry it, via a pulley system. Every floor had them, and he could use them to climb to the floor Jamison was hiding in.

Mako couldn’t help but smile, knowing that now he had a plan. Now he only needed to find a service room to crawl up from.
That would be more difficult. It had been months since he was there, and it wasn’t like he was an expert on the place before. He bit his lip—he would have to trust his instincts.

He tried to look for the most rustic and worn door. Mako guessed that the pretty doors would lead to pretty rooms and not service rooms, but at the end it was not necessary—after going down the hallway looking at all the doors, he found one of them with a label on the outside that read “Service”.

That would work. He opened the room and entered. It was empty, and Mako immediately went towards the wall, hands all over it, trying to find the passage.

It took him several seconds to find it, but at last he pulled open a small door leading into an even smaller crawlspace.

It would be a tight fit, but he could make it. He would have to climb up, but he didn’t hesitate for a moment before he squeezed inside. It was dark and smelled of dust, but he didn’t care. He heaved his entire body inside and started crawling up.

It was dark too, but that still didn’t stop Mako. He could barely fit inside; every time he breathed the wall behind him pressed against his back. The pulley-rope pressed at his side, chafing against his arm. He crawled up, with small, cramped, calculated movements.

He kept moving forward for a while, his heart pounding hard against his chest. He was starting to build up a sweat. It was pitch black, with only the sounds of his breathing and his back armor scraping against the wall to indicate he wasn’t dead.

It was tight. Too tight. Maybe this wasn’t a good idea after all, he thought. He wondered how much he had advanced, and how much time had passed.

Mako recalled his father telling him about his uncle, who liked to explore caves when he was young. One day he got stuck, and never got out. Mako wondered if that would happen to him; if he would get stuck between the walls and die, to never be found again, rotting alone, behind brick and mortar.

He took a deep breath. It was not the time to think about that, it was not the time to get a panic attack, lest he actually get stuck. He continued his small crawl, beads of sweat rolling down his face.

Finally, after what seemed to be an eternity, Mako saw a ray of light above him. He scrambled to it, sighing in celebration as he emerged on the next floor.

He had to push the door to open it, immediately crawling to the outside, free from the wall. He breathed in fresh, clean air, his body relaxing. After closing the door, he moved forward, now with a different kind of anxiety overcoming him.

He was going to see Jamison again. It was obvious, but it was something he hadn’t even considered. If he was going to do the rescuing, it meant facing Jamison once more... and he didn’t want to do it. He didn’t know what to say. He didn’t know how he was going to react at all. Jamison may even think he was there to kill him, too.

Fuck. He would find a way to convince him. He didn’t know how, but he would.

The floor was empty, no one in sight. Mako recognized his location due to the decorations in the walls, and knew he was in the right place. Now, to find the king...

He was about to start looking through the rooms when he heard a faint knocking from one direction. The knocking persisted—Jamison?
Mako followed the noise as the knocking became more and more frantic. He remembered the area. He was going towards Jamison’s work room.

Just as he turned a corner he saw someone outside of the doors, knocking frantically. The figure kept knocking with both arms, but they seemed to be holding a rapier on one hand. They were wearing a pale blue dress, torn from the bottom. He could make out the woman’s features as he approached faster.

Princess Bianca.

She kept knocking on the door with all her strength, and it seemed like she was about to start slamming her body into it.

“Fawkes! Open the damn door! Fawkes!”

She was trying to get into the room where Jamison was, with a sword in hand.

Mako reacted quickly by rushing to her. The sound of his footsteps alerted her, and she looked at his direction. Her eyes went wide with horror as she saw the giant run towards her, and she held her rapier up in defense, completely terrified.

“No—” she managed to get out before Mako got to her, slapping the sword away from her. She stumbled back as Mako grabbed her by the neck, slamming her against the wall.

He knocked the air out of her body, making her gasp like a fish as she clawed at his hand. Mako wanted to kill her so much; so, so much. But he was pretty sure killing a princess was considered treason, or would immediately get him executed. Even so, it was so tempting.

“Who do you work for?! What did they offer you?!”

The woman stared at him with defiant eyes, struggling to breathe. Mako applied less pressure and she gasped for breath, still clawing at his palm.

“I know who you are,” she spat out, showing her teeth.

For a princess, she wasn’t what Mako expected. He was used to noble woman screaming and crying, rather than showing defiance. But he could see the hatred in her eyes.

“You want the crown for yourself? Or is it something more?” he hissed, and the woman snarled.

“What about you, Rutledge? You want the money so you can go live far away? Or is this some sort of revenge fantasy?”

Mako blinked, disturbed at how much this woman knew about him. She still wasn’t giving any straight answer to his demands.

“You are with the attackers that want to kill the king. Who is your boss?”

The woman stared at him, confused, then scoffed. Her fingernails were scraping and digging into Mako’s hand, but he didn’t notice.

“I am not like them,” she choked out, coughing. “I don’t want anything they got to fuckin’ offer. What about you? Heard there was a coup and wanted to join in? Wanted to get rid of the competition, huh? You wanted that money all for yourself, ain’t that right?”

Mako’s eyebrows knotted together. It was obvious she was confused and thought that he wanted to
kill Jamison, but that wasn’t the thing that bothered him.

“You… don’t want to kill him?”

“No, you fucking idiot,” she hissed, apparently ignoring that Mako could still kill her in an instant. “They want to kill me, too. I am his fiancé, after all—if something happens to him I get the crown. No one told you that, huh?”

Mako took a deep breath, carefully lowering Bianca on the ground. The woman fell, gasping and scrambling to get her rapier, even though it would be completely useless. She pointed it at Mako, but he could tell even she knew she had absolutely no hope to win. She was just willing to go fighting.

“I don’t want to kill him,” he finally blurted out. Bianca stared at him in confusion, but didn’t lower her weapon.

“Bullshit. I know what you did. Fawkes told me about it. You were going to fucking sell him, you monster.”

The comment felt like a gut punch, but he deserved it.

“Do you really think I will believe you?” Bianca asked.

“I don’t want to kill him.”

“Prove it.”

Mako sighed, taking his weapons and dropping them on the floor. They clanked on the tile, and Bianca took a glance on them but with her rapier still pointed at him.

“This means nothing to me. I know you can kill people with your bare hands.”

She wasn’t wrong, but Mako couldn’t think of another way to prove that he didn’t want to kill Jamison.

“What can I do to prove it?”

“Jump out of a window, maybe then I’ll consider it.”

Mako was about to reply to that, only for the doors leading to Jamison’s studio to open in one kick. Both of them turned towards the doors, the smell of chemicals littering the air as soon as the door became unsealed.

“Jamie!” Bianca yelled, letting her rapier fall to the ground. “What are you—”

“Shut up!” he screamed.

Mako took a look at Jamison for the first time in months. His face was twisted in exhaustion, dark bags under his eyes. He had a bag that seemed to be crammed with bottles and other things. The thing that caught Mako’s attention was the strange device he was holding in his arm.

Mako recognized it. Jamison had showed it to him, a long time ago. Something he’d started building in Australia, that he used shoot oranges and paint balls at people. Now, it looked finished, and Mako was willing to bet that its ammo was anything but oranges.

He pointed the launcher at Bianca, who winced but didn’t move.
“Jamie, I want to help you. I was attacked, too. I’m on your side!” She lifted her arms to show she was unarmed. “I’m not going to hurt you.”

Jamison seemed desperate, unsure if he should trust her or not. He blinked, and then noticed Mako.

He stared at him, eyes wide. They stared at each other for a long time. Mako didn’t say a thing. He didn’t feel it was his place to do so. Jamison didn’t say a thing either, mouth opening and closing as if he was trying, but couldn’t manage it.

He raised his launcher, and pointed it at Mako.
“Stop!” Bianca screamed, backing up to launch herself to Jamison and wrestle the launcher away from him. Instead, Jamison pointed it at her, which made her stop in her tracks.

“You brought him here, didn't you? You brought him back to kill me!” He started to rave. Mako could tell that he was extremely exhausted, and wasn't even thinking about what he was saying.

“He brought himself in—I would never do that. You know that! Fawkes, I'm on your side!”

“How am I supposed to believe you?”

“You saw how they tried to kill me, and—” Bianca pulled away her turtleneck, which showed the redness of her neck, bruises already starting to show in the shape of Mako’s fingers. “He attacked me.”

Mako supposed he should feel like shit he did that, but to be honest he did what he believed was right considering the situation. He was wrong, however—Bianca had no intention of attacking Jamison.

Jamison didn't seem to believe this, however. But he did hesitate, staring at Bianca and then slowly at Mako, his launcher still pointed at him. His face twisted in anger and hate, something ugly bubbling under his skin, digging at his guts.

“ Came to finish th' job, huh?” He smiled, that sharp smile he reserved for vermin. “Heard of th' coup, ya decided to finish th' job before everybody else?”

“Jamison—”

“Answer me!” he screamed, gritting his teeth together and taking a step forward. “Why are you here?! What do you want?!”

“I…” He felt so small, as if he was going to vanish. “I want to help you.”
“I ain't need ye bloody fuckin’ help.”

“We should tie him up,” Bianca said, getting at Jamison's side. Mako saw both standing next to each other, young and yet so old due to what was happening. They looked like children who’d found a dangerous foe, trying to figure out how to stop him. Their clothes were dirty and ripped at the sides, their faces tired with bags under their eyes.

“That ain't gonna work, he can rip chains off. I've seen it.”

“What do we do, then?”

Jamison licked his lips and stepped forward, placing the cannon of the launcher under Mako’s chin, tilting his head back. Mako kept staring down at Jamison, on the verge of breaking. Jamison just stared back, all lidded eyes and tired face.

“Easy.”

“You'll kill us all, Fawkes.” Bianca whispered, obviously nervous as she bit her nails. “If you want to kill him, just use a sword or something.”

“That—that’s actually a good idea.” He turned to Bianca, his hand extended for her to give him her rapier.

Mako swallowed spit as the tip of the rapier slipped under his chin, poking at his skin in a painful way. This was how he was going to die. Killed by Jamison himself. He continued to stare down at him, knowing that no matter how much he pleaded, it wouldn’t work.

It was his personal punishment for what he had done.

Jamison hissed and was about to complete the deed, if it wasn’t for the loud explosion from the other side of the floor. The floor trembled, tripping the two young adults.

“Fuck!” Jamison screamed, staring at Mako with unfiltered seething rage. “You lead them here, didn’t ya?! Ya fuckin brought em here!”

“I did no such thing. They already knew, that’s how I knew—”

“Fawkes!” Bianca screamed, pointing at the hallway. “I hear them coming! Many! We need to—”

“No, I got this, I have to—” He stopped paying attention to Mako, turning towards where the commotion was coming from. Jamison shoved one hand in the bag he was carrying, rummaging around. He eventually pulled out what looked like a firework, but heavier and with a different smell, of gasoline.

“What are you going to do?” Bianca screamed, looking at the firework as Jamison pulled a lighter, and waited. He did not answer, and at the sound of dozens of guards coming their way Mako just wanted to snatch him away somewhere safe, but knew he should not. He trusted Jamison, whatever he was planning.

Still, Mako crouched and picked his weapons up, knowing that he would need them. Maybe by protecting them, they would know that he intended no harm.

The guards came to view, running with their weapons raised against Jamison. They were quick, and yelled at him.

“Jamison Fawkes, you are under arrest! Any opposition will result in your immediate execution by God’s command!”
Jamison tensed, and Mako watched him carefully. He ignited the rocket in his right hand, standing in the middle of the hallway as the group of guards approached.

“Be my guest.”

The rocket shot forward, launching in a horizontal line, quick and deadly. It zipped through the air and into the guards, intense smoke already emanating from it. Some guards were able to barely dodge it, but it hit one of them straight in the chest. It exploded into beautiful colors, but also deadly flames. It popped and cracked, the sound of the firework drowning the screams of the guards that were in the range of the explosion. It looked beautiful, but with it rained bits of skin and armor.

“Fuckers,” Jamison hissed, as he shook his right hand. It was smoking, the beautiful silver still intact but slightly red with heat. “Bet ye they ain't gonna give up. They’re still comin’.”

“There are too many—it’s the entire royal army! What do we do?!” Bianca asked.

“Got me plenty of these ones ta’ get rid of most of ‘em.” Jamison adjusted his bag, turning to Bianca. “Gonna show em what happens when ya mess with th’ Fawkes.”

“But what are we going to do, after this?” Bianca rubbed her arms nervously. “This is…”

They both got very aware of Mako still standing there, and both stared at him, uncertainly. Jamison stepped over him, eyes full of hatred, but at least this time he didn’t have a weapon pointed under Mako’s chin.

“I don’t want to kill you, Jamison.”

“I know. I just gave ya many openings for ye to snap me neck, and yet ya did not. What are you doing here, then?”

“I want—I want to help.”

“I don’t care how ya found out about this. But ya really got a nerve to show yer mug here after what ya did.”

“Fawkes,” Bianca called out for him, reminding him of the time pressure.

“I ain't got no time for ye. I would kill you like I promised, but I am far too busy right now.” He snarled. “Consider this yer last chance, pig. I don't care what ye do, but if ya still around here when I deal with this, I will not hesitate to kill ya.”

That gave him time. Mako could make things right, one way or another.

“You think you can launch another one of those things? Bianca asked Jamison, who was inspecting his bag. “There are far more we need to take care of!”

“If the entire royal guard is after us… I ain't sure if it's gonna be enough.”

Just as they were speaking more footsteps approached. More guards. Jamison hissed as he started to shoot the ammunition in his launcher. Mako observed, perplexed, how the balls bounced up and down on the air as if they were made of rubber. They crashed against the guards and exploded, throwing their bodies into the air uselessly. The explosions broke the floor tiles and tore the decorations of the walls down, leaving clouds of smoke in their wake.
“You…” Mako sighed as Jamison reloaded the gun, shoving more explosives on the device. “You were the one to block the stairs, weren’t you?”

Jamison did not answer. He stared at Mako, tiredly.

“Should we tell him?” Bianca asked.

“Whatever. If he is sticking here, I don’t care.” He rested the launcher on his shoulder as he retreated into his workshop, probably to get more ammo.

Bianca looked at Jamison, licking her lips. She obviously didn’t trust him, but realized that Mako was going to stay there for a while, so she must have decided it was a good idea to let Mako know.

“We… we were going to have a meeting, the royal advisors. Fawkes—he had a lot of proposals, and they wanted to review it with him. But… but they never came, and instead sent a group of guards and they immediately told us we were under arrest. There were no explanations, no anything—they said that if we didn't comply then they would execute us. We… we managed to fight back somehow and escape. We got here. They… they want to kill us, to get the throne for themselves. But I don't know who could be behind this.”

Mako had an idea of who it might be.

“They say they want to arrest us, but they just want to kill us.” Bianca started to bite at her fingernails once again. “I didn't expect this to happen. I thought—I thought there would be resistance, but not this.”

“Resistance?”

She stared at Mako, thin lips forming a line. “You must know Fawkes has some radical ideas to change the country. We knew there would be opposition, but… I don't think even he thought of the possibility of a fucking coup.”

There she goes with the language once again. Mako didn't mind, but it was something that made him feel odd. All the noble women he met barely even spoke, and for her to simply be so forward and uncaring was a rarity.

“Who are you?”

“A princess. Bianca Keaton.” She did a mock gesture with her hand, rolling her eyes.

“You are not—”

“Like other noble women you met? Figures. That's what everybody tells me.”

Well, Jamison was not like other noblemen, so he figured they complimented each other well. It hurt to see how their chemistry worked, and Mako wanted to shout, but he didn't. Instead he nodded slowly, exhaling through his nose. It was not the time to be sentimental for the things he’d lost.

“Roight,” Jamison exited his workshop and closed the doors very carefully. He shot a tired smile at Bianca as he pointed at the place with his chin. “Rigged tha' place. This is the first door they'll reach when they get 'ere. They'll open it and boom! We'll send 'em to Kingdom come. Should buy us some time.”

“Time for what? We don't even know what we are going to do. What is the plan?” Bianca asked.
“Fight for our lives. There ain’t anythin’ else we can do but that.”

Mako felt removed from the conversation, as if he was just a spectator of what was happening, not an active player. There had to be something he could do to fix all of this.

“We gotta move—” Jamison started.

“Jamison,” Mako called out, but Jamison didn't even look at him. “Is there—is there something I can do?”

Jamison stared at his feet, taking a deep breath. He didn't dare look at Mako in the eyes, and it killed Mako inside. He wanted to see those eyes once again, but without all that hatred.

“There…” his voice was low, almost a whisper. It clung in the air desperately, sending chills down Mako's spine. “There is nothing you can say or do to fix what you did.” He closed his eyes.

Mako knew Jamison didn't believe he would kill him. The young monarch knew Mako's intentions now; that he only wanted to help, that he wanted to prove to Jamison how sorry he was. But he couldn't force the young man to forgive him. Who was Mako to command his young lover to do so?

“It's over,” Jamison whispered, finally.

It was over. Jamison was over with him, and there was nothing Mako could ever do to make things like they used to be.

Mako knelt in front of Jamison, his head down and hand on his armored chest. He felt his heartbeat in his ears and misery clinging to his bones. Jamison may not love him anymore, but Mako loved him so. He loved him so much he was going to leave the country to get away from it. He loved him so much his bones hurt, his heart ached, and his lips were dry. All those sleepless nights were caused by Jamison.

“Your Highness, my king. I will not let harm come to you. I will give my life to protect you.”

He would not let him die.

Jamison took a breath and nodded, but said nothing else.

“Come on. We need to move.”

Mako stood up, knees cracking a little. He sighed, his chest full of anxiety. They moved forward, but it wasn't long before an explosion vibrated through the walls.

“Fawkes, is that your workshop?!” Bianca asked, propping herself up with the help of one of the walls as the floor shook beneath them.

“No—it should be way stronger and louder! This is—” Jamison clicked his tongue, a snarl appearing on his face. “They broke in th' other side!”

There were two ways to get into the floor. Both stairs had the ceiling collapse on them, thanks to Jamison and his explosives, but it seemed that the guards had managed to clear both stairs with explosives. Now they would be coming soon.

“Fawkes, we need to keep moving or—Agh!”

Bianca suddenly held her shoulder, curling into herself. Jamison was quickly at her side, crouching and examining her left shoulder. Mako saw an arrow piercing her, but it hadn’t gone completely
“Fuck! Fawkes—look!” She pointed and there were already guards making their way there, about a dozen. They had arrows and were shooting at their direction. Mako quickly stepped in front of Jamison and Bianca, the arrows bouncing off his armor.

“From the other side too!” Bianca screamed, holding her rapier tight as she pointed behind them. Another two dozen guards appeared, brandishing their weapons. The fighting space was far too small, and with their proximity explosives might not be a good idea.

...And even so, Jamison stood and started to fire. His bombs bounced up and down, exploding and hitting the walls and ceilings as well, the foundations cracking and about to give out any second as more guards kept appearing.

“Jamison, you’ll bring the floor down with us in it!” Bianca screamed, pressing herself against the wall while blood poured out of her wound. “This place is too small!”

“What the fuck am I supposed to do, then?!”

One of the bombs bounced back far too close, exploding in a cloud of debris and smoke. It made the air thick, and all of them started to cough while barely able to look at each other.

“We need to go!” Jamison shouted.

“There’s nowhere to—ah!”

Bianca’s shouting came to a halt and Mako became very anxious. He quickly reached over to where she was, touching the wall to find a big, perfectly shaped gap in it. Air came out of it, and then a face popped out.

It was Melissa. She stared at Mako with one hand over her lips and the other directing them to get inside. Mako felt Jamison shove him from behind into the hole, and they proceeded to enter rapidly before the smoke dissipated.

Once they were all inside Melissa immediately closed the door, letting it click under her palms. The room went pitch black for few seconds before Melissa got a little candle, igniting it and illuminating her face. She said nothing, her index finger pressed against her lips.

Mako’s heart was racing, but he nodded and attempted to calm down. Jamison did the same, the sounds of the soldiers outside still dangerously close. It was anxious, but Melissa silently directed them away. Without a word, they followed.

Mako heard that the castle had many secret passages. Hell, he had climbed into that floor via the dirty laundry passage, but he wasn’t entirely sure if that counted. Even so, this was different. He had to crouch to completely fit in the small hallways that twisted and made corners, but he far preferred that than fighting the soldiers outside.

Jamison twitched in front of him, his fingers rubbing against each other. Mako knew he had a lot of questions, but he knew they needed to remain quiet, lest they be found. Several excruciating minutes passed before Melissa reached another door, knocking on it with rhythm three times—a code.

The wooden door opened, and she slipped inside. Jamison followed, and Mako did the same. The room was well lit, unlike the outside hallway. It was big and comfortable—Mako believed it was some of the maids’ resting chambers.

Bianca sat in one of the beds, the arrow still sticking to her shoulder. A man, someone who Mako recognized as a nurse, was tending to her wound already. The rest of them were people who Mako...
had recognized in the castle, people whom he saw run around carrying either food or laundry, or other workers. They were tired and covered in bruises and sweat.

“What…” Jamison let out, confused. They all immediately stared at him, their eyes lit up with hope at seeing their king.

“Your Highness, you're okay!” an old woman called. Mako recognized her. She was the boss of the maids. “We were so worried. When they told us that they were going to arrest you… We were all so shocked and we… we just can't let this happen.”

“Um,” Jamison shifted in his feet. “What is this place?”

“This old castle has many secrets, your Highness. There are some chambers like these, which we, the workers have agreed to use in case of… in case of emergencies. Like this.” Jamison blinked, unsure.

“Yer helpin’ me,” he said, confused. “You guys… yer helpin’ me. Why? They… they attacked ya. Because ya didn't follow orders. Then why…”

“We may be commoners, but,” Melissa intruded, “we have seen many monarchs come and go. We see how they are, and what they plan. The way they live. You… you are different. We… we trust you. This—you don't deserve this.” Her eyes went wide when she realized just how casual she was being. “Um, your Highness…”

Jamison took a deep breath, and Mako could see everything was overwhelming him. The young man did not expect them to help him at all, to try so hard to keep him safe. And yet here they were, the people whom he’d been taught to treat like dirt, the ones that were there from the beginning.

Jamison pressed his face into his palms, and started to cry.
The situation was, to put it simply, awkward. No one had expected Jamison to just burst out crying in the middle of it all, and no one was really sure how to react. Mako had to fight the urge to touch his shoulder to comfort him—it was not his place anymore.

“Y-your Highness—”

“Shit—sorry.” He wiped his tears clean with his sleeve, rubbing at his red, tired face. “I got—sorry, I just got a bit overwhelmed. I mean, everythin’ that has happened…”

It was uncomfortable for everybody present, unsure of what they were supposed to do. Their king was crying, and it wasn’t like they were used to that kind of thing.

“...Hey,” Bianca called, in the middle of being looked at by one of the nurses. “Um, thank you for all your help, but now you will probably be incarcerated—no, executed. Are you truly okay with that?”

“They were killing us anyways. This is just a different reason to do so,” a servant said.

“Sorry you’re going through all of this. It ain’t yer fault,” Jamison added, once he was clear-headed. “Ye shouldn’t deal with this stupid shit. But I am going to fix this.”

They all turned to stare at Jamison, in wonder and surprise.

“What are we going to do, Fawkes? The castle is surrounded at this point. I don’t think we are going to be able to get out,” a maid whimpered.

“There… there is an old tunnel. A crypt. It goes to the other side of town. It can be used by His Highness to escape, but it will probably be difficult to reach it?” one of the older maids mentioned.
“That is perfect,” Mako intruded. “Do you believe the guards know about it, however?”

“Oh, I am pretty sure they do not. It has been a… let’s say, secret for us, just like these tunnels are.”

“Great!” Bianca smiled. “We need to get there, and after Fawkes escapes I—”

“No,” Jamison interrupted, shaking his head. “I’m not—I ain’t escapin’. I am not leaving this place. This is—this is my castle, and I ain’t gonna give up just cus these idiots think they just can do whatever the fuck they want!”

“You do understand that they are going to kill you, right?” Bianca cut in, desperately. She sounded tired, and on the verge of tears herself. “They want to kill you, and me. They want to kill us both.”

“I understand. But—I can’t just let ‘em win. If they do, ya know what is going to happen? All that shit they told me, the shit they wanted me to do, they’ll do it with no remorse. I ain’t gonna let that happen.”

Mako felt something in him. That thing he’d felt so many months ago, when he realized he had fallen for this boy. He was different from all those kings and queens, different from all of them.

“You’re willing to give your life for this?” Mako asked.

“I ain’t… I’m not gonna let this happen. They’ll have to kill me.”

Mako felt guilt. He believed, at one point, that Jamison had changed for the worse after everything that happened. He had thought the young man had become like his kind—spoilt, terrible and disgusting. He expected it, and a part of him wanted it. Imagining it made the decision to leave easier.

He was so completely wrong, and he felt like shit for assuming Jamison would change. He was the same, despite everything. Even with the opportunity of escaping with his life, he’d rather stay and fight to the death.

“So,” Mako finally said. “What is the plan?”

Jamison stared at Mako, surprised and unsure. He didn’t seem to completely trust him, but recognized there was no time to waste.

“It would be easy tha’ just get rid of these guy’s boss, but I ain’t think it’ll be that easy. We… we are gonna have tha’ get rid of all tha’ guards.”

“You want to kill them all.”

Jamison nodded, silently. At this point everyone in the room was staring at them, either in awe, horror, or doubt.

“The royal guard is composed of hundreds of soldiers. To get rid of them all…” Bianca rubbed at her face, tiredly.

“I can rig traps. I got enough things tha’ start rigging and makin’ explosions to get rid of some of ‘em.” He lifted his bag, the insides clinking. “I can get rid about tha’ half lot of ‘em, maybe.”

“That still will leave us with the other half to deal with. How are we going to fix that?” Bianca asked.

“I…” Jamison rubbed at the back of his neck. “We fight.”
“Fawkes—”

“What else do ya suggest? We gotta do somethin’. They’re gonna try to kill us anyways.”

“We will fight,” Mako said, surely. “We… I’ll help you.” Jamison stared at him, eyes glassy. “I said I would give my life, and I mean it. I am a warrior, and I can help.”

Jamison bit his lower lip hard until it went red, and was about to snarl an answer at Mako, but Emily interrupted him, not giving him a chance to talk back.

“We will fight too,” she said, and the other maids and workers nodded their agreement. “We want to help. We will fight back and—”

“Absolutely not,” Jamison said, coldly. “I ain’t gonna let more lives go to waste because of this. Ye already did enough.”

“But we want to—”

“No, this is an order. I ain’t gonna let ye. You gotta escape from ‘ere. Get away, get somewhere else.” Before anybody had the chance to say anything else, he grabbed his bags. They rattled with God-knew-what. “I need some time ta’ start making tha’ traps. I got everythin’ I need but it may take a while. We should be safe ‘ere.”

Mako noticed that the others wanted to say something but collectively decided not to. They wanted to help, but they also wanted to listen to the one they considered their king. There was no need for them to help, after all. Mako knew he would be enough to keep them all safe.

Jamison went to a table in the room, sitting on the floor as he very carefully placed the contents of his bag on the table in front of him. He then started to very carefully work on his items, his fingers working away.

One of the other maids stepped up, about to approach him, but Bianca stopped her.

“Don’t. Just let him do his thing. He is going to be alright.” Her wound was bandaged, but it seemed that she would recover without any issue. “You should start figuring out how you are going to escape. It is a bad idea if you all escape in one big group—you should all wait and do it in parts. The guards will be busy with us anyways, so it shouldn’t be too hard for you.”

The staff started to talk between each other, nodding and working out a plan. Mako didn’t really have much to do, so he shifted on his feet as Jamison worked away and the others organized.

Sighing, he sat down in a chair propped against the wall.

Minutes passed quietly, Jamison still working and Bianca examining her rapier, sighing as she turned it over.

“...How did you meet each other?” Mako asked.

Bianca exhaled loudly, putting her rapier aside. She didn’t look at Mako directly, simply staring at her hands.
“Fawkes went to an Australian school for nobility. I went to the same school. Well, the one for noble women. Same school, basically. Buildings were close, you get the idea.”

Mako recalled reading about that, but he had not cared at the moment. He’d been too upset to be interested in those details.

“While the schools were separated most of the time, there were events where they mixed us. We met in our first grade, in one of those events. We became friends, like one does—that happened to a lot of people there. Heh, I actually think it was on purpose, to get us to know future spouses and such. Who knows? Anyways, the point is, we met at one of these events. We hit it off, became friends, so every time an event like that happened we just gathered and talked about our lives, you know?”

She chuckled, remembering about her past. She licked her lips, and continued.

“So, we just… hit it off. We became friends. I mean, we had other friends but… I don’t know. They… they became like our parents, like the rest of them. People that cared for nothing but their status. They became nothing more than assholes. Fawkes… Fawkes didn’t change. Instead, he got angrier, upset with everything, the way things moved on. Me? I agreed with him. We talked all day about this, and about how things are.

“I am the youngest of my siblings, and… they were all women. And they’re—they got good husbands. They got married and had kids. I never really fit the same way Fawkes did. Instead, he got angrier, upset with everything, the way things moved on. Me? I agreed with him. We talked all day about this, and about how things are.

“Plan was that Jamison would reveal his affair with Mako, and then they would get married, but then everything else happened. He had no idea what Bianca was talking about.

“I don’t… The plans were different, then. None of this. I do not know what you are talking about.”

“Hm,” She hummed. “Guess he changed the hell between then and now. Well.”

Mako felt anxious, wanting to know what the hell was Bianca talking about, but felt like he had no right to ask. The young woman turned around, her eyes fixated on Jamison for a minute, and sighed.

“I guess it doesn’t matter at this point. We will probably die, so what does it matter if I tell you?”
She scratched the back of her neck and stared at her feet.

“Jamie… He knew that he wouldn’t have as much political power to do the changes he wanted if he was single. Our marriage will make him—us more powerful, have more… you know, more credibility, a second line of defense. He knew that for all the changes he wanted to implement politically, he needed as much power as he could. He contacted me because we have the same political ideas.”

“But,” Mako almost stumbled with his words. “Does he not…?”

“He… I know how he is. And he told me about this. And I don’t care. This is… we’re like siblings, we have each other’s back. We would die for the other, but if you’re asking if we love each other, the same way people should love when they get married?”

She laughed, softly.

“It’s a farce. The marriage. It’s a farce.”

She leaned forward, hunching. She looked back at Mako, her blue eyes fixating on him.

“Heart belongs with someone else, and so does mine.”

Mako stared at Bianca. His mouth was dry, and he tried to say something, but he was unsure as to what he wanted to say. He just glanced at Jamison, who kept working on his traps. His stomach twisted in ways it had never, with something that he hadn’t felt in months. He didn’t know what to say, or how to react. He didn’t know what he should do.

Those feelings were eating him up and were making his head think weird things. Thoughts danced around his mind, all questions without answers.

He never loved Bianca? They were only getting married? Jamison hadn’t changed? Jamison was never in love with Bianca?

Had Jamison moved on?

Jamison never loved Bianca. Not in the way he had loved him, after all. Not the way they loved, the way their fingers touched and just graced each other gently, not the same way Mako had loved Jamison for so many days.

He had planned this. Jamison was going to change everything. He had a plan to completely change the way the country was run, and he was going to sacrifice his opportunity to love someone else, someone who he truly loved (even if it was not Mako) for the sake of his country.

Mako did not know what to say. He stared at his own hands in silence, his head full of static. He didn’t think about it. He didn’t want to think about the implications of all of this, at least not until they got out of there.

“Why did you come back?”

Mako looked up. Bianca stared at him, her eyes sharp and judgmental. She blinked, lips drawn in a line.

“Fawkes told me what you did. How you were planning on…” She bit her lip and looked around. They were in a place where probably admitting treason was a bad idea, considering everyone’s emotional state at the moment. “Whatever. You lied. And yet you’re here now, again. Why? What
made you come here and say that you would die for him?"

“I… I deeply regret the things I have done.” He shifted uncomfortably. “The plan was made before I
got to even know who my charge was going to be. It… It doesn’t excuse it, but as time passed, I…”
He sighed. “I realized I couldn’t do it.”

“It does not fix anything.” Bianca said, staring daggers at Mako. “I don’t think there is anything that
will fix what you did.”

“Did… Did he tell you about everything?”

Bianca stared at him for a long time, judging eyes.

“Did he tell you about… us?”

“He told me everything.” Her lips twitched. “He loved you so much.”

Loved.

“Does he still—”

“Love you?” Her gaze shifted to the floor. “I wouldn’t.”

“But I…” He wanted to say that he still loved him. That he would do anything, but he must have
repeated that a thousands of times. There was no point anymore.

“You made your decision. Now you get to live with it.”

They fell into silence once more, heavy and uncomfortable. He felt like the room was shrinking
around him, Bianca’s staring eyes fixated on him.

He started to sweat, his heartbeat increasing. He wish he could stop this. There was no way to stop
this.

“Hey,” Jamison finally called, holding a burlap sack. His hands were dirty, and beads of sweat rolled
down his forehead. Bianca looked at him, rolling her shoulders.

“You ready?” she asked. Jamison nodded.

“Okay,” he took a deep breath, instructing the others in the room to listen to him. “This is the
plan…”
Mako cracked his knuckles, trying to get ready for what was coming. There would be a fight, but wasn’t there always a fight? It seemed his life was just one fight after the other, but he felt like this one was the most important one yet. After all, he wasn’t fighting just for himself this time.

He also tried not to think about Jamison outside, alone.

The young monarch had gone out of their hideout to start the first part of their plan. He had made many bombs and traps to place strategically, to take out as many guards as they could. It would definitely help, but he insisted setting the traps alone; more people would have made it far more likely to get caught.

He trusted him, but Mako still felt that burning feeling in his gut, the fear of him not coming back. But he had to trust him. And so he did.

“After Fawkes comes back, we will leave and go hole ourselves up in the throne room,” Bianca mentioned to the staff. “We will bring down the entrances so there is only one: the main one. From there, it hopefully won’t be as hard to defend ourselves. You will then make your way out of the castle via the secret passage. You should be safe.”

“Will do, Your Highness.”

Bianca chuckled and scratched her chin. “Aw, come on. Don’t call me that…”

“Please protect His Highness,” an older maid said, approaching Mako. She was way older than the rest of them, probably Mako’s age. Other maids and staff members nodded. “We… we just want everybody to be safe.”

“Don’t worry,” Mako said, still cracking his fingers in an attempt to calm down. “I will do whatever
it takes to protect him.”

“We don’t know what happened, but it’s a shame. You’re so good for each other.”

Mako stopped.

He blinked a couple of times, and turned to the old woman.

“I beg your pardon?”

“We know you were a couple.”

Several questions rushed through Mako’s head, none of them making sense. The words he wanted to say came jumbled as soon as he tried to speak them, biting his lip and trying to ground himself back to earth.

His head was still swirling when he tried to speak. “H-how…”

He blinked several times again, cheeks red, and tried to figure out how it was that their supposed secret was out. Had Jamison told them? Had Bianca? Did they figure it out on their own? And if so, then, how was it possible? In what moment had they slipped up that the maids knew about their tryst?

“How did you… figure out?” he managed to say in a thankfully semi-coherent manner.

“Sir, with all due respect, we are not idiots,” the old woman said. “Who do you think washes your sheets?”

Mako wished he could die at that instant.

A mixture of embarrassment and awareness, but mostly just pure embarrassment, overwhelmed him. He wished he could just hide away forever, from everybody there. Good lord. What was he supposed to even say?

“I’m… I’m sorry?”

She shook her head. “If it makes you feel better, you are not the first to be part of a romance with royalty.” She smiled coyly. “It is a cliché for a reason, after all.”

Mako couldn’t decide if this was better or not. But anyways, he still was red in the cheeks.

“However, from what we’ve seen, His Highness was ready to throw everything out the window for you,” she sighed, thinking. “Most of the time the, ah, poorer one of the relationship gets forgotten for the riches and power that one’s class gives. His Highness was different, however.”

“He is different like that.”

“Is he, really? After all, you left.”

“You…” Mako licked his lips. “You weren’t told what happened?”

“No, sir. We do not know. I don’t think anyone here knows; news travel fast, after all.”

Mako was deep in thought. At first he considered that maybe the maids or the staff were the ones responsible for bringing back his book. Of course, she could be lying and it was one of the maids, but now he wasn’t sure.
It was not time to think about that. It didn’t matter at this point.

“We… we just want to wish you luck.”

Mako nodded, still flustered. The intention was nice, but he still felt deeply embarrassed. Before anything else could be said, Jamison was back from his trip. Mako wanted to hug him, the relief washing over him almost acting up, but he stopped. Jamison would have surely objected to Mako touching him in any way.

Bianca’s face lightened when Jamison came back, surely worried as well.

“All right, everythin’ should be set up,” he said, cleaning the sweat off his brow. He looked out of breath, leaning on the wall for support.

“You okay?” Bianca asked worriedly. Jamison just smiled gently, panting.

“I, er, almost had some ruhn off with the guards. But nobody saw me. Of that I am sure.” He chuckled. “Don’t worry, I’m fine. The traps are set, and we are ready.”

“Oh, okay.” Bianca nodded anxiously. “So we should go to the throne room?”

“I passed the room while I was comin’ back. It seems to be empty, so we shouldn’t have much trouble. All of ya gotta wait until the first explosion, then wait about ten or fifteen minutes, then leave. Understand?”

They all nodded nervously, sure of the plan but still anxious about everything. How couldn’t they be? Their lives would be in danger soon enough.

“Alright, then.” He cracked his knuckles, turning to Bianca. “It’s time.” Jamison turned to face Mako, just a little. He bit his lip, but didn’t say a thing. It was killing him.

“Okay.” Bianca took a deep breath. “Let’s go.”

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Jamison didn’t speak to Mako as they made their way towards the hallways. All of them were silent, running through the twisted paths until they finally made it to a small door. Jamison opened it, peeking through.

“Shit.” He very carefully closed the door. Mako maneuvered himself to be in the lead, opening the door and seeing the problem: there were two guards chatting amongst themselves at the other side of the hallway. It was a bare hallway, so it was pretty impossible to come out without them noticing.

“We need to be stealthy- otherwise they may rise a ruckus and we might be in trouble,” Jamison added as Mako closed the door.

“We should look for another way out, then.”


Mako noticed that the woman wasn’t with them, but was unsure for how long. He hadn’t noticed, his eyes on Jamison all the time. It didn’t help that the inner corridors were dark and small; he just lost track of when the woman got lost.
“Fuck, where-”

There was a sound outside and Mako opened the door slightly. Jamison nudged himself to also peek out.

Mako saw Bianca come out from a wall, a passage similar to the one they were both in, and lunge at one of the guards, slitting his throat in one swift movement from her rapier. Before the other one could raise the alarm, Bianca went and stabbed him in the neck, swift and quick.

With both men down, she saw them peeking through the door. She waved at them to come over, and so they did. Mako wanted to ask about what he just saw, but at this point nothing surprised him anymore. Now that the path was clear, both he and Jamison rushed out carefully.

Bianca must have made a weird turn somewhere without realizing it, eventually ending up in that end of the hallway. They were going to reunite, but Mako heard footsteps and yelling before they managed to reach her.

“Halt! In the name of-” Before the guard could finish, Bianca took off running and disappeared from their sight. More guards arrived behind Mako and Jamie; they had been spotted.

“Halt! You are under arrest!” they yelled as they ran, weapons at hand towards Mako and Jamison.

“Under arrest? Ha! I ain’t stupid!” Jamison yelled, seemingly about to fight and pointing the barrel of his launcher at them. “I know very well ya all gonna kill me!”

Mako thought that he was going to shoot, but instead took off as well. Mako was about to stop and fight until he remembered the traps Jamison had set. He needed to follow the young man lest he be caught in them as well.

Something that caught his eye was the fact that as soon as Jamison reached the hallway, he jumped into it instead of walking, as if avoiding something. He didn’t even look back at Mako, but the man understood. As soon as he got to that one part, he leaped as well, avoiding whatever Jamison avoided.

Jamison actually looked back and saw that Mako was unharmed, but said nothing.

Mako looked back as well as he ran, just in time to see the four or so guards chasing them step through whatever it was that they avoided early.

The tripwire activated, detonating the bombs hidden in the walls in an instant. They exploded in their faces, screams reaching Mako’s eyes as he turned back and ran at full speed.

That was the first of many explosions. The sound must have alerted the other guards as they rushed towards them, activating even more traps. The explosions made the palace rumble, the floor vibrating as screams broke out across the hallways.

“Ahah!” Jamison laughed, still making his way to the throne room while explosions continued to ring out. “Idiots! They are fallin’ for ‘em! I sure hid ‘em well!” Mako wasn’t actually sure if Jamison was talking to him, but he didn’t say a thing. No reason why he should risk it.

Everything went quiet for a couple of minutes as they ran, until the building suddenly shook in an aggressive way. The explosion was bigger than the others, the sound echoing through the hallways in a terrifying way. The sound was so powerful that Mako was afraid for a second that they had tripped something themselves. Jamison was hollering in laughter, however, as he kept running.
“They found me work room! It must have looked beautiful!”

Mako recalled how Jamison rigged his own work room to explode to kingdom come. Hopefully, the explosion was able to take out a good many guards. Mako couldn’t help but smile, since Jamison seemed so happy.

He had missed that laughter, the way he ran practically skipping in happiness due to things going his way. Even if he was technically laughing at the death of others; considering the situation, Mako did not care at all.

Mako recognized the hallways. They shouldn’t have been too far from the throne room, but just as they were approaching it, two guards cornered them from another hallway.

“Halt! Jamison Fawkes, You are under-” Before the man could finish, Mako stepped over and wrapped a giant palm around each of their necks. A quick twist broke one’s spine, while Mako slammed the other one into the wall before doing the same.

“I don’t need ye bloody help.” Jamison stepped over their bodies, ignoring Mako.

“I know. I just wanted to help-”

“It ain’t welcome.”

Mako sighed. He said nothing, knowing that Jamison still hated him. What Bianca had said lingered in his mind, how if it had been her she wouldn’t forgive him.

Mako wouldn’t either. Why would he?

It was not time to beat himself up. He could do all the martyring he wanted after the day was over. For now, his sole mission was to protect Jamison, and that was what he was going to do.

“We gotta move, they’re gettin’ closer.” Jamison started running again, more explosions heard in the distance. Mako had no idea how many traps Jamison had set, but they would eventually run out and they would have to fight.

The outside of the throne room had guards, and Mako bit his lip getting ready to fight. Jamison aimed and fired, the little bombs bouncing up and down until they reached their targets. The men were caught off guard when the explosives went off at their feet, prompting them to scream as they fell to the ground or were launched at the walls.

“Hey!” Bianca screamed from the other side of the long hallway, dress decorated with blood that did not look it belonged to her. It seemed that she also had her run-in with the enemy, but had been able to hold her own. Noticing some of the guards still alive, she finished them off with thoughtless stabs.

“You alright?” Jamison asked, getting to her side.

“Peachy. Had to face some of ‘em, but wasn’t too much trouble.”

“You were always the best at fencing, or so I heard.”

“Come on,” she chuckled. “We have things to do.”

Even though he learned that they were not in a romantic relationship, Mako still felt like the third wheel. Jamison tapped on the doors, slightly battered but still sturdy from the explosion.

“We gotta be careful, there are probably gonna be lots of ‘em inside. We gotta get ready.” He moved
his launcher a little. “I can probably nail ’em from ’ere, but ya still gotta be careful, okay?”

“Okay,” Bianca said. Mako was pretty sure Jamison wasn’t talking to him, considering he didn’t bother to look at him the entire time, so he said nothing. Then both youngsters stared at him, waiting.

Mako immediately understood, placing himself in the middle of the doors and taking a deep breath as he placed both hands on the surface. In one go, he pushed them open as strongly as he could, almost tearing them off their hinges. Jamison jumped inside, his launcher in position for anybody waiting.

Except that there was no one.

“Huh,” Jamison said after carefully examining the place. “Let’s check, anyways.”

Mako closed the doors behind him, barring them with one of the dead guards’ lances. After securing the doors, he turned to make sure both Bianca and Jamison were fine, but they didn’t seem to have trouble. They looked a bit perplexed at the fact that the place was empty.

“The other entrances seem to be secured. Someone has been here before.” Bianca motioned to one of the doors, the path to it already blocked by rubble as Jamison had planned. “Why isn’t anyone here?”

“They cleared the room… The guards outside were supposed to be protectin’ it from us, it seems.” Jamison scratched his chin. Nothing inside seemed to be in a different state. It was… creepy. “Maybe someone was gonna come ‘ere after we were arrested?”

Jamison shook his head. “Doesn’t matter. We’ll figure it out later- we gotta get ready before-”

Something slammed the doors from outside, only the barring lance keeping them shut. More slams followed as Mako stepped back.

“Open the door!” a voice commanded from outside. “Let us inside!”

“The moment we open tha’ door, I’ll blast ye all to the next kingdom!” Jamison yelled loud enough for the other side to hear. The knocking stopped, only for a familiar voice to call.

“Your Highness, we come to negotiate with you. We do not mean you any harm, so please, open the door!”

Victor, one of the King’s royal advisors. Mako tensed, but wasn’t sure what to do. He looked at Jamison and saw Bianca doing the same, both unsure how they should proceed.

“Victor?”

“Your Highness, this is a huge misunderstanding. I am sure if you open the door, we can talk and make right this mess.”

“They,” Jamison got closer to the doors, “they tried to kill me!”

“Their orders are to apprehend you, not to assassinate you, Your Highness. Their orders come from an understanding of what has happened. If you open the door, I assure your safety.”


“I assure the safety of everyone inside that room. But we must discuss this; Your Highness, surely you trust me?”

Jamison bit his lip and thought about it. Time ago, Jamison had told Mako that he had known Victor
since he was a child, and Victor had been his father’s advisor long before Jamison was alive. He trusted him, in a way.

“What do we do?” Bianca whispered, close to Jamison.

“I don’t… I don’t know?” He took a deep breath. “Maybe…”

There was a glimmer of hope in Jamison’s eyes. He gulped, and spoke.

“Victor, only ye can enter. Whoever else enters, I’ll make ‘em explode. You know I can.”

There was silence from the other side of the doors for several seconds, as if they were thinking about it.

“Of course, Your Highness. I’ll be the only one entering, so we can discuss the current situation. Please, let me in.”

Mako carefully took the lance off and opened the doors just enough for the old man to slip through. Immediately after he entered, Mako closed them again and watched Victor as he walked towards Jamison. He didn’t seem to have any weapon on him, didn’t look like someone who knew how to fight at all.

Bianca stood close to Jamison, sword in hand. Victor stared at the blood on her dress, clearly alarmed, but said nothing as he stared at Jamison and smiled calmly.

“Your Highness! It is such a shame we must meet like this.”

“We had a meeting with ye and yer men earlier today, but then all of this happened. Do ya have an explanation for it, Victor?” Jamison went straight to the point.

“Yes, unfortunately. We were going to have a meeting earlier today but it seems things went out of… a little bit out of control. It seems that information leaked, and things happened a little too fast.” He clasped his hands together softly. “There were a multitude of things we wanted to discuss during the meeting.”

Jamison crossed his arms and stared. “Does this got anythin’ to do with what is going on currently and why they want to arrest us, or are ye stallin’?”

Victor licked his lips. “Your Highness, the thing we wanted to discuss during the meeting was about you… renouncing your Kingship.”

Jamison laughed. “Excuse me, what?”

“We, the royal advisors, have come to the conclusion that your time as King needs to come to an end, Your Highness. We have discussed this at length, and we have come to the conclusion that it is necessary for you to step down.” He nervously fidgeted with his thumbs. “If you were to refuse-”

“Then the guards would arrest us, ain’t that right?”

Victor nodded. Jamison bit his lip, his foot tapping against the floor. He pointed at Bianca with his chin. “What about her? If I die or somethin’, she should be made queen. Ye were chasin’ her as well.”

“Miss Bianca’s political beliefs are very similar to yours, Your Highness, and as such are dangerous to-’”
“Political beliefs! Is this all about me not wantin’ to follow through on yer stupid requests?!” Jamison started to scream. “Is this what this is all about?”

“Your Highness, you don’t seem to understand. It is not only that, but there is a plan. There has always been a plan, but things have become too altered. We wanted to see how things would go with the new turn of events, but it seems that, unfortunately, we must step up and go back to the plan.”

“Excuse me?” Jamison laughed nervously. “A plan?”

“Your Highness, it is not important. What is important is for you to step-”

“Shut the fuck up! Ya ain’t tellin’ me what to fuckin’ do!” He stepped over to Victor, who started to step back in a panic until Mako placed himself behind him, grabbing his shoulders tightly so he wouldn’t escape. “Now, ye are gonna tell me about this plan of yers, if ye know what is good for ye.”

“I will not do such things. You may be the King of the land, but-”

Jamison slammed the barrel of his launcher into him, busting Victor’s lip. The man whimpered, and Jamison shoved the barrel under his chin to make him look up at him. His face was red with anger, beads of sweat rolling down his forehead. Mako hadn’t seen Jamison so angry since… since their fight, actually.

“You are going to tell me, or may God help you.”

“Ya are really stupid if ye thought I was going to let ya out of this without some blood. What did ye expect?”

“I am your advisor. You cannot do this to me.” Victor trembled, fearing for his life. He seemed to have miscalculated just how Jamison was going to react.

“Ya are really stupid if ye thought I was going to let ya out of this without some blood. What did ye expect?”

“I have influence; you harm me and-”

“Oh, come on, Victor.” Jamison snarled his teeth, canine showing. Bianca stood back, watching the events unfold with a strange calmness. “You really think money and influence is gonna help ya here? Ya should’ve known, I don’t give a shit about that.”

“I am not going to tell you anything. It doesn’t matter. You will be apprehended, Your Highness.”

Jamison slammed the barrel into his face once again, immediately breaking Victor’s nose. The man wailed and screamed as the pounding behind the door started once again.

“Please- please stop!” Jamison chuckled, pressing the barrel of the launcher onto the man’s throat, hand on the trigger. “I’ll tell you everything!”

“Ye are all the same. You feel all mighty, but then ye see a bit of yer own blood and cry like fucking dogs.” He pressed the gun tighter against his throat. “Now, ye are gonna tell me what ye are talkin’ about, if ya don’t want me to blow yer fucking head off. You know I will.”

Victor swallowed, eyes focused on the gun and on Jamison. His eyes were wild, face red, and he was clearly ready to pull the trigger. He was not fucking around and Victor knew it.

“There was a plan,” Victor started. Jamison cocked his head, paying attention. “We… even though the King is the ruler of the land, we as royal advisors are to make decisions that sometimes affect the King himself, like in this case, where we know the King is not suitable.”
“Keep yer stupid comments to yerself, if ya wanna keep yer head on.”

“When your mother passed, your father’s rule became less optimal. We considered options and came to the conclusion that your family was not fit for the role of being monarchs anymore. We decided on another person whose views aligned with what we expected of the monarchy.”

Jamison grit his teeth so hard Mako thought he would chip them. Bianca tensed as well, swallowing dry. Mako knew what was coming, but it still felt like a slap to the face. The knocking outside kept going strong, but they ignored it.

“Duke Ian Wellington. He has what we expect of a monarch, so we decided he would be a better fit. He had no heir, so he would be the one to govern. Your father…he rejected the idea immediately and was afraid that there would be an attempt on your life, which is why he, against our wishes, sent you to Australia to keep you safe.”

Mako saw Jamison bite his lip, still focused on Victor.

“So all of this time, everythin’ that has happened, it was to kill me so my uncle could get the throne?”

“We do not approve of the methods he presented, but there was no way to prove it was actually him, so we could not apprehend him.”

“Oh, ain’t that nice. Ya were worried about me, eh? But you couldn’t do anythin!” He lightly hit Victor under the chin. “Keep talkin’!”

“W-when you came back, the plan was to apprehend both you and your father before your coronation, and then Duke Wellington would take the throne. However, your father then died, and you were made the King. We hoped that maybe you would be fit. But we saw that we were wrong, so we ask you to step down or we will apprehend you.”

Jamison’s face twisted into a snarl, and then into a manic smile. He showed all his teeth as he started to laugh loudly, entire body twisting as he laughed, voice echoing.

“Ya knew me since i was a kid,” He laughed even louder. “Ya fuckin’ raised me to die in a cell! Ya fuckin’ bred me to die! What fuckin’ asshole does that, looks at a child and thinks to themselves, ‘Ah yes, I will throw this boy in a cell for the rest of his life!’”

“I-”

“This is why this place was sealed off, huh? Cus ya wanted the fuckin’ future King to have a nice protected place to sit on! To fuckin’ loom over me as he kills me! Because ya fuckin’ planned this from the beginning!”

“We were not the ones that tried to kill you!” Victor spat out, anger on his words. Jamison just slammed the barrel of his gun hard against his skull, a crack emanating from the hit. Victor’s eye went red, a bruise immediately forming beneath it.

“Oh! That just makes it better, eh! Ye weren’t the ones that tried to kill me, no, ye just wanted to take everythin’ from me father and me! That is so much better!” Jamison growled, slamming the barrel into him more and more until Mako stopped holding him and Victor crumpled into the ground. Jamison started kicking him in the face, ribs, torso, any place he could reach. “You fuckin’ knew me! Ye fuckin’ raised me! Ye- ye were the one that was there when me father died! Ye were- ye were there! Ye assured me everythin’ was gonna be fine! How fuckin’ dare you! How fucking dare you!”

The man curled into himself, his hands raised pleadingly to the sky. Jamison spat on him and
continued to kick him. “What kind of monster are ye?! How can ya fuckin’ sleep at night?! What is the fuckin’ matter with ya?!”

Both Bianca and Mako were silent as Jamison kicked and kicked until Victor didn’t move anymore. He laid in a crumpled, dead heap on the floor as Jamison panted, rubbing his face with his palms, biting his lip so hard it almost bled. He was about to cry, but forced himself not to from what Mako could tell.

“He fuckin’...”

“Jamison…” Bianca approached him slowly. “I am so sorry.”

“My father knew this. He thought... he was on me side. And... it was all part of the plan? To kill us? Kill me first, then him? I-” He clenched his fist harshly, eyes focused on the body sprawled on the floor. “I am going to fuckin’ kill ‘em all.”

“Listen.” Bianca very carefully touched him in the arm, bringing his attention to her. “Duke Ian will come here soon. If we kill him the nightmare will stop.”

“We will still have to get rid of all the other guards, though.”

“We can do this, Jamison! We can absolutely do this.”

Jamison sighed, and stared once again at Victor’s body.

“Everythin’ I have fuckin’ trusted… is either dead or was always plottin’ tha’ kill me.” He looked at Mako while he said that.

“Jamie, we’re going to help you. I- fuck, this won’t happen to you, okay? I am going to help you get out of this. Do you believe me?”

“Yes, I just-”

“Jamison,” Mako finally spoke, after what felt like hours. Both Bianca and Jamie stared at him. “I am so sorry.”

“I know.”

“I don’t- I just want to make right what I did.”

“Yes.”

“I will give my life to-”

“You already said that. I know. You said it and I know. But don’t you fuckin’ expect me to be okay with this. Fuck- I have lost so much in a few months and ye just want me to accept this?”

“I just want you to know it.” Mako bit his lip. “That you can trust me. That I am sorry.”

“I don’t- Mako, I don’t have time for this. There are people out there who are gonna get paid if they kill me. Ain’t got no fuckin’ time to deal with what happened. Don’t fuckin’ do this to me. I don’t want to think about this now.” He pointed a metallic finger at Mako. “If ye mean what ya said, then ye’re gonna help me not die now. But I don’t want to see ya again.”

“Fair enough.” Mako said, but honestly he just wanted to start sobbing.
“Um,” Bianca nudged Jamison, “don’t you think everything is a little too quiet on the other side now?”

She was right. It was just too quiet. Considering the men could hear the sound of Victor being killed, Mako would have expected them to keep trying to get into the room.

“Jamison Fawkes!”

Mako felt his muscles tense at that voice in particular. God damn.

Jamison recognized the voice as well, tensing and aiming at the door with his finger on the trigger. Bianca had to stop him. “It’ll just bounce off and hit us instead. Don’t be stupid.”

“Yes, listen to her, Jamison. Do not be stupid. Did you really think that holing up in the throne room, my throne room, was a good idea?” the Duke said from behind the doors. That was the reason everybody had gone so quiet; they were probably briefing him on what was happening. “It is just three of you against many of us. Do you think you have any chance of winning?”

“I don’t care to win if i get to fuckin’ kill you, you fuckin’ piece of shit!” he screamed, wildly waving his gun around. “I’ll fuckin’ maul you!”

“I was going to let you live, you know. Considering the fact that you are so hard to kill. But you are forcing me to kill you. So be it.”

The other side went quiet and the three of them got ready. The doors were slammed from the other side harshly, again and again until they finally gave out. As soon as the doors came down Jamison shot at the figures behind them, the bombs bouncing and landing in the middle of the group of guards.

The bombs detonated and sent them flying, missing limbs wobbling through the air as men screamed and more guards replaced them. Jamison kept shooting, but some of the men managed to make it inside before he could pick them off.

Mako saw Bianca go to Jamison’s right to get at the guards that went inside. She was lithe and fast, her sword slitting the throats of those that got near. She was so agile the men were having trouble even following her movement, blood spraying on her beautiful dress as she killed them.

Mako himself went to Jamison’s left, using his hands to punch and crack the necks of those that got near. He unsheathed his sword, slicing anybody that came into contact with it, one hand slicing and the other snapping necks while carefully dodging Jamison’s bombs that kept exploding in the ever-growing cloud of smoke.

Mako felt the adrenaline rush through his veins, how good it felt to kill so many people. He would snap their necks, slice at their bellies and stab them in the gut. The feeling of being able to control wherever they lived or died was a thing of beauty, something he had missed so much. He felt young, full of life, something out of this world. Even more now that he had an actual reason to do this, someone to protect, someone to look out for. He would kill them all with his bare hands for Jamison.

“All!” the guards kept screaming, but the three of them didn’t give them a chance to keep up. That is, until a group rushed inside and raised a shield as Jamison fired. The bomb hit the shield and ricocheted towards where Mako was standing.

His eyes went wide as he saw the bomb making its way towards him, turning his back to it as the explosion went off. It rang in his ears, his skin hot and uncomfortable. His back rose in temperature, burning at his flesh dangerously. His armor was burning. It was burning his skin.
The armor had to go, since it felt like it was fucking melting on him (what did he put in those bombs?), so in one swift movement he took his chest piece off and threw the melting metal towards the men with the shield. It threw them off-balance enough for Jamison to shoot at their feet, sending them flying across the room along with the shield.

Now that Mako didn’t have his chest plate, he needed to be far more careful, but that wouldn’t stop him. Once, someone called him the One-Man Apocalypse, and he intended to make that title stick. He would kill anything that even dared look at Jamison.

Several minutes passed as Jamison kept shooting, Bianca still holding her own but seeming to tire. Mako still felt his blood heat from the action, but also the strain in his muscles.

“Oh, fuck-”

Mako immediately turned to Jamison and noticed he had run out of ammo. He needed to load more from the bag he had, but that would take time and the guards were already getting inside the room at a dangerous rate, pushing them back more and more. Mako grit his teeth. He had had enough.

He slammed the man whose head he was holding onto the ground, running towards the group of about ten who had just spilled inside the room. He snarled like an animal as he grabbed one by the arm and yanked as hard as he could, heartbeat booming in his ears as he slammed him full force against the floor like a rag doll and listened to his bones crack. He then used the force to throw him against the group, knocking a few to the floor.

Mako used their confusion to keep attacking, grabbing another guard and breaking his neck before shoving him into the floor and using his sword to impale yet another. Blood sprayed the black shirt he wore under his armor and Mako saw red, his stomach churning in excitement as he took the blade out of the man as if he was a chunk of meat. He grabbed another of the guards too shocked to react and dislocated his arm before shoving his fingers into his jaw and ripping it from his head.

The men tried to attack him, absolutely terrified out of their minds as they kept coming. Duke Ian must have paid them well considering they looked like they had pissed their pants and yet still kept coming. Mako was too big, too fast, too powerful. He would yank those weapons out of their hands, stab them in the neck with them, slice off their limbs with their own blades, snap their necks as the last thing they looked at was Mako’s eyes.

“Kill him!” the Duke screamed from somewhere. “Kill Fawkes! I want him dead! Kill him! I want his head! Kill him!”

Mako managed to push them back outside of the room, ripping one of the massive wooden doors off its hinges and using it to bludgeon the guards as he shoved. They flew and fell to the floor, several dead due to the sheer force of being hit with a door.

After that, no one else tried to enter the room. Around him lay corpses from those who tried to harm Jamison, their blood already pooling on the floor. It was a beautiful sight. His heart was beating hard against his chest as he looked under him. The Duke must have run off because Mako couldn’t see him anywhere. He was about to start running to personally skin that creep before a voice called out to him.

“Mako.”

He turned, his face full of blood and sweat, to see Jamison standing, his launcher still in his hand. He was staring at Mako and down at the chaos he had created, all of those people. The people he had killed for him. To protect him. Because Jamison was everything, his goal. As long as Jamison was
alive, so Mako could be in peace.

Yes.

As long as Jamison was alive, Mako could be at peace.

To see him alive, that was enough for Mako.

He sighed, a calmness in his heart. He went over to Bianca, who was on the floor from having tripped while killing one of the men. He helped her stand up silently and she accepted his aid in silence, each of them trying to rationalize the carnage that had just happened.

“I.”

Something was wrong.

Footsteps gathered outside of the room and Mako saw it. Jamison was in the center of the room as several guards spilled inside at the same time out of *somewhere* (From where? From where? Where did they come from?) with bows ready to attack.

Mako heard the Duke scream at them to fire, his eyes falling to their fingers as they let go of the arrows aimed at Jamison. Bianca screamed.

Mako felt something burning in his gut as he ran, his ears screaming as he placed himself in front of Jamison. In one movement, he held Jamison close and lifted him, using his entire body as a shield for the man as his gun clattered to the ground. Mako held him tight and close, feeling dozens of arrows pierce the fat of his back now that his chest armor was off, explosions of pain blossoming through his skin and down to his entire body, blood already spilling from them.

The arrows kept coming and coming, dozens of them lodging into his back. Bianca kept screaming as Jamison lay stunned in his arms, staring at his face with wide eyes as arrows flew at him and buried themselves in Mako before they could reach.

He stared up at Mako, his golden eyes glassy and wet with tears as Mako kissed his eyebrow softly, arrows still lodging into his skin.

“I’m so sorry.”

He felt Jamison’s tears stick to his face as he heard a distant voice say they were out of arrows, and then Mako finally felt his legs give out, still holding Jamison close as he succumbed to the weight. Jamison managed to get away from his grasp as Mako fell, and oh he was so selfish, because he wanted to hold him close, hold him forever. Wanted him close.

Mako wondered if he would die. He pressed his cheek against the cold floor, the arrows lodged in his back grinding against each other, feeling pain.

He heard laughter, that horrible, disgusting laughter in the distance, and footsteps approaching them, approaching *Jamison*.

Mako was not going to let him win.
Bloody Mary

Chapter Summary

Mako needed to get up.

Chapter Notes

Mako needed to get up.

Hello! !!! Im so sorry this is late, life got in the way.

Cant talk much Im in the run thank u and i hope you like it!!!!

Shoutout to my beta nami! !

Mako laid still on the floor, several arrows lodged into his bleeding back, but he wasn’t dead yet. This wouldn’t kill him, and he knew it. But he couldn’t move, and that was important. His world was nothing but pain against the cold floor, cheek pressed against it as he heard what happened around him.

The archers had been blown away by Jamison’s last grenade, thrown at their feet. The smell of charred skin, blood and smoke drowned the room, small fires consuming their bodies. It was a sickening smell, but adrenaline ran high, and it was the last thing anybody cared about.

Jamison laid in the middle of the room, Mako behind him. He panted, beads of sweat rolling down his forehead, as well as some blood that didn’t belong to him. Bianca shook, staring at the door.

“You just have to ruin everything, don’t you?”

The Duke stepped into the room. Behind him was his personal bodyguard, tall and menacing, built like a brickhouse. “I know you don’t have any more bombs. You have nothing.”

His blue eyes fell on Victor’s corpse, and he sneered. “You made a mess of things.”

Jamison stared at him silently, golden eyes rabid like an animal’s. His posture was erratic, like he would jump and attack at any moment.

“You know that no matter what, you can’t outrun this, don’t you? This was set in motion a long time ago, and you can’t just unmake it, Jamison. After your mother passed, the royal advisors approached me asking to be part of their plan, and I agreed. Because I knew neither you or your father were fit for it.”

“Ye killed me mother,” Jamison snarled, teeth showing. “Didn’t you?!”

“I loved my sister Amanda so very much. However, dear Jamison, something that it seems you or your father never seemed to understand, was that there are some things we just need to remove.” He
placed his hand on his chest solemnly, recalling the event with his eyes focused on the floor, “If we desire to achieve more power, there are obstacles we must overcome to be able to advance.”

“You killed my mother.”

“After your mother died, the royal advisors agreed that it may be better to have me as the new king. But I had to get rid of you—unfortunately, your father shipped you off to Australia before I could.”

“You…” Jamison’s legs were shaking, eyes glassy. “You killed my mother—your sister—t’ become king You killed your own sister?!”

“You are such a spoiled child, Jamison. How do you think this kingdom was built? How do you think your family rose to power? This is how it works, and it is how it will always work, now and in the future. We must rid of that which burdens us, to get power. And you, Jamison, are my burden.”

His bodyguard stepped over slowly and Jamison took a small step back. He aimed his frag launcher, but it was an empty threat—he had no more ammo to use.

“Every single thing I’ve done has been planned. I spent so much time planning this, to take the crown, and you will not take it from me. You will not stop me.”

“So ye gonna kill me, huh? Like ya killed all my family?”

“It’s how the world works. But I admit,” he smiled wide, the wrinkles on his face twisting with delight, “I will enjoy this. Now, Ulric, if you may?”

The bodyguard, Ulric, started to approach Jamison. Each step was steady, deliberate. Jamison basically screamed desperation through his eyes, without a method to attack him at close range.

Bianca jumped behind the man, wrapping her arms around his neck with her rapier in one hand. She pressed it against his neck, but Ulric effortlessly grabbed her by her right arm. He was stronger and bigger than the other guards, and he was able to pull her off his back and throw her to the ground.

Quickly, Bianca stood back up, ready to leap and attack. She screamed in anger, lunging forward with her rapier still in her hand, ready to stab him in the face. He easily slapped her to the side, throwing her into the floor once again.

Without hesitation, he kept walking towards Jamison, who aimed his gun at him. No matter how many times he pulled the trigger nothing came out of the barrel, but his mind hadn’t registered it.

Once again Bianca leaped forward between the two of them, hair messy and desperate. She tried to attack, but Ulric easily stepped back. He reached over her, grabbing her right hand and yanking the sword out of her hands. He had his own sword, but he just took hers and threw her back. Even so, Bianca did not give up, ready to try to yank it back again.

Ulric swung the rapier.

Bianca was thrown back by the strength of the slash, immediately cradling her face. She made a wet sound as she crashed to the ground, curling up into herself and going still, hands covering her face as a puddle of blood formed under her head.

Jamison watched her in horror, unable to say a thing as Ulric approached. He threw the gun at him in desperation and it crashed against his chest, but it did nothing as it fell uselessly on the ground.
“You can’t escape fate, Jamison. This is what you were born for.”

Gritting his teeth, Jamison did the only thing he figured he could do—go down with a fight. He leaped forward, scratching and attempting to bite at the man’s flesh. His nails dug into his cheeks, his legs kicking harshly as he attempted to pull his hair, to do any kind of damage. It was useless, Ulric was strong and far too powerful.

It was like a rat attacking a horse, it did nothing. It was no use. Ulric grabbed him and threw him to the ground, knocking the air out of the young man. Jamison gasped like a fish, the demon of a man still approaching him.

“Please, Ulric. I want to enjoy this.”

Jamison stumbled back, crawling backwards, attempting to get away, but it was useless. Mako felt the blood pool under him as he saw the events unfolding in front of him. He couldn’t move, just stare as Ulric approached Jamison and yanked him by the arm. Ulric had weapons, but he did not unsheathe them, instead balling his massive fist and striking Jamison down.

The young man refused to scream or do anything, a bruise already on his cheek as he buried his nails in the man’s palm. He choked out something as Ulric dropped him on the floor, pinning him with his legs and hitting him in the stomach.

Jamison made a weird wet sound, turning his head to puke as he continued to be punched in the stomach, in the torso with great force. Jamison could only lay on the floor as Ulric continued to punch him, fingers scratching the tile under him as the awful pounding kept going.

It hurt. Mako watched and he felt his blood boil, but his body didn’t move. He screamed at it to do something, but it refused to. He wondered if he was dead and this was his punishment for everything he’d done, to watch as Jamison kept being assaulted, those fists punching into him and breaking, bruising, destroying him slowly as Jamison refused to cry, simply laid with his teeth bare, fingers tracing lines under him.

Ulric stopped as the Duke walked towards them, looking down at Jamison and smiling.

“Even this was planned, you know. Every little detail of your life. It has lead up to this. I had to pay a lot of money to make it happen, but you won’t be able to outrun your destiny, Jamison.”

He smiled wide, a shit eating smile that made Mako want to tear his mouth open. “I could have you imprisoned, but you are so hard to kill, this is satisfactory to me.”

Jamison snarled up at him, face red and pained. Ulric continued with his attack, punching with his armored fists at Jamison. His body kept being broken, and he gasped and hissed in pain... but didn’t cry, didn’t scream. He contained it all. He bared his teeth and kept his eyes open as he stared the man on top of him, killing him, beating him into nothingness. He was looking at the face of his death and he did not budge, did not beg.

“I believe that’s enough, Ulric. Now, if you may?”

The bodyguard nodded, reaching to his side to unsheathe his sword. Jamison kicked around, managing to slip from under the man, and started to run towards Bianca’s rapier. Ulric was already up and running towards him with his own sword.

Bloodied and beaten up, Jamison still stood. He held the rapier between them, and quickly struck up. He caught Ulric off-guard and managed to make a cut in his left cheek. The man’s eyes widened in anger, kicking at Jamison in the knee of his artificial leg with force and bringing Jamison down. He
stomped on the artificial leg, an awful crunching sound echoing through the room.

Mako needed to get up.

Jamison’s leg de-attached under Ulric’s foot, and without it, Jamison managed to free himself. He was quick, standing up even though he lacked a leg. He kept himself propped up with the rapier and jumped back, fear printed on his pale face as he tried to get away from Ulric.

Mako had to get up.

Ulric kicked the leg away and approached Jamison, who avoided the man’s frantic slashes as he tried to protect himself, raising his sword.

Mako couldn’t get up.

Jamison desperately tried to jump away, the realization that he was going to die hitting him. He breathed hard as he hopped back, and that’s when Ulric struck.

The slash hit Jamison in the face. Blood sprayed in a straight line, coating Ulfric’s armor and face. Jamison twirled in place, letting go of the sword as he crashed lifelessly into the floor. He didn’t move, his face pressed against the tiles, blood already pooling down.

Mako got up.

The arrows in his back remained in place and they hurt, it felt like they were tearing his skin apart. He felt the blood in him drip down his skin, his body both numb and in pain, but he got up.

His blood boiled, his fingers digging into his palms and drawing blood. His mind was blank, nothing but white noise, white hot anger pouring out of his eyes, out of his mouth. He gritted his teeth as everything became red. He felt things pulling at him and trying to bring him down, but he ignored them. He ignored the screeching awful pain that flooded his body and mind.

“What?!” the Duke screamed as he saw Mako standing up. He just happened to be next to him as he rose.

Mako grabbed him and in one swift movement threw him against the wall.

He heard the thud, and Mako knew that he was still alive. But he would deal with the Duke later. For now, now he had another target.

Ulric saw him approach and got ready. His stance became instantly aggressive, his eyes wide as he saw Mako was still alive. Mako had no weapon, but it didn’t matter—he did not need it.

“The bodyguard,” Ulric said. He seemed… impressed, but Mako did not care about impressing the man he was about to kill.

This time, Ulric was the one to attack first. He roared as he swung his broadsword, but Mako stepped out of the way easily. One slash connected, but Mako grabbed Ulric’s wrist and yanked it, twisting it, hoping for it to snap. It didn’t; instead, Ulric used the proximity to punch Mako in the face.

The fist connected but he didn’t feel it, too much pain in general. Mako yanked Ulric towards him, kneeing him in the stomach where there was no armor.
Ulric barely flinched, using his weight to grab onto Mako and try to throw him into the ground. Mako didn’t budge, howling as he pushed Ulric back, shoving him off and making him stumble.

He used the opportunity to leap forward and start hitting Ulric. His fists hit him directly in the face, but the man took them and barely moved as Mako continued. Ulric managed to catch Mako’s fist in one hand, and the other in his free one.

They both fought for dominance, putting their weight on their fists as they stared at each other, Mako staring right at Ulric’s eyes as he pushed with all his weight, none of them budging.

“I thought you were going to sell him,” Ulric spat as he pushed more with his fists, attempting to overpower Mako. His eyes widened at the fact that this man somehow knew about that. “What changed your mind, warrior?”

“You… How—”

“Ulric you idiot! You weren’t supposed to say a thing!” The Duke coughed, still sitting against the wall and cradling his shoulder.

“He will die. What is the point?” Ulric stared into Mako’s eyes as he spoke. “Everything was planned. Why do you think you were hired to become his bodyguard?”

Several things rushed through Mako’s head, making his power falter just a little bit. He regained his composure almost immediately, simply pushing back, locked with Ulric. The Duke, however, laughed.

“Fine. I’ll let him known, just before he dies.” He didn’t stand up, reclining his head against the wall behind him. “He is right. Why do you believe you, Mako Rutledge, who was a ruthless warrior and became a killer for money, were hired to protect the Prince?”

Mako grit his teeth, the pain in his entire body blossoming more and more as he tried to keep his stance.

“The general—” Mako hissed as he kept fighting.

“Every man can be bought, Mako.” He started laughing. “Do you think it is a coincidence, those men you used to work with suddenly appearing and telling you that you should steal your charge? Do you think it is a coincidence you are good at killing and yet not protecting?”

Mako felt as if the floor beneath him disappeared. Everything suddenly made perfect sense, but as he figured it out he lost his strength. Ulric pushed him to the floor and started to punch him, beating him just as he did with Jamison minutes ago. Mako felt the arrows lodge even more into his back, hissing in pain as he kept being hit in the face, feeling how his lip split open and his mouth started to bleed, nose breaking.

“I took care of every single thing. But I must admit, I did not expect your involvement to be like this.” Mako felt one of his teeth fall as he was punched in the jaw, his world spinning in place.

“But it doesn’t matter. As I said, I planned for everything. Even this, in the offcase you failed at the task I had assigned to you.”

Mako had wondered why he had been hired. He was good at killing people, not protecting them. And it had been a farce. He had been part of the plan all along, a part of the Duke’s plan. He had bought everyone and had them hire him so he would either fail and get Jamison killed, or would sell him to the Duke himself.
Whatever it was, he was just a piece of his twisted, disgusting plan to get rid of his own bloodline.

It hit him. He had been part of this all along. He had been nothing but a tool to kill Jamison.

“Pathetic fool. I knew commoners were animals, but this was too much. To think! My own blood, my sister’s blood, fucking a villager, like you.”

Oh, good, so he knew that, too.

“Just lets me know what a disgrace he is. Luckily one of the guards saw your little notebook, thrown away. Even despite your stupid deviation, the plan was able to move forward without you.”

Oh. Oh.

Everything fit into place.

The Duke had hired him. The Duke expected him to either sell or get Jamison killed. He was the one to tell Jamison what he had done. He was the one that had hired everybody to kill him. To murder Jamison to get his hands on the crown, to govern. He had destroyed everything close to Jamison and had twisted him, and now Jamison laid there, most likely dead, with blood pouring out of him, on the cold floor like a butchered pig.

And Mako had been part of the plan.

Mako did not take well to being a pawn.

He grit his teeth as he finally grabbed one of Ulric fists, grabbing it and twisting as hard as he could. This time, he was able to break it. Ulric howled in pain and Mako pushed him off, yanking his arm straight and kneeling it in the middle of the humerus with all his strength. It broke with a wet gross crunch. Ulric screamed even harder, yanking it back, but Mako pulled it, popping it out of its socket.

Ulric snarled as his arm hung limply from his side, cradling it.

“You piece of shit!” he screamed, grabbing his sword and leaping forward to stab Mako with it.

Mako took the sword in his palm, stopping it even as it bled through the skin. But it didn’t hurt, as Ulric stared at Mako with horror in his face.

Mako screamed as he grabbed the sword and pulled it, taking it off Ulric’s hands and leaving him weaponless. He swung the broadsword with both hands, his palm still bleeding, but the pain didn’t exist anymore. He just attacked, the sword hitting Ulric in the shoulder and going through the armor and into the flesh beneath.

The bodyguard howled once again and tackled Mako with incredible force, knocking him off his feet. He landed against the other wall, as Ulric attempted to get up with blood spilling from his shoulder and his limp arm still hanging dead.

Mako had crashed against the decorative armors, destroying them. They laid undone on the floor
around him. His palm was bleeding profusely, and as much as he wanted to kill the bastard with his bare hands, Ulric had managed to get a hold of his broadsword once again. Mako needed an advantage.

His ears were ringing as he grabbed a sickle that laid on the ground, once held by one of the armors. There was a long chain at his feet, and without thinking he grabbed one end and tied it to the heavy sickle.

When Ulric got up Mako was already swinging his makeshift weapon, swinging the chain with the sickle cutting through the air. Ulric stared at it strangely just before Mako threw it at him. Ulric raised his arm defensibly, the one holding his sword. It caught him on the wrist, and Mako pulled.

The sickle was sharp enough that it cut his hand in a straight movement, the appendage falling down dead to the ground, still holding the sword. Ulric screamed as he stared at it, curling into the ground as Mako started to swing again, running and approaching Ulric.

Ulric looked up to Mako. He was furious, eyes red and face twisted in pain and anger. He bit his lip as he popped his arm back in place, his broken humerus not a problem as he grabbed the sword despite what must be a terrible pain, and awaited for Mako’s next movement.

Mako threw the sickle once again, and Ulric used his sword to throw it off, roaring as he rushed towards Mako. Mako yanked the chain towards him, his other hand grabbing at Ulric’s arm as he attempted to slice Mako’s throat.

“Beast,” he snarled, lips bloody and eyes bloodshot. “Animal. Fucking animal! Piece of shit, I will fucking kill you!”

Mako didn’t say a thing. He didn’t say a thing as he retrieved the chain and got the sickle in his free hand. Mako didn’t say a thing as he held the sickle between his fingers and shoved it at Ulric’s throat. He didn’t say a thing as he sliced open his throat in one swift movement, the blood spraying to his face as Ulric’s eyes went wide, mouth spilling blood as he let go of Mako, his handleless arm and broken limp arm going to cradle his throat. Mako said nothing as he kicked the man into the ground, watching the bodyguard choking on his own blood, eyes rolling to the back of his head as he died, choking on his own blood.

Mako said nothing as he looked up, covered in blood and sweat, sickle in his hand, with a broken body, and stared at the Duke. The Duke stood up against the wall, his back pressed at it and trembling. Fear in his eyes, he stared at the massacre. Everybody, all that money he had paid, was gone. His bodyguard, the guards, Victor—everyone that had been on his side was now dead.

And there was nothing the Duke could do about it.

“B-beast!” he screamed, panting in horror as Mako started to walk over him, dropping his sickle. “Demon! Vermin!”

Mako just kept getting closer, stepping over Ulric’s dead body.

“Was this part of your plan?” he asked in a silky voice. The Duke just stared, shaking as if his entire frame was going to become undone. “Everyone who was going to help you is dead. Every single one. What is your plan now?”

“I—I—” he gulped as Mako finally was now in front of him, blood seeping through several wounds on his body. “I fought for this. This—everything is planned. You cannot kill me. I am going to be
king. I will be king. I have done this to govern and you—you piece of shit, you commoner won’t get in my way. You commoners have no right, Y-you—you won’t—"

“I’ve met a lot of nobles, lately,” Mako remarked. “And all of you, it seems that you have the same thought. You think rules don’t apply to you, and you know? Maybe you’re right.”

He grabbed at the Duke with one palm, lifting him to his eye level and squeezing his neck. The man thrashed and fought, his face starting to get pale as he couldn’t breathe. “You know what’s funny?” Mako flashed his bright white teeth, as the Duke gasped for air as his windpipe was crushed.

“Death comes to all.”

Mako kept pressing and stared, looking into the Duke’s eyes as his life drained out of him, as he vomited in his palm, body becoming weak and limp and his eyes rolled to the back of his head.

Mako waited, and waited. He waited until he was sure the Duke couldn’t move. Until he was sure that he would never, ever move again. Until he was sure that Duke Ian Wellington was truly dead, and stayed that way forever.

He was dead. Mako let his body drop to the floor, a crumpled pathetic heap of a man, dead at his feet.

Mako took a breath, and turned around.

Jamison laid on the floor still, but Mako saw him move. He saw his hands twitch, still alive. His legs moved on his own as he quickly ran towards him. He didn’t care about anything else in the world, hovering just above Jamison who was still on the floor, curled.

Very softly he turned Jamison over, his heart dropping to his stomach as he did so, and the young man whimpered.

Mako let out a small gasp as he saw Jamison’s face.
A horizontal gash was on his face, from a cheek, crossing his nose and ending on his other cheek. It bled a lot, and Mako almost touched it. It was a big wound, and it would scar.

If Jamison survived.

His face was full of bruises, a split lip and a black eye, forehead bleeding as well. The young man was completely wrecked, his face broken. Mako very gently traced the outline of his face on the unbruised areas with a finger as Jamison took laboured breaths.

“Jamison,” Mako said, softly, as he still was on top of the young monarch. “Jamison, I’m so sorry.”

Jamison opened his eyes slowly and with difficulty, and saw Mako on top of him. Something deep inside of Mako hurt, squeezed at his heart and made him cry. Tears gathered at the corner of his eyes and spilled out, falling on top of Jamison’s face. “I’m so sorry.”

With great difficulty Jamison lifted his left ungloved hand, fingers trembling and shaking. He gasped as his fingers very slowly crawled up Mako’s face, touching him softly.

It had been so long since he had touched him.

It had been so, so long.

Mako raised his bloodied palm, cradling Jamison’s pale hand against his face and soaking it in his
own blood. He kissed at the palm, his tears spilling as Jamison let him touch him at last, let him cradle him and kiss him and love him, letting him after so many months.

His hair was undone, the long strands falling and forming a halo around Jamison’s face. He looked beautiful. He was so beautiful, and it made him cry.

Jamison’s hand wrapped around Mako’s cheek and very gently pulled his face down. Mako let him, let his long delicate bloodied fingers guide him down, his face very slowly getting closer and closer.

He had his permission.

Their lips touched, Jamison’s tender and red, bloodied. It tasted like metal, and Mako leaned into it. He kissed Jamison softly, his lip very delicately kissing Jamison’s, one hand propping himself up and the other cradling under Jamison’s head. Jamison kissed back, soft and weak, his hand running through Mako’s long hair.

Mako couldn’t stop crying. His tears fell down his bloodied cheeks, making clean tracks. He was openly sobbing now, crying against Jamison’s soft mouth, Jamison’s hand slowly sliding off his hair until he stopped moving.

“No, please,” Mako cried, separating and pressing his cheek against Jamison’s bloodied one. “Please, Jamie. Please.” He knelt on the floor, dragging Jamison’s body against him and cradling him in his arms, his face pressed against Jamison’s shoulder as he begged and cried, his fingers touching and making circles on every bit of skin he could touch.

“I…”

Bianca stood in front of him, but Mako just glanced at her. The right side of her face was bloodied, a nasty gash starting from above her right eyebrow, going through her eye and stopping mid cheek. Her eye was closed, her eyelid not being affected but her eye surely having been destroyed. Blood decorated her dress.

Mako didn’t care. He wasn’t in the emotional state to care about anyone else.

“They’re coming,” Bianca added. Mako didn’t pay attention to what she said, so she raised her voice. “Mako, they’re coming. Rebel groups and the likes—revolutionaries that the royal advisors and the Duke had been putting down—they’re coming. And—and there’s a fire.”

Mako turned around and, indeed, fire was starting to spread from the charred bodies that Jamison blew up. It was starting to consume everything, and if they waited for too long, it would consume them as well.

“We…” Bianca swallowed. “We need to do something.”

Mako just sat with Jamison in his arms.

“Mako. Mako listen to me!” Bianca screamed and hissed, holding her hand to her eye as she cursed. “Fuck! Mako, we need to do something!”

But Mako didn’t do a thing. He just sat there, white noise ringing through his ears. Bianca yelled out in frustration.

“I know what to do. Jamison, He—” Mako looked at her at the mention of his name. “Jamison told me what to do, well. Something he wanted to do. He told me what he wanted to do so…”

She swallowed, her eye still shut as blood kept oozing.
“You need to get up.”
Chapter Summary

The sky was cloudy.

Chapter Notes

The aftermath.

Hello!!!! I am SO SO SO SO EXCITED!!! This is technically the LAST chapter of the fic! what is next is the epilogue! but i am SO SO SO HYPE. LIKE I AM SO HYPE! I hope you guys like this chapter as much as I liked writing about it.

Well, see you next chapter, which will be the end of the fic!

Love y'all!!!

Shotout to my GF Trish, who was my beta reader! Thank you babe!!

The sky was cloudy, the ground wet from the light rain from a few hours before. The smell of wet dirt was pleasant, the cold breeze forcing people to wear coats and scarves.

The train station was full of people, just as usual. Many had that day’s newspaper, either reading it while waiting for their train to arrive or tucking it away for later.

Many of those people were distraught, confused looks on their faces. As if they suddenly realized they had to get out of the country as soon as possible. Most of them wore the elegant clothes of the higher castes. They looked confused and worried, reading the newspaper with horror on their faces.

The front page. The one everybody stared at, eyes red and sobbing.

"The King is Dead"

Bolded, it was the only thing on the cover. More news ran inside, as it always did, but no matter what company the newspaper was from, it had the same thing on the front page.

"Monday afternoon, explosions were heard inside of the palace. There were no guards on site or in the area surrounding the palace. Locals remarked how strange an event this was, mentioning how the perimeter was always full of guards. The explosions continued through most of the afternoon.

With the perimeter unguarded, anarchist group The Coalition of Free Will used the opportunity to enter the castle early Monday night after the explosions ended.

“The Coalition of Free Will is a group responsible for political protests and rallies against the monarchy, their protests becoming more widespread and stronger after King Jamison’s crowning. They were the strongest anarchist group in the kingdom, both widespread and numerous.”
“Witnesses and sources tell us that the inside of the palace was a massacre. Burnt bodies littered the hallways, corpses of guards and some service people flooding the floors. A fire consumed the top floor of the palace, which took the anarchist group several hours to put out as they searched through the castle for survivors. Maids and staff members were the only ones alive, and they recounted the events that had transpired earlier.

“The survivors told how it had been a coup, a political movement to kill King Jamison Fawkes and his fiancée Princess Bianca Keaton orchestrated by Duke Ian Wellington. The fight reportedly lasted several hours until the fire broke out.

“The fire had been extinguished by 5:00 Wednesday morning without any other survivors apart from maids. The floor was destroyed, littered with the charred corpses of guards and the King’s Royal Advisors. Sources claim that the fire began in the throne room.

“There were many bodies inside the throne room, among them those confirmed to be Duke Ian Wellington, Princess Bianca Keaton, and King Jamison Fawkes. The bodies were identified by their jewels and the staff’s witness accounts, plus the presence of their bodyguards amongst the dead.

“The Coalition of Free Will have made a statement that they are now the strongest political group in the Kingdom and will hold the Palace. Other kingdoms are reportedly already attempting to seize power, but The Coalition has stated that they will not let any more monarchs take power over the people of this country. For now, the future state of the Kingdom remains uncertain.

“The Fawkes bloodline has been erased from the earth and, with them, their Kingdom. God help us all.”

Sighing, Mako tucked the newspaper away in the small bag he was carrying. It was worth reading later, he figured. He went and grabbed every single newspaper he could find, nobody noticing that he never paid for them. Everybody seemed in such a panic at the news of their King’s death that they didn’t care.

He was exhausted, entire body in pain. He hadn’t slept properly since Monday and it was Wednesday morning- the newspaper had just been published a couple of hours ago. There was nothing he wanted more than to just lay down and sleep, but he couldn’t do that yet. He still had things to do.

Mako felt adventurous and, as he walked, made use of the panic to steal some food. It wasn’t hard, just grabbing the sandwiches at the counters of the small shops and stuffing them in his bag. Even though he was massive, everybody was too busy crying and trying to get out of the country to pay attention to him.

Mako noticed all of the people desperately wanting out were nobles. Rich women and men with runny makeup, not daring to think what it would be like to live in a place with no monarchy.

Oh, how would it be.

He finally reached his goal, a small bench out of the way. Mako sighed and sat down on one side, the two cloaked figures on the other side unmoving.

“I’m back,” Mako whispered as he took the sandwiches and passed them over. Bandaged fingers reached over and took them to the sound of shallow breathing.

“Thanks,” a tired voice said.

“Everything is chaos,” Mako pointed out.
“Can see that.” A voice from the other figure, feminine but equally tired.

Mako sighed.

“Do you have everything ready?”

The cloaked figure next to him grunted and turned to look at him.

Jamison’s face was bruised, his face bandaged where it was sliced two days ago. Dark bags decorated his face and he looked like he was on the verge of passing out. Bianca nodded as well beside him, carefully eating the offered sandwich.

Mako sighed again, his hurt body feeling relief as he waited for their train to arrive.

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It had been easy enough.

Burn it to the ground and get away forever. Jamison had mentioned it before, during one of those nights where they embraced each other under the sheets. The desire to just escape, get away, pretend he was dead and escape it all.

But he wouldn’t. He had a duty to do and he wouldn’t let those money grabbers take his job because he knew damn well it would be the worst thing to happen to the Kingdom. So it was nothing but a dream.

When Bianca mentioned that it could be done, Mako knew that they had to do it.

It was dirty work, but necessary. They had to drag the bodies of the unfortunate staff that didn’t survive into the throne room and put their jewelry on them. Taking the rings off of Jamison’s hand to put on corpses felt morbid but was, again, a necessity.

Once the corpses were in place, they accelerated the process. Despite her sliced eye, Bianca was able to set fire to the room and leave.

The maids, bless them. Not all of them had escaped because they felt the three would need help. And they were right. They directed them to the secret tunnels and promised they would stay behind and deal with The Coalition of Free Will. Make it so they were dead, forever.

The tunnels smelled of rainwater, dark and cold as they walked silently through them. One of the maids walked ahead and guided them towards the exit.

Mako didn’t pay attention to just how much time had passed since they had entered the tunnels. His mind and body were numb. The pain was intense, but he couldn’t feel it anymore. Blood continued to leak from his wounds.

In his arms he carried Jamison, bloodied and half dead. His fat fingers gently pressed against Jamison’s neck as he carried him, making sure he still had a pulse. A weak one. It was the only thing stopping Mako from losing his will to live.

Bianca limped behind them. She still carried her sword, but it dragged against the stone floor. She insisted, in case it was “necessary,” and assured them that if anybody attacked them she would attack back. Mako let her; it was obvious it was more a comfort for her than for them. They both kept bleeding, leaving a trail. Mako hoped the maids were right when they said no one but them knew about that tunnel.
They came to an opening where the tunnel diverged into several. There were no signs or words on the walls that could indicate where each one led. The young woman stopped, staring at the entrances.

“Um…” She turned to face them. “Where do you wish to go?”

“We need some place to rest for a day before we leave,” Bianca said as she hobbled past Mako. The bottom part of her dress had been ripped and wrapped around her damaged eye as a makeshift bandage. It was completely soaked with blood. She turned to face Mako, exhausted. “Where do you live?”

Mako said nothing, just staring. He hadn’t said a thing since the battle back at the throne room and he still felt numb, not conscious enough to actually answer. Bianca stared at him for a couple of seconds, then blinked.

“No… they’ll probably search it, just in case. We can’t all be there when that happens. We need somewhere where they won’t think of finding us.”

“Um…” The young woman guiding them bit her lip. “Maybe you could use my mother’s house? She passed away about a month ago. It is empty and not too big, but maybe you can use it to hide…”?

Bianca looked back at her, slightly stunned. Or maybe more tired. At this point, it was anyone’s guess.

“That- that would be fantastic. That’s- yes. That will help. Thank you.” She was on the verge of tears, but Bianca didn’t cry. “Could you please take us there?”

The young woman nodded and they followed her into the tunnel on the right. Mako kept silent, following suit.

More walking. Several more minutes (or less?) passed before Mako felt the body in his arms move slightly. He stopped immediately, staring down as Jamison’s face started to twist in slight pain.

“Jamie?” Mako whispered, his voice hoarse. The young man kept moving, as if trying to get away from him.

“Jamie, Jamie!” Bianca soothed. “Jamie it’s okay. You’ll be okay. We’ll do the plan. The disappearing plan. It’s okay.”

Jamison looked at her for few seconds, then lost consciousness again.

They needed to get him medical assistance fast.

The young woman quickened her pace, almost running. It was a haze for Mako and, after agonizing minutes, they finally made it to the surface. It took them only a few seconds to get to the house, after which she produced the front door key.

It was already night, the cold air feeling strange on their sweaty bodies. His body felt strangely hot, adrenaline still pumping. He could hear crickets near and, despite it being night, could see flashes of light far away. Mako turned his head and saw the castle aflame.

The castle, in flames. It was a strange feeling, one Mako couldn’t identify. The structure had always been there, present, standing just where everybody could see its magnificence. Burning down. They were a little far from the town, but Mako could already tell people were panicking at the image.
“Please, come in,” the woman whispered as she opened the door.

The place smelled of humidity and there was a thin layer of dust on everything. It was mostly barren, few pieces of furniture around. Among them was a big old couch. Mako immediately went towards it and carefully lowered Jamie onto it. The young man whimpered softly as Mako placed him on the cushions.

Mako sighed as he saw his state. Hurt and bloodied though he was, he wished he could fix it. He needed to do something.

He got up immediately, about to get out of the house. As soon as he moved he almost fell over, his legs almost giving up on him. He felt the floor move beneath him and had to use his hands to prop himself and not crash into the floor.

“S-sir!” the young woman urged as Bianca just stared.

“What are you playing?” Bianca hissed, tired. She probably thought he wanted to escape, but Mako wanted to do anything but.

“There’s… medicine and- and first aid, in my house.” He winced. It even hurt to speak. “I was going to-”

“Are you a moron? Look at you, everybody will freak out even more than normal. And you are still wearing half a knight’s armor. You can’t leave like this.” She bit her lip. “I can’t, either. People know who I am.”

Without thinking, Bianca turned to the still-startled young woman. “We need your help again. We need medicine and- and bandages, and first aid tools. You need to help us.”

“Y-yes! My uncle, he is a medic, he can come and-”

“No! Do not bring anybody here! We can’t trust them!” Bianca lashed out. “Please just… we can take care of it ourselves, but we need things to do it.”

“…Yes… yes, I will not bring anybody here. I’m sorry-”

“It’s okay, just, please.”

The woman nodded and left. Mako felt like his world was crashing down as the adrenaline finally died off. He gasped, but he couldn’t come undone yet. Not yet.

The woman returned soon with a lot of medical supplies on her hands and they set to work. She helped them as they healed each other and swallowed painkillers like candy. Mako didn’t even bother with his own injuries until he made sure Jamison was okay. He took apart his clothes, showing his bare chest. It was red and bruising.

As a warrior, Mako had had to heal himself and companions back in the day. He still remembered how to, memories guiding him through the process. Bianca was taking care of her eye, but paying attention to Mako as he softly traced his fingers over Jamison’s body.

The young man winced as Mako felt his ribs. Two were broken. He couldn’t feel any internal bleeding, but his body was sore and bruising. He removed his arm prosthesis, the stump red and angry, and massaged it, trying to figure out if it had been broken. It was okay, but the same couldn’t be said about his left arm. Mako made a splint for it with the items he had been given.
He sighed, going over his face next. It was bruised, a huge red slice running across his nose. Mako started to clean it to bandage it next, but Jamison hissed at the motion, so Mako brushed off his sweaty hair. He didn’t seem to have caved cheeks, which was good. He bandaged the wounds, cleaning off the injuries with alcohol. He gently lifted Jamison’s head, pills on his other palm. He softly opened his mouth and put the painkillers inside. He realized he didn’t have any water, but when he turned Bianca was holding a small glass of it. She didn’t say a thing, just stared at Mako.

Wordlessly, he grabbed it and gave it to Jamison, who at first looked shocked but then took gulps of it until he tried to push the glass away with his own face.

“It’s okay, it’s okay,” Mako soothed, still caressing his hair gently. “Painkillers.”

Once Jamison was taken care of, Mako could finally take care of himself. Most of the arrows had already fallen out of his back, but he couldn’t reach the rest. He sighed, already dreading trying to take them out, when he felt a pain in his back, something being taken out of his skin.

“Sorry,” Bianca whispered as she dabbed the wound with alcohol. She kept pulling the shafts and, while it hurt, Mako appreciated it. But God, it hurt.

Bianca helped him apply bandages to his big body. It was strange. It felt intimate, but they didn’t speak of it or what had happened.

“Mako,” Bianca finally said as she bandaged herself. “We need to leave.”

Yes. They needed to leave. But not just that place; they needed to leave the Kingdom. Leave forever. Let them believe they died and vanish to make them truly believe they had been killed.

“They won’t be able to put out the fire for a whole day,” Mako said. He was exhausted, sleep deprivation hitting. “We should leave as soon as we can, but…”

He turned his gaze to Jamison. Bianca immediately understood.

“I have gold in my house. Someone will have to go there.”

Bianca glanced at the young woman, asleep in a small chair propped against the wall. Bless her, she had helped them so much, and they would need her help once again.

“We leave the day after tomorrow, first train.”

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“How are you feeling?”

“Miserable.”

They rested for only one day. Mako felt like crap and there was no doubt that Bianca and Jamison felt the same. They could barely move, their wounds scabbing and healing. The young woman had helped them retrieve several cloaks and some gold from Mako’s house and they were wearing the perfect disguises.

But they hadn’t really talked. Apart from telling Jamison what they were doing, and him nodding in acceptance, they didn’t say much to each other. It felt like there was a physical wall between them.

“...I have to talk to you,” Bianca motioned. She got up and sat between Mako and Jamison, hissing and trembling. “There is a slight change of plans.”
“Bianca?” Jamison whispered, slightly concerned.

“I… I am going somewhere else.”

When they planned their escape, the three of them had agreed to go to the same place. A place far away, at the west of the continent, with no Kings or Queens. It was rare to hear of, but those places existed and both Bianca and Jamison agreed. However, here she was talking about a change of plans.

“I thought we were going west.”

“Well, yeah, but…” She took a piece of paper from her pocket, an addressed ticket she must have bought separately while Jamison and Mako weren’t paying attention. It was another country, one to the east. Mako recognized it as a small country free of monarchy. “I…”

“Bianca, what is going on?” Jamison asked.

“I… well. Remember I mentioned that girl who I met before I came to this Kingdom? Alyssa?”

“Oh.”

Mako didn’t understand.

Bianca noticed it and turned to face Mako. Her face was bruised, but she still looked beautiful.

“Mako, you and Jamison aren’t the only ones having love stories on the side,” she smiled, tired, and then turned to Jamison. “Just before I left, she left to her home country. She… gave me the town she would live in, if I ever got bored of being royalty.”

Bianca then smiled the warmest smile Mako had seen on her.

“I’m sorry, but this is something I have to do.”

“You’re… leaving?”

“Sorry, Fawkes.”

“You… should have told me.”

“Jamie, you were in a coma for like a day and half. You just woke up a couple of hours ago and we had to run here. When was I supposed to tell you? We are literally on the run, right now.”

“I just…” Jamison sighed. “I just wish ya would have told me! I just wanted to’ know…”

“Are you upset?”

“No! I am very happy for ye. I am just… worried for yer safety!”

“Awh,” Bianca chuckled. “You sweetheart.”

Mako felt sudden horror on his heart. His stomach went cold, worried. If Bianca was going to leave, would Jamison, too? What if Jamison told Mako to not follow him? What if he just told him to stay here in this miserable country?

Jamison had kissed him. He had let Mako touch him, but hadn’t said a thing ever since. Mako had been too tired surviving to even think about that, but it cut deep. He was unsure of what to say or do,
so he remained silent.

“Jamie,” Bianca whispered. “Will you be okay?”

“Hey,” he smiled. “Ya heard tha’ old man. I am hard to kill, eh?”

Bianca smiled; the announcer at the train station announced that the next train to the East had arrived and Bianca stood up. Every one of them had a small bag with gold that Mako had given them, enough to be able to take care for themselves for a while. She sighed, fiddling with her fingers.

“Bianca.” Jamison stood, barely able to. He hugged her tightly and the young woman did the same. “Thank ye so much. Really, for everythin’.”

“Hey, it’s okay. We gotta stick together, eh?” She giggled and let go. “If you ever need somewhere to crash, you know where to go.”

“I hope everything goes right for ye.”

“Hey, after this, anything is easy. And…” She turned to face Mako. “Thank you. If it wasn’t for you, we would both be dead.”

Mako just nodded, silently. Bianca smiled and turned back to Jamison. “You’ll be okay.”

She sighed and smiled. “Goodbye.”

Then she left.

They saw the train leave and, with it, Bianca Wellington. Mako hoped her life turned out alright and that she could find happiness with that girl. But now he was alone with Jamison next to him.

They were both quiet, but Mako couldn’t tell if it was due to exhaustion or something more. He turned to Jamison to say something. He didn’t even know what, just something, but noticed Jamison had fallen asleep while sitting on the bench.

He didn’t wake him up. He needed the rest, and deserved it.

Mako was finally able to think about what happened and what was going to happen. He would leave with Jamison to another country and maybe help him out until Jamison was healthy enough. Then he would leave, probably.

They had kissed, and Mako remembered it with ache in his heart. But Jamison… he hadn’t said a thing. He hadn’t mentioned the kiss and seemed cold towards Mako, but he hadn’t cursed at him or told him to leave. That was good, right?

So many things went through his head, but he figured that he should approach things step by step. He would figure out what to do when they reached the country.

About half an hour passed before the announcer called their train. Mako was almost asleep, and he very gently woke Jamison up.

“Jamison.” He touched his shoulder, where he knew he wasn’t too hurt. “Our train is here.”

The young man stirred and gasped. “Yeah, ok.”
He stood up, grabbing a crutch from his side. It hurt to walk that way, but they were in a rush and couldn’t get him a prosthesis in such a short time. Mako grabbed their bags, which held the gold.

Mako felt nervous, worrying if someone would recognize them. But nobody did, not even when they stepped onto the train. The conductor stared down at Jamison strangely as the young man hunched and limped, but didn’t say a thing as Mako gave him the tickets. Once they finally made it inside, Mako felt better immediately.

“Over here.” He motioned to a small room. It had two beds at the sides, far too small for Mako, but he could sleep sitting up. As soon as they entered, Jamison sat down on one side next to the window and sighed in pain. He seemed to relax as well, leaning his head over the window as Mako closed the door to their cabin. He placed the bags on the floor and sighed as he sat and relaxed on the bed.

The trip would take three days. It had been expensive, but Mako had the money. He was worried about crossing the border, but considering the fact that the King had “died” and that the anarchist group had taken over, he wouldn’t be surprised if they didn’t care about such things as officiality. Jamison was unrecognizable and very few people knew about his prosthetics. They shouldn’t have much trouble.

Mako placed the newspapers he had stolen next to Jamison in case he wanted to read them. The young man noticed and did so, grabbing them and starting to read the first pages.

“Seems it worked,” he said, reading the articles of multiple newspapers at the same time and noticing that all the information was the same. “Everyone seems to have bought it.”

“ Aren’t you sad?” Mako asked, and Jamison shrugged a little.

“It was me life. I am abandonin’ it, of course I am sad mate. But, this is what it’s best.” He threw a particular newspaper at Mako, one he hadn’t actually read. It was accused of having anarchist affiliations but the allegations were never proven, so they let it run along with the others.

Mako took it, flipping through the pages.

“Isn’t it ironic? All these people wanted nothin’ but power. They killed others and paid a lot for it, but in the end it didn’t matter. We all die one day, don’t we?”

Mako read a paragraph of the newspaper.

“History has told us many things about our rulers. History repeats itself. We know King Jamison attempted ideas to change the Kingdom for the better and, while those ideas reeked of the ignorance that anything but gutting the monarchy would save the country, they were the start of a spark that could bring change to the Kingdom.

“However, as hungry as the monarchy is for power, the nobles who used to drink on the blood and death of those beneath them took those ideals and attempted to destroy them. They waged a war between each other, ultimately killing themselves until there was nothing left. There are no bloodlines left, no one to take charge of this forsaken place.

“Many will try to consume it, to get the throne to themselves, but we will not let them. As history has taught us, the rich do nothing but eat each other.

Vive le roi.”

Dramatic, Mako thought. But fitting, and it was true. He had witnessed it himself, bluebloods planning their entire lives to tear each other down, maul them and eat them and gorge on their bodies.
The Duke was one of them, killing his own sister and orchestrating everything to take power. They were a special breed of people, those ones. They would kill and destroy for nothing but rank.

Jamison was a rare occurrence, just like Bianca. They were unique, uninterested in what riches would give them and more preoccupied by making life better for people.

“Isn’t you worried about what will happen to the Kingdom?”

“I am,” Jamison said, tiredly. “These people thought… They got their heads on their shoulders. They got tha’ right Idea. If they manage to keep every greedy noble from takin’ power, then…”

He sighed.

“They’re right. We were what stopped ‘em. They don’t need no kings or queens, they need somethin’ more. Somethin’ they know, somethin’ that won’t hold ‘em back. And now with us out of tha’ way, they can do that.”

He smiled sadly. “It’s a new beginnin’ for ‘em.”

Soon enough the train moved forward, starting their travel. Jamison stared out of the window, eyes half lidded, but his eyes fixed on Mako soon.

“We need to talk.”

Mako blinked and nodded slowly. He had no idea what Jamison was going to say, but Mako would hear him. It would most definitely be about what happened, their relationship, and what would happen next.

“I… I don’t know what I am doing,” he admitted. His gaze fell to the carpeted floor of the train, not daring to look at Mako. “I don’t know how to feel.”

“We kissed.” Mako said, adventurous. “You kissed me.”

“Ever since ye left, I hadn’t been able to stop thinking about ye. How could I? Fuck, Mako, ya are tha’ best thing that happened to me, and every night I thought about ye. I… I forced meself tha’ move on, keep with the plans I made, but that ended bad for me.”

His hand gripped at the bed under him.

“I hated you. I wanted to kill you. For what ye did. For what you were plannin’ on doing, but when I saw ya, when I saw you on top of me, covered with blood and half dead. When ya used yerself to save me… fuck. Mako, fuck. I don’t know what went through my head. I knew I had to kill the bastard. I had to kill ‘em all, because even though I wanted ye dead, to see ya do that, to fucking do that made me wish I could kill ‘em all.”

His voice was breaking, eyes reddening from the tears threatening to get out.

“I thought I was going to die, but when I saw ya there, when I saw ya holding me… I didn’t mind If I died, cus ye would be the last thing I saw. And you were alive, and that’s what I truly cared about.”

He started to cry, tears dampening the bandages wrapped around his face.

“But I’m still hurt from what ye did. I’m still… I don’t know how I am. So many things have happened and I ain’t got a fuckin’ minute to think about it.”
He sighed, wiping off the tears that had gathered on his cheeks.

“Everybody I knew is dead, tried to kill me at one point, or is gone. You… you’re the only one that stayed.” He looked at Mako, his golden eyes staring with an intensity. They were red and glassed over from crying. “You’re the only person I got left. And I am glad for that.”

He curled into himself.

“But… I ain’t sure if things can go back to how they were.”

“I understand.”

He did. He truly, truly did. This was something that Mako was grateful for. He didn’t care if things couldn’t go back to how they exactly were, the only thing that mattered to him was that Jamison was alive.

“I can’t assure ye nothin’, Mako. Maybe it ain’t gonna work out in the end.”

“It’s okay. If that happens, then it’s okay.”

He meant it. Things would change. Things were going to be hard and difficult and it would truly be awful for a while. And maybe it wouldn’t work.

But if that happened then it was okay, because they would be together for it.

The train continued to move as they stared into each other’s eyes.

They would continue to live.
Chapter Summary

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cups chopped onions or thinly sliced leeks (whites only)
1 cup thinly sliced celery
2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
Coarse salt and ground pepper
3 cans (14 1/2 ounces each) reduced-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes, with juice
1 tablespoon tomato paste
8 cups mixed fresh or frozen vegetables, such as carrots, corn, green beans, lima beans, peas, potatoes, and zucchini (cut larger vegetables into smaller pieces)

Directions

1. Heat oil in a large stockpot over medium heat. Add onions or leeks, celery, and Italian seasoning; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until onions are translucent, 5 to 8 minutes.

2. Add broth, tomatoes and their juice, tomato paste, and 3 cups water to pot; bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, and cook, uncovered, 20 minutes.

3. Add vegetables to pot, and return to a simmer. Cook, uncovered, until vegetables are tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, as desired. Let cool before storing.

Chapter Notes

The End.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAH YOU GUYS!! I AM SO!! EXCITED!!!
This is it. This is the epilogue, what happens after everything. The ending. This is it. The fic is FINISHED.

God i am so emotional rn, not gonna lie. Super emotional and i am happy for you all, and happy for me and lakjsdfi i am a mess.

I hope you guys like this epilogue. I am so happy for it. I am so happy for this fic. Thanks all of you, I hope you enjoy it as much as I did ;;;;

Shot out to my GF trish who was my beta reader!!!
Technology’s evolution is fast-paced; every year or so, new advancements in science are discovered and implemented to present history. New technology starts being used to unbury the truth from the past.

What once was known as the Kingdom of Echeveria stopped being a monarchy two hundred years ago. History books tell of the event in which the last King, King Jamison Fawkes, was murdered by the Duke Ian Wellington, who died in the assault as well. The event left no one alive, no blood lineage to continue. It was a part of the country’s history, the decisive moment where the anarchists purged the nobility from the land and started a political revolution.

It was history, part of what made the country what it was. A lesson on greed, on mortality and sacrifice.

And the truth came out.

The King and the future Queen’s bodies were exhumed, their DNA tested. Using genetic code gathered from salvaged pieces of clothing belonging to the late King Jamison and his fiancée Bianca, anthropologists made comparisons. The corpses were not those of the young monarchs.

The other bodies and their graves matched, but those did not. Researchers began an investigation, gathering things belonging to those close to the couple. Diaries and letters from the maids that used to work for the King revealed information that the King and his fiancée were not dead, but rather had orchestrated their demises. Journals from the women who helped them escape detailed a failed assassination attempt.

While the journals never mentioned where they escaped to, the DNA of a recently-exhumed body in the eastern country of Haworthia matched that of Bianca Keaton, King’s Jamison’s fiancée. She had been buried alongside a woman, whom letters and pictures retrieved from their descendants revealed had been her lover.

She lived a healthy life, eventually dying of natural causes. Researchers estimated that she died in her nineties, leaving historians to believe Bianca Keaton lived a peaceful life after renouncing monarchy.

These findings sparked the fire of knowledge in historians’ hearts, triggering an attempt to find what happened to King Jamison. However, they have yet to find records stating what happened to the King or where he was buried. There were no traces left to search for, no more information about where the young monarch could have vanished to or whether he lived a long life or died young. There are big rewards available to those that find anything about the King’s past, anything that could help researchers learn more about their late King. Anything that could tell them just what happened or how his story ended.

King Jamison Fawkes’ fate will remain one of history’s biggest mysteries.

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The apples looked good, not shiny and elegant like he was used to a couple of years ago, but they looked good and delicious. He touched one, caressing it softly with his big fingers. He grabbed some and shoved them into a sack as the shopkeeper stared.

The marketplace was big, bigger than he was used to. There were vegetables, fruits, fish, meats and not only food but also clothing, random items, and even some pets. People chatted amongst
themselves as they bought things, laughing under the sun as the women discussed what to feed their husbands that week.

Mako hummed contently, his eyes wandering to the vegetables on the stall. They looked pretty good, and he immediately decided to make some vegetable soup. Just the thought of it made his stomach rumble, so he started to pick the vegetables he wanted to add.

Leeks, onions, carrots, potatoes, green peas, zucchini… he had a good amount not only for the soup but also for the rest of the week. Once he got everything he needed, he paid the shopkeeper and continued on his merry way.

The people around him would stare at him for a second or two, then mind their own business. He had been there for two years and the people had gotten used to him, which was good. They would stare at his scars, but they had the decency to keep their questions to themselves. Appreciated.

A man was selling cuts of meat on the market. Mako went to his stall. He figured chicken would be good for a vegetable soup.

“Excellent choice!” the butcher smiled as he started to look for chicken meat.

A hooded figure limped towards Mako, eating something. He placed himself next to Mako, licking the melted caramel on his fingertips.

“Whatcha buyin’?”

“Chicken.” Mako raised the bags with the vegetables inside. “Going to make vegetable soup.”

“Oh!” the man beside him gasped in excitement. “Sounds good, can’t wait!”

“Did you get something good?”

“Got some candy, plus some for you, too. Didn’t find much of interest, though.” He placed a bit of caramel, delicately wrapped, onto Mako’s palm. Mako stared at it, then unwrapped and ate it in one chunk. It was nice, a delicious sweet taste rolling onto his tongue. It was really, really good.

Jamison chuckled, taking off the hood covering his face.

The wound that crossed his face had healed but had left a scar, cheek to cheek across his nose. It was brown compared to his pale face. He also had a small scar on his lip where, instead of pink, the flesh was pale.

“Did you buy the feed?” Mako asked, and Jamison nodded happily as he raised a bag full of birdseed.

Mako nodded, noticing that the butcher was back with a whole plucked chicken with cleaned skin. It looked fresh, probably alive earlier that day. Mako nodded and the butcher put it in a bag before handing it to him.

“Oh! The woman that sells plants is back!” he said as he limped towards the woman in question. Mako kept an eye on him as he dug around his pocket to retrieve his money.

“Hey,” the butcher said, motioning to Jamison, who was happily looking at the colorful pots. Mako stared at him, curiously. “Don’t you think he looks like that dead King, Fawkes?”

Mako stared at him, then chuckled.
“Don’t be ridiculous. The King is dead.”

The butcher stared, shrugged, and went on with his business. Mako grabbed the chicken and walked to Jamison, who had already bought a pot with orange tulips in it. They paid the woman and left.

The farm sat at the outskirts of the small town and featured old cobbled path leading to it. Jamison, like always, rushed over to reach the door and open it so Mako could pass through. As he entered the house and closed the door, he saw that Jamison had already placed both the tulips and the other flowers that he had purchased. Lilies, orchids, sunflowers… they were all in pots, the sunlight hitting them just right, enough for them to thrive and bloom beautifully. He would help plant them in the front yard later.

He placed the groceries in the wooden table at the kitchen. Jamison went through the bags and Mako told him to start chopping the vegetables in little cubes. He nodded, so Mako grabbed the bird feed and went outside.

The chickens were very happy to see him, clucking and making noise as Mako approached the coop. He smiled, petting them and even hugging a couple, placing soft kisses on their soft white feathers.

He fed them and put away the chicken feed for the next day. As they ate, Mako pet a couple of them and exited.

Next were the pigs.

They only had three pigs, but that was enough for him. He was thinking of buying another one soon. He laughed as he crouched down, letting the pigs give him kisses with their snouts. Mako felt like he was a child again, feeding his pig friends and letting them give him soft kisses.

He fed them, patting them and hugging each one of them individually. Done, he waved them goodbye as he closed their enclosure and made his way to the house.

It wasn’t a big farm, definitely smaller than the one he lived in as a child, but it was his farm. He would sell the eggs he got and wouldn’t dare to sell his beautiful pigs. They had way too much money with Mako’s gold, so there was no need to worry on that front. He had crops as well, but Jamison had managed to build a system that would sprinkle the crops with water each morning. He was a brilliant young man, saving Mako a lot of time.

Mako sighed as he made his way to the house once again, hearing Jamison sing to himself as he chopped the vegetables contentedly. Mako smiled as he opened the door a little bit too forcefully, accidentally slamming it against the wall.

Jamison immediately rose to his feet, eyes wide and pupils contracted until they were only dots. He shook, face pale as he jumped back, and tripped on his chair as he crashed against the floor. He stood immediately, holding the knife and aiming it at Mako. He was sweating coldly, licking his lips as he stared at Mako.

“Jamie.” Mako stayed where he was, arms in the air to show that he was unarmed. “Jamie, it’s me.”

This happened occasionally. Mako would say the wrong thing or do the wrong noise or something would just happen that would trigger Jamison, taking him back to what happened in his home two years ago when his own uncle tried to assassinate him.

It pained Mako. It made his heart clench that this had become a normal occurrence. But he was never
offended. He would never be personally hurt at what Jamison did after everything that happened.

“M-m-” Jamison mouthed, but his eyes were still wild as he pressed his back against the opposite wall, knife still in his grasp.

“Jamie, it’s me. It’s okay.”

Jamison stared at Mako for several seconds, blinking, his body relaxing as he started to come to himself. He took deep breaths, staring at his hands and the floor. His left hand was bleeding and he dropped the bloodied knife. “Ah-”

“It’s okay, it’s okay,” Mako soothed as he ran towards the cabinet, pulling bandages and ethanol from it. He quickly made it to Jamison’s side and cleaned the wound. It was small, but he cleaned it and bandaged it well while Jamison sat on the ground looking away.

“...I’m sorry,”

Mako didn’t say a thing, simply placing a soft kiss on the back of Jamison’s hand. It made the young man fidget, but he accepted it. “I’m the one that is sorry. I shouldn’t have made a loud sound.”

“It was an accident. Ye ain’t at fault.”

“So aren’t you.”

Mako stood up and went to get a kettle, filling it with water and heating it on the stove. He let Jamison stay on the floor; he knew that the young man liked to have his own space. He had learned from the previous experiences. He got the tea ready, one cup for him and another one for Jamison, just as he got up from the floor and sat on the table next to the chopped-up vegetables.

He placed the cup of tea in front of Jamison, who grabbed it and took a sip. He exhaled and rested the cup on his bandaged hand. Mako took a drink of his cup in silence,

“Ya think I am a bad person?” Jamison asked, anxiously.

“No. Why?” Mako answer was immediate. He didn’t even have to think it.

“Because, I left. I should’ve…” Jamison rubbed his face. “I don’t know. I should’ve done somethin’.”

“You said it yourself, that it was better for you to step out of the way.”

“Yes but, I mean. Maybe I should’ve gone back. I would have stayed out of tha’ way, but I’m runnin’ away from me problems.”

“Jamison.”

“I don’t know. Forget it.” He took another sip of his tea.

Mako wasn’t sure what to say, trying to find the right words to comfort his partner until Jamison placed his cup on the table and crossed his arms.

“I should leave,” Mako said. Jamison lifted his gaze.

“Where ya going?”

“I mean,” Mako continued, “leave here. Leave you alone. You’ve been with me and I am a reminder
of what happened to you, what they did to you. What I did to you. Maybe if I’m gone you will feel better.”

Jamison’s eyes widened, mouth slightly open.

“Mako, ya think I am an idiot?”

“What? No, why do you think that?”

“Because ya ain’t respecting me decision.”

Mako rubbed his temple. “What decision?”

“Keepin’ ya around.”

“You never really said a thing. You just… never got rid of me.”

“Mako,” Jamison bit his lip, the tea long forgotten and at his side. “We just… never really talked about it, huh?”

They hadn’t. They had arrived in town, bought a farm, and gotten comfortable in it. It had been two years since they arrived and not once had they talked about what had been happening and what happened. Mako had to admit it was something that he had always feared.

“No, we haven’t.”

They remained silent, Jamison clearly looking for the words he wanted to say. Several seconds passed before he spoke.

“I don’t think I ever truly forgave ya.”

Mako felt it like a punch to his stomach, but he took it. He remained still, staring at the young man in front of him.

“Because I still sometimes think about it, and I get hurt, and I get really mad about it, because… because it was fucked up.” He tapped his fingers on the table. “But it also wasn’t entirely yer fault. Me uncle drove ya to it, in a way. He was the one that ‘tempted’ ya, so to speak. But it was also kind of your fault. But ya know what’s different, even tho I still can’t really forgive that, ya know what is different from now and two years ago when I wanted to kill you?”

Mako stared at him and shook his head slowly.

“You… you fixed it. You fixed what ye did. Because… ya recognized it. But not just recognized it. Ya could have left and leave me to die many times. I thought ya were gonna do that but, but ye didn’t. Not only that. Ye… all this time, after that, you proved yourself. Ya proved that I could trust you.”

He chuckled tiredly, staring at his wounded hand.

“Ya changed, Mako. Ya were only interested in tha’ money and didn’t care for nothin’ else. Now… now ya ain’t care about that. Ya changed into a better person. I know me uncle set ya up, and he was the one that did the notebook shit, but it is also your responsibility.” He lifted his gaze to meet Mako’s eyes. “I hate the person ya were, but I love the one that came back.”

Mako felt his eyes redden, on the verge of tears.
“You trust me?”

“Durin’ two years ya could have killed me easily. Yer actions… Ya got me to escape. Ya got me here. Ya used yerself as a shield so I could survive. People… people don’t do that.”

He reached over to grasp Mako’s thick hand, his fingers linked with the older man’s. His was thin and delicate, unlike Mako’s massive hand.

“We’re okay. You… you’re okay. You’re okay, Mako. You did okay.”

Mako already started to cry as he pressed Jamison’s hand against his forehead. He sighed, his body relaxing, a tension that had been there for two years finally vanishing.

Things were different. But they were okay.

The moonlight shone through the window, bathing the bed with its light. Mako gave Jamison’s neck soft kisses, traveling up to his jaw and into his mouth. They both moaned in the light, Mako rolling his hips softly into Jamison, his hand lovingly caressing everywhere he could reach.

Jamison had wrapped his arms around Mako, pressing himself up into the man as he was softly fucked.

They hadn’t been intimate since they had arrived in this new country. Mako was okay with that; he had indulged himself in the few moments he was alone. But this, this was different. This was better, the real thing. To have Jamison wrapped around him, his soft lips pressing kisses onto his thick shoulders, his fingers pressing into his hair and urging Mako to keep kissing him, his eyelashes tickling Mako’s cheeks.

“Mako…” he gasped, his legs pressing even harder against him. He had taken off his prosthetics, including the homemade peg leg he had made from scraps. It had taken a while for Jamison to get used to it, but he got the hang of it soon enough. It wasn’t like the elegant prosthetic of his hand or the one he used to have, but it was something, and it was Jamison’s style.

Mako just kept kissing him softly until he came inside of Jamison. He gasped and kissed the young man on the mouth as he came, still rolling in and out of him, milking himself as he grasped at Jamison’s erection and pumped him until the young man came with a shout as well.

As soon as they were done, he rolled himself over so they were both lying on the bed and dragged Jamison close as he pulled out. He cradled him close, lifting the young man and pressing his face into his sweaty chest.

Jamison was stunned at first, but started to pet Mako’s hair as he jiggled softly.

“I love you, Mako…” he whispered.

“I love you too, Jamie. I would… I would die for you.”

“I know.”

They remained silent for a moment.

“Hey Mako?”

“Yeah?”
“We’re okay, right?”

“Yeah,” Mako breathed into Jamison’s chest. “We’re okay.”

“Are we going to be okay?”

Mako lifted himself, staring at Jamison’s golden eyes. He kissed him deeply, soft and romantic. It was silky and reeked of romance.

“Yes,” Mako breathed into his lips, pressing their foreheads together as his hand caressed Jamison’s spine. “We will be okay.”

And they were okay.

They would always be okay.

Chapter End Notes

Years later an animated movie about King Jamison life comes out and its as hetero as anyone could imagine.

Don't mind me I've been watching a lot of Anastasia.

"But Andy, we thought tiw ouldn't have a happy ending after all"

I used to be a fan of endings where people just died, where nothing mattered and they just... died, and nothing mattered. Those were the stories I used to like to write when i was a depressed Teenager, but now??? Now, I don't care about that. Now I just... I just want stories where the characters struggle a lot, and in the end they are fucked, and sick, and ill and with trauma but that's ok. That's okay because after everything it was worth it. I want stories where in the end everything they went through was worth it, and that they're happy. where they just kept getting up and getting up and just never gave up, so it pays off, and they can live happy. Because they're okay. Call it cliche. Maybe it is! But it's what i like. It's who i am. That despite having PTSD, trauma, and having gone through awful shit, you still can have a happy ending where you're okay, because you're with the ones you love.

I want to thank a lot of ppl for this. This fic was really fun to write, and also i just... i just loved it, man. I loved working on it so much. Its my baby, basically, haha. I want to thank all my readers, my friends, the ppl that drew fanart of this- every single reader out there, thank you so much!!! you're the reason I do this.

Everyone was so excited when this started, and They kept getting excited as it went on. I am so happy!! Thank you all, I am so emotional this is over. It has been a GREAT experience, and I enjoyed every single second of it. Thank you all!!!
Thanks to Fin, whose drawing inspired all of this!
https://twitter.com/fg083/status/812876369889730560

And thanks to everybody, thank you for sticking around!!

Thank you all!!!!!!!!!!

End Notes

Thank you for reading!!! I hope you enjoyed it!!!
My Tumblr!
My Twitter!
Hit me up if you want to talk about how much of a little shit Jamie is!!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!