

The Price of Peace

Von chelle76

Kapitel 4: Life's Lessons

I DO NOT own Saber Rider and the Star Sheriffs or Sei Jushi Bismarck, they are owned by their respective animation companies.

The Price of Peace

Chapter 3: Life's Lessons

Nearly six weeks later, they have all been released from inpatient care and have arrived at Saber's home colony to continue recuperation. "Well Robin, you've got your hands full. I'll leave them in your charge for now. Let me know if you have any problems," Commander Eagle says with amusement in his voice.

Robin smiles, "I will, sir. I'm sure there are people here that will help corral them if they become unruly."

The Commander nods, "I've talked with Thomas, who cares for the Rider's estate, he said that they will help in any way they can. I've explained the situation to him, so it won't be a surprise." Robin nods.

"Father, I'm sure we'll be fine. We're all able to walk around and such now," April states a bit annoyed. "It's not like we're complete invalids like we were a couple of months ago."

"I know, April. I'm sorry for sounding so overbearing. Take care of yourselves and relax," he replies. The commander goes and looks at Saber, "Don't fret over your memory or your lack of vision, it could all still come back in time. Just relax and enjoy the break."

Saber nods, "I know, sir. I'll try and not force anything. I just wish I could see again."

"I know you do," he replies quietly before looking over the group once more before they load up into a waiting vehicle that takes them to the Rider's estate.

Upon arrival, they are met by Elaine and Thomas, the head caretakers of the estate. "Welcome home, sir!" Thomas exclaims when they arrive. "I'm Thomas and this is my wife, Elaine." he says, placing a hand on Saber's arm.

Elaine rushes over to him and starts looking him over carefully, placing her hand in his. Saber looks a bit nervous, and Elaine realizes that he truly doesn't remember her and sighs. "I'm glad you seem to mostly be all right, Saber." She takes his things from him and nods towards the house taking his arm to lead him, "Let's lead you all to your rooms, shall we?" They all follow the couple into the house and go and get settled in.

Saber enters the room she leads him to and sits on the foot of the bed as Elaine places his things down. "This is my room?" he asks a bit unsure.

Elaine nods and smiles, "Yes, it is now. It was your parent's room before, but you're head of the house now."

He gets up and carefully walks around the room, carefully touching different things trying to find something familiar. He comes to a cluster of pictures and stops, studying them curiously.

"That's a picture of you as a young boy," she says as she runs his hands over the frame of the picture. "And this one here is one of your parents," she says, holding up a picture of a couple on the steps of the house.

He holds the picture for several minutes and sighs, "It just isn't coming back. Nothing seems...familiar." he mutters obviously frustrated. "What happens to me if I don't get my vision back? Or my memory?"

Elaine places a hand on his shoulder, "Don't force it, Saber. In time, it will come. You have been through a lot, just as the others have. Think of this as a vacation. You have no schedule, no worries, you can do anything you'd like and I'll fix you anything you want to eat, just ask." Saber nods, still holding the picture of his parents. "Perhaps later, I can show you the room you used to stay in. This is your first time staying in this room. Perhaps something in there will jog your memory a bit."

Saber looks to her and nods, "I'd appreciate it Miss Elaine is it?" he says hesitantly.

She smiles gently at him, "Yes, that's right. I'll let you rest a bit. Come downstairs when you're ready. Just call for someone and we'll help you, until you're familiar with where everything is." She looks over him once more then leaves, closing the door behind her.

He sits on the foot of the bed for few more minutes before lying on the bed and staring at the ceiling letting out a long sigh and running his hands through his hair. "I wish I could remember something, anything," he thinks to himself. A while later he gets up and heads out the door, almost walking into April. "I'm sorry," he stammers apologetically, realizing someone is there.

She stops startled, managing to avoid a collision and laughs, "It's okay. I was just coming to check on you to see if you were all right. You've been in your room for nearly four hours."

Saber gives her a surprised look, "I'm fine, all things considered. A little hungry though."

"Glad to hear it, because I think dinner is just about ready," she replies. "Shall we go down and join the others?" He nods and she takes his arm and they go downstairs.

They reach the sitting area where Colt, Fireball, and Robin are waiting just as Elaine comes out, "Dinner is served, come on in and sit down everyone."

A few days later, the group is out walking the estate grounds when Saber stops suddenly.

"What's wrong?" Robin asks concerned.

He looks around listening for a moment before answering, "I feel a bit uneasy. Almost like we're being followed."

The others all look around cautiously, their hands on their blasters. "I don't see anything, Saber," April says, her hand still on her blaster.

Saber looks around slowly, but doesn't relax, "There is definitely someone or something that's off. I'm just not sure what, who or why," he says quietly.

After a few minutes without a sign of anyone else close by, they continue walking the grounds back towards the house each person seemingly on alert for any sign of trouble. Just before reaching the house, a lone figure steps out from the direction of the house, "How are things going?"

"Hello Commander," Saber says hesitantly.

"Have you started to remember anything yet, Saber?" the commander asks as he approaches the group.

Saber nods slightly, "Some things are beginning to seem familiar. My vision still hasn't improved though., he replies. "Sir, have you been following us?" he asks.

Commander Eagle shakes his head, "No, I just arrived a few minutes ago. Why do you ask?"

"It has felt like someone has been following us," Saber replies a bit uneasily. "Or that something is...off. I just can't shake the feeling."

"Well, I've yet to see anyone, so let's just go inside," Colt says trying to ease the tension he feels building.

Commander Eagle nods, "Yes, let's go inside and chat a while," he says looking at each person as he turns towards the house. "Perhaps we can figure out what's causing that feeling."

Everyone goes into the house, Saber lagging a bit behind, giving the yard one last glance before carefully making his way inside and closing the door and joining the others.

"So, has everyone been resting?" Commander Eagle asks, looking to each person in turn.

Robin nods, "I've made sure that they have behaved, sir." she replies amused.

"Yeah, we've not been able to go anywhere alone," Fireball adds with a huff.

Robin glares at him and laughs, "I suppose I could let you go off in pairs, so long as you all promise not to over do it. I could use some quiet time myself."

"Yeah, with the cowboy," Fireball says, making both Robin and Colt blush.

"Like you wouldn't like some time alone with April," Colt quips in reply.

"I think that's enough, boys," April says amused. "I think all of us can use some time to ourselves. Could we maybe agree to not leave the estate grounds unaccompanied?" She looks to the others, who slowly nod in agreement. "How would you feel about that, Father? Would you be amenable to that?"

Her father thinks about it for a few minutes, "I think that would be fine." He looks to Saber, "I know you used to enjoy riding off on your own around here, so perhaps it would be good for you." Saber nods slightly and he continues, "I brought your horse, Steed with me this trip. I thought that you would be physically all right now to ride some. It might do you some good."

"I have a horse?" Saber asks surprised.

"Technically, it's a mechanical horse," April replies.

"A mechanical horse?" Saber says amused. "Perhaps that would jog my memory. I'm sure something like that would be memorable."

Commander Eagle smiles, "That's sort of what I'm hoping will happen. Spending time riding your horse, might be what you need. He's loyal to you and will help protect you if need be, so I think you'd be okay to go out alone some."

"Well, I don't feel quite as edgy as before, so perhaps after lunch, we can all do our own thing until dinner?" Saber asks the group, receiving mutters of agreement in reply. "How long are you planning on staying, sir?" he asks the commander.

"I planned on staying this afternoon. I want to talk with the doctors here, and to Thomas and Elaine, if you will permit it to get an opinion on your status. I might stay until after dinner, but then I would need to return to Calvary Command," he replies.

The doorbell rings and Thomas crosses through the sitting room, "Is anyone expecting

a guest?" he asks.

"No." came the unanimous replies.

He continues to the door, the others standing up and moving closer to the door, hands ready near their blasters. He opens it and gasps in surprise, "Lady Sincia?"

"Hello, Thomas. I heard that Richard has returned." she replies. "I'd like to see him."

"Well, you are welcome to come in," he begins as he steps back, allowing her to enter the house, "but you should be made aware that he has some...changes, my lady." he finishes as she brushes past him and into the sitting room.

She spots Saber sitting in a chair and head for him, "Richard, I heard you had been injured..." she begins. Noting the sunglasses she stops, "Um, why are you wearing sunglasses inside?" she asks confused.

"I'm sorry, Miss. I can't say that I know who you are," Saber says hesitantly.

Sincia draws back a step, "Is this some kind of joke?" she asks looking to the others in the room.

"I'm afraid not, my lady, Master Saber has lost his memory and cannot see," Thomas replies. I was trying to prepare you, but you walked past me before I could advise you on the present situation.

Sincia stops in front of Saber and studies him for a moment. "You really have no clue who I am?" she asks fiercely.

Saber shakes his head, "I'm sorry, Miss. I can't say as I do. You seem to be familiar with me, so I suppose we know each other. Perhaps if I was able to see..."

"You're blind as well?" she asks a bit harshly. He nods in reply. "So how long will you be blinded?"

"I wish I knew." He replies barely audible.

She scoffs at the comment, "Well, this is rather convenient. I knew you weren't thrilled about giving up your position as a Star Sheriff, but I didn't think you'd stoop to something like this just to get out of our engagement." Saber goes to speak, but she interrupts, "I release you from our agreement, Richard. I can't deal with this type of drama. If you can't see, then you can't provide for me, so perhaps this is for the best. Good-bye, Richard." She turns in a huff and leaves, not waiting for a reply.

A long awkward silence ensues before Elaine comes up beside Saber, placing her hand on his shoulder, "If that is how she is, you deserve better, Saber. Your mother was never sure about her anyways."

"I suppose I'd be upset more if I knew exactly who she was. She called me 'Richard.' No

one else has addressed me as that." he replies.

"Richard is your birth name. Everyone has called you Saber since you were a small child, so I hadn't thought of mentioning your birth name, since you didn't use it," Elaine replies.

"So who exactly was she?" April asks. "She surely didn't seem very nice, especially when she learned of Saber's condition."

"Her name is Sincia. She and Saber were betrothed as children. It had been agreed that they would marry when she turned twenty-one, but the war was still going on, then Saber's parent's passed, and her family decided that they would marry in about a year. That would have been about the time that all of you were injured, and things seemed to be bleak. She would call here on occasion to see if Saber had come home, but never inquired as to how seriously he was injured or anything. I know that Lord and Lady Rider were having doubts about the marriage, and were hoping that they could find a way to allow the children out of the contract that wouldn't tarnish either family's name," Elaine explains, getting some shocked looks from the others in the room.

"Saber, you never told us you were betrothed before," Fireball says.

"I suppose that it's a moot point now. Perhaps I had my reasons for not telling you at the time," Saber replies quietly.

"If she's always been like she was here, I can see why you didn't say anything," Colt says harshly.

"Colt!" April and Robin scold.

"Well, he deserves better than some uppity chick." Colt replies.

Saber shakes his head, "I suppose I had my reasons for not disclosing such information, perhaps I was looking for an out. If she was like that in private, as well around others I'm not sure I could have imagined myself with someone like that."

"Well, why doesn't everyone go off and do their own thing for an hour or so. I would like to talk to Thomas and Elaine for a while. Saber, if you wish to go riding, I can have Steed brought to you, although I'd like for you to stay and listen if you don't mind," Commander Eagle says trying to change the mood.

Colt, Robin, Fireball and April get up and head off. Saber nods, "I'll stay. I'm not sure about venturing off completely alone just yet."

The commander nods and Thomas and Elaine come and sit down, "I want all of your opinions here, I was thinking of seeing if you would be to having us hire you someone to assist you. Help you learn how to do things for yourself as a blind person."

"You don't think my sight is returning, do you?" Saber asks quietly.

"I am hoping it returns, but given the amount of time that has passed with little to no improvement, we need to plan in case it is indeed a permanent hindrance, Saber," the Commander replies sympathetically.

"It's been nearly five months since you've come out of the coma, sir, and since then, your sight has not improved. I do think your memory is slowly improving, so I am not discounting anything as permanent. I think someone that can assist you, and help you learn to do everything you did before, would make you feel better too. It would also allow you to be more independent, something that I can tell you are desiring," Thomas says.

Saber sighs, "Somehow I get the feeling this has actually already been decided."

"Yes, we had decided that someone is needed, but you would still get the final decision. I am hoping to interview a couple or three people today. I would like for you to be present. You have usually been a good judge of character, so I feel that you can tell whether you'd be comfortable with the person," Commander Eagle says. "I think this is our best course of action at this point, Saber."

Saber nods, "I know that you are right. I don't like having to depend on everyone to get around and such. I am adapting somewhat, but I still feel like a hindrance to the others. When are the interviews?" he asks with a hint of resignation in his voice.

"The first one is any time now," the commander replies. "I figured a half hour between each one, then after dinner, we can discuss the prospects and decide whether to keep looking or choose one of the people today."

"That sounds reasonable to me, sir." Saber replies.

The talk for a few more minutes and the doorbell rings. Thomas goes and answers it. A young man, a few years older than Saber enters and Thomas leads him into the room. "Hello. Nice to meet you. I'm Aaron Walker," the young man says. He walks over to Saber and shakes his hand before sitting down across from him.

The others nod. "Well, Mr. Walker, I am Commander Eagle, the person who contacted you. I would like to know just how you think you can provide service here."

"Well, sir. I believe that anyone can be trained to adapt to being blind. I believe in guiding them to learn to use a cane and other such implements to get around without help. They have to learn that they are disabled, but not unable to do things. I think I can teach Captain Rider to do most anything he wishes to do."

The continue talking for a few minutes, and once the interview is over, Aaron gets up to leave. "We will be contacting you in a day or so to let you know of our decision, Mr. Walker. Thank you for your time," Commander Eagle says as he leads him to the door.

He returns to the group and sits down, "Well, what are your thoughts, Saber?"

Saber sits quietly for a few minutes in thought before answering, "I'm not sure, sir. He seems intelligent, but there's something...I'm not sure...there's an arrogance or something that I don't care for. I'm sure I could learn from him, but I'd like to see one or two other prospects before deciding anything."

Commander Eagle nods, "I agree with your assessment, Saber. Thomas, Elaine?"

They both nod. "I feel the same, sir." Elaine replies. "Something about him I just didn't like." The doorbell rings and she gets up and answers it, leading the next person into the room.

"Hello everyone." An older woman says as she enters the room. She walks over to Saber and takes his hand, "You must be Captain Rider. It's nice to meet you. I'm Clara Dooley."

He shakes her hand, "Nice to meet you too, Ms. Dooley."

She releases his hand and sits across from him, waiting for questions.

"So, Ms. Dooley, what kind of experience do you have working with someone who has lost their vision?" Elaine asks.

She thinks for a moment before answering, "Well, I helped my husband when he lost his vision after a car accident. After a few months, he could do most of the things that he used to do before he lost his vision. I feel that blindness doesn't mean that you are incapable, just that you have to take a different approach."

They all nod in agreement and chat a little longer before Commander Eagle stands up, "Thank you Ms. Dooley for coming today. We will be discussing our decision tonight, and should let you know in the next day or so what we have decided."

She nods, and stands up, heading for the door. She stops close to Saber and places a hand on his arm, "No matter your decision, sir, it was nice to meet you." He nods, not sure what to say and she goes to the door and leaves.

Commander Eagle returns to the group, "Well?"

"She is better than the first one. She seems nice enough," Saber says.

"But?" The commander asks.

Saber shrugs, "I'm not sure. I don't know what to be screening for."

"Well, I think you'll know when we find someone that they are the right person for you," Elaine says.

"How many more are there, sir?" Saber asks.

"I only have one more interview set up, but I know there are a few others that are

interested in the position, if we don't like the next one either. I don't want you to settle on a person, just because no one else is scheduled for an interview. This is a person that you are going to have to put a good deal of trust into, so if you have any doubts, we keep looking, okay?" The Commander replies.

Saber nods, "I understand, sir. I sincerely appreciate the efforts you are taking on my behalf."

Commander Eagle nods, then he sighs, "Saber, if you could only remember everything that you have endured to help protect the people of the new frontier, you would understand that I am not doing nearly enough. But I am doing all that I can."

The doorbell rings again and Thomas goes and answers it, a young woman comes in looking a bit nervous at the number of people sitting before her.

"Good afternoon. My name is Amanda Kelly. I'm here for the interview," she says pleasantly.

"Hello, Ms. Kelly. I'm Commander Eagle, the one who set up your interview."

"Glad to meet you, sir," she replies trying to hide her nervousness. She nods to Thomas and Elaine and then approaches Saber, "I hope that you will not be needing these services for long, sir. I'm sure this is rather degrading to you. I know I'd be mortified." She touches his arm briefly, then goes and sits down.

They talk for a while, then after some discussion, she is preparing to leave. "We will let you know either way once a decision is made. Thank you for your time, Ms. Kelly. Should be no later than the day after tomorrow," Commander Eagle says as he escorts out the door. A short time later, they are all sitting quietly, each lost in their own thoughts.

"So, do you feel that you should call a few more, sir?" Thomas asks, finally breaking the silence.

Saber looks up, "I don't know. I felt safe around the last two, but I liked the last one better, I suppose."

Elaine smiles and nods, "I have a good feeling about her."

"She wasn't afraid or thrown off by my condition. She didn't pretend that it wasn't there either. She seemed to be speaking honestly when she said how she'd feel in my place." Saber says quietly.

"That is what impressed me. She faced it head on, and didn't try and avoid the fact that you are uncomfortable," Commander Eagle says.

Saber nods, "Perhaps we should give her a chance, sir. I suppose if it doesn't work out, we can try again."

Commander Eagle nods, "It is your choice, Saber. If you are willing to allow it, then we shall call her tomorrow and let her know of the decision."

"I'll write out the letters of regret to the other two, sir," Elaine says.

Saber nods, and after talking a while longer, they eat dinner and go off their own directions. He goes into the study, quietly listening to music. Elaine comes in and sits across from him. He looks up in her direction, "Hello, Elaine," he says quietly, taking out the ear buds he was wearing.

"How did you know it was me, sir?" she asks astonished.

"I am learning to tell how different people walk. I also notice the perfume you're wearing," he replies indifferently.

"I came to see how you are. You've not said much since the interviews this afternoon," she says quietly.

"I suppose I don't know what to say...Admitting that I need this help makes it seem like everyone has given up. That scares me, Elaine." She gasps involuntarily as he continues, "I seem to be slowly remembering things, not as fast as I'd like. I want to think of this as a positive step, but the idea of having to depend on someone else to teach me how to do things I should already know..."

"Don't think of it like that, Saber. Think of her as someone teaching you to be independent again. She won't be here forever, just long enough to show you that you can still do almost anything you did before. You will be running this estate, and you can do something for Calvary Command, once you have your sense of self back."

"I am agreeing to do this, but I do not have to like it." he says bitterly.

Elaine shakes her head, "This will get better. Would you like me to see if she could come tomorrow? Perhaps starting sooner, rather than later would be good for you. I do have one other question regarding this whole matter."

"What's that?" he asks.

"Is she going to be living here, or just coming when you want? I figure I should get the details before we call her." Elaine replies.

"I hadn't thought about that. I suppose it should be her choice. I know we have the space for her. Or if you think it's improper, then don't say anything. I'll go with whatever decision is made on that front," he replies.

Elaine nods, "Then I'll go and make the call. I'll come and inform you of the decision she makes, so it won't be a surprise tomorrow."

He nods in reply and she leaves the room to make the call. He falls back into the chair he had been in and returns to the solace of his music.

