

# The Price of Peace

Von chelle76

## Kapitel 33: Decisions

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Chapter 32: Decisions

"Well, it looks like all of your crew was lucky, Commander," Dr. Izumi says sounding exhausted.

"I'm sorry that I had to get you, but as you can see, we really needed you," the commander replies apologetically.

"The burns on Mr. Wilcox and your daughter are minor. They were all lucky to have escaped with just the few broken bones and bruises. I don't think they will be in any condition to fight for a while."

"That's what worries me. They were the only ones who had any experience piloting the prototype weapon. I doubt any of the other cadets would be able to handle it in a battle if something should happen and we need it."

Dr. Izumi is silent for several minutes before taking a breath and slowly releasing it. "It does put you in quite a predicament, Commander. I suggest that you not borrow trouble needlessly. The troops all need some rest, as do we," he says turning and looking out the window.

"Perhaps I could send the Bismarck crew to visit Saber. I've not yet told them that the twins were born yesterday. They could rest there and free up a few beds for those more severely injured," Commander Eagle says.

"I think that is a good idea, sir. I do suggest running it by Captain Rider before saying anything to them. I would request to be allowed to accompany them personally, if you feel you can spare me now," Dr. Izumi says.

Commander Eagle thinks for a moment before nodding, "I think that is a wise suggestion, doctor. I'll call Saber now. Why don't you go and change into some fresh

clothes and meet me in med bay in a few minutes."

A couple hours later, April, Alex, Colt, Fireball, and Dr. Izumi are in a van being driven by another soldier from the outpost and on their way to see Saber and Amanda.

"Are you sure they won't mind us visiting, doc?" Colt asks as the van drives closer to its' destination.

"Commander Eagle called and asked them before telling you of the option," Dr. Izumi replies. "He said that Captain Rider was more than happy for us to come. I am also bringing him some new glasses I had made while at the outpost. He should stop having the frequent headaches now, which should make his wife more at ease over his situation."

"Well, I think I can recover better in the peace and quiet of Saber's place far better than all of the commotion at the outpost," Fireball mutters as they arrive at the main gate and are greeted by a soldier. The driver shows his EBU to the guard and they are waived through.

They get out and are greeted at the door by Thomas. "Ah, I'm glad to see that you made it safely," he says as he helps them into the house and into the sitting room. They all take their seats, with the exception of Dr. Izumi.

"Thomas, are they upstairs?" Dr. Izumi asks, getting a nod in reply. "Then I shall go and see how things are and then retire to my room. I've not slept since I left here yesterday." He heads up the stairs and after knocking, he enters Saber and Amanda's room to find Amanda sitting in a rocking chair holding Moria, and Saber coming from across the room where two small cribs are set up. "How are you feeling?" he asks Amanda quietly after closing the door.

Amanda smiles, "Tired and sore, but not too bad. How are the others?" she asks quietly, so as not to wake the sleeping child in her arms.

"They are downstairs. Things could have been much worse. They can all get around, although it is a little difficult. They will not be fighting for a few months at least," Dr. Izumi replies. "I've not mentioned that you have had the twins to them. I thought I would allow you to surprise them. They could use a bit of good news."

Amanda smiles, "I suppose we should go and see them."

"Are you up to going down, Love?" Saber asks.

Amanda nods, "If I go slow, I'll be fine. I'd ask you and maybe either the doctor or Elaine to carry Moria. I need my hands free for the railing right now."

"Well, do you mind taking one of them, doctor?" Amanda asks. "I can hold her once I'm sitting down again."

Dr. Izumi smiles, "I'll gladly carry one of the little ones down, Mrs. Rider. Which one

would you like me to take?"

"I'll get Eryn for you," Saber replies as he walks over to the crib and scoops up the sleeping child and carefully hands her to Dr. Izumi. He carefully cradles the child in his arms and Saber goes and helps Amanda carefully to her feet before taking Moria from her arms. "Are you sure you're up to this?" he asks her again.

Amanda nods. "Yes, it'll be nice to move around a little," she replies. "Besides, I want to see their faces when they see you come down holding a baby," she adds with a smile.

Saber chuckles and turns for the door. "Very well, let's go then," he says as they make their way down the hall and slowly down the stairs.

The others are talking amongst themselves when Colt spots Amanda walking carefully down the stairs. "Hey there, Amanda. How are yo-" he starts to say and stops when he sees Saber coming behind her, a baby in his arms.

The others look up when he stops and April gasps, breaking into a huge smile. "You had the twins?" she asks excitedly.

Amanda nods as she comes all the way down the stairs and over to a chair, sitting down carefully. "They were born yesterday morning," Amanda replies quietly.

Dr. Izumi brings Eryn over and gently places her in Amanda's arms. "If you don't mind, I'm going to go and rest for a while," he says quietly.

Amanda nods, "You look like you could use a break. Please, go and rest."

"Thank you. Do not hesitate to come and get me if any of you feel that I am needed," he says looking to the others in the room. They all nod in reply. "Thank you," he says quietly and retires upstairs.

"So, what are their names?" Colt asks as he moves to get a better look at the baby in Amanda's arms.

"I've got Moria Grace," Saber replies moving over so the others can see the sleeping baby in his arms.

"I'm holding Eryn Blaire," Amanda says as Colt carefully makes his way over to look at her.

"They're very pretty," April says quietly. "I thought babies are all pink after they're born."

"They had to be cut out," Amanda explains. "There wasn't room for them to turn and be born safely, so Dr. Izumi did an emergency cesarean. I had started having contractions, so even though they are a little early, he said it was safer to do that."

Colt shakes his head. "Were you awake for it?" he asks.

Amanda nods. "Yes, but I didn't really feel anything. He gave me something to numb me and then something to make me sleep after they were born."

Colt shudders slightly, and Amanda chuckles. "You were there when Robin had Wil, weren't you?" she asks amused.

"Yeah, but she had it easy. She pushed him out in less than an hour. There was no surgery or drugs," Colt replies and walks over to Saber. "Were you there for all of it?" he asks hesitantly.

Saber nods. "I wasn't going to leave her," he replies.

"Did you see her cut open?" Colt asks shifting a bit uncomfortably.

Saber chuckles, "Not really. I saw some out of the little peripheral vision I have, but my focus was on Amanda and keeping her calm. I did turn and look when he brought Moria out, and then Eryn. To be honest, I wasn't bothered by it. I was too focused on Amanda and the babies to care about anything else."

April laughs, "I can imagine."

"I'm sure I'd hit the floor," Fireball says shaking his head.

"After everything you've seen, I'm sure if you were in the situation, you'd be fine. You would be too focused on other things, as I was," Saber says. Moria starts to fuss and he starts rocking her in his arms and after a few minutes, she settles. He moves her so her head is against his shoulder and she sleeps peacefully against him. "I heard the Bismarck was destroyed," he says after a long silence.

April looks up and nods. "Yeah. We were ambushed," she replies.

"The renegade pilot had a few new tricks," Colt says coldly.

"Oh?" Saber asks. "What kind of tricks?"

"It had the weapons from the Tirpitz," April replies.

Saber doesn't bother to hide his shock. "That's not good," he says quietly.

"Did you manage to get the unit?" Amanda asks.

"No," Alex says finally speaking up.

Amanda looks over and studies his face. "Alex, do not blame yourself for this,"

"But had I done a better job of planting the explosives-" Alex starts.

"Do not blame yourself for something you had no way of knowing," Saber says firmly, interrupting Alex. "We need to be discussing options. Not dwelling on how it might have remotely been avoided."

Alex goes to protest, but a look from Saber stops him and he nods in resignation, "You're right, Captain," he mutters in defeat.

"Alex," Amanda says quietly, causing him to look in her direction. "Don't dwell on the past. Focus that energy on figuring out a solution."

"None of us can fight. If that renegade unit comes back we're done for!" Alex says angrily. "There is no one that can fly the new unit. None of us could even do very well in it."

"New unit?" Saber and Amanda ask at the same time.

"Oops," Alex mutters embarrassed at his slip.

"It's a single pilot unit," April explains giving Alex a quick glance. "It's only a prototype. All of them have tried it, but it has some glitches. The timing is off with the movements, so aiming the weapons is a bit harder. There are also some issues with it getting too hot and the pilot possibly becoming overheated in battle. I have the development team looking into those issues now, since they were able to save it from burning up with the Bismarck. It's more like a renegade unit, than anything else I've designed or helped to design."

"So what are you going to do?" Saber asks. "What if the enemy shows up again?"

"I don't know. I don't think any of the other cadets have a prayer of using it. We have the best chance and even that hasn't been ideal," April replies.

Saber looks at the child cradled against him then to Amanda, who nods to his unspoken question. "Let me try using it, April," Saber says quietly. The others quickly go to protest and he holds a hand up to silence them, "I'm well aware of the risks. But if they have such technology that one suit was able to inflict the amount of damage as was done to the Bismarck, no one is safe until they are stopped. I want my children to have a chance to grow up and as it stands right now, they may not get that chance. If I can change that, even if it means risking my life to do it, I will," he says firmly.

"But Saber, You have Amanda and the li-" April starts to say.

"He's right, April," Amanda says interrupting her. "I do not like where this conversation is heading, but Saber is right. He has the most training of any of you and the ability to adapt quickly. None of you will be in any condition to fight should something come up, so why not let him try it?" she asks as she struggles to hide her fears. No one says anything and she looks to each one in turn before speaking again, "Do I want him to fight? No, but what he says is true. None of us can live a normal life as long as the Outriders have this technology that can so easily kill us. None of us are safe, no matter how much we try and pretend we are. So as I said, let him try it. Let

him become familiar with the unit, at this point, he is your only chance...our only chance."

Elaine comes in from the kitchen to check on things and stops and looks at each person, sensing the tension in the room. She sees Amanda visibly upset and comes over to her and scoops Moria from her, "Lady Amanda, please don't work yourself up. You could make yourself ill, which wouldn't be good for you or the wee ones."

Amanda looks up, suddenly realizing that Elaine is there and has taken Moria from her. She shakes her head to clear it and blinks back the tears that had started to form and sighs, "You're right, Elaine. I'll try and not get so emotional," she says in an almost monotone voice.

Saber casts her a worried glance then looks to Elaine, "Why don't we go lay the girls down? I'll be back down in a minute." Elaine nods and they take the babies up to sleep in the cribs.

An uncomfortable silence falls between the group in the sitting room. Upstairs, Saber places Eryn down gently in her bed as Elaine does the same with Moria. "Is Lady Amanda alright, Saber?" Elaine asks quietly as they approach the door to the bedroom.

Saber stops and sighs, "Yes and no, Elaine," he replies, getting a confused look from her. "She is glad the the babies are here and healthy and that our friends have survived another brush with death. However, she knows that this battle isn't over and that it appears that I may be the only one who can possibly end it," he says with a sigh.

"Why you?" Elaine asks.

"Because of my training and ability to adapt quickly," he replies matter-of-factly. "April said that even Fireball and Colt had trouble with the new suit that she has designed."

"And you think you can do better?" Elaine asks.

"Possibly. But it's more because of the fact that the others are injured, I stand a better chance with it right now."

"And what if something happens to you?" she inquires.

He shrugs. "I suppose that Amanda will have to handle it. Of course I don't plan on letting that happen. I want to see our children grow up, Elaine. I want them to have a chance to do so," Saber replies.

"Don't make her a widow twice, Saber," Elaine says looking up to meet his gaze. "I'm not sure she would take it so well a second time."

Saber nods slightly. "I know, Elaine. I don't want to do this. I have to," he replies, his voice breaking slightly. "Amanda is the strongest woman I know. If anyone can pull

through something like that it would be her. I just don't want her to have to, and I will do everything within my power to make sure she doesn't have to," he adds quietly.

Elaine places a hand gently on his shoulder and nods. "Then you do what you need to do. She will support you. You know that. We will support both of you regardless of how this turns out," Elaine says.

Saber kisses her cheek and opens the bedroom door for her, "Thank you, Elaine." Elaine smiles and walks through the door. He follows out after her.

"It's what families do, Saber, support each other," Elaine says quietly as they return to the sitting room.

Amanda looks up as they return, her eyes meet Saber's and his countenance softens. He comes over and sits beside her on the arm of the chair. "How are you feeling, Love?" he asks quietly so only she hears.

"I'm okay, I guess," she replies quietly. "The girls are sleeping?" she asks.

He nods. "Yes. They should be good for an hour or so."

"Are you ready to eat?" Elaine asks brightly trying to ease the tension of the group.

Everyone turns to her and nods eagerly. Slowly the group gets up and heads into the dining room, Amanda and Saber lagging behind as he helps her up and she moves a bit more slowly. "I think after I eat, I should lie down for a while," Amanda says, not bothering to hide the fatigue in her voice.

Saber gives her a wary glance, "Would you rather go and upstairs and I'll bring something to you? I don't want you hurting yourself," he offers eyeing her carefully. "You're awfully pale."

"I don't want them to think I'm angry or something," she says as she slowly wills herself to move forward.

"Technically, you should probably still be in bed. Most women are still in the hospital one day after such a procedure. I think they will understand, Love. If they don't it's their problem, not yours," Saber states. "Let me help you to our room and I'll bring you a tray. I'll even eat with you if you'd like."

Amanda starts to protest, but nods, "Okay. I think you're right, perhaps I should go on upstairs. They are welcome to come and visit if they'd like, but I think I have done too much," she admits begrudgingly.

The next morning, Saber is awakened by Eryn crying. He gets up and goes over and scoops her up and rocks her. Elaine quietly slips in to offer assistance. After changing her and feeding her, she starts to settle when Amanda wakes up and takes her.

A knock at the door and April enters after a moment, "I thought I heard crying," she

says quietly as she comes in, closing the door after her.

Saber comes over holding Moria, who he had just changed. "Would you like to hold her, April?" he asks quietly.

April tenses for a moment and nods hesitantly. "Um, sure, if you're sure I won't break her," April replies.

Saber chuckles as she holds out her arms. He carefully places Moria in her arms and April holds her rigidly. "You need to relax, April. I won't let you drop her," he says obviously amused at her discomfort.

"Could I sit down with her?" she asks trying to not drop the baby.

Amanda smiles. "You can sit in the rocker, if you'd like," Amanda says.

April carefully makes her way to the chair and gratefully sits down. She relaxes a bit more and gently begins rocking her. "This isn't so bad," she says beginning to relax.

A short time later, Thomas comes up and enters the room, "Master Saber, Commander Eagle is here and wishes to see you."

Saber nods, "I'll be right down, Thomas."

"Yes, sir," he replies and heads downstairs.

Saber comes over to Amanda, "Are you alright?" Amanda nods.

"I'll be here with her, Saber," Elaine says as she comes over and takes Moria from April who stands up.

"Thank you Elaine," he replies.

"Be careful, Saber," Amanda says quietly.

"I will, Love," he replies and kisses her briefly before he and April head downstairs.

"All right Saber, I think we're ready for you to try the suit out," April says as she hits several keys causing several readouts to pop up on her screens.

"Got it, April," he replies and hits a couple of buttons and grabs the control stick and the suit begins to move.

"Take it out of the hangar, I want to see how well you're able to maneuver with it."

Saber is a little unsteady for a few steps, but after hitting a few buttons, he seems to have better control and begins moving fairly fluidly.

"Looking good," April says. "Think you're ready to try the weapons?"



"Let's go for it, April," he replies. April hits a series of buttons and several targets being popping up at random intervals. Saber begins firing at them, he hits all of them, only a couple of them miss the center area.

"Not bad, Saber. You're doing better than the others did."

"You've tweaked the systems since then, I'm at an advantage, April," he replies as he removes his helmet after exiting the unit.

"You don't look as overheated as they did either," April states after looking him over. "How are you feeling?"

"I feel as good as I have lately. I can see about the best I've been able to see since the accident," Saber replies.

"I wish I knew a way to see how the sword handles with it," April says more to herself than him.

"Do you want me to go back and and draw it and do some basic movements with it?" he asks.

April looks at him carefully, "Are you up to it?"

Saber nods, "I'm fine. I would tell you if I wasn't."

"Well, it might be a good idea to try the sword. Better to have some practice, in case something comes up," April says.

"All right then, I'm going back out," Saber says as he climbs back into the suit.

It's late in the evening when they return to Saber's estate. April makes her way to her room and Saber enters his room to find Amanda asleep in the rocker cradling Eryn against her, who is also sleeping soundly. He goes past them into the dressing room and after changing clothes, he walks over to the cribs and stares at Moria's sleeping form. He watches her for a minute before going over and kissing Amanda on her head, waking her. She looks up to him and smiles, still half asleep. "Why don't I lay her down and you come lay in the bed?" he asks. "I think that you'd be more comfortable."

Amanda nods and he gently takes Eryn from her and goes and lays her in her bed. She stirs a little, but settles and he goes over and helps Amanda up and to the bed, laying down beside her. After stretching out she moves against him carefully and he sighs.

"Are you okay, Saber?" Amanda asks concerned, moving a little to try and see his face.

"Yeah. Just tired. We spent several hours trying that suit out today," he replies.

"How did it go?" she asks quietly.

"April seemed pleased with the results. She sent the readings to her design team and said she wants to try again tomorrow," he says not bothering to hide his fatigue. "How are you feeling?" he asks concerned.

"I'm sore and tired, but I assume that is normal. Elaine has been wonderful. She is trying to do everything for me, and keeps trying to get me to take something for pain, but I'm afraid of taking anything."

"Why? Dr. Izumi wouldn't give you something that could hurt you or the girls."

"I'm more afraid of not being able wake up if one of the little ones start crying and you're not here," Amanda replies.

Saber nods and sighs, "I can understand that, but I don't want you punishing yourself, Love. There are people here that can help. Let them. I will do all I can to help too."

"I know, but who knows how long you'll be here?" she asks, her voice breaking slightly. "I'm assuming that if something does come up, you'll be the one to fight, right?"

"Aye. It seems that right now, I've done the best in the new unit."

Amanda sighs and snuggles against him, "I just hope this is all for nothing."

"So do I, Love," Saber replies as he drifts off to sleep.

Please review and let me know what you think! :-)