

# The Price of Peace

Von chelle76

## Kapitel 36: After the Battle

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Chapter 35: After the Battle

"Lady Amanda, Commander Eagle has arrived and wishes to speak with you privately," Thomas says coming into the kitchen.

Amanda looks up from her cup and nods, standing slowly. "Would you please send him into the study? I think we can talk there without much interruption," she replies.

"Of course," Thomas replies and leave back towards the sitting room.

Amanda takes a deep breath and releases it slowly. From the stairwell leading to the second floor, she hears the sound of a baby crying and turns towards it.

"I'll see to the wee one, Milady, you go and talk with the Commander. They will be fine, I promise," Elaine says, coming over and placing a comforting hand on her shoulder briefly.

"Thank you, Elaine. I'll go to the study then. Come and get me if you do need me."

"I will, Milady," Elaine replies as she heads upstairs to tend to the crying infant.

Amanda leaves the kitchen and takes the small hallway to the study. She enters and has just sat down when Thomas knocks briefly before leading the commander into the room. Commander Eagle takes a seat close to, but across from her, so that she can see his face, and he hers. Satisfied that he has fulfilled his duty, Thomas heads for the door. "Call if you need anything, Lady Amanda, I'll see to it that you are not disturbed," he says. She nods in appreciation and he slips out and closes the door behind him.

The pair are both quiet for several minutes, each of them trying to get a read on the other. Finally, Commander Eagle breaks the overbearing silence, "He is doing better, Amanda." A look of relief washes over her features and the commander continues,

"He is still not out of danger, but at least he is finally stable. As you are aware, he lost a good deal of blood from when the unit crashed. Or we are assuming that is when it occurred, since the pilot pod was covered in blood, as was he. We have finally got ahead of the infection and his fever is down. Hopefully, that will stop the seizures and we can wean him from the anticonvulsant medication that is sedating him. It will still be a week or so once he wakes up before he will be allowed to return home, something that I know both of you will want."

"Yes, that is true, commander. I am glad that you have taken the time to come and see me. It means a lot that you are taking great pains to keep me up to date on his condition. It kills me that I am unable to go and see him. I hope he isn't angry when he wakes and finds that I've not been there."

"Amanda, you should know that he will understand. You are caring for your children and running the affairs here. He will know that you have been kept up to date. I do not feel he will wonder why you aren't there when he comes around. If he asks, I will tell him the truth."

"So have there been any more signs of the enemy?" Amanda asks.

"We had one possible sighting of some ships, but they seemed to vanish by the time we got there to check them out. Right now, we are busy cleaning up just outside of that little town you and Saber visited before you got married."

"Why? From what?" Amanda asks curiously.

"Evidently during the fight, when we blew up some of the fighters, not all of the pieces burned up in the atmosphere above the colony. Several large chunks of debris fell from space and caused some extensive damage. We have sectioned off a small area of the outer fields of the outpost to set up temporary shelter and such necessities for the citizens that have been displaced while we have soldiers help with the rebuilding efforts."

"Was anyone killed?"

"Luckily no. We have a few that were injured," the commander replies. "One or two of them seems to be a little more serious than the others, but I think that everyone will survive. It is why we called for the air raid sirens to be activated. Had we not done that, the numbers could have been far worse."

Amanda nods and releases a breath she didn't realize she was holding. "I am glad to know that things are well, comparatively. I am sorry that anyone was injured, but as you said, it could have been far worse. How long do you think the rebuilding efforts will take?"

"Most of it won't take long. There are a few of the more...ornate structures that will take a bit longer. A couple of the nobility have been displaced, but they seem to be grateful that they came away with their lives. I will be meeting with those affected in a few days time, so that we can come to an agreement on restitution."

Amanda is silent for several minutes pondering the information she has been given. A couple of times she has started to say something, each time deciding against it. Finally, she looks up and meets the commander's eyes, "Sir, if I am able to arrange it, would you allow me to come to see Saber? I won't stay more than a couple of hours, but I feel that I need to see him. If not for my benefit, than to be able to affirm to anyone who comes questioning that he is indeed alive."

Commander Eagle watches her closely as she's speaking and almost as soon as she has made her request, he is ready to object. She presses on and he soon sees that it would be pointless to argue. He sighs, rubbing his hands together in thought before replying. "Amanda, had anyone else made such a request, I would without a second thought deny it," Amanda goes to protest and he holds a hand up to silence her before he continues, "However, I know that this culture is a bit different than most, and I see your points as valid, so I will allow it, provided you are able to have an escort, and leave some people here in your absence."

"Thank you, sir," Amanda replies quietly.

"Now, why don't you go see if someone would come with you, and perhaps you may return with me when I leave."

Amanda nods and they stand up and return to the sitting room, where Colt, Robin, Alex, and Sarah are sitting and talking amongst themselves while watching their boys play. Robin looks up and smiles at them as they enter the room. Commander Eagle comes and sits down and watches the children play. Amanda nods politely and heads into the kitchen, searching for Elaine. Not finding her in the kitchen, she knocks on the door to her and Thomas' quarters and Thomas answers the door and gives her a kind smile.

"What can I do for you, Lady Amanda?" he asks stepping aside to allow her to enter.

Amanda steps through the door and looks around, "Have you seen Elaine?" she asks as she takes a seat on the couch in the small sitting area.

Thomas sits down across from her. "I thought she was with you. Perhaps she is upstairs tending to the babes," he replies. "Is there something I can do for you?"

"Well, I have convinced Commander Eagle to allow me to go and see Saber today, provided I can find an escort and that someone will tend the children while I am away. I only plan to be gone for a few hours, but he is insistent that I have an escort, so that I do not have to return here alone."

"I would gladly go with you if you wish, Milady. However, perhaps Mr. Wilcox would be a better choice. He is better able to protect you should the need arise."

Amanda nods, mulling his suggestions and sighs. "Do you think I am being unreasonable wanting to go and see Saber?"

Thomas offers her a sympathetic smile, "No, I do not feel that you are being unreasonable. I think you need to see him, even if he doesn't know you're there, I think being close to him briefly would do you some good." Then as an afterthought he says with a smile, "As for whether Elaine would mind that you went, leaving her in charge of the wee ones, I don't see that being a problem."

"Thank you, Thomas. You two have truly been wonderful to me. I know that without the two of you, I could not handle this."

Thomas comes over and places a hand gently on her shoulder, "You are stronger than you give yourself credit for, Lady Amanda. Now, you go and talk to Captain Wilcox, and I'll go and talk to Elaine to tell her what we have discussed."

"Okay," Amanda replies as she stands up and they two of them head for the door. Once in the kitchen, Thomas takes the back stairwell, and Amanda heads to the sitting room. Spotting Colt, she walks over to him, "May I speak with you for a moment, Colt?"

Colt nods and stands up, "Sure thing, Amanda. You wanna go to the kitchen?" Amanda nods and they return to the kitchen and sit down at the small table. Colt studies her face for a minute before speaking, "So, what's up?" he asks casually.

"I have a favor to ask of you," she begins a little nervously.

"Shoot. Can't answer til I know what the question is," Colt says.

"Would you mind accompanying me to the Outpost for a few hours? I would like to go and see Saber, even if he's not awake. Commander Eagle said I could go, so long as someone goes with me that can escort me back. I thought about asking Alex, but since you are closer to Saber than he is, I thought that perhaps you would be the better choice," Amanda says before taking a breath to calm herself.

Colt chuckles to himself and shakes his head. "And here I thought this was going to be something hard," he quips. "I'll be glad to go with you, Amanda. I'd like to go and drag April and Fireball back here too. She needs to take a break, and I'm sure Fireball would like a change of scenery. When do ya want to leave?"

"As soon as the commander is ready, I suppose. Although I'd like to run up and check on the girls before we leave."

"Then you go and do that. I'll go talk to the commander and let Robin and Alex know what is going on," Colt replies.

"Thank you," Amanda says with a nod and heads upstairs. Colt heads back out into the sitting room.

"Is everything okay?" Alex asks when Colt returns alone.

"Yep. Amanda wants me to go back to the outpost with her to make sure she gets

back here safely. That means that you'll be in charge of security and the troops at the gate while we're gone. You okay with that?" Colt replies.

Alex nods. "Sure. Is she okay?"

"She wants to see Saber, Lieutenant MacKenzie," Commander Eagle replies. "I think more to convince herself that he will be returning more than anything."

"Has he woken up yet?" Robin asks.

"Not that I am aware of," the commander replies. "He has had a couple of different surgeries and had to go under dialysis for a week, but his organs seem to be functioning almost normally again. Hopefully, he will come around before much longer. I can tell that this is taking a toll on her."

Amanda opens the door to the bedroom and slips in quietly. She sees Elaine sitting rocking Eryn, and Thomas is sitting in another chair cradling Moria. Elaine looks up and smiles at Amanda when she comes in the room.

"I thought you would have left by now," Elaine says quietly.

"I thought I should come and see you and the little ones. I wanted to make sure you had enough to feed them for a few more hours too," she replies quietly.

Elaine nods. "We should be fine, even if you end up having to stay overnight," she replies.

"I'm glad of that. I am hoping to only be gone for a few hours. I know Saber wouldn't want me to leave them for long, but I feel like I have to see him," she says trailing off.

"Do not feel as if you need to explain yourself, Milady. We understand. Go and do what you need to. We will care for the wee ones in your absence. They are the closest thing to grandchildren we have, and we love them as such," Elaine says firmly.

"Thank you," Amanda replies quietly. She goes and gently kisses each child's head and then heads back downstairs, where Colt and Commander Eagle are waiting. "I apologize for taking so long."

"You didn't. I'm sure you had to make sure things were in order for the little ones before we left," Colt replies as he stands up. Amanda nods. "Robin and Sarah can help too, if they need it."

"I'm not exactly incapable with a baby either, Amanda," Alex states. "So Thomas and Elaine will not be lacking in help."

"I sincerely appreciate everything that all of you are doing," Amanda says quietly as the commander and Colt stand up. They say their goodbyes and head out the door.

About an hour later, Amanda is walking into Saber's hospital room. She sees several

machines and monitors hooked up and she goes and pulls a chair up beside the bed. She takes his hand into hers after sitting down and leans back in the chair and closes her eyes, listening to the sounds around her.

A short time later, a nurse enters the room and gasps in shock, jolting Amanda from her trance like state. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to frighten you," the nurse says apologetically.

"Funny, I was about to say the same thing to you," Amanda says with a weak smile.

The nurse comes over and checks Saber's vitals, scribbling some notes as she does so.

"So how is he?" Amanda asks hesitantly.

The nurse studies her face for a moment and glances to where Amanda's hand is intertwined with Saber's and sees her wedding band. "Much better than when he arrived. He could wake up at any time," the nurse replies kindly.

"Thank you," Amanda replies quietly.

The nurse goes about her duties and leaves after she is done, leaving Amanda alone once again with Saber and the various machines.

Amanda starts to feel restless, so she stands up and looks over Saber's sleeping form and with her free hand, gently runs her fingers across his face. He twitches slightly at her touch, so she leans down and kisses his cheek. "I miss you," she whispers softly towards his ear. He stirs a bit more. "Saber?" she says in a more normal tone.

Slowly he begins to stir and after a minute or so, he squeezes her hand. Amanda gasps and he opens his eyes, blinking several times and looks around. "Amanda?" he says barely audible.

"Saber?" Amanda asks in a mix of relief and excitement.

He gives her a weak smile and she leans down and kisses him lightly, tears falling onto his face from hers. "We have to stop meeting like this," he says quietly, causing Amanda to smile in spite of herself.

Amanda nods and turns and hits the call button beside the bed.

"Yes?" a female voice says from a speaker.

"Colonel Rider is awake. Please tell Commander Eagle and Dr. Izumi," Amanda replies.

"They will be there shortly," the voice replies.

Amanda starts several times to speak, but is unable to find her voice. Saber smiles weakly at her. "For once you're speechless?"

Amanda goes to reply when the doors open and Dr. Izumi comes in, followed closely by Commander Eagle, Colt, April, and Fireball.

"Saber?" April says as she comes through the door and rushes over beside Amanda.

"Hello," Saber replies quietly.

Dr. Izumi comes over and reads the machines and studies Saber closely before speaking. "How are you feeling, Colonel?"

"Stiff and sore, but I've been in worse shape," Saber replies honestly.

"If I'd known that Amanda's presence would wake you, I would have brought her here sooner," Commander Eagle says with a smile.

"I am actually surprised to see you here, Love," Saber says looking at Amanda.

"I convinced Commander Eagle to allow me to come see you. I won't be here for long, I'm afraid. I don't want to leave the girls for too long."

Saber looks at her closely and nods, "I'm glad you came, Amanda. I would have understood if you hadn't though. How are the girls?" he asks quietly.

"They are well. The whole camping in the basement was nothing for them. But I was glad to get back to a real bed."

"How long has it been?" Saber asks to no one in particular.

"Almost three weeks since they brought you in," Dr. Izumi replies. "We had our work cut out for us. You damaged a few of your organs, even had to be on dialysis briefly." Saber gives him a look of shock, but the doctor continues, "Your staples were removed last week, and you've had IV fluids for nutrients. Overall, you should be fine to go home in a day or so, provided you can promise to stay out of trouble."

"Well there goes that," Colt retorts, causing the others to laugh.

"Really funny, cowboy," Saber says dryly.

After the laughter dies down Dr. Izumi looks over Saber with a serious expression, "Do you want to try and move around a little?"

Saber shrugs. "Might not be a bad idea. Amanda, would you mind walking with me?"

"Not at all. Though might I suggest toting along a wheelchair, in case you get tired," Amanda replies.

Dr. Izumi nods his approval. "Let me get you unhooked from everything and have a wheelchair brought in and then the two of you can take a brief walk, all right?"

Saber nods and a nurse is called in. The others except Amanda leave to the commander's office to talk while the nurse and the doctor unhook him from various machines. After helping him change into sweats and a t-shirt, he takes Amanda's arm and they start slowly walking down the hall. After a few minutes, he has to stop to rest and Amanda unfolds the wheelchair.

"Sit," she says sternly, with a look that ceases any objection. He complies and they continue down the hallway in a comfortable silence, winding up to the entrance of the courtyard. "I suppose we should start heading back to your room," Amanda says sounding a little disappointed.

"I know you have to be leaving soon, I'm sorry, Love," Saber replies quietly.

"Don't be. I'm glad that you are okay, and that I was able to come and see you," she replies as she turns the chair back down the corridor they came from. She nearly turns right into someone and looks up to apologize when she stops in shock.

"Mrs. Rider?" a female voice says equally shocked. "R...Richard?" she stammers.

"Sincia?" Saber says shocked.

"I thought you were dead," she says in an almost accusatory tone, after she recovers from her shock. Glaring between the two before her.

"Technically, I was. Amanda found out well after you had gone that I wasn't," Saber replies matter-of-factly.

"Technically?" Sincia scoffs. "So I'm sure the pregnancy was false too, as I see no sign of it now," she adds coldly, glaring at Amanda.

"That is quite enough, Ms. Swadjen," Amanda says trying to control the anger she feels building. "Saber is still recovering from the last battle. I do not want his stay away from our home prolonged due to stress."

"A battle that has injured my husband and countless others," she replies back hotly.

"I will not get into this here. This is not the time or place, madam. I pray for your husband's swift recovery. Good day," Amanda says and she pointedly steers the chair past Sincia, who is standing in shock, her mouth agape.

They arrive in the room a couple minutes later and Saber allows himself to laugh out loud, no longer able to hold it in.

Amanda stops and moves in front of him to face him. "And what pray tell is so funny?" Amanda asks.

"I do not think Sincia expected you to speak to her like that. No one has ever told her off before," Saber says as he finally catches his breath from laughing. "I think you handled the situation well, Amanda. You were far more polite than I would have been."



So be glad you said something before I had a chance."

"I really should have handled it better. I'm sure that she is under tremendous stress right now," Amanda replies quietly.

"It still does not give her the right to speak to you the way that she did. I can understand her hostility towards me, but you have done nothing to her, Amanda." Saber replies.

Amanda helps him get back into bed and he sighs, obviously tired. "She had no right to speak to you that way either, Saber. She broke off your engagement through no fault of your own."

Saber goes to object, but decides against when someone knocks on the door. "Come in," he replies.

Commander Eagle, Colt, April, and Fireball enter the room. "Are you ready to leave, Amanda?" Colt asks hesitantly.

Amanda nods reluctantly. "Yeah, I suppose we should be going."

Saber takes her hand and squeezes it gently. "I hope to be home in a day or two, Love."

"I know. I'll be glad when you are," Amanda replies and then leans down and kisses him lightly. "See you later," she says quietly. They all say their goodbyes and leave to head back to Saber's estate.

Commander Eagle hangs back a minute after they leave. "Are you sure that you are okay?" he asks Saber noting how tired he looks.

"I'm just tired, sir. I think I'll be fine eventually. I tried to walk too much is all," Saber replies honestly.

"I am just trying to make sure. How is your vision?" the commander asks.

"About as good as it was before I ended up here," Saber replies.

Commander Eagle nods, accepting his answer. "I will come and check on you in the morning. Try and get some rest, Saber."

"I will, sir," he replies. "And thank you," he adds as the commander heads for the door.

The commander nods in acknowledgement. "Good night," he says as he leaves, pulling the door closed behind him.

The ride back everyone is talking randomly about various things, only Amanda seems rather quiet. "Are you all right, Amanda?" April asks suddenly realizing Amanda hasn't spoken during their trip.

Amanda nods slightly. "Just lost in thought, I suppose."

"You don't look too happy. I thought you'd be relieved that Saber was awake and seems to be well enough to return home soon," April replies.

"I am. I'll feel much better having him home. I suppose it's just everything hitting me all at once and I'm a bit overwhelmed," she replies quietly.

April nods slightly, accepting the answer. The rest of the trip Amanda listens to the conversations in the car, trying to look a little more involved, interjecting occasionally. Once they arrive, she heads up to check on the children. She finds them sleeping soundly in their cribs and Elaine cleaning the room when she enters.

"How is Saber?" Elaine asks quietly.

"He may come home as early as tomorrow. He woke up while I was there," Amanda replies sounding tired.

Elaine looks her over carefully and comes over placing a hand gently on her arm, "Get some sleep. The wee ones are good for a while."

Amanda nods and goes to change, returning a few minutes later. She gets into bed and falls fast asleep before Elaine has even left the room.

The sound of someone entering the room stirs him awake. Straining to see in the dark room, he notices the shadowy outline of a figure slowly walking towards him. Listening, he can tell they are trying not to make much noise. Moving slowly, he closes his eyes and then flicks on the lights above him, causing the intruder to gasp in shock. He opens his eyes and the person standing halfway between the bed and the door freezes in their spot. "What are you doing here?" he asks coldly.

"I...I...came to talk," she stammers.

"We have nothing to discuss," he replies flatly.

"Okay, I came to apologize then," she states quietly.

"You were out of line, stress or not."

"You lied to me, or rather she did," the female voice states.

"She told you what she knew to be true, Sincia. Everyone believed it was true. They had no reason not to believe that all of us were killed. Had we done what we said we were going to do, we would have died," he says firmly.

"You lied to me before that, Richard," she says matter-of-factly.

"So you say. I don't see how I did," he replies harshly.

"You said you'd never regain your vision," she retorts.

"I said I didn't know whether I would or not. I still could wake up one morning totally blinded again. You have a life now, you have a husband. Go and live your life, and let me live mine," he says coldly as he fights to control his anger.

Sincia gasps taken aback by his tone, "You can't talk to me that way," she says defiantly.

"I can easily have you removed from this room. I am doing my best to remain civil to you. You come in here at God knows what hour, claiming an apology, which you have yet to issue and instead you are speaking to me as if I owe you an apology. If that is what you are after, you might as well leave. I've done nothing wrong," Saber says coldly, allowing his anger to show in his voice.

Sincia's temper starts to get the best of her and she takes a deep breath, trying to calm herself before speaking. "I think you lied because you had met that woman and wanted to get out of our wedding contract. Had I known you would still be able to fight, I never would have broken our engagement. So yes, you did do something wrong, Richard. You lied to get out of our contract. Your parents would turn in their graves if they knew that you married the help."

Saber clinches his fists and starts several times to say something, each time stopping himself before saying something he would regret. A smile forms on Sincia's lips each time he stops himself from speaking, working to only infuriate him more. Finally, he closes his eyes and takes a deep breath to calm his temper. "Actually had all of this happened and they were still alive, they would welcome her with open arms into our clan. She has defended my life on more than one occasion. It is because of her that I was able to return and fight. She was my eyes. I literally was fighting blind, but knowing that the others would likely die if I didn't go, she went to help me fight, at the risk of her own life. Would you have been able to kill a man, Sincia? She has killed twice to save my life, including once when she was pregnant. Could you or would you have been able to do the same?" he asks. She goes to speak, but he continues, not allowing her to raise any objection before he has his say. "Do not judge everything from one vantage point, there are sometimes other things that change a situation to be something other than what it appears to be. She is a loving compassionate woman that has been through Hell because she has known me, and yet despite all of that, she has remained with me. I married her because I love her and I am glad that she has given me two beautiful children. So do not think you have the right to judge her because of what you believe her to be, because she is far more than what you think know."

Sincia feels tears of rage falling down her face. Several times she goes to reply to his accusations, only to have him cut her off as if her opinion means nothing. He finally finishes and she is near exploding with rage, so much so she can barely speak. "You don't know what I've been through," she finally manages to say just barely above a whisper. "How would you feel if you were told you had been promised to someone who would rather leave than be with you? Then when they do come home they claim

not to know you and they are an invalid. So you do what you think is right and release them and find someone else that can appreciate you, only to have them mortally injured in the same damned war that your former love was supposedly maimed in?"

"You seriously think I pretended that I lost my sight so I could get out of our betrothal?" Saber asks in disbelief. "I am sorry that your husband was wounded. From what I have heard, those that were wounded are the ones that chose to ignore the air raid sirens. If that is what happened, then why didn't you evacuate? Do not try and blame what happened between us to be the fault of your husband's injuries, Sincia. You and I both know that is not the case," he says coldly. "I am sorry that you are having to go through this, but perhaps enduring this will make you a stronger person. I know that I have grown because of what I have been through," he says not bothering to hold back the anger in his voice. "Sometimes it is the only way we learn the lessons we need to," he adds a little less harshly. He sighs, trying to force his rage from his system. "It is late, and I would like to rest. You should do the same, Sincia," he says quietly.

Sincia nods slightly. "I suppose you are right," she says quietly. "I am sorry that I have wasted your time and my time," she adds coolly.

"Perhaps one day you will see that I have spoken the truth, Sincia. I wish you the best in your life," Saber says as civilly as he is able.

"Goodbye, Richard," she says and she leaves without another word.

After the door closes Saber slinks back against the bed mentally worn out from the debate. He reaches for the call button, then thinks better of it. He turns off the light and sits on the darkness, replaying the last few hours of conversation in his mind, trying to make sense of it. Eventually he drifts into a restless sleep.

A couple hours later, Commander Eagle enters his room and finds him asleep. He walks over and touches his arm, "Saber?"

Saber stirs at the sound of the voice and someone touching his arm. Slowly, he opens his eyes and after a minute, "Morning already?" he asks groggily.

"Yes, it's nearly eight now. I thought you would have been awake some time ago," the commander replies.

"Late night," he mutters.

"Trouble sleeping?" the commander asks.

"Actually, I had been sleeping rather well until I had a late-night visitor," Saber replies with a hint of anger in his voice.

"A visitor?" the commander asks confused.

"Aye," he says with a sigh. "Sincia came in here last night. She was rather angry that I

was alive, when she thought I had died," Saber says quietly. "She had run into Amanda and I in the hallway yesterday and said some rather harsh things. I know it upset Amanda, but Amanda handled it far more diplomatically than I was about to. But evidently, that just seemed to fuel her anger. So much so that she approached me here last night."

"You should have hit the call button. They would have removed her, Saber. You don't need to deal with that right now."

"Neither does Amanda, sir. I saw how tired she is, even though she did her best not to show it. I worry that she is going to make herself sick."

A knock at the door ceases their conversation and Dr. Izumi enters the room, "Ah, good morning, Colonel. How are you feeling today?"

"A bit tired, but I expected that," Saber replies honestly.

"He had a rough night, Doctor," the commander states, getting a look from Saber.

"Oh? What happened?" the doctor asks.

"It was more of a personal matter rather than a medical one, Doctor. Nothing you need be concerned about," Saber replies, hoping to cease further inquiry.

"Ah, worried about your wife?" Dr. Izumi asks. Saber nods slightly. "I noticed she looked a little tired, I figured seeing you wake up would help with that."

"Speaking of which, when do you think I can return home?" Saber asks hopefully.

Dr. Izumi chuckles, "I suppose you're ready to see your little ones?"

"It's been almost a month since I've held them, so yes, I want to see them, doctor." Saber replies. "I also feel that I can recuperate better at home than in this God forsaken place."

Dr. Izumi nods. "I'm sure you will feel better at home, sir. I need to check you over and make sure that physically you are well enough to go, but I would like for you to eat something first. If you can keep down some food, and your vitals are good until this afternoon, I may just allow you to go home today."

Saber nods and noticeably relaxes a little. "I'll hope for everything to come out well then. I still have the wheelchair from before that I can use to get around some if I need to, if that will help make your decision in my favor, doctor," Saber adds.

Dr. Izumi laughs. "That might gain you a couple of points in your favor. That and the fact that I'm sure your wife won't let you do much for a while."

"Trust me, if you list my limitations, she will make sure I don't exceed them."

"And I'm sure that Elaine will also make sure of that," Commander Eagle adds.

"Aye, I'm sure that is how it will be, sir," Saber replies with a smile.

"Well, your countenance is better than when I arrived, that is encouraging. So we shall see," Dr. Izumi says as he reads over his vitals. "I'll come and check on you in a couple of hours." With that, Dr. Izumi leaves and Saber releases a deep sigh.

"Well, the odds are you will be going home today, Saber," the commander says. "So perhaps the only sleep disruption will be from your children, rather than uninvited guests."

"Aye. Had Amanda been here, Sincia might well have ended up with a sword at her throat. Or in a bed beside her husband."

Commander Eagle chuckles. "And then who knows what would have happened. I don't know what she said to you, and it's not my business to know what was said, but if she acted at all like she has in my presence previously, I'm sure it would have ended in her having to be admitted into the hospital ward alongside her husband."

Saber manages to hide his smile but nods. "Pretty much. It took everything Amanda had to not physically attack her yesterday."

Commander Eagle chuckles, "Amanda is fiercely loyal to you, Saber. Almost to a fault."

"She is different than most women that I've been around. Perhaps it's the way her father raised her."

A knock on the door causes the two men to turn just as it opens and Colt comes in followed by a nurse with a food tray. She sets it down and moves the table closer to the bed before leaving the room.

"Mornin'," Colt says casually looking between them.

"Good morning," they both reply.

Saber moves the table so that he can reach the food, then slowly begins picking at his food as they talk.

"Is Somethin' up? You two look a little tense," Colt asks curiously.

"I had an unwelcome visitor last night, so I'm tired. That's all," Saber says between bites.

Colt looks confused and looks at the commander for an explanation.

"Don't worry about it, Captain. With any luck, Saber will be leaving later today, so there won't be more of such instances," the commander says. He then looks to Saber, "I have some paperwork to do. I'll return in a few hours to see if a decision has been

made."

"Thank you, sir," Saber says quietly. The commander nods to both of them and leaves.

Colt pulls up a chair and the two of them sit in silence while Saber slowly eats the food that was brought in for him. Just about the time he finishes Colt looks up at him and asks, "So, who was the visitor last night, Saber?"

Saber visibly tenses at the question, but then sighs and closes his eyes before facing Colt again. "Sincia," he says barely above a whisper.

Colt notices his physical response and flinches when he hears the reply, instantly regretting asking the question. "Not for a social visit then?"

"No," Saber replies curtly.

Colt lets out a long whistle and shakes his head.

"She had the audacity to accuse me of pretending to be injured. Saying that it was a ruse to get out of our marriage contract," he says his anger starting to return.

"Ouch," Colt mutters. "What did you say to that?"

"I'd rather not repeat it right now. I'd like to be well enough to go home today."

"Understandable. Maybe some other time," Colt replies.

Dr. Izumi knocks and opens the door, coming into the room, a nurse not far behind him. "How are you feeling after eating some real food?"

"It seems to have agreed with me. I am still a little tired, but I would like to get out of here," Saber replies.

"I'm sure you would," Dr. Izumi says with a chuckle. The nurse comes over and checks his vital signs while the doctor does a brief physical examination, nodding approvingly. "Well, if you think you'll not rush into any battles for a while, and not pick up anything heavier than your little ones, I am inclined to allow you to return home," Dr. Izumi says with a smile.

"I can adhere to those stipulations," Saber says quickly.

"I can come over twice a week to check your progress, with the instruction that should I be needed in the interim, someone call me."

"I assure you that would not be an issue," Saber replies.

Dr. Izumi nods. "Then I will go and talk to Commander Eagle and see about your discharge paperwork. You could be leaving within an hour or so." The nurse begins disconnecting the various monitoring devices and removes his IV as they talk.

"Thank you doctor," Saber replies as Dr. Izumi heads out the door, the nurse in tow.

Colt and Saber talk for a while. Colt helps Saber change into regular clothes and they talk as they wait, Fireball and April join them, having heard that he was to be released.

About an hour later, Commander Eagle and Dr. Izumi return.

"You ready to go home, Saber?" the commander asks.

"Yes, sir," Saber replies. He gets into the wheelchair that is provided and they head out the door.

Please Review! :-)