

50 The Dark Passageway

Inara had his mother Mary's eyes, he decided; those deep green irises floating in a turquoise stream offered him a sad glimpse into the past when his mother was still young and he was still naïve.

"I've instructed security to stand down," she said replacing the handset into its cradle. "Azra'il," she told him, "is not my concern. He worked for my grandfather. I've instructed security to inform Azra'il of his current employment status. I assume his only concern would be getting off this island."

"What about Amber?"

"What about her?" Anais asked with a far off glaze to her eyes.

Whitte shook his head and grabbed Brighton's Sig Sauer 9mm. The magazine held fifteen however, as he examined it before replacing the magazine, there were only six more cartridges loaded. He glanced over to McIntosh.

"Why did you all have guns?"

"Would you have done anything we asked if we didn't?"

Whitte held out his hand and McIntosh retrieved his from the desk and handed it to Whitte. It, too, was a Sig Sauer that held a full clip. Whitte took that gun and the clip from Brighton's and pushed his way through the door.

"Off for your revenge, Jack?" Anais asked.

Whitte didn't respond.

He wanted to take stairs down the two flights to the hospital wing but he couldn't find any. He was worried what would be waiting for him when elevator doors slid open but he had no other option. As it descended, he crouched low and pointed the gun at an angle, covering the door. The floor chime dinged and the doors slid open slowly. There was no one waiting for him and so he crept out and turned to his left. He retraced the path that the Wunderkind had led him on and as he reached the hospital wing, he pushed back the swinging door and peered down the hall. The first door on the right is where he had been held. The door past that was where the doctor had told him Amber was located. It was where Azra'il would be waiting as well.

He realized that if they had managed to capture his father, it was a good bet they held Johnson as well. Azra'il was a monster. Whitte was a tall man but Johnson was bigger. He knew, even with a gun, he had a better chance of beating the beast with Johnson at his side. As he approached the door where they now held his father, he crouched and tried the doorknob. It was loose so he twisted it and peaked through. His father was still held in the chair, his head still down. Jack led with his gun and as he began to squeeze through the crack, the door snapped back on him. He let out a grunt as his hand was crunched and the gun dropped. He moved to try and regain control but a heavy-soled black leather shoe shot out and kicked the gun away from him. In the same motion a hand grabbed his and yanked him into the room.

Wentworth trained his gun on Whitte's head as he stumbled into the room and fell flat on his face.

"You're just in time to watch me slit this man's throat," he laughed.

He kicked Whitte hard in the ribs and for the second time that day, Wentworth made him literally see stars. He coughed, feeling liquid ooze down his esophagus and into his lungs. Then he vomited, blood mixed with yellowish liquid expelled from his stomach.

“Lunch didn’t agree with you I see.” He motioned to Whitte. “Stand up.”

Whitte struggled to do so and once up, he had a difficult time, swaying before regaining composure.

“Walk over in front of the man.”

Whitte held a quizzical glare on his face. Why hadn’t he identified the man on the chair as his father? He wasn’t going to wait to find out. He swayed once more, falling toward the stainless steel counter where the nurse had earlier discarded the tray. As he crashed into it, he grabbed it and in one motion hurled it toward Wentworth. Wentworth ducked and Whitte reached out and grabbed an IV pole and charged Wentworth. He knew he would be shot so he held his head down, ready for impact.

From that moment on, Whitte would never understand why Wentworth turned toward his father and, from fifteen feet away, shot him in the back of the head. Whitte didn’t have time to react to that, continuing his charge until the end of the pole struck Wentworth beneath his chin, lacerating the side of his neck. Wentworth flew back, the gun flying through the air toward the far wall. On the ground by Wentworth’s foot was a scalpel. The instrument was heavy gage, pointed at the end but with only a one-inch blade, not enough to do heavy damage to internal organs. Still, it was better than nothing.

He dove and grabbed the scalpel and rolled into Wentworth, taking his legs from beneath him. Wentworth crashed on Whitte’s back and Whitte drove him down and ended

up beside him. He took the scalpel and drove it into Wentworth's abdomen and held it in tight. Wentworth didn't feel the incision and twisted up and over Whitte, all the while the razor-edge slicing through his navel and along the linea alba, separating the two sets of rectus muscles. Wentworth screamed out, falling onto his back and flopping like a beached fish.

Whitte stood and watched the blood pour from Wentworth's sliced turtleneck shirt. He took a deep breath and walked to where his Sig Sauer was on the ground. He chambered a round and walked back to the slithering Wentworth.

"I should kill you," Whitte said. He pulled the trigger and the gun kicked up. The slug tore into the floor beside Wentworth's head, concrete shattering, kicking up fragments into Wentworth's face. He began to cry.

Whitte bent over, trying to catch his breath and then he turned. Tears came to his eyes as he walked over to the dead man slumped in the chair. It was Dr. Castro. Whitte let out a gasp. Thankfully it wasn't his father; his weakened mind had become gripped in fear and susceptible to the suggestion of the worst imaginable outcome available. He immediately felt for the man but then, more selfishly, realized that there was no Ranger Johnson to help him face down the Angel of Death.

A click at the door caught his attention. He shot a look up and one of the Wunderkinds stood in the doorway with an Uzi loosely pointed in his direction. Whitte held up his hands. The Wunderkind shook his head and lowered his gun, glanced over at the withering Wentworth and then back to Whitte.

"He needs medical attention."

“Fuck him,” Whitte responded. “He killed this man.”

Wunderkind shrugged. “The man is gone.”

Whitte was confused. “Who? The doctor? Of course he’s gone.”

“No. The big man, with the woman. He’s gone.”

“Where?”

The man shook his head. “I think he’s heading to the other end of the island. There is a boat on the way to take him back to the mainland.”

“Where’s the woman?” Whitte asked excitedly.

“With him.” He turned and began to retreat toward the main portion of the resort.

“Wait!” Whitte called out after him. “You’ve got to help me.” Whitte made it to the door and saw the man rushing away. “Wait.”

“You’re on your own.”

“Give me your gun.”

“Fuck you.”

“At least tell me where he went.”

Wunderkind turned a corner and was out of range. Whitte shook his head. “Fucking coward.”

He walked into the room where Amber had been but there was no one, just a trail of blood leading to the door and down the hall toward the emergency exit. He pushed the door open. The sun had finally expired. What lay before him was a dark passageway, deep into the jungle. At the other end was Azra’il.

