

THE QUEEN'S DOGS

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE CATACOMBS - NIGHT

JASPER, ZEKE, and MERCY walk briskly towards the hidden chambers used for the Dogs' interrogations. The hallway is weakly lit and its limestone walls are damp.

Jasper, 26, is the recently appointed leader of the Queen's Dogs and out to prove himself. He walks with a pirate's cocky swagger, and his long, brown coat kicks out behind him.

Zeke, 29, matches Jasper's stride. Despite his age, his eyes have dark shadows and his temples are greying.

Mercy, 23, trails behind. The youngest of the Dogs, her face hasn't been hardened yet by their work, and she is much shorter and slighter than her colleagues.

ZEKE

Damn it, Jasper, I told you to watch yourself out there!

JASPER

I did! Besides, it turned out alright in the end, didn't it?

ZEKE

Mercy was nearly blown off that roof because you can't listen.

JASPER

She's a big girl, ain't she?
Ain't you Merc?

Zeke stops, grabs Jasper's arm, and pins him against the stone wall.

MERCY

Zeke, stop it!

Jasper struggles against Zeke.

ZEKE

You wanted to be Captain, remember?
My reassignment is in two weeks,
and I won't be able to save your
hide from Burma.

Jasper continues to struggle. Zeke twists his arm even more, and Jasper grimaces in pain.

JASPER

The target was going to get away if we didn't do something. I took a chance and, in case you didn't notice, it paid off.

ZEKE

God, do you even hear yourself? How do you expect me to leave you in charge if you can't even look out for the rest of your bloody squad?

JASPER

(to MERCY)

I'm sorry, love. I won't do it again.

Mercy nods at Zeke, and he releases Jasper. Jasper rubs his shoulder as Zeke walks down the hallway towards the last oaken door on the left.

MERCY

You alright?

JASPER

Yeah, copacetic.

MERCY

Good.

Mercy punches Jasper's injured shoulder.

JASPER

You bricky bitch, what was that for?

MERCY

Do anything like that again and I'll kill you.

ZEKE

You tossers coming or what?

Jasper and Mercy jog down the length of the hallway to meet Zeke at the door. Zeke opens a small window and looks inside.

In the middle of the room, a huge, muscled man sits in a chair with his wrists and ankles shackled. A black sack covers his head.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

You think you can handle the interrogation?

JASPER

Really?

ZEKE

What? I'm not going to be able to hold your hand forever, mutt.

JASPER

Shall we?

Jasper opens the door with a loud SQUEAK, walks to the restrained man, and yanks the sack off his head.

BENNET, 30, blinks against the sudden light. The cuffs around wrists CLANG when he tries to move his arms. His darkly rimmed eyes surveys the room.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Rise and shine, big man. Sorry for the cuffs mate, but we can't have you busting skulls all about the place, now can we?

Bennet eyes Jasper.

JASPER (CONT'D)

I guess we'll get on with it, then. What's your name?

Bennet ignores the question. Facing Bennet, Jasper folds his arms across his chest and leans against the wall.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Oh, strong silent type are you? Mercy, if you please...

Mercy reveals a file folder from inside her weathered trench coat. She uses her forefinger to keep track as she reads out the information.

MERCY

"Bennet Livingston, thirty years old. Blacksmith by trade. Wanted for theft, assault, and impersonating a constable."

JASPER

Impersonating a constable, eh? That's creative thinking.

BENNET

If you know so much about me, what's with the questions?

JASPER

Oh! He does speak. And trust me
gov', we know plenty.

Jasper winks at Bennet, who in turn glares at Jasper.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Oi, like what you see? Last time I
got a look like that, I got lucky.

BENNET

Watch your mouth, there's a
lady present.

ZEKE

Knock it off, Jasper. Are you going
to question him or flirt with him
all night?

JASPER

I'm getting there. So, Bennet. Can
I call you Bennet?

Bennet continues to scowl in silence.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Mr. Livingston it is, then. Who you
working for?

Jasper gets frustrated with Bennet's lack of response.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Really? The silent treatment again?
And we'd made such progress. What
else is in there Mercy?

Mercy opens the file again and shuffles through documents.

MERCY

"Born and raised in
Whitechapel...became a blacksmith
apprentice at eleven years of
age...specializes in locking gears
and keys."

JASPER

Hmm, specializes in locks and keys,
and is wanted for theft. I wonder
how those fit together.

Bennet turns his head, but Jasper pointedly walks into
Bennet's line of sight.

JASPER (CONT'D)

You're in heaps of trouble, Mr. Livingston. With the evidence stacked against you, you're looking at a lengthy sentence.

BENNET

Then what's all this? Aren't I already in custody?

JASPER

What did you think all of this song and dance was for? We have a proposition for you. Despite being a criminal, you are a talented bugger. We'd like to employ your services.

BENNET

Excuse me?

Jasper holds out his hands, indicating Bennet's options.

JASPER

Work for us and you don't go to prison. Don't work for us, and you get to spend the rest of your miserable life in a cage.

BENNET

(suspicious)

Doing what?

ZEKE

We need your knowledge. Criminals are getting smarter, and the banks of London have yet to catch up.

JASPER

Besides, we could use some brawn.

Bennet looks at them all in disbelief.

BENNET

This some sort of joke?

JASPER

Do you see anyone laughing, sir? Tell us who you're working for and we can start making arrangements to guarantee your immunity.

BENNET

How about I counter with my own terms? I don't work for you, and I don't go to prison.

Bennet uses his immense strength to break the wooden chair's legs and stands up.

JASPER

For Christ's sake!

Jasper pulls a length of rope from his coat, while Zeke fumbles with a syringe from his pocket. Bennet easily throws them to the ground and the syringe shatters.

Bennet uses the stone wall behind him to demolish the rest of the chair. Mercy stands in front of the door to prevent Bennet from leaving.

Jasper and Zeke come to. Bennet is standing with the door behind him and Mercy in a choke hold.

BENNET

Let me out, and I let the girl go.

Jasper holds his side and leans against he wall.

JASPER

Like I said, lots of brawn. But how much brains you got? If you do get out, how are you going to escape? This place is surrounded by the queen's guards -- you think they're going to let you leave?

Zeke stands, and blood trickles down his cheek from a gash at his temple. He takes a step towards Bennet, who tightens his hold on Mercy. Zeke holds his hands up in surrender.

ZEKE

What do you need her for? A man with your skills should be able to pick that lock without much trouble.

BENNET

True. But that's a Chubb lock, and it'd be faster if you unlocked it.

JASPER

Come on, I know you don't want to hurt anyone. Let Mercy go and we can talk.

BENNET

No more talk! Unlock the bloody door and I won't hurt her.

Mercy gives Jasper a slight nod.

JASPER

Fine, it's your funeral, mate. Mercy, you got the key, right?

MERCY

In my pocket.

Bennet shoves his free hand into Mercy's coat pocket for the key. Using his momentum against him, Mercy flips Bennet over her shoulder and throws him to the ground.

Mercy then kicks him in the head, stunning Bennet. She kneels on his chest, reveals a silver knife from her sleeve, and presses the knife against his throat.

MERCY (CONT'D)

It'd be a shame to spill blood in the presence of a lady.

Bennet struggles and Mercy digs her knee deeper into his chest and presses the knife tighter against his neck. She draws blood and Bennet lies still.

ZEKE

I admire your sense of loyalty, but do you really think the men you are working for would extend the same courtesy?

JASPER

We're offering you an opportunity. I suggest you take it.

Bennet turns his head to look at Jasper.

BENNET

Thomas Bevan.

JASPER

The bank manager at Barclay, Bevan and Co.?

BENNET

He wanted to use the other robberies on Lombard Street to cover up his thieving.

ZEKE

And then use the burglaries as
cover for his bank's missing funds.
Smart.

MERCY

Thank you, Bennet.

Mercy gets up from Bennet's chest, but before he can get up,
she kicks him again, knocking him unconscious. Zeke slips to
the floor.

ZEKE

(sarcastic)

Congratulations on your first
successful interrogation.

Still holding his side, Jasper stands next to Mercy and looks
down at Bennet with pride.

JASPER

We're gonna have to use double
Laudanum darts on brutes like him
next time. You alright, Merc?

Mercy stretches her neck, loudly cracking the vertebrae.

MERCY

Copacetic.

FADE OUT.