

Chapter 7:

Skyfall

“What in the name of diddly-doo was that!?” Jade exclaimed, struggling to maintain his balance as the room swerved and bucked violently, tossing machinery, debris and monsters around like rag dolls. “Did something happen!?”

“A-are you daft!?” yelled Jay, dodging flying objects and bracing himself against the floor, before kicking upwards and slamming into Darkblade’s armoured stomach and crushing his back into the crumbling roof. “Obviously something happened.”

“Will you stop being so technical!?”

Suddenly, the room was jarred out of balance by a second booming explosion from deep in the belly of the ship, and Jade lost his footing. At the same time, Gigabone ripped a massive control desk out of the ground and hurled it straight at him.

Let’s see you dodge this while in midair!

The giant metal box slammed into Jade and pushed him through the wall separating the room they were fighting in and the gigantic cockpit, sending monsters packing and scurrying.

“What the??”

Jade braced himself against the control desk and shifted his head to look behind him, and realised that there was no-one at the five piloting seats.

“Huh?”

Then Gigabone’s red-skinned fist crashed through the control desk and slammed into his temple, and he was blasted straight through the glass at the front of the cockpit and spiralled outside of the ship.

My vision... aggggh...

Jade’s eyeballs rolled up into his head and he plummeted straight downwards, free-falling towards the Atlantic ocean below.

Jax was thrown up and down the corridor he was in as the explosion sent shockwaves throughout the ship, and a giant piece of metal crashed through the wall and slammed into him, carrying him through several more walls until he crashed into Fox, and the two crumpled over each other.

“Oww! Where the hell did you come from!?” Fox demanded, sitting up and rubbing his head.

“Oof,” Jax groaned from the floor, a line of blood trickling down his head.

“There was an explosion. A biiiiig explosion.”

“Did something happen to Erik or Jay or Jade?” Fox asked.

“I mean, it could’ve only been them, who else could it have been?” Jax snorted.

Just at that second, a third body came flying through the walls in a flaming, smoking heap.

“Wha- Erik!?”

Fox hurled his jacket on the burning form of his friend and then jumped on him to quell the flames, with a sickening sizzling noise.

“Erik - aaaaaaa - he’s dead.”

“Don’t be an idiot, you think fire can kill him?” Jax replied. “He received the role, like us.”

“I know, I know,” Fox sighed. “But you can’t tell me to not be alarmed when your best friend comes flying through the wall on fire after a massive explosion!”

Erik coughed and threw up a few drops of blood and smoke leaked out. His shirt was a mess of smouldering, burnt rags hanging off his body, and he slowly propped himself up onto his elbows.

Jay stared after the giant hole Jade had made in the glass at the front of the cockpit.

“You... blathering idiot!”

He turned slowly to look at Darkblade lumbering towards him like a tank, and Gigabone spun around to glower at him from behind, both smiling like demons.

Ya... they’re probably high to look like that.

“So this is how it’s going to be?” Jay muttered. “This is discrimination, you crapheads.”

“Grumble after you die!” Gigabone hissed.

Jay zoomed towards Darkblade and slammed his foot into the hulking warrior’s stomach, sending him stumbling backwards like he had been hit by a truck, before turning around and trading blows up and down the whole cockpit with Gigabone.

“Is this all you’ve got!?” Darkblade bellowed, hefting his massive sword again and raising it high above his head.

"Prepare to be cleaved directly in half!!"

"Can't have that happening."

Jay dodged around Gigabone when they were directly in front of Darkblade, and wrapped his arms around his waist from behind before flipping himself into a backwards somersault in a suplex. Darkblade, who was already swinging his ten-ton sword, couldn't stop.

"You're saying there's no pilot or engine room!?!?" Jax demanded, shaking Erik's shoulders. "What the hell are you talking about!?"

Erik leaned against the wall as he use his cryomancy to slowly patch up the areas where the explosions and shrapnel had tore through his skin.

"As I just said," Erik breathed, "there was no engine room when I entered the place where it should've been. Just a fat hill of dynamite. But that doesn't make sense."

"Huh?"

"What do you mean, 'huuuh?'" Erik demanded. "How thick are you? If it doesn't have an engine then it wouldn't have a pilot, obviously."

"Wow!" Fox exclaimed. "You're so smart!"

"No, you're just dumb," Jax muttered.

"Guys, shut up," Erik ordered.

"Look who's talking."

"Seriously. SHUT UP."

"Okay, okay."

"This thing doesn't have a way to power itself, and it doesn't have pilots either," Erik reasoned. "But its staying in the air."

"Is it?" Fox mused. "I've been feeling it for a while now, but haven't we been moving downwards this whole time?"

Jax gasped.

"It can't be!"

"Huh?"

"I think... Witherblood wants to crash this craft into Europe," he said.

"Probably our headquarters."

"Yeah, that's likely," Erik agreed. "But the more pressing issue for me right now is how we stop a craft that's already, well, stopping."

"Okay, so," Fox said. "Why ain't it just plummeting?"

"That's what I wanna know," Erik agreed. "Think. If the craft is gliding after being powered by its engines, that's not possible, since its impossible to calculate its accurate trajectory and Witherblood knows that. But it wouldn't have worked even if he could because theres no way to take out the engines in the middle of a flight – the fuel would spill outta the pipes, otherwise you would have to rip out the entire back side of the craft. Plus, the thrusters on this thing don't provide enough momentum for it to glide as far as London out in the Atlantic."

"Okay, so how is it being moved then?" Jax asked. "...come to think of it, I've been feeling something that reminds me of Witherblood's energy from ages ago, but it feels... really faint, and also kinda... corrupted."

"Never heard you say so much at once," Fox smirked, and Jax bonked him on the head.

"Jax, what do you mean?"

"Basically Witherblood's power was fluctuating for some reason, it wasn't steady like he was actually present or something. It was as if there was a trace of his power."

"Huh??" Fox mused what does that mean?"

"Hold on," Erik said, his eyes wide. "One of Witherblood's techniques is telekenesis. What if he's the one controlling this ship?"

"No way," Jax said jumping up. "If that's the case... then the growth of his power... is beyond imagination."

"How could've he obtained such power?" Fox demanded. "Isn't that impossible?"

"Do you think... it was them?"

There was silence between the three of them for a few seconds.

"Nonsense," Jax decided. "They're just as desperate to stop them as we are. There's no way they would make the fight harder by making our common enemy stronger, and there's no way they would betray us and join them, especially *them*."

Fox nodded in thought.

"Yeah, what's more, their powers don't extend to the underlings of those guys."

"Then we can eliminate any chance of their interference," Erik said.

"Maybe we should ask them for help."

"You sure? It could put them in danger."

"Desperate times, desperate measures," Jax said. "Not like we haven't done it before."

"However," Erik said. "Think. Witherblood couldn't personally be on this craft, or we would've known for sure. But no matter how much stronger he has

become, his telekinetic range can't reach from AmErika to here, so he must have set up a trail of telekinetic waypoints. If we eliminate the one on the ship, we can easily stop his control over the ship, and Naman and Tom will probably handle the rest.

Jay somersaulted through the air and crushed feet first into the wall before leaping back off it and Darkblade's huge fist slammed into where he just been. Twisting himself in midair, he turned and blasted a series of energy blasts from his fignertips and they exploded against Darkblade's back, sending him stumbling forwards. Gigabone shrieked and rushed towards him, raising a fist, but Jay caught the attack with his hand and traded a few more blows with him, before grabbing him by the shoudlers and flying at top speed into the wall, slamming Gigabone against the crumpling metal as he was at it. He pulled back as a huge flying slash carved a gouge in the ground, and jumped nimbly through a series of flying slashes send by Darkblade with his enormous sword.

"Just use aimbot," Jay tutted, and blasted another series of energy pulses from his hands, which snaked through the air, every one of them found their mark and pummelled Darkblade.

Darkblade is slower, but very tanky with armor and he's also very strong, but he's not as much of a threat if I keep dodging. Gigabone's attack power is weaker and he has less defense, but he's faster and smarter. I should kill Gigabone first because they're both annoying.

Darkblade suddenly body slammed him with his shoudler, sending Jay flying through the air and crashing on the balcony overlooking the control area.

"Damn, no fair."

Gigabone rushed after him, but Jay took off into the air and grabbed him from behind, smashing him against an iron pole. On the other side of the room, Darkblade ripped a line of control desks out of the ground and hurled them at him, and suddenly Gigabone loomed from behind. However Jay scooted out of the way and the giant metal box crushed to the floor next to him. Gigabone rushed at him, but Jay drew in his strength and wrapped his arms around the control desk, slowly but surely lifting it off the ground. The muscles in his arms screamed in pain, and popping noise came from every joint in his arms and legs, but he lifted the monstrous hunk of metal and spun it around in his arms, slamming it straight into Gigabone and sending him flying with a splat into the far end of the cockpit, leaving a trail of blood. Jay panted heavily and sweat rolled down his face as he turned around to face Darkblade again, his body still trembling with the effort of lifting a massive solid cuboid of iron.

Meanwhile, Jade streaked after the giant shadow that was already far into the clouds, only gaining a little as the seconds went by.

"Dammit! Jay, my bad."

He gritted his teeth and focused all of his power into flying, and slowly caught up to giant ship until he came alongside the rear end of it, and slammed hard against the iron hull, crashing through several walls and ending up inside the ship.

I can sense an energy trail from my teammates. Off I go!

Jade plunged through wall after wall of iron and metal, ripping doors of hinges and peeling down corridors at breakneck speed, making his way through the belly of the ship and ravaging it as he went by.

Up ahead.

He burst through the last wall, metal girders and sheets crumpling and tearing apart as he skidded to a stop and turned around to find Erik staring at him.

"Erik!?"

"Jade, what the hell??"

Erik suddenly grabbed his shoulders and looked him in the eyes.

"Jade, where's Jay?"

"I'm going to him!" He replied. "Those goddamn craphead knocked me out the bloody ship, and I just got back."

"You dumb thing."

"Sh-shut up! He threw a freaking... well, vending machine thingy at my head and then punched the daylights out of me. Oh and also, I didn't see any pilots at the cockpit, but that's not important! I'm gonna go kick their-"

"The ship is being moved by Witherblood remotely, who's using telekinesis!"

Erik said urgently. "As long as that guy's using telekinesis, he has to set up a power channeling orb, so we're tryna find it right now. Any idea where it is?"

"Hell if I know! I'm gonna go help Jay then! He's in the cockpit!"

"I'll come with you!" Erik said. "Jay is my friend too, and the orb might be in the cockpit."

Jay leapt back as Darkblade's fist slammed into the area he had just been standing in, and the metal around the impact point contorted and crumpled with a horrid screeching and crunching noise.

"Damn, I don't got enough stamina left..."

The hulking brute of a warrior glared at him from under the black helm of his helmet, his faintly glowing red eyes radiating with nothing but violence, and a series of gargantuan wind slashes went coursing across the room, several grazing Jay here and there, and the final one catching him directly on the shoulder and slashing a giant gash across it, and blood spurted upwards like a fountain.

"AGH!"

Darkblade pounded towards him like a bull, and Jay raised his hands to defend, but he simply rammed him full on with his armoured shoulder, and Jay smashed against the wall, making a massive circular dent. The back of his head left a bloody trail as he slowly slid down the wall, until he was leaning against it with only his head. Darkblade grunted and snorted in triumph as he raised his ridiculously big sword above his head and plunged it into Jay's stomach full force.

"NO!"

Jade came flying out of nowhere, brandishing the same massive control desk that Jay had used to swat Gigabone in one hand, and swiped it across Darkblade's face like it was a simple baseball bat. The strike sent shards of black armour and purple blood flying across the room, followed by the thick figure of Darkblade himself.

"Jay!" Erik exclaimed, as Jade bellowed in rage and raced towards his enemy, dragging his giant metal club behind him.

Oh, crap, this looks real bad. If only Fox was here, he could cauterize it, but it seems like the only way to stop the bleeding now is to freeze it.

Jay looked at Erik threw thin eyes, every breath gargling with blood as he lay on his back, the gaping hole in his stomach still spitting out blood. Erik sent a thin beam of ice out of his fingertip, and slowly but surely plugged up to two wounds on Jay's shoulder and stomach, effectively but temporarily stopping the bleeding.

"Jay, can you here me?"

"Y... yeah..."

Erik gave him a nod and turned back to Darkblade, who slammed his fist into Jade's side and sent him flying into a pile of metal junk. Erik slowly stood up straight and calmly starting to walk towards him.

Even with minimal intelligence, Darkblade could see that Erik was seriously ticked off, and also that this little man who wasn't much taller than Jay and half a head shorter than the stocky Jade was stronger than both of them combined. Erik looked down at the floor as he walked, without making eye contact with Darkblade the whole way until he stood directly before the hulking general, who towered over him like a mountain.

"RAAAAAAA!"

Darkblade lifted his sword and brought it down on Erik's head. Erik responded by lifting his hand and shattering it in one blow, and black metal shards went clattering to the floor like rain.

"I won't look at you. Weak trash doesn't deserve to be gazed upon the strong."

One of his hands suddenly lashed out and clamped down on Darkblade's jaw, and then his head exploded like a bloody cabbage.

"Come on, come on!" Dani bellowed, waving his arms at the huge ship that was looming through the cloud through the clouds as it neared the coast of Portugal. "COME DOWN AND FIGHT M-"

He was cut short as Naman bonked him on the head and he crumpled to the floor like a pile of paper.

"What the hell are they doing up there?" He said. "I should go up and have a look."

"Go on then," said Nightingale, a CSA member. "It's not like we can't handle ourselves down here."

She spun her dagger between her fingers.

"Alright," Naman agreed. "Don't get into trouble."

"IT'S NOT WORKING!"

"YA THAT'S WHAT I JUST SAID YOU BIG ***** **** *!"

Jade paused from hurling debris around the cockpit and thought for a second.

"Oh yeah."

"Aaaaauuugh."

"...guys..." Jay muttered from his spot on the floor.

"Don't talk," Erik said. "It'll make your injuries worse. Anyway do you understand what I just said?"

"Yes," Jade replied. "I should just destroy random **** until I find his waypoint, right?"

"No," Erik replied wearily. "Please don't."

"...I have an idea..." Jay breathed. "My final move..."

"Don't be a fool!" Erik gasped. "You want to die here?"

"...what choice do we have...?"

"There's obviously some way!"

"...ok..."

"The hell!???" Fox demanded, slicing apart another batch of metal walls.

"Where the **** is this thing?"

"That's what I wanna know," he muttered. "I'll call Erik, hold on."

Jax pulled out his phone and stared at Erik's thirty four missed calls.

"...shoulda not put my phone on silent..."

"WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN!?!?!?"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry," Jax replied, holding the phone at arm's length. "

"I need help," Erik replied. "I need Fox's flames to help me cauterize a wounded soldier."

"WHAT!?"

"Who didn't pick up my calls?" Erik fired back."

"Ugh..."

"Jay is wounded," Erik replied. "Tell Fox to come."

"Okay."

Jax hung up and relayed the message to Fox, who nodded and sped off towards Erik, Jade and Jay's energy signatures.

"Ugh... now I have to look for it by myself."

However, at that exact second, an ominous, black, screen dropped down across the walls and the exits of the room he was standing in, completely isolating it from the outside world.

The hell?

"So... what do you think? I trapped you and me in a dimension rift that I created myself. It's small but effective."

"Witherblood!"

"That's right."

Witherblood's slim, black figure rose out of the ground like a zombie and grinned at him.

"In the flesh."

"Do you take me for a fool?" Jax snarled, unsheathing his twin blades. "A mere puppet can't do anything."

"Haha, as expected you're sharp."

"Why did you attacked me?"

"I've decided that I need to eliminate you first," Witherblood sneered. "Don't tell me you don't know why."

"Hmph," Jax sneered back. "If I could awaken it and beat you into the ground with it I would've."

"I'll eliminate you first, then the other catalysts, and then them last of all... those detestable Lords."

Sparks rang flew across the room as Jax and Witherblood's clone clashed, the clone using his black claws on his fingertips to slash at Jax's face, and the latter parrying perfectly as they dashed across the room, sending flying slashes gouging across the whole room. Jax lunged forwards and his blade missed the clone's face by millimetres, and the clone slashed five red lines across Jax chest. Undeterred, he pounded forwards, ignoring the slight pain, and slammed his fist hard into the clone, sending it crashing into the wall, followed by a rapid series of sword strikes which quickly dissected its limbs.

“Are you mocking me?” Jax asked.

He kicked the clone in the chest and then it crashed through the black barrier, sending splinters of energy showering to the ground like glass.

“You...” the clone grinned widely. “You can stop this if you want, it will just be a minor setback for us. I mainly came here not to fight you but to ask you a question.”

“No wonder,” Jax grunted. “If you though this doppelgänger was enough I would’ve gone over and slaughtered you this moment.”

“Haha, I already know not to underestimate you,” the clone replied. “I just came to ask why you willingly bow your head to the Lords, don’t you know they will use you and then throw you away?”

“Use?” Jax spat. “Only a worm like you would think we’re being used.”

“Whatever,” the clone shrugged. “The main reason I came here though is to give you a warning, leader to leader.”

“Oh?”

“Our main assault will begin in 5 days,” he grinned. “I’ve given you time to prepare. I’m looking forward to see your best efforts.”

“You *****, you’re mocking me after all. You wanna die?”

The clone shrugged again and smirked, then Jax slashed it to pieces and it evaporated. Instantly, the entire ship shuddered and jarred as Witherblood’s waypoint slowly materialised before Jax, mockingly.

*That ***** he was hiding it in his body all along.*

Jax raised a foot and crushed the waypoint, a pulsing, purple ball, into vapour, denting the ground while he was at it.

“Hmph!”

A moment later, the craft wobbled and then plummeted like a stone.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAH!”

Jade was torn off his feet and he slammed into the roof of the control room, pressed against it by the pressure, while Erik had rooted himself to the floor using ice and was gripping Jay’s arm tightly to stop him from flying away. Fox had cauterised his wound and the bleeding had completely stopped, but his internal organs were damaged and still had to be healed by Naman after they made it out of the craft alive. Just then, a second explosion, rigged by Witherblood, tore through the belly of the ship, enveloping Jax in flames, and turned the entire craft into a giant fireball rolling into the sky.

“HOLD ON Y’ALL!!!” Fox bellowed as he stared at the sea of flame rushing towards them.

“Should I use ice??” Erik asked.

“Yea!”

Erik sent a surging wave of ice rushing towards the flames, but they were quickly overturned and the fire cascaded into the room, only to be stopped by Fox, who formed a barrier of heat that blocked the explosion.

“Ugh!”

He quickly dissipated the flames and they slowly died down into a tiny flicker.

“Well that was ***** smooth, wasn’t it, Mr Erik.”

“YOU’RE THE ***** ONE WHO TOLD ME TO USE ***** ICE!!”

"Cry more," Fox smirked. "Just proves that your ability is no match for mine."

"Against fire, sure."

"It would be the same for ice! My ability's clearly better."

"Better my ***."

"What do you mean, 'better my ***!'" Fox demanded, and both of them stepped forwards and got in the other's face in the middle of a falling spaceship.

"YOU WANNA GO!?"

"HEY!!!" Jade bellowed from his spot on the roof.

"What the hell is going on!?" Naman demanded, staring at the plummeting spaceship.

He spread his fiery blue wings and soared downwards after it, easily overtaking it and coming up alongside the cockpit, where he looked incredulously at Fox and Erik wrestling each other, Jay hanging on for dear life on a control desk embedded in the floor, and Darkblade's headless body and Jade pressed against the ceiling, with the latter screaming. Naman smashed through the glass and skidded to a halt before pulling Erik and Fox apart.

"What the hell are you doing!?" He asked furiously. "Come on, jump out unless you wanna die."

Grabbing ahold of Jade's shoulders, Naman hurled the screaming guy out of the ship and into the open air, where he wobbled around for a moment then found his footing and took flight.

"Oof, what happened to Jay?" Naman asked as he came to Jay's side and place his hand on his wound. "Hold still."

Instantly, a small blue flicker of flame danced along his fingers and spread along Jay's abdomen, slowly piecing together his insides as the ship continued to fall, tearing through the clouds and heading straight towards the blue sea below. With a grateful nod, Jay was also launched outside the ship

by Naman, and he followed Jade in flight as they dived alongside the craft. Lastly, Naman grabbed Erik and Fox and exploded out of the glass himself, and hovered in midair as they watched the gigantic craft crash into the sea, causing monstrous waves and throwing water up to almost their height.

"Yo," Erik said, staring.

"What?" Naman asked. "I saved you."

"Ya," Erik agreed. "But Jax is kinda... in there..."

"WHAT!?????????"

Jax rushed through the corridors, now completely submerged in water, as he slashed through wall after wall with his blades, powering through the water with his legs as he searched for a way out.

Damn, I can only hold my breath for about 5 minutes, and I have no sense of direction while underwater in this goddamn massive craft. I could be heading into the belly for all I know.

Meanwhile, at the surface, Kyle opened his palm, and a small circle of magic appeared, before gradually expanding until it was as big as his fist, then it ballooned in size until it covered over ten square kilometres, as a transparent purple dome of magic.

"Welcome to my operating room," he muttered, before nudging a small rock with his foot. "This one'll do. Hey, Rex."

Rex turned to him and waited.

"Locate Jax for me."

"Alright."

Rex put his hand on Kyle's shoulder, sharing his vision with him, before using his power to scan the belly of the rapidly sinking craft.

"Found him."

"Nice... now, my turn."

Shambles.

Instantly, a drenched Jax crashed face first to the ground next to them, replacing the tiny pebble that Kyle had chosen earlier, and he breathed heavily before raising a hand of thanks.

"Thanks man."

"No prob," Kyle sighed, as he looked upwards at Naman, Jade, Jay, Erik and Fox. "We can call this mission success. You not only stopped the big, fat bomber plane but you also eliminated Darkblade and Gigabone. Nice."

Jax sat up and began to wring out his shirt.

"Tell the others that Witherblood's assault is coming in five days."

"Oh, did he tell you or something?"

"Yeah, and you know my other power," Jax replied, slinging his still dripping wet shirt over his shoulder and getting to his feet. "I can discern whether one is lying or telling the truth, and that ***** wasn't lying."

"Alright," Kyle said. "I'll go tell the others."

As Kyle walked off, and Jax looked down at the last of the waves caused by the impact of the bomber breaking on the shingle as his teammates disbanded, chatting and yapping amongst each other.

Things are going to get for real, from here on.

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