

Protect & Serve

by

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INT. ABBAS' SHACK

DANTE's eyes snap open as he looks around in a huff. He is inside a building that he has never seen before and is covered in bandages. There is another person in the room who could be no more than 16 years old. He seems to be cooking something that smells wonderful.

DANTE
Where am I?

ABBAS
Oh, Mister Dante, you are awake.
Please don't move around so much.
You are still injured. Your
injuries could reopen if you do.

DANTE
Who are you? How do you know my
name? And where are my clothes?

ABBAS
Your name was on your dog tags...
and your uniform, and your
weapon's display, and-

DANTE
Alright I get it.

ABBAS
My name is Abbas. I am my
village's "doctor," I'm really
just the doctor's apprentice, but
when she died getting supplies, I
was promoted. Eeeh... don't worry
about how I patched you up. It is
best you didn't know... What was
the third question? Ah, your
cloths! You were bleeding a lot,
so I had to remove them. They're
in that pile over there.

DANTE
Ok, where am I? Where did you find
me? What happened to my unit?

ABBAS gets up to grab get some stew and brings the bowl
over to DANTE

ABBAS
Do all Americans ask so many
questions all the time? You are in
Bareeq.

(MORE)

ABBAS (CONT'D)

We are a small village near the border of Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Right now, we under the rule of Jordan I think... It changes every few months so it's hard to keep track. I found you near the ruins of what was Zaiqib. There wasn't anyone else around when I found you.

Propping himself upright on the bed.

DANTE

So, they really did leave me...

In a mocking tone with a fake gruff voice

ABBAS

Please don't start muttering things like "They will pay." or "I need to find them." in your condition.

DANTE

What? Nah. Ha ha. I don't really care what happened at this point. I'm just glad to be alive. They were probably just following orders, so I can't really hold that against them.

ABBAS

Oh, you laugh! I thought American soldiers were serious all the time.

DANTE

What do you mean? We laugh all the time. Just not usually when we are working.

ABBAS

And when do you not work?

Pausing to think

DANTE

Huh. We do work all the time, don't we?

ABBAS

Your arabic is really good by the way. How did you get so good?

DANTE

I got an implant in my brain to help me speak almost any language.

ABBAS

Really!? Wow! No offence, but I was wondering how an American who looks like a stack of bricks could speak so fluently. Most of the time they are all: hElLO hOw ArE yOu?

DANTE

Thanks for the vote of confidence. Most other soldiers don't have this implant, well, almost no one has it... either way it makes talking to locals a lot easier.

ABBAS

Do you have any other implants?

DANTE

Yes, but I can't talk about them.

ABBAS

Why not?

DANTE

I don't remember all of them.

ABBAS

How can you not remember them!? They are implants! They go inside your body!

DANTE

I wasn't really paying attention when they were telling me. I was just hungry and thinking about food.

ABBAS

...you are as dumb as you look. Oh! Do yo-

Mid-sentence ABBAS is interrupted by violent knocking on the door. Dante notices his weapons at the foot of his bed and reaches for his pistol. ABBAS shoots him a look saying "Chill"

ABBAS (CONT'D)

Hello? Who is it? I was not expecting visitors.

VOICE 1

Are you the young doctor? Open up.
You need to cure our comrade's
sickness.

ABBAS loos over at DANTE who is clutching his pistol ready to shoot and raises up his hand. He cracks open the door to see 4 men with guns at their side. One of them seems to look worse than the others, and is clutching his stomach. After taking another a look at the other men, and then their guns ABBAS responds

ABBAS

I see... Could you hold on one
second, I need to get my tools.

MAN 1

What do you mean? You must see us
inside boy. Do you have not
manners?

ABBAS

I can't let you in.

MAN 2

Why not?

ABBAS

I-I have another patient in there.
He is very sick. He has a...
terrible disease that is highly
contagious.

DANTE starts coughing and groaning loudly.

ABBAS (CONT'D)

Yes, he is in constant pain, and
is spewing liquids from every
orifice of his body! I could not
expose you prestigious men to such
as sight, or smell.

DANTE groans louder.

MAN 1

huff Thank you doctor. Now hurry
up and help our friend.

ABBAS helps the men quickly and they hurry off as fast as
they came.

DANTE

Nice thinking there kid.

ABBAS

Nice acting. You could be in holovids.

DANTE

What were you trying to ask before?

ABBAS

Hmmm, ah! Do you think you could use your special soldier status to help me get into medical school in your country?

DANTE

Uhm I don't know about that. I'm pretty sure the government thinks I'm dead. It might actually be better if it stays that way too. Don't get me wrong I owe you my life, but I don't think it will be that easy.

ABBAS

Oh... well it was worth a shot. What are you going to do when you get better though?

As ABBAS says that the door opens behind him and a woman who looks like to be in her 50's walks in. She is wearing fancier cloths than ABBAS and carries herself in a commanding manner.

SHUMAILA

Yes, what ARE you going to do American?

Startled, DANTE reaches for the pistol again, but ABBAS stops him as he moves.

ABBAS

Chief Shumaila what brings you here?

SHUMAILA

Well, I saw four men with guns driving away from your house, so I had to come see if you were ok. I thought they had killed you, but what do I find? You are housing an outsider, not only that, an American! Abbas do you know how bad it could be if his government came to pick him up from our town.

DANTE

I understand you concern ma'am,
but I don't think you will have to
worry about that. I was left to
die by my unit, so no one will be
looking for me.

SHUMAILA

Oh? So he understands us?

ABBAS

Shumaila I found him when looking
for supplies. Did you want me to
abandon a dying person?

SHUMAILA

If it meant that our village was
safer because of it then yes. Do
you know how much Americans are
hated in this area? Did you think
of what would happen if those men
found him?

DANTE

As much as I like being alive, she
is right. The locals don't really
like us all that much, and for
good reason. You took a huge risk
saving me.

SHUMAILA

You stay out of this.

DANTE raises both his hand up.

ABBAS

SHUMAILA I cannot just leave a
person to die when I know I could
help them. I know it was a risk,
but I couldn't leave him.

SHUMAILA

Huff Fine. Let him stay until he
recovers, after that he needs to
leave.

ABBAS

But chief he has nowhere else to
go! If we dress him up in our
clothes he would be able to blend
in. He also speaks our language
flawlessly, so no one would be
able to tell

DANTE

I agree with Abbas I could blend in easily. To anyone else I would just be a wondering African. I could also help you out with any sort of defense or hard labor you might need.

SHUMAILA

I don't have time for this right now... we will discuss this later I need to think about this.

EXT. VILLAGE OUTSKIRTS

A few days have passed, and DANTE is able to walk around on crutches now. DANTE and ABBAS have become fast friends and are often seen working together. To everyone else in the village DANTE is just a nomad from Africa that got caught in the crossfire of a skirmish between the Syrians and Jordanians. Abbas and Shumaila have been arguing over what they should do about DANTE.

DANTE notices a band of cars carrying a group of men holding rifles.

DANTE

Hey, I don't mean to interrupt your discussion but I think those guys are heading here, and they don't seem happy.

SHUMAILA

What are you- Oh no! Quickly! Abbas go tell everyone to get inside.

ABBAS

Why? They could be willing to just pass through.

As ABBAS is saying this one of the people in the cars points his rifle towards them and fires.

ABBAS (CONT'D)

Never mind. Telling everyone to get inside.

As ABBAS is leaving DANTE and SHUMAILA take cover behind a stone wall.

DANTE

Do you have a plan? I can help.

SHUMAILA

sigh I didn't want to rely on you, but yes, I need your help American.

DANTE

Ok. What weapons do you have on you right now?

SHUMAILA

Just a pistol, and vibration blade.

DANTE

Great, I only have my pistol with me too. We can't hit them from this far away, so we should wait for them to get closer. If we wait for them on either side of these buildings we could pick off a few of them as they are passing. That should stop at least one of their cars from going into the village further. If I can take out the driver in the front properly then we might be able to block the road with his car. They would be in a firefight here and wouldn't be able to get into the village.

SHUMAILA

You know your stuff American! Ok we will do that, I don't want my people to get hurt.

DANTE

Please just call me Dante already. I will let Abbas know the plan, so he can help when he's done.

DANTE holds an old walkie-talkie and relays the information to ABBAS. They take up their positions and stop the caravan in place according to DANTE'S plan. Soon they are locked in a fire fight at the edge of the village. A majority of the invaders are dead or have run away, but a few remain.

SHUMAILA

I am almost out of ammo.

DANTE

Me too. It would be great if Abbas actually showed up.

Over DANTE's walkie-talkie

ABBAS

I am on my way with your rifle.
Everyone is safe for now. Where
are you guys?

DANTE

At the front of the village. There
are only 2 or 3 guys left. Do you
think you can get them?

ABBAS

I don't think so. I can get over
to where you are though.

DANTE

No! You could be hit by a stray
bullet. I will come to you.

SHUMAILA

No. You cannot run! I will go.

DANTE

Do you know how to operate a
long-range rail rifle?

SHUMAILA

It can't be much different from
anything else I have used.

With that SHUMAILA runs off and meets up with ABBAS. After DANTE fires his last shots the sound of a rail rifle ring through the air. The three last combatants fall one by one in rapid succession.

DANTE

Nice shots.

With the combatants repelled the three meet up again at the village entrance.

SHUMAILA

I hate to admit it, but because of
you our village survived. Thank
you Amer- no, Dante.

ABBAS

See I told you he could help us.

DANTE

That was the first time you used
my name chief.

SHUMAILA

Yes, you are right. Maybe I was wrong. You could be of great use to us in helping defend against any attacks.

ABBAS

Does that mean he can stay?

SHUMAILA

Yes, but only if he helps out around the village, and if he helps you get into medical school. If he causes any trouble, then he is gone.

DANTE

You have a deal Ma'am.

SHUMAILA

Teach Abbas some respect too!

ABBAS

Thank you Chief Shumaila!

END