

## Dark Side Of The Moon

By Scribblesinink

*"Every one is a moon, and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody."*

*-Mark Twain*

Jake's pacing on the stone floor rang out in the heavy silence that had fallen over the bank. The only other sounds to break it were Pig's whispered murmurs as he cradled his brother's body. Jake was too far away to make out the words, but it sounded like a prayer, or maybe a benediction. Swiveling around, he forced himself to look at Henry, lying so still.

The corporal was at peace at last.

He regretted that, though. Regretted losing his temper, like he regretted ever coming up with this dumb-ass plan of robbing a bank in the first place. But *goddammit*, if Rabbit hadn't taxed his patience to its limit, and beyond. First pulling that crap in Iraq, now here... If not for Rabbit—.

He turned back to the frosted windows, riddled with bullet cracks. No, that wasn't fair. *He* was their platoon leader: he was responsible. Only a coward would lay the blame on a dead man. A hero to his country. Henry had just finally snapped under the strain, that was all.

A blurred reflection of himself glimmered back from the window pane and he stared at it for a moment before walking away in disgust. It was true what they said: everyone had a dark side, and his had turned out to be pitch black. He'd thought he'd hit rock bottom when he took the old man away after Cali shut off the power. Could he have killed him in cold blood? At the time, Jake hadn't really believed so, and been glad he didn't have to find out. Now? He wasn't so sure any more. But *fuck* if he'd give up. His men depended on him to get 'em out of this snafu.

The thought brought a bitter taste to his mouth. His men.... Yeah, he was doin' real well by them, wasn't he? He might've saved their lives back in Fallujah, but he was gettin' them killed just the same, here in Pittsburg. Rabbit; Derzie; Big Stan; poor, talented Mike who shouldn't have joined the army in the first place....

Yet he couldn't give up on the others: Albie, Marshall.... It'd been *his* fucked-up idea that got them into this shit, and he'd damn well get them out of it. Even if it meant selling his soul to the devil.

Jake didn't think he had much of a soul left, anyway.

He sensed Chloe's gaze on him and looked up. True to form, she was following his every move, like she had for days. Amazingly, it didn't bother him. He'd asked her, once, how she could look at him like that, and she told him maybe she saw a different side of him that nobody else in the bank saw.

It was a side he wasn't sure existed anymore. But it was true: she was the only one who saw *him*. His men expected him to have all the answers: to be their savior. Most of the other hostages regarded him as if he truly were a wolf in sheep's clothing, and was gonna show his real face at any moment.

Come to think of it, they were right on the money with *that*.

But not Chloe. "I have a connection with you," she'd said, and oddly, he felt the same way. It was the last thing he'd expected to find when he walked into the bank, but she was the first woman since Anna that made him feel... well, *something*.

Wasn't real, though. Couldn't be. Intellectually, he knew what was going on: Stockholm syndrome. He'd heard about it: abductees identifying with their captors, sometimes to the point of turning on their rescuers. He'd never known it could work in both directions, though.

He glanced at Chloe again. It was her faith in him that had kept him sane these past days, that had helped him grasp straw after straw after straw every time another escape plan fell apart. Once Cali got here and he told him what he'd done, he'd lose her for sure, and his last connection to humanity with it. He didn't think he could bear watch it happen; didn't want to see that confidence get replaced with something else. Something much uglier.

Making up his mind, Jake handed his gun over to Marshall and strolled over. Chloe lifted her face and he lightly ran his fingers over her arm for a moment before taking her hand and giving a gentle tug. She rose to her feet immediately, and he marveled at the implicit trust in the gesture. He hated it, too; he should be the last man to be trusted.

"I want you to go." He kept his voice low.

She struggled a little, and objected. He'd expected that. But she gave a trembling nod after he challenged her to prove herself by stepping out for a moment and coming back. Once he was sure she'd do as he asked, he unlocked the door and let her out.

He waited until she'd walked a few steps out in the street and her back was turned. Then he quietly pulled the door shut behind her. As soon as she heard the lock click, she was back, pounding on the glass and begging to be let in. For a moment, he was tempted to give in, to hang on to her and what she meant to him for as long as he could. Then a SWAT team got there. As they began to lead her away, Jake rested his forehead against the cool glass for a second, trying to get himself back under control.

When he straightened up, the mask was back on.

It was time for the end game: his last, desperate play, all or nothing. It would be ugly and nasty, and it'd likely fail. But he wouldn't have to see Chloe's face once she learned how far he'd been willing to go in the end.

There was that, at least.

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