

Natural light did not exist in this forgotten place. The only illumination was cast by flickering candles set into alcoves in the walls, several of them already exhausted from where flame hungrily consumed their wax. What little artificial light remained was reduced to a pittance, colouring the figures inside the cramped cell in a sickly yellow glow.

The Saint silently stared at the sorry figure before her, his body suspended from the high ceiling by thick rope. The rough material had already proven too abrasive even after so short a time, the flesh around the captive's wrists visible as pink and swollen between heavy knots. She reached back with one gauntleted hand before slapping him across the face with all the strength she could muster.

'So, this is to be your fate, Rabia? Dragged into these depths along with the rest of your miserable cadre and left to rot? You and your kind disgust me. If it were my order, you would be long dead and our time would not have been wasted.'

'Nor... nor the lives of your men, neither.' Rage's voice was a coarse rumble, as dry as his dark humour.

Grace felt her face flush at his unrepentant reply. Biting her tongue, she abruptly turned to leave, the tail of her robes cutting through the air. The Inquisition could beat such impudence out of the wretch. Alongside, Benediction offered one final baleful glare before departing with her.

Alone, Rage cackled to himself, despite how the sound wracked his throat. Solthecians were ever the easy targets; he had yet to meet one without a stick up their arse.

*'Of course. Just like you, bullying those who can't fight back.'* The voice drifted through his mind unbidden, the words sharp enough to cause the Union thug to pinch his eyes. *'I don't remember you having the spine to stand up like that against a real threat.'*

'Get fucked.' Rage didn't know when talking to the voice had become commonplace. Once, he had refused it with all of his being, he dimly recalled.

That time was far past.

*'How imaginative. Tell me, is that the same eloquence which will see you free of this miserable cell, and talk you out of a worthless death down in these depths?'*

Rage refused to answer, sullenly pulling at his restraints.

*'I thought so. Save your strength, Usurper. Hear the footsteps in the distance? That will be the boots of your torturer – a vicious man, servant to only bloody and unconscionable deed. He'll break you. Drive nails into you, or tear parts of you away until you submit.'*

'Looking forward to that, are you, Blackheart? Don't count on it. I've killed and gutted bigger men before - just like I did to you.'

*'Yet, am I truly gone, Rage? You should have known better than to try and end my saga. The tale of the Pirate King is one yet to end...'*

Rage could only close his eyes and try to ignore the deafening laughter echoing through his head, as the shadow of the tyrant consumed him once more.