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MARZ MONTIEL LIESTEN MILLA DREAMER

THE DARKNESS

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THE DARKNESS:
MAFIA HITMAN JACKIE ESTACADO WAS BOTH BLESSED AND CURSED ON HIS 21ST BIRTHDAY: HE BECAME THE BEARER OF THE DARKNESS, WITH ACCESS TO AN OTHERWORLDLY DIMENSION AND THE DEMONS WHO DWELL THERE TO DO THIS BIDDING. WHEN MOB KINGPIN FRANKIE FRANCHETTI KILLED JENNY, THE ONLY WOMAN JACKIE EVER LOVED, JACKIE TURNED AGAINST HIS MAFIA FAMILY, KILLING BOTH FRANKIE AND HIMSELF. BUT THE DARKNESS BROUGHT JACKIE BACK TO LIFE, TO DO ITS OWN MYSTERIOUS BIDDING.

RECENTLY:
IN AN ATTEMPT TO SET THE FAMILY BUSINESS IN ORDER, JACKIE SETS OUT TO BROKER A DEAL FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN THE FRANCHETTI AND YUEN CRIME FAMILIES. THE YUENS ATTACK JACKIE, WHO USES THE DARKNESS TO DESTROY THEM. HE LEAVES ONE MEMBER OF THE YUEN FAMILY WITH A MESSAGE FOR LORD YUEN IN HONG KONG: "I'M GOING TO KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM." NOW JACKIE HAS ARRIVED IN HONG KONG, BUT WILL HE LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO FULFILL HIS THREAT, OR HAS THE DARKNESS MET ITS MATCH?

THE DARKNESS

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NO, REALLY I'M
SERIOUS.

I WAS
BORN UNDER
A CURSE.
SORT OF A
FAMILY CURSE,
I GUESS.

Heh. "**FAMILY**"
CURSE. THAT'S
KIND OF FUNNY
CONSIDERING MY
LINE OF WORK.
ANYWAY...

...IT'S CALLED
THE
DARKNESS.

THIS GUY
ONCE DESCRIBED IT
TO ME AS "AN ENTITY
OF CHAOS AND WILD
ABANDON," BUT I DON'T
EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT
MEANS. HE WAS KIND
OF A JACKOFF
ANYWAY.

IT'S A
BUNCH OF
MONSTERS.
IS WHAT IT
IS.

BUT AT
LEAST THEY DO
WHAT I TELL
THEM.

MOSTLY.

SO WHAT DO
YOU THINK OF
THAT? YOU EVER
MEET A GUY
WHO WAS...

...YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND A
WORD I'M
SAYING, DO
YOU?









I WORK FOR
MR. YUEN.



GUPHH!



EVERYBODY
GET...

>KOFF<
>KOFF<

...THIS KIND
OF WELCOME
IN HONG KONG
OR AM I JUST
THE LUCKY
TOURIST?

WE THINK
OF YOU AS
OUR GUEST,
MR. ESTACADO.
YOU CAN EXPECT
TO BE TREATED
AS SUCH.

YOU KNOW, I'M
GETTING A LITTLE
TIRED OF YOU GUYS
TAKING MY GUN AWAY
FROM ME.

THEN PERHAPS
YOU SHOULD BE
MORE CAREFUL
ABOUT WHO YOU
THREATEN TO
KILL WITH IT.

AS YOU
INTENDED YOUR
THREATS HAVE
REACHED MR.
YUEN'S EARS. HE
WAS SOMEWHAT
UNHAPPY WITH
YOUR TONE.

HE WISHES
TO SEE YOU IN
PERSON, WHICH
I SUSPECT WILL
NOT BE A
PLEASANT
EXPERIENCE
FOR YOU.





GHNN!

TWAK!



I'M GETTING
TIRED OF THAT,
TOO.



LOOK, IF
YOU'RE TRYING
TO THROW A
SCARE INTO ME, YOU
LADIES ARE GONNA
HAVE TO DO A
BETTER JOB.

IN NEW YORK
THAT KIND OF
THING WOULDN'T
EVEN MAKE AN
IMPRESS--



THUD!

BOSS?

HEY
BOSS, YOU
OKAY?

COME ON,
WAKEY WAKEY. NAP
TIME'S OVER.

UHNNN...

RISE AND
SHINE
SLEEPYHEAD!

...OW!

SLAP!



WATCH
WHO YOU'RE
SLAPPING.

LET'S NOT
FORGET WHO'S IN
CHARGE AROUND
HERE.

SORRY
BOSS...

...BUT YOU'VE
KINDA BEEN
ASLEEP ON THE
JOB. AND WE
WANNA GO OUT
AND PLAY.



SO?
CAN
WE?

ALL YOU
GOTTA DO IS
GIVE THE
WORD.



NOT
YET.

IT'S NOT
TIME.



WHY **ISN'T**
IT? LET US DO
WHAT WE DO,
BOSS.

BESIDES,
SOME OF US ARE
GETTING PRETTY
HUNGRY.

YOU'LL
GET YOUR
CHANCE. **SOON.**



GO ON
NOW...



...GET OUT
OF HERE.

TALKING
TO YOURSELF,
MR. ESTACADO?

I'M MY OWN
BEST AUDIENCE.
I ALWAYS AGREE
WITH WHAT I HAVE
TO SAY.

YOU ARE
EXPECTED

MR. YUEN IS
VERY PARTICULAR
ABOUT PUNCTUALITY.
I WOULD HATE FOR
YOU TO BE LATE AND
INCUR HIS
DISPLEASURE.

YOU'RE
CONCERNED
ABOUT ME, KUO.
THAT'S NICE, I'M
TOUCHED.

MAYBE WE CAN
GO HAVE COFFEE
LATER, JUST THE TWO
OF US, OR TEA, YOU
GUYS DRINK TEA,
RIGHT?

BE COZY,
WOULDN'T
IT?



YOUR ATTITUDE
IS MOST CAVALIER
FOR ONE WHO IS SO
NEAR DEATH.

I SHALL
ENJOY
KILLING
YOU.

THAT'S FUNNY
YOU KNOW? ME AND
YOU, TWO GUYS FROM
SUCH DIFFERENT
WORLDS...



...AND HERE
I WAS JUST
THINKING
EXACTLY THE
SAME THING.



BE COZY,
WOULDN'T
IT?



BRING
HIM.



PENTHOUSE,
HUH? NICE
PLACE.

BUSINESS
MUST BE
GOOD



SO
MR. YUEN
IS WAITING.

YEAH, I
WOULDN'T
WANNA PISS HIM
OFF OR ANYTHING.
HE MIGHT DECIDE
TO KILL ME
TWICE.



THERE ARE
WORSE
THINGS THAN
DYING.







I AM MR. YUEN.

I AM... YOU MIGHT CALL ME... A CARETAKER.

THIS ORGANIZATION EXISTED LONG BEFORE ME, AND IT WILL CONTINUE LONG AFTER ME. WE OWE OUR LONGEVITY IN LARGE PART TO A **PRAGMATIC** OUTLOOK.

WE WERE **PARTNERS** WITH THE BRITISH IN THE OPIUM TRADE.

WE SOLD WESTERN ARMS TO BOTH MAO AND CHIANG KAI-SHEK. WE GREW **RICH** WHILE THE COMMUNISTS AND THE NATIONALISTS KILLED ONE ANOTHER.

AND NOW OUR INFLUENCE EXTENDS ACROSS THE **GLOBE**, TO YOUR NEW YORK, FOR EXAMPLE.

THE WEST IS A USEFUL **TOOL** TO US. WE HAVE **PROFITED** GREATLY FROM IT.

CERTAIN OF MY EMPLOYEES MET THEIR **DEATHS** AT YOUR HANDS IN NEW YORK. THIS I AM WILLING TO **FORGIVE** AS THE NORMAL COST OF DOING BUSINESS.

BUT THERE IS THE MATTER OF YOUR **THREATS**, MR. ESTACADO. YOUR **BOASTS**. THOSE I **CANNOT** FORGIVE.

MANY OF OUR RIVALS WOULD SUSPECT US OF **WEAKNESS** IF YOUR BEHAVIOR WERE TO GO UNPUNISHED.

THE ENSUING UPHEAVAL WOULD BE **COSTLY**, A NEEDLESS WASTE OF OUR RESOURCES.

YOU ARE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH MR. KUO.

HE BELIEVES THAT I SHOULD LET HIM **KILL YOU** AND BE DONE WITH IT. AND TO BE SURE, THAT IS A TEMPTING SOLUTION TO OUR SITUATION.


BUT, AS I SAID, I AM A **CARETAKER**. MY FIRST RESPONSIBILITY MUST BE WHAT IS **BEST** FOR THE ORGANIZATION, NOT WHAT IS MOST TEMPTING.

ALL BUSINESS IS **COMPROMISE**. SO I OFFER YOU A BARGAIN.

TURN OVER TO ME YOUR FRANCHETTI ORGANIZATION AND ALL ITS HOLDINGS. IN RETURN, I GIVE YOU YOUR **LIFE** AND A **JOB**.

YOU WOULD WORK FOR **ME**. A PORTION OF YOUR PROFITS WOULD FLOW **HERE**.

I HOPE YOU FIND THIS **ACCEPTABLE**, MR. ESTACADO. THE ALTERNATIVE IS, BY NECESSITY, VERY UNPLEASANT FOR YOU.



I APPRECIATE THAT YOUR MAIN CONCERN IS YOUR FAMILY. BELIEVE ME, I DO.

THAT'S KIND OF THE SAME BOAT I'M IN, TRYING TO SALVAGE THE FRANCHETTIS FROM THE MESS THE TWO DOPES BEFORE ME MADE.

BUT I'M LOOKED AT AS THE YOUNG GUY, THE UNPROVEN GUY. IF I'M GONNA LEAD THE FAMILY I HAVE TO SHOW EVERYONE THAT I'M CAPABLE OF IT. ACTIONS, NOT WORDS, YOU KNOW?


SUCKS THAT THE WHOLE THING'S REDUCED TO PUBLIC RELATIONS, BUT THAT'S THE WAY OF THE WORLD.



I'M AFRAID I DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE BUT TO TURN DOWN YOUR OFFER.

I SAID I WAS COMING HERE TO KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU SONS OF BITCHES...

...SO I GUESS THAT'S WHAT I SHOULD DO.



LET'S FACE IT, YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN TREATING ME LIKE A DUMB ASS BECAUSE I GREW UP EATING MARINARA INSTEAD OF SWEET AND SOUR.

DID IT OCCUR TO YOU THAT MAYBE I LET YOU BRING ME HERE TONIGHT? THAT MAYBE THIS WAS A HELL OF A LOT EASIER THAN SHOOTING MY WAY IN?

WHO'S THE DUMB ASS NOW?

I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING ELSE...

...I BROUGHT FRIENDS.





IT'S
MORNING...

INDEED,
MR. ESTACADO.

MORNING.

YOU DID NOT
BELIEVE US SO
IGNORANT AS TO BE
UNAWARE OF YOUR
REPUTATION, DID YOU?
OF THIS **DARKNESS**
YOU COMMAND?

IT WAS NOT A
DIFFICULT THING
TO KEEP YOU
UNCONSCIOUS LONG
ENOUGH TO REMOVE
THAT ADVANTAGE.


THE SUN
SETS IN THE
WEST...

...IT
RISES IN
THE
EAST.




A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit, sits on a wooden throne. He is looking towards the right.


MR. KUO,
IF YOU
PLEASE...

A man with long dark hair, wearing a white suit, walks down a set of stairs. He is looking forward.

MR. KUO IS
FROM A LONG LINE
OF TALENTED
INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE
SERVED THIS
ORGANIZATION.

A close-up of Mr. Kuo's face. He is wearing a white suit and a red tie. His face is surrounded by blue lightning bolts. He has a serious expression.

THE ABILITY IS
PASSED FROM
FATHER TO ELDEST
CHILD AND AS YOU
CAN SEE...

A close-up of Mr. Kuo's face. He is wearing a white suit and a red tie. His face is surrounded by blue lightning bolts. He has a serious expression.

...IT IS NOT
DEPENDENT
UPON THE
SHADOWS.



WHO IS
THE
DUMB ASS
NOW?



JESUS
CHRIST...



YOU SEE,
MR. ESTACADO?

YOU ARE
NOTHING
SPECIAL
AFTER ALL.



KILL
HIM.



GLADLY.





TO BE CONTINUED
IN DARKNESS #12