

Chimerical

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Episode 14: Mercy, Part One

Jo'dehki slowly opens his eyes as the faint yellow light of the sun pierces through the window glass. He blinks a few times as he wrestles with his grogginess. He rolls over, lying on his back as he takes a deep breath. He sits up and sighs, looking over to the second bed in the room. It is still made; it had never been slept in. Nish obviously did not return to the inn last night. He stands from his bed, the claws of his feet clicking on the wooden floor of the inn as he walks toward his gear. He groans as he stretches, taking his belt in his hands. He turns, glancing over to the unused bed.

"Figures..." Jo'dehki murmurs.

As the sunlight beams in through the windows of Rabara's home, Nish yawns and stretches an arm. He turns, his other arm numb as it sits underneath Rabara's head. She lays against him, her hand on his chest, a leg over his, and her tail sitting across his waist. She sleeps peacefully and

sounds as though she is purring. He gently strokes her cheek with the back of his fingers and her claws rake his skin as her fingers coil. Her eyes open and her tail flicks as she looks up at the Imperial.

“Sajka jer raba do zaigu?” He asks.

“Jat.” She says softly with a nod.

“Rik vaber jaji?” He grins.

“Ahziss dov'kono rabeka zaj mi kona shabar fa tenurr suno.” She grins back.

“Ahziss rabaoh vayma.” He says before kissing her tenderly on her lips.

“Yo wo jaga tano.” She adds.

“Jer sajoh degeali lurma.” He chuckles.

“Rabara dov'kono yosha.” She retorts, kissing him back.

“Dov'kono?” He raises an eyebrow.

“Ahziss ko dov'kono lurmaali jer.” She says.

She sits up, the golden silk blanket falling from her nude and shapely body.

“Jaji vaba kaaka ahziss krozijka.” He remarks.

He sits up, his arm tingling as the blood rushes back into it. She gently rakes her claws on his skin, watching him

with a smile. Once his arm is as awake as the rest of him, he rises from the bed. Rabara stands with him, and the pair collect their clothes. They slowly dress, regularly gazing admiringly at one another. Once they are dressed, Nish helps Rabara don her gambeson and her polished steel plate armor. As she unlocks the door to her home, she briefly pauses. She turns and looks at Ra'kanishu somberly.

"Ahzisse krozij eja jer." She says softly.

"Ahzisse vaba tas." He assures her.

"Kiva ahziss dej vako jer to S'ren-ja fa pal." She smiles faintly.

"Kiva." He grins.

She swings open the door and the pair leave the house. Nish stands by her as she closes and locks her door. She turns and stops, looking rather surprised that he hasn't walked away yet. He reaches out and rests a hand on one of her pauldrons.

"Rasin jerno." He says.

She rests a hand over his and smirks.

"Ahziss va zath khitiali sallidith." She retorts.

"Jer saa'do vaba." He says as he steps back.

Nish turns and walks away, returning to the inn where he was supposed to meet Jo'dehki. He enters and looks around the main hall, finding his companion at a table by himself. He looks quite frustrated as he sits and drinks from a second tankard while eating his breakfast. Nish takes a deep breath, unsure of how his friend will react to his tardiness. He approaches the table and pulls up a comfortable padded chair. Jo'dehki turns his eyes to Nish, grimacing at the Imperial.

"How nice of you to finally show up." Jo'dehki grumbles.

"Apologies. It would not have been so long, but one thing led to another... Several times." Nish smirks.

"And that kept you out all night?" Jo'dehki raises a brow.

"Can you really blame this one for succumbing to Rabara's wiles?" Nish retorts.

"No, but this one would have preferred not to waste the coin; he'd have slept on a bench, had he known you weren't going to use the second bed." Jo'dehki quips.

"At least Ra'kanishu kept his word! ... In fact, this one recalls feeling the same way on two separate occasions back in Cyrodiil..." Nish remarks.

"Jo'dehki understands your reasons, and can't argue with your perspective, but it still bothers him. Please do not to abandon Jo'dehki again."

"You did when we were at the Imperial City." Nish reminds him.

"Fjorn was with you."

“And then again in Skingrad... Who was with Ra’kanishu then?”

Jo’dehki suddenly feels guilty. He lowers his head, looking down at the table. After a short pause, he turns back to the Imperial.

“Jo’dehki promises to never abandon you again, so long as you do not do the same.”

“Alright.” Nish agrees.

“So... Did you want to order breakfast?” The Khajiit asks.

“No. I have food in my pack, and we really need to get back on the road.”

“Suit yourself.”

They stand from the table and begin to leave the inn. Jo’dehki stops at the door, returning to the front counter where he buys a bottle of honey lager for the road. Inersrin passes him a bottle and looks past Jo’dehki’s side.

“So, your lover has returned to you?” She asks with a smirk.

“He is *not* my lover.” Jo’dehki growls.

“It’s alright. Inersrin does not judge.” She winks.

Jo'dehki looks the young innkeeper over as she takes a damp tankard and begins wiping it dry. He grins sinisterly. Now that his anger and frustration has subsided, he knows how to get his revenge.

"He is a close and trusted friend." Jo'dehki begins. "We travel together, fight together, eat together... And ravage females together." He growls sensually.

"What?!" She asks in shock.

"You heard me, lovely." Jo'dehki winks. "If we return, you should play with us. You look supple enough."

He reaches out and gently strokes the underside of her chin with the claw of an index finger. Her hands tremor and her eyes narrow, gazing lustfully back at him.

"What fun you could have with two skilled lovers." He coos.

Inersrin drops the pewter tankard that she is holding; it clanks loudly on the wooden floor. She looks to her left and right, wondering if anyone else is watching, or listening to their conversation. She kneels down to pick up the tankard.

"While you are down there..." Jo'dehki laughs.

She looks up to him, her brow soft and her lips twisted in embarrassment. He presses his lips together, blowing her

a kiss, before he turns and walks away from the counter. He chuckles and shakes the bottle of honey lager in his hand.

“What was that about?” Nish asks.

“Nothing important. Let’s go.” Jo’dehki replies.

They leave the inn and walk toward the road. They march south along the well-traveled trade route, heading for the city of Rawl’Kha. Jo’dehki and Nish travel in relative silence, the Khajiit taking occasional drinks from his bottle of lager. The Imperial looks back at his companion, visibly concerned with his drinking. Jo’dehki notices his friend’s stare and offers him a drink from the bottle, but Nish refuses.

“Is something troubling you? You haven’t drunk this much so early in the morning before.” Nish asks.

“It’s nothing.” Jo’dehki murmurs.

As they walk along the road, they soon come upon a jumble of figures in the distance. Is it a gathering? Could it be another convoy? As the two silently wonder what is ahead of them, a portion of the mass breaks off, chasing a lone figure who tries to escape. They now realize what is happening just down the road; a skirmish is taking place either between soldiers and raiders, or raiders and civilians. The duo rush towards the group, their yelling and screaming growing louder as they approach. They can see the raiders

attacking the lightly armed civilians, and quickly draw their weapons.

The raiders are a mix of Bosmer and Khajiit of several breeds. What appears to be a mer woman lies on the ground. Her clothes are ripped from her body by a wood elf as two Cathay hold her down by her arms. Several innocents lie on the ground as raiders jab daggers and short swords into them. One body lies face down with a flaming arrow jutting from her back. The Bosmer holds his erection as he kneels between the legs of the wriggling and screaming woman, ready to forcefully penetrate her. An injured Suthay-Raht lies not far from her, watching in disgust as he holds a large gash on his side.

Nish targets the Bosmer and charges, while Jo'dehki stops and draws an arrow, pulling it back against the string of his bow. He releases the string, firing an arrow into the eye socket of a Khajiit who holds down one of the woman's arms. The Bosmer turns in time to see Nish swinging his axe at his throat. Before he can scream, the would-be rapist is beheaded in a single swing. His severed head lands on the woman's stomach, blinking several times as she screams. Nish throws the axe at the remaining Khajiit, who sits dumbfounded. The axe spins in the air once, before slamming into his left bicep.

Jo'dehki fires arrow after arrow at other raiders as Nish lunges at the injured Khajiit. His hand rests on the blunt edge of his sword as he rams the blade into the raider's

throat. He straddles the raider's chest as he shifts the blade from left to right, cutting down to the Khajiit's spine.

"Look out!" The woman yells.

Nish turns and pulls up his sword, turning it sideways as he blocks the swing of another Bosmer's axe. He pulls backward and rolls. The Bosmer does not release his axe, and falls forward onto Nish as the sword locks underneath the beard. Nish brings a knee to his chest. As the Imperial rolls back, he flips the Bosmer, who lands on his back on the ground, staring at the sky. Nish completes the roll, landing on a foot and knee, quickly jamming the sword into the Bosmer's chest and pinning him to the earth. He pulls the sword from the man's body as he spews blood from his mouth.

Jo'dehki walks backward toward Nish, shooting two more raiders with several arrows as they seem preoccupied with murdering the last of the civilians. Nish rushes toward Jo'dehki, spinning his sword. Jo'dehki turns, his eyes widening in fear as a muscular Cathay-Raht raider holds up a great sword with one hand. Jo'dehki turns, but stumbles on an exposed root. He falls backward, landing on his buttocks with a thud as the raider bears down on him with the sword. Nish swings his blade, cleaving off the hand of the raider. The great sword falls, the blade landing perpendicular in the dirt beside Jo'dehki's leg; the raider's severed hand is still gripping the handle.

The raider roars and grips his stump as he turns to the Imperial. Nish spins his sword preparing to fight the large one-handed Khajiit, but is caught off guard as the raider suddenly leaps, tackling him to the ground. Nish drops his sword from the force as he lands in the dirt. The Khajiit holds him down with both arms as he lunges for his throat, trying to bite into his neck with his large canines. As Nish struggles to keep the Khajiit's powerful jaws from his throat, Jo'dehki grabs the raider's shoulders and rips him from his companion.

Nish rolls over and gasps, now able to breathe without the weight of the Khajiit atop him. He grabs for his sword as Jo'dehki draws his dagger from his sheath, his tail swaying. The raider stands from the ground, but his legs are weak; he is succumbing to shock as the blood pours from the stump of his wrist. He rushes Jo'dehki, but the archer turns and steps to the side, causing the raider to fall. He gently tossed his dagger into the air, catching it by the blade with his first two fingers and thumb. As the raider struggles to stand and turns back to Jo'dehki, he throws the dagger, driving it into the raider's neck.

He coughs up blood and reaches for the blade, but soon collapses onto the ground. Nish walks up to the fallen thug and pulls the dagger from his throat before gliding it across both arteries and his windpipe. He hands the dagger back to Jo'dehki, who wipes the blade clean and sheaths it. Nish does the same for his sword, before taking his axe from a bandit's corpse and slipping it into the ring of his finger. While Jo'dehki looks over the bodies of the civilians, looking

for survivors, Nish returns to the frightened woman who lies in a ball on the ground, sobbing softly.

As he approaches, he realizes that she is not a man or mer, but a Khajiit; she is an Ohmes-Raht, covered in short golden-brown fur. Her tail was obstructed by her own leg as she lay on her back, but now on her side it coils over her waist. Her long, wavy brown hair is pulled to the ground by gravity, revealing a tall and slender ear, half-feline and half-elven in shape, and situated on her head like a man or mer, not at the top like most Khajiit. Nish hadn't seen an Ohmes-Raht since he left S'ren-ja, and never once encountered them during his travels. She turns her fearful eyes to the Imperial, he kneels down before her and holds out a hand.

“Sajoh vaba qojithka. Ahziss va etoforali zatay jer.” He says softly to her.

She lowers her brow and tilts her head, as though confused.

“Vara jer yotra?” He asks.

She doesn't answer him, but leans up on her forearm.

“Saj jer pur Ta'agra?” He raises a brow.

She sits up, covering her breasts with her arms.

“This one will take that as a no.” He chuckles.

He looks around and finds a brown leather vest on the body of a fallen Bosmer, an arrow sticking out of his head. The vest has notch-buttons in the front, allowing it to close. Nish pulls the garment from the corpse and passes it to the scared girl, who sheepishly reaches out, taking it from him.

“Who are you?” She asks.

“This one is called Ra’kanishu.” He replies.

She slips on the vest, quickly buttoning it closed and covering her body. Nish reextends his hand. She looks at his hand and then down at her unclothed legs, her tail covering her groin from view.

“Apologies!” Nish says.

He looks around for suitable clothes, only for Jo’dehki to pass him a pair of brown pants from a Suthay-Raht, the only pair he could find not stained with blood or bodily waste. Nish hands her the pants and steps back. They both politely avert their eyes as she slips them on. She stands to her feet, brushing herself off.

“So, you’re Ra’kanishu?” She asks.

“Indeed.” He nods.

“And who is this?”

“Jo’dehki.” The Cathay-Raht bows his head.

“I see... I’m Abari.” She says.

“This one is pleased to meet you, Abari.” Nish smiles.

“Likewise.” Jo’dehki chirps.

She looks around at the destruction, her lips curled down into a frown. A groan catches everyone’s attention and Abari leans past her saviors. Her eyes widen in horror as she sees the injured Suthay-Raht, who lies not far from where she was being assaulted.

“Oh no!” She cries out, rushing past the duo.

She kneels beside the man, resting her hands on his cheeks. His blood seeps from his wounds and his lips, trickling over her fingers. Tears well in her eyes as she looks to the man. She leans in and rests her face alongside his, weeping as she tries to assure him that he will be alright. Nish and Jo’dehki slowly approach, looking between one another. They both know that it is only a matter of time before the Suthay-Raht expires; his wounds are so severe that there is nothing anyone can do.

“You’ll be alright. I promise!” She sniffles.

“This one does not have much time...” The Khajiit groans.

“Don’t talk like that! You’re going to be alright!” She assures him.

The Khajiit moves his hand away from his large gash, revealing the extent of his wounds to her. Her eyes grow even wider, before shutting tightly as her jaw closes; she knows that he is does not have long to remain in this world.

“It hurts so much...” He murmurs.

As she looks to the man, she can see the pained expression on his face. Her heart breaks as she watches her companion slowly dying. Jo’dehki slowly draws his dagger. The Suthay-Raht turns his eyes to Jo’dehki, and gives a single nod. Abari turns and sees the glistening blade.

“No!” She cries out, holding the dying Khajiit tighter.

“Please... Do not let Jotzaka die in agony.” Her companion whispers.

She turns back to the man, biting her bottom lip as she struggles to hold back her tears. She slowly nods.

“Alright...” She says. “But not like that.”

“We do not have any poison, and it wouldn’t work fast enough if we did.” Jo’dehki remarks.

“Ra’kanishu will do it.” Nish says, stepping forward.

The group look to him and the Imperial holds out a hand, a ball of purplish-blue electricity spiraling within it.

“It will be quick, painless, and won’t leave any marks.” Nish adds.

“Alright... Do it.” Abari whimpers.

“You’ll need to move away. You can’t touch him.” Nish says.

She nods, reluctantly moving away from Jotzaka while Nish kneels beside him. His hand no longer glows as he opens the Khajiit’s shirt. He places his palm firmly on his chest and looks to the dying man, who nods once to the Imperial.

“Zaigu dal, liter.” Nish says softly.

Jotzaka’s body jerks and his head falls limp, his heart stopped in an instant by a sharp jolt of electricity from Nish’s palm. Abari cries loudly as Nish gently closes Jotzaka’s eyes with his fingertips. He turns and sees the pain of Jotzaka’s loss, his own eyes welling with tears. Ra’kanishu can’t help but feel her pain. He collects

Jotzaka's body, carrying him like an oversized doll as he walks to a patch of soft earth.

"What are you doing?!" Abari cries out.

"Burying him." Nish replies.

"Is that really wise? Shouldn't we leave?" Jo'dehki asks, raising a brow.

"Kalor vaba jer sunej?!" Nish barks at him,

Abari quickly joins Nish. Jo'dehki sighs and aids the two as they dig a grave for Jotzaka. They bury the slain Khajiit and pile stones on the grave. Abari kneels beside the pile of rocks as Nish offers a prayer.

"Thank you... For saving me... For everything." Abari says to the Imperial.

"Think nothing of it." Nish murmurs.

"I don't know why you did any of this, but I'm eternally grateful... He deserved a proper burial." She sniffles.

"Most do." Nish quietly remarks.

"We were not lovers, but he was a very close friend; he was really more like a brother." Abari begins. "We had spent the last year researching some of the ruins in Cyrodiil together, along with the others. I didn't know many of them too well though."

"Jo'dehki is sorry for your loss." Jo'dehki remarks.

"And so is this one." Nish adds.

“Where are you two heading?” She suddenly asks.

“Ra’kanishu is returning home to S’ren-ja with his friend, Jo’dehki.” Nish replies.

Jo’dehki silently breathes a sigh of relief, now knowing that they aren’t heading for Willowgrove.

“I’m heading to Dune... Can I travel with you?” She asks.

“Dune is past S’ren-ja.” Nish replies.

“I know... Just for a while! At least until you stop in S’ren-ja.” She pleads.

Nish sighs and looks at the Ohmes-Raht girl, then back to Jo’dehki.

“We’ll take you to Dune. If we don’t, you might not make it.” Nish says as he turns back to Abari.

“Indeed. Jo’dehki would not feel right letting you walk the road alone.” The Cathay-Raht chimes in.

“Oh, thank you! Thank you so much!” Abari says with a tearful grin.

“It’s alright. This one is just doing the right thing.” Nish remarks.

“Why do you talk like that?” She asks the Imperial.

“Like what?”

“Like a Khajiit.” She elaborates.

“Oh, that... Sorry... Old habits.” He grins.