

THE KING & THE ASSASSIN (EXCERPT)

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INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

The tavern glows in the dim lamplight, a few PATRONS remain at their tables.

AELIUS, 24, sits at the bar top and searches for answers at the bottom of his glass.

RAIDEN, 22, face hidden in the shadows of her dark hood, takes a seat a few over from Aelius. The bartender pours her drink without her asking. She knocks it back.

Aelius watches, a small grin on his face.

AELIUS
One of those nights?

Raiden's hood shifts in Aelius' direction, but her face is still obscured.

RAIDEN
It usually is.

Aelius takes another drink.

RAIDEN (CONT'D)
What has you here drinking alone?

Aelius looks over at her, he raises an eyebrow at the small talk.

AELIUS
I was trying to find someone, but it seems that they're too good at not being found.

RAIDEN
What did you need from them?

AELIUS
I wanted to ask them a question.

He rubs a hand down his face.

AELIUS (CONT'D)
Or maybe it's more of a favor.

RAIDEN
I know a lot of people, who are you looking for?

He looks at his glass, eyebrows pinched.

AELIUS
Can you keep a secret?

A grin flashes from under her dark hood.

RAIDEN
I think so.

AELIUS
The Ghost.

She takes a drink.

RAIDEN
And what would you need with
someone like that?

The bartender refills Aelius' glass.

AELIUS
Do you know them?

RAIDEN
Can't say I do.

AELIUS
It seems like no one can.

Raiden nods.

Two GUARDS, one with a well kept beard, the other has a scar on the side of his head, walk into the tavern. It's clear this isn't the first one they've visited tonight.

Raiden finishes her drink and stands.

She nods to Aelius and walks toward the door. Beard stumbles as she walks by and they bump shoulders.

BEARD
Watch it.

RAIDEN
I'm not the one that's drunk.

Raiden keeps walking as the guards process the disrespect.

BEARD
Aye! Get back here.

She ignores them and walks out.

The guards, now pissed, hurry after her.

Aelius stands and follows.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The lanterns and moon cast the city in a pale glow, shadows crawl up the walls.

The guards and Raiden face off.

RAIDEN

I don't care about your hurt pride,
now leave me alone.

BEARD

(words slightly slurred)
You'll pay for your disrespect.
We're royal Guards.

Aelius starts towards them as he pulls his hood up.

Beard unsheathes his sword. Raiden flicks her arm out, a throwing knife flies through the air and cuts his cheek. Blood blooms from the wound.

Aelius freezes in his place.

Beard touches his cheek, smearing the blood.

Raiden, dagger in hand, takes her chance and lunges forward, Beard recovers and swings. She blocks and disarms him in a moment.

Scar swings at Raiden's back, but she leans to the side and reaches for her blade strapped to her back under her cloak. She pulls it out just enough to block then rolls away.

Raiden stands, sword in one hand, dagger in the other. The Guards rush her. She blocks Scar's attack with her sword and slams the hilt of her dagger into Beard's face. She kicks Scar in the gut, then spins and kicks Beard in the head. He falls, and doesn't stand again.

Scar comes at her, but she spins around him and slices the back of his knee. He falls and she slams the hilt of her sword into his head. He doesn't move.

Raiden stands up and sheathes both blades. She looks at Aelius, who hasn't moved.

He smiles a little.

AELIUS

I have a question for you, Ghost.

Raiden grins back.

RAIDEN

I thought you said it was more of a
favor?