Bani Karl Backstory Theater Part 3

Penguin were not all of the same mind concerning their government, but most kept their opinions to themselves and made no fuss. Those that did were usually quietly taken care of or managed to suffer some awful circumstance that commanded more attention than political activism. The penguin parliament however is a relatively new player in the political game. The institution had been created five years prior due to the unflinching decadence of the penguin lords. The tide of popular opinion turned against them and could not be swayed by any amount of subterfuge so to keep hold of their status and prevent uprising the lords agreed to have an elected body of officials regulate the finances of the government. The power of the parliament grew steadily after its creation and the members of it began to take notice, unfortunately, so did the lords.

The first power struggle began with the parliament attempting to pass a bill that would outline the extent of the lord’s powers. The bill gained traction quickly in the parliament but when the time came to vote on it all the members let the bill die. After this the parliament tried to pass bills that subtly undermined the lord’s power, but the same situation resulted. The parliament appeared to lose its teeth after that and no more bills that threatened the lord’s power were drafted. Whispers began circulating in the palace that the parliament members had begun a secret campaign to dismantle the lord’s information network and perform a coup d’état. Once the rumors reached the lord’s ears the Shadow beaks received a summons, the organization sent the newest recruit, a young whelp who had not earned his name yet, to do the deed. The recruit received briefing from the lord’s spymaster that the parliament members at the head of the conspiracy met frequently at a club called *Scuttlebutt.*

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The shadow beak waited on the roof of Scuttlebutt as the snow gently fell around him. His harness shifted slightly as he walked forward and placed a square crystal in the center of the roof. Twin beams of azure magic shot out on opposite sides of the crystal and carved into the roof while the square soundlessly turned. The section of roof remained in place for a moment before the penguin inserted a crowbar into one side and levered it open before lowering himself down on a rope attached to his harness. He pulled the loose section of roof back over his head, leaving a small opening or his rope to feed through, and lowered himself further down into the dark maze of roof support and insulation.

After unbuckling the harness from himself the penguin began flitting from support to support in the darkness. His eyes acclimated to the light level in a few moments and he saw the trapdoor that connected to the Scuttlebutt’s pantry. He stopped above the trapdoor and checked his daggers. Once he assured himself they were in good condition he slipped into a waiter’s suit and carefully put on a false mustache. Then he climbed into the pantry and grabbed a jar of pickles and a bottle of vodka before walking out into the kitchens. The chefs bustled with activity as they filled orders for the various patrons and ordered their aides and the waiters around. The shadow beak walked calmly through the rushing penguins as he pocketed the jar of pickles and picked up a rag which he draped across his flipper. None of the penguins in the kitchen paid any notice to him because it seemed he was in the middle of doing something and he never gave any clue otherwise as he strolled out of the kitchens onto the club floor.

The band in the center of the club floor played a soulful tune about fishing for love in all the wrong ice lakes. The shadow beak stopped to listen and stare at the band, then he continued on. The patrons in the club were a curious mix of young and old penguins, all of them chatting, dancing, or drinking. The shadow beak watched the penguins enjoying themselves as he forged a path to the private rooms underground. He reached a dark wooden door, opened it, and closed it behind himself soundlessly. The private rooms in the club were all underground, usually they were requested for high stakes gambling or more salacious entertainment. The shadow beak just passed by room after room without interest until he came to room 305. The sound of heated discussion radiated from the door. He opened it and stepped in.

The eight penguins inside continued the discussion they were having as he waddled in.

“The taxes for small businesses must be lowered if we wish them to survive till next winter Walsey.”

“If we lower the taxes then the treasury will run dry in a few months, the public works and the military are bleeding it dry.” The penguin speaking adjusted himself in his chair. “And the nobility’s pleasure castle is doing a damn good job of sucking in money.”

The shadow beak moved forward and set the jar of pickles down onto the table before beginning to uncork the bottle of vodka.

“The fishing returns are looking grim gentlenoots, we may have to supplement Pingwin’s food supply.”

“How the hell are we meant to do that when our funds are so low and the nobles keep fucking us over?”

“Which one of us ordered vodka and pickles?” A penguin wearing tea glasses asked. The shadow beak finished uncorking the vodka with a loud pop while all the parliamentary conspirator’s eyes settled on him. He said nothing as half of the penguins around the table drew guns from their clothes and levelled four barrels at him. He poured a small amount of the vodka into the glass of the penguin nearest him and rocked back onto his flippers to eye the penguins around the table. A silent moment passed in the room as the smell of fresh vodka began to permeate the air.

The penguin furthest from the shadow beak began to squeeze the trigger on his pistol but the assassin ducked under the table and flipped it into his face before he could fire and the shot went wild. The penguins without weapons moved to the other side of the room and their comrades with pistols stood in front of them and covered the room. The assassin still had to be behind the table, he couldn’t have moved during that time without them seeing him. They heard the sound of metal scraping on metal for a moment and began looking furiously around for the source of the noise. An object flew over the table in a lazy arc and got shot down before it reached the penguins in the corner of the room. It showered them in vinegar and lumpy pickles right before a fiery bottle flew around the corner of the table and smashed open all over them. The penguins screamed as the alcohol burned their flesh. The four who had guns dropped them and tried to pat themselves out before the table hit them. The assassin stalked over to the penguins wreathed in flames with knives drawn and saw that the only one left conscious was the penguin wearing tea glasses. They looked at each other for a moment and then the bespectacled penguin spoke.

“So the nobles finally sent one of their pets to get rid of us.” He said as the shadow beak walked towards him.

“I suppose we should be honored to receive such intimate attention, the nobles must really think us a threat.” The penguin pushed up his tea glasses and stared at the penguin before him.

“We are not enemies of the state. We only want to take control away from the children who run rampant in the palace and degrade our great nation.” The penguin noticed no reaction in the assassin, who now stood over him.

“Surely you’ve seen that our great and infallible lords are ignoring the needs of the common penguins. Ignoring our sick, our hungry, our injured, and our orphans so they can turn the palace into a whorehouse. They must be stopped if we are to… to..” The penguin wearing the tea glasses looked at his chest and saw blood leaking from around the knife embedded in it. He struggled for a few moments but the thrashes got weaker and weaker until they were imperceptible, then he died.

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The Scuttlebutt suffered some fire damage to the private rooms but there were only eight reported casualties. One waiter noticed the blaze during its infancy and began evacuating civilians. The penguins who died were never formally identified, as the blaze had blackened and charred any identifying features, but according to witness testimonies from the staff they were eight members of parliament. The Scuttlebutt soon opened its doors again and welcomed pleasure seekers into its fold.

The assassin that killed the eight members of parliament returned to the shadow beak headquarters and wrote up his report. After all the details were checked by senior members of the organization the young recruit came before the lords to receive his title. They looked into the book of the old language and dubbed him Bani Karl, Death of the Commoner.