

## Shard Warriors - Vol.1

### Chapter 7

Voices. Soft, incomprehensible voices.

It was the first thing he heard. Words that, in his dazed and confused state, he couldn't understand. People talking. More than one voice. How many, he couldn't say. But more than one.

He was about to open his eyes, look for the source, but something stopped him. A memory, or a dream. *Something*. Yellow looming over him, her hand coming down. And then... Darkness.

"-must be. Where else would they be keeping him?"

It was a girl's voice. Not familiar, but Halen could guess who it belonged to.

"We can't," a male's voice spoke. This one far more recognisable. "Who knows what kind of protections they have in place. If we charge in the front door-"

"Then what do *you* suggest we do?" The female voice barked.

"Calm down, Abi," another voice said. Green's voice. Jennifer Morose. "I get it. You're worried. I am too. Jason is my *brother* for fucks sake. But we can't just go rushing in like that. They have him. Imagine what they'll do to him if we attack them head-on."

As the fog in Halen's mind cleared, his brain began to absorb the words he was hearing - piece together who the voices belonged to and what they were talking about.

Jason. The Red. They *knew*.

He kept his eyes shut, ignored the tightness around his hands and ankles, ignored the tape over his mouth. And he listened.

"We have our own hostage," Abigail Denver snapped. The Yellow. "We offer them a trade, Jason for *him*."

He felt the eyes on him, did his best not to react to those heavy gazes. Bound to a chair as he was, head slumped forward, limbs trapped in place, there was nothing he could do. Nothing but listen and study and plot. As long as they weren't aware of him being awake, there was the chance that they might spill some valuable information. All he had to do was keep the act up...

"And then what?" A faint, soft voice said. Pink's. "They know who we are. Even when we get Jason back; they know our names. They know where we live. What are we supposed to do?"

Nothing. There was nothing they could do now.

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it," Green sighed.

"We've *already* come to it," Yellow snapped. "We beat the answers we need out of this fuck, storm the Venitus Institute, find and free Jason, then burn the place to the fucking ground. We put an end to this. Today. Destroy the Gemshards, the research, everything."

Just like The Grey had done so long ago. Stolen Halen's grandfather's research, murdered him, set fire to his lab and destroyed everything.

The Purple Shard in Halen's chest burned.

All four of them were there. Pink, Green, Yellow, Blue. One big, powerful blast of his power and-

But no, that wouldn't work.

When someone became aware they were being manipulated, they gained a resistance to it. Not total immunity – they could still be affected by the Purple Shard in small ways – but enough of a resistance to severely cripple Halen's abilities. He wouldn't be able to simply blast them all on one go, trick their minds into thinking he was Jason again. That ship had sunk.

But, even so, there had to be *some* way out.

"They have the Red Belt," spoke Blue's voice.

"So what?" Yellow spat. "They can't use it, Gramps made sure of that. And four of us

is more than enough to crush-”

“He’s awake,” Pink’s voice cut in softly.

Silence followed the words. Deathly and ominous.

Halen raised his head, opened his eyes.

Light. Blindingly bright at first. But, as his eyes adjusted to the white light, he realised where he was. Where they’d brought him.

The Five’s meeting room, in their secret base.

He was strapped to one of the five chairs, with each other chair occupied by a member of The Five. Yellow in the yellow chair, Pink in pink, Blue and Green in theirs. Halen would’ve laughed if not for the tape over his mouth. Once again, he was occupying Red’s seat.

“Good,” Abigail Denver said, rising from her chair. “Time to get some answers.”

“Abi...” Pink whispered, but Yellow was already moving, circling the large, metal table towards Halen.

Interrogation time.

“I’m going to remove that,” Abigail said, grabbing a corner of Halen’s mouth tape. “Say *anything*, and I’ll break your jaw. You will speak only when spoken to, and you will *only* answer questions asked. If I think for one *second* that you’re trying to use your mind control powers on me, I won’t hesitate to *break* you. Do you understand?”

Halen nodded his head.

How very *interesting*.

Yellow, and the rest of them by extension, seemed to think that Halen needed to *speak* to use the Purple Shard’s power.

He could use that.

As Yellow tore away the tape, Halen grunted. He glanced down at himself, saw his exposed chest and the glowing Purple Shard. His eyes searched the room, the faces seated around the table.

Green – Jennifer – looked about ready to vomit, her face taking after her suit in colour.

Pink was blushing, couldn’t look Halen in the eye.

Blue stared at Halen, eyebrows narrowed thoughtfully.

And Yellow... Abigail Denver was *pissed*.

“Where. Is. Jason?” Abigail demanded, voice ice-cold.

“That... depends,” Halen tried to shrug. “How long was I out? What day is it? What time-”

Yellow’s fist buried itself in Halen gut.

He grunted, hunched forward as far as the bindings would allow. It took him a moment to regain his breath. Thankfully, Abigail wasn’t suited up – none of them were. No full-force blow from Yellow. At least not yet.

“Answer the question,” Abigail growled.

“I-” Halen coughed, spat on The Five’s shiny table. “I’m trying to. If- If I’ve only been out for an hour or two, Jason will still be at a secret research lab outside the city. If I was out all night, he might already be in the process of being transported.”

The glance Green and Yellow shared was enough for Halen. The mirrored worry in their expressions. He *had* been out all night.

Yellow really hadn’t held back when she’d knocked his lights out, had she? Bitch. She could’ve done some serious damage with that kind of strength!

“Where is he being transported?” Yellow demanded, reaching down and grabbing Halen’s throat.

“You’ll know,” he grunted, “soon enough.”

The bitch squeezed.

She didn’t say anything, and Halen didn’t struggle. The two just locked eyes as her

hand clamped down on his throat, cut off his ability to breathe.

Only when Halen's face was turning purple, darkness closing in from the corners of his vision, did Abigail snatch her hand away.

Halen gasped for air, mind reeling.

Escape. There had to be an escape. A way out. An opportunity.

These idiots thought he needed his voice to use the Purple Shard. They believed they had him under control. How could he use that?

*Use your head*, he thought at Blue. *Torture as a form of interrogation doesn't work. You need to be smarter than that.*

He'd seen little of Blue, but he'd also not used The Five's remaining male in the same way he had Green and Pink. Of his four captors, it was Brain Xander – The Blue – who Halen would have the best chance at manipulating.

*Good cop, bad cop*, he directed at Blue, using the power of the Purple Shard while staring at Yellow. *That works. Abigail is the bad cop, what if you pretended to be the good cop?*

"Where," Yellow snarled, "is Jason?"

"Depends," Halen glared back at her, even as he pulled on Purple's power and cast it over at the nerd. "What time is it?"

Yellow raised her fist, eyes narrowed with pure hatred.

"Eleven," Blue answered from across the table. "Morning."

Abigail's head snapped around to glare at Brian.

"In that case," Halen smiled, "Jason is probably being loaded into an unmarked van as we speak."

*It worked*, he thought at Blue. *You have information. Good cop worked.*

Tiny nudges that took a whole lot of power to make happen. But, even if it was only a little, Halen could use it. He'd already obtained the most important piece of information he needed right now.

"He's lying," Yellow spat. "We can't trust-"

"Mother and I," Halen said sharply, interrupting his torturer, "have been very busy warping Jason's mind."

That got everyone's attention. Four sets of eyes focused on Halen, all of them wide. Wanting answers, yet dreading them at the same time.

"He's damaged," Halen continued. "Broken. Right now, Jason Morose is nothing but a puppet following orders. And his orders are to cause havoc and destruction and mayhem until you four show up. Him and seven Shard Monsters."

"Bullshit," Abigail Denver said, though her voice sounded hollow. Fearful. Her face was pale.

"Your grandfather stole everything from my family," Halen smiled. "He murdered my grandfather, stole the research, burned the lab to the ground to hide his crimes. He ran away like a fucking coward. A *rat*. And he only came back to fuck with Mother and the new research we're doing on the Shards. You side with him, you deserve what's coming."

"That's not-" Green – Jennifer Morose – tired to say.

"Yes," Halen went on, chest burning. "It is. Look at you fuckers. Hanging out in a 'secret base' playing heroes, using stolen tech and research without a care in the world. Fucking colour-coded clowns protecting a murderer."

He gathered power, sent it in wave after wave. His chest screamed at him, his mind flaying from the effort. But, unknown to everyone else in the room, Halen bathed two of them with his divine power. Blue and Green. His tools, though they didn't know it.

"Where is he? Where is The Grey?" Halen grunted, pushed down the urge to laugh like a madman. He felt the Purple coursing through him. Consuming him. It was *glorious*. "Tell me where the old bastard is, surrender your belts to me, and maybe I'll let you live to see tomorrow! Maybe I'll even give you sluts a good ride before-"

"Enough of this," Yellow snapped.

Halen saw her pull back her fist, ready for a powerful swing. He closed his eyes, braced for the impact.

The next time Halen opened his eyes, three of his four captors were gone. Only Blue remained seated, eyes intent on his phone screen. The sound of a news broadcast filled the meeting room.

"Blazes are spreading out of control. Fire-fighting departments from across the city are battling the inferno while police are barricading-"

"It's started then," Halen said.

Blue's head snapped up, eyes wide.

"Forgot to mention," Halen smiled weakly. "We gave Jason a Red Shard. Seemed only fitting. That, along with his suit, means he's practically unstoppable now. The sluts don't stand a chance. They're as good as roasted. Three cooked whores."

"They're not as weak as you think," Brian said, voice unusually calm given the circumstances.

"I know how strong you all are," Halen nodded. "And I know about the weakness of your Morph Belts. Tell me, exactly how long has the fight been going on so far?"

Brian didn't answer. He didn't need to. The fear in his eyes spoke for him.

Too long. That's how long it'd been going for.

The Blue had stayed behind, just as Halen had wanted. The waves of power he'd been throwing at Brian before the Yellow bitch had knocked him out – it'd been for this. This, and to help nudge Brian into make the *correct* choices with what came next.

"If they had you with them, it'd be a closer fight. But they don't. Three of them against Red and seven Shard Monsters? They're fucked, and you know it."

"Shut up."

"I can stop it," Halen told Blue. "I can put an end to all of this. You just have to let me go."

"Not a chance," Blue stated. "The only reason I'm here instead of *there*, is to stop *you* from getting away. No way I'm going to betray-"

"The Purple Shard can't control people," Halen lied. "Not without help, at least. Like how your Power Belts work. I need to wear a special crown to focus the energies and make my powers work. Right now, that crown is in my truck. You get that for me and I can call off Red and the Monsters, make them stand down."

Blue's gaze wavered.

The Purple Shard's power flared in Halen's chest.

"Yeah? And why would you do that?" Blue demanded, eyes flicking away from Halen. "You're about to 'win', remember?"

"I am," Halen shrugged. "And I'm not. Red and the Monsters will win, and the girls will die. But then what? No way you're gonna let me go. And you're not gonna be able to keep me here forever. Your only option will be to end me too. And I'm not a big fan of that idea. I go free, I stop Jason, I live."

"You're trying to manipulate me," Brian said, narrowing his eyes.

"I am," Halen grinned. "If I can get out of this mess *and* put an end to The Five at the same time, I'll do it. But here's the thing, blue-balls, you *really* don't have any other choice. Either you trust me, or your girls are done for. Simple as that."

"It's in the back of my truck," Halen said as Blue pulled over. "In a metal chest. The key's in the glovebox."

As he spoke the words, he used Purple's power.

"Get out," Blue ordered him, "we're driving your truck there."

An easy slice of control, that one. Making it so that Blue wanted to protect his

identity, not drive his own car right into the action down at the docks. Halen's truck meant it'd be Halen who'd have to answer for why his vehicle was driving into a no-go warzone.

"I can't," Halen said, lifting his hands.

Tied together with tight rope, oven mitts trapped by the bindings to prevent Halen from using his fingers. His ankles and boots were similarly bound together with rope.

"Make it work," Blue grunted, climbing out of his own shitty car.

As Halen struggled to open the door and climb out, hopping his way towards his black truck, Brian climbed onto the truck bed. The Blue tore away tarp bindings, picked up the special, locked chest that Halen had found just days ago – though it felt more like a lifetime now.

By the time he'd managed to open his truck's passenger door and tossed himself inside, Brian had already started the engine. The locked chest – the old man's treasure – was dumped haphazardly between them.

Blue, of course, didn't wait for Halen to strap himself in before setting off.

In the distance, towers of black smoke rose into the sky.

The truck smashed through a police barricade, didn't stop or slow down. Halen flopped around in the passenger seat, bashing head and knees and arms on just about everything. No seat-belt for him on this drive, it seemed.

"When you put your helmet thing on," Blue grumbled, his suit's mechanical voice making the nerd sound far more intimidating than usual. "They'd better stop fighting. The Monsters. Jason. All of them."

"They will," Halen lied.

No helmet. No stopping. Pretty soon, Blue would discover the treachery. How would that turn out?

"If they don't," Blue promised. "I'll snap your neck like a twig before I join the fighting myself."

Lovely.

No matter. Halen would think of something. He'd-

A warehouse on one side of the road collapsed, sending a shower of debris out in all directions. And still Blue drove on, deeper into the inferno. Unaffected by the blistering heat and smoke.

Halen, heart racing, kept his eyes forward. Ignored the carnage and destruction all around. Ignoring the heat and the fear and the smoke.

Eyes on the prize.

And, a minute later, they were there - truck screeching to a halt.

The battle. Or what *had been* the battle.

Four of Halen's seven monsters were down. Unmoving on the ground. Of the three that remained, two faced off against Yellow. Yellow's suit was shredded – half her helmet missing, holes and tears and gaps in the suit revealing the dirty, ashen skin underneath. She was panting heavily, too focused on her opponents to pay any attention to the truck that'd just shown up.

Not too far away, Pink hung upside down – foot held high by a large, scaly monster. Both massive tits were free of her pink suit, dangling down just like the rest of her. And, in front of her exposed face, an abnormally huge, scaly cock.

And, off to one side, Green and Red.

The brother and sister. Leader of The Five and second in command.

Jason Morose was on top of his sister, hands around her throat as he rammed his cock into her tight hole over and over again. His face was hidden by Red's mask, but his sister's was entirely visible. As was her expression of wild, unrelenting pleasure.

"Oh my God," Blue breathed beside Halen.

"Well blue-balls?" Halen smiled, turning to look at his chauffeur. "What're you

waiting for? Three damsels in distress for you to save. But which one will you pick?"

"The crown-" Blue choked out. "You-"

"No time for you to worry about that," Halen told him. "Look, Abigail is about to get tag-teamed by monsters, Maya's about to get face-fucked by Scaly over there. And it looks like it's already too late for poor Jennifer..."

Brian Xander hesitated for a moment longer.

Just long enough for one last Purple Shard pulse.

"Fuck!" He roared, rushing out of Halen's truck so fast that the driver-side door flew off its hinges. "I'm coming!"

Funny, Halen thought.

That was exactly what the three girls would be screaming soon, too.