

## The Windowpane Walls

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/31193768) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/31193768>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Explicit</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">F/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Shadow and Bone (TV)</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Kaz Brekker/Inej Ghafa</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Kaz Brekker</a> , <a href="#">Inej Ghafa</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Knifeplay</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2021-05-09 Words: 2,884 Chapters: 1/1

# The Windowpane Walls

by [impertinence](#)

## Summary

Kaz and Inej, back in Ketterdam.

## Notes

Huge thanks to abby for fixing my homophones.

This is set immediately post-S1 but borrows from the books in terms of character backstories.

It would be easier if she knew how to stop feeling like this.

She knew it. Kaz certainly knew it, and had told her as much. Inej was silent, deadly. She was the Wraith. She'd *killed* for him, but how much could that matter if she was still like this? Human. Devout.

Afraid.

They'd booked a room at an inn on the outskirts of Ketterdam, and Jesper had immediately excused himself. Inej couldn't blame him; they still didn't have a plan for how to deal with fucking up the job. If she'd had the option, if thinking about it didn't make her stomach turn, she'd spend this last night in the arms of a friendly stranger as well.

"Stop it," Kaz said quietly from across the room. Well. The room was tiny; there was no "across". There was a small bed they'd all three have to share and a single chair next to a small table holding a pitcher of water. Inej stood against the far wall; Kaz sat in the chair.

"Stop what?"

"Thinking."

"And let you do it all for me? Not likely."

"I," Kaz said, and stopped. He looked into the middle distance; his nostrils flared and he flexed one hand around his cane.

One bare hand. He'd taken his gloves off, after Jesper left.

"You're not going back," Kaz said: halting syllables, like he was furious he even had to say it.

And something about that made her light up, a signal flare against a dark sky. *He* was angry about it? Only imagine how she felt, a tangled ball of emotions, fury and fear and sick, sick disappointment that this wasn't more, that *he* couldn't be more for her.

The knife was in her hand before she registered as much; she moved over the bed without a sound. The Wraith, someone Kaz had only seen glimpses of. She pressed the knife against his neck.

Kaz only tilted his head back, improving her access. "The flat of the blade? Inej."

Fine, then. She turned it just a bit, the edge kissing his skin. "If I make a mistake right now I'll kill you."

"Did you think it might be a mistake not to kill me?"

*Never.* "Often."

“You won’t make a mistake.”

That was the problem. Not what he’d said; she did make mistakes, though she kept them from Kaz. But the faith, the surety. The way he looked at her, still breathing steadily, still perfectly relaxed. It wasn’t that he thought he was safe, Inej knew that. To Kaz, nowhere was safe, no *one* was safe. It was much worse. He’d said it himself: he needed her, and not even the threat of her blade or faith or fury would budge him.

She couldn’t respond. She thought words would tear her throat out as easily as a volcra. She pressed the blade a little more firmly against his neck and heard - felt - him gasp.

“Inej.”

“Do you do this with Jesper? With others?”

A hint of irony in his gaze. “Do what?”

It was easy to keep the knife steady, perfectly still, while reaching down with her free hand and touching him. Touching his bare skin, pulling his fingers up, pressing his palm hot against her waist and digging her own fingers into the bones of his wrist. “This.”

He swallowed, his jaw tense. “Inej. I don’t do this with anyone.”

She could take the knife away right now. She could leave. He would let her, she knew, a last gift. He’d lose the Crow Club, though. Heleen might not take it, but he was still too leveraged. Too many people wanted what he had. For a moment she imagined a future where she was free and far from the Barrel, and Kaz remained, rebuilding his power. He’d eventually come to hate her, she thought. He’d be angry with her and that anger would sour over time.

“No,” he said, and she came back to the present, tension unspooling like a circus act, like the moment she lowered herself and trusted the silks to hold her weight. For one disorienting moment she thought she’d spoken aloud, but of course she hadn’t. Kaz had just seen what she was thinking anyway. The skill that had kept him alive, and that had kept him away from everyone else.

“Whatever happens,” Kaz said. “Whatever you choose to do, I...”

He fell silent and stayed that way for so long that Inej thought they might be through. But then he sighed, a frustrated huff of breath, and moved. Pressed his neck against the blade, where there was no more room for error. Blood leaped up around the knife.

“What are you doing,” Inej said, but she didn’t move. Her hand stayed steady, and blood dripped down Kaz’s neck.

“You tell me,” Kaz said, and still his neck - his neck -

She moved the knife. Not far. It sat against his jaw now, the tip just kissing his ear. “Don’t do that again,” she said. Her hands were steady, but her voice shook.

“All right.”

And that was - he looked -

*Damn* him -

Something broke.

Her hand didn't move. Her hand stayed steady. She said, “Take your clothes off,” and he obeyed, moving to unbutton his waistcoat, to shrug out of his shirt, to pull his trousers down. Inej moved with him. She'd stalked guards across dozens of buildings; she'd been a wisp of smoke in the night that even Grisha couldn't best. It was easy to manage one ungraceful thief. Kaz Brekker, who had no heart, who wanted Inej because she was *useful*: it was easy to predict his movements and keep the knife steady against his jaw, until he sat naked in the ugly little chair. It must have been uncomfortable, but he didn't seem to notice. He was hard and wanting, and yet he didn't seem to notice that either. He only looked at her, that false, stupid trust all over his face.

“Touch me,” she said.

She thought that would be the point at which he said no, but it wasn't. He dropped his eyes and reached out. Skin on skin, down her forearm, making her shiver. Rough fingertips - when had he started wearing gloves? - skimmed over her knuckles, kissed the hilt of her knife.

“Inej,” he said. “I can't touch much of you here.”

It was a plea. *Let us out of this. Step away.* Because Kaz wouldn't, couldn't. He'd told her as much. He didn't seem to understand that Inej couldn't either. “You'd better fix that, then.”

She'd had clothes taken off her before, by evil men and by benignly interested ones - and by inanimate objects, too. If you made a misstep on a Ketterdam roof you'd fall, and iron lampposts, rough brick, wood lattices, all would rip at you to slow your fall. Inej had experienced all that and more, often under Kaz's orders.

If asked to guess, she'd have said Kaz would be brutally efficient with this, just as he was with everything else. Pressed for details, she might concede that she expected politeness. Never in her life would she have predicted trembling hands, averted eyes, soft touches against her hips, the underside of her breasts.

“Inej,” he whispered, and this time there was no performance, no challenge. Only Kaz, to whom she was bound in a dozen different ways, kissing her navel and looking up at her.

She held her hand steady.

“Touch me,” she said, and he closed his eyes, swallowed hard. Nodded, and pressed against her just a little, until she walked backwards and sat upon the bed.

He collapsed. No: he knelt, and he looked up at her, and she kept her hand steady on the knife as he leaned in and kissed her thigh. The blood on his neck had slowed to a trickle, but it was still as obvious as a scream in the still night. It smeared a little when he leaned in again. This

time, he nuzzled her, eyes flicking up to watch her reaction as he pressed her thighs further apart.

She didn't know what he saw; she looked away before he could meet her gaze. She held the knife steady as he reached up, unsubtle, broadcasting all his movements.

When he pressed her lips apart, she knew what he'd find, how wet she already was. He breathed in once, harshly, nostrils flaring. Then he leaned forward and licked her.

She couldn't lean back and still keep the knife on him, but she could brace herself with her other hand, fingers digging into the lumpy mattress as Kaz nuzzled her, licking slowly, *sucking* on her in such an odd, exploratory way. He knew what he ought to be doing, she thought, but he'd never done it before. There was something so horrible about that. Blood stained his collar, and yet he closed his eyes, seemingly paying the knife no mind as he reached up and teased a finger against her entrance.

She thought he might show his hand then, push in roughly, not deliberately awful but careless, self-interested as Kaz always was. He didn't. He only teased her, felt her wetness. His lips tilted up a bit in a half-grimace when she gasped and moved her hips a little.

"How does that feel?"

"Saints, don't make me say it."

Cool eyes flicking up to her face. "You can just say good or bad. But I do need to know."

They might as well have been planning a heist. She felt a completely insane urge to laugh. "*Good*. It feels...touch me again. I want -"

"I understand," he said, still so cold, sounding nearly unaffected. He leaned closer. His finger slid inside her so easily that Inej was almost embarrassed. Would probably be absolutely humiliated later, when she didn't want this quite so badly.

He curled his finger a little, and when she shivered - when she couldn't stop herself - he leaned in and licked the spot where his finger met her skin, dragged his tongue all the way up to her clit, then took it in his mouth.

She gasped, and she held the knife steady. She rocked her hips to take more of him inside, and she kept the blade flush to his skin. She opened her legs further, scooted to the edge of the bed - let him press his face against her, wet and messy, and she ensured the tip of the knife did no more than kiss his ear. She would not be responsible for more bloodshed, not tonight.

"I wish I could make you lose control," Kaz said. He shook his head, pressing a second finger inside her. It stretched, it nearly burned. It felt wonderful.

And yet: "If I lost control you'd - *ah* - you'd get your throat slit."

"Yes," Kaz said, and licked her again, and again, and again.

He was methodical about this, and that should have made it harder to - that should have made it less. Less intense, less memorable. Less something she needed. His hands were so strong, and he fucked her so implacably, like he didn't exist for any reason except her pleasure. She held the knife steady and she fucked herself on his hand and she came just like that, shaking, wound tight around him. It wasn't until after that she realized she'd moved her free hand from the bed and had buried it in his hair. He'd used too much pomade; it looked ridiculous now.

But of course, looking at his hair was easier than looking down at him. She wanted... something, she didn't know. To kiss him, to tug his hair more. To see his eyes go wide, his expression slack. She wanted to make him *feel*.

Instead, she turned the knife again so the flat of the blade rested against the line of his jaw, and she said, "Now you."

He looked at her, then down at himself. His lips looked clean but his face was shiny from her, cheeks and chin. "Like this?"

Did she have a choice? If she told him to get up on the bed, to kiss her and hold her, to *fuck* her - or to let her touch him - would he allow it, or would the spell be broken?

"Yes," she said finally, a coward's prayer. "Yes, like this."

He closed his eyes then, swallowing hard. Fear, maybe, crossed his expression. She found she couldn't bear even the suggestion of it. She slapped his cheek with the flat of her blade, just once. "Kaz, *now*."

His mouth opened on a silent gasp. He took himself in hand: she knew that was what was happening, even if she couldn't see it. His arm began to move, and he opened his eyes and stared up at her. Moved, pressed his cheek against the blade so firmly it nearly cut him despite Inej's best efforts.

"Inej," he whispered, and his arm moved faster.

"Yes." She moved the knife, but not back to his neck. Instead, she just...dragged it over his skin, down his cheek, across his jaw. Pressed it against the meat of his shoulder. Dragged the tip through his mussed hair. "Good or bad?"

"Inej -"

Now she pressed the tip of it in the hollow of his shoulder, just below his collarbone. He had to stop then, staring up at her, face bright red and eyes wider than she'd ever seen them.

"Good or bad, Kaz."

"Good," he whispered. He licked his lips. She could - Saints, she could smell both of them. They smelled like sex. She'd never known it like this, free of the perfumes of the Menagerie.

"Inej. Please, it's so good, *you're* so good."

Another lightning bolt went through her. She moved the knife again, slapping his cheek with the flat of the blade. He gasped, collapsing in on himself. "Kaz."

"Good," he whispered. "Still." And then he started touching himself again.

She kept the knife moving. She was terrified of what she might do if it stopped. His hair, his temples, his cheekbones, his lips - and he kissed the blade, eyes never moving from her. She was turned on again, or still, trembling with it, nipples tight in the cool night air. He took forever to come, too, despite the urgency in his movements. It was like he wanted to draw it out. Well, so did she; she knew she'd never get this again. But finally he was close, and then he laid his head on her thigh, making a hot keening noise, and came.

She felt it against her calf, warm wetness, and then she felt something else against her thigh: the flutter of his eyelashes, the barest hint of moisture.

She used the knife to pet his hair and waited for his trembling to subside. When it did, she moved - to get away from him, maybe. To put her clothes back on.

"Wait," he said, and caught her again. His hands splayed out on her thighs, blunt nails scraping her skin.

"What?"

He didn't answer. He only lowered his head and pressed his tongue inside her.

The knife fell from her hand. She allowed it to: never hold a weapon you're not willing to use. She needed both hands, anyway, to guide his head, to cling to him. Her heels dug into his back, her own back arching off the bed, and still he pressed on. Two fingers, then three - he was ravenous and she had no interest in stopping him, couldn't even imagine trying. "Inej, Inej," he whispered against her skin, and she writhed in his grip as she came again, crying out, pressing him to her as her world spun off its axis.

She drifted after that, just a little. She was aware of him moving, but she paid him as little attention as she could. She wanted to capture this moment, confusing as it was: the sweet ache between her legs, the sound of Kaz's quiet moans. She knew she'd take it out in lonelier times, worry over the memory like a page torn from an old book. It would live in her heart alongside the moment she'd seen the Sun Summoner's power, indelible and all the more painful for how real it was.

Eventually, though, she came back to herself. Kaz's hand appeared in her field of vision. He'd folded her clothes and placed them on their single chair; he was now placing her knife next to her shoulder, easily grabbed from either side.

"I'm going to go for a walk," Kaz said. His gait was off, stiffer than it had been when they'd gotten the room. "You...I'll be back. But not for awhile."

"Kaz."

"Yes?"



She didn't know what to say, and he must have realized it. He tilted his mouth up, a not-quite-smile barely visible in the moonlight. He'd cleaned the smears of blood off his neck, but the cut remained, looking like a stray thread clinging to his skin.

"You should get some rest," he said. "I'll have a job for you later."

"A job? Here? Now?"

"Yes."

"But -"

He held up a hand, gloved again. "There's always another job. We'll talk later."

And then he was gone, leaving her to fix her own clothes, splash water on her face, and remember what it meant to be the Wraith.

Works inspired by this one

[[podfic](#)] [The Windowpane Walls](#) by [growlery](#).

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!