

AVERAGE DAYS ABOARD THE PRAXITELES

A collection of stories chronicling the downtime of Captain Navarchus Zepto and his crew of ruffians aboard the universal traveling airship, The Praxiteles

A Beer a Day May or May Not Cause Radioactive Combustion

“So would you believe it, just offering my hand for her to shake as I was about to go my own way, she immediately thought I was proposing to her. Apparently on that world, handshakes are the equivalent of going down on one knee with a ring. Chalked that up to the third time I accidentally proposed to a woman on another world. Never gets easier being a heartbreaker when you don’t mean to be, but what can you do?” Captain Zepto took another swig of his ale, leaning back into his chair, his feet kicked up on a crate of empty bottles. Across from him was his fellow crewmate Stan, listening intently to the story being told while holding his drink. The two were conversing in a storage room where the crew would normally go to after a long day of work and maintenance.

“And you wonder why I keep reminding you to review the handy book on how to interact with new inhabitants,” Stan replied, amused by Captain Zepto’s tale but slightly annoyed by the repetitiveness of this specific issue.

“I do read them lad.”

“Dragging your finger along each line of words and whispering gibberish to yourself, doesn’t count as reading, sir,” Stan chuckled, taking a small sip of his drink. “Alright, I’ll give you the benefit of the doubt; tell me one thing that’s in the handy book.”

Captain Zepto scoffed at the challenge taking a swig of his drink, “Easy! Run up to the people with open arms and big smiles!”

“The exact opposite sir,” Stan said, shaking his head with a smile on his face. “You observe how they interact with each other from a distance and do not run right into town.”

“Oh fine, you got me! I’ll admit, my eagerness does make me more...inattentive to details but I simply cannot hold back my excitement of meeting new people; see them face to face, hear their exotic voices, see their exotic bodies!” Captain Zepto popped up from his chair holding his ale up high “A gent such as I can’t waste time with my head in papers when the opportunity is hot!”

Before Captain Zepto could continue his speech, a knock was heard coming from the entrance of the room, with Feronix standing in the doorway; his glowing body illuminating the area around him. “Sorry, am I interrupting you guys or...” he trailed off, unsure of whether to come in or leave.

“Ah, Fero my boy!” Captain Zepto exclaimed! “Not interrupting at all. I was just sharing some stories with Stan here. Take a seat, grab a beer! I got many more tales to tell!” He guided Feronix to a spare seat next to Stan before going to get something to drink. “What would you like?”

“Oh I don’t drink alcohol,” Feronix responded.

“Do you mean a certain type of alcohol or all kinds?” Stan asked.

“All.”

“Is it the burning sensation that bothers you, friend? That’s usually the case but it’s something you can get used to over time,” Captain Zepto said.

“It’s not even that,” Feronix started, “I know the power I have and it’s a dangerous one at that. Shooting out radiation from my fingers isn’t exactly something I feel comfortable about having, knowing the adverse effects it has on everyone besides me.” He held up his hand and gazed at the ever-present glow emitting from it. “If I were to lose control of my powers by having too much to drink, who knows what kind of damage I could cause.”

The room was silent for quite a while after Feronix spoke, and sighed looking at his feet. Captain Zepto and Stan looked at each other and back at Feronix, to share a quick laugh.

“What’s so funny?” Feronix asked looking up from his feet with a confused look on his face.”

Captain Zepto, still with his drink in hand, walked up to him and patted his head, “Listen lad, one small drink won’t make you lose it.”

“I don’t know that though. I don’t remember if I was a lightweight when it came to alcohol or if I even did drink at all. I can’t take the risk.” Feronix got up from his seat shuffling out of the room.

“Well, I know one thing we have to do today Stan,” Captain Zepto said. “We have to show our glowing friend that he can drink with no worries...and I know exactly how to do it.”

“So how is leaving an open bottle of beer out going to get Fero to drink?” Stan asked, looking at the bottle being placed on a table by Captain Zepto.

“The answer to that is simple; curiosity and temptation. Sure he said no earlier but when faced with an opportunity such as this, at the very least he’ll take a sip. We will be in the other room while he do-”

“Um, Zepto?” Stan interrupted, looking over Captain Zepto’s shoulder.

“Please, no interruptions friend. Now as I was saying, we’ll be in the other room while he does so. If anything goes wrong we have control of the situation.” Captain Zepto finished.

“Sir...”

Captain Zepto sighed in frustration giving into Stan’s gaze only to look behind himself and realize Feronix had been standing behind him the entire time with a sour look on his face.

“You didn’t happen to hear all that, did you?” Captain Zepto asked.

“Every word...you really have to work on discussing your plans in private” Feronix said. He walked away to go back to checking inventory.

“Damn, he’s right,” Captain Zepto said, feeling silly for letting his plan be exposed like it did. He gestured Stan to follow him to the storage room, making sure they were far enough inside so no one could easily hear from the doorway.

“I think it’s a bit too late to discuss the plan in private,” Stan said.

“Not if it is a new a plan lad.”

“Alright, so what is the new plan?”

Captain Zepto opened his mouth to speak but immediately was lost for words, stroking his chin to ponder what to say next. “I actually don’t know.”

Stan chuckled, “Worry not sir, I think I have something we could try.”

“Very good! Give me one sec though. Might as well get that beer I left out. Can’t let it go to waste.”

On his way to do so however, he came across an unexpected sight. Approaching the table, he saw that the beer was not there and instead was being held by Lorum, who was taking big gulps of it.

“Hey, that was mine!” Captain Zepto shouted.

“Don’t see your name on it,” Lorum said nonchalantly going back to his station.

“Note to self; start putting my name on the bottles.”

The day was winding down, the sky now a hazy orange and the sunlight casting a faded glow onto the deck of the ship; the wind starting to pick up and howl with the cold air. A normal, one sun, sunset unlike the ones seen on other worlds the crew had explored where there would be three suns setting at once. Feronix was out on the deck by himself leaning on the railing and enjoying the refreshing view of something somewhat normal for once.

His attention was brought to the sound of the door to the interior of the ship opening; Captain Zepto and Stan walking out onto the deck, both with a beer in their hand.

“Guys,” Feronix sighed. “I already said-“

“Just hear us out Fero,” Stan leaned on the rail next to Feronix. “We understand your concern with this but you really have nothing to worry about.”

“But my powers-”

“Can be dangerous if you have too much to drink but think about it, we’re all dangerous if we drink too much. Hell, the Captain here nearly knocked us into a mountain when he went overboard and started prancing about the control room, pressing all kinds of buttons.”

“Alcohol from that world we were on had a bit more of a punch than I was used to...”
Captain Zepto smirked, his cheeks flushing red.

“Point is,” Stan continued, “If you’re responsible with it, have it in moderation, you’ll be just fine. We’re outside away from all the machinery. If anything goes wrong you’ll have Zepto and I to take care of things. I even watered it down a bit for you. When you’re ready we can try it without water.”

Stan smiled at Feronix and handed him the bottle. Feronix brought it up to his muzzle to get the scent of it before drinking. The subtle fruity aroma filled his nostrils followed by a bit of spice from the alcohol. He looked towards Stan and Captain Zepto for confirmation; their answers being a nod of their heads.

“Well here goes nothing,” Feronix tilted the bottle against his lips and took a sip smacking a little to get the flavor from it. It definitely wasn’t as strong as he anticipated but he remembered Stan had watered it down some. He was still able to taste some sweetness along with the alcohol that was still remained.

“So, how is it?” Stan and Captain Zepto stared at Feronix with big grins on their faces hoping for a positive response

Stan put his arm around Feronix’s shoulder with a feeling of satisfaction, “Yes! I knew we could convince you buddy! Now just keep taking sips and keep us updated on how you feel, okay?”

Feronix nodded with a small grin on his face taking another sip as he started to get used to the flavor.

“Know what this calls for lads? Another story amongst mates!” Captain Zepto exclaimed.

“Oh, how about the one where you almost got the ship to float on water? I don’t think Fero’s heard that one yet,” Stan suggested.

“Ah, a fine one indeed and I am sure our new drinking buddy here will get a kick out of it. What d’ya say?” Captain Zepto popped the top off his beer with his claw, holding it out towards Feronix.

He took another sip and smiled, holding out his bottle towards Captain Zepto, “Sure thing.”

The two clinked their bottles together; Captain Zepto taking a swig and Feronix taking a slightly bigger sip.

“Cheers!”