

The Hamiston

The next morning, I was awoken by the sound of metal grinding on metal, followed by a blinding light seared my eyes and forced me to close them once more. As I began to tenderly open my eyes and regain my vision, I could see a distinctly female figure opening all of the windows in my room. As she turned and noticed that I was now awake, a familiar voice spoke, breaking the silence between us.

“Good morning, Sir! I am glad to see that you made it home safely! We were all concerned after the news of your hospitalization reached us. Would you care for some breakfast this morning? I have brought eggs, bacon and bread for you.” asked the female in a cheerful tone while walking over to a silver tray and walking towards me. As she approached, I could begin to make out her features more distinctly in my weary state. She was wearing a lavender dress and white apron. Her corgi body was slim and shorter, but what really brought attention to her were here warm brown eyes that always showed a spark of joy, no matter the circumstance.

Finding my voice, though course from my rest, I smiled and replied. “Good morning to you as well, Mydera. Food sounds really good right now. I haven’t eaten since yesterday morning.” As she placed the tray on my lap, I sat up and began to eat slowly. Mydera was one of my longest serving house assistants. When I moved into the estate and an advertisement was placed for workers, she was one of the first applicants to pass all of the security credentials given by the military. Since I did not own a large house, I had only asked for as minimal assistance as required. As much as it was nice to have them, from working on the farm as a pup I liked having some chores to complete myself.

Finishing my meal, I smiled and moved to hand her the tray. Twisting the wrong way however, a slight gasp escaped from my muzzle while a twinge of pain rushed through my left side, causing me to drop the piece of metal and clutch at my side while a low growl escaped my throat. As I looked up, I could see the concerned expression on Mydera’s face and forced a smile to try and reassure her.

“Are you alright, sir? Do you wish for me to get the doctor?” she asked as she moved closer to the edge of the bed. I quickly raised a hand to her and shook my head.

“No... no, I will be alright... just moved the wrong way.” I replied while gritting my ivory teeth together. “The explosion had broken two of my ribs. It will be at least another month before the pain starts to fully die down.” This explanation seemed to calm the female slightly as I watched her expression fall into a state of understanding before she moved to pick up the tray and dishes I had dropped. “The meal was lovely. Thank you.” I added to the end, trying to salvage some good feelings for what had just occurred. “Could you please ready the bath for me? I need to still clean up from my travels... I probably smell horrible.” I requested with a chuckle, though promptly stopped as the movement of my chest struck with more pain.

With only a simple nod and curtsy, Mydera slipped out of the room and down the halls towards what I remembered to be the bathing room's direction. Letting out a sigh, I slowly pulled myself out of the warm bed and moved once again into my closet. Placing on my brown pants, I made my way out of the bedroom and down the halls. Any of the servants working in the house knew of my markings, so I was not concerned as I passed them, returning any greetings that were given by them.

Entering the bathing room a short time later, the familiar white, marble walls of the small space were already beginning to fade from the steam clouds forming in the room. Spotting the tub through the mist, I removed my clothing and made my way over, carefully sliding into the warm water and lowering my body until the water was up to my shoulders. Warm water was a luxury that was unobtainable while at sea, and I cherished every moment that I had to use it. Slowly scrubbing my body down in the tub, I made sure to get every crevice. Once I had finished cleaning any dirt from my body, I held my breath and stuck my white face into the water and began quickly scrubbing the dirt away from my neck, cheeks and hair. After another fifteen minutes of simply relaxing, I reached out for my towel and stood up, exiting the tub and drying off. This was the cleanest I had felt in months and it was refreshing. Placing my pants back on, I finished drying off my torso and head before exiting the room and went to go get ready for the day.

I had spent the next few hours slowly getting back into the home life routine. Catching up with the workers of the estate with the stories my travels, completing my own chores... with the help of Mydera, and other various tasks ended up being my whole day and before I knew it, I could see that the sun was beginning to set along the western edge of the city, towards the sea. One thing I had learned early on about this city is that the night life was just as entertaining as during the day and I constantly found myself out there. Heading back to my room, I began to put on my charcoal, leather jacket over the maroon dress shirt that I had donned earlier in the day after my bath. The weather was looking as if it was going to rain and I really didn't feel like getting soaked on the way down into the city.

Wishing Mydera a good night, I started my way down the road towards the city. As much as I wanted to relax at home, I knew the alcohol from the pub would keep my ribs at bay until the morning, as long as I didn't do anything stupid... or maybe I just really needed a drink at that time. I wasn't planning on taking part in anything crazy, as I honestly only planned to have a couple drinks and maybe look at some tail. Being an officer had its downsides however, such as acting civil even if a man is pissing you off. Approaching the pub, I could already hear the loud chatter from the city's citizens inside.

I could feel a smirk forming on my face as I approached the building and entered the main door and pushed up open. The familiar strong scent of smoke and booze quickly filled my nostrils, causing me to cough slightly. Not being around it for a while, it affected you almost as if you never experienced it. Entering, I made my way to an open table and sat down, waiting to be served. As the worker approached, I was caught off guard to see that it was a male server making his way over to me. Usually the pub only had female servers... maybe they were desperate for workers. The strong form of the golden retriever made his way up to me and without even looking up, spoke in a plain tone.

"What would you like, sir?" he asked, and I could tell he was already annoyed with the volume the pub was currently at. His average form was clearly visible under his tight clothing and I could tell that it was only adding to his annoyance by the way he pulled at it. It was actually kind of cute come to think of it.... No, that's not what I am here for!

"Simply a pint for now, and get one for yourself, it looks like you need it." I replied with a smile and handed him the extra coins for the second drink. It felt good as I saw him look up and returned my smile. Giving a quick nod, the male server disappeared once more into the crowd of rowdy, drunk canines.

By the amount of men in the pub, I took a guess that a fleet had just arrived back into port. The building was never this full, even on a good night unless the dogs were celebrating their lives. Shaking my head, I looked down at the table once more while I waited for my drink. I was shaken from my blind stare at the wooden surface before me when a couple sailors began to approach from my left side. Keeping them in the corner of my eye, I continued to focus on keeping myself out of any trouble. It wasn't very often that an officer would be was sailors from any ship in the same pub, as we usually had our own times, but I had been coming to this establishment for years now. As the three men approached, they stopped beside me and I had no problem recognizing the signs of a drunkard wanting to fight.

"Lookie here boys.... it is the *"immoral"* Captain Shepherd. The man who never turned away a fight." he started, roughly as he slurred his words. "What is a man of your stature spending time with the "lowly" men of the *Hamilton*? This is *our* night at the pub!" he laughed. As I looked up, I could see the form of a well-built wolf standing before me, his uniform half undone and fur matted. The crew of the *Hamilton* and my crew had never gotten along since they attempted to attack us one night over rumors, and brawls were almost a given if we were caught together. It just went to show that even if you were on the same side of the war, you still had to watch your back.

"I don't know." I replied to him plainly. "Why are you talking to an officer looking like a piece of shit?" I kept a blank face as I stared him down. I could see his body tense in anger at the comment and it amused me to see him boiling as he attempted to return the jab I sent. I could see his buddies attempting to keep themselves between us, though being half his size, I would have to react myself if he decided to do anything.

Shaking my head, a smirk plastered on my face, I slowly stood and started making my way towards the bar to pick up my drink instead of having it brought to me. I only get two steps however before I felt the wolf grab my shoulder and spin me around. I couldn't help but wince as a sharp pain shot through my torso from my ribs and this easily caught the attention of the wolf, who smirked wildly.

"I am not going to take shit from nobody! Not a crew member, not an officer! Especially a *St. Catherine*." he shouted before swinging his right fist towards my midsection. Growling, I jumped back to avoid the blow and glared at him, forcing my pain to the back of my mind. This is what I wanted to avoid. I knew I was in no condition to fight. As luck would have it however, I

spotted another brawl starting near us and I used them as a distraction before once again moving towards the bar. I could hear the wolf calling me a coward behind me, but I could really care less about the drunkard at the moment. One hit from him could have easily sent me back to the hospital in my current state.

Looking up to the bartender, a good looking german shepherd, I requested my drink and spoke. "If that drunk grey wolf is approaching me again aggressively, let me know please." I asked, and was happy to see him nod. Looking down at the metal cup in front of me, I took a good gulp of the beer and relaxed. As I finished my pint of beer, more movement caught my eye. Sure enough, about twenty minutes later the bartender looked at me and motioned that the male was approaching me. It was so simple, all I had to do was wait for his heavy panting and steps to approach me. I simply grabbed the cup and swung around, catching the wolf across the jaw and dropping him to the floor with a loud thump. The pub seemed to fall silent however as they all looked at me while I stood over the male, clutching at my rib cage. Without a word, I gave the bartender a large tip and nodded in thanks before moving towards the exit, my night now ruined by the drunk Hamilton crew member now unconscious on the floor of the pub.