

Do Angels Smell of Rum?
by Bavand

(Takes place sometime before POTC 1 on a tropical island in the middle of the Caribbean under the hot, blistering sun. It's a first person perspective of Jack from a (mostly) proper English lady... (originally posted on fanfic.net in 3 separate parts.)



Part 1 of 3

Apparently, he had not learned—or chose to ignore—the social graces of a gentleman keeping a polite distance from a lady.

Heaven isn't suppose to hurt so much, is it? Do angels smell of rum? I thought not and yet it was too hard to think otherwise with all the pain and sickness I felt.

The endless excruciating roar of the ocean pounded in my head without mercy and my arm, somehow trapped and unbending, burned with pain of a broken bone. This could not be heaven with the ever present torrid taste of coconut milk on my tongue—very unpleasant.

There he was again... coming out of the darkness, hovering above me with a colorful assortment of trinkets dancing around dark, smoldering eyes and wearing a red halo. Those eyes seemed more devilish than holy, but they were filled with compassion and concern every time I saw them. No, I'm sure I must be dead because I could not have survived otherwise.

Snatches of a violent storm and drowning in the thrashing waves clawed at my consciousness. My father shouting... the salty sea filling my mouth... gagging, choking and pulling me under then gagging and choking on sand... out of the water and unmoving, slipping into the sometimes hot, sometimes cold darkness of... hell? Bloody hell! Did I really deserve this after being such a good girl all my life?

I opened my eyes and found I was laying on my right side. My left arm—obviously broken—was secured in a makeshift splint and propped on my hip with rags. My hair had been pulled back and tied with a rag. The rampant roar in my head had simmered down to a dull drum roll. I felt hot, gritty, achey and so very, very thirsty. I was on a beach with the first colors of sunrise chasing away the night. The last of a fire crackled in front of this crude shelter we were under and this fellow was stretched out on his back with several rags shoved under his head and empty bottles at hand.

This was not my father.

I gasped and screamed for him as I struggled to sit up with my good arm. The sudden movement turned my stomach into a tight tempest of nausea as bile filled my mouth. He was at my side in an instant, holding me up as I wretched into the sand. He told me to take deep breaths in a soothing slur until I collapsed back down on my side, completely spent.

“You’ll sleep better now and not feel so sick.” I watched as he scooped away and smoothed the sand in front of me until the mess was gone. He eased another softer, something folded under my head. I heard a cork pop and then my face was wiped clean with a cloth soaked in wine. “No quick moves again, “ay? Slow and easy, darling.”

Sleep rolled over me like a fog. He put a hand to my forehead, sighed in relief and stroked my cheek. I remembered that feeling from before... I was so cold it felt like the rest of my bones would break from the shaking. I thought there must be monkeys all around me from the constant chatter I heard, which I now realized were my teeth.

I felt him curl up against me from behind, engulfing me in his warmth under some sort of covering. A warm hand massaged my cheeks and jaw until my teeth stopped chattering. As he leaned over me, I felt little feathers tickling my neck and ear—the braids of his beard. He whispered warm, soothing thoughts in my ear: *darling, this is a tropical island in the middle of the Caribbean, how can you be so cold? You can't be cold, luv. Not good... no fevers allowed here, savvy? There's a hot, blistering sun beating down on us with no shade... Alright, that's not entirely true. There is plenty of shade, but for our purposes here, darling, think no shade...*

Different thoughts floated up from dreamland: Angels have warm hands; I wanted that silky whisper to stay in my ear and hold me forever; I don't like coconut so why do I keep tasting it; I'm getting use to the reek of rum and wine; I'm not in hell but on a tropical island in the middle of the Caribbean; why can't I have some water, or better yet, a spot of tea...?

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Whap-whap-whap!

I opened my eyes, but didn't move. The fellow sat cross-legged facing me in the shade of this makeshift shelter we were under. He had cracked open a coconut by tapping the seam with handle end of a kitchen knife. He scrutinized the inside of the two halves before tossing one over his shoulder and carved a slice of the meat out from the half he kept.

“Who are you?” I croaked. Somehow speech was hard to manage with a parched throat.

“Ahh, you're awake! That's a good sign, “ay?” He held up the knife in admonishment, “but no quick moves, savvy?” I nodded. “Good. Slow and steady for you, I think.”

He dropped the white coconut chunk into his mouth and chewed thoughtfully, studying me as I got a better look at him. Two braids hung from his chin secured with beads. There were colorful beads and trinkets tangled in his hair about his face and the rest of the mess was secured with a red bandana—not a halo. Ahhh, so this was the angel—or devil—that smelled of rum and wine. Barefoot, he wore bedraggled breeches and a dirty, once-was-white shirt. A long, ragged red and white sash was wrapped about his waist and held a knife.

“Captain Jack Sparrow, at your service.” He said with the sweep of his hand and bow of his head as though he was announcing a hero and expected applause. He sighed ruefully at the lack of recognition on my part and grabbed an open bottle of wine without having to look where it was. He lifted it up, saw that it was empty and pitched it aside.

“I don't remember seeing... I thought my father and I were the only passengers.” I cautiously lifted my head. He dropped the coconut he was still clutching in the other hand and scooted over to me. He eased me up into a sitting position. Once I was securely upright without problems, he sat back down right in front of me, knee to knee, watching me with quiet amusement. Apparently, he had not learned—or chose to ignore—the social graces of a gentleman keeping a polite distance from a lady.

I was about to say something when I saw all the wreckage strewn about the beach. Salvageable and useful items had been sorted into loose piles of clothes, jewelry, valuables, assorted cutlery and other kitchen utensils along with a fair amount of wine and liquor bottles. These were lined up in several neat rows in the shade of two palm trees. Here and there were small piles of coconuts.

“Water?”

He shook his head and reached back to the small pile of coconuts behind him and picked up the knife. With the handle end he poked at the three knots that looked like eyes and a nose until two of them were pushed in like a cork forced into a bottle. He sniffed at the holes, smiled and held it up in a salute before tipping his head back. He let the contents dribble into his open mouth. Once it was drained, he smacked his lips in satisfaction.

I licked my dry, cracked lips longingly. He obliged me with another coconut and helped me drink it when I almost dropped from my one good hand. I drank it with a grimace, but it did slack my thirst somewhat.

“It’s just us, then?” I asked in a small voice. “My father...?” He shook his head and I was touched by the sympathy in his eyes. “What happened? We were in our cabin and I remember a storm—”

“Aye, there was storm.”

“But it wasn’t that bad—a bit of a drenching rain and the waves were high—but not enough to cause a shipwreck.”

“There was an explosion. I have no idea... gunpowder, mostly likely. In the bow it was, but with the storm raging, it sank the ship fast.”

The complete candor in his voice was also unsettling. I got the impression it was not used very often and I realized why with quick clarity: His manner of being completely harmless along with the casually friendly, slightly sodden slur put you at ease enough to eventually let your guard down.

“Your father was struggling to hold your head above the water while shoving you on to a part of the mast.” Jack continued. “You were out cold... Had one arm up and it flopped back in the water—broken—wouldn’t hold at all. I helped him get you half on it by pulling you from the other side... he must have been injured badly—hardly any strength left to heave himself up. Hanging on to you, I tried to pull him up, but the waves...”

He paused and sighed as my eyes filled with tears. He disliked being the bearer of bad news. “I’m sorry, luv. He shouted for me to save you before he went under. So there we were, you and I, at mercy of the wind and waves, clinging to this wood and hanging on to your arm for dear life. Don’t know how long till the storm cleared and we were swept towards this spit of land.”

I could not hold back the sobs. His hands came up hovering between us, unsure of what to do. Hug me? Pat me on the shoulders? Silently he got up, leaving me respectfully alone to my grief or to retreat from a despairing damsel.

However, I soon discovered it hurt my head too much to cry and the tears stung my sunburned face. I felt hot and grimy in this soiled, shipwrecked dress and my broken arm ached and itched against the splint. It did not take me long to compose myself as I watched him sashay back with a bottle of brandy and two unbroken tea cups.

“I say, you’re the prisoner they were keeping down in the hold!”

He stopped dead in tracks and looked around as though he was making sure no one else heard and shushed me. He put a finger up to his lips as he crept up and hunched down to sit under the shelter beside me. He then leaned on me so close I could feel his breath on my face. I was tempted to move

away, but decided to stay still. I was not about to give him the satisfaction of unsettling me with ungentlemanly manners.

"I'll have you know," he slurred as he dropped the cups in my lap, "that I was being held against my will."

"Oh really, isn't that what most prisoners claim?"

"Wouldn't know," he shrugged as he straightened up to struggle with the cork of the bottle. "I never considered me-self a prisoner." That, I could see, was an outright lie. He freed the cork and sniffed the contents approvingly. "Brandy for m'lady?"

"Miss," I corrected offhandedly as I picked up one of the cups. "Miss Barrett. Lord Barrett was my father."

"Ohhhh, I see, my apologies, Miss." He sat up straighter, brushed the sand from his breeches and smoothed out his shirt.

I studied the cup and held it up to the light. Not a single crack... fine porcelain china survived a shipwreck, but not flesh and bone. Well, we can't be that far from Port Royal—we had only been at sea a few days...

He sighed impatiently. "Ahh, miss, if you're not going to drink..."

"Oh, sorry..." I held the cup out to him and he poured a small serving into it. I thanked him and raised it to my lips.

"Just a sip, luv. Wouldn't want you to get sick again."

I took a tiny sip and almost choked. I felt it burn on the way down but by the time it hit my stomach, it suffused me with a warm glow.

In one quick move, he had the brandy and the other cup in his hands. He carelessly poured the brandy until it sloshed out of cup. I stared, somewhat pointedly, at the brimming brandy, taken aback at the lack of manners. Unabashedly, he raised it high in a salute. "To Lord Barrett," he declared and drained the cup in one swallow. "And to his lovely daughter, Miss...?"

"Julia."

"Julia," he purred. "Pretty. Like a jewel, "ay? Jewel-lee-ah."

I blushed as I was never one to delude myself in front of a mirror. I could be really smart looking at times with my hair done up and a bit of makeup applied just right. Nevertheless, my eyes were more a dull gray than green and my straight straw colored hair did not curl in lovely waves about my shoulders. Most importantly, I was a little too flat on top and a little too wide on the bottom. But when my name rolled off his tongue like a precious gem, I felt chills go down my spine.

He flung the cup aside and took a long swig directly from the bottle. I gasped and glared at him.

"What? Now that we've been properly introduced there's no need for formalities, "ay? You won't get any from me, luv, but what you choose to do is, well, what you choose to do. And, you need to eat," he declared. He put the brandy bottle down between us and reached for the coconut he had drank out of earlier.

"No, really, I couldn't."

He said nothing, but smiled like a cat about to pounce on a mouse. He expertly tapped along the seam with the kitchen knife handle until it split open. He cut away several small chunks, speared one on the knife and handed it to me. My face wrinkled in distaste.

“No use keeping airs about the food either. This is it, darling, if you want to survive. There’s jerky in the barrel over yon, but I wouldn’t recommend it.”

I looked over at the barrel and turned back to the knife. He handed it to me without dropping the meat on the blade. I managed to swallow it and had to admit I felt better with something in my stomach. I washed it down with another small sip of brandy.

“Just beef jerky? But how amazing how all those bottles of wine survived intact and, what? Washed up on shore with nary a broken cork?”

He raised a finger up as though he were about to impart an important secret. “The key to survival is priorities, darling. One can only save so much before it’s lost to the sea. And who knows how many more,” he choked back a fake sob, “that will never see the light of day? I just couldn’t save ‘em all...”

“I see. And what are these?” I picked up one of the empty, unmarked dusty bottles and sniffed. The rum was pungent in strength. “Certainly nothing the Royal Navy would have served.”

He looked away with in mock guilt and shame. “I’m sorry, darling, I truly am. I discovered the cache several days ago, and well... the truth is,” this last part came out in a rush, “that was the last of it.” He cringed like a slave about to be hit. “I had no idea if you were going to survive—but thankfully you did!—or I would have saved you some of the rum. Honest.”

“I see... well, as you can imagine I am deeply crushed. I suppose it was a matter of those “survival priorities” you spoke of and I will just have to take your word that you would have saved me some if you knew I would survive. Well, what is done is done and my priority now is for you to help me up and get me out of this blistering hot and heavy dress.”

Jack put a hand up to his ear. ““ay? Did I hear you say you want me to undress you?! Or was that a trick of the wind?”

I sighed in exasperation and struggled to stand up. “Just please help me. Obviously I can’t manage undoing all these laces with one hand, or believe me, I would.”

“Oh yes, I know exactly what you mean, luv. All those laces can be such a nuisance.”

He scrambled to his feet and had me up by the one hand before I might change my mind. Temporarily blinded by being thrust into the sun, he whipped out the knife in his sash before I could protest. In one expert slash, the dress fell away from my body. Next came the corset without any hesitation.

Freed from the weight and constriction of the heavy material, I took a deep breath and sighed in delight. “Ahhh. Oh, thank you, Jack, it feels—no, never you mind that! This stays on.” In the brief pause of the blade, I managed to put a hand of protest over the laces of my chemise as I had nothing else on. And he knew that.

“Ah well, can’t blame a pirate for trying. ‘Take what you can and give nothing back’, is our motto.” He paused in thought. “Actually, one of several mottos.”

I almost gasped out loud—a pirate?! I suppose I knew that all along, but some how his admitting to it seemed like admitting to a criminal act. I kept my composure so as not to offend him. “Yes, well, that is all the accommodation I need, thank you very much.”

I took a step and almost tripped on the hem dragging in the sand. The proper thing would be to hold the chemise up just high enough to walk without showing any leg whatsoever. However, I was on a tropical island in the middle of the Caribbean full of sand and would prefer not to be hampered in movement.

Jack looked down as well with gleeful anticipation, twirling the blade in his hands.

“Alright, there is obviously one more thing you could accommodate me that I would appreciate. Can you please cut the hem off enough—no, not that high!” He had grabbed the seam well above the knees. “Just enough so I can walk about freely. Lower... Jack, please! I’m feeling a bit faint and you know exactly what I mean.”

Without further ado, he did a nice job of slicing off just enough hem to be functional and still retain my respectability. He took my hand and helped me back down.

“Thank you, sir. I do believe I shall rest before dinner is served.” He backed up and bowed like a servant being dismissed, then weaved away in search of another bottle.

I sighed as I closed my eyes. Pirates are not angels, no doubt about that, but this one saved my life...

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[No tea cups, corsets or coconuts were harmed during the production of this part.

The somewhat unsavory—not to mention—possibly unholy comparison of Jack to angels used with permission (Angels Union Local Heaven). The devil didn’t give damn one way or another, so I took that as implied consent.]

Part 2 of 3

"You're becoming irritable and impossible to live with it. Not to mention rebellious, obstinate—with big, dark circles under your eyes—very unbecoming for a lady such as your self, 'ay?"

I forgot what I was going to do when I stood up... the firelight flickering across Jack's face created a sensual glow I had not noticed before. I dare say I found myself more and more drawn to him as the days went by...4 or was it 5 now? I lost track and I did not care. Yet my father's voice persisted in reminding me to keep my distance: Pirates are despicable! They should all be hanged—every last one of them...

But surely father would have recognized the disheveled manner of dress and the gaudy jewelry—most likely stolen—flashing on the hands he was entrusting with his daughter's life. And yet he was nothing like the criminal pirates I had seen at the pier, bound in irons and herded to the gallows with no life... no passion. There was a class about him—almost aristocratic—that put him far above the others with a sensual, unrestrained passion...

I watched him bend over again for another branch and throw it on the fire, being careful—of course—not to spill any wine. Oh yes! I was going to get another bottle of wine... So very different from the buttoned up, bewigged and perfectly polished men of my world; the ones my father foisted upon me as suitable suitors approved for future son-in-laws. They were the epitome of restraint in every sense, the latest being, what's his name... Lieutenant... Norrington?

But Jack's whole manner spoke of a life free from the burdens of society... no restraint whatsoever. We spent hours and hours sharing life stories and adventures—more his than mine—until he showed me those scars of his. It was in a suddenly serious moment of the "truth" behind all his "adventures" and I shall never forget how hard his dark eyes turned, daring me to ask—knowing full well I would not want to hear about the painful side of surviving as a pirate. No one did. All they wanted were the grand tavern tales of the legend he represented and wished they could be... so passionately unrestrained.

Still, it seemed much too high a price for this freedom he goes on and on about... and only added to the mesmerizing mystic... the unrestrained passion that was all so compelling... he was so compelling; then I realized with a start he caught me staring at him and was amused.

"Oh! I'm so sorry, how terribly rude of me," I stammered. "I was just wondering—was thinking, really—well, really wondering what your life must be like, to live so unrestrained, so pass—I mean, that is to say, so different from my life, really..."

"Were you now?" he asked as he sashayed back and came right up into my face. "But I see no apology in your eyes, darling. In fact, you are blushing."

"No, really," I protested poorly, taking a step back to regain some semblance of space and sensibility. I snatched the bottle out of his hand. Was it just me or was the night air getting rather hot? I needed a drink and took a good strong swig, hoping he would not notice the tremor in my hand.

"In fact, luv, I think you were "thinking" how you would fair living so "unrestrained" and... whatever that last word was I didn't hear clearly." He dismissed the unheard word with a flick of his wrist.

I almost said it, but I bit my lip.

"Hold that thought," he commanded as he took back the bottle and gestured for me not to move. He carefully set the wine down securely in the sand before straightening and stepping right up against me in one fluid motion. Preening, he made a big show of turning up the corners of his mustache.

"I hope what you were "thinking" might be enjoyable, 'ay?" He continued as his eyes flashed flirtatiously. One arm circled my waist, bringing me completely pressed against him with a gasp.

That is to say, I was the one to gasp. He slid around to my side without releasing me, drawing his hand across my belly.

"To be so unrestrained," he cooed in my ear, " Or perhaps... ahhh, perhaps passion is the word I didn't hear clearly."

He slinked behind me and his hands came down lightly on my shoulders. Chills shot down my spine at his touch. It was rather unnerving how he could almost read my mind. Was I really that transparent? How could he have possibly known what I almost let slip and yet I felt myself melting under his hands—which was rather unnerving as well. That is to say, I am not some pure, pristine virgin who has never been seduced before. It's just that the moon was so bloody hot in the middle of the Caribbean and the wine was intoxicating...

"Passion is our way of life, luv. We are passionate about the horizon we see," he breathed in my other ear, "and the freedom it brings. Passionate about... treasure—oh yes—and the freedom it brings... whatever your heart desires."

His hand slid seductively gentle down my broken arm and lightly scratched the space between my skin and the splint. While it was not the most romantic of gestures, the relief from the itch made me swoon against him breathlessly.

"And passionate about..." he came around in front of me, "...I promise you, m'lady, you will never forget a pirate's passion for—" He paused, reading my face. His hands froze in midair near my cheeks.

In spite of being flushed with my heart pounding madly—an ardent puddle of desire completely at his mercy—my true reluctance must have been apparent as he obviously reconsidered what he was about to do. Having had a titch too much wine, he wisely realized I might regret such a dalliance later, and come to resent him for it as well.

He took a step back, brought his hands together in supplication and bowed slightly. "I promise to be a perfect gentleman, you have nothing to fear from me. And now, if you will excuse me, I will fetch me-self another bottle."

What? The spell had been abruptly broken, leaving me reeling with rejection. He turned and started swaying away. "Wait, your body!" I blurted without thinking. He whirled back around with wide eyes of feigned surprise at my unseemly outburst. "I mean the bottle—your bottle! Here, take it. I don't want anymore." I picked it up and held it out to him after taking another quick swallow.

"Thank you, but strange... I could have sworn I heard something other than "bottle". Must have been the wind, "ay?"

Oh how chivalrous! We both knew there was no wind. "Bloody hell!" I swore under my breath as I turned away, fully flushed from embarrassment now and infuriatingly frustrated.

Suddenly, I felt his warm breath on my neck again as he bent down to my ear without touching me. "No worries, luv. I'll know if there's ever a change in the wind..."

I stood stock still, holding my breath until he finally moved away—hopefully to the far side of the island. I hated how he could sneak up on me without being heard, hated how pathetically transparent I was and hated how the open-ended invitation lingered in the air.

"Bloody hell!" I swore as I shuffled over to my coconut husks "village".

Sand castles were utterly impossible build with one hand and so coconut halves turned upside down became my houses. The entire beach was littered with abandoned harbor towns, clusters of

constellations and maps drawn in the sand. He taught me how to navigate by the stars, the best possible approach to various ports without raising an alarm and where all of the buried treasure he knew of lay hidden.

This village represented Nassau and he showed me how he planned to take it some day without firing a single shot. The husks turned right side up represented the ships in the harbor—he even carved a jolly roger in the side of one to represent the Black Pearl.

“Bloody, bloody hell!” I kicked sand in the Black Pearl, but that did not satisfy my ire enough. Finally, I just picked it up and threw it away as far as I could and yet I couldn’t resist touching my neck where his breath had been moments before.

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The torrential rain kept pushing my head under the waves again and again. And the ocean was filled with the noise of hysterical screaming. A vague part of my mind wondered how someone could scream so loudly under water when a stinging slap across the face brought me instantly to my senses and fully awake. I touched my cheek where the skin burned and burst into tears.

“Darling, I’m so, so sorry,” Jack pleaded apologetically, “I didn’t mean to strike you so hard, but I couldn’t wake you.”

I nodded in understanding. It was raining hard enough to soak through the clothes he had piled on top of the shelter and spill on my face, triggering the worst nightmare yet.

“Another nightmare, ‘ay?” He picked up a fist full of sand and tossed it in the air. “But see? Not drowning, luv, nothing but sand all around and an ol’ scurvy scallywag.”

I could not help but smile his description of himself and he smiled back. He lifted my hand off my face and winced at the mark.

“Ahem,” he swallowed hard. “Bit of a red mark, I see, but should be gone morning and you’ll be your bright, beautiful self again.”

This elicited a snort of derision from me as he lay back down on his back. He put one hand under his head and stretched the other one out, inviting me to put my head in the crook of his arm. “Sorry to wake you again.”

He mumbled something about swimming lessons and needing to take control of my fear as he slightly shifted my splinted arm between us. I mumbled back a polite no thank you, to which he mumbled back something about needing to take control of my fear as he drifted off right back to sleep. I lay staring out at the waves rolling white with the storm. Last night’s debacle of “passion” was all but forgotten in the shadows of the nightmare.

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“Alright missy, it’s swimming lessons for you today.”

“No thank you.” I declined politely. “I am fine, really.”

“You are not fine,” he declared as he firmly took my hand and led me to the waters edge. “You need to take control of your fear.”

“No, really. I—“

“—Can’t live the rest of your life in a nightmare—“

“But—“

“—And I can’t tolerate another sleepless night. ”

“You!?! You always go right back to sleep! I’m the one—“

“—You’re becoming irritable and impossible to live with it. Not to mention rebellious, obstinate—with big, dark circles under your eyes—very unbecoming for a lady such as your self, ‘ay?”

I dug my heels in and pulled against his grip. He stopped and dropped my hand with an impatient sigh. “Why ignore it, luv, when you can conquer it?”

“I can ignore it,” I insisted. “I do not live my life on the high seas like you do and besides, the nightmares will go away.”

“Darling, let’s sit down and discuss this, shall we?”

He walked into the water until it was above his ankles and sat down. I sat down next to him as he stretched out his legs and leaned back against his arms, basking in the sun. This we have done many times before as it was refreshing to bathe in the cool waters.

“You’re going to spend the rest of your life in Port Royal and not go back to England?” He asked with just a note of sarcasm in his voice.

“Of course, why not? I dare say I can run my father’s estate from there just as easily. Besides, England is—“

“And how do you plan to get from here to Port Royal?”

“Well, yes, obviously by ship, but I shall be fine, I’m sure.” The confidence in my voice was real. If I could walk on water, I would not hesitate to run on it right now knowing there was tea, and water, and a bath with soothing lavender oils and biscuits with marmalade waiting on the other side.

I watched as he pushed himself into the water until he was floating completely relaxed.

“Nature is a funny thing when you think about it. Take water, for instance.” He flicked at the water with his fingers. It’s not solid, luv, and yet it can hold objects as big as a ship with the right displacement of buoyancy.”

I automatically nodded in agreement even though his eyes were closed. I have to admit I was rather envious of his ability to just repose in the water like that with the waves gently rocking you.

“And then there’s fear, and its displacement,” he continued.

“Are you saying you are not afraid? Of anything?”

“Yes,” he answered simply and honestly. “Why should I when I know that every beastie has a fear of its own. Anything with a heart knows there will always be something bigger and stronger or smaller and deadlier. Saavy? I don’t have to be afraid, if I know it’s afraid and displace it with its own fear.”

I loved how he talked. His voice had this melodic lull to it that made any sort of a discussion interesting, even when he did not quite make sense.

“But if it doesn’t have a heart—with flesh and blood and all that—it’s just a thing. Or an element like water or fire. And that’s all it is, just a thing guided by its own rules of nature that you can reckon with. You

should really try this, darling. It is soooo relaxing, almost as blissful as rum..."

"I see... Alright, answer me this—and honestly, mind you. You are honestly not afraid of anything?"

"Darling, I'm Captain Jack Sparrow." He stated as though that was enough to settle the matter. In the ensuing silence he finally tipped his head up and squinted at me, only to find my glaring back at him. He sighed, rolled on to his stomach and glided back to sit next me.

"Alright, I will tell you this, and you will be the only living soul I've ever told."

I nodded eagerly, dying to hear what was his secret fear.

He lowered his voice. "I dislike intensely—which is not the same as "fear", mind you—but I intensely dislike those little beasties with six legs." He imitated the movement of a spider with his hand across the sand and up my arm. "And they have these little itty, bitty beady eyes. And some even have fangs!" He shuddered as though to shake them off.

It took me a moment to realize what he was saying. "What?! You mean a spider?!"

"Shhhh!" He hushed me with another shudder and a bone chilling shake of the shoulders. "Don't even say it, luv! The very idea of one—I'm telling you, truly evil, they are."

"A spider. You are afraid of a tiny little spider that spins webs and—"

"Not so little, darling. I have seen some as big as my fist! And not fear, remember? I intensely dislike them, but you see, I know what displaces them..." He paused dramatically.

"And that is?"

"They can't swim!" He laughed, almost hysterically, as he stood up as though he were officially ending the "lesson." "Nary a one can swim! And so you spit on them to subdue them and then you crush them mercilessly beneath your boot before kicking them off into the dreaded ocean!"

He stomped his way out of the water to emphasize his point.

"Umm, Jack? You do know you are not wearing boots now?"

He froze in mid-step and pivoted around to me on one foot. "Good point."

I meant nothing more than how ridiculous it was to stomp in the sand. However, he tip-toed back to the water, glancing over his shoulder nervously. "Not sure if there are sand spiders beasties—if there is such a thing—but why take such unnecessary risks when the water is so cool and inviting."

He effortlessly eased into the water again and glided out. I could not help but laugh at his strange sense of humor.

He swam back to me and took my hand. I resisted until he pulled hard enough for me to lose my balance and I was in the water. Without letting go, he rolled on to his back and closed his eyes as he hadn't a care in the world.

What if... perhaps, just perhaps he really was afraid of spiders? Somehow, the silly thought gave me the courage to cautiously lay back in the water until I was actually floating.

"Remember, luv, think displacement. That's all there is to it."

Displacement, indeed. I do believe somewhere along the way his mind had become displaced, I

chuckled to myself as I floated serenely on the waves. That certainly would explain a lot...

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[No firewood or imaginary spiders were harmed during the production of this part. Unfortunately the Black Pearl coconut husk was severely damaged and an insurance inquiry has been filed (United Association of Coconuts, claim #011362, for more information go to www.UAC.org).

The reference to suitable suitors unanimously approved by the Society of Single Royal Navy Officers.]

Part 3 of 3

“As it were, am in no hurry to return to the gallows. I find nooses around my neck distasteful, don’t you agree?”

Scanning the horizon and not expecting to see anything had become an unconscious habit. I sat with the coconut gripped between my knees to punch in the eyes when the dark shadow registered in my brain. I looked up and blinked my eyes.

“Jack, look!”

He was beside me in a flash and squinted at the speck in the distance but unmistakably coming toward us. “Royal Navy, no doubt...”

I had not given any thought to rescue and what it would mean for Jack. It just stayed in the back of mind as a possibility some day. But now, here it was in what—a week?—and civilization had come a-calling.

He helped me up and then clapped his hands together and rubbed them as though he had a job to do. He turned to me and bowed with flourish. “M’lady, the pleasure of your company has been, well, a pleasure. I shall treasure this time together as a fond memory. I wish you well and following winds... good-bye!”

He whirled off, but I was quick enough to grab his arm and stop him short. “Wait! Where are you—?”

He removed my hand and held it tenderly. “M’lady, I’m sure you’re elated at the prospects of rescue—civilization... rum, food, water, rum... a ship.” A brief trace of temptation crossed his face before his eyes narrowed, intent on self-preservation. “As it were, am in no hurry to return to the gallows. I find nooses around my neck distasteful, don’t you agree?” He kissed my hand and turned away.

“But you can’t just hide here.”

“Oh yes, darling, I can.” He stopped and turned back to me, anxiously wringing his hands. “Why don’t you send a ship back for me when you reach Port Royal. But time is of the essence before I’m spotted, and I really do hate these long good-byes.”

“That could take months—even you can’t survive here that long.” I came right up to him and grabbed the braids of his beard. “You’re coming with me.”

“I see you’ve grown very attached to me—and my chin.” He tried turning his head away, but I held fast.

“I promise you, luv,” his perpetually grubby hands came up and attempted to pry my fingers loose as he spoke, “you don’t need me a’tall. You’ll be just fine on your own. Truly. Honestly.”

My response was to tug harder until he yelped and bowed his head in submission. “You can act a part to save your life, I know you can—something about impersonating a cleric? But these have got to go.”

“What!?” he roared in mortification as he tried to look down his nose to see them.

“Servants don’t wear braids, we need to cut—”

“Servant!?”

“Yes, his name was Jeffries,” I sighed, missing him as well. “But I guess you’ll have to be Jamaican with that dreadful hair of yours.”

He gazed at me shrewdly as he weighed his options and considered my proposal. He glanced at the

growing silhouette on the waves and then pure amusement curled the corners of his mouth. He bowed his head subserviently, putting me completely in charge.

Still holding the braids, I kissed him lightly on the lips before I let go. "I never thanked you for saving my life."

Jack stamped his foot in frustration. "Now the wind changes when there's no time for me to—"

"Yes well, such is my life and the reason there are no Barrett heirs. Now come on." He followed me up to the protection of the shadows near our shelter and all the supplies.

"Now hold these so I can cut them off," I ordered as I grabbed the knife out of his sash. He obediently pulled the braids down taut and I sliced them off at the chin. "Besides, I'm sure you have a painted lady waiting in every port... those brazen barmaids." I smoothed out the area as best I could. "Those tavern trollops... You really should be clean shaven, but there's no time."

"Sinful strumpets?" he added helpfully. "Or wicked wenches?"

"Yes, yes, I think we've established the kindred of your "ladies". He was thoroughly enjoying my stroking his chin and I fought the urge to slap that flirtatious smile off his face. "Now get rid of those things in your hair," I snapped. He held his hand out for the knife and I slapped it in his palm.

I started hunting around for a long kerchief I had seen earlier and absent-mindedly stuffed the braids down my chemise. They might search the beach and they were worth saving—men's vanity being what it was and all that. Perhaps I could some how sew or weave them back on his chin later. Of course without cleavage, they fell right through to my waist.

He held up several severed strings of beads with one hand while the other reached for my chest.

"What are—ah, no, not there!" I shooed his hands away. "Never you mind about that. If you must save them, put them in that valise over there with anything else of value to save." I glanced over my shoulders and the ship had doubled in size. "No, wait! Quick, first put those other breeches on—no, the darker ones—and the matching vest—probably the captain's cabin boy or something, but it looks enough like a house servant. Hurry!"

I turned away just in time before he dropped his breeches—knowing that's exactly what he would do right there and then. I felt the color of my cheeks flush red. Of course there was no time for him to properly run off behind the palms to undress, but still...

"Hah, this will have to do." I found a white napkin and a hanky in fairly decent shape.

I came back to him as he was buttoning the vest. I saw that he had changed into a more appropriate shirt. "Perfect! Oh and occasionally pull it down in place like my father—like men, you know, like stuffy men do to seem important." I handed him the napkin. "Get that thing off and tie your hair back, you know, like a slave—like a servant."

"Demanding mistress, you are!"

"Bloody hell, just do it! Hurry!" He gasped at my profanity but it felt like eyes were watching our every move. He struggled with the tangled mess of braids and dread locks until it was back off his shoulders.

"No, that's not good enough." There was no time to be vain, I spun him around and began raking back his hair using the fingers of my good hand like a comb. He yelped and whimpered like an unruly little boy, but after removing several more beads hidden in the dark mass, I got it all gathered into my one hand and twisted it.

"There, tie it off now... No, no, no, can't you make one of those caps they wear knotting the corners? Never mind, try a bow. No, that's not right—just secure back tightly—neatly—in a knot. There, that's good." I stepped back for a quick appraisal and was impressed. The pirate was almost completely gone.

He watched me with amusement as though he was playing charades to humor me as opposed to saving his life. Did he not realize the seriousness of the situation? Did he ever take anything seriously? I stuffed and fluffed the hanky in the vest pocket. One eyebrow shot up questioningly.

"He was..." I shrugged sadly, "oh, Jeffries was always pulling it out and dusting things—wiping things whether it needed it or not. I... well, anyway, it fits. It looks rather servantly. Alright now, I dare say just let me do all the talking and we should be just fine. Now wave to them excitedly to show we've seen them and then go about packing some valuables in the valise."

I went to the pile of clothes in an effort to make myself more presentable when I remembered one other detail.

"The rings! Quick, take them all off—" I gasped, startled at the total transformation that had taken place. His whole demeanor had changed as though he had been a servant all his life. One would never have guessed otherwise. He held up his hands—no rings—and waved me off as he went back to packing.

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When the landing party reached the shore we were ready for them. The captain advanced on to the beach as though he meant to conquer it while his two guardsmen helped the oarsman secure the boat. I stepped forward and met him half way. "Oh Captain, you have no idea what a relief it is to see you!"

"Lady Barrett, I presume?"

"Miss'," I corrected, aware of how his eyes scoured the beach and came to rest on Jack. "Lord Barrett was my father."

"I see, and there are no other survivors?"

"Other than my father's servant," I glanced over my shoulder at Jack who stood ready with the valise at his feet. He was doing an excellent job keeping his eyes and face neutral under the captain's scrutiny. "He saved my life, but my father..." I held back a sob, not entirely out of pretense. "No, there are no other survivors, Captain...?" I paused significantly.

"Vernon, at your service," he answered with a slight bow. "My condolences for your lost, Miss Barrett. We will get you and your "servant"...?"

"Jeffries. Oh I am so grateful, Captain. I can't bear another minute on this retched island. I want to put this ordeal behind me as quickly as possible. You have no idea what—"

I started for the boat when the Captain politely but firmly restrained me. "One moment, Miss." A slight nod of his head got the guardsmen moving. One started searching the beach while the other took up a position behind Jack.

"Were you aware, Miss Barrett, that the Victoria was escorting a prisoner back to England to stand trial?" He withdrew a faded piece of paper from his inside jacket pocket. It revealed a simple sketch of Captain Jack Sparrow—a warrant actually—stamped by the East India Trading Company. The indistinct image was rather vague for identification purposes except for a few telling details, including the double braided beard.

"Why yes, of course. My father told me a prisoner was being kept down in the hold, but not to worry about it. I knew we was perfectly safe in the care of the Royal Navy."

“Dat my brotter?” Jack said casually in a perfect Jamaican accent, startling everyone. He had easily edged over without being noticed. The guardsman hastily moved up into position behind him. The Captain’s eyes narrowed, but Jack shrugged, impassively neutral. “Could be. My motter was... who know?” he shrugged again and took his position slightly behind me.

The scouting guardsmen came up and stood at attention. “Nothing, sir. There is no sign of him—anyone, sir.”

The Captain scowled at Jack again before pulling me aside. His kept his voice low. “Are you sure, Miss, of your servant?”

“Of course I am! I say, who else—?”

“You don’t understand the gravity of the situation. This felon is highly dangerous and very clever. I must be sure you are not being threatened or somehow unwillingly coerced into aiding this, this despicable pirate.”

“What?! How absurd, Captain. Jeffries has faithfully served my father for over twenty years.” I snatched the sketch from his hands and began fanning myself with it, wilting under the heat.

“Sir,” the guardsman hissed as he glanced meaningfully down at Jack’s pocket.

A string of those beady-trinkets he had in his hair was poking out. Before anyone else could react, I took the offensive and pointed at them rather indulgently. “Jeffries, what on earth is that? Where did you find it?”

He sheepishly pulled out the string and held it up. He nodded up the beach. “Pretty, no? For m’lady?”

“Looks like something a pirate would wear,” commented one of the guards.

Jack shrieked like a woman and flung it away as though it were a snake. He danced around screeching and shaking his hands, then tried scrubbing them together as though he had touched poison.

“Jeffries! Jeffries! Calm yourself. It’s alright. I dare say you must calm yourself!”

Jack took a deep breath as he whipped out the hanky and wiped his hands with it. He mopped his brow and fluttered the hanky in front of his face femininely. He glanced up at everyone staring at him. “Jeffries donin’ like pie-ritz.”

The guardsmen made eye contact with each other knowingly. One of them lifted his pinky and wiggled it daintily. The other one smirked in agreement. The Captain sighed in resignation.

“Yes, yes, Jeffries, none of us like pirates. Besides, we are under the care and protection of the Royal Navy. I—“ I swayed, suddenly faint, and reached out to the Captain for support, clutching his arm. The warrant fluttered to the sand.

“M’lady!” Jack flitted up to me anxiously and started mopping my brow. He surreptitiously kicked some sand on the paper, hoping to bury it, but one of the guardsmen grabbed it.

“Captain, may I... if you by chance happen to have... I haven’t had fresh water to drink for weeks. Could you please...” I desperately tightened my grip on his arm, “could you please spare me a cup of water?”

Startled at my sudden distress, he looked at me fully for the first time, completely appalled at my condition. “Good heavens! Lafayette, fetch the canteen! Prepare to make way. There, there, Miss Barrett. We have a skilled surgeon on board—the best in the fleet—and he will see to your injuries.”

He gently but firmly disengaged my hand from his arm and pushed me towards Jack. “Gentle. Easy, have you got her? Good.” He brushed and straightened his sleeve where my sweaty, grimy palm had marred the crisp, clean starch.

Lafayette handed him the canteen. He carefully uncorked it. “There you go, Miss, don’t gulp—”

Without thinking, I yanked it out of his hands and took a long, unlady-like drink. I dare say it was the best tasting water I ever had. They stared at me, aghast at such an unseemly display before politely averting their eyes. I wiped my mouth on my sleeve and handed it to Jack who took a dainty sip.

“Lafayette, help them along to boat.”

“Yes, sir.”

We moved off in a huddle towards the boat. I could easily have ran to it and jumped in, but I let them guide me along as a proper, terribly wounded, lady would.

Out of the corner of my eye something flashed bright. The slightly unkempt oarsman was stashing a small flask back into uniform pocket. Ahh, so Captain Vernon had a wrinkle in his clean, crisp crew. I sighed and prayed that he was not the one steering the ship.

Jack got in the boat first. He deftly wiped the seat clean with his hanky before reaching for my good arm and helping me on board. Lafayette rolled his eyes impatiently, but said nothing. Once I was securely seated, he pulled the vest down with dignity and sat next to me. He neatly folded up the hanky and put it back in his breast pocket while his eyes kept darting to oarsman’s pocket—he had seen it as well.

I glanced back at the captain as he gave additional orders to the guardsmen. I sighed again. We were not out of the woods yet, we had merely passed the first hurdle. Vernon was most likely planning to search him on board and would discover the pirate brand on his arm. And surely Jack was aware of all this and had come up with a plan of his own. Nevertheless, I whispered for him to stay with me at all times. He nodded once in acknowledgement, then flashed the oarsman a brief, friendly smile—one servant to another.

The captain stood ramrod straight facing us and the beach, unaffected by the waves. The slight squint of the eyes and the clenching of his teeth told me that the successful rescue of Lord Barrett’s daughter had not been their primary concern.

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The transfer from boat to ship was a bit of challenge with only one good hand. A sailor was bent over the rail, reaching for that good hand while Jack had me braced from behind, hands on my hips. Suddenly I was overcome with an intense craving for coconut milk. *Wait! I demand you take us back immediately!*, my heart screamed in my head, as I hung poised in mid-transfer.

Bloody hell, what is wrong with me? *I don’t want to leave!* Yes, that was it, pure and simple. I don’t care about hot tea, or a hot bath or beef wellington served in its flakey, hot pastry. I want the blistering hot sun in the middle of the Caribbean. I want that idyllic island life. I dare say it was rather limited in resources, but the freedom... it was—quite simply—fun. With Jack.

No more laying in our shelter gazing the brilliant night sky of lights. No more stories of his adventures—legendary or otherwise—or dreams of future riches just beyond the horizon. Jack had proven to be rather jolly good company. And perhaps there could have been more given more time... Yes, yes, I know eventually the romance of the adventure would have given away to the tedious, tiresome task of survival. But it hadn’t yet.

Once we set foot on this ship—and back to Port Royal—he will disappear before I can utter an invitation to stay with me. I dare say he won't even look back. With no hesitation whatsoever, he'll go straight back to his trollops and taverns and treasure maps. His world will quickly crowd me out of his memory and I had to admit I rather enjoyed having him to myself. *I just wanted a more time...* my heart whispered with longing.

A hiss of impatience behind me and a pinch on my bum got me moving again... back to a society of starchy men and no unrestrained, passionate pirate...

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Epilogue

I sighed as stood on the balcony over looking the ocean, watching the brilliant colors of sunset fade as the first peeks of stars took their place. I sipped at the warm coconut milk—a very effective sleeping draught, I had soon discovered upon my return to civilization... three years to this day. Actually, the rescue would come a week and a half hence. This was the day the grand adventure had started when I awoke to find my rum-scented angel was the infamous Captain Jack Sparrow.

I heard the distant knock at the front door and soon soft feet padded into drawing room behind me. The young lad cleared his throat for attention. “Mo’am?”

“Yes, JJ, what is it?”

“Package, mo’am, spes-sial deliverin’”. I turned to see Jeffries Junior holding a brown paper package.

“At this hour?” He nodded as he handed it to me and waited. “Thank you, JJ, and tell your mother I won’t require anything more this evening.”

“Yes, mo’am.” He nodded and started off.

“Oh, JJ? Please bring me—“ Before I could finish, he had already grabbed the sissors off the desk and returned with a lamp so I could remain on balcony. I shook my head in amazement at his quick cleverness, smiled and winked. “JJ, I don’t know what I would do without you.”

He smiled and winked back before scampering away. “Donin’ even tink it, mo’am.” He dismissed the thought with a flick of his wrist before closing the door behind him.

I sat down, looked the barren package for any sort of markings of origin before tearing it open. The simple box was filled with dry straw to protect the contents which lay nestled in the center. Half of a coconut husk had been carved into an intricately detailed ship, complete with sails and a flag woven out of palm leaves and attached to bamboo shoots.

“Oh, it’s beautiful! This must be the Black Pearl!” I said to myself as I recalled how I had kicked it and threw it in my frustration of the dalliance that never was.

A plain, unmarked but some what lumpy envelope had been placed underneath it. I carefully set the husk aside and slit it open. I looked inside—a gasp and a cry of shock escaped my lips—as I shook the contents on to my hand. I stared at the two braids of hair, tied off at one end with some beads while the other end had obviously been hastily hacked off a chin.

“This couldn’t be the same ones? No, this must be another set...” He surely must have grown another beard, and circumstances must have necessitated them being cut off again. I did not know whether to laugh or cry and ended up doing a bit of both until I finally blew out a breath in silly relief. I dare say I had felt rather badly about having to cut them off... perhaps this was his odd sort of sentimental way of saying it was alright then as it was now. But most of all, I had not been forgotten.

I yawned and finished off the coconut milk. I put the braids in the husk as I went back inside and placed it on the mantel. As I shut out the ocean and locked the balcony door, I started wondering what sort of predicament he had gotten himself into now...

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The author would like to extend her gratitude to Nytd for discovering this scurvy ol' story and her encouragement to get it done. May you always have beta sharp eyes and following winds...

[No braided beards, warrants or canteens were harmed during the production of this part.

Jack's impersonation of a Jamaica servant used with permission (Jamaican Servants Union, Local on dis island, mon). However, the BBATT (Brazen Barmaids And Tavern Trollops) have reported some disgruntlement in being considered "kindred" to wicked wenches. Sinful Strumpets are actually all bubble heads and were totally clueless.

Captain Jack Sparrow and the world of Pirates of the Caribbean are the property of Disney—and Mr Depp because, let's face it, he is Jack. I'm just visiting for a little fun and not for profit, savvy? jk, writehearted@gmail.com first posted on fanfiction.net 12/2008.]

Captain Jack has left the island...