Full Speed Ahead

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by theotherwolfinsideyou

Summary

Eddie comes back from a year at sea to see the omega barmaid he spent the whole voyage thinking about. Little does he know, Steve has a surprise waiting for him.

Eddie leans as far as he can over the bow of *Hellfire,* watching as the speck of land in the horizon that is the port city of Hawkinia grows bigger and bigger. He's never felt more at home than at sea, but in this moment, he's itching to be on land more than any seasick sailor ever has.

"Staring isn't going to get us there any faster, Cap," Gareth says. Eddie's co-captain is leaning against the railing to his right, brown curls fluttering in the wind.

"It's not going to hurt," Eddie replies, taking a deep breath of the crisp ocean air. It does nothing to tame the excitement raging in his gut. He's surprised he's not shaking.

"We'd already be restocking our supplies if we went east to Lenora five clicks back," Gareth takes a swing of rum from his flask.

"Hawkinia has better rum," Eddie reminds him. "And Dustin robbed the head of the city guard last time we were in Lenora."

"Right. We're going entirely out of our way just to avoid having to hide Dustin in the cargo hold for a few hours," Gareth smirks. "Not because you miss that pretty barmaid you like so much."

Miss was an understatement. Eddie's had a slew of omega partners over the years, and none of them have *ever* made him feel like Steve does. He'd taken one look at that mole-covered face and doe-like brown eyes across the Hawkinia tavern, and he'd been a goner. His crew is long-since used to making detours to visit the unremarkable Hawkinia to spend unusually long amounts of time in its harbour.

Eddie always missed Steve, but this past year had been a *torture.* He's never had to spend some much time away before, but between the four months he spent in Lord Carver's dungeons and the long escape that followed, there'd been no chance to return to Hawkinia. Eddie can't *bear* it any longer.

If there's one benefit to the long separation, however, it's the fact that it's cleared Eddie's mind. He's always tried to live his life with no regrets, but one had tortured him for every minute he spent in that cramped dungeon. "I'm going to ask him to mate me."

Gareth's eyebrows raise. "Are you actually?"

Eddie nods. "And move him to Free Hills, if he's willing."

Free Hills is a free city miles away, one in the middle of *Hellfire*'s usual routes and friendly to pirates. It's where Jeff keeps his mate. If Steve moved there, Eddie would be able to see him every two months, assuming there were no more impromptu imprisonments in his future.

"Holy shit," Gareth slaps him on the back. "I never thought I'd see the day! Finally decided to get your uncle off your back, huh?"

“I should’ve done it a year ago,” Eddie replies. He’d rationalized his way out of it, then, telling himself it was too dangerous for Steve, that Steve was just having fun before settling down with a real alpha. But Steve has stayed unmated this long, and Eddie has had a lot of time to think over all their trysts. Maybe he’s being deluded, but he’s pretty sure Steve has been waiting for *him.*

“Well, shit,” Gareth leans over the railing. “I’ll stare with you.”

Hawkinia creeps forward, each wave crashing against its hull echoing the fast beating of Eddie’s heart. When they finally dock, it’s only his captainly duties that stop him from jumping off the ship and running to the tavern the second *Hellfire*’s ropes hit the docks. He stays until the ship is securely docked in the harbour, the port authorities are paid, and all men are accounted for. *Then* he takes off for the tavern at the fastest walk he can muster.

Hawkinia’s tavern is close to the harbour, as they almost always are. Eddie hasn’t even broken a sweat by the time he throws the doors open. His eyes quickly scan the crowd inside. He recognizes one of the barmaids, but the other one is a new recruit. Crucially, neither of them are Steve.

The one he recognizes notices him and makes her way to the door. What’s her name again? He’s pretty sure it starts with a C. “Can I help you?”

“I’m looking for Steve,” Eddie says. “Is he working today?”

Carol! That’s it. Carol looks him up and down, before grinning smugly at him. “Yeah, I bet you are.”

“Is he here?” Eddie asks. “He worked here a year ago.”

“He’s… taking some time off,” Carol says. “He lives on the other side of town, near the forest. Someone’ll point you to him.”

“Thanks,” Eddie says, though the way Carol’s grinning is starting to unnerve him. He feels like he’s the butt of a joke he doesn’t know has been told. He can feel her watching him as he leaves.

He starts a brisk walk through the town, ignoring his crew as they reach the tavern. Steve’s never taken time off work before, as far as Eddie knows. A thousand worse case scenarios fly through his head, like Steve on his deathbed from tuberculosis, or being permanently crippled by a freak carriage accident. He’s lucky Hawkinia is small.

He finds himself on the edge of the forest, surrounded by several small houses. When he and Steve met up, it was always on his ship or in one of the tavern’s rooms. Eddie has no idea where he lives.

He’s about to start knocking on doors when a voice booms behind him. “YOU!”

A very angry Robin is walking towards him, finger raised. Eddie recognizes her instantly. She’s a carpenter, and Steve’s best friend. Eddie’d been terrified she was Steve’s alpha the

first time he'd met her, before discovering that was an impossibility for her. Not that that fact helped him much; she's just as protective over Steve as any mate would be.

She jams her finger into his chest, ginger scent spicy-hot with fury. "Where the HELL have you BEEN?"

"Long story," Eddie raises his hands. "Has something happened? Is Steve alright?"

"Oh, *something's* happened all right!" Robin pushes him slightly, sending Eddie stumbling. "I *told* him not to mess around with a pirate. I *warned* him that you were unreliable, that you'd forget about him and leave him in the dust. But no! No, you were *different*, you *cared* about him, I didn't have to *worry* about you."

She spits in the dirt at Eddie's feet. "Do you know how many alphas I've had to ward off Steve over the years? Lord knows why I let you near him. It's a mistake I'm not going to repeat!"

To say Eddie's stomach has dropped would be an understatement. It's closer to the ground than his belly button right now. Robin has always been wary of him, but she's always liked him. "What's happened, Robin?"

"Oh, after a year of silence, now you're all concerned about Steve's wellbeing?" Robin crosses her arms. "What, not getting your knot wet fast enough this time?"

Eddies steps closer to her, frowning. "That's not what this is."

"Is it not, now?" Robin asks. "I've really been seeing proof of that recently. You know, seeing as you're completely oblivious that Steve *just had--"*

"Robin!"

Eddie's head whips to the side, and there he is, standing at the threshold of one of the houses. He's just as beautiful as Eddie remembers, hair windswept and shining, eyes big and deep. Eddie's heart flutters.

"Lay off him, Rob," Steve says, before smiling at Eddie. It brightens his whole face. He looks radiant.

"Steve," Eddie whispers more than says.

He takes a step forward, before stopping. Eddie is *very* familiar with Steve's body; he's spent more time thinking about it than anything else. So he *knows* that Steve's hips are wider then they should be. Steve's as skinny as he's always been, and there's only one other thing that can widen an male omega's hips that much. There's no other explanation.

Steve's had a pup.

Eddie's too late. Another alpha's swooped in and pupped Steve and Eddie can't even blame them, because who wouldn't? Who else on Earth would've been stupid enough to let that happen, besides Eddie?

He takes a step back. He knows his scent is souring, but he can't help it. He's ten minutes away from throwing himself off *Hellfire*'s deck, and that's only because he can't walk there faster. He's never felt such strong despair in his life, not when his mother died or his father was hanged or he saw the Carver fleet closing in. He wants a tsunami to sweep him away and leave everyone else, swallow him into the sea and keep him there.

"I'm sorry," He says, fighting back the tears. "I'll, uh--I'll get out of your hair."

"Oh no you don't, you son of a bitch!" Robin pushes him forward. "You're not running from this!"

Running from what? Did Steve's alpha want to fight his past competition? Whatever it was, he couldn't worm his way out of it, not with a fuming Robin Buckley in his path.

"Come inside, Eddie," Steve pushes the door open. "We've got a lot to talk about."

"Your alpha won't mind?" Eddie asks.

Steve gives him an odd look. "Just come inside."

Eddie enters the house, still on the verge of tears. Getting close enough to Steve to catch his lavender and cherry scent helps, until he remembers that that scent is for someone else, now. Maybe he could make it in five minutes, if he ran the fastest he could.

Steve takes his hand in his, and before Eddie has a chance to think about it, Steve's dragging him to the far end of the house. He finds himself standing next to a cradle, staring at a pup who couldn't be more than a few months old, and he wonders if Steve is taunting him as some sort of punishment before *oh.*

All pups smell like milk, mainly, along with a soft note that marks their secondary gender. This pup is no different, but the second her scent hits Eddie's nostrils he *knows.* He'll try to explain it to his crew later, but he'll have no words. Every part of him simply knows that this pup is *his.*

"Oh my God," he says, awe-struck.

"Like I said," Steve smiles. "Lots to talk about. Like where you've been, for starters."

"I didn't know," Eddie says immediately. "I didn't know, Steve."

"Yeah, I know that," Steve laughs.

"I would've come back sooner if I could," Eddie continues. "I was locked up for a while. Occupational hazard."

"Oh, so you're not a fisherman?" Steve tilts his head. "I remember you insisting many times that you were but a simple fisherman who could somehow afford to pay for his whole crew's tab with gold."

Eddie looks at him, then, and the words come flowing out of his mouth. "Mate me."

Steve's smile drops. "You don't need to mate me just because I've had your kid, Eddie."

"That's not why I'm asking," Eddie grabs Steve's hands. "I've wanted to for a while. From the start, really. Ask Gareth."

Steve looks down at their hands. "You really want to mate me?"

Eddie nods rapidly. "Fuck Steve, I've never wanted anything more."

He squeezes Steve's hands. Steve squeezes back. "Well, I've already had your pup, haven't I?"

Eddie kisses him then, hard. Steve laughs into his mouth and threads his hands through Eddie's curls and fuck, it's everything Eddie's been missing. He should retire, just stay here with his omega all the time. His omega and *his pup.*

He breaks away and reaches into the cradle, before hoisting her up into his arms. She's an alpha, already adorned with a full set of curly brown hair, and she's the most perfect thing Eddie's ever seen in his life. He has to sit down on the floor to keep her safe, because his legs feel weak.

"Her name's Helen," Steve tells him. It's not the name Eddie would have picked, but he doesn't get to complain. Not after he missed *everything.*

"I'm so sorry, Steve," Eddie says. "I'm going to spend the rest of our lives making it up to you."

"That might not be long enough," Steve smiles. "But it's a start."

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