

**Encounter: Paying The Pirate**  
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## Paying The Pirate

The moldy stench of the swamp air made Sabine gag and warred with her *Chanel* perfume. She smoothed her navy blue suit jacket with one hand and squeezed the key ring with the other. The vehicle behind her beeped like she'd pinched its bumper and the doors clicked locked. Her icy unflappability had melted into uncertainty with a healthy dose of fear.

Stalling was stupid. The camera over the door was likely recording every bead of sweat the Louisiana heat drew from her skin. Faint strains of music slunk out from behind the heavy door she couldn't bear to knock on.

The Rolling Stones' *Wild Horses* provided the soundtrack for a highlight reel of memories of Jude in various stages of undress belting out lyrics in an angelic voice that belayed her sometimes demonic nature. A pirate ship captain, Jude lusted for power long before a blood vampire transformed her into one of his kind.

They'd dubbed dozens of songs "their song" during their thirty-three year relationship, the Stone's ballad being the final one. Wild horses didn't need to drag them apart when jealousy and pride could do the job more efficiently.

Sabine wrenched open the door to *Pirates Landing* to silence the damned song, a painful reminder of the best and the worst of Jude. And the best and worst of herself.

Quitting Jude was like quitting opium. Or quitting breathing.

Jude's blonde curls cascaded over her shoulders, framing collarbones exposed by her white shirt. She stood in the dim light, naked except for the barely buttoned blouse, tankard raised in a toast.

Sabine drank in the vision of her ex-girlfriend's creamy skin and rosebud mouth. "Hey..." she started, her voice a hoarse whisper.

“Don’t.” Jude slurred and guzzled from the mug. “If you dare say it, I shall declare our agreement null and void. Fucking Beatles.”

Brilliant. The pirate was cranky, drunk, and more beautiful than ever. Sabine dare not leave until she satisfied the terms of the agreement she’d made to save the life of her friend John, the only other remaining energy vampire in the French Quarter. And the person Jude blamed for tearing them apart.

Sabine plucked the needle from the vinyl 45 spinning on a vintage turn table. The former bar never would have passed a health code inspection, but now the whole building looked condemned. She fought the urge to tidy up the room, which lacked the energy and life she remembered. If she could slip back into their relationship, would she?

“Choose.” The pirate waved her hand to indicate the three men. Two were blood vampire minions. One, a huge hulk, and the other, tall and thin. Laurel and Hardy. The undead pirate version. Sabine didn’t remember their names, but they’d been with Jude since the days she’d pillaged the seas.

The third man was human. Doug had been in Jude’s care for a scant number of hours. Already he looked half dead. Fang marks covered his bare arms. A leather collar circled his neck and a chain hung from a metal loop in the center.

Sabine withdrew a protein bar from her purse and tossed it. His glassy eyed gaze followed the bar’s progress. The snack smacked him in the chest and landed in his lap.

“You know better than to feed my pets.” Jude licked her lips and eyed the man like the meal he was.

“He won’t be much fun if he’s catatonic.”

“Interesting choice.” The pirate snapped her fingers and Laurel shuffled out of the room with Hardy in his wake. “Must I remind you of the rules?”

Sabine shook her head. As if there were rules other than Jude had all the control. The game wasn't over and the debt wasn't settled until the pirate declared it so.

"Bring the toy. I've got the drink." With a large bottle covered in cobwebs in one hand and the tankard in the other, the pirate stumbled to her quarters in the rear of the building.

Sabine shook Doug, peeled the wrapper from the protein bar, and shoved it in his mouth. "Eat, damn it."

He chewed and swallowed. "Are you here to rescue me?"

Silly human. She tugged on the chain connected to his collar and led him to his doom.

\* \* \*

Jude took another gulp of the rum laced with blood. She'd had hundreds of lovers in the decades since their breakup, but no one aroused her mind and body like the energy vampire. And no amount of sex, blood, or alcohol could fill the void left in Jude's heart when her one true love abandoned her.

Sabine entered the bedroom dragging the human. Her ebony hair hung in a thick braid exposing the tender skin of her elegant neck. The carotid artery pulsed in a dance that made Jude's mouth water.

Jude needed to squelch the tiny glimmer of hope for a re-conciliation Sabine had ignited. She used the chain to haul the human to the bed, and straddled him. The man's heart beat frantically in his chest with terror, but Jude compelled him. She slid her tongue into his mouth and ground her pelvis against his cock until it rose to full mast.

The energy vampire stood, arms crossed. "If you wanted me only to watch, you could have simply sent me a DVD of your performance." Her voice came out flat like she was discussing how to employ a sextant for navigating the seas.

A combination of rage and lust burned its way down Jude's spine. She shoved the human aside and stalked toward the energy vampire. "How dare you be indifferent?" She slapped Sabine and raised her hand to deliver another blow.

A red blotch marred the ivory creaminess of Sabine's cheek and tears gathered in the corners of her gray eyes, but she made no move to deflect the next strike.

They'd hurt each other enough. Jude dropped her hand to capture the end of Sabine's braid, removed the fastener, and unwound the silky dark strands. Unbound, the waves framed the energy vampire's patrician features.

Sabine leaned forward to deliver a kiss full of regret and promise. After unfastening the remaining buttons, she slid off Jude's shirt, nuzzling and teasing each of her breasts in turn.

After being adrift for years in a sea of sadness, Jude's anchor had returned. She fervently wished the night would never end.

"Now we're talking. Girl on girl action." Doug stroked his erection.

The energy vampire reached over to place her palm on the human's forehead. When he slumped against the pillows, she shoved him off the bed. He landed on the hardwood floor with a thump.

Jude gave a husky laugh. "Nice trick."

"You kept Jolly Roger." Sabine lifted the nineteenth century ivory phallus from its stand and wiped off the thin film of dust. "Let me settle my debt then we can talk." She climbed onto the bed and crooked her finger.

Jude sashayed to the bed and lay down. Nipples hard and a moistness between her thighs, her body hummed with anticipation.

"Trust me?" Sabine pulled a long pink ribbon from her pocket and tied one end to the bed post.

Jude would rather walk the plank than relinquish control, but she gritted her teeth and allowed herself to be bound.

Sabine caressed Jude's skin and planted kisses lower and lower as though using her flesh for the canvas of a treasure map. When her lover's mouth locked on her clit and began a slow pulsing dance, Jude's breath became ragged. She writhed on the sheets. Her bound hands strained the pink ribbon and shook the bed frame. Soft mewls of pleasure escaped her lips.

Sabine rubbed the ivory phallus against Jude's entrance before sliding it inside. Tonguing Jude's clit, she moved Jolly Roger in and out at an increasingly faster pace.

Jude's entire being shook with an orgasm more intense than any she'd had since their breakup. The bedpost made a splintering sound and Jude found her hands free, the ribbon dangling from one wrist.

She scooted down and kissed her taste from Sabine's lips. "Maybe we could try that modern thing." She looked away and focused her attention on unfastening the ribbon from her wrist, lest her words betray how desperately she wanted Sabine back in her life. "Where people see each other socially and occasionally have intercourse."

A snicker escaped Sabine's lips. "Friends with benefits?"

Jude shrugged. "You were my best friend and best lover."

"I have some conditions."

Jude squelched the urge to kick her pet human and took a slug of rum instead. The combination of blood, alcohol, and orgasm, temporarily satisfied her lust for violence.

"Take better care of Doug." Sabine shook out her purse and human food packets like the one she'd given her pet earlier poured out. "You need to feed him or he won't survive. Make Laurel and Hardy find someone else to snack on."

"You don't care if I eat him?"

"He's a bad man who's done plenty in his short life to warrant being used as food. Just promise not to turn him."

"I paid dearly for agreeing to turn John's wife. I shall never create another blood vampire."

"So we're going to do this?" Sabine twisted the ribbon into a heart shape.

Jude put on her best poker face. Was her love actually considering her proposition? "Perhaps. What are your other conditions?"

"Just one. We need a new song."

"I can think of one by the Rolling Stones that's fitting."

Sabine groaned. "Which one? *Satisfaction*?"

"No." Sharing her feelings had never been one of Jude's gifts, but she whispered the song title anyway. "*Miss You*."

Sabine blinked at her with eyes shiny with unshed tears. "I missed you too."

Jude picked up the ribbon, Next time she'd be the one to do the tying up.

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