

Encounter: A Bonny Castaway

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A Bonny Castaway

“Get off me!”

I had awoken a few moments before the hands began rifling through my clothes. I had been face down in the sun baked sand, suddenly aware of the spear points of pain which pricked and pierced my body. No limb or joint was spared, and I had been sliding in and out of fevered dreams for what seemed a lifetime -- dreams of a Siren with flaming red hair.

Wakefulness finally solidified as I was rolled over, and rough hands ripped apart my shirt and probed my broken ribs.

I opened crusty eyelids and was blinded by an impossibly bright sky. Somehow I summoned up the strength and pushed away the shadowy figure. That it was a pirate I was sure, one of the scum who had attacked and destroyed the ship. I reached for the dagger I wore at my belt, but it was gone.

Pain and fatigue defeated me and I flopped back onto the sand, and like a helpless lamb waited for slaughter.

“I thought you were dead.”

Though deep, and coarse, the voice was a woman's, and vaguely familiar. “Well, I ain't,” I said irritably, but my voice was weak and thick. My swollen tongue lay heavy in my mouth like a fat slug. My throat was parched. I'd had nothing to drink for days, baking under the sun, drifting aimlessly like so much flotsam. I shielded my eyes from the glare. She sat on her haunches gazing at me in a curious manner. She was bedraggled, her dress shredded, her forehead bloodied by a jagged gash. Her most remarkable feature was the brilliant crown of scarlet hair which glinted warmly in the sun like a ruby coronet.

She held up her hands. In one she held my missing dagger. “Peace.”

I twisted my head and surveyed the stretch of beach which curved to a coral point from which a solitary palm tree swayed against the deep blue sky.

Wreckage was strewn across the small bay including some twisted and bloated bodies. I surmised we were the only living souls in sight.

“Where are we?”

“I cannot say,” she replied. “After we were separated, I clung to a plank for a day, pushing off sharks, until I washed up on the other side of the point.”

Separated? I remembered the attack, and the explosion that had destroyed the ship. I’d been cast off the deck as if by the careless sweep of some giant’s hand. Plunging into the water, I had struggled for my life as my boots filled and dragged me down to the deep. I’d surfaced with a lung full of salt, and in my desperate floundering found a splintered hatch cover to lie on.

“You saved me,” she said.

I nodded as more images returned. A body had floated beside me, a woman, not an enemy. With difficulty, as I was grievously wounded, I had clumsily hoisted her aboard my flimsy vessel, and weakly slapped her face to see if life persisted. Her eyes fluttered open just as I fell into a deep and dark place.

“You needed saving,” I mumbled.

“As now you do.” She said something else, but I couldn’t make it out as I once again descended into the shadowy depths.

I awoke to find myself beneath a makeshift shelter; four spindly poles with some ship’s canvas fluttering above my head. I was surrounded by barrels and bits of wood and coiled lengths of rope. A wooden bowl of water lay within reach. I felt better, though my body ached like the devil. I could move, a little, so I hoisted myself onto my elbows. The water was cool and fresh, and I gulped down the contents until the bowl was dry.

“That’s a good sign,” she said from behind me.

I turned to see her dragging a few barrels in a net made of rope. “More wine,” she said with a grin.

“You’ve been busy.”

“You’ve been asleep for three days.” Her tone held an accusation.

“Sorry.”

She shrugged and squatted beside me. “Hungry?”

“Starving.”

She fed and nursed me for two more days. She plucked wooden splinters from my back; shrapnel from the explosion, and cleaned coral from deep cuts in my front; gained when the waves had swept me across the jagged reef. She stitched me up so that every time I moved I felt the thick threads pulling against the tender flesh. Thank God I was spared any infection.

My saviour spoke little. When I was awake I tried to hold a conversation. but her taciturn nature was stronger than my eloquence. There was no doubt that she belonged to the pirate crew that had attacked us, and when I asked what had happened to her mates and ship she would turn away and make herself busy.

So, with nothing else to distract me from my aching body, I studied her. She was not beautiful. Seeing through the wild sanguine hair, her triangular face was marred by a blood crusted gash across her forehead. She had other scars as well, vivid white against her deep tan, suggesting a violent past. Deep troughs were etched between her bright turquoise eyes which matched the surrounding seas, and were just as hypnotizing. Her thin lips were slanted to the left, as if she suffered from some slight palsy. But her face was strong, resilient; that of a fighter.

One afternoon, she was washing a wound that had reopened on my stomach. Her firm but gentle touch had the inevitable result upon my person. She laughed, but not unkindly, and our eyes met.

Something passed between us.

I fancy it was the camaraderie of those who survive against all that man and nature can throw against them. For together we had held off death, plucked each other from his bony grip, and stared defiantly into his toothy maw. Having shared so much pain and horror, we were bonded like no others could ever be.

More likely it was the constant sight of uncovered flesh, the curve of breast and bicep, the exposed privates, and the mingling of hot sultry breath.

It was a simple matter for her to hitch up her tattered dress, and straddle my hips. She grunted as she forced herself down upon me, pushing aside her womanly flesh. I could do little to contribute to the voyage, only supply a hard length upon which she filled her sails. Her hips rocked back and forth rapidly, then slowed, and then quickened again in a wild rhythmical dance of animal lust.

Being only able to lift my hips an inch or so to deepen the penetration I could do little else than grip her hips to encourage her bucking. Her eyes were closed, her palms pressed hard against my chest, forgetful of her stitching that crisscrossed my taut skin. They would require some repair work after, but at that moment I didn't care. The hot wetness which enveloped my shaft was all that my fevered mind could encompass.

Suddenly she threw her head back, her face contorted as if she was in the grip of some great agony, and the frenzied gyrations of her hips ceased. She held like a ship suddenly becalmed before collapsing upon me, burying her face into my neck, gulping air like a stranded fish. The gossamer blanket of her flaming hair covered my face and tickled my nose.

Her panting subsided, and without a word she began gently moving her hips, no doubt aware that my mast was still hard within her. Her inner flesh gripped me like a fist and her movements, like the ebb and flow of the tides, brought me to the finish in quick time, and I gratefully emptied myself into her depths. As my hardness died she hastened her movements as if I could bring her to ecstasy one more time.

Her movements suddenly stopped, but not from a surfeit of pleasure.

“What is it?”

She didn't answer; her breathless gaze fixed on something out to sea. She reached for the dagger. I stared, and finally found it, a warship entering the bay, her crisp sails cutting the horizon. It was flying the King's flag. We were saved.

"Are you an honourable man? A gentleman?"

"Well..."

"You have to marry me."

"What?"

"You had your pleasure, didn't you?"

"I seem to recollect it was you who took your pleasure."

"No matter who did the taking, it's done, innit?"

"I suppose so."

"Then we are married, under the sight of God, yes?"

"Well..."

She ran her finger along the length of her dagger. "When asked, I'm your wife. Yes?"

I nodded dumbly. It had been the longest conversation we'd ever had.

She swept scarlet strands away from her face. Her thin lips creased into a mischievous, yet delightfully crooked smile. Her azure eyes sparkled like the diamond sea, drawing me into their cool depths, and there I foundered. "Tell me, husband, what is our name?"

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