

Northwest 27

Chapter 27

Ed! The captain is calling for you.

Ed jumped up without a word of goodbye.

Excuse me for a second.

No, where are you going?!

Duty calls!

He manoeuvred steadily through the tight spaces between the giant men. Complaints about the sudden intrusion came in from all directions. They were mostly critiquing voices towards Alain.

Alain, unable to understand the situation, grabbed several by the collar.

What were you doing?

Oh well, Ed was here, he was kinda our last hope.

The Count of Amiaeng had a problem with his thing and Ed cured it

Isn't the effect so great that his aged thing still works?

So, you guys were planning on taking the drug? A bunch of sailors standing on deck without any women? That would be great indeed. What, were you going to play with each other then?

What did you just say?

Or rub it on the ship's figurehead. Wasn't the Bell Rock a very pretty mermaid?

-Pak!-

Soon, fists were being thrown back and forth.

Ed left the cabin quietly, leaving the people who had initiated the argument behind.

Everything is so boring and annoying. Except for Lil, everyone is causing problems right now. Since I boarded the Bell Rock, it has been difficult to have a private, face-to-face conversation with her.

Ed and the other officers reported in turns during the executive meetings. So that can't be counted as a stand-alone and Lil only inquired about his time on board.

And even though Liloa frequently visits the deck, starting a conversation was tough. She openly avoids me while the sailors keep bothering me. When that happened, Liloa seemed to be observing my every move, so I had no choice but to hang out with them.

Such a ridiculous situation continued, till finally, Lil called Ed first.

Delighted, Ed enjoyed feeling the breeze as he quickly climbed to the upper deck. He started to whistle, curious about what Lil might say to him. For no apparent reason, he tidied up his hair and rolled his sleeve, before he knocked on the captain's door.

Come on in.

Excuse me.

Ed smiled upon opening the door. He poked his head in, anticipating her.

It was a nice room, with the sun still shining through the stern window in the east. As he entered and looked around, he noticed that there was not a single piece of loot decorating the space.

Just a window, wardrobe, desk, and a bed?

He returned his gaze, seeing that the bed was quite large and that the cotton-covered shape was not customary for a single person.

Sit down.

Lil sat at the head of the table, which was always used during meetings. She pointed at a seat on the opposite side, with a document laying in front of it.

Ed read the text on the piece of paper.

A contract?

Of course, its something we use. Fill it out.

Picking up the contract, he quietly sat down diagonally from her.

What? Why are you crawling up here?

Ed blinked his eyelids, pretending to be surprised.

Because I need sunlight.

Cant you see it from there?

Its the vision of a doctor, Captain. Sometimes I doubt if Im going blind.

You cant see well? Is it because you read too much? But why dont you wear glasses?

Not always. I mean, sometimes its like this.

What?

Ed reacted vaguely on purpose. He had no desire to explain to her in detail that he stayed close to her to get a better look. Lil was taken aback and flinched. As she was about to express her objection, Ed reacted faster. He pointed to the middle of the contract with his chin.

What does this mean?

Cant you read the article about the doctors?

My visions blurry today.

How annoying.

I cant sign it without knowing what its about.

Youre not allowed to bring a woman on the ship.

Ed stared calmly at Lil as she read the sixth clause. With her back to the window, Lils earlobe was the only thing that caught the sunlight.

The profile I saw in the dark was clearly different. Her low-tied black hair is now much shorter than before. Perhaps its because of the clothes, but her body shape appears to be different too. No matter how hard I try, the memories I have dont overlap. If I didnt know any better, I would just think of her as a good-looking man.

It was a first for Ed, being unable to remember something.

My perception is being thrown off.

He drew his attention to the jewel around Lils neck, hidden beneath her shirt.

You mean women cant board?

Uh-huh, thats right.

Really?

Lil gave Ed a strange look. When she turned, his face was closer than she had anticipated. Feeling offended, her expression hardened.

Ugh!

Is it true?

You havent been on the boat for too long, but youre already in heat. Im not sure what kind of shameful thoughts a strange guy like you have.

What do you mean? Dont get me wrong. I dont even like women that much.

Thats bullshit, stop lying.

Seriously, Captain.

Shut up.

Ed realised at that point that Lils first impression of him had been quite negative.

I did, after all, suddenly touch her legs when we first met. No, but thats because Liloa tried to kick me in the balls Damn it, I made a mistake.

Lil finally pushed his shoulder away.

Anyway, no women.

But thats weird.

What?

No, its just Ive been smelling it since I got on the ship

Ed closed their distance and exaggeratedly inhaled his nose as if sniffing her.

Where is the scent of womens powder coming from?

A woman must be hiding here, Captain.

Ed kept sniffing close to her. Lil gave him a stern look.

You say youre not interested in women, but now youre claiming you can smell womens powder?

Thats another story.

Bullshit, you look like youre going to move your hips as soon as you see her.

What, me?

Yeah, but I bet the closest youve ever gotten to a woman was when you got punched by one.

Feeling wronged, Eds eyes widened.

I know Ive done a hundred things wrong, but Im not a pervert! This is unfair.

No one has ever said that to me.

Dont be ridiculous. Now, sign it and get out of there.

Ed remained seated to her. He double-checked Lil to make sure he hadnt overlooked anything. His lowered gaze raises once more. When their gazes met, Lil frowned.

Arent you a man?

What?

So, why are you staring at me in that way?

Didnt you just take a look at me?

Acting like a pervert is strictly forbidden on board.

Do you think Im a slave to lust? Are you worried about me fancying both men and women?

Yes.

No, cant you just drop it? If I were, I would have done something a long time ago.

Im still not convinced.

I cant believe this

Get out. There was something I wanted to ask, but now Im annoyed. Ill call you back later.

Im not like that!

I cant work because youre too loud. Get out, fill it in, and bring it to me. If you have questions, ask someone from the crew. Just get out.

Ed didnt want to go because he had always stuck to his principles. He hadnt given it much thought, but he cant believe hes already being told to leave. He changed his strategy and was about to give it another shot.

Whatever. I have never met anyone who doesnt fall for it.

Ed lowered his voice.

Peok!

Oh!

There was no time to feel the pain or to check what kind of object had hit his face, as a bunch of papers flew directly in front of his nose. Instinctively, Ed twisted his body to avoid it.

You perverted son of a bitch. I told you to get out.

Lil kicked his chair. His upper body slid onto the seat, leaving no room for his body to be supported. Ed hastily grabbed the table, pulling himself up. He appeared to have escaped being thrown on the floor, but Lil didnt stop there, throwing everything she could get her hands on.

Get out! Get out! Get out now!

Ah, no, Captain!

Get ooouut!

Lil jumped out of her chair and kicked Ed without hesitation. Ed was beaten mercilessly and pushed out further and further. His begging for mercy became more pitiful, but her kicks continued unabated.

Bang!

The captains door slammed shut. Ed was expelled in an instant and had no idea what just happened. He eventually raised his body and crouched in front of the captains room. At the same time, the door opened again and something fell on the back of his head.

Sign it. If you do a sloppy job, Ill hang you from the figurehead. I dont care if youre a doctor or not. Youre not one of my men till you sign the contract, so beating you up isnt against the rules.

Lil slammed the door with a gesture that didnt hide her annoyance. Ed slowly rose from his crouching position and listened to the laughter leaking out of the captains room.

Im sure she assaulted me so severely to retaliate for my work at the Counts house.

He stretched his upper body and touched his shoulder. After he inspected his side, he gave the verdict.

Looks like the shoe marks will bruise. Plus, I dont think its going to end with this one time So after I sign the contract, you officially wont be able to kick my ass again?

As hes grinding his teeth, the sound of suppressed laughter came through the door. Ed turned his stiff shoulders and grumbled.
