

Hangover

Von Peacer

It was another normal day on the Moby Dick. Well, as normal as it could get on a ship that held the biggest, most powerful and possibly craziest crew on the whole Grand Line.

It was the morning after yet again a party that had continued until dawn and he lightly made his way through the passed out bodies on the deck, most of them snoring loudly, some drooling and all of them smelling like they'd taken a bath in a barrel of sake.

He wrinkled his nose as he stepped over Thatch' leg as the pirate mumbled „Come here, ladies, I only bite if you're into it“ in his sleep, smiling contentedly. For now. He'd be the one cursing the loudest about his headache when he finally woke up. And the first to start drinking again to cure said headache. That idiot never learned.

He quickly passed Jozu because the wall of meat snored loud enough to leave a slight ringing in his sensitive ears, face grim even in his sleep, then had to slow down as he carefully made his way over the countless empty bottles of sake that littered around the small form of Haruta that lay sleeping in the shadow of Jozu's form. He'd never understand how a midget like her could drink enough to put even giants to shame and still get up the next morning like it was no big deal.

“Come on guys and gals, no rest for the wicked!”

Then again, nobody was as obnoxiously cheerful as Vista in the mornings after a party, nor as annoying. His loud, booming voice rang over the deck and was followed by a chorus of pained groans from those woken up from their alcohol induced slumber, and even more cursing.

He hastily made his way across the deck to the only quiet place left.

Ace was sitting on the figurehead again, chirp as ever. If he had a headache, he didn't let it show. He probably didn't, though. He burned through alcohol as fast as he burned through everything else. Still, not even a massive hangover could have kept him in bed. It had been a little surprising at first, but the airhead had turned out to be a morning person. Thatch, at a loss, had asked about it one day, but the Fire Fist had just shrugged and mumbled something about the early bird catching the worm and feeding ravenous brothers. Whatever that had meant.

The point was, he really liked the ever cheerful Ace, so he jumped up beside him, partly because he really enjoyed his company and partly to make sure he hadn't fallen asleep again and was in danger of falling into the ocean. That happened more often than anybody was comfortable with.

Ace was awake though, looking at the sunrise with an uncharacteristic thoughtful look on his face, so deep in thoughts he hadn't even noticed his presence. He poked him

and the Fire Fist started, before relaxing when he recognized him.

"Hey," he said, a fond smile on his face as he gave his back a friendly pat. "Awake already?"

He snorted as he settled down beside Ace, then tilted his head in question. The Fire Fist shrugged easily, his smile turning a bit melancholy as he looked back at the sunrise. "Just thinking about my little brother. He's a real airhead, you know, can't keep from worrying about him."

He nudged the Fire Fist in the side where he knew he was ticklish, and sure enough, he squirmed away with a suppressed squeal, his typical grin back in place. "You're right, he'll be fine. Thanks."

He nodded, satisfied, and got back up to his feet. He got another pat on his back for his effort, then jumped down from the figure head, continuing on his original path below deck, content to have been of help.

There he made a slight detour to the kitchen, in the hopes of coming across some food and indeed there was already someone stuffing his face with cherry pies. It was neither the food he preferred nor was Teach the person he liked best, but his hunger won over and he approached the man.

Teach's face lit up when he recognized him. "Ah, already back from your morning stroll? And hungry, I guess?" He looked around for something, but the only cabinet he had stolen a key for was the one that held the cherry pies; the others wouldn't be opened until breakfast began, once the cook woke up from his sake induced slumber. A look of regret flashed over his face, then he sighed and offered him one of his beloved pies.

He sent him a grateful look as he munched on the sweet treat, thinking that maybe Teach wasn't that bad after all, at least sometimes. The man gave off so many different vibes, he could never be sure which one to believe. Well, this morning at least it was a positive feeling.

He left again, his stomach more or less satisfied. He crossed the corridor where the commanders had their cabins and after some deliberation he decided to test his luck and quietly pushed open the door to the sixteenth division commander's quarters.

As expected, Izou was up and about already to work on his appearance. He was brushing his long hair as he turned to greet his early visitor. A smile appeared on his red painted lips, which disappeared just as quickly as he looked him over, replaced by a displeased frown. "What happened to you?"

He nervously shifted on his feet, looking down as he inconspicuously tried to clean off his cherry blotted face. He should probably have thought of this before entering the domain of the pristine geisha.

With a sigh, Izou put down his brush and beckoned him closer before he started rummaging through his drawers. "I can't have Pops see you like this. The poor man would have a heart attack."

He begged to differ, pretty sure that Whitebeard wouldn't even notice, much less care about his appearance, but he wisely stayed silent until the geisha had found the necessary utensils.

Izou once again scanned him critically. "Well, this is going to take some time. Settle down."

He obediently sat down on the bed as the man started to work on him with his brush, carefully untangling all the knots he hadn't even known he had, then proceeding to groom his moustache back to his usual splendour. He'd never admit it to anyone, but he actually liked being manhandled by Izou. It was strangely relaxing.

Before he could nod off for good though, the geisha finished and gave him a heartfelt slap on the back. "You look gorgeous, darling. Now off you go, I still have to work on *my* hair."

He left the geisha's cabin, but didn't come very far. As he passed Marco's cabin, he slowed down, perking up his ears. As expected, he could hear the scratch of a pen against paper and the mumbling of the first division commander. He rolled his eyes as he once again made a little detour and pushed open the door to join the workaholic and make sure he got the rest he needed.

Marco looked up from the papers he was pouring over and gave a lazy smile when he saw his visitor. He put down his pen, taking the opportunity to take a little break, and got up to stretch out the cricks he surely had in his back from his slumped position over the desk.

He cringed when he heard the loud cracking the phoenix' back made, but the satisfied sigh he gave eased his worry.

Marco chuckled at his disgruntled expression and gave him a reassuring pat on the back. "I'm fine. I just forgot the time a little."

He shot him a disapproving glare, then pointedly looked at the high pile of papers that littered Marco's desk, then at the bull's-eye where the light from the rising sun slowly started pouring in. Then he looked back at the phoenix and tilted his head when he saw the dark smudges under his eyes. He really did need someone to tell him when to take a rest.

At least Marco had the decency to look a little sheepish. "I just wanted to get this done before going to sleep."

He shoved the workaholic in the direction of his bed before planting himself firmly between the phoenix and the desk, making clear that he wouldn't leave until Marco got a little rest.

The phoenix raised his hands in surrender, chuckling a little. "Fine, I'll get some sleep."

He sat down on the edge, but then shot him a worried look. "Don't tell Pops?"

He snorted at that. It really was funny how easily the thought of upsetting Whitebeard could unsettle the ever calm Marco when nothing else could. But securing his silence wasn't that easy. He needed a little more persuasion than that, and his gaze travelled back to Marco's desk where he had spotted some leftovers nearly hidden behind all the paperwork.

Marco, observant bird that he was, followed his gaze and immediately understood his intention. "You know you're not supposed to have bacon."

He shot him an incredulous look and the phoenix surrendered with a small smile. "And I'm not supposed to stay up all night. I guess that makes us even." He got up again and handed the beloved bacon over.

He blissfully chewed on the treat as he watched Marco settle down in his bed again, waiting until his breathe had evened out before silently leaving the cabin to let the phoenix get some much needed rest.

Then he finally reached his destination and slipped through the open door into the big cabin, carefully making his way over the various cables, and jumping onto the bed to curl up beside Whitebeard, his head resting on the man's chest so he could hear the steady beat of his heart.

Whitebeard's big hand carefully came to rest on his head and he contentedly closed his eyes as he snuggled closer. "Welcome back, Stefan."