

## ***Drake: Tales of a Lusty Pirate***

an online serialization by Erin McCarthy & Kathy Love © 2007



### Part Three

Drake supposed it was out of the question to ask for a cabin upgrade.

He understood that this was a ship to transport convicts to the colonies, and luxury accommodations weren't the goal, but there was no reason they couldn't toss some soapy water through its bowels from time to time in an attempt to combat the grime. The stench was unbearable.

Plus the floor was damp and filthy. The walls were full of chinks that sent the harsh sea air blowing into his face, and the pitch of the vessel from the waves had caused several other prisoners to become ill, and their moans and retches made Drake want to jab red-hot needles into his ears to make it go away.

He was hungry. Cold. Stiff. And not in a good way.

He was starting to lose track of the days. He thought he had been on board the *Elle Mouille* for six days, but it was starting to become a blur of boredom and discomfort. He wasn't sure how long the passage to Louisiana would be since he had tended to skip his geography lessons as a lad in lieu of hiding under the stairs to catch a glimpse up the serving girl's skirts, but he thought he had to endure at least two months of his current hell before they reached their destination.

It was possible he would just go insane before then. He was not used to such inaction, and had discovered that he wasn't really interested in reflective thought. Assessing his life and searching for meaning in the steps that had brought him to

this point had seemed like a positive exercise, but frankly, in the end it had just bored him. He drank too much, he squandered money, he made free with women's favors, and so what of it?

No one had been hurt by him.

And while he could never be accused of sacrificing himself for his fellow man, he wasn't drowning kittens in the Thames either, so he figured in the end it all balanced out.

He didn't deserve to molt on this damned ship and if someone didn't bring him some goddamn food he was going to eat his cuff links.

The door squeaked open and the cabin boy came into the hull with a bowl that Drake knew from experience contained scraps of stale bread. It was the most exciting part of Drake's day thus far, and he watched the boy move from prisoner to prisoner, pressing bread into their shackled hands and murmuring a few words to each of them. When the boy reached the wretched specimen next to Drake, the man who was chronically seasick and covered in his own vomit, the poor sot didn't even raise his head. Nor did he grab hold of the pitiful morsel being offered him.

"I'll hold his piece for later," Drake said, with every intention of eating it. This man wasn't going to be swallowing solids any time soon, and why should that hunk of semi-moldy yeast go to waste?

The cabin boy glanced sharply at him. "Will you now?" he asked. "More likely you'll eat it like the thief that you are."

Insolent little brat. Drake studied the boy. He was a pretty little thing, with fine eyelashes and striking cheekbones. His eyes flashed with challenge.

"I was trying to save you another trip down into this pit of hell. Forgive me if my generosity was out of line." Drake stared the boy down with the haughty air of the aristocrat. It was a look known to send noblemen scrambling.

But the boy just smiled, a sweet smile of amusement that showed pearly white teeth. He leaned closer to Drake, sending a whiff of lavender soap his way.

“Generosity is never out of line. Lying and selfishness is. One is all you get, sir.” He took a piece of bread and pressed it into Drake’s hand, his delicate small fingers caressing his palm.

And Drake suddenly found his body stirring to life. He clamped his knees together in horror. Bloody hell, he *had* gone insane. He’d never shown any Greek tendencies, so why was his blood rushing south at the touch of an effeminate lad barely out of short pants?

It was appalling, unbelievable, frightening to think that six days of isolation could alter the essence of who he was. He loved women, he loved the female form, he loved their soft voices as they mewled in pleasure, he...

Wait a minute.

This lad had breasts.

The cabin boy had leaned forward and his—her—shirt had gaped open at the neck. Drake knew what he was looking at, having seen hundreds of the tell tale orbs in his lifetime. The boy was a girl, thank God, no question about it.

He grinned. “Only one?” Despite the shackles holding his hands together, he lifted a finger and brushed the tip across the front of her shirt, finding a nipple with unerring accuracy. “But you have two to offer.”

Drake was prepared for a slap or a denial, but instead she smiled, pulling back slowly. “You, sir, are incorrigible.”

“That’s what my mother always said.” Drake bit his bread hard, satisfied that this trip from hell was definitely improving in outlook.



To be continued...

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