



ON THE WINGS OF THE SPARROW

LIL CXCX

This Fanfiction is currently in progress.

Rating: PG13

Genre: Friendship/Romance

Coupling: You/Jack

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Setting: POTC 4 never happened. Angelica is now Jack's mother instead.

Summary: You are a barmaid working in Tortuga when a certain pirate captain finds you. You knew each other when you were kids but will that friendship turn into something more? And will you ever learn about what really happened in your tragic past?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Alone..... 3
2 Her Name is Sarah 5
3 Renaming Jack 8
4 Conversations..... 10
5 Aboard the Pearl 14
6 Back to October 17
7 You’re Safe Here 20
8 Shock..... 24
9 Trinidad Bound... 27

1 ALONE

You are a barmaid at the Faithful Bride on the island of Tortuga, a haven for pirates. Tonight is not unlike many nights, but you're doing your job on autopilot while your head reminds you that you are utterly alone in this world. The only friend you have is Connor, the owner of the tavern you work in.

You're beautiful to many men, but you don't know what they see. You've got a golden tan, long wavy hair and green eyes that make even the deepest waters of the sea jealous. You're not too thin, or too thick, you're built just right. And you've your mother's curse for certain endowments.

Your name is Sarah, and you are always alone. Your mother had been killed when you were seven, murdered right before your eyes though you had been hidden from the attacker. You'd run the first chance you had and found yourself cold and hungry on the streets of Trinidad. A man and his son found you and took you to their home and fed you, they'd made arrangements for you to stay with the boy's mother who'd owned a brothel and boarding home named the Spanish Rose. The man's name was Teague, the boy's mother was Madame Angelica and though you and their son had been practically best friends you could not remember the boy's name.

You were eighteen when you were abducted by a group of slave-traders. Three days into your journey aboard their ship their powder magazine had exploded, leaving you the only survivor, floating on a piece of the wreckage. You tried your best to push your body and the piece you were floating on to the island that you could see in the distance. Anamaria was the captain of a fishing vessel at the time and fished you out of the water before you could pass out from exhaustion.

Ana had taken you to Connor to see if he would take you in and look after you. Connor is a good friend of Ana's and decided that he would do just that but also decided that you needed to see a doctor. He sent you and Ana to the local doctor, Alice, who diagnosed you with a concussion as well as some minor cuts and recommended a week of doing absolutely nothing. Connor decided this was for the best, especially with parts of your memory missing. Your past was and still is very fuzzy, that bump on the head from the explosion had knocked you for a loop. You now had a small room at the Faithful Bride and were working every day that Connor would let you. But even you needed a break sometimes, weather you would admit it or not.

Today was the four year anniversary of being pulled into Ana's little fishing vessel and taken to Connor for a home. Connor knew this, and he also knew that you were going through the routine day without even noticing your surroundings. He knew your mind was very far away, grasping for details of that fateful week. However, he was not the only person to notice things. A pair of deep brown eyes watched you intently from the far corner of the room. He watched as

you waited tables with a grace he'd seen only in his mother's trained escorts and fancy ladies. He recognized you but thought he was seeing a ghost, and decided he would ask Connor after your shift had ended.

"Hey, Connor!"

"Aye?"

"My shift's over, I'm gonna turn in fer the night. The other girls have everything under control, they've their orders for what they need ta do before they leave as well."

"Alrigh' lass, 'ave a good nigh's sleep. Take the next two days off as well. You and I both know you need it."

"But Connor..." you started to protest.

"No 'buts' missy! Take 'em and rest! Get rid of those nightmares I hear so much about."

"Alrigh' I suppose a few days of rest wouldn't hurt." You finally submitted, knowing Connor was right. He nodded at you as walked out of the office he was in, acknowledging that he was right and glad that you'd agreed.

The sailor watching you made sure you were done for the night before approaching Connor who was drying glasses. "Hey, Connor," he said gaining the man's attention.

"Aye?" Connor asked raising his eyes to see who he was addressing. "Jack! When did ye get in?!"

"Just made port today, mate. Listen, who was that girl that ye were just talkin' to?" Jack asked motioning to the way you'd disappeared to.

Connor frowned; he knew Jack's reputation with women too well, especially since they were good friends and Jack a good patron of the establishment. He didn't want to see you hurt by the scallywag's habits; you had become something like a sister, or even a daughter to the older man. "Now Jack, she's not the type of girl ye be lookin' fer."

"Connor, I'm not after a night of company from 'er, atleast not like tha'. What's 'er name?" Jack pressed on, a little annoyed by the man's need to protect you from him.

2 HER NAME IS SARAH

“If ye don’t want her fer company, what do you want ‘er fer?”

“I think I know her, I think she was a little girl I used to play with as a kid. If it’s not her then I’ll let ‘er be, Connor, no need to upset the girl.” He swore to Connor, placing his right hand over his heart. Jack was torn, what would he do if it really was you, would he let you be or see if you remembered the scrawny boy you used to play with?

Connor thought for a second, and then decided that Jack seemed sincere enough, “Her name is Sarah. She’s had a rough life the last few years, hell from her whole life I’d reckon. She ne’er said anythin’ ‘bout knowin’ ye though.”

“I doubt she remembers me, or at least my name any way. ‘Specially if she’s had a rough go of it.” Jack paused, trying to think of a plan. “Put me in the room across from ‘er. I’ll bring ‘er breakfast in the mornin’ and hopefully we can sit and talk about old times and catch up on what’s happened since I left home.” It was unusual for Connor to hear Jack talk about home, or even his past so he simply handed the captain the key to the room directly across from yours and bid him good night.

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Jack awoke bright and early the next morning, true to his word he went downstairs to fetch you a plate of breakfast. “Jack, go slow alrigh’?” Connor pleaded as he prepared your favorite breakfast.

“What do ye mean?” Jack was confused by the other man’s request, he was not trying to bed you or win your affections. He just wanted to talk.

“She got a nasty bump on ‘er head when the ship exploded. She was in bad shape when Ana brought her to me and Alice said that she would suffer some memory loss.” Conner explained.

“So yer saying that she remembers very little from ‘er past?”

“Aye, she knows she was an orphan and she remembers a man named Teague and his son. Also, she knows his mother’s name is Angelica. The only other thing she remembers is living in a boarding home.”

“Does she remember the boy’s name?” Jack asked, he knew it was a long shot. You were twelve when you last seen him, he was nearly seventeen.

“No, and this frustrates her because she knows he was her friend.” Connor ran his and through his thick salt and pepper hair and passed Jack a plate of food while he put the finishing touches on your breakfast.

Meanwhile...

You had awakened and felt very refreshed from a good night's sleep. You stripped of your sleep clothes and found the dress you usually wore on wash days. It was white, short sleeved, with a skirt that fell straight from your hips. It didn't have all the ruffles that most girls' dresses had, it was more of a gypsy dress than a barmaids. It stopped short of your ankles, revealing a silver ankle bracelet with sparrow charm hanging from it that you'd gotten on a birthday; that much you knew.

After dressing you gathered your weekly laundry for the maids who cleaned the inn and searched out the sandals you'd bought from the oriental shop down the street. You smiled as you took in your appearance. You'd left your long hair down, it hung in waves down to the middle of your back, framing your face. On a work day your hair would be tied up in a bun, but today you were relaxing so you decided to leave it down.

The dress you had on was simple enough, though most of your dresses were very much the same as the one you wore now, only differing in color. A knock at the door turned your attention to the sack of laundry you were fixing to take to the laundry room in the inn's basement. You figured Connor sent a maid up instead of letting you take it down yourself.

When you opened the door, however, it was not a maid standing there. You were met with the smell of your favorite breakfast and the most beautiful brown eyes you'd seen since you were rescued. You couldn't remember them, but they seemed familiar, along with the face they belonged to. "I'm sorry, but I think you've got the wrong room, mate." You told him.

He was rather handsome, a captain by the looks of things. You figured he'd made a wrong turn headed to his room to bring his sweetheart breakfast. "No, no mistake unless yer name's not Sarah." He replied smoothly. You knew that voice, but you couldn't put a finger on where or why.

"I'm sorry, Captain, but I do not know you." You told him, as much as you would like to know him...

"All the same, I brought ye breakfast. Ah, but where are my manners? I be Captain Jack Sparrow. We were friends when we were kids, Sarah." He informed you, offering you the plate. Your eyes went wide as the image of the little boy you once knew floated through your mind. You were starting to remember.

You took the plate from him and beckoned him inside, shutting the door behind him. You walked to your bed and sat down; Jack sat in a chair near your small writing desk. "Thank you, Jack..." Your mind was going at warp speed with tons of memories, all involving Jack. You ate slowly as you processed these memories, Jack watching the progress, seeing the wheels turn in your head.

After a while Jack decided it was safe to ask the one question he wanted to know the answer to. “What happened to ye when those slave drivers grabbed you in the market four years ago?”

You looked up, trying to phrase the answer right, all the while taking in Jack’s curious gaze and beautiful face. “I don’t really remember that much. It’s all a bit fuzzy from my head injury.”

“Aye, Connor mentioned ye had a nasty one.” Jack was watching your reaction and at the same time trying to memorize your face. You had a scar on the left side of your neck, close to your throat and three identical scars on your right cheek. Your arms were crisscrossed with little scars as well, the remnants of a beating if he had to guess. Your green eyes, once bright and cheerful, now haunted. Your hair and clothes were much the way he remembered them.

“Aye, Alice said I’d ‘ave memory loss because of it. And she was right; I don’t even remember who I am. If you hadn’t said your name I would have never remembered you.” You were amazed how easy it was to talk with Jack. Being around him was as easy as breathing, you didn’t feel the need to be on guard all the time, didn’t worry about what he was going to do or say next.

“What do you remember?” he asked gently. He could tell your memories of him had rushed back, but seemed to have no order to them.

“I remember you, but your last name isn’t Sparrow... it’s Teague.” You exclaimed as you latched onto the memory you were after.

“It used to be. You gave me a new one, do you remember tha’?” You lapsed into silence as a faraway look came over your face. And you were indeed far away, several years away in fact.

3 RENAMING JACK

You were twelve, standing on a beach in a small cove near the Spanish Rose. One side of the cove had an outcropping that was perfect for diving off of. And that was exactly why Jack had brought you here, diving lessons. “Are ye watching, Sarah?” he yelled from the ledge he was going to dive from. It was far higher than you would have dared.

“Aye, Jack, I can see ye!”

“Okay. Spread your arms out to the side like this,” he spread his arms out wide as he said this, “and jump, but before you reach the water bring your hands together above yer head so they break the water and ye don’t get a headache.” When he finished telling you what needed to be done he executed a perfect swan dive into the waiting sea. You clapped your hands as he surfaced.

“Wonderful, Jack!” You told him when he was close enough to hear. A wave knocked him down and you ran to the water to help him up.

“You try it!” the sixteen-year old urged, “I’ll help ye out of the water.”

“I don’t know, Jack, that’s awfully high...” you weren’t the biggest fan of heights at that point in your life, though later you came to love them. He simply smiled softly and pulled you with him to a lower ledge on the outcropping. He didn’t want to scare you but he at least wanted you to try, and you’d jumped from this ledge dozens of times on previous swimming lessons.

“I’m right here; I won’t let anythin’ happen to ye. I promise.” He reassured. He gave your hand a gentle squeeze before letting you go. You nodded, a look of determination on your face, as long as he was with you, you could rule the world.

You spread your arms and counted, “One... Two... Three...” then you took a deep breath and jumping off of the ledge, doing exactly what Jack had just showed you. He followed you with a gentle splash off to your right. He’d positioned himself between you and the mouth of the cove. “I did it!” your smile was so wide you thought your face would crack in half.

“Aye, Sarah, ye just executed the most beautiful and graceful swan dive I’ve ever seen.” He complimented as he followed you to shore. You could swim like a mermaid, but you never could be too careful when it came to undercurrents. Once on shore you found your favorite shade tree and lay down in the grass to dry. You were wearing shorts and a cami top for the days adventures. Jack flopped down next to you, wearing only his sea pants, his shirt hanging from a branch of the tree.

When you turned your face to look at him you thought he looked sad. He watched a baby sparrow take its first flight out of the nest in the bush next to him. “Jack, why are you so sad?”

you asked, he was normally so happy that it startled you to see him this way. But he'd never hid anything from you, not like he did from the others.

He smiled a soft smile at you, the one he saved only for you as he considered how to answer your question. "Because I 'ave to leave soon. Dad's gonna teach me how to be a pirate and a sailor. I don't know when I'll be back."

You frowned at this, despite the age difference you and Jack were best friends, thick as thieves his mother would say. He taught you everything he knew. You hadn't got to learn sword play yet, because you weren't yet strong enough to lift one. "Surely he won't keep you away long. He comes back a lot. At least every sixth month..."

"No, Sarah," Jack said shaking his head, "this time it's different, he said he's in it for the long haul. That he may not see this port again." You'd both known that this was always a possibility, but hadn't wanted to believe it. "He also said I should change my name, so people won't use me to get to him. What do ye think?" Jack had given you a chance to change his identity, something he would have never given anyone else.

You thought for a moment before coming up with a simple answer. "Sparrow."

"Why 'sparrow'?" he was genuinely curious, and confused as to how you came up with this idea for a last name.

"Because that's what you remind me of and you like to watch them. They're free, free like you want to be..." the last part was barley a whisper as it came from your lips.

"Sparrow it is... Captain Jack Sparrow!"

"The most fearsome pirate in the Spanish Main!" you finished for him. It had always been Jack's dream to be a pirate and to be free. When you would play like pirates as children he'd always taken you with him on his adventures. Just then a thought crossed your mind, "Jack, do you really want people to be scared of you?"

"I guess so," he replied, he'd never really thought of it before, "but not ye, I never want ye to be afraid of me."

"Never!" you were horrified at the idea. "Now you give me a last name. Mama never told me what mine was." Though the idea had sounded good in your head, it made you sad that your mother never had told you your last name.

Jack frowned; he hated it when you were sad. And he hated the man who killed your mother, though if he hadn't the two of you may have never met. He sat in silence for a moment, thinking of a word that would sum you up.

4 CONVERSATIONS

“Grace,” Jack’s voice brought you out of the memory, “your last name is Grace.” You were twenty-two again, sitting in your room at the Bride. Jack looking at you curiously as you remembered the name he’d given you ten years ago.

You smiled, “Yes that was the name you choose for me. Though you never go to tell me, why?”

“Because you are the embodiment of grace, there is nothing klutzy about you.” He answered softly, “but ye’ve had enough memories for now. I suggest a nice long bath in the hot springs by the Bride. Give your mind time to catch up.”

He stood and walked over to you; he offered his hand and helped you up before stepping towards the door. The hot springs sounded positively delightful, and Ana would be able to go with you today. Granted today was the day that you and Ana normally went to the springs. “That sounds brilliant; will you be here when I get back?”

“Only if ye don’t want me to be,” he said solemnly.

“I want you to be. I’ve missed you, even if I didn’t know it.” This was true, you’d missed him the last ten years.

“Then I’ll be waiting with a plate of lunch, and if ye like I’ll take ye to the Pearl and give you the grand tour.”

“I would like that very much.” Jack smiled your smile, oh how you’d missed seeing it. Jack opened the door and bowed so you could exit the room first. Down stairs you met up with Ana and Jack had sought out Connor to tell him of your plans.

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“What were ye doin’ with that Captain Sparrow?” Ana asked as you scrubbed your head, the water was deep enough in the spring to cover your breasts so you could both talk comfortably. She stood outside the pool to head off any peeping toms, and you would do the same for her. She watched the smile spread across your face at the mere mention of his name.

“He’s just a friend, Ana, nothing more.”

“Jack is not ‘just a friend’ to any woman.”

“He is to me; you don’t know him like I do.”

“So you say, but I’ve seen more of ‘im in the last ten years that ye ‘ave, aye?”

“That is true, but Jack is still my friend. What he does with his personal life is none of my concern.”

“Just how long have ye known Jack for anyway?” She expected the answer to be hours, not years.

“Since I was seven... For the first time in four years I have a link to my past. I remember who I was, who I was meant to be. I have a last name, Ana!” You announced just before going under to get the soap out of your hair. Ana was shocked at your revelation. The fact that Jack’s interest in you was completely innocent was a new thing for Ana. But the fact that you’d recovered so much over breakfast was amazing to her.

“So what is your last name?”

“Grace. My full name is Sarah Beth Grace...”

Ana was stunned, she’d heard your name before. “Yer Angelica’s girl!”

“Not her daughter, but close enough.”

“Not from what I hear.”

“What do you mean?” you asked as you dressed, you seriously doubted that Angelica would have set you up with Jack.

Ana smiled when she surfaced, “From what I hear, that boy of hers was frantic when he found out ye were missing. Said he showed up a few weeks after yer birthday and was devastated that ye’d been taken. I heard they were practically torn apart when they found out yer ship had been sunk, and no survivors to speak of.” She took a moment to get some suds going before continuing, “Had I known it was ye, I’d have returned ye to yer home.”

“Ana, do you know who her son is?” You were curious to know if she actually knew who had been so upset about your abduction. And you wondered what had caused him to return home around the time of your birthday.

“No, they say that he’s a handsome sailor though. Said he left to search for ye, vowed he wouldn’t return home without out ye, or proof that ye were gone. He ain’t been back since.”

“Oh...” was all you could say. You’d never dreamed that your disappearance would have affected Jack like that. It made you want to rip your heart out because you’d hurt them so, even if it wasn’t your fault.

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While you and Ana were bathing, Jack was dealing with Connor and his insecurities. “Jack, don’t be pullin’ nothin’ with Sarah. She’s got enough to deal with.”

“Don’t ye think I know that, Connor? I’m not trying to bed her, I’m trying to help her.” Jack nearly shouted at the man, *And I missed her, is that not enough?! He thought.* “Look, Connor, did she ever mention anything about her past aside from what ye mentioned last night?”

“No, not really, she couldn’t remember much after the concussion. Why?”

“Did she tell ye her mother was murdered in front of her while she hid out of site when she was seven?”

“No, just that she didn’t know ‘er father and her mother died when she was seven.”

“Well her mother was murdered. Sarah saw the whole thing, and she did the logical thing. She ran at the first chance she got. Dad and I found ‘er on the streets. She weren’t in no better shape than when she fell into yer lap I’d say.”

“Oh tha’ poor girl...” Connor murmured.

“Aye, Dad made arrangements for her to stay in Mama’s boarding house. I was twelve when we found ‘er, and sixteen when I left with Dad to become a pirate...”

“It wasn’t yer fault Jack, there was nothin’ ye could ‘ave done.”

“Maybe, maybe not, but I shoulda been there...” Jack murmured so low Connor almost didn’t hear him. There was no doubt that Jack felt responsible for your abduction, he felt he could have stopped it had he been there. “I coulda helped ‘er Connor. How bad was she?” He almost didn’t want to know. But he had to ask so that he was a little prepared for what he would ask for from you later.

“She wasn’t raped, if that’s what ye want to know. I think someone had tried and was caught with their pants down. I suppose ye’ve seen the scars on her face and neck?”

“Aye, and the random ones on her arms as well...”

“Well, I think they tried to break ‘er. An unwilling slave doesn’t fetch that high of a price, even if she is a pure one.” Jack gritted his teeth at the description Connor left him with. You’d been a mess when Ana had brought you to Connor, and now Jack knew just how bad.

“Is she happy here?” he asked after digesting the information he’d received.

“I honestly don’t know. I was getting ready to make ‘er second in command here at the Bride. She does a fine job of making sure the other girls are workin’ properly. Still will if she stays on.”

“What do ye mean?” Jack was genuinely confused by this; he wasn’t going to take you away from your life here. Not unless you wanted to leave.

“C’mon, Jack, yer not that thick! Yer the key to her past, to her memories. Ye got a ship and can take ‘er back to where she really belongs. Not too many people would turn away from tha’.”

“Aye, I suppose yer right...”

“She’s special to ye, ain’t she?” Connor asked, he’s seen the look on Jack’s face when he’d asked about you the night before, and it had only intensified when the conversation turned to what had happened to you on the ship. No man can look like that without a reason.

“Why do ye say that?”

“C’mon, Jack, in the past forty-eight hours ye’ve not so much as looked at another woman. I’ve seen every emotion pass across yer face that only a person in love would show.”

“Connor... the last time I spoke to ‘er she was twelve. Much too young for me to love like tha’.”

“How do ye know, Jack? Maybe yer heart was just waiting for the opportune moment. Fate practically dropped ‘er in yer lap.” Connor left Jack to think about this as he started going about his business for the day. It was true, you were important to Jack, but just how important?

5 ABOARD THE PEARL

It was nearing dinner time as you made your way to the Pearl. Jack had been waiting for you when he returned, a plate full of fruit for a light lunch. You'd asked him what he'd been up to in the last ten years and he'd told you the real stories, not the ones he'd made up for everyone else to hear. As Jack led you up the gang plank you asked, "How did things go with Connor today?"

"Interesting to say the least..." he sounded so sad when he said this. But in an instant he was back to his charming self. "Milady Sarah, welcome aboard the Black Pearl." He bowed and took your hand much like a carriage boy as you stepped onto the deck of the ship.

You smiled as you took in the ebony timbers and sails of the ship. "Jack, she's positively beautiful!" you were in awe to say the least. You fell in love with the ship immediately.

"Welcome aboard the Pearl, Miss Grace." Gibbs greeted you from the helm as he stood watch over the grand ship, you waved at him as you stood speechless. Jack took your hand and led you to the galley where your dinner was waiting.

"What about ye, how did your bath with Ana go?" The two of you had been so emerged in Jack's stories that you'd completely forgotten the previous conversations.

"Well, Ana did the twenty questions routine. My memories are still a bit fuzzy, I remember you as plain as day, and anyone around you when the memory happened. But so many of them are still out of focus..." You were saddened by the fact that you were still struggling with your memories.

Jack frowned, he wanted you happy not sad. "What exactly did Ana tell ye?"

"Well, she told me about your overly active social life." You said with a small smile before becoming serious again, "She told me how upset everyone was when I disappeared, how upset you were... I'm so sorry..." You were practically in tears because you were frustrated with yourself and because you had inadvertently caused so much pain. "Jack, she said you were devastated and Angelica was torn apart!"

Jack's eyes were like molten pools of chocolate at seeing the tears streaming down your face. You were upset with yourself, not something he wanted. He turned you to face him and took your face in his hands, "Ye did nothing wrong, luv, it's not yer fault ye can't remember. And now I 'ave ye back. I know yer alive and well so I'm all better." He tried to sooth you with his words, and when that only made you cry harder he pulled you into a hug, rubbing your back as the years of frustration finally broke you down.

"I'm so sorry, Jack..." you murmured as the sobs slowly subsided.

“Ye ‘ave nothing to be sorry for, ye did nothing wrong.” He said raising your face so that he could see you.

“I meant for soaking your shirt...” you smiled through the tears. You felt better, he could tell. “I feel like a child all over again...”

“Luv, sometimes it just needs to be let out.”

“When will you let it out?” you asked, seeing the anger and pain in his eyes. He was angry at himself for leaving, angry for not being there, and angry at the men who took you from him, angry about what they did to you, and in pain because you were in pain.

“Someday...” he promised, “but right now it’s dinner time.” He said leading you to a table laden with food. All throughout your meal of small talk about nothing in particular the crew would come and introduce themselves to you. Knowing the people you were surrounded by made you feel more at ease, like you could trust them with your life. And you could, anyone important to Jack, was important to them.

Once you were done eating the grand tour really began. Jack walked you all over the ship explaining this and that to you, teaching you what little you didn’t already know from growing up with him. He even showed you where his private stash of rum was. He ended the tour at his quarters. “C’mon I want to show ye something.” He lead you inside his quarters, normally this would have set off warning bells. But this was Jack, trusting him was easy as breathing. He sat you down at his desk and started retrieving books from the top shelf of his book case and laying them on the desk in front of you.

Books that you recognized, “Jack, these were mine, they’re the ones you sent to me!” you exclaimed running your fingers over the worn leather. They were classics, from authors like Shakespeare and Dante. He had sent them home to you, one book a year from whatever random port he found them in. He would read them, then send them to you with a letter written on the back page and a detailed drawing of the port he was in at the time. He took you around the world with him that way.

“Aye, I wanted to feel closer to ye, so when I left home I brought them with me. Thought maybe they’d gimme the answer to where ye were at... I was reading this when we docked yesterday.” He said placing *Romeo and Juliet* in front of you.

You smiled, flipping to the back of the book. Upon opening the back cover, you spotted the picture you were looking for, the port he’d sent the book from was none other than Tortuga. “It’s like fate wanted you to find me...” You smiled, Jack decided that your smile was his favorite thing in the universe. Better than the Pearl, better than all the rum in the world.

“Aye...” he trailed off, the look on his face said he wanted to ask you something, he just wasn’t sure how.

“What is it, Jack?” you asked, arching an eyebrow his way. He smiled, you knew him too well sometimes.

“How did ye get these?” he asked, running his calloused fingers gently over the three scars on your right cheek. You sighed bringing your hand up to cover his.

“You’re not gonna like what you hear...” you warned with a small frown. You knew he didn’t care, he needed to know.

“I need to know, I don’t care ‘ow much it hurts me to know it...” his voice was near to breaking. He knew telling would help you get passed it and he wanted to know what you hadn’t told Connor. You’d lied when you’d said you couldn’t remember the details, you knew perfectly well what had happened.

6 BACK TO OCTOBER

You were excited; it was your eighteenth birthday! There was a big party planned for tonight and you had a letter from Jack that Angelica wouldn't let you open until the party. She'd sent you to the market to keep you busy until then. She'd bought you a baby grand piano to replace the piano you'd been playing on. Yes, you could play the piano beautifully; you'd needed something to fill the void Jack left over the years. Music soothed you so you choose the piano. You were planning on purchasing some new sheet music.

However, as much as you were excited, you were also scared. Your instincts were blaring an alarm in your head. You were on high alert. Captain Teague, or Captain as you called him, had taught you to trust your instincts, and you were listening to them, but you didn't know what they were telling you.

You had just came out of the bookstore after purchasing some sheet music. You had the owner of the store, a man named Ivan, bind the music into a book that you would pick up on your way back to the manor.

Angelica had moved you to the manor and out of the boarding home as soon as she realized just how close you and Jack were becoming. She'd placed you in the rooms next to Jack's own; her rooms were directly across the hall. The three of you had a bedroom, living room, and bathroom all to your selves. A door in your living room adjoined your rooms to Jack's, a door that had been shut since his departure.

Just as you rounded the corner an arm wrapped around your waste and a knife was placed against the skin on the left side of your throat, just below your cheek bone. "ello poppet, yer gonna fetch a pretty price at market." A man grumbled into your ear. From what you could see he was filthier than most, and his breath smelled like a dead fish. "Ye even think about screamin' and I'll slit you from ear to ear." He promised as he led you through the alleys to the docks. You then boarded the Duchess' Reaper.

You were shoved into a cell after an inspection by the captain, a man named Malice. Your wrists were bound, which wouldn't do you much good even if you could maneuver the dagger you had hidden on you. You looked around and noticed there were at least two girls per cell in the dim brig of the ship. There wasn't much you could do, so you huddled into the corner and tried to sleep.

~*~

The next morning you and a few others were hauled out onto the deck and told to submit to your new master. Those who wouldn't submit were to be tied to the mast and beaten into submission. You passed out first; a scream never passed your lips.

When you awoke the next morning you found yourself alone in your cell, where your roomy was you had no idea. Heavy boots could be heard descending the stairs to the brig. You watched as their owner came into view and he came to stand in front of your cell. “Well well, well, if it ain’t the stubborn slave, and she’s awake...” He smiled an evil smile, “Ye like pain girl?” He opened the door to your cell and approached you.

“Go to hell!” you shouted, spitting into his face. He wiped the spit from his face and punched you in the face, his rings lacerating the skin of your right cheek.

“Tha’s no way to be talking to ol’ Kale now is it?” he asked sarcastically as he grabbed a fist full of hair and dragged you to a room you’d thought was a store room. When you looked around the room you saw what could be a single person’s mattress. The walls and floor were covered in blood stains and only God knows what else.

Kale slung you towards the bed but you bounced up before he could make it to you, ignoring the stinging in your back. Your options were limited, your hands were still bound, but you had about six inches of rope between each wrist now. “Ohh, a feisty one!” he sounded like a child with a new toy.

You had realized by now what he’d intended to do with you when he’d locked the door. “Yea, well you’re so ugly you have to rape defenseless women to get laid!” you remarked. You knew you’d pay for it, but the angrier he was the more he would play into your hands. One thing Jack had taught you was to think on your feet. He went to swing again and you kicked him square in the balls.

“Ye li’l wench, ye’ll pay fer tha’!” He retaliated by punching you in the stomach three times before shoving you onto the mattress and using his weight to pin you down. You tested the strength of your bonds and found them strong enough to do what was needed.

Using a trick Kai, a girl from the Spanish Rose, had taught you; you flipped Kale over onto his back. When he tried to get up you wrapped your rope around his neck and attached yourself to his back. This is how one of the guards found you, with Kale nearly out cold from your grip on him. He pulled you off of Kale and put you back in your cell. He then escorted Kale to the captain. After a while the guard returned with a rag and a bowl of warm water to clean your injuries. “Why did you help me?”

“I didn’t, ye bring more money if yer a virgin. The lashing was just to make you submissive. A slave girl who doesn’t do what she’s told doesn’t fetch a pretty price.” He informed you, leaving you with the bowl and the rag.

“Oh,” was all you’d had to reply as the ship shook with an explosion. And then another and another. The ship was being attacked. A cannon ball blew a hole in the hull were your cell was, while it had missed you, it had given you an escape route. Who knew all that Jack had

taught you would be useful someday? You poked your head out of the opening to find yourself face to face with the H.M.S. Dauntless, pride of the king's royal navy. It was your ticket to freedom.

You used your dagger now to cut your bonds and took a deep breath, diving out of the opening into the waiting sea. You swam to a piece of wreckage that was floating nearby. It was then that a cannon ball hit the powder magazine of the Reaper, causing it to explode. A piece of debris hit you in the back of the head, knocking you unconscious, and that is how Ana found you some time later. The men from the Dauntless could see no survivors among the wreckage, and declared as much to the public.

7 YOU'RE SAFE HERE

Jack gritted his teeth, he knew Kale and the man was still alive. *If I ever see that scum again I'll kill him!* He swore to himself. "I told you that you wouldn't like it..."

"Tha' ye did. It's getting late, we should get back to the Bride before Connor sends out a search party..." Jack was reluctant to give up his time with you, but he knew Connor would think the worst, and he didn't want that.

"Should I bring my books?" You didn't really want to carry them that far.

"No, I'll send for them later." Jack answered, he hoped after his offer he wouldn't have to send for them.

~*~

You were almost back to the Bride and your instincts were screaming again. "Jack, something's wrong..."

"Aye, tha's the Bride!" He agreed as you rounded the corner. The Bride was engulfed in flames and surrounded by men, Connor was nowhere to be seen.

"Connor!" You screamed, lurching forward as a barrel exploded inside. You were stopped by Jack's arms wrapping around your waist in an iron grip. He grabbed a nearby horse and slung you onto it, turning the horse back towards the docks and handing you the reins.

"I'll see to Connor! Get back to the Pearl, tell Gibbs Barbosa is here! Lock yerself in my quarters, you'll be safe there!" Jack ordered, leaving no room for argument as he slapped the horse's flank causing it to shoot forward.

You thundered toward the docks and you'd be damned if you slowed for anyone in your way. Once you made it to the Pearl you jumped from the horse and ran up the gang plank to the deck of the ship. "Gibbs!! Gibbs I need your help!!!" you shouted, desperately seeking the man, fearing for Jack's safety.

"What is it lass?" Gibbs yelled from the helm as he made his way to the stairs. He broke into a run when he noticed your panicked state, and the fact that Jack was nowhere to be seen.

"It's Connor!" you panted, "Jack said it's Barbosa, the Bride's in flames! Jack went to check it out on his own!"

Gibbs' eyes widened as he grabbed your arm and lead you to Jack's quarters. "Take these." He ordered shoving a pistol and a short-sword into your hands. He had no idea if you knew to use them but he was taking every precaution. "Do **not** unlock this door fer anyone! Jack has a key if he wants in! We'll keep ye safe. Do ye understand?"

“Aye.” You answered solemnly; you were scared but trying to be strong. You stepped further into the cabins as Gibbs shut the heavy mahogany doors; once they were closed you locked them. You could hear shouting on deck as Ana and Gibbs started ordering the crew to their posts. *What is Ana doing here?* You wondered, you had no idea why your friend would be on board the Pearl. There was commotion as the men obeyed their orders, and then nothing. Not a sound could be heard on the ship.

You placed the sword and pistol on the bed and began checking your surroundings to see if there was anything else to use to your advantage. You checked the windows and the privy to make sure there was only one way into the quarters you were currently secured in. And then you climbed into the middle of the bed and waited.

And waited... Hours passed, or it may have been minutes, you couldn't be sure. The name Barbosa sounded so familiar but you couldn't put your finger on it. The sound of gunfire startled you out of your memories; the fight had come to you. You grabbed the sword and pistol and readied for a fight should someone make it that far. You scooted to the end of the bed, but didn't get up; you didn't want them to think you a threat at first glance.

As suddenly as the fight began, it ended. There was silence on the deck save for the sounds of footsteps. The door handle rattled, you cocked the pistol. Jack would have known the door was locked. The rattling stopped and you could hear a key being inserted as the door was unlocked; they must have taken Jack's keys. As the doors swung open your heart jumped into your throat. Jack was on his knees, bound and gagged with two pistols aimed at his head. You turned your attention to the man at the door as his face split into a sinister grin. “ello little sister... You're all grown up...”

You arched an eyebrow at him as you analyzed your situation. “Ah, but ye probably don't remember me, ye were such a little tyke when I last saw ye. Couldn' 'ave been more 'an two. Dad went to take ye from Mom a few years later so 'e could raise ye like 'e was me. No sense in ye growin' up in a whore house. What a pity he couldn' find ye.”

Jack's eyes widened, he now knew why Barbosa had been so familiar to him. There was a small family resemblance between the two of you when Hector was younger, now he bore no resemblance to anyone. You recalled the night Barbosa was talking about, “He murdered our mother that night. I watched him do it.”

“Ahhh, so ye were there! And what be ye doin' in here?”

You had no idea if your plan would work, but you had to try. “I was waiting for the dear captain's return. I was goin' ta kill 'im and take 'is ship.” You lied, smiling evilly. Had Jack not known any better he would have believed you, but he played along to aid your plan. You'd always been good at lying when you wanted to be.

“Tha’ so?” Barbosa was curious as to why you would want to kill Jack.

“Aye, I don’t take kindly ta being jaded.” You were using Jack’s well known history with women to your advantage. Barbosa frowned, you were his sister after all, the instinct to strike at Jack for harming you kicked in. As he turned to strike Jack in the face you grabbed his wrist. “I want to do it.”

He smiled, “It would seem ye grew up just fine without Father’s help...” he wrapped you in a hug. You used your new position to place your pistol at his throat, and a dagger you’d found at his balls.

“Aye, I grew up just fine with Jack by my side.” You smiled, “Now release him or you’ll be half of the man you were this morning when you woke up.”

You were smirking when Barbosa leaned down to whisper in your ear, “It’s not tha’ easy, Sarah.”

“Yes, it is. Either they stand down, or I castrate you before blowing your brains all over this deck.”

“Ye ain’t gonna kill me...” he said looking into your eyes, you pressed the tip of the blade a little harder against his family jewels and he gasped, seeing that he was very wrong. You didn’t know him and didn’t care what happened to him. Jack was your priority now. “Men, stand down.”

Ana took this time to show herself, relieving Jack’s captors of their weapons as the rest of the crew took care of the other intruders. Ana then helped Jack up and unbound his hands after pulling the gag away from his mouth. “Thank you. Now, what happened to Connor?” You looked from Barbosa to Jack.

“He’s fine, a little banged up but nothing a few days of rest won’t cure.” Ana offered up the information of your friend’s wellbeing.

What happened next may haunt you for the rest of your life. Barbosa grabbed your hand with the dagger in it and flung it out to the side, effectively losing your grip on the dagger and sending it flying. The sudden movement startled you enough to cause you to pull the trigger on the pistol that he had forgotten about. This effectively covered you in blood due to your close range and effectively ended his life.

Jack jumped at the noise as you dropped the pistol to the deck. “Are ye ok?” he asked as he ran to you and cupped your face in his hands. He was searching for any sign that you’d been injured by the proximity of the gun to you when you’d fired as he began wiping some of the blood from your face. He could tell you would be in shock soon.

“I was afraid I would lose you again...” You looked at one of the men behind Jack and noticed his sudden movement. He’d grabbed a sword from a crew man and was running straight for Jack, whose back was turned. Before anyone had time to react you grabbed the hilt of the sword Jack had replaced in his belt and shoved him to the side, raising your sword to block the oncoming blow. As you shoved the man’s blade backwards Jack pulled his own pistol and fired. The man fell backwards and heaved one last breathe as Jack turned to you in astonishment.

“How did ye do that?” He asked, he didn’t teach you sword play and as far as he knew no one else had either.

“Act, don’t react...” you quoted his father perfectly. Then Jack remembered his father catching the two of you fighting with sticks you’d fashioned into swords one day. You’d had a natural talent with Jack having all of the training. You were working off of instinct and when Captain seen you take a second to process what you were doing and told you those exact words. You handed Jack his sword as your mind started process what had just happened. You approached the man that had attacked you and Jack to see who he was. You had to cover your mouth to stifle the scream that had threatened to be released when you saw the face of the man who’d haunted you for years. The man who had murdered your mother those many nights ago, the man who was supposed to be your father...

Jack turned you to face him and wrapped his arms around you in an iron tight grip as you buried your face in his neck, trying to suppress the images that threatened to surface. “Javier Barbosa.” Jack nodded to Gibbs and Ana who immediately began cleaning up the mess.

“Alright ye mangy dogs, get this mess cleaned up!” Ana ordered while she was passing out mops and buckets.

“Marty, grab two other’s ‘n come with me!” Gibbs ordered. They would be getting you something to take a bath in. All this was happening while Jack led you back to his quarters. The crew had already removed Hector’s body and was working on cleaning the doors and the deck where there was blood.

8 SHOCK

Jack sat you down in a chair next to his desk and knelt down in front of you so that his face was level with yours. He dipped the rag he'd found into the bowl of water on the desk top and began trying to clean your face. After a few minutes he finally got all of the blood off of your face and moved to your hands. He then slipped your sandals off of your feet and began cleaning them up as well.

Marty and a few others came in carrying buckets of steaming water and Gibb's rolling an empty rum barrel. Once they got it all situated where Jack wanted it they left the room, closing the door behind them. The ship was now headed to a new port, only a few hours away, you would be there by morning. Jack was talking in soothing tones, but you didn't comprehend a word he was saying. He took both of your hands in his and pulled you to your feet. The windows, now clean instead of salt encrusted as they had been when Barbosa had been captain, reflected the scene in the room. The lamps had been lit on the small balcony outside and you could see the entire ocean and sky from where the barrel was sitting, as well as what was happening in the room.

"Sarah, your bath is ready fer ye, luv..." Jack cooed. He hadn't noticed that he'd been calling you 'luv' for some time now, it just felt natural. He turned you to face the windows as he gently unlaced your dress. Moving slowly so that if you wanted him to stop he could do so easily, and he didn't want to scare you. He placed his hands on your shoulders and gently pushed the dress down your arms and let it pool in the floor. He then gently removed your undergarments so that you were naked, you'd watched him do all of this. Jack was amazed at how much you'd seem to trust him. Even in shock you still would have been able to stop him if you'd wanted to.

Now you weren't so sure if you wanted him to stop at all. He knelt low enough to place an arm behind your knees and the other at your back and swept you up in a bridal cradle before placing you gently in the steaming water. He then went to fetch a clean rag and some soap he had stashed away while you got situated in the barrel. You were moving on your own, to him this was an improvement. Once he found what he was after he found you a shirt and a pair of pants that was his to change into, as well as a piece of cloth to cover your breasts so that the shirt wouldn't expose them due to its low-cut neckline. He then returned to the barrel.

He handed you one soapy rag he'd found, figuring if you were moving maybe letting you help him clean you up would bring you out of it. He soaped up the other one and gently began scrubbing your back; he smiled when you began working at the blood on your chest and neck. Once he noticed you were done with this he told you to tilt your head back and close your eyes. He took a cup and poured water over your face and hair, and then began scrubbing your head as you relaxed even more to his touch. "Jack?" you spoke while he scrubbed. It was nearly a whisper, but he heard you none the less.

“Aye?” he replied softly.

“Am I a monster for killing my brother?” He heard the anguish in your voice as you struggled to rationalize what you’d just done. You didn’t want to be a monster like them.

“No, luv, not at all... it’s not yer fault he’s yer brother. And had he not pulled what he did he’d still be alive. Besides, it would have been ye had ye not pulled that trigger.” You sighed as this seemed logical to you and gave up your inner struggle, succumbing to the soothing feeling of Jack’s fingers as he massaged your scalp.

“That man that you shot, was he my father?”

“If ye could call him that... He was Hector’s father. He was the man who killed yer mother.” Jack replied, this was good enough for you.

“Is Connor really alright?”

“Aye, he’ll be fine in a few days. Prolly rebuild the Bride before we make it back.”

“So... what now?” You really didn’t know what you wanted to do now, so asking what Jack’s plans were seemed logical.

“I thought we’d stop at the next port in the morning and get ye some clothes that actually fit. And then we could go home to Trinidad. Then see how things go from there...” You nodded, it sounded like a good idea. Jack handed you a towel and turned with his back to you so that you could get out, but close enough that he could help you should you need it. You smiled, despite having just seen you naked, and just bathed you; he was still being a gentleman.

You stood and dried off, then you used Jack’s strong shoulders to steady you, you climbed out of the barrel. You pulled on the pants he’d laid out for you and began wrapping the piece of cloth around your chest, effectively covering your breasts but you were having problems tying the ends. “Jack, I need your help...” you plead. Jack turned to help you, his breath catching in his throat.

The pale skin of your back was exposed now, except where the cloth had it covered, as you had your hair over your shoulder. He could plainly see the scars left behind from the beating you’d received to make you submit four years ago. He swallowed thickly, gently taking the ends from you and tying them tightly. “All done.”

“Thank you. Ya know, for having sailor’s hands they’re quiet gentle...” you commented as you turned to him, pulling the shirt over your head. Jack spotted the scars from Kale’s rings just before you covered them with. You sat down in the middle of his bed and began fussing with your hair thinking about how amazing Jack’s hand’s had felt on your bare skin. He was your

friend; you weren't supposed to feel like this about him. You didn't even mind that he'd seen you naked.

You were brought out of your thoughts when Jack sat down; or rather lay down, in the bed next to you. He gently grabbed your arms and pulled you back with him. He placed a chaste kiss on your head as you snuggled into him. It took you a few seconds to realize that it was his bare skin against your cheek. "I almost lost you today..." you whispered, not even realizing you'd said it out loud.

"Aye, but ye didn't. And I'm not goin' anywhere unless ye send me away." He promised as you fell asleep in his arms.