

A Day for Pirates

[Fiction]

Brian Buckley

Pulling into the driveway, Jay notices something in his living room window. Two very young pirates wave swords and make faces at him from behind the glass. Jay smiles back at the makeshift buccaneers as he parks his Jeep just before the garage door.

Jay steps out of the car and walks over to the stairs of his suburban home. Jogging slightly to the top, he greets the two small plants in earthy clay pots, standing sentry on either side of the impressive designer door. With a grin he bends down to make sure their soil is still damp. Setting his briefcase down, he swings the front door open in one quick swoop, letting out a triumphant "*Aargh!*"

"Daddy! Daddy, daddy, daddy," begins the practiced harmony of five-year-old twins.

Jay hunches down into a catcher's position, holds his arms out wide as he turns to face his boys in the living room, "How are my two favorite pirates doing?"

The boys leap off the sofa cushions and run toward their father, throwing the swords at their feet shouting "Look, look! We made patches out of shoe string and a piece of your old hat. Mom gave us banandas to put on too."

Giving them each a good, thorough inspection he tells them he finds them to be two perfectly fit pirates. "Banandas, huh? I see. I think I need one too. What do you guys think?"

"Yeah! Mom! Dad needs a bananda too! Mom!" the boys shout.

Jay laughs as they race across the hardwood floor, stomping loudly with their unlaced shoes and waving their wooden swords emphatically from side to side, slashing down invisible enemies as they make their way toward the kitchen. The boys take a sharp left at the stairs and slow down as they hit the threshold of the kitchen. Mom doesn't like them running in the house;

they both learned early on that their father is the lenient one. In the kitchen, his wife turns her head toward the stampede as she leans over the counter to water the potted plants adorning the window sill above the sink. Jay meets her eyes and walks toward her with a smile on his face as he draws within range of a kiss.

The boys swipe their swords at his legs while they catch up. She leans down to the two brigands and asks, "So you think he deserves to be a pirate, eh?"

Excitement strikes their faces, "He's the captain, Mom!"

"Alright, well how about you two leave the captain and I here for a moment while you guys go clean up your snacks in the living room."

With drooped shoulders the boys head for the door, their bottom lips stuck out in a pout to garner sympathy, mumbling incoherently between each other as they leave.

"Don't worry, guys," Jay assures the two boys. "We'll hop aboard the ship as soon as you finish cleaning up."

The boys give a hesitant pause and look at each other with wide eyes before making a mad dash toward the living room, screams and laughter echoing through the wide halls.

"How was work?" asks Jay's wife as she wipes down the table with a wet cloth.

Shrugging, Jay drops his face into his hands, pulling his fingers through his hair as he leans back again. "The usual I guess. Spent all day waiting to come home, basically—waiting to see you guys," he says, turning toward her in the chair. She smiles as she cleans the same spot she's already wiped over three times.

"Did your boss like the cupcakes I made for your meeting?"

"Oh yeah, everyone loved them. All the guys think I'm lucky to have a wife who bakes so well—they were all gone in about 15 minutes."

"Oh, good. You *are* lucky," she says with a coy smile. "Sometimes I think I treat you *too* good. I spoil you."

Jay chuckles disinterestedly as he turns toward the hallway leading back to the living room, "Yeah, I can see how you'd think that."

She looks up from the table and smiles, extending her arms for a hug. They embrace earnestly, the way young married couples do, as the pirates come charging back to the kitchen, plates and cups in hand.

"Captain Sir, we have finished our chores and wanna set sail, Sir."

Jay tugs his tie off and looks down at the boys with an exaggerated play at poignancy. He begins unbuttoning the top two buttons of his pressed white shirt and grabs a bandana lying on the counter, wrapping it around his head in the same fashion as the boys.

“Alright ye’ mangy dogs, let’s sail!” He raises his fist at the end of his declaration as the boys raise their swords in salute, and with that they head for the front door.

Jay leans over to kiss his wife on the cheek and whispers, “I’m just gonna take them over to the park, we’ll be back in about an hour.”

“Okay, Sweetie, I’ll try and have something ready when you get home. Spaghetti maybe?”

He looks down at her with a smile, “Sounds wonderful. Bye, Honey.”

Jay runs for the door as the boys nearly make it to the car. Hopping inside, he helps each of them into their car seats, picking them up individually to plant them back in position. As they pull out into the street, Jay tilts his head to the side, “Wave to your mom, guys.”

The two pirates alternate waving their free hands and swords as Jay turns the corner at the end of their street. Smiling, Jay reaches down to the floor of the passenger side and returns with a platter stacked high with chocolate cupcakes, resting it neatly on the top of the seat.

“Who wants a cupcake?”

Both boys scream “Me! Me! Me!” as they both drop their swords and grab two, one for each hand.