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about 750 words

Homeward Bound

by Jamal Rashad

After parting ways with his would-be partner-in-crime from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum heist, Callum headed to the forest clearing where he hid ship during his visit to the past. He powered on the time-traveling ship and went to change out of his police officer disguise and into his normal clothing: smoky grey slacks, a white long-sleeved collared shirt, smoky grey vest, and black boots.

Callum grabbed his holographic communicator and stepped outside into the night. After keying on the communicator, a man,

seated in a raggedy metal throne, appeared and greeted Callum.

"Good'ay, mate! You got what I asked for?"

"Yeah, I have the pieces of art you wanted. Things didn't go like you said they would, but I managed to get it all done. Where's the mechanic you promised me? I'm trying to get out of here."

"Well, here's the thing. All my guys are kind of tied up right now. It'll be another day or two before I can send you a mech."

"C'mon, mate. I did what you asked. Can you send someone to this time period with the parts I need or not? They don't even have to stay. I'll fix the bloody ship myself." Callum's annoyed tone disputed his seriousness. He tuned out the rustling leaves and waves of whistling winds in the abandoned forest clearing; a lone crow cawed in the distance.

"I mean, yeah, you stole the art I wanted but that doesn't nearly cover what you already owe me, and now you want me to spend resources on fixing your fuck up? I don't know, Cal. That's going to cost you."

"It's going to cost me what?"

The dealer paused, tapping his chin. "How's about you do one more favor for me?" he grinned.

"Just one?" Callum felt uneasy; he'd been handed deals like this before, and they never worked out for him, but he thought he had no other options.

"Yup. Only one. And don't worry. You don't have to do it right now. I'm going to call in this favor at some point, and I just want you to fulfill it, no questions asked. Sound good?"

"Fine, Jaime. I'll do it. I'll owe you a bloody favor for this one." Callum hung his head in despair.

Jaime smiled and rubbed his hands together. "Good. Your assistance should be there right...about...now."

A bright light illuminated the moonlit forest clearing where Callum hid his ship. A teenaged boy appeared as the light emitted a low hum; it was one of Jaime's runners. Callum didn't recognize this one; he must have been a new one. "Here you go, sir. Everything you asked Jaime for is in this bag. Good luck to you."

"Thanks, kid. How old are you, anyway?"

"Thir-thirteen, sir," stammered the boy.

"Thirteen!" Callum was in disbelief. "I hope you don't end up owing Jaime your whole life like I almost did, kid. Go on. Get outta here."

"It was an honor to finally meet you, sir. The stories they tell don't compare to the actual thing," the kid said before vanishing in the same flash of light in which he arrived.

"Jaime's snatchin' 'em up younger and younger these days," Callum whispered to himself while digging through the bag of tools.

Hours had passed, and the sun had begun to rise since Callum started the maintenance on his ship. He wiped a bead of sweat from his brow after he tightened the last bolt. He was ready to test his work to see if he would be able to travel home.

Callum applied power to the control terminals and began praying a silent prayer; nothing happened. In a fit of rage and despair, Callum slammed his fists onto the terminal, and the ship roared to life. "Oh, thank Tobias! I knew you wouldn't quit on me just yet girl!" Callum fell back into his pilot's chair and sighed a sigh of relief. "I can finally get home and put this whole ordeal and time period behind me as it should be."

Callum's present thoughts were nothing compared to the ones he refused to entertain, though. He knew that at some point, Jaime would come to collect his favor, and it would not be anything simple; but he couldn't stress about that at the moment. Callum was more concerned about how he was going to explain to Boot that he was going to be late on paying his debt.