

Sheldon grew up along the coast, in a fishing village near the big city of... nothing. Seriously, if you picked the most populated and busy area of the coast, Sheldon's home was the farthest thing from it.

It wasn't exactly a small village, home to a few hundred people, but the same few hundred people over time is pretty tiring.

But his life was good.

He would one day be a fisherman, accompanying his father and brothers on their excursions out into the ocean to catch the fish to be sold at market a few villages over.

He wasn't quite there yet.

He found himself nearing his 20s, still stuck on land, cleaning and preparing the fish for shipping, hoping for a chance to hit the ocean with his family. His father had been promising to bring him aboard "next year" for the past few years.

But that was ok... It was ok because.. Betsy.

Betsy was the daughter of a sheep farm owner on the outskirts of the village. She was beautiful, she was funny, and she was his girlfriend.

He woke up in the morning with her already on his mind, and she was the last thing he would think of when he fell asleep.

She adored him, as well (at least she said she did).

Though, as some girls were, she was quite chaste.

Wanting to save herself for marriage and such.

Not more than a peck on the cheek, and even then, not in front of people.

That's not what a proper lady would do, of course.

None of this upset Sheldon. He was quite happy with his relationship with Betsy, and knew that one day they would be wed.

She made his life complete, and he was happy for it.

Then one day, a strange ship came near the village. It dropped anchor a bit out, and only a longboat approached the docks. Seems

Misty Pete (a pirate that terrorized these waters) was looking for crew men.

None in the village ever volunteered, but that didn't stop them from trying.

Besides, they enjoyed trying to have their way with the local women.

When word got to Sheldon that representatives from the pirate crew had come ashore, he left his work in search of Betsy. She had had a close run in a few months ago with one of those damned men, and he didn't intend to leave her side while they were around.

He eventually found Betsy, though it took longer than expected. She was safe enough from the pirates, in the back room of the bakery.

Except she wasn't that safe from the baker's son, Keith, around whom her arms were wrapped, his own hands resting a little too comfortably on her hips. He noticed with a start the patch of wetness on her neck which he could only imagine was Keith's saliva. He watched as she leaned in and kissed him on the lips, dismay washing over him as her tongue crept out and playfully sought refuge within his friend's mouth. Sheldon stood s

tunned outside of the doorway, as Keith asked her "what about you and Sheldon?"

She replied coyly, twirling a strand of the baker's sons in her finger, "Oh Sheldon is a good lad, and keeps me entertained well enough for the moment, but would never add up to much. I expect be kept in a better lifestyle than a fisherman can provide.

I keep him around as it keeps away unwanted suitors, and lets me pursue more eligible candidates. Maybe someone like you."

Keith pushed out of her grip, "No. Sheldon and I have been friends since we were small lads, and he deserves better."

Betsy laughed bitterly, "Ha. You didn't say that earlier when you had your tongue on my neck and your hand in my skirt. Sheldon is an idiot and thinks me chaste. If he knew the things I've done, things I'd like to do with you, he would probably die on the spot". She chuckled as she moved back in close to Keith, her hands reaching for the waist of his breaches.

Sheldon was crushed. He turned and left, neither Keith or Betsy knowing that he'd even been there.

He wandered through the village and found himself at the docks where the pirate crew were loading up the longboat with a few supplies.

He just stood there staring, watching them load everything into place before getting into the boat themselves.

One of the men looked up as he grasped the oar and noticed Sheldon standing there. "Oy, lad, are ye thinking of joining our crew?", he said to Sheldon.

Not even realizing he was talking, Sheldon replied "Yes. Yes I am."

So Sheldon, without a single of his possessions, got in the long boat with the pirates as they

rowed back out to their anchored ship. No one from the village even saw him go, which caused quite a stir hours later, when Betsy was unable to find him and then early the next morning when his father and brothers came home with their latest catch. Sheldon had just disappeared without a trace.

A little over 8 years later, Sheldon rode back into his home village. He was dressed in sharp clothes, on a strong horse, and by all appearances seemed very well off. Word quickly spread that Sheldon, the young man who had vanished years ago, had come home again looking very fine indeed.

Sheldon rode straight to his boyhood home, to find his father at work cleaning and dressing the fish from a recent catch. His father didn't look too pleased to see him, since his disappearance had cost the family greatly. He'd lost one of his older sons overboard during a storm, and no longer had his own boat. He was handling the cleaning and packing of fish for another fisherman, living (barely) off a very meager income. His other brother, it seemed, left the village the previous year in search of a new life, and hadn't been back since.

Sheldon visited with his Father only a short time. He told his father of the day he left, and why. His father told him that Betsy had never married, but she had dated just about every boy in town who was worth something. After a couple of hours, Sheldon took his leave, but not before gifting his father a small chest that he had strapped behind his saddle. He wished his father luck, and rode back towards the village. As he rode away, his father opened the small chest to reveal a small collection of gold, jewels, and pearls. It was not an earth shattering amount of wealth, but in this poor village his father would never need to work again.

Sheldon reached the town and visited a few of his old friends. He thought he would enjoy catching up, but they had changed so little while he had changed so much.

He kept each visit short and cordial, and eventually end up sitting near the docks.
That's where Betsy found him.

Betsy's eyes were wide, beholding Sheldon all decked out in his fine clothes, and immediately threw herself at him. Asked him where he had been, and why he had waited so long to come home to her. She had missed him and saved herself just for him, for all this time. She had absolutely no idea he had heard her conversation with Keith all of those years ago. Sheldon remembered it as it were yesterday.

Sheldon sat with her, by the docks, Betsy doing her best to ingratiate herself into his heart. She didn't even notice the longboat approaching the docks, not even when it arrived and the men climbed out. Only when Sheldon stood up and stepped forward, did she notice them.

The pirates stepped menacingly forward, ogling at the beautiful Betsy, as she maneuvered behind Sheldon for protection. Sheldon, whom she realized now stood much straighter than before, with newfound confidence.

"There were no complications?" asked one of the men.

"No", Sheldon replied. "Everything is as planned. I'm ready to return"

Betsy was confused. She stepped in front of Sheldon to stop him as he moved toward the longboat. "No, you can't leave me," she cried. "I only just got you back!"

"Oh," he replied, "I have no intention of leaving you" he smiled back. Hands from behind grabbed her, and dragged her to the longboat. A few villagers from another boat, whom Sheldon recognized, came running to assist her.

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Sheldon stepped out in front of the pirates who were busy dragging Betsy roughly into the longboat. He drew his rapier with a flash and held it before him. "I'm sorry," he said, "but I cannot allow you to come closer. But I'll kill you on the spot if you do".

"Sheldon!", a man he remembered as Kyle yelled. "What are you doing? Why are you letting those men take Betsy, the woman who loved you??"

"She never loved me," he said glancing over his shoulder at her as she lie in the bottom of the longboat, "did you, you gold digging tramp? Yes, I saw you with Keith the day I left." As Betsy's eyes grew wide, he turned back to the men in front of him. "Besides, they're not taking her, I am," he said. "Though I no longer go by that name. I am now Grimm."

With that, he stepped back and down into the longboat, and the pirates rowed back out into the ocean.

The villagers never heard from Betsy again. But word had it that the Pirate Grimm had taken her back to his ship where he was the first mate, the bloody whore, and let his crew have his way with her, before selling her into slavery. That ship spent the next several years rampaging the waters off the coast, living hard and playing hard. Grimm eventually became captain and spent his treasure as quickly as he made it, usually on booze and women.

Then, as if out of nowhere, he vanished for a second time. Not just him, his whole ship. Just gone.

No one knows what happened to Grimm or the bloody whore. Not many know that Grimm even lives. Walking along the path to the next village, he reaches into a small pouch and removes a small glass sphere. He watches the small clockwork goldfish as it swims around inside, before stuffing it back where it belongs. Walking along with a spring in his step, he looks forward to his next adventure, with a thought of

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what he would do if and
when he finds those who are responsible for him losing his ship. He will gladly make them pay.