the return of the prodigal son

by kadtherine

Summary

"at some point after rip is rip again but before he’s actually allowed out of the medbay (they gotta make sure he’s healthy or whatever) someone takes the jumpship back to 2017 and raids a local party city (see: pays for the goods provided, thank you very much) and so when rip goes to the bridge for the first time in a while he’s greeted by cake and a banner that says “congrats on not being dead!” and there are balloons and its a pure moment.”

Notes

The Golden Boy is back and I'm weeping of joy! Honestly, I missed my son Rip Hunter, I'm so glad he's back.

See the end of the work for more notes

Rip found comfort in knowing that, despite his absence, his team was still as confusing and exasperating as ever.

Obviously, things hadn’t gone back to the way it was before New York – seeing as there were two new members that he didn’t know. Amaya, he knew of from the short time he had spent with the JSA and the few History courses that he remembered. Nate Heywood was another story, though. He had recognized his name and had made the connection to Henry, but Rip had no recollection of
his grandson gaining powers. Which was something he intended to discuss about with Sara as soon as he was allowed of the medbay. To say he wasn’t surprised when Ray cornered him on his way out would be an understatement. His too-wide grin alarmed him, though.

“Can I do something for you, Mr Palmer?”

“Oh no, no. I just came to see if you’re okay,” Ray answered, rocking back and forth on his heels.

His eyes narrowed, Rip crossed his arms and gave him a nod.

“Well, as you can see, I’m perfectly fine.” At the other man’s unimpressed look, he rolled his eyes and tilted his head to the side, “Well, as fine as I can be considering. Now, if you’ll excuse me.”

Barely registering the way Ray’s eyes widened in a panic, Rip walked around him and made his way toward the bridge.

“Hey! Did you know we had rats on the ship?”

*That* managed to catch his attention. Stopping in his stride, he slowly turned around, his eyes wide opened as he stared at Ray, the latter stuffing his hands in his pockets.

“I’m sorry. What?” Rip choked out, his hand clenching into a fist by his side.

“We’ve got rats. Well, actually we’ve got one rat – by we, I mean Mick - but you know how it is with rodents: where there is one, another hides elsewhere and-”

Rip wasn’t sure he had processed everything Ray had been rambling about. Seeing as it concerned *rodents* on his ship, he knew that he should probably paying attention to the subject of conversation. The random and sudden change of subject caught him by surprise, Ray’s blabber confusing him further more. Martin walking into the medbay stopped him cutting into the other man’s rodents’ rant. Rip watched with a frown as the older man took a look around the room before his gaze fell on him.

“Oh good, you’re still here,” Martin sighed in relief, making his way to him.
“Actually, I was on my way out-” Rip started.

“About that,” he interrupted, rubbing his hands together; “I was thinking that it would be better for you to stay put for a few more days.”

“I don’t really think that’s necessary-“ he started again, his brow furrowed in confusion.

Rip understood the logic behind him staying at the medbay, under constant surveillance. He really did, seeing as the last time he had been left on his own, he had succeeded in deliberately crashing the Waverider in the Stone Age. While he hadn’t been in complete control of his actions when doing so, Rip had been getting better since then – thanks to Jax and Sara travelling into his mind.

“With all due respect, Captain,” Martin spoke up, breaking Rip’s train of thoughts, “You’ve been through quite the ordeal and while I’d like to take your word for it, it wouldn’t be the first time you’d downplay the gravity of your health-“

“Martin,“ Rip said, putting an end to the older man’s tirade, “I appreciate the concern and understand your wariness about my current state and my abilities,” he ignored the muttered ‘none of us are wary’ and put a hand on the professor’s shoulder, “But as I was telling Mr Palmer before you came in, I am fine. Beside, I’m aware that things have changed during my absence. I’m planning on taking things slow for now on.”

He watched, slightly puzzled, as Martin and Ray exchanged a look, the latter shrugging in response. With a loud and long sigh, Martin looked back at Rip and gave a small nod.

“Very well, then.”

Giving him a small smile, he patted his shoulder and walked out, making his way to the bridge. He hadn’t even taken two steps into the hallway before having his path blocked by Nate, the latter too busy reading some book to notice his presence. Restraining a groan of frustration, Rip crossed his arms and loudly cleared his throat, stiffening a smirk when he jumped, a yelp coming out of his mouth.

“Heeeeeeey, Captain Hunter-” Nate drawled out with a sheepish grin before he sobered up and tilted his head to the side, frowning in contemplation, “Cap-captain Rip Hunter. Mr Hunter. What am I supposed to call you?”

“Rip’s fine, Mr Heywood,” he replied, slightly amused by the other man’s nervous blabber.
“Nate,” he retorted with a finger pointed to himself, earning a snort from Rip, “Which you already knew. But what I meant is, just Nate is fine.”

“I’ll keep that in mind, then,” Rip nodded.

Nate returned the nod, a pleased spreading on his face and his fingers drumming against the hardcover of his book. As an awkward silence began to stretch between them, Rip narrowed his eyes at the other man’s nervous behaviour, the latter bouncing on his toes while clicking his tongue. Tilting his head to the side, he opened his mouth to ask if something was wrong, before thinking better of it and closing it. Nate’s nerves were probably due to him being alone with Rip. At least that what was the Captain thought, his jaw clenched. With another nod and clear of throat, Rip went to move around him, only to have Nate block his way again.

“It’s really great to meet you in person, you know,” Nate said loudly, ignoring the confused look Rip was sending him, “It’s great to see you live up the stories Amaya and I have been told.”

“Do I really?” Rip deadpanned, an eyebrow lifted in doubt.

He wasn’t too sure that, during his absence, his team had been singing his praises to the two newcomers. Oblivious to his scepticism, Nate nodded frantically, his smile widening.

“Well,” he sighed, “I better go and catch on what I’ve missed if I want to uphold my reputation. And just out of curiosity, where are you going?” Nate asked, his tone hesitant as he stepped to the side, once again blocking the Captain’s path.

“My office, if that’s fine with you?” Rip retorted, his confusion turning into irritation.

“Ah,” he grimaced, tilting his head to the side, “Actually, you can’t go there.”

“And why’s that?” he shot back, his stance defensive.

Rip felt a bit of pride at the way Nate’s eyes widened, unconsciously taking a couple of steps back. His pride was short-lived, though, and was replaced by guilt as he noticed his hands clench into
fists by his side, as if readying him to attack.

“You can’t go to your office because all of the reports concerning the latest missions have been stocked in the library,” the new arrival suddenly intervened, not even letting Rip the time to think about an apology.

Turning around, he found Amaya standing by his side, her arms crossed and staring at Nate with intent. He watched, with a frown, as Nate returned the look before he snapped his fingers and pointed at her.

“Right, that’s why,” he confirmed, though his tone sounded like he was trying to convince himself as much as he was trying to convince Rip, “I’ll be going now.”

Amaya let out a snort as she watched Nate beat a hasty retreat, muttering under his breath, Rip lifted an eyebrow at her in question, to which she responded with a shake of head. With a sigh, he ran a hand over his face, the other stuffed in his pocket as he began to make his way to the library. To his surprise, Amaya didn’t follow Nate on his way back to the bridge but walked by his side. Noticing his stare, she stopped and frowned.

“Do you mind if I walk with you for a bit?” she inquired.

“Oh no, it’s fine,” he reassured.

Amaya shot him a small smile and wrapped her arms around herself. Both of them fell into a comfortable silence as they made their way to the library. Rip was aware of the constant glances that she threw his way every ten seconds. He couldn’t tell if she was looking at him with suspicion or if she was just curious. They hadn’t spent that much time together, if you were to ignore the time he had spent trying to kill the entire crew.

“Can I ask you something?” Amaya spoke up, putting an end to the silence and breaking his train of thoughts.

“Uh – sure,” Rip stopped walking, his hands stuffed in his pockets, “what is it?”

He watched, with a frown, as she tuck her hair behind her ear, nibbling nervously on her bottom lip.
“About the JSA,” she started, clenching and unclenching her fists, “Were they mad-”

“About you leaving?” he finished, an eyebrow cocked. With a sigh of relief, Amaya nodded, “I don’t think so. Not that I would know, I haven’t spent that much time with them. They did spoke very highly of you, though,” Rip added after noticing her frustration, “I guess if they were angry at you at some point, they understood the reasoning between your departure.”

She shot him a small smile at the assurance.

“The same thing can be said about you, you know,” her smile widened at his perplexed tilt of head, “what I meant is that this group of people speaks very highly of you, too. They’ve never lost faith in you or the mission you’ve trusted them with. And after meeting you, I can see why.”

Rip gave her a crooked smile and bowed his head, rubbing the back of his neck in humility. He knew he hadn’t been the greatest Captain or team leader, endangering members of his crew without a second thought and keeping secrets from them. He had tried to redeem himself in the months following the destruction of the Oculus. Apparently, he had managed to get through them, somehow.

“Well, it seems that it took me turning to the Dark Side for them to do what they’re being told,” Rip retorted, smirking.

Huffing out a laugh, Amaya gave his arm a squeeze, oblivious to the other’s surprised reaction at the comforting touch.

“You should give them more credit. Same thing goes for you, Captain.”

With another squeeze and smile, she let go of him and began to make her way back to the bridge. He watched her leave, a contemplative look on his face before he continued his trek to the library. For some reason, he wasn’t surprised when he found Mick sprawled on the desk chair, his feet crossed on the table and a bottle he didn’t recognize as one of his own in his hands. With a sigh, Rip walked in and made his way to the desk, where he could see an even pile of folders in its corner. Mick barely spared him a glance as he got closer and, without a word, grabbed an extra glass from the cupboard behind him. Grabbing a file from the pile, Rip watched with a frown as he poured an amber liquid to the rim of the glass.
“I don’t think that I should be drinking at the moment,” he remarked.

“What makes you think the second glass is for you?” Mick retorted, pushing it toward him with the butt of the bottle, “Beside if you’re planning on reading these, alcohol is going to help.”

With a grimace, Rip dropped the folder back onto the desk and sat down in front of him, watching as Mick emptied half of his glass in one go without wincing. Leaning back into his chair, he took the glass, the liquid swirling in it as he did so.

“All good in the head, now?” Mick grumbled, the ghost of a smirk on his face.

“I suppose,” he snorted, looking up at the pyro. Trust Mick to tactlessly inquire about his mental health. Mimicking the other man’s smirk, Rip lifted his glass in a silent toast, “And I hear that I have you to thank for.”

Grunting, Mick briefly looked up at him before looking down at his lap, where he was trying to balance his glass without having the liquid overflow from it.

“Don’t thank me yet, English. I didn’t do it for you anyway,” at Rip’s cocked eyebrow, he lifted a shoulder, “Most of the crew was going crazy with you on the dark side, especially Captain Blondie and the kid.”

“Still, you did it for the team,” Rip retorted, stiffening an amused smile at Mick’s reluctance at admitting that he actually cared.

“I did it for myself,” he corrected, glaring at him, “I got tired of everyone whining about you.”

Undeterred by his glare, Rip gave him a nod and raised his glass to him. With an eye roll, Mick clinked his glass with his before downing his drink in one go. Rip gave his drink a cautious sniff before taking a gulp. His eyes scrunched in disgust, he was barely aware of Mick snickering as he struggled to swallow what he thought was whiskey, coughing.

“What the bloody hell is that?” Rip croaked out, eyeing his glass with distaste.
“No idea,” Mick admitted as he got up from his chair, slamming his empty glass on the desk, “Snatched it from Al Capone’s.”

His eyes widened at the nonchalant confession, his head tilted to the side as if he had misheard the words that had left the thief’s mouth. Shaking his head, he cleared his throat and ran his fingers through his hair.

“Do I really want to know how you came across Al Capone’s possession?”

“Probably not,” Mick retorted, slamming the bottle in front of him with a smirk, “Take it as a ‘welcome back’ gift, Captain.”

“You shouldn’t have, really,” Rip deadpanned.

Snorting, Mick patted his back and made his way out of the library, his hands stuffed in his pockets. Sighing, he pushed back the drink with a scowl on his face and grabbed a couple of folders. He was half way through reading about their mission in Feudal Japan, when he heard a soft knock. Rip looked up to find Sara leaning against the threshold, a small smile on her face.

“Barely out of the medbay and already back at work,” she clicked her tongue in fake disapproval, “You’ve got a problem, Hunter.”

Rolling his eyes, he let out a scoff and closed off the file, throwing it back onto the pile of read file he had made.

“I’ve been out of the loop for a while, just trying to catch up,” Rip crossed his arms and leaned back in his chair as Sara hopped onto the desk, “I haven’t seen much of you, today.”

“Well, being Captain is a lot harder that it seems. Everyone wants a piece of me,” she retorted, flipping her hair behind her shoulder.

“Yeah,” he smiled at her, “Well, you’ve done a remarkable job from what I can see.”

Snorting, Sara grabbed his discarded glass and downed it in one go, wincing as the alcohol burned
down her throat. Judging by the disgusted look on her face, she was wincing at the taste.

“This is nasty,” she muttered, putting it back onto the desk, “I’m glad you’re back, though. Takes some of the weight off my shoulders.

“I don’t know about that,” Rip began, his tone teasing and light, “Like I’ve said, you’ve been handling it very well. I could leave, retire or take a break.”

He saw her expression darken and her fist going for his shoulder, but he didn’t stop it. He gritted his teeth in pain when her punch landed on his shoulder, scowling at her as he rubbed his arm.

“Don’t say that. You’re not going anywhere, Hunter. Got it?” Sara warned, shaking a finger in his face.

With a nod, he grabbed her finger and before she could take it back, Rip intertwined their fingers, giving her hand a small squeeze. He watched, with a fond smile, as the tips of her ears reddened.

“I apologize for the interruption,” Gideon intervened, “Your presences are requested on the bridge, Captains.”

“Roger that, Gideon,” Sara replied, rubbing the back of her neck with her free hand.

Clearing her throat, she pulled Rip to his feet and let go of his hand, plastering a smile on her face as she stuffed her hands in her pockets.

“Come on, you’ve heard the A.I,” Sara nodded to the ‘gifted’ bottle on the desk, “You should bring that with you.”

Rip frowned at her before his gaze fell onto the offending bottle of alcohol. By the time he looked back to the doorway, Sara had already disappeared. Rolling his eyes, he grabbed the bottle and made his way out. His frown deepened as he noticed the obscurity in the hallway leading to the bridge. His hand automatically went to his side, only to remember a second too late that he didn’t have his gun holster or any kind of weaponry by his side.

Swearing, Rip held out a hand as he slowly trudged through the hall. Letting out a breath, he
stopped at the bridge’s entrance, squinting his eyes as he tried to discern silhouettes in the dark.

“Gideon, lights,” Rip whispered.

His eyes fluttering shut as the room was enlightened, he barely had to register anything before he was assaulted with noise.

“SURPRISE!”

“Jesus Fucking-” Rip jumped back, a hand coming to rest on her racing heart.

Letting out a breath, he reopened his eyes to find the entire crew grinning back at him, apparently amused by his predicament. Their behaviours weren’t the weirdest thing, though, nor were the party hats that they each were wearing. No, what caught his attention was the fact that the bridge had been completely decorated with party ornaments. Balloons filled the room, the floor was covered with confetti and banners hung from the ceiling. Tilting his head to the side, Rip narrowed his eyes as he tried to read what was written on it.

“What the hell -” Rip started.

“Do you like it?” Ray made his way to him, his party hat crooked and a garland wrapped around his neck, “Sara and Jax didn’t find any ‘Congratulations on not being dead’ at Party City, obviously. So I made it – Nate helped,” he added, rolling his eyes at Nate’s loud, oblivious cough.

Rip wasn’t sure he had understood any of the words that had left Ray’s mouth, but still he nodded as the other man wrapped an arm around his shoulders and led him onto the bridge. He barely blinked at Mick walking to him, a smirk on his face and pried the bottle out of his grasp.

“Would you look at that? The good Captain brought booze at his own party,” he unscrewed the bottle and raised it in a toast, “How thoughtful.”

He frowned as Mick walked away, bringing the bottle to his mouth before turning back to Ray.

“Wait- when did any of you had the time to go to Party City? And how did I not notice it?” Rip
muttered to himself.

Amaya snorted at his slow processing, shoving an opened bottle of beer in his hand.

“You’ve been spending a lot of time unconscious lately,” she shrugged, taking a sip of her own drink, “Jax and Sara might have borrowed the drop ship and flown to 2017 for some shopping.”

Again, Rip could do nothing but nod. Bringing his beer to his mouth, he replayed the last few days in his mind, trying to understand how could he have missed it. Hell, he hadn’t even noticed their strange behaviours until today. With him spending most of his time in the medbay and drifting from sleeping to awake every five hours, it was not as if he had the occasion to notice they were hiding something from him. Rip had noticed the constant absence of Jax and Sara, but he had attributed to them being busy.

He spotted Jax and Martin discussing over a cart of food while Sara was leaning against the threshold of his study, laughing about something Amaya said. A clear of throat made him look up to find the superhero duo he had been observing a moment ago in front, in front with their cart of food.

“Hey guys,” Jax breathed out, handing each of them a cupcake. Rip couldn’t help but smirk as he noticed the hourglass drawn on it. He cocked an eyebrow at the younger man, to which the latter responded with a shrug, “I was going for a theme.”

“Yeah, a really weird time,” Sara remarked, appearing at Jax’s side, “You should have seen the baker’s face when we asked when we told her the message we wanted written on the cake: ‘congrats on not being dead and not a mindless drone anymore.”

“I don’t see the other half of that message,” Rip remarked, cocking an eyebrow.

“Eh, the first half was already weird enough,” she shrugged her shoulder, dragging her finger through the icing before spreading it on Rip’s cheek.

Grimacing in disgust, he wiped his cheek on his shoulder and threw her a glare, the latter ignoring it as Sara sipped on her beer, a smirk on her face. Humming in realization, she handed him her bottle, which he took with a suspicious look, and stormed into his study. Rip threw a look at Jax, to which he responded with a clueless shrug. Sara reappeared with a wrapped package in her hands, which did nothing to ease his suspicion. She stopped in front of him, a satisfied and eager smile on
her face.

“Let’s do a trade,” she said, nodding to the beers and cupcake he had in his hands.

Knowing better than arguing with her about it, Rip put the bottles and pastry on top of the box before carefully grabbing the package from under. Sara grabbed the bottles by the neck and put the cupcake into her mouth, wagging her eyebrows at Rip’s unimpressed expression.

“You didn’t need to get me a present, y’know,” he sighed, pulling on the bow on top of it.

Rolling her eyes, Sara took the cake out of her mouth.

“Open it before you start whining. And then, you’ll thank me,” she added, biting into the pastry.

With a sigh, he slowly took of the lid of the box, leaning back as if preparing himself for something to blow in his face. Nothing happened, though. Cocking an eyebrow, he let the lid fall onto the floor and peered into the package, his heart skipping a beat out the familiar pocket watch resting on top of a neatly folded brown trench coat. His mouth dry, Rip looked up to see Sara’s smug expression. Huffing out a laugh, he shook his head and took the watch out of the box, slowly opening it and letting out a sigh of relief at the untouched photograph.

“Where did you find this?” he breathed out, finding it impossible to tear his eyes from the picture.

“In the inside pocket of your coat,” Sara grinned, satisfied, “I thought that I should hold on to it. As for the coat, well, I don’t think I could imagine our Captain wearing anything else that the coat he stole from his cowboy boyfriend. Am I right, fellas?” she finished, raising her beer.

Jax and Ray replied with an ‘Aye’, each raising their drinks while Martin gave a small nod and Mick grunted. Sara turned back to him, raising an eyebrow as if saying ‘see?’ Rip responded with an eye roll, closing the pocket watch and slipping it into the box.

“Thank you,” he said, looking up at her with a smile, which she returned with a nod, “To all of you, actually,” Rip added, his gaze darting from one person to another, “I’m very grateful for all that each of you have done and I’ll forever be in your-”
“Urgh,” Mick groaned, his head falling backward, “he’s getting sappy.”

“He’s right,” Sara intervened before Rip could even think about protesting, “Don’t ruin my party mood, Hunter. Gideon, play my jam!”

Cheers filled the bridge as the Rolling Stones’ *Satisfaction* began blaring through the speakers. Rip watched with a fond smile as Jax made both Amaya and Sara twirl under his arms while Ray and Nate stayed to the side, the former singing out of tune and the latter playing air-guitar. Detaching himself from Jax, Amaya succeeded in convincing Mick to join her, which Rip found pretty incredible and funny. He had to stiffen a smirk when the pyro turned to glare at him, as if sensing his amusement, and raised his beer in greeting. From the corner of his eye, he could see Sara leave Martin’s side and moved toward him.

He cocked an eyebrow at her as she sang the words under her breath, a hand outstretched for him to take. With an eye roll, he took her hand and let himself being pulled in the middle of the bridge. He let out a small chuckle, bending at an awkward angle as she made him turn under her arm before doing the same, her arms, then, going to wrap around his shoulders. Rip’s hands went down to her waist as they began to sway from side to side, *Satisfaction* changing to *Prodigal Son*. And if his hold around Sara tightened as the songs changed, no one seemed to care. Rip didn’t care. He was home and that was all that mattered.

End Notes

Thank you so so much for reading this tiny piece of fan fiction, you’re awesome and I love you ! Please, don't forget to leave a comment to tell me what you thought about it ; it means the world to me ! You can also find me on tumblr, @generaleiafisher

Until next time,
Kadi.

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