When the Past Bites, Bite it Back

by MidnightCreator

Summary

Ford and Stan have docked in Alaska for supplies. Stanley, however, has been gone far longer than he should be and Sheba showing up is not helping Stanford worry.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Ford tapped the wooden surface of the table with his pen, gaze fixed on a blank page of his journal but not really seeing it.

Stanford and his brother had been out at sea for almost two months now and Ford could say with confidence that they were the two months aboard the Stan O’ War were the best months of his life. Who would have guessed sailing around the world and fighting anomalies with one’s twin brother would be such a blast.

Currently, the Stan O’ War was docked in Alaska and Stanley had gone out to make a supply run while Ford put new entries into his journal. But that had been almost four hours ago. Ford hadn’t been too worried at two hours, three had him wondering what was keeping Stan, four had him considering going after his twin. However, he was hesitant to go looking for Stan and that hesitates was born from the fact that Stan had insisted that he was perfectly capable of getting some fish bate and extra rope. Stan liked being independent and was often annoyed when Ford did something that may look like he thought Stan was incompetent and unable to do certain things. They had agreed upon Ford giving Stan his space, but it still didn’t help Ford’s worry for his twin and the fact that Stanley’s memory sometimes blanked for a few minutes to an hour wasn’t helping either. It was little
things but it still frightened the older twin every time.

“If you aren’t back soon Stan…” Ford murmured to himself as he continued to tap his pen.

His wait lasted only ten minutes before the whole boat gave a jolt.

Ford yelped as he tumbled out of his chair while the boat rocked and tilted. He scrabbled up and grabbed his gun on his way to the cabin door. When he swung it open, he was greeted by familiar red and gold fur and bright sapphire blue eyes.

“Sheba!”

The dragoness rumbled a greeting and lowered her head so she was on an eye level with Ford.

“What are you doing here? You could be spotted!”

Sheba snorted and her ears twitched back.

“It’s doesn’t matter how remote this dock is, you’re taking a huge risk right now!”

Sheba snorted again and jerked her head at the cabin.

“Stan isn’t here. He went into town for supplies.”

Sheba’s ears flattened and her head lifted to look in the direction of the town Stan had gone to with a growl.

Ford blinked up at her, “…something’s wrong.”

Sheba made a quite growl of conformation and shifted into her take off crouch.

“You can’t just charge in,” Ford reached up and grabbed one of Sheba’s horns. “I know you… somehow, can find Stan no matter where he is but there is no telling what will happen if someone sees you.”

Sheba snorted and jerked her head so his grip on her horn releases.

“Give me a minute to get my gear and I’ll go with you. You can fly me close to…where ever you can sense him and then I can continue on the ground.”

Sheba snorted and her tail lashed but she folded her wings and gave him a look Ford felt sure translated into, ‘Don’t take to long.’

Ford nodded and ran back into the cabin to grab anything he thought he would need. It took him less than three minutes but Sheba looked as though she had been waiting for hours.

“Ready,” Ford climbed up on her back and grabbed her scruff. “Just drop me off on a roof with a fire escape when we get close.”

Sheba snorted and took off, gaining speed as she climbed and leveling out once she reached the clouds. Ford scanned the ground from his seat as they flew, hoping he’d catch sight of his brothers red wool beanie and ease the worry building in his chest.

Sheba soared over several buildings, mostly stores, and Ford was a bit surprised when the dragoness flew right over the more populated area into a rougher part of town.
“Sheba…are you sure you’re not mistaken? Stan said he was going to bait and tackle stores, he would drop the stuff off at the boat and invite me before going to a baaAAAHH!” Ford wrapped both arms around Sheba’s neck as she suddenly dived. “Sheba! What are you doing?!”

Sheba growled and continued to dive, down into an ally behind a bar. Ford heard someone scream before the dragon landed in a flurry of fur and a whoosh of wings. Ford sat stunned for a few moments before he leaned to look around Sheba’s neck to see why she had descended so fast.

Pinned under her claws of Sheba’s foreleg was a pudgy male with lightly colored hair and eyes as wide as saucers, panting heavily and trembling in fear. But the thing that stood out to Ford was the golden amulet around the man’s neck, with a large purple stone surrounded by smaller blue gems set in a golden base.

“Where did you get that?” Ford snarled almost as darkly as Sheba as he slid off her back and stalked over to the man.

“C-call off this thing! Get it off me,” the man panted out.

“Where,” Ford reached down and pulled his brothers amulet off the frightened man’s neck. “Did you get this?”

“G-guy I work with g-gave it to me. S-said he h-had better stuff th-then some punks’ ch-cheep trinket.”

Sheba snarled at that and shifted so that more of her weight pressed down on the man’s chest.

“Don’t crush him yet Sheba,” Ford said. “We still need information.”

“Th-that’s the t-truth! I swear.”

“Perhaps, but I need to know who gave it to you.”

“G-guy is named George, h-he hangs out at th-this place called R-Red Dog. B-big guy, lotta tattoos, c-can’t miss him.”

Ford glared at the man before turning to Sheba, “Blast him.”

“WH-WHAT? I-I TOLD YOU E-EVERY-” the man broke off in a scream as Sheba pulled her head back and opened her jaw, flame already building in her throat and making her mouth glow.

The man yelled and promptly passed out when a small burst of flame exploded next to him, barely enough fire to leave scorch marks.

“Good dragon,” Ford praised and patted her neck. “Now to find the Red Dog, get up in the sky and stay out of sight. I’ll look around and ask some locals.”

Sheba made a low rumble, clearly not happy at having to stay in the air while Ford investigated, but complied nonetheless.

Ford watched until Sheba disappeared, marveling a bit at how a creature so brightly colored could disappear so easily. He pocketed Stan’s amulet and checked his watch. Almost six thirty.

“Should’ve started looking sooner,” Ford muttered to himself as he left the ally and went in search of the Red Dog.

**********
It took a half hour of asking locals and wandered the streets before Ford stood in front of a corner building at sunset with ‘Red Dog Saloon’ painted over the door in, well, red letters. Ford walked in and immediately started to scan the crowd for a heavy built man with tattoos.

He weaved between people and tables for a few minutes before he spotted a burly man with dark hair in the corner, back to Stanford. He had on a sleeveless shirt, so the tattoos on both arms were easily spotted.

“George,” Ford said once he is in earshot.

The man looked up and started as his dark eyes flick over Ford rapidly. The researcher had to resist the urge to hide his hands when George’s gaze settled on them.

“That punk’s gotta twin.”

Ford growled at the whispered statement, “Where is my brother?”

George’s eyes flicked up to Ford’s face and he grinned, “Not a clue.”

“Don’t test me,” Ford growled and took a step forward.

“Or what?” George challenged as he stood.

Ford grabbed the larger man’s arm and twisted it behind his back. George yelped and snarled in protest as Ford dragged him out the back door and threw him to the ground, “I’d advise you to answer me.”

“You stupid runt! You’re gonna pay…for…that…”

Ford felt a hot breath on his neck and heard a low growl, “Ready to tell me what I what to know?”

“What the hell is that thing?!”

“Surely someone as small minded as you can see what she is. And if you don’t tell me what I want to know I will not hold her back.”

“You’re wasting you time! That worthless bastard will be long dead by the time you find him!”

Ford narrowed his eyes as rage burned deep in his gut but kept his expression cold and impassive. Sheba, on the other hand, had no issue letting her rage known and launched forward, snapping her jaw closed on George’s leg.

George screamed as his leg was crushed and he suddenly found himself hanging upside down.

“Sheba, drop him.”

Ford felt a hot breath on his neck and heard a low growl, “Ready to tell me what I want to know?”

“What the hell is that thing?!”

“Surely someone as small minded as you can see what she is. And if you don’t tell me what I want to know I will not hold her back.”

“You’re wasting you time! That worthless bastard will be long dead by the time you find him!”

Ford narrowed his eyes as rage burned deep in his gut but kept his expression cold and impassive. Sheba, on the other hand, had no issue letting her rage known and launched forward, snapping her jaw closed on George’s leg.

George screamed as his leg was crushed and he suddenly found himself hanging upside down.


“Lake! There’s a lake just forty miles east of town! Boss had me put him in a car trunk and sink it in the lake!”

Ford felt his heart rate skyrocket, “Drop him Sheba.”

The dragoness let George fall to the ground and crouched so Ford could swing up on to her back, “He better be alive.” Ford snarled at the man holding his bloodied leg before Sheba rocketed into the air.

Ford had to wrap his arms and legs around Sheba to ensure he wouldn’t fall. He could feel the
dragoness pushing herself to move as fast as she could, wing beating madly against the icy winds.

The flight felt like it lasted for ages before Sheba dived and skidded into a landing that reminded Ford of when he had nearly been taken to space jail. He scrambled off Sheba’s back and sprinted for the water, fully prepared to throw off his coat and dive in, when Sheba grabbed him by his coat.

“Sheba!” He protested, but her growl broke threw his panicked haze enough for Ford to realize that he wouldn’t be any good to Stan if he gave himself hypothermia when he had a dragon that could heat her own body up at will.

“Sheba!” Sheba dropped him with a quite grunt and leaped into the water with a loud splash.

Ford paced at the water’s edge, trying to see into the water while keeping an eye on his watch.

It was the longest two minutes of Fords life before Sheba resurfaced, moving backwards and dragging a dark green car out of the water and onto the bank. Ford ran forward as Sheba tore the trunk lid off with a screech of metal being ripped apart.

Stan was curled up in a tight shivering ball in about three inches of water, hands tied behind his back, legs tied by his knees and ankles. Ford saw red when his gaze landed on a leather muzzle locked onto his brothers jaw.

“I had to chew my way out of a car!”

The words from three decades ago echoed in Ford’s mind. Of course the people who locked him in here would try and ensure he wouldn’t escape. Shaking away vengeful thoughts, Ford reached down to unsnap the muzzle.

Stan started violently when Ford’s hand brushed his cheeks, eyes snapping wide open and darting almost every way at once while his breathing started to pick up.

“Stan, calm down. You’re okay, we’re here to get you out,” Ford ran his hand threw Stan’s hair and his twin’s eyes seemed to focus on him.

“Sixer?” Stan’s voice was raspy and muffled by the leather muzzle.

“Yeah, it’s me Stan. Sheba’s here too.”

The dragoness rumbled softly and pressed her muzzle into Stan’s side.

Stan blinked owlishly up at Ford before his eyes drifted close and his whole body seemed to sag in relief, “Knew you’d come.”

Ford felt something stab his chest. Stan had been waiting for him. Stan had faith in Ford to come save him. Ford’s hand trembled slightly as he unbuckled the muzzle and casted it aside. Next to him, Sheba makes quick work of the rope bindings before scooping Stan out of the car trunk, the way she held Stan to her chest reminiscent of how a mother might hold her child.

Ford growled a bit when, even out of the trunk, it was to dark to see how badly Stan’s injuries were. But it was clear he was suffering from at least mild hypothermia. Ford silently wished he’d let Sheba rip Georges leg clean off, aloud he said, “Let’s get you back to the boat.” He draped his own coat over Stan and climbed onto Sheba.

The flight back to the Stan O’ War was slower then the previous ones of the evening, and it took almost an hour to get back to the boat. When they landed, Ford wasted no time in ushering Stan into
the cabin and sitting him down in the kitchenette. Ford carefully removed Stan’s damp clothing and began his examination.

Stan had bruises on just about every inch of him and a nasty black eye. His palms and knuckles were scraped up, his left wrist was sprained and there were a number of cuts on his arms and a gash clotted over in dried blood on his temple. The only upside seemed to be the fact that his shivering had lessened from being right next to Sheba’s chest for the flight back.

As Ford gently patched up his twin, Stan reminded silent and complied to all of his brothers requests. It wasn’t until after he was bandaged, dressed in dry clothing, fed a mug of broth and being led to his bunk did he speak.

“Sixer.”

“Yes Stanley?”

“Can’t ‘member anything.”

Ford felt his blood freeze, “You-you recognized me and Sheba.”

“Know you, her, kids, everythin’ else is…poof,” Stan waved a hand as he sat on the edge of his bunk. “Think it was that hit to my head.”

Ford swallowed, “Just rest. When you’re feeling better we’ll get out Mabel’s scrapbook and go threw it.”

“M’kay,” Stan yawned and laid down, snuggling into his pillow while Ford tucked blankets around him. “Think Sheba could get in here?”

“I’m afraid not,” Ford ran a hand through Stan’s hair. “But don’t worry, she’ll probably stick around for as long as she can and I’ll be right here if you need anything.”

“Mmm,” Stan grinned and closed his eyes. “Love ya Sixer.”

“I love you too Stanley,” Ford smiled and listened to his twins breathing as it evened out.

*******

Ford didn’t even realize he had dozed off until he awoke to the sound of agonized scream.

He was up in an instant, on high alert and looking every way at once in search of a threat. His eyes landed on Stan, who was trashing under the sheets and screaming out a garbled mix English and Spanish.

“Stan, wake up,” Ford called loudly while trying, and failing, to grab his brother’s shoulder without getting punched. “Stan!”

“Please…por favor, deje de. Let me go!”

“Stanley!” Ford shook his brother’s shoulder.

“Obtener lo más lejos posible de mí!” Stan yelled and lashed out at Ford. “Someone help!”

Ford drew back, and was about to yell Stan’s name again when the cabin door burst open. The loud bang makes Ford jump and startled Stan awake. Both stared in complete bewilderment at the door.
Sheba, most likely hearing Stan’s screams, had shoved her head and neck threw the door and only stopped because just her head was a squeeze and she would have had to shrink a good amount to get her shoulders, wings and tail into the boat’s cabin.

The twins blinked at her and she stared back at them. It was a good few seconds before the silence was broken by a low, concerned rumble.

“I’m fine Sheba, just a bad dream,” Stan responded with a wave of his hand.

“You were screaming,” Ford said and Sheba rumbled in agreement.

“I’m fine, I’m awake now see?” Stan gestured to himself.

“You’re shaking.”

Stan blinked and looked at his hands, which were, in fact, trembling quite violently, “Oh.”

Sheba huffed and strained her neck.

“You’re not going to fit in here Sheba,” Ford put a hand on the dragon’s forehead. “Frankly, I’m surprised the door and doorframe haven’t been broken.” She growled, not happy at not being able to go comfort Stan but she stopped trying to force her way in.

Ford turned back to Stan once he was sure Sheba would break a wall down. He sat next to his twin on the bed and wrapped an arm around Stan’s shoulders, “You can talk about it if you want to, or not if you don’t, but I am here for you Stan and I’ll make sure what happened to you never happens again.”

Stan looked up at Ford with an expression so much like the one he had had right after his memories had first been wiped that Stanford felt something twist in his gut, but he pushed it aside in favor of looking after Stanley.

Stan blinked a few more times before he slumped into Ford’s side, burying his face into his twin’s neck and hugging him around his middle tight enough to make Ford grunt slightly before hugging Stan back. He felt Stan’s trembling intensify before he started to sob into Ford’s neck, “I…didn’t remember…I didn’t know what I did….and they said it was…my fault…and..and-”

“Shhh,” Ford rubbed a hand up and down Stan’s back. “You didn’t do anything Stan. The guys who did this are at fault, not you.”

Stan continued to hiccup and sob while Ford rubbed small circles into his back. He glanced over at the door at one point, only to find that Sheba had somehow managed to pull her head out of the cabin and shut the door without making so much as a board creek.

The brothers remained on the bed for well over an hour before Stan dozed off again. Ford carefully tucked his brother back under the blankets and sat himself next to the bed, determined to watch over Stan until morning.

*******

It wasn’t until after breakfast the next day that Ford remembered to return Stan’s amulet. The conman almost cried anew when Ford handed it to him, “I thought I’d never see this again.”

“Sheba found it. My guess is she has some kind of connection to it since it came from her hoard.”
“That explains why she is always able to find me,” Stan puts the gold chain back in its place around his neck. “Speaking of the old girl…”

“I checked the deck before you got up. She likely took off at day break to avoid being spotted.”

“Smart dragon.”

******

Ford was waiting in line at a bait and tackle shop, getting supplies while Stan rested back at the boat, when he heard to men talking quite loudly by a shelf of canned sardines.

“Did you hear about that fire on the edge of town?” The first said.

“Sure did,” the second nodded. “The whole building was pretty much gone when the fire department showed up.”

“I heard that some big business guy called Rico had bought that warehouse. Think anyone was inside?”

“If there was, no one can find any bodies. There’s nothing left there but a pile of ash.”

Ford furrowed his brow a bit. He knew of only one kind of fire that could destroy a building in a matter of minutes, seconds really, seeing as how this town was pretty small when one thought about it, and the one who wielded that fire did have a good time gap between when Stan and he had fallen asleep and when Stan had his nightmare. And if this Rico was the boss that George had spoken of…

Ford smiled at the picture that had formed in his minds eye, a part of him knowing without a doubt that Stan truly did not have to worry any more.

---

End Notes

Moral of the story: Do Not Harm A Dragon's Hatchlings, Adopted Or Otherwise.
Have a nice day and be on the look out for more in the Dragon Mom series.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!