

## **"ADMIRAL TRAFALGAR VS. THE CRABMAN."**

*A hard-up TV actor, embarrassed about his most famous role, reluctantly attends a convention of fans of the show.*

James Tarrant sighed when he saw it, as he stepped into the lobby of the hotel. He felt taunted by the oversized framed painting of Admiral Richard Trafalgar, commander of HMS Oceansight, star of the sci-fi action series "Deep Sea Strike!" that was mounted on a stand to one side of the lobby.

It had been a role that was a blessing and a curse, following him since the mid-1980s. Mostly, in his opinion, a curse. A golden stinking pile that rested pungently on his acting career.

No matter how well an audition went, no matter how serious a role he was up for, he'd always hear it from someone, the whisper of "Let's take to the sea!".

He had a mental picture of a fan from years back; his shirt pulled up, the phase tattooed across the idiot's chest. In the words of Billy Connolly: Jesus Suffering Fuck.

For five seasons in the mid-1980s he defended the realm from Russian spies, terrorists, mad scientists, evil secret organisations, the odd alien invasion and once rather infamously the Loch Ness monster.

He glared at the painting as he passed it. James hated Richard Trafalgar with a passion, which was what made this weekend all the more depressing.

Oliver, his agent, had been pretty rough with him. The last thing he'd appeared in had been an episode of "Midsomer Murders", and that had been nearly a year ago.

"Look Jim, I'm going to be blunt here. The work is no longer coming in. You're no longer on the guest star list that every casting director has. You're no longer famous. I'm sorry, but there it is."

That conversation played on his mind as he checked in, and threw his bag on the bed in the small but clean room.

The irony was that he'd had no shortage of guest star offers in the years after "Deep Sea Strike!", because he was on The List. That list of actors of former telly drama and sitcom character actors that allows a TV show look expensive with a load of people who were once household names but are in fact relatively cheap and glad of the work.

He looked at his face in the bathroom mirror, the fat, worn middle-aged shadow of the handsome man in the lobby.

He'd been a star in RADA, the coming young prodigy, the next Olivier, and he'd turned his nose up at TV and film work until "the right project" came along. The reviews in the West End had been very good, but then he'd discovered you can't eat reviews or pay your rent with them, and so "The Bill" and "Dr Who" had kept the overdraft down.

The offer of a lead role on "Deep Sea Strike!" had led to a row with his agent.

James had only done the audition to keep Oliver happy, and had never expected to be offered the part. He turned his nose up at doing "rayguns and flying saucers" and wanted something more substantial, like a Merchant Ivory picture.

But Oliver had warned him that he was getting that most feared of labels for a still jobbing actor: "being difficult to work with".

James was smart enough to know how much luck and reputation mattered in the business, and how many people got work because they were "just lovely".

And anyway, said Oliver, do a series of this to get your handsome face on the cover of the TV Times and every casting director will know who you are.

That had been the plan.

One series and he'd be off.

After all, this turkey will only get a single series anyway.

What no one in the business ever admits is that no one can ever for certain tell you why this TV series is a hit and this one flopped.

It is rarely to do with quality. The finest of television dramas with powerful writing and skilled casts can bomb. Sometimes it's just pure and simple luck. The TV show that just happens to come out at the right time, on the right channel and seen by the right audience.

DSS was that show, and suddenly he was one of the most well-known actors in the country. The second series was commissioned immediately, and then there was the money.

He'd always told himself he wasn't interested in money, which was probably true until the first cheques started to arrive. Having the first few quid in the bank was nice, being able to write a cheque knowing it wouldn't bounce.

The pay for the first series wasn't bad but it was nothing spectacular.

But then the offers started to come in. The merchandise, the annuals and board games and toys all started to add up, allowing James to buy a nice flat in Islington. He got his first movie role shortly after, in one of those thrillers the UK used to make in the 1980s based on Alastair Maclean novels with Robert Morley, and suddenly he was on his way.

He dried his face with the towel, turned away from the haggard reflection and looked at the room. It was small but clean, but everything looked well-used.

Outside the sky darkened as clouds brought in yet more sheets of rain.

That was the appeal of this hotel, he speculated.

Long past its turn of the 19th century grandeur, it was now an overweight dowager struggling to maintain her dignity. No longer the hotel of society, what was once a vista of polished brass and chandeliers was now just a collection of costs to be met in a highly competitive hotel market.

And yet here it still was, giving two fingers to modern economics.

He sat on the bed for a moment as he removed his shirt to shower.

The view, peering off the end of Cornwall and out into the abyss was hypnotic. Ship lights in the distance, all alone in the crashing waves as if they might be on the moon.

Whatever you could say about the Grand Occidental, it had a view.

He checked his watch, and reckoned he had about 25 minutes to meet the secretary of the DSS fanclub, and that was enough to have a shower, run an electric razor and a comb over his ravaged surfaces, and get downstairs. He was a professional, at any rate.

Looking half decent in the lift as it descended to the lobby, James recalled the first time Oliver had suggested he start doing conventions.

"Absolutely not!" had been his response. He'd heard the stories of "Dr Who" and "Blake's Seven" conventions, all mouth-breathing weirdos wanting to know things about episodes you were in but can't remember. Weird things.

James always thought that attending the conventions was finally admitting your acting career was over, that you were reduced to compering the "Who is wearing the best bin like a Dalek?" competitions.

Christ almighty, he wanted to play the Dane!

That was all well and good, but after five seasons he suddenly found he was typecast. Lewis Collins had warned him about it, but he'd thought himself a better actor. Pocket the money and on you go. Except he didn't.

The offers didn't exactly dwindle as much as veer in a certain direction. He was forever being asked to appear in science fiction shows. "Dr Who" bombarded him regularly. His agent explained that was what happened when you'd been a series regular on a successful sci-fi show. Casting directors for other sci-fi shows see you as a safe bet: the fans recognise you, indeed some of the fans of your show might give the other show a look because you are guesting in it.

He said no.

He wanted a serious drama. Alan Bennett. Dennis Potter, something meaty. "Jewel in the Crown" sort of thing.

But the offers simply didn't come, and he needed to work, and so "Dempsey and Makepeace" and "The Paradise Club" and "Minder" and "Bergerac" kept the bailiff from the hearth. His heart jumped when the agent informed him that America was calling, but it was for "Star Trek" and....God save me...."Seaquest DSV".

That fucking submarine show, where he guested as a once-great admiral now all washed up. Ha bloody ha.

He'd had his belly of submarines but his agent wouldn't let him throw out his admiral's uniform, and he'd been right. As the TV drama dried up he found himself doing guest spots on things like "Noel's House Party". In that bloody uniform.

Soon he was doing panto, and what did they request every time they booked him.

"Eh, I don't suppose he still has his uniform, love?"

And yet the panto had not been the worst. He'd never dial in a performance, and so hammed it up for panto as the producers wanted, usually playing some wacky sailor, and he'd always throw in a "Deep Sea Strike!" reference which the kids didn't get but the adults roared at.

Finally, he'd reached bottom, both from a career perspective but also in the lift.

He was now, he thought, one of those saddos on a panel talking about Cybermen.

Except it wasn't even that. This was a one-off event, a single gathering of DSS fans meeting Admiral Richard Trafalgar.

Oliver had deliberately booked him into something small, given it was his first event. A toe dipped in the stream, he'd said. Both men knew it was really about giving him an opportunity to screw up without too many witnesses.

He spotted Tom from the fanclub almost immediately. When you'd been in the public eye as long as James had been, you got to recognise the various looks the public gave you.

The people who were slightly overwhelmed to meet you.

The people who recognised you but can't quite remember what thing they saw you in.

The people who genuinely have no idea who you are.

And finally, the people who bizarrely pretend they don't know who you are even though you know they do.

James could see that Tom was a genuine fan.

Not what he expected either.

Tom wasn't the bearded pot-bellied middle-aged man James was expecting.

He was in his late thirties, maybe very early forties, wearing spectacles, tall, slim, clean shaven and dressed in what looked like a Marks & Spencer suit and crisp white shirt. He

had a leather folder under his arm and on it was the insignia of the HMS Oceansight. He was not as much handsome as perfectly presentable.

Tom smiled and stepped forward slightly nervously, putting out a hand.

“Mr Tarrant, I’m Tom Crane. Really absolutely thrilled to meet you.”

“James, please Tom. Good to meet you. So, you want to run a few things over with me?”

“That’s right, I’m just checking that the room is OK, and you have your itinerary for tomorrow.”

James confirmed that he had received it from Oliver. There were a few sections, including the showing of a few episodes of the show, and a question and answer session.

Tom led him over to a pair of worn but comfortable leather armchairs in the Grand Occidental’s cavernous but worn lobby.

“Your agent was very clear that you’ll just be doing the two hour session, and I just want to assure you I’ll be very strict with everybody about your time. This really is such a big thrill for us. I understand you’re not....a huge fan of the show.”

The young man looked slightly embarrassed, and opened the folder to take out a copy of “The TV Times Guide to Deep Sea Strike!”

“Wow, I have not seen a copy of that in years!”

Tom handed it over gingerly.

“They’re quite rare. That one is worth about £100 now. I thought you might like to borrow it tonight. Just to gen up on episodes, etc.”

Oliver had suggested the same, but James had drawn the line. He hadn’t seen an episode of the show in twenty years and had no intention filling his head with more nonsense.

But he knew to at least be polite, and promised to return the book in the morning. Tom promised him that he’d introduce him at ten in the morning, and have him out and heading for his train at twelve. With that, James wished Tom a good night and made his way back to his room.

Back in his room, James changed for bed, brushed his teeth, washed his face and then sat on the side of the bed and leafed through the book Tom had lent him. The book was in quite good condition given the fact it was over 30 years old, and James found himself enjoying looking through the photos, either snapshots from individual episodes or behind the scenes or publicity images. He found that he actually remembered some of the photographs being taken or indeed some of the scenes which surprised him, given that he had filed the entire series in the back of his mind as one embarrassing blancmange that he would simply rather not recall.

He did find himself getting irritated at some of the pictures of aliens or monsters that had become a staple of the later seasons as budgets were cut. But he surprised himself by finding that he was even smiling at some of the pictures, recalling time he had spent on set with guest stars or fellow cast members that he had gotten on well with, despite the nonsense that they were filming.

Much to his own surprise he didn't fall asleep until after midnight having read the entire admittedly short book from cover to cover.

James breakfasted early the following morning, and returned to his room as he wanted to avoid any DSS fans who happened to be loitering around the hotel. A friend of his, who had been a popular secondary character on “Dr Who” and so was an old hand at the conventions had given him that tip, and so it was at nine fifty five that Tom had collected

him from his room. He took him through the agenda once again, about how he'd start with a few questions and then open it up to the members. James was happy with that: Oliver had suggested he have some sort of prepared spiel beforehand but that had not gone down well as a suggestion.

Tom brought him down through a staff-only corridor, which James had thought was a bit melodramatic for meeting a few guys in a hotel meeting room, and it was only when he heard himself being introduced by someone on a microphone did it dawn on him that something was amiss.

He stepped through the door onto a slightly elevated stage to a cheering crowd of at least 400 people, with the "Deep Sea Strike!" theme music blaring and a huge picture of him from the 1980s projected up onto a drop down screen behind him.

The entire crowd rose to its feet in applause, and James was slightly stunned as he was guided to one of the two large armchairs in the middle of the stage. Tom took the other, after securing a microphone to James' jacket lapel.

"Bloody hell! I was expecting about twelve people!" James said, which caused a ripple of laughter and applause.

Tom introduced him briefly, pointing out that he didn't need introduction and explained the format. That James would prefer a simple question and answers session, and so he was going to cheekily pull rank and put the first question.

"All of the remaining cast of Deep Sea Strike! had been doing fan conventions up to now, but not you. What changed your mind?"

"I needed the money," James said, to laughs. But he noticed that some didn't laugh.

It was literally only dawning on him that he had not prepared for this at all, and now here he was on a stage. He couldn't blame Oliver, who had told him to prepare, who certainly took conventions far more seriously than he did, and here he was now, in danger of being a dick.

What should he do? Be honest?

Tom seemed to detect his difficulty, and stepped in.

"Many fans get the impression that you're, well, not really proud of your time on DSS?"

James shifted uncomfortably at the question.

Was it a bit close to the bone? Or throwing him a life rope?

The audience had gone quite silent.

"Honestly, there's probably some truth in that."

Some in the audience booed, but Tom put up a hand.

"Come on guys, James has come all the way to talk to us, let's hear what he has to say."

James looked out at the crowd. There were all sorts of people, many with DSS teeshirts and uniforms, some with his face.

He could tell them to go fuck themselves, stick their money.

Tom intervened again.

"Is it the crab man?"

That bloody crab man.

In the fourth season, an episode had featured the Oceansight investigating a radiation leak from the Sellafield nuclear reactor, which had resulted in him fighting with an extra dressed in a huge but shockingly unconvincing foam crab costume. The episode was blamed for driving away serious viewers from the show, but also for destroying James as a serious actor.

When he tried to play “MacBeth” people turned up in crab costumes. “Noel’s House Party” insisted that he wear a crab costume for a sketch.

“That’s mostly what people remember. Me fighting a crab. For about five years afterwards I was offered various ads, and I needed the money, and almost every ad wanted me dressed as a giant crab fighting someone. So yes, you’re right, I’m not particularly well disposed towards the show. I find it embarrassing.”

The audience started booing and hissing. Someone shouted out “Dick!”.

Tom waved people down with his hand.

“Why do you think the show has so many fans, even now?”

“I’ve no idea, really. I can’t understand why anybody would watch it.”

James surprised even himself with that burst of honesty.

He was aware he was destroying any convention future he might have.

Oliver had been very clear: if people think their hero is a dick they just don’t invite him to things.

Might as well be hung for sheep as lamb, he thought to himself.

“When was the last time you actually watched it?” Tom asked.

“Not in decades.”

“Ok. Let me show you something: Brian, can you dim the lights.”

The lights went down, and a scene appeared on the screen behind. The crowd started cheering, recognising it.

It cut to James comforting a dying seaman in a flooded engine room. James actually remembered the scene. The ship had hit a World War II mine which had exploded, killing some of the crew and trapping the rest in the submarine at the bottom of the North Sea. James comforted the seaman, played by a young Ray Winstone. It was a powerful emotional scene.

James watched it. Unlike many actors, he was quite comfortable watching his own performances and critiquing them coldly. He couldn’t complain about this scene: he was very good in it, even if he said so himself.

The lights came back up.

“That’s from the episode “North Sea Disaster”, which is a fan favourite. Because your performance is absolutely riveting. And not a crab monster in sight.”

The crowd laughed, and James had the grace to nod in agreement.

“Personally, I hate the crab monster episode too. But even in that episode your performance is excellent. Watching it, I believe that you believe you are genuinely fighting a crab monster, and that’s acting. We’re all fans of DSS, and we’re all well-used to people taking the mickey about the crab monster and the running from side to side shaking the camera and all the rest. But there are also serious and dramatic episodes. “Last Resort” was a very serious look at the concept of nuclear deterrence. It was basically Crimson Tide ten years before that was made, with a fraction of the budget. I always think you have to look at shows like Deep as if they were stage plays, where you are asking people to suspend belief and just enjoy it.”

James was genuinely speechless. He hadn’t expected this. Was the younger man wrong to say that the show he had spent five years of his life making, that will almost certainly be the first line of his obituary, wasn’t total shit?

“What was your memory of the crab episode anyway?”

The picture behind him changed to a still of him wrestling with the oversized crustacean.

James looked at the still for a moment, and smiled.

“Actually, Tom lent me the TV Times guide last night, and reading through has loosened a lot of memories for me. Especially this scene in particular.”

He turned in his seat to look at it.

“The guy in the suit was a stuntman named Dave Everidge. Lovely guy, and a great chef. He used to do a lot of cooking on set. Now, the thing about Dave Everidge is that he absolutely loved using garlic in his recipes...”

The crowd started laughing, and James felt his inner performer taking over.

“Yeah, you can see where I’m going here. That look of horror is not RADA training, that’s a belt of garlic in the face.”

The crowd erupted in laughter.

James took another seven questions. Those he couldn’t answer he was honest about, admitting that there were people in the audience who knew more about what happened on the set on a given day than he did even though he’d been physically there.

Tom leaned over to him and covered the mike.

“I’ll wrap up now.”

James was surprised at this, and looked at his watch. Eleven fifty five. He couldn’t believe it.

Not only could he not believe the two hours had flown past so fast, but that he had enjoyed it so much.

There was a train back to London at one, but what was he rushing back to London for? An empty flat and an Aldi shepherd’s pie?

“You know what Tom, I can get a later train if people have more questions.”

Tom’s eyes lit up.

“That’s wonderful, we’ll break for lunch, and then maybe you could talk more after lunch?”

“Fine by me.”

The crowd reacted with a round of applause and a cheer.

After lunch, Tom brought James around the tables set up at the back of the hall, where fans displayed memorabilia from their private collections. Toys, magazines, annuals. James happily signed whatever was put in front of him, posed for selfies that people wanted, and was really surprised how much it didn’t bother him.

One chap asked him a question about a BBC “Play for Today” he’d done in the late 1980s which he’d been seriously proud of, and he was secretly delighted that anybody remembered.

On one table, he remarked that the model of the Oceansight on display was as good as the real one they’d used on the show.

“This is the real one!” the bearded middle-aged man behind the table said in exasperation.

“Really?” James asked.

“I assumed it had been thrown in a skip somewhere.”

He could see the man’s eyes light up. An opportunity for a story he was itching to tell, no doubt. To his own surprise, James found himself curious.

“It was. I live near Elstree studios, and a mate of mine who worked there tipped me off. I got around there so fast with a trailer. Got this, some of the sonic pistols...”

He pointed at the plastic moulded guns they used on set.

Sonic pistols, they were called. Basically to allow the producers to save on special effects by dubbing a sound instead, the cheap bastards.

**"I mean, it really shouldn't be allowed. This is a piece of our national heritage."**

**James smiled, thinking the man was joking, but he was deadly serious.**

**"Do you think so?" James asked cautiously.**

**Tom laughed.**

**"You'll find the professor here has very strong views on protecting the nation's cultural heritage."**

**The professor nodded.**

**"Absolutely. Television is a key insight into how a nation sees itself at a given time, and shapes a nation's direction. A whole generation of children learned about the Royal Navy from DSS, and the Oceansight is part of that. The Americans take this sort of thing much more seriously. The USS Enterprise model is in the Smithsonian."**

**Tom led James on to the rest of the hall.**

**"The professor?"**

**"Oh yes. Teaches British history in Cambridge. We're all real people with real lives, you know. Ah, I want you to meet someone very special."**

**A young boy, maybe ten years old, was in a wheelchair, with a nervous woman standing beside him. The boy was wearing a replica of James' admiral's uniform.**

**"This is Billy, the club's honorary admiral and our youngest fan."**

**Although clearly nervous, Billy gave James a salute.**

**James quickly returned it.**

**Billy's mum, a woman who had clearly been through the wars emotionally, gushed as James shook her hand.**

**"This is such a big day for us, Mr Tarrant. When we heard you were coming, well, "Deep Sea Strike!" is the only thing that has kept Billy's spirits up with all his health issues..."**

**James could see the tears in her eyes.**

**He looked down at the boy, and noticed that the words HMS Oceansight had been carefully stencilled onto the side of his wheelchair, and a sticker of the ship's badge.**

**"That's a fine ship you have there," James said.**

**"Do you really not like the show?" Billy asked. His mother shifted uncomfortably.**

**James knelt down, to put himself on eye level with the young boy.**

**"I won't lie to you Billy. I had not watched it in a long time. But being here today has changed my mind. I had no idea how much happiness it had brought people. And maybe I'm better in it than I thought."**

**Billy smiled, and leaned in closer to whisper.**

**"I've never told anyone before, Mr Tarrant: but I think the crab man is really silly too!"**

**James laughed out loud, gave Billy a playful punch in the arm, and stood up.**

**Then he remembered his shoulder bag, which he'd absentmindedly been carrying around the room with him.**

**"Just a minute Billy: I've something for you here."**

**He opened the bag, and rustled through its contents until he found what he was looking for.**

**He silently thanked Oliver for insisting he bring it, despite the actor's protests.**

**Billy gasped when he saw what James pulled out of his bag.**

**"Billy, I want you to have this. Now, I'm not going to claim it's the only one I wore on the show, as I was always losing them, but I'm pretty sure I wore it a few times."**

**He handed it to the boy, who just stared open-mouthed at him.**

**"Go on, it's for you."**

The crowd of fans gathered around them started to applaud, and Billy reached out to take it, his eyes filling with tears as was his mother's.

Billy took it, and then held it above his head to a cheer.

James smiled.

"Go on, put it on!"

The boy nervously placed the admiral's cap on his head, where it fitted quite comfortably.

The crowd cheered, James shook Billy's hand and posed for some selfies.

The rest of the day was a blur to James, as he answered more questions, took more and more photos, and ended up at one in the morning in the hotel bar as well-oiled as the fans and winning their plaudits with a very respectable karaoke version of "La Mer".

Tom helped him stagger to his room.

He awoke in a confused, still fairly pissed state. There was a lot of noise outside the room, some sort of alarm, a very annoying alarm, and then he realised the room seemed to have smoke in it. It was then it occurred to him he was having considerable difficulty breathing. He tried to rise from the bed, where he was lying fully-clothed, but he could barely move.

There was a loud incessant knocking on the door, and he called out, if only to acknowledge it. He still couldn't rise from the bed.

The door splintered, first a little, then it disintegrated, smoke billowing through. Had it exploded? Perhaps from the heat of a fire? James wasn't sure. Maybe this was it, his brain suggested. At least it would get him a mention on the news.

"The actor James Tarrant, famous for playing admiral Richard Trafalgar on the 1980s science fiction series "Deep Sea Strike!" has died in a hotel fire."

Then they'd put up the picture of him fighting the crabman. The fucking crabman.

Then he saw it. An admiral coming through the smoke towards him.

The admiral grabbed him, threw him over his shoulder, and carried him into the smoke, which was getting thicker and thicker, and seemed to contain muffled noises of people shouting. He started coughing in the smoke, struggling to breath, and then he felt a blackness creeping in, and the sounds vanishing.

James awoke to a blast of cold clean air which triggered a coughing fit. He opened his eyes to see Billy, in his wheelchair but crouched down holding an oxygen mask over the actor's mouth.

James pulled himself up, looking around to see he was in the lobby of the hotel. There were a number of people scattered around the lobby in various bedclothes and blankets. A number of firemen in oxygen tanks were casually walking through the lobby. They didn't look to be in a hurry.

Billy's mother appeared, leaning down and offering him a bottle of water which he took gratefully.

**“Apparently there was a small fire in a store room on your floor. No one injured, thank God, but very smoky, they’re saying.”**

**James gulped down the water.**

**“Billy remembered he had his emergency oxygen with his wheelchair.”**

**James nodded.**

**“Yes, thank you so much. Do you know how I got down here?”**

**She shook her head.**

**“Someone from the convention, I suppose. We are all staying on the same floor.”**

**A fireman walked by with a badly charred costume made of foam. It had a set of claws attached.**

**James staggered to his feet, helped by Billy’s mum.**

**Then he saw it. An admiral, in full dress uniform walking towards him. Some smoke damage on the uniform. It was Tom.**

**“Hi James, how are you feeling? Billy looking after you? Damn lucky. The manager reckons not too much damage. Mostly a new lick of paint. Someone left a bloody crabman costume beside a heater, and it went up.”**

**“Bloody crabman!” said Billy.**

**James looked at the uniform.**

**“Was it you who got me out of the room?”**

**Tom grimaced.**

**“Yes, sorry, all a bit dramatic. Can’t take risks with fires, as you know. Hardwired into me.”**

**He tapped the stripes on his sleeve.**

**James nodded. Then it occurred to him: why was he wearing an admiral’s uniform at night? During the convention he’s been dressed quite, well, normal. Sure, some of the fans had been wearing uniforms, but he wasn’t wearing one when he left him in the room.**

**“What’s with the admiral uniform?” James asked.**

**Tom looked down in puzzlement.**

**“This isn’t an admiral’s uniform. It’s a captain’s uniform. First day back in work this morning.”**

**“Work?”**

**“Yes. Didn’t I tell you? I’m a submarine captain. HMS Resolute. We’re sailing this morning.”**

**As if on cue, a younger officer suddenly appeared and snapped a sharp salute.**

**“All ready to go, sir?”**

**“Certainly. Lieutenant, I want you to meet the man who inspired me to join the navy. This is James Tarrant. You know, Admiral Trafalgar from “Deep Sea Strike!”?”**

**“Oh yes, the crabman thing. A bit before my time, sir. Nice to meet you, Mr Tarrant.”  
He shook James’s hand, and walked away.**

**“Sorry about that,” Tom said.**

**James waved it away.**

**“Thank you for everything. Seriously. Everything,” James said.**

**“And thank you admiral,” he said, saluting Billy.**

**An hour later, showered, shaved and packed, James stood on the train platform with his phone to his ear, telling Oliver to book him on the convention circuit, and see if he could locate any more captains’ hats from the series. As the train pulled in, a small number of passengers got off. One of them, a very proper looking bowler hat and umbrella ex-army colonel looking man strode past James. Then, with the glimmer of recognition in his eye, his face lit up and he did a bad impression of a giant crab snapping his claws at James.**

**The End.**

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