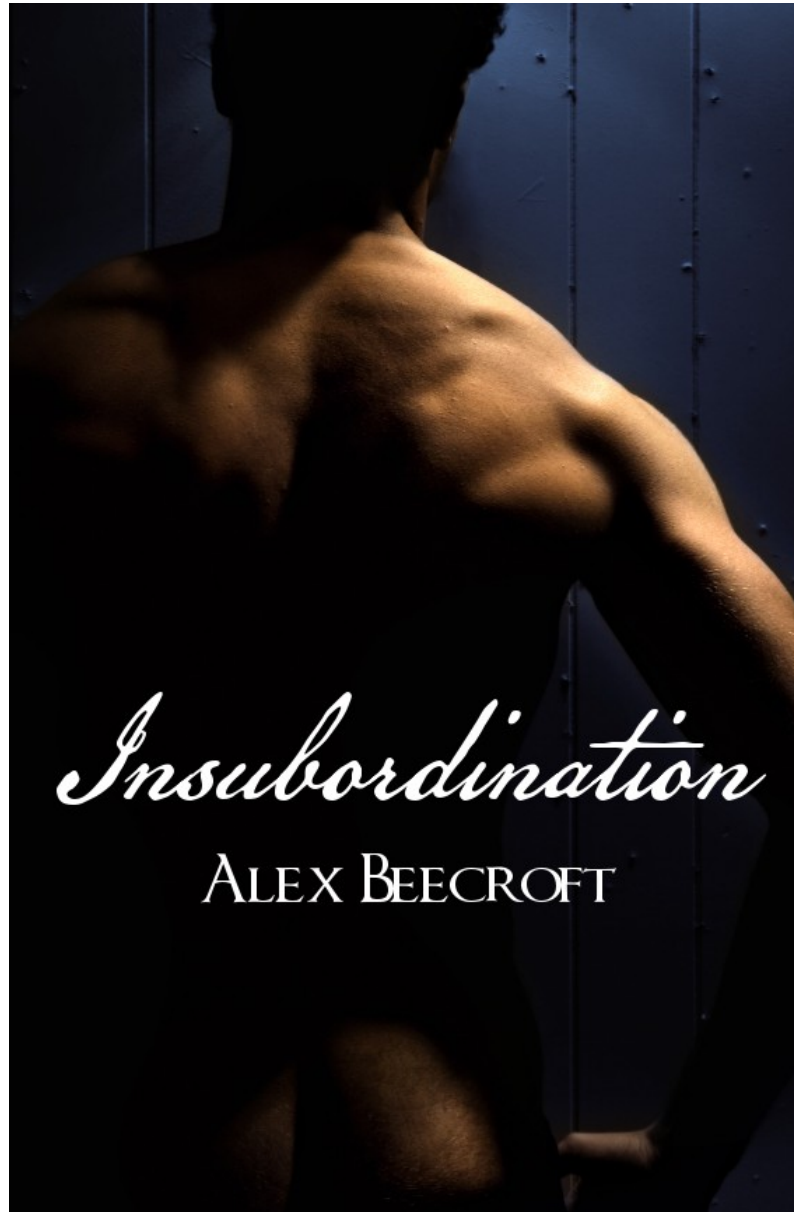


Insubordination

By [Alex Beecroft](#)



INSUBORDINATION
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Supper at Kenyon's house, and they talk of the supply problems, the difficulty of getting fresh drinking water aboard, while sipping crab and scallop soup, each trying his hardest not to slurp, trying to look perfectly at ease.

Josh sneaks sideways glances at his captain, gaze caught and held by the sheen of sweat on that stiff upper lip.

The soup removed, they discuss smugglers – their habits and lairs, their distinguishing marks, avid and precise as any stone age hunters reciting the spoor of their prey. The line of gold on Kenyon's lip continues to obsess Josh. He can't stop looking, wanting to forget all this food and instead lean forward and lick that line of sweat away.

Kenyon looks up, catches his eye and there is a moment's silence, ringing like a struck brandy glass. Like brandy, it goes to Josh's head, smooth, hot, delicious. He licks his lips. They are both breathing harder when he looks down again.

It started this morning – this tension that he does not dare call foreplay. He had seen enough of Peter's miserable sighs. His patience, sanded thinner and thinner over weeks of forbearance had finally snapped. Entering Peter's office, he had laid down a bundle of paper on the polished desk and said;

“Despatches from London. Butcher's bill from the *Seahorse*. Sightings of the *Avenger* and the *Cruel Bones*. Papers containing news of the war, and incidentally, Sir, I still love you. Why not take an evening off from being respectable? I'm owed a chance to bugger you for a change, don't you think?”

Kenyon had frozen rigid, while the quill snapped in his fingers and his eyes became the cloudy green of thick glass. Then he shook himself and replied, “I'll see the applicants for ship's Doctor at the hospital at noon – have the sick men transferred at once. Let me see your predicted courses for the *Avenger* and the *Bones* first. Digest of the papers to follow please.”

Then as Josh bowed, put on his hat and turned to make a scorchingly embarrassed exit, he had finished, “and about that other matter. I'll give you my thoughts at dinner. 8pm. Be prompt.”

So here they sit, watching one another, with nervous caution and sweaty hands, and Josh still has no idea whether this is a 'Mr. Andrews, if you cannot let go of our undesirable connection, I will have to transfer you elsewhere' dinner, or a prelude to the world's most inept seduction. He hopes for the latter, of course.

The doings of his extended clan form an inexhaustible topic of conversation over the roast duck. Four living generations of Andrews's in East Anglia. O'Neills, O'Hallorans and FitzGerald's in Ireland. Cousins who run vast estates and cousins who haunt the attics of the same, exercising squatter's rights to keep three pigs and a hen. Illegal brewers, champion poets, friends of friends in the Spanish and French navies, and smugglers closer to home, until he's painted himself as a little wild by blood; a little inclined to do the unthinkable and get away with it.

Kenyon's family, for whom the receipt of a new batch of letters is excitement enough to occupy them a month, cannot compare. And if Peter suspects him of making half of this up, well, he doesn't know which half. Meanwhile, Josh punctuates his tales by sucking the sauce from his fingers and watching the tide of red rise from beneath Peter's cravat to suffuse his whole face.

Flustered is a good look on him.

Between courses, while the silent servants remove plates, fill up glasses, Josh takes off his coat, loosens his cravat and stretches, luxuriantly. He can't keep the little smile off his face when he opens his rapturously closed eyes in time to catch Peter watching. It only broadens when Peter abruptly flinches away, dropping his spoon.

One more course, and the cook has outdone herself with confections of ice and citrus, sharp and cold and refreshing. Josh's lips tingle as he savours each mouthful, imagining how Peter would gasp, and laugh, and groan if he were to melt these on the man's bare skin and lick them very thoroughly away.

“About... that matter,” Kenyon says at last, waving away the servants' attempts to draw the cloth and dismissing them to their own homes as though he cannot wait another moment. The sound of the sea comes in through the open windows. It is almost cool, and a wave of goosebumps travels down Josh's arms at the privacy, and at Peter's strained, formal voice; so cautious, so frightened. “I thought we had agreed... For the sake of our lives, our careers – to put this vice behind us.”

A small, sweet smile and Josh thought that for all his flirting, Peter could outdo him without effort. For that smile he'd clean the heads every day for a century. Hell, he'd roll himself in broken glass, put a candle in his mouth and hang himself from the ceiling as a chandelier if it would only make Peter smile like that again.

“I confess I have regretted we did not have longer together. Did not do all the things I would have liked to try. I have dreamed... No. No, I won't even say that. God knows we neither of us need any encouragement and I *will* not...”

“Take advantage of me?” The smile has grown until his cheeks are aching with it. He shoves his chair back from the table, stands. He's been planning this 'one last time' for weeks, and he knows exactly what to do.

The politenesses of society are so ingrained in Kenyon that he rises in echo, and stands, looking bemused and helpless and rather lost before the gold and red drapery of the Pellegrini above the mantle. Slowly, but firmly, Josh takes him by both wrists and backs him into the wall, where he stands, rigid with a mixture of terror and desire – very still, but his chest heaving. “I don't want to risk your life,” he tries to explain. “Josh, we were going to... stop... we agreed this was...”

“Peter,” says Josh, carefully removing the powdered wig and setting it on top of the globe of the world, where it looks appropriate but rather undersized. “Shut up.”

Peter looks at him then, really looks at him, startled, his eyes wide and dark with

outraged dignity and arousal.

Josh loosens the knot in Peter's cravat, undoes the two little buttons beneath and leans in, touching his mouth to Peter's skin, the collarbone hard against his lips. He licks along the bone to the muscle of the neck, fastens his mouth there and sucks hungrily at the taste of Kenyon. For a moment there's no reaction, but the thunder of Peter's pulse against his lips, and then Peter catches his breath in a shaky little gasp that makes him want to bite.

Instead he lets go, licks the oval, purple bruise with a smug tongue, catlike, and raises his head to say, gently. "You don't want to risk me? We'll play a game then, yes? You aren't in control. None of this is your fault. If you really don't want it, say 'no', but you can't say anything else. Understand?"

As he speaks, he manages to get the waistcoat buttons undone, push the garment down Peter's arms. Peter's eager wriggle to get the thing fully off pushes him first against Josh's chest and then his groin. Gasping, he presses closer until he can feel the warmth of Peter's cock, hard and eager, through the two layers of linen that separates it from his own, grinds them together, need and joy together like a pulsing fire in his belly, while he explores the shell of Peter's ear with his tongue, one hand stroking the nape of his neck and the other full with the glorious curve of his arse. Peter is fumbling with his own breeches buttons, not daring to break his own strange rules and touch Josh's.

"Um... How do exclamations such as... ahh!... 'please' and 'harder' apply in this situation?"

Josh laughs for joy, for sheer joy, and tugs his commanding officer away from the wall by the shirt that is now the only thing he's wearing. "You can say them. I don't have to listen."

"That seems unfair," Kenyon is recovering from the shock, his attempt to take back authority is instinctive, completely unconscious, even when Josh knows he doesn't want responsibility for this, will second-guess himself and feel guilty for weeks if he has it.

"Shut up, sir," he says and pushes the man hard against the table, undoing his own clothes one handed in the process and scattering them on the floor, only the cravat dangling in a long fall of white from his fist. "Or do I have to gag you?"

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"You wouldn't!" Peter pants, swallowing down against the giddy rush of shock and delight – this is nothing like what has happened between them before; Josh's reluctance, his worship, the mornings of shame afterwards. He hadn't dreamed of this – Josh with his red hair loose about shoulders Peter had never imagined that wide; Josh with that look on his face – not a supplicant but a predator. He thinks he should struggle, but while he dithers, Josh catches him by the arms, spins him effortlessly round and pulls the cloth between his teeth.

A small part of his mind registers that the knot is loose, that his hands are free, that this is nothing more than a symbol he could pull apart whenever he chose. But a more basic part feel the graze of the linen against the sides of his mouth like hot kisses, tells him he can't give orders, he isn't in control; tells him this is *not his fault*, and he groans aloud, feels the vibrations of his own voice, of the moan, through his skin and his fingertips and his painfully hard cock, trapped against the cloth covered edge of the table.

“That's better,” Josh breathes against the back of his neck with a voice like raw sugar syrup. The gentle scrape of teeth against his nape makes him go boneless, sag against the table in mute surrender, needing, needing to be touched everywhere, to be enveloped, to be burned up in fire and consumed. “Let's clear for action, shall we?”

The tablecloth is pushed away - glint of glasses and silverware tumbled into chaos in the corner of the sheet - a wide, glossy, cool expanse of polished mahogany opened up before him. Then Josh pulls his shirt off. He has a brief flash of how this must look – himself spread out on the board like a forgotten appetizer, all skin and bone and sinew, the ridiculous jut of sex between his legs a final insult. He feels he should say 'stop! This is against the articles, against my dignity as a man and a commander', but his tongue presses against the gag and spit gathers warm in the corner of his mouth, and he remembers with a bolt of lightning pleasure that he can't say anything at all.

A sturdy knee between his legs, pushing, and he spreads them without thought. Not what he expected, not at all, but God he wants it now! Josh takes his hands and places them far forward on the table, bending down over him, and he's pinned between the cold, slick hardness of wood and the heat of Josh's body, skin against his shoulderblades, heat and skin and hardness of his belly against Peter's back. He's lifted up and the cold, waxed surface glides against his nipples, his chest, the impatient, swollen need of his cock with a half painful, half blissful slide. It hurts, it isn't enough, he wants to do it again.

Josh's hand leaves his own, scoops the melted butter from the butter dish, and he hasn't time to think 'do I really want this?' before he's thinking *oh my god, oh my god, yes, oh fuck, yes, no, please... Oh God!*

The gag is in his mouth, damp now, and in his mind he can't say 'no. I wouldn't take a man's fingers inside me, that's disgusting'. He can't say it. He's free to feel Josh's hands, those beautiful hands, so strong and sure, breach him gently, lay him open, thoroughly as Josh does everything. He's free to whimper and writhe against the table and push madly into the palm that finds its way beneath him, finds his aching balls and kneads them gently while the fingers of the other hand are gliding in deep; and there's something inside him he never imagined, a place that Josh's fingers brush repeatedly, and every time – like the flintlock of a pistol – it makes a little explosion of pleasure burst through every particle of his body.

He is gagged, he can't shame himself by pleading. If he pants 'please, please, oh God please!' no one will hear it. So he does, and the knowledge of his own wantonness is another illicit wash of joy. Melted butter is trickling, warm and slippery, down his leg, and Josh's hand leaves him, clamps around his hip, stilling him – and only then does he notice that he has been grinding back against the touch, abandoned, shameless.

Shameless. The touch of Josh's cock against his hole shouldn't do this to him, shouldn't make him grind his teeth together in his own linen and arch his back and push with sweat slicked hands against the table, trying to speed the sensuous, buttery slide of hard prick into him, feeling it, inch by inch, feeling cored out, invaded, burning, and loving it.

“I love you,” says Josh, the gasps of his breathing loud but his smoky voice quiet, awestruck, and all of a sudden it isn't about Peter any more at all, it's about how much he can get of his lieutenant. *His* lieutenant. He lifts his legs and locks his feet around Josh's knees, takes his cheek from the slippery tabletop and rubs it against Josh's forearm, which is holding his own down flat, fastens his mouth there, bites. The coppery taste of blood mixes with the metallic taste of his own need. The cloth tightens at the sides of his mouth and Josh fucks him with long, slow, worshipful strokes that make him cry out each time in an escalating chant of bliss and frustration and need and belonging and surrender and oh God! Oh God yes! Yes! Oh, fuck... God! *Yes!*

“The polish is quite ruined,” he says, later, when he can rouse himself from his state of sodden, golden mellowness. He's lying in Josh's lap, nose in the hollow of his throat and his slightly grazed cheek against a muscular shoulder. How he will ever have the strength to give this up a second time is a problem pleasantly postponed. He wonders why he thought Josh needed to be protected, and contradicts himself immediately afterwards by vowing to make sure he always is.

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Josh smiles, indulges himself one more time in raking his fingers through Peter's glossy jet black hair, in kissing away the unacknowledged salt of tears at the corners of Peter's eyes. He is still trembling and heavy with satisfaction. He wants to go to sleep, and to stay awake forever, trapping himself for all time in this moment, with Peter. An intimacy he knows will be over as soon as he leaves the house.

“You'll have to dine at my place, tomorrow. There's nothing worse than an ugly stain on a table.”

“There is nothing ugly about it,” says Peter, surprising him yet again with how much more he was, how much better than any imagination. More sensuous, more generous, more... sentimental? No. Romantic. “I must say it will make dinners with the Admirals more entertaining, knowing it's there beneath the cloth.”

“You're a wicked bastard,” says Josh, admiringly, and tightens his grip.

“Only in private, Mr. Andrews. In public, I am your commanding officer. I expect you not to forget it.”

“Yes, sir. You're a wicked bastard, *Sir*... But you'll come to dinner tomorrow?”

Peter turns in his arms and gives him a desperate farewell kiss. “Oh Josh,” he says,

painfully, dropping them both abruptly back into the darkness. "I can't. You know why we can't. We shouldn't have done this. I shouldn't have allowed it. But you must understand that it can never happen again."