

Chapter XCII: A Day to Relax

By the time we made it back to the rest of the group, Euryale and Asterios had been welcomed by Drake's crew with open arms. By the cheering and the laughter, they even seemed delighted to have them both among them, and more than one marveled at Asterios and his incredible height or the wound that was still bleeding sluggishly on his chest. Drake's word that they were allies now seemed to be all the more any of them needed, and considering how much they all adored her, maybe it really was.

Euryale, from the look of her, didn't quite know what to do with all of that. She seemed somewhere between upset and confused, like she was used to being the center of attention — men's especially — and couldn't decide whether she was supposed to be upset or not that no one was really ogling her.

Some of that might also have been her expecting the crew to treat the two of them a lot differently, and now that they had so thoroughly defied her expectations, she was lost and clueless about what she was supposed to be doing. No one was looking at Asterios like he was a monster, not to be trusted, likely in no small part because he wasn't wearing that bull mask anymore, so she didn't need to put herself on display and distract them to keep their attention away from her wounded...friend?

Were they friends? It was hard to tell. Asterios didn't speak much or clearly, but it was obvious from their interactions that they cared about each other to some degree. How much went in which direction wasn't as easy to discern.

Asterios, for his part, seemed equally bewildered and out of his depth at the reception he was receiving. He looked uncomfortable, and he probably wasn't used to people treating him with such carefree attitudes, considering his myth. The Minotaur hadn't known a single kindness in all his life, had never had a single friend, and while the myths had said that he was a callous, bloodthirsty killer with a taste for human flesh, it was fairly obvious that the myths weren't entirely right about that.

That was becoming a theme, wasn't it? No, that should be obvious, especially with two very large examples being shown off every second we spent in this Singularity, barely contained within that red coat. "True to history" had gone out the window starting in Fuyuki, and it didn't look like it was coming back anytime soon.

"Who's this, then?" Drake asked from where she and the others were waiting as the three of us approached the camp.

"Another tagalong," I said simply. "Calliope."

"What?" the twins asked in stereo.

"That so?" Drake squinted at her, and Calliope pulled her cloak tighter around herself as though it would shield her from Drake's scrutiny. "Skittish little thing, ain't she?"

"Wouldn't you be, in my situation?" Calliope asked sourly. "Stranded in a strange place among strange people without the faintest idea why?"

Drake chuckled, unperturbed. “And she’s got some bite, too! How long was she following us for?”

“Wait, she was following us?” asked Ritsuka at the same time as his sister asked, “Who’s Calliope?”

“One of the muses from Greek mythology,” Mash explained dutifully. “She presided over eloquence and epic poetry, and she was the mother to Orpheus, who was said to be the most masterful lyre player to ever live. Even the god of the underworld, Hades, was charmed by his skill. In some versions, he was also a member of the Argonauts, a companion of Heracles and Jason.”

Calliope snorted, and under her breath, she muttered, “He wishes.”

She didn’t elaborate, and when I glanced over at her, she turned her head away, her lips pulling into a tight line. Who the “he” was remained unsaid. Not Heracles, I was sure, because he had nothing to be envious of except a stable family life, and...I wanted to say probably not Jason, considering the Argonauts was packed with big names as it was, but the Jason of the myths was a petty, greedy gloryhound.

Another thing the legends had missed? I guess it wasn’t impossible that many Greek heroes envied the chance to be part of the famous Argonauts, even those you didn’t expect to care. Sort of like wanting to work under Alexandria or Legend and be a part of one of their teams.

“She was hiding in the trees,” I said as though she hadn’t spoken. “If we hadn’t called her out on her sneaking around, she would likely have spied on us for as long as she thought she was undetected.”

“Spy?” the twins squawked, this time echoed by Mash.

“How suspicious!” Bradamante added.

“Fou, fou!” the little gremlin agreed.

I nodded towards Euryale, who was awkwardly hanging around Asterios in the middle of the camp as one of the pirates wrapped a stretch of gauze over his wound. I was pretty certain it wouldn’t actually do anything, but no one was correcting him.

“It seems she’s not as willing to take us at our word as she says she is.”

The tension eased out of the twins. “Oh,” said Rika. “Well, that’s different! We’re not really jumping for joy at having *her* around, either!”

“What she means is,” said Ritsuka, turning to Calliope, “we had a...bad experience when we met her sister a while back, so we’re a bit more cautious about her than we might normally be when we meet a new Servant.”

“Both sisters,” Rika reminded him. “Don’t forget Fuyuki!”

Ritsuka grimaced and corrected himself. “Right. Both sisters. Neither Medusa nor Stheno left the...best of impressions.”

“The gods tend not to,” Calliope said dryly, “even the fallen ones.”

“I suppose you would know,” Emiya said sardonically. “Better than most, right, Calliope?”

Calliope scowled at him. “Not that it’s any business of yours, *Emiya*.”

I kept my expression schooled into my usual calm. That confirmed it, at least. The only time we’d mentioned Emiya’s name since entering the Labyrinth was during the fight with Asterios, and while she’d managed to keep her presence suppressed enough to follow us without notice afterwards, Marie would have said something if she’d been following us since we made landfall on the island.

“Do you two...know each other?” asked Ritsuka.

“No,” Calliope said, simple and direct, at the same time as Emiya shrugged and agreed with a, “Not really.”

Or they knew each other, I amended. I wondered, for a moment, whether or not they were both telling the truth, but if it wasn’t important enough for Emiya to tell us anything about it, then even if it rankled a little not to know, I guess I could let them off for now. Stuff like that tended to come out, one way or the other, especially when strong feelings were involved.

If they hated each other? I gave it a day, maybe two. In the meantime, I’d add it to the list of things I was watching out for.

“In any case,” said Ritsuka, “we don’t blame you for being a little cautious.”

“Even if you *were* spying for Your...E-yur...”

Rika grimaced as she stumbled over the name again.

“Euryale,” Mash supplied helpfully.

She jerked her finger at Mash. “What she said.”

“My,” Calliope murmured, “how generous of you.”

“Well, if she were spying for the big guy and the tiny tot, that makes her an ally, don’t it? Friend of my friend and all of that jolly stuff?” Drake asked. She nodded without waiting for anyone else’s input. “In that case, looks like we’re welcoming three new hands aboard the Golden Hind!”

“I-I suppose,” Bradamante hedged, “i-if Master is okay with it, then...I don’t see any problems.”

Saying I was “okay with it” might have been a bit of a stretch, but, “There’s no reason to leave her behind. Strays are always here for a reason, and I’m sure we’ll want her close by when we find out what hers is.”

Whether it turned out she really was an ally or not. Keep your enemies close, right?

“Three new hands?” a pirate walking past asked, having come close enough to catch the tail end of it. “We taking on more *esteemed guests*, Cap’n?”

“That’s what I said, ain’t it?” Drake barked back. She turned around and addressed the whole of the camp. “You hear that, you shitstains? We got three new people to welcome aboard our humble little ship!”

“Three new people?” Bombe called from where he had hoisted a barrel of water. “Say it ain’t so, Cap’n! We just made space for the last set!”

“Your brain going with those ears of yours, Bombe?” Drake snarked to laughter from her crew. “Starting to get senile in your old age? That’s right, you heard me just fine! Three new people, three new mouths to feed — in a manner of speaking — and that means three new people we need to show some very homely hospitality! And, of course, the only proper way to make them feel at home...”

She pulled her Grail out of her chest, and because she was turned away, she missed the double-take Calliope did when she saw it.

“...is to eat, drink,” Drake lifted up her Grail in toast, “AND PARTY UNTIL WE DROP!”

The whole island seemed to quiver under the force of the cheer that rose up from the camp, like every single member of her crew had decided to belt out the loudest shout they’d ever shouted all at the same time. I wasn’t the only one that wince and covered my ears with my hands until it ended — only it didn’t really end properly, so much as it transformed into the cacophony of four dozen excited voices all trying to talk at once, and getting louder to make sure they were heard over the din of everyone else.

Drake seemed the only one of us unaffected. She just grinned that big, crocodile grin of hers, downed the rum that had appeared in the cup of her Grail, and turned back to us.

“Alright, you lot,” she said loudly, audible only because of her proximity. “We’ll worry about that business with this creepy pirate and his hunt for the little tot tomorrow! Tonight, we have some fun again! So grab a tankard, fill it up as high as it goes, and loosen that collar of yours!” Her grin grew broader. “And if the old nag has anything to say about it, well, you just say it was Captain’s orders!”

“I-I don’t think Boss Lady is gonna accept that for an answer,” Rika squeaked, but Drake didn’t hear her over the commotion, and she had already turned around again, barking off something at one of her crew as she waded deeper into camp. She was swallowed up by the throng, and the only way I could keep track of her was the bugs I had secreted away in the folds of her clothes and the brim of her hat.

“I don’t think she heard you,” Ritsuka informed his sister uselessly.

“I’m not sure she would have cared even if she had,” Emiya added dryly.

Arash shook his head, smiling ruefully. “That’s Captain Drake for you, I guess.”

I could barely hear him, muffled as he was by the noise. Off to the side, Euryale was less amused, standing sentinel by Asterios with her arms crossed and doggedly refusing the cajoling of any pirate who so much as stepped close. The pirate wrapping his wound at least seemed to have his priorities straight. He was probably the closest thing they had to a doctor or a medic.

A sigh nearly breezed out of my mouth, but I swallowed it and jerked my head over in the direction of our wayward duo. “Come on!” I called over the dull roar in the background.

We skirted around the edge of the camp and the party that was starting to take off, making a beeline for the island of relative calm off to one side. Bradamante’s head was on a swivel the whole way, watching out for any wandering hands that might try and cop a surreptitious feel. Fortunately for all of the pirates and their “pride,” none of them was actually daring enough to attempt it, so we came upon Euryale and Asterios without being accosted.

“We brought something of yours,” Emiya announced sardonically.

Euryale’s head spun about, and her eyes landed an instant later on Calliope. For a brief second, she looked like a deer caught in the headlights, and then, she grimaced. “Oh.”

“It couldn’t be helped,” Calliope told her by way of explanation. “Unlike that fop, these people are competent.” Her head turned my direction. “At least they don’t *seem* to be in league with your stalker. The person she contacted bore no resemblance to him or any of the flunkies we glimpsed.”

So there were flunkies, now. I guess, if they’d been assuming we were with this stalker of theirs to begin with, then that only confirmed that he did indeed have other Servants working with him, although if his interests in Euryale were as...*sexual* as she’d been implying, then I couldn’t imagine why they might go along with it. Personal loyalty? That only took you so far.

Maybe, if he actually had the Grail, then they all wanted it and were just waiting for the right moment to swipe it, especially if the flunkies were pirate Servants, too. No honor among thieves, right?

“Come to think of it,” Mash said thoughtfully, “Senpai, I don’t think we ever explained Chaldea or what we were doing here to Miss Euryale and Asterios.”

“You didn’t,” Euryale said snidely. “Quite the oversight, don’t you think?”

Rika’s cheek twitched, and she looked like she was about to spout something acidic, but a subtle nudge from her brother had her swallowing it before it could make it out of her mouth.

“Good idea, Mash,” Ritsuka said instead. He hesitated and looked at me, like he was asking permission. “Um, should I...?”

“Go ahead,” I told him. I wanted to see if he could do it without stumbling all over the place. This was our fourth Singularity, and the twins had to start mastering the interpersonal parts of being a Master of Chaldea, too.

I couldn’t see why we’d have to right now — or anytime in this Singularity in particular — but if I wasn’t there for any reason, even if just because I’d gone to handle a bodily function or two, they needed to be able to pick up the slack.

“Right,” he began, and then, a second later, more confidently, “right. So, um, we’re with the...Chaldea Security Organization, and our job...our job is to safeguard the future...”

And he proceeded to explain what we were doing there in that Singularity, pretty comprehensively, at that. He stumbled a little, he meandered a little, and strictly speaking, he gave more detail than he really needed to, but he did a decent enough job. The important part was that he covered all of the relevant bits in a way that was clear and understandable.

“Two Grails?” Calliope squeaked when he let that part slip. “There are *two* Holy Grails in this...Singularity?”

“Well...yes,” he said, nonplussed. “You...already saw Captain Drake has —”

“Yes, yes, I knew what that was,” she interrupted peevisly, “but you’re telling me there’s a second one?”

“Yes,” was the answer Mash gave. “We...haven’t confirmed its existence for ourselves, but the Singularity remained stable when we took possession of Captain Drake’s Grail, so it was the only conclusion we could draw.”

“Then you haven’t —”

But that was as far as Calliope got before she caught herself and snapped her mouth shut, refusing to finish the thought. Hadn’t what? Had she been assuming Drake had taken the Grail from another Servant in this Singularity?

Did that mean Euryale’s creep *wasn’t* the one who had the other one? Was there yet another faction in this to worry about, or just two groups working together because their goals aligned? I wanted to demand the answers from Calliope, but she was frustratingly tight-lipped and I had no leverage to use yet.

When Ritsuka was done explaining, Euryale sat back, looking overwhelmed. Asterios was a little harder to read, but his expression was slack and his eyes were open slightly wider, so I assumed that meant he was just as stunned.

Calliope remained the hardest to read. With most of her face and her body language hidden by that cloak, getting a good sense of what she was thinking was difficult at best.

“A Singularity,” Euryale said. “A twisted gnarl of space and time... No wonder this place is so strange. It was obvious for anyone with eyes that something unnatural had happened, but I wouldn’t have imagined...”

“Servants...fix...” Asterios added.

“Yes, that *does* rather raise the question, doesn’t it?” Euryale admitted. “If Servants are summoned here either by the Holy Grail or by the Counter Force...” She gestured to herself and Asterios. “Why us? Not that I discount my own radiance, but even I can admit that I don’t make much of a fighter. I won’t be fixing anything anytime soon.”

“A glitch, maybe,” I told her. “When we met your sister, she said that her summoning was a mistake, because Romulus suppressing his divinity resulted in things being botched. Something like that could have happened here.”

“Or you might have a role to play,” Arash interjected. “It’s hard to tell until it becomes obvious, but there *have* been a few Servants we’ve met whose presence seemed inexplicable. And then some were simple and straightforward,” he added, nodding towards Bradamante.

Was it? I wondered about that. On the surface, Bradamante’s summoning was to protect the people of France, and she’d settled in Thiers...but what if she’d been put in our path specifically so that she could heal Siegfried? Had the whole thing been planned that far in advance by the Counter Force?

Precogs were such fucking bullshit.

Euryale sighed. “Oh good. So you’re saying that I *have* to stay with your group, is that it? Because I might be instrumental to fixing this place?”

“The Counter Force isn’t so transparent,” Emiya said dryly. “It could be that you’re just here to look pretty.” He smirked. “Or be the damsel in distress.” He looked over at Asterios. “Although the valiant knight is usually a little more...shiny. And wearing a little more clothing.”

“I suppose my only other option is to hide away on an island and hope that creep doesn’t find me,” Euryale said sourly. “Fine, fine. I already agreed to go with you lot, didn’t I? Saving the world isn’t really my sort of thing, but I suppose if I’m being called to do it, I can’t exactly say no.”

“Sure you could,” Rika said, apparently feeling a lot less charitable. “Stheno did, and we managed just fine without her, didn’t we?”

“Stheno wasn’t being chased by the Servant who might just have the Grail pinning this distortion in place,” I reminded her. “We need Euryale for that, if nothing else.”

Rika grimaced, but didn’t fight the point, because she knew I was right. If having Euryale with us would cut down the amount of time we would actually have to spend in this Singularity... Well, I wouldn’t say I would be happy to take her along, but it kind of made the choice for me, didn’t it?

Euryale arched one eyebrow at me. “So I can be bait, you mean.”

“Well-protected bait,” Arash corrected her diplomatically. “It might not be glamorous, but you’re going to be safe and guarded by four Servants.” He glanced over at Calliope. “Sorry. Five.”

“Four,” Calliope said reluctantly. “I’m afraid I’m...not of much use defending anyone.”

I chanced another glance at her, but no more of her stats had become visible since I’d first looked. I still had little more than her Caster class to go off of, which wasn’t much at all.

“That’s better than just one, I suppose,” Euryale said. To her companion, she said, “Sorry, Asterios. Even someone as strong as you can’t take on so many Servants at once.”

“Under...stand...” Asterios’ hand lifted to his wound, wrapped in white fabric. His hand was big enough to cover it entirely. “I...no...enough...”

A sudden cheer arose from the rest of the camp behind us, cutting off our conversation, and as a single voice, the pirates bellowed out:

“And it’s no, nay, never! No, nay, never, no more! And I’ll play the wild rover! No never, no more!”

The clink of dozens of tankards being mashed together sounded, and the whole crew seemed to take a sip of their drinks all at once. A moment later, they broke out into song again.

“I went to an alehouse I used to frequent,” they all belted out, a discordant harmony that was off key at best. “And I told the landlady my money was spent! I asked her for credit and she answered me, Nay! A custom like yours I can have any day!”

They all clapped and stomped their feet, and the whole island seemed to tremble under the weight of it as the sound rumbled through the air like thunder.

“And it’s no, nay, never! No, nay, never, no more! And I’ll play the wild rover! No never, no more!”

“Well, they’re certainly having fun,” Emiya commented. “Funny. I never realized this song was that old.”

“A lot of stuff started as an oral tradition and only got written down decades or even centuries later,” I said. I had to raise my voice a little to be heard over the chorus.

“I took from my pocket ten sovereigns bright! And the landlady’s eyes opened wide with delight!”

“I wonder if they realize the irony of singing a song about giving up piracy and drinking as they drink among a pirate crew,” he said.

Probably not, I thought. Drake might be a genius navigator who had taken her crew — or would take in a few years, from her perspective — around the globe, but none of them were particularly bright or scholarly. Most of them probably didn’t even know what irony was.

The benefits of a modern education and having an English Lit professor for a mom.

“And it’s no, nay, never! No, nay, never, no more! And I’ll play the wild rover! No never, no more!”

When the song ended, another cheer went up, another clink of their tankards being smashed against one another, and they all took another heaping gulp of their drinks, laughing and smiling all the while as the volume subsided for a brief moment. One in particular started wading through the rest, making a beeline for our little island of relative sanity.

“We’re about to have company,” I warned the group.

“Company?” the twins echoed. Rika grimaced. “Ugh. Senpai, no, *please* don’t tell me it’s more giant crabs! The last one gave me nightmares!”

I gave her a sidelong look, my brow furrowing a little. What was so scary about a hermit crab?

“Emiya!” Drake called as she came closer, waving her Grail about. “Emiya, you handsome devil, c’mere! Where are you?”

Emiya grimaced, and he looked ready to pull a Houdini and disappear, but before he could put thought into action, Drake managed to meander over to us and catch sight of him. She grinned, sloshing rum in her Grail, and yet somehow not spilling a single drop.

“There you are!” she said over the din. “Been looking for you, you louse! Where’d you go off to?”

“I’ve...been right here the entire time,” Emiya said.

“Bah!” Drake took a swig of her rum. “Nevermind that, now! We got more important shit to talk about! Like food! Really, really good food, and in particular, the one here who goes and makes it!”

“I feel like I’ve had this conversation before,” Rika said, “only this time, I don’t have a baguette to fend her off.”

“See, I was thinking,” Drake went on. “Drake, I says to myself, Drake, what goes better with good booze and good company than good food? Why, Drake, I replies to myself, that’s a great idea! It’s just about supptime, too, ain’t that convenient as all get out? And who do we know who makes great food to go with our good booze and good company?”

Emiya breathed out a weary sigh. “Let me guess,” he said, resigned. “It’s me, right?”

Drake’s mouth pulled into an even larger grin. “Sure as shit! Smart one, ain’tcha? So whaddya say, Emiya? Think you can whip up a feast for us poor, deprived souls? We ain’t asking too much, are we?”

Emiya looked to Rika for an answer, but it wasn’t the one he was probably hoping for.

“You heard her, house husband!” she said. “We’re eating here, too, so I’m loaning you out! Mama needs her three squares, and I missed out on one earlier!”

He shook his head and sighed, shrugging, as though to say, “what can you do?”

“I’ll need that Grail of yours,” he told Drake, “if you want to have enough to go around.”

Drake’s grin threatened to split her face. Over her shoulder, she shouted, “You hear that, boys? We’ll be dining rich tonight!”

An answering cheer rose up from the crowd, deafening, and they toasted again, using the news as an excuse to take yet another swig of their drinks. Drinking that much, it was a miracle they were all still standing, let alone conscious.

I had the feeling they would have cheered and guzzled down another gulp if she’d just told them they were going to be digging latrines in the morning. Any excuse would have done.

“And it’s no, nay, never!” they sang. “No, nay, never, no more! And I’ll play the wild rover! No never, no more!”

Drake drained the rest of her rum from her Grail, and then she tossed it over to Emiya, who was so surprised that he almost dropped it. “What about the rest of you lot?” she asked us. “What are you doing, standing about with your thumbs a-twiddle? Don’t you see there’s a party going on?”

“Uh...”

The twins turned to look at me, stricken, like they didn’t know what the correct answer was and whether they’d get in trouble for saying yes.

“The Director...wouldn’t be happy if we were too rowdy,” Mash said hesitantly.

“And last time didn’t exactly go that great for me,” Ritsuka added. “I’m...still feeling it a little, actually.”

“Bah! A little booze never hurt anyone!” Drake waved it off, then looked over to Asterios and Euryale. “And what about our guests of honor? Here you two be sitting while we all get sauced in your names! What kind of hosts are we if we aren’t showing you a good time?”

“We’re Servants,” Euryale told her flatly. “We can’t get drunk.”

“Me...never...” Asterios admitted. It wasn’t any more coherent than anything else he’d said since we’d met him, but I still managed to figure out the gist of what he was trying to say: that he’d never tried alcohol before, in any form.

And when I thought about it, that was kind of tragic, wasn’t it? If the myths were wrong about exactly how monstrous Asterios was, then it would mean that what had happened to him was actually all kinds of terrible. A chance to try alcohol and find out whether he even liked it wasn’t the only thing that had been denied to him in life.

“Don’t mean you can’t enjoy other bits of it! A party’s about more than booze!” Drake insisted. “C’mon! Live a little! Er, given what you are, that is. As much as you’re able? Ah, you know what I mean!”

And of all people, Euryale turned to me, like I would swoop down from on high and deliver her from her predicament. Maybe I even could have, if I was insistent enough about it. Drake was the kind of personality that dragged you along with her, but she wasn’t unmovable, and we’d already earned her respect. Beaten it into her, in point of fact.

But there was nothing pressing for us to do, just then. No reason for us to sequester ourselves away from the party and, as Drake had put it, twiddle our thumbs for the rest of the night. We would just be bored. And as an extra bonus, it would mean I would have to spend less time directly interacting with our resident goddess — a few hours where I didn’t have to put up with her condescending attitude.

So if I enjoyed getting the chance to burst her bubble a little, well, no one had to know but me.

“Why not?” I said mildly. “We’re going to be sailing with these guys for the foreseeable future. Might as well get to know them a little better.”

Euryale wasn't the only one who looked like she didn't much like that idea, although why Calliope wanted to stay away from people so much, I wasn't sure. *Something* had happened to her, but I wasn't sure what, and all things considered, I couldn't even be sure it was something that had happened to her in this Singularity or something she was carrying over from when she was alive.

Hell, I couldn't even be absolutely certain she even *was* the real Calliope.

Euryale sighed. "Well, if you insist, then I suppose I'll have to...*mingle* with your crew, Captain."

"There you go!" Drake said, grinning. "See? Hey, cheer up! These folks ain't all bad, you know! Just because they're the saltiest buccaneers to ever sail the Spanish Main don't mean they'll treat you wrong!"

"Good," said Euryale, "because Asterios will be protecting me. If anyone puts their hands where they don't belong, *he'll* be the one they have to answer to."

The gigantic Asterios rumbled an agreement. His severe face could have been carved from granite.

"I will, too!" Bradamante promised. She practically vibrated as she turned to Rika. "Master! You, as well! If anyone tries anything untoward, Captain Drake, I'll divest them of their pride!"

Arash shook his head. "Are we still using that as a euphemism or...?"

"Yes!" Bradamante said viciously.

"Alright," said Rika. "I...guess it's party time!"

Another cheer arose from the nearby pirates who heard her, and the others further away who hadn't joined in just because their crew did. As a whole, they chugged down another gulp of their booze, and the party went on, just as lively as before.

"That's what I'm talking about!" Drake shouted. To the crowd, she hollered, "Hey! One of you tossers get our friends some drinks! What kind of hosts are we if we don't even have something to wet a parched throat?"

"AYE, CAP'N!" someone yelled back.

"Just remember what I said a few days ago," I reminded the twins. "About drinking and how much you can have."

The both of them grimaced. Ritsuka even looked faintly green, like the very idea made him feel sick — remembering, no doubt, what his hangover had felt like yesterday.

"Don't worry, Senpai," he said grimly. "I've learned my lesson."

So had I. That was why I planned on keeping a much closer watch on how much the two of them drank tonight.

Marie would be much less forgiving if it happened a second time.