

## Arms and the Lieutenant

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# Arms and the Lieutenant

by [bluebacchus](#)

## Summary

"I have a theory that Mr. Jopson..." he pauses for dramatic effect, "...is incredibly strong."  
"No!" Irving gasps.  
"You don't say!" George says.

Jopson lifts things. Little would like to be one of those things.

Shoutout to Mr. Dimmons for making Big Jop a reality.

## Notes

A fill for The Terror Bingo: "table"

This is for you, twitter. Title is a play on Shaw's Arms and the Man. The working title was Big Jop, so you know what you're in for.

I'm back on my nonsense comedy bullshit, so please enjoy.

It does not come to any of the officers' attention until the day Lieutenant Little needs a hug. It would be unbecoming of him to request a hug from his fellow officers, though John and George would surely be of service. It would be a shameful matter to ask it of his captain, though he has fantasized about the softness of Crozier's embrace on many occasions. He could ask Tozer, certainly, but only if he never wanted to hear the end of it. And it would be an abuse of his station to request it of Mr. Jopson, no matter how he longs to feel the man in his arms, thin and fragile, not hardened by years of duty as an AB.

So he goes to Neptune. A fine dog, to be sure. Well-behaved, charming, and incredibly fluffy. Edward has seen Neptune behave himself impeccably for nearly the whole voyage. The only moments when his composure breaks and he acts like a puppy is when Mr. Jopson crouches down and opens his arms. Then Neptune breaks into a run, tail wagging furiously, and he leaps into Mr. Jopson's arms and is twirled around like a dame at a dance. Edward would very much like to twirl Mr. Jopson around, but he will settle for his second favourite member of the crew.

He finds Neptune under the table in the Great Cabin, napping.

"Ahem," Edward says, hoping to rouse the slumbering canine from his dreams. "Excuse me, Seaman Neptune," he tries again.

Neptune does not stir. Lonely and sad, Edward turns away. Perhaps he will ask George after all.

Then Neptune lets out an enormous fart, making Edward jump about a foot in the air and startling Neptune to his feet.

The dog looks around for the perpetrator, for surely it was not the delicious veal cutlet tomato that John secretly fed him under the table that would turn on him so quickly. Neptune beats his tail against the floor once, tentatively. Edward crouches down and opens his arms.

The dog gives him a look, as if to say *Please, human, I could stomp you to death with my great paws for you are weak and hairless, and I am a great fluffy beast.*

Edward pats his thighs. He really needs to hug this dog immediately, lest he fall apart completely.

Neptune sneezes and shakes his head, then bounds slowly towards Edward, lifting himself on his back legs and planting a paw on each of Edward's shoulders. The weight of the huge dog knocks him firmly on his backside, but he is showered in puppy kisses. He does not appreciate it as he thought he would, for his mind is occupied with one question:

How does Mr. Jopson do it?

Edward does not share his theory until another incident has passed. This time, they are at dinner. Captain Fitzjames generously offered to pass around a ring, gifted to him by the Maharaja's son who had lost it to a hungry, overlarge jird, which the Captain described to be something closely related to a gerbil, whatever that may be.

"A rat, but cute?" Irving scoffs. "Rats were put on the earth to test us."

"I can assure you, Lieutenant, that an Indian Desert Jird is a lovely creature."

"Say 'jird' again," Edward says under his breath. Only Hodgson hears him.

"Just because you choose not to believe in the orang-outan does not mean that you know anything about nature!" Hodgson says. Edward, who had been passed the ring which does, indeed, have the imprint of tiny rat teeth in the metal, is so taken aback by the fury in George's voice that he drops the ring. It bounces under the table.

"My apologies," Edward says. He glares at George.

"You should go find it before a very gold-hungry ship's rat does," Irving says. Edward no longer believes Irving is talking about vermin.

"I do need my ring back," Fitzjames says.

Edward is not ready to fall to his knees and crawl under the table. He is really not in the mood. And his tailbone hurts from the Neptune incident.

"Not to worry, sirs," Jopson pipes up from behind them. "I will lift the table, and Lieutenant Little can fetch the ring."

Before anyone can protest, Jopson wedges himself between Edward and George's chairs and lifts the table clean off the floor.

Edward scrambles to pluck the ring off the wooden floorboards, but Jopson does not appear to struggle under the weight of the table in the least. Rather, he is balancing it as easily as he balances the tea tray.

"All clear, Lieutenant?" he asks. Edward nods, and Jopson places the table down as gently as if it were a feather. He nods, and Edward silently hands the ring back to Captain Fitzjames.

“Gentlemen,” Edward says, “I have a theory.”

John and George are sitting on his berth while Edward sits on his chair. They are not as rapt an audience as he had hoped. John brought his bible and has not stopped thumbing through it, while George has attempted to derail the conversation twice, and he has not even started his address.

“Do you believe the ship is infested with Indian Desert Jirds?” George says. Irving snickers. They bump fists underneath John’s bible.

“What? No! I have a theory that Mr. Jopson...” he pauses for dramatic effect, “...is incredibly strong.”

“No!” Irving gasps.

“You don’t say!” George says. “Have you any evidence for this alarming theory of yours?”

“He lifted the wardroom table with nary a blink,” Edward says solemnly, “and when I tried to catch Neptune, the beast knocked me over completely.”

“But Jopson is so agile!” Irving says. “Like a saint,” he adds.

“Have there not been men who are strong and agile?”

“None so strong and agile as Mr. Jopson,” Edward says.

“Well then, it must be a farce,” George says. “There is only one solution: we must see his arms.”

Irving nods, though his face reddens. “To see a man’s arms... he would have to undress to a most immodest degree!”

Edward schools his excitement into what he hopes passes for mere scientific interest. “I shall be the one to request this boon of Mr. Jopson. He is a sound, intelligent man. I hope he will understand the importance of our experiment.”

“You’re certain, Edward? I could try my hand at seducing the man. Mrs. Hodgson and I have an arrangement—“

“Only I will be seducing Mr. Jopson!” Edward says forcefully.

Abashed, George turns to John. “Perhaps we could also request to see some arms. Surely one of the men must have arms befitting a saint. He could model for your next watercolour.”

“Sergeant Tozer,” John says immediately. “Err...” he stutters, “he has a fine physique. From all the exercises. He would make a fine Christ figure, I’m certain.”

“Yes!” George says with enthusiasm. “Let us undress Sergeant Tozer and have him pose as Jesus Christ the Redeemer!”

“I need to be redeemed,” John whispers, but George grabs him by the arm and tugs him out of Edward’s cabin.

Edward does not want to lose the momentum he has gained by confiding in his fellow officers, so he goes to the Great Cabin and knocks before entering. He does not want to spook Jopson. Of course, Jopson is there, moving furniture about and mopping underneath.

“Evening, sir,” he says. He pushes a cabinet back against the wall with ease. It makes Edward’s heart race. “Watch your feet, the floor’s bound to be slippery.”

Edward takes a step inside. His pulse is pounding. He must make this request of Mr. Jopson. He must know if he is, truly, as strong as he appears. For science.

But Edward slips on a soapy patch of floor, and before his undignified holler can escape his lips, Jopson is there to catch him.

“Slippery, sir,” he says.

Edward can feel his entire body being supported by Jopson’s strong arms. He tries to regain his footing, but his feet slip out from under him and then Jopson is carrying him, holding him in his arms with Edward’s head on his shoulder, and it feels so nice that he might cry.

Instead, Edward Little swoons and faints in Mr. Jopson’s arms.

Edward records all the evidence. On Tuesday, George pretended to sprain his ankle and Jopson let him use him as a crutch all the way to the med bay. On Thursday, John could not reach the box of salted meat, so Jopson bent down and let John sit on his shoulders. Yesterday, after the Great Crozier/Fitzjames Fight of the Month, Edward saw Jopson pick up Captain Crozier like an angry kitten and put him in bed. The only possible conclusion: Jopson is incredibly strong.

Edward does not stop to think about why this is so important to him. If he did, he would realize that all his life, he has been finding excuses to stare at men’s arms. He has complimented so many hideous tattoos in his life, only because the arms they decorated make him weak at the knees. His desire to twirl with a fine man ignored the fact that in his fantasies, it was he whose feet would leave the ground. Edward does not realize that it is his heart’s desire to be picked up, embraced, and carried to a marital bed.

At least not yet.

Eventually, it is too much.

“I need to see your arms,” he blurts out one evening over supper. George slaps him on the back.

“Good show, mate,” he says. “Let’s give Lieutenant Little some time to recover from his momentary lapse in sanity,” he says to the rest of the wardroom which is, unfortunately, full. Crozier’s eyebrows have achieved liftoff and are well on their way to outer space. John has dissociated fully, and it takes a firm hand and comforting word from Dr. MacDonald to escort him away from the table.

Then it is only he and Jopson left.

“I’m sorry,” he says miserably. “You’re so strong, and all evidence points to arms.”

“I do believe I have arms, Lieutenant,” Jopson says. “Would you like to touch them?”

Edward nods. He reaches out and touches Jopson’s closest arm. “It’s lovely,” he says, still miserable over his great embarrassment.

“Oh, Edward,” Jopson says. “Come with me.”

Edward follows meekly, all the way to his own cabin. Jopson slides the door closed behind him and sits Edward down on the berth.

“You’re terrible at seducing men, you know.” Jopson is taking his coat off. Now he is unbuttoning his waistcoat. Edward’s brain is screaming the word “ARMS” over and over again.

“Yes, I know. I do try,” Edward says, despite the cacophony in his brain.

Jopson smiles as he peels off his sweater, then his shirt, and then finally removes his undershirt.

“Arms,” Edward says.

By that, he means that Jopson’s arms are the most beautiful arms he has ever seen. The curves of muscles that have been hidden by so many layers of clothing are now exposed, and Edward looks his fill. The skin is smooth and pale beneath dark hair. Jopson crosses his arms in front of his chest, and the muscle shifts and lengthens and contracts and Edward can no longer think because all the blood is in his groin.

“Is this what you wanted to see?” Jopson asks. He must be unnerved by Edward’s silence, because he shifts from foot to foot and suddenly, Edward’s mind screams LEGS! at him.

“I do believe you are the most handsome man I have ever seen in my life,” Edward says. He is proud that he was able to make a full sentence in his current state.

“How fortunate you are,” Jopson says, “that I am already in love with you.”

Edward’s brain quiets, finally. The part that was yelling “arms!” and the part that was yelling “legs!” now seem to be in agreement. Together, in perfect harmony, they sing “Jopson!” and Edward stands and envelops Jopson in a hug.

Jopson’s arms are firm to the touch, and Edward wants to feel out every dip and curve of them. But then Jopson wraps his arms around Edward, and he presses closer, nestling against Jopson’s chest, wrapped in strong, safe arms.

“This is very good,” Edward says.

“What you’ve needed all along, isn’t it?” Jopson says. “To be held close? Taken care of? Protected?”

“To be taken apart by someone who is strong enough to put me back together,” Edward whispers.

Jopson’s hands grasp at his thighs, and then Edward’s feet leave the floor. Then he is pinned between his cabin wall and Jopson’s body, supported by those strong, strong arms. Edward can feel the stress leave his body, and he leans forward, presses a soft, tender kiss to Jopson’s left bicep. It has the desired effect: Jopson surges forward, pressing their mouths together. All Edward can feel is Jopson surrounding him, supporting him.

Jopson finally breaks away, eyes shining.

“Please, Mr. Jopson,” Edward says, wrapping his legs around Jopson’s waist, “won’t you take me apart?”



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