

## Homeward Bound

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/41746257>.

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| Categories:      | <a href="#">M/M</a> , <a href="#">Other</a>  |
| Fandom:          | <a href="#">The Penumbra Podcast</a>   |
| Relationships:   | <a href="#">Peter Nureyev/Juno Steel</a> , <a href="#">Aurinko Crime Family &amp; Peter Nureyev</a> , <a href="#">Vespa Ilkay &amp; Juno Steel</a>   |
| Characters:      | <a href="#">Peter Nureyev</a> , <a href="#">Juno Steel</a> , <a href="#">Vespa Ilkay</a> , <a href="#">Ruby 7 (Penumbra Podcast)</a> , <a href="#">Jet Sikuliaq</a> , <a href="#">Rita (Penumbra Podcast)</a> , <a href="#">Buddy Aurinko</a>                          |
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| Language:        | English  |
| Stats:           | Published: 2022-09-16 Words: 1,948 Chapters: 1/1   |

# Homeward Bound

by [DesertWillow](#)

## Summary

Peter Nureyev makes his way home.

~~Vespa and Ruby 'help' Juno make a scene...~~

EDIT 9/21/22: Now with amazing art by Prydon!

## Notes

The change from italics and the line break mark a POV change.

Thanks to fancryptid for giving this a once over!

EDIT 9/21/22: And thanks to Prydon for the absolutely AMAZING art! I just keep staring at it and falling in love with it all over again.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

*It was months before I saw him again. Slowly but surely, the bulk of the journal unlocked. What happened with Nureyev and Slip was... a lot. But in the end, I got it. I understood why he had to leave us, leave me. Stuck between two terrible choices, I'm not sure I would have chosen differently.*

*What I didn't understand was why he said there was more, that I had to wait for the last entry still. It seemed very complete: how their lie was caught, how his name was found out, his debt, and how he was taking care of it at last, needing to protect more than just his name. It explained almost every part of Nureyev's life that I wasn't there for.*

*And yet he said there was still more? How? What was there left to say? What was the final shoe to drop? I wracked my brain for an answer, reread the stupid thing over and over, trying to solve the mystery of what mystery was left. I didn't understand until it finally unlocked.*

*A time and place. His location. A place to pick him up.*

*It was just outside of the Cerberus Providence, nearly exactly where Rita and I joined the Carte Blanche. He'd given us a lot of leeway in terms of travel time, especially since we happened to still be in Sol, just over on Io. We arrived with several days to spare.*

*It was too much to hope he'd be there early, the gap likely there for himself as much as us, but it didn't stop me from looking around for a sharp smile and long legs anyway. After some poking around for incoming flights from Rita and some travel time calculations from Buddy, we figured out Nureyev likely wasn't even on Mars yet. Unwilling to risk missing him, we stayed put. He probably chose the time and place for nostalgia not for convenience.*

*It gave me time to plan. If he wanted nostalgia, I could give him nostalgia. I'd give him so much nostalgia he could drown in it...*

*One comms call and a delivery drone later, I had what I needed.*

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No one ever properly explains the exhaustion that comes from traveling, not in a way you understand until you've felt it yourself. Why does a simple change of planet sink into your bones, hook around your muscles, and rob you of energy in a way that mere time cannot? And time can certainly take it out of you just fine on its own.

Bone-weary and heartsick. I thought I understood what they meant, but it isn't until I am riding out into the middle of the Martian desert, dead on my feet, with miles and months of heartbreak between me and my detective, that I truly comprehended.

Was it the uncertainty that was consuming me? Other than that momentary flash in Aurinko Permanent Corrections and a journal that only went one way, I hadn't been in contact with Juno since the wedding. I had no way of knowing if he had the journal still, or if it had been lost through his various misadventures since our parting.

Or if he even still cared enough to meet me.

This damned pickup truck didn't help matters. The front cab was occupied by the kind dome-farmer who'd offered me a ride and their young daughter, so I was stuck in the back. It was painfully slow, smelling of Martian corn, and kicking so much fine, red dust in the air, that it spoiled the view entirely leaving me with no way to gauge the distance.

As long as it was shielded—which it was, or the produce couldn't be sold they insisted—I shouldn't complain. It was free, the dust wasn't so bad I needed anything as awkward as goggles, and they didn't mind taking a small detour to drop me off directly at my destination. Compensation for helping them with a...*troublesome* vendor. Still, hitchhiking in the back of a truck that had been full of corn several hours before wasn't ideal, but without a penny to—or against—my name, this was my best option.

"We're coming up to the spot you wanted," the dome-farmer—Buck, I believe their name was, shouted through a small window from the interior cabin. "You sure about this son? There's nothing out here."

"I'm sure." I flattened my voice, mimicking my love's own Hyperion accent. Even as dressed down as I was, my slacks and button up gave me away as a city dweller instantly, but if Buck assumed that I was more local than I was, it would make me harder to trace.

"A ship, Mada! A ship!"

I tried to see what the child was babbling about excitedly, but if the dust while we were in motion was wretched, it increased ten-fold when Buck started to break. Once stopped, I grabbed my bag and hopped out of the back. I dusted myself off uselessly out of habit, and removed a stray corn husk that stuck itself to my calf. I walked around towards the front and shook their hand.

"Thank you once more."

"No problem, thanks for helping with that asshole back there." I waved once more and they drove away, kicking up more dirt and sand in the process.

As it settled, I began to see the outline of a ship. Not the Carte Blanche—newer but not new, sleeker, with the walkway lowered. More became clearer. A flash of red hair—Buddy—and I could hear excited chattering—Rita.

They were here. I couldn't believe it.

More of the dust settled and I thought I saw something in my peripheral vision—a flash of green. I looked towards it, but the dust was still too much to see through. I didn't bother searching anywhere else though, for I knew exactly where the Ruby 7 would be. The air cleared more and I received larger flashes, more green, a license plate, the whole driver's side door.

And then... I saw him. Sitting on the car's green hood, I saw him.

He'd dressed for the occasion: a rose pattern suit jacket with a maroon eyepatch and satin pants to match. Not the original suit, which was left behind at the Oasis, but a fair facsimile.

My breath was stolen just as thoroughly as my heart.

His full lips were painted a beautiful shade to match. He smiled that flickering smile I loved so dearly. I was much farther away than I wished to be—anything short of being pressed against him was too far away—but I was near enough I could hear him.

“Hello, Peter. It's been a while.”



He came for me. He came! I told him he didn't have to, that I understood if he wanted to move on. But he was here! Here and doing a marvelous recreation of my own pose from all that time ago.

Emotion overwhelmed me and I couldn't find the words.

It was for that reason I couldn't say something as I saw a flit of green hair come up from Juno's blind side. It slid towards the driver's side—Vespa's assassin-quick speed beat my emotion-sealed throat, stopping me from warning Juno.

“HOOOOOOOONK!” the Ruby blasted.

Juno was completely unprepared. He jumped several inches into the air, and then was scrambling to catch himself. And while the satin pants did *wonders* for his backside, they offered no benefits to staying on the glossy hood of the car. He fell off, landing flat on his previously mentioned backside.





Vespa cackled, practically falling over in her mirth.

“What the hell, Vespa!” Juno yelled, trying to stand from his undignified heap on the ground.  
“I just wanted *one god damn moment* to—”



“To make an ass of yourself!” she shot back through her laughing. “I was just helping you along... though you really were doing fine on your own. You looked ridiculous, sticking your ass out like that!”

“I—What?” Juno muttered in return, flustered. His attempt to smooth out his ruffled clothes, turned self-conscious. “No, I wasn’t...”

“Yeah, Steel, you were. Practically draped across it like a pinup girl.”

“I’m afraid she’s right, Mista Steel. You were popping your booty.”

Juno groaned. “*Please, never* say that again, Rita.”

“I calls 'em like I sees 'em.”

“And I could see you putting your feet on its hood,” Jet intoned, a hint of annoyance slipping in. “After you explicitly promised your feet would not touch its paint at any point.”

“Buddy,” Juno whined. “They’re all picking on me. Can’t a dame get a moment to make an impression on his boyfriend who—” He turned to face me. “Oh god, oh baby, are you okay? What’s wrong?”

I tried to say ‘Nothing,’ because nothing was wrong; nothing at all! I couldn’t remember ever being this happy in my life! I thought my laughter at their antics spoke to that, but the hitch in my voice when I tried to speak caught me by complete surprise.

And then Juno was there, wrapping an arm around my waist and reaching up to wipe my face with the other. Only then did I realize I was crying.

“Shhh,” he whispered. “What’s wrong? What happened?”

I shook my head, trying to convey that I was fine while I struggled to find my voice. “I’m—I’m fine! I’m so happy! It’s just—” My voice cracked.

“It’s okay, I’m here. Take your time.”

“That’s just it! You’re here! Everyone is! I can’t believe—I’m finally back—” I trailed off, mouth still forming words that I couldn’t find to describe what this meant to me. What *they* meant to me.

“Home?” Rita offered. “You’re finally back home?”

I just nodded and then fully sank into Juno’s embrace, burying my face into his neck to hide my unseemly sobs. He just held me, and rubbed soothing patterns down my back.

After a moment to calm myself, I pulled away a little and looked down at my detective. He was radiant, his smile shining as a few of his own tears slid down his cheek. “Welcome home,” he said.

The others echoed him. Even the Ruby 7 chimed in with bright and happy beeps and chirps.

“And *you*, Ruby!” Juno swung half out of my arms and turned on the car, sounding utterly betrayed. “I *know* you made that horn louder!”

“Hell yeah, it did!” Vespa confirmed. “We planned this last night. You did alright there Ruby.”

And then, the Ruby moved *oddly*. I know of no other way to describe what it did, other than it appeared to be holding out a tire. It held out that tire in a way that would have broken the axle on any other car, but on it... well. It almost appeared like it was holding out a hand.

Vespa, completely unbothered by this, returned the high five.

“Juno, love...” I whispered in bewilderment. “What exactly did I just witness?”

Instead of looking as shocked and confused as I was, Juno only chuckled sheepishly. “Yeah... That’s just a whole... *thing*.”

“A whole *thing*?” I prompted, my voice climbing in pitch when Juno failed to offer more of an explanation.

“Yeah, there’s a lot you need to get caught up on.”

“I would say so...”

Juno took my bag in one hand, and my hand in the other. “Come on, I’ll tell you about it on the ship. Let’s get off this rock.” He only looked back to smile at me.

Before I followed, I tugged on his hand to bring him back to me. I leaned down and swept him up in a kiss. He tasted like home.

## End Notes

Don't worry. My other fic "All of the Ink" is still being worked on. I just want to get all of it finished before I publish any more of it (I have pretty much just 1 scene and then half of the last chapter left to write).

However, This little scene wouldn't leave me alone until I wrote it. So I wrote it.

I think this is up there as one of the fluffiest things I have ever written.

Find me on tumblr at [azdesertwillow](#).

EDIT 9/21/22: And find [prydon](#) and tell her how amazing her art is.

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