



Mrs. Halinen reached over and felt his forehead with the back of her paw. “Oh my, you’re really warm, Arden. Do you feel dizzy at all?”

Arden shrugged. “Not really. Just cold.” He shivered again. He let his mother check his throat and lymph nodes. “And I think I have a headache coming on.”

Mrs. Halinen shook her head. “Looks like you’ve got the flu, young man.” She turned to her husband. “Well, he’s not going to Finland for the time being, that’s for sure.”

Engvard pulled out his cell phone. “I’ll write the school a quick email. How long do you think he’ll be out?”

Mrs. Halinen wiped her paws on a moist towelette. “Two weeks, I’d say. Three if it’s serious.”

Arden sighed and focused on his drink. Several sips later, he gave up on it. “I think I’m just gonna go to the boat and lie down.”

Sam and the rest of the family were up even before he was. “We’ll go with you.”

Mr. Halinen paid for their drinks, and the small group made their way across town to the docks. “Let’s sail back tonight. Arden, you can sleep on the boat, sleep in the hotel, and then it’s just a matter of making the flight back. We’ll get the doctor to check up on you when we get to Barbaros, too, to make sure it’s nothing serious.” As he, Mikey and Sam prepared to set sail, Mrs. Halinen ushered Arden into the bedroom. “Get some sleep, dear. Let me know if you need anything.”

“Okay.” Arden climbed under the covers and fell considerably quicker than he ever remembered doing.

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Morning came slowly. Contrary to Arden’s expectation, he didn’t feel any better at all. In addition to the headache and fever from the night before, the young otter could now add exhaustion, a stuffy nose and sore throat to the list of things that ailed him. He opened his eyes slowly, squinting at the bright sunlight that streamed in through the porthole. The cabin was empty, so the otter decided to take a peek outside.

He found his mother busy in the kitchen. “Oh, you should *not* be out of bed, dear.” She ushered him back into the bedroom. “We’re in port, and your father has called a taxi. I’ll let you know once it gets there.”





*A white stretch Limo was parked in the driveway, and Mark stood proudly next to it.*

