**Content for the website**

*Links:*

The statistics twitter: <https://twitter.com/StatsMcdm>

Twitch: <https://www.twitch.tv/mcdm>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/helloMCDM>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/mcolville>

*Home:*

*Welcome:*

Welcome dear viewer! On this website you can find everything about the chain that’d you’d want to find. You can find the story, the characters, links to the social platforms, a streaming calendar and much more so go on and explore! This website is 100% fan built and is not an official part of MCDM productions.

*Siderbar:*

*(see links)*

*Blog posts:*

**Red sky at morning:**

I’m supposed to write about the fall of the Chain. About the rout. But all I see when I close my eyes is my friend dying. Probably have nightmares about it the rest of my life. I guess that’s the good news. Life is short in the Chain.

Red was the Commander to me long before he ever earned the rank. We were going to go to Rask, see the place he called home someday. The place he left behind. We both knew it was bullshit but…

I watched Red, I was right there next to him, when Commander Trip died at Morning. After Xorn gutted him. Red picked up the Commander’s sword and that was it. He had the standard in one hand and the dead Commander’s sword in the other and now he was the Commander and everyone knew it. Red was a natural.

Red was the one sponsored me into the Chain. He asked a lot of questions, questions I didn’t want to answer. I thought the Chain was about leaving your past behind, I said so. He sort of... he laid it out. No past meant no loose ends. “We got enough to worry about,” he said, “without assuming your debts.” I got it.

So I told him everything and when I was done talking, I was in the Chain. I’ve learned a lot since then, seen folks join up and you learn sooner or later, you gotta tell someone, at least one person, everything. Red was that person to me.

You want to give some kind of meaning to events. That’s my job, I’m the Chronicler. I write it here, and then it’s true. But I don’t know what the meaning of this was. We were set up. There was some kind of rivalry between the elf vampire and Ajax and we got caught in the middle. It was almost the end for us.

I asked Red. What’s this about? Since when are we in the fight against Ajax? He said, I mean he was right, he said the fight was gonna happen sooner or later. It wasn’t a question of “if,” only “when, and which side?”

He was Vaslorian, watched everything go down from the front row. “You don’t know what it’s like,” he said, “to see an entire way of life destroyed.” He’s right. Higara is still free. I think.

Lotta the regulars, they don’t care one way or the other. Especially the ones we picked up back in Alloy. I know how I feel, but I thought I should let Red know, not everyone in the Chain thinks like us.

He said, “Yeah but I want to sleep at night.” “Me too,” I said. That was six hours ago.

We didn’t know the mission was happening this morning. Probably smart, to keep us in the dark. Most missions are secret. But I guess I thought I thought there’d be more time. Me and Cook and Angel figured we had a week at least. We were talking about what there was to do in Blackbottom. Turns out the only thing to do was watch it burn.

Anyway, I have an entry to write.

The job was assassination. Our employer... I guess I saw one of them this morning. Elf named Sariel. I didn’t know anything about her but she looked tough. It looked like she might have been able to stop Ajax, but he surprised her with that hand.

Sorry, getting ahead of myself.

The officers were supposed to assassinate Ajax’s wizard. Mortum. Chief Wizard Asshole for the Lord High Asshole. Maybe it could have worked. She gave the Commander five red arrows. “One should do it.” he said. It might have worked.

But the whole thing was a setup. We know that now. I think Nails was the first one to say it. Mortum wasn’t even at the church. It was Mandrake, Ajax’s chief knight. They were waiting for us.

We weren’t the target though. Ajax was trying to flush out Sariel and it worked. When our plan went south, she showed up to finish it. I don’t know if she ever had a chance, maybe she didn’t either. Probably figured it was never gonna get any better than this. Might as well take the shot.

Of course, Ajax didn’t get where he is by stumbling around in the dark. He was ready for her. She had a sword, or two swords? Accounts differ. But they were artifact swords. She made her play and Ajax broke the sword. Someone said he had the Hand of Kukai. Had to look that one up. The Chronicle is a useful book.

Meanwhile Ajax’s pet demon, a thing called Relg, showed up and just

He ate the Commander. I mean we could see it coming. Tough watching the officer corps all trying to do something, desperate, even when they knew it was futile but, I guess, the good news is only Red among all the officers died. And we saved four of the red arrows. Should come in handy. If they work at all.

Relg seemed to surprise Judge. Ajax summoning demons. Need to talk to Judge, see what he knows about this. He’s our expert after all.

I think once Relg grabbed the Commander, we all knew that was it. But we were all waiting to see what Sweet would do. Do we stay and fight and die, for the Commander, even with no hope? Not a bad way to go, I don’t think most would have minded. And Sweet has a reputation for going back to get our dead and wounded. I thought maybe maybe he’d refuse to retreat.

But he’s an officer through and through. I think he called the tune before Red was dead. I knew it was a rout and my job was to try and wrangle as many regulars as possible. Stop the entire Chain from disintegrating.

Then it was just “get to the docks.” I got to watch Commander Sweet just punch a city gate and the thing exploded. Then the streets choked off, demons everywhere, and Copper waved the standard and jumped into a sewer. When it comes to getting out of tight spaces, trust your goblin.

In the end, I think we got about 60 to the docks. Stole a ship. Well, I think we stole it, things aren’t clear yet. Maybe we bought it, I dunno. Boots did a lot of fast talking and Judge is hard to say no to.

Guess we’re going to Capital. Maybe some others survived. We’ll see. Lot of ocean between us and there. And Ajax is pissed.

Reading this back... I’ve been in the Chain too long. I was raised a noble. I don’t think I could even do the calligraphy now if I had to. Reading what I wrote, I sound like any other soldier now.

I guess this is home.

**The night before:**

*In those days, the Chain was in service to Lady Sariel.*

*They met in a graveyard.*

“I have given you arrows of *liannar*,” the woman said. “The bloodmetal. Made by father. Forged in the same fire and of the same steel as the Teeth of the Dragon. Use them.”

“You’ll have to get close,” the nobleman next to her said. “The range on those things is short.”

The Commander shook his head, openly skeptical. “We need…you said you’d give us the tools we need and we get this? Aren’t you some kind of…? Mortum’s got so many wards, his wards have wards.”

“Look to your chronicle,” the ethereal woman said. “The bloodmetal pierces all such defenses.”

“Commander?” the Lieutenant asked.

“Yeah?”

“Mandrake’s sword is made of bloodmetal.”

“Is that right? Ok, well…. If one sword could kill Vitae, maybe five arrows will do the trick.”

“Baz-**kor**. Korz rogesh. Bezdin **tok**,” the half-orc baron barked.

“What did your half-orc say?”

The noble shifted in his armor. “He said five arrows is a waste of four arrows.

“**Because you’ll only get one shot.”**

**The contract:**

**IN ORDER** to affect the **DEATH** of the Archwizard **MORTUM**, I, Kenway Dalrath bearer of the **SHIELD OF AENDRIM** and rightful Duke of Aendrim, in alliance with **SARIEL**, Princess of the Orchid Court, Oracle, hereby swear to pay the **OFFICERS OF THE CHAIN OF ACHERON** 100,000 golden crowns upon completion of this task.

**I**, **DUKE KENWAY**, **AGREE** to provide the **CHAIN** any support necessary to complete their contract insofar as the assassination of the wizard **MORTUM** may require special tools unavailable to the **CHAIN**.

**MORTUM’S BODY** must be deceased, delivered, and identified by myself or a duly appointed representative.

**IN THE EVENT OF MY DEATH**, verification and payment will be handled by Lady Sariel, Nekodemus Baron of Rend, or my lieutenant, Lady Avelina Knight of the Coals.

**THIS CONTRACT** does not forbid the **CHAIN** from assuming other duties, undertaking other contracts, or obligate them to field their soldiers in battle except insofar as doing so may be a necessary component of affecting the death of the Archmage **MORTUM**.

**SHOULD THE UNDERSIGNED PERISH** due to any cause, including treachery, combat, natural causes, chance, luck, suicide or the direct or indirect intervention of a **GOD**, **SAINT** or agent of the timescape, the next ranking officers of the **CHAIN** assume the responsibilities of the undersigned, and agree to complete the terms of the contract, even should it cost their lives.

**BY THE ORDER OF**

*Kenway Dalrath*

**WITNESSED BY**

*Sariel, Princess of the Orchid Court, Oracle*

**SIGNED and SEALED**

***THE CHAIN***

*of Acheron*

**Soldier take warning:**

There’s something wrong with Nails. Probably something wrong with all of us. For one thing, we seem to be in the wrong reality.

Getting ahead of myself again. One thing at a time.

I am now the Lieutenant of the Chain of Acheron. What is going on? 24 hours ago I was a junior officer. I was happy as a junior officer. Hell, I was happy as a damned ranker. Glad to let someone else get paid to do the heavy thinking. But Red didn’t leave us much choice. His last gift to me. Thanks, Red. Piece of shit.

Not sure why Sweet choose me, I barely know the guy. Why not Judge or Nails? Sweet and Nails go back a ways. I guess it’s because of this. The Chronicle. The life of the Chain. I feel like... I dunno, it was easier to write about this stuff when I was outside it. Just watching the high-ups make decisions and putting in my two bits.

Now I am one of the high-ups. Shit, I outrank Judge. On paper, I guess. I give that guy an order all I’ll see is a smile with pointy teeth in it.

I suppose I could give someone else the Chronicle. Conk maybe. Nah. She’ll put everything in here but the truth. Be a more interesting read though. Your loss, I guess.

So for the time being, you’re stuck with me. King, Lieutenant and Chronicler of the Chain of Acheron, last of the Helltroopers. That means... hang on, that means I’m second in command. Sweet... you better not die.

Where was I?

Getting onto the Rosso Cielo turned out to be a little harder than just waving the treasury under the Captain’s nose and making promises. There was a company of Warbreed on the ship. I sorta had a feeling something was going on. The Captain of this boat, her first mate, both had this air about them. Not like “hey there’s a company of Ajax’s soldiers onboard” I just had this feeling. Like… “you don’t know what you’re getting into, stepping on this ship.”

Yeah. Yeah I was right about that.

Anyway, we got to see some fireworks. Set off some of our own. They had this big ogre did a lot of swinging, never hit anything. Seasick probably. otherwise we made short work of them. Copper sat Bigcat down on the deck and she just flayed Warbreed with her tentacles. I’m used to seeing her from a distance. Up close she is an unstoppable maelstrom of claws and teeth and death. So, a normal cat basically.

Copper spent the battle picking off their rankers, Sweet went toe to toe with their commander. Got in a couple good licks before they swarmed him. I’m not sure but I sorta wonder if Sweet was expecting Red to be behind him. Probably.

Judge pissed off a lot of orcs, and gabbled at the Ogre in his heathen lingo. For a moment, the Ogre worked for us. Nice trick. But before it could do anything, most of the orcs were dead.

I called on my ancestors and ruined a few orcs’ day. Sort of overkill. The Warbreed are some of Ajax’s best troops. Against anyone else, they’d probably come out on top. But the Chain had had a bad day and were eager to take it out on someone.

It was good, fighting the Warbreed. We needed a straight up fight after the Cathedral. But it left a lot of questions.

We kicked around the boat, found our quarters, and then it was time for dinner in the Captain’s Mess.

I haven’t known a lot of Riojans. They don’t mind asking questions and they had a lot. None of us felt like talking, but they didn’t seem to mind.

First mate gave me the lowdown on Capital. They put on a little show for us, dessert with the symbol on it. That was nice. Think if they’d started with that we all probably would have been in a better mood.

After, we talked. Captain let us have the room, and about halfway through I forgot I was an outsider. Now I was just another officer, trying to figure out what the hell was going on.

We had a lot of questions about what happened at the cathedral, and no answers.

“Ajax knew we were coming,” Judge said. No one responded. “Mortum was there. We saw him at the end. But that wasn’t him at the Cathedral. Why was Ajax there?”

No one said anything. So I spoke up. “Sariel,” I said. Everyone looked at me. Gulp.

“He knew there was some kind of conspiracy against him. The whole thing was a... a plot, a ruse, to lure her out. This wasn’t about us. It was about her.”

Everyone nodded. No one called me an idiot. Is this being an senior officer? You just make a guess and everyone shrugs because they can’t think of a good reason to disagree and now that’s how it is?

“Now we have a mark against us,” Judge said. He pulled out the orc commander’s log.

“Not necessarily,” I said. “We’re just the guys caught in the middle. He didn’t seem interested in us.”

Judge was going to object, but Nails fired his namesake and took a drag. Reminded everyone of something important. “This was a secret mission,” he said. “It was supposed to be a secret mission, who knew about it? The Commander. The four of us.” He meant everyone but me.

We waited. Then he got to the point.

“Those orcs up top, they were waiting for us. They knew we were coming. They knew *everything*.”

“Maybe they just got word from the docks,” I said. Shrugged. “Doesn’t mean anything.”

“Who you trying to convince?” Nails said. He was right. I was presenting options I didn’t believe in.

“Excuse me,” Judge said quietly. He was holding the orc commander’s log, reading it. Everyone stopped talking “Who was... the Elf. Who was she with?” He put the book on the table, open to two pages covered in orc scrawl and looked at Sweet.

“Ah, half-orc. Baron of Bedegar. And a man. Duke of Aendrim.” Judge blinked. He was thinking. Then Sweet continued. “Used to be the Baron of Dalrath but he got a promotion.”

Judge spun the book around and pushed it across the table at Sweet. Stabbed a black, curved nail at the page. Sweet picked it up.

“Holy shit,” he said. He lowered the book and looked at us. “Those Orcs were in Dalrath a month ago. Came straight to Blackbottom.”

“Wait, the Warbreed were IN Dalrath?” Nails asked, and held out his hand for the book. Sweet gave it to him.

“Hey you gonna eat that?” Copper asked, eyeing Judge’s uneaten pudding. Judge was watching Nails. “No? Looks like no,” he reached his fork out and slid the uneaten dessert over and started devouring it. No other way to describe how that guy eats.

Nails looked up from the book. “They’ve got a traitor in their organization. Someone in Dalrath looks like.”

“Why would the Duke hire us AND be conspiring WITH Ajax?” I asked. It didn’t make any sense. I said so. “What the hell’s going on?”

Judge raised an eyebrow. “Good question,” he said.

With questions piling up and answers slipping away, we called it a night.

Next morning and the boat was acting like she wanted to jump out of the water. But one night onboard and we were getting used to it. Still, it couldn’t get much more rough than this.

Wow when I am wrong….

The Bale, the maelstrom that gives the sea her name, stretched out to the west from horizon to horizon like the edge of a flat world. We were already uncomfortably close. I said so.

“We had no charts!” Godesto explained. “You seemed in a hurry. But we have made this journey before. We shall do it…,” he paused and looked up to the quarterdeck where the Captain was, even though she was out of sight. “By the seat of our pants!” Sounded like he was quoting someone.

Whatever the crew were planning, sail around the edge until we got to Rioja? We never found out. No plan survives contact with the enemy.

“Dragonflies astern!” Someone from the poop deck called out.

“Shit,” Godesto spat. I’d never served in Khemhara, so I had no idea what that meant, and climbed up to the quarterdeck to get a look. The rest of the officer corps had a similar idea.

Three ships were bearing down on us. They were faster than us, everyone could see that. They looked like upside down beetles, their hulls were curved and polished. And hovered a few feet above the water.

We couldn’t see whoever manned those ships. But we knew who they worked for. They unfurled flags to let us know. Flags bearing Ajax’s livery.

“I think perhaps things are not going well for the Pharaoh,” Godesto said. I guessed these must be the Pharaoh's ships. Normally.

“They’re gonna catch up to us,” Sweet smiled sweetly and cracked his knuckles. He was ready for a boarding action. Seeing Ajax’s flag put him in a mood.

The captain called out for the seer, whoever that was. I was imagining a woman, probably a tall Elf maiden or something. Once again, when I’m wrong…

His name was Hrathi. He was bent and gnarled, blind and deaf. And dumb we learned. Stripped to the waist, he showed off a grid of tattoos on his back. Glyphs I didn’t recognize. As he walked past, the crew touched the glyphs. Ah, this is how they speak to him. He can feel their hands touching the symbols.

He was smiling and nodding at friends and crewmates he couldn’t see, but knew were there. He touched a piece of driftwood that had symbols notched into it. The crew watched his hands move. This was how he responded.

Godesto told us Hrathi’s story but I was distracted. Between the Dragonflies and the Bale I felt we were riding the edge of a wave that would crush us at any second. One misstep in either direction, and that would be the end of the ship, the crew, and the Chain.

Hrathi climbed up to the foc'sle and disappeared out of sight behind sails and rigging. Was he an oracle? What good would that do? The crew were preparing for some maneuver.

I looked behind, the Dragonflies were almost close enough to make out their crew.

Lady Massingham gripped the wheel, her eyes burned with concentration as she threaded a needle between the Bale and the Dragonflies. “They can fly!” She shouted. “They’ll fire arrows, harpoons. They’ll shred the sails and pull the masts down before they board. Even if you win, we’ll all be left adrift!”

Then the Captain pulled on the wheel, and the ship began to turn. Toward the maelstrom. That threw the Commander off.

“What are you doing?!” Sweet asked.

“You want to escape the Dragonflies?” Lady Massingham shouted over the growing sound of the Bale. “There is only one way.”

The hair on my neck stood up. At some point in the last few moments, the crew had become one single entity, all working like demons toward a purpose I did not know.

The ship finished turning. The maelstrom hove into view, directly in front of us. Sails were furled, rigging was stowed. Men started to lash each other to the masts, to the railings. I started to get a bad feeling.

The Captain of the Rosso Cielo pointed into the Bale. “In!” she called out.

Godesto, grinning like a madman, looked from the quarterdeck out to the crew. “Through!” he called.

The entire crew shouted as one. “BEYOND!”

And the seer began to chant.

“I’ve decided I don’t like this boat!” I shouted to Nails.

“You better tie yourself to something,” he said. “These people seem to know what they’re doing.”

A Riojan swabbie held out a line of thick rope. I nodded and, along with the rest of the Chain, I was tied to the boat like everyone else. The seer’s chanting began to ring through my bones. It was unnatural. No, it was supernatural.

I realized we were in the middle of some kind of spell. We were in for one hell of a ride.

The ship plunged into the maelstrom. I could hear people, mostly the rankers in the Chain below decks, screaming. The maelstrom was the whole world, we rode down its edge and it felt like the entire ship was going to tumble free, just fall into the black pit at the center of the thing. What was down there? How big was it? Did anything ever survive to find out?

My ears rang, my skin was lashed by biting cold seawater that felt like razors slicing into my face, my hands. Were the Dragonflies still behind us? Had they followed? Did they assume, whatever we did, they could do? I couldn’t see. I still don’t know.

From below, from the depths of the maelstrom, a massive wave surged up toward us. It looked like it was a mile high, but it was probably no more than 60 feet? 100? Certainly large enough to smash the ship into splinters and us with it.

The chanting was now loud enough to drown out the sound of the Bale. I looked into the wave before us and saw... I saw stars. A million brilliant stars behind the wave. It sounded like a thousand voices were droning in my head. Shaking my skull.

Lightning, the seer’s? Stabbed into the wave. A thousand bolts of lightning blinded me just as the wave tipped over to crush us.

Then... nothing.

Judge is calling me. To be continued.

**Sailors on the sea of stars:**

Something loomed out of the mist. I asked Godesto what it was. He shrugged. “The flotsam and jetsam of the timescape,” he said. Riojans have a way with words.

Somewhere out in the mist some lost souls are watching the silhouette of a galleon — sails furled, three masts sticking up, unadorned, like the bones of a dead sea creature — sail by in the mist and they’re asking “what is that?” And someone’s shrugging and saying “the flotsam and jetsam of the timescape.”

This is the Sea of Stars. Presumably the Captain and Seer know how to get out of here. We’ve been here before, but it was always the Lady of Brass’s job to get us between worlds. There’s some relation to mundane time and space here, but I have no idea what it is.

It’s an eerie, unsettling experience. Fog everywhere. A flat light above us. The ocean looks to be about 4 feet deep. And stars under the water. Sound gets whisked away. It feels like being on a ship in a bottle, packed with cotton.

Business as usual for the Chain. We’ve been here before. Some of the rank and file freaked out, but they looked to the officers and seeing as how we were mostly bored, sleeping, or eating, they relaxed. It’s easy to relax here. There’s a sound, like a choir, out in the mist that will lull you to sleep.

“Giant’s out in the fog,” Copper said.

“Huh?” I asked. Articulate.

The goblin hopped off the big cat and grabbed some raw fish. Took a bite and gave the rest to the cat. This is normal to me now.

“Big fuck-off giant walking around in the fog out there,” he said, grabbing another fish from a barrel.

I didn’t know what to say about this. “We in any danger?”

Copper wolfed down a fish head with one gulp. “‘Course we fucking are,” he said, licking his fingers. “Chain of Acheron. We’re not in danger, we’re not in business.”

Copper is, of course, a prophet.

Less than an hour later… or maybe an hour or maybe two, time gets away from you here, the Captain called out, “Somnium Tenebris! Aft” And every Riojan in ear shot soiled their pants. That was something to see. These guys don’t seem afraid of anything; not us, not Ajax, not giants in the mist, but three words from the Captain and they were all looking for passage off this boat.

We assembled on the quarterdeck and any questions we had were quickly replaced by reality. Something was coming after us. Something big. At first, I thought it was a sea creature.

“It’s a Mind Flayer dreadnaught,” Judge said. The thing was maybe twice as big as the Rosso Cielo and closing.

“It’s fast,” I said. It would catch up in only a few moments. It was... it looked alive. Like someone built a ship on a giant space squid. And the squid was hungry. I was reminded of Copper eating fish heads.

“Can we outrun it?” Sweet asked Lady Massingham.

“Not unless you’re a lot smarter than you look,” she said. She was making some internal calculation, and coming up short.

“Look!” Copper said. His eyes are the keenest in the Chain.

The ship unfurled sails designed to catch a psychic wind. Black, tattered. Someone had painted a crude device on them. One we recognized.

“Ajax,” Sweet guessed, before the sails were even finished unfurling.

“This is impossible,” The Captain spat as her hands gripped the wheel. “How did they know where we are? How did they find us??”

She turned and grabbed Sweet by the shirt and shouted. “Who ARE you people?!”

I’ve seen a lot of remarkable things in the Astral Sea, but watching Captain Massingham grab Sweet and shout in his face was maybe the most astonishing. This is someone I’ve personally watched punch his hand clear through a half-orc’s head... and he wasn’t even particularly angry in that moment, he was just working.

Sweet calmly pried the Captain’s hand off his shirt and wisely let the lady live. Sweet might make a good Commander.

“You want to live through this,” Sweet said. “Tell us what that thing can do.”

“They’ll board us.”

Judge put a hand on the pommel of his big two-hander. “Let’s just…,” he waved vaguely with his other hand, thick black fingernails on display. “What happens after that?”

“If we survive the boarding party... the ship’s tentacles will rip the ship apart.”

I figured there was maybe something I could do about that, and called on Takeshima. Lightning rained down into the reaching, grasping tentacles but they proved thicker than my lightning. Well, we are far from home.

“It won’t work,” the Captain said. She was despairing. “I watched those tentacles rip our sister ship apart. They had a wizard, too.”

“Yeah,” Sweet cracked his knuckles. “But they didn’t have us.” This was by way of being an order.

We got ready for work. Weapons drawn, wards cast. Nails fired his namesake.

“You ok?” I asked.

Nails took a drag. “There a reason you’re asking?”

“Mostly because your eyes are silver.”

Nails exhaled a long billow of smoke. “Says who?” he asked. Fair enough.

The boarding action was typical Duergar tactics. We heard them, knew they were there. They boarded the ship invisibly then dropped their psychic blinding field and shifted into their larger form to attack. Bigcat took some licks, but she’s probably about as tough as this entire boat. She’s built to take licks.

It was pretty clear whatever these guys were used to, it wasn’t us. The crew joined in and between their piracy and our brand of underhanded villainy, the boarding action turned into a tactical retrograde.

It took a moment after the dark dwarves retreated for us to get our bearings. Everyone was waiting for the command, including Sweet. Then he remembered his new pay grade.

“BOARD THE SHIP!” he hollered. In classic helltrooper style, we prepared to assault the ambush.

I don’t know what’s on that ship. I don’t know what we’ll find or what they expected. But they’re about to find out what happens when you cross swords with the Chain of Acheron.

**A dark dream:**

“What did you say to Nails?” Judge asked.

Sweet evaded. “I did what I had to,” he said. “It worked.”

I watched Nails, normal Nails, trying to talk to the Navigator. Frustrated. Unsure what was happening, but made aware by Sweet that we needed him to do... something. He didn’t know what. I didn’t know what. It was a chance for the rest of us to have an impromptu staff meeting.

“For now,” Judge said.

“Now’s enough!” Sweet snarled.

“You don’t know that,” Judge said. “And you’d be a fool to believe it.”

Sweet didn’t reply. Judge wasn’t wrong. He took a step toward Sweet, lowered his voice.

“He’s your friend,” Judge said. “You’re trying to protect him. I’m trying to protect the Chain. I need to know what you did in case the Other Nails comes back.”

“If that happens, I’ll take care of it,” Sweet said.

“And what if you can’t? What if the next person he turns into a red slick is *you*?”

Judge was out of line, I thought. I remembered who the Lieutenant was. “Judge,” I said. “Stand down.”

He wheeled on me. “You’re not senior officer here, *Chronicler*.” He turned back to Sweet. “What about it, Commander?”

I wanted to do something, voice some witty retort, but he was right. Sweet’s in charge.

“You saw what happened to Buts,” Judge said. “What happens when he thinks *we’re* ‘insubordinate?’” Sweet said nothing, just bunched his fists.

“Sweet,” Judge said. “He’s my friend too.” That seemed to do the trick. “What did you say to him?” Sweet shook his head, like he disapproved of what he was saying. “I named his True Name,” he said. Judge nodded to himself. He’d suspected. I’d never considered it. Based on Copper’s wide-eyed reponse, neither had he. BigCat seemed indifferent.

“Figured Nails killed everyone left who knew his Name,” Copper said.

“I’ve known it for years,” Sweet said.

Judge took a deep breath. “Well now you can tell me.”

“No,” Sweet said, no hesitation. Uh oh. Sweet was already dug in on this one. So was Judge.

“Commander, you *have* to. His Name may be the only thing between us and obliteration, it can’t just live in your head.”

“Well it’s going to have to,” Sweet said. “I solved the problem, he’s fine. Move on.”

Judge wasn’t in the mood to listen. “You still haven’t answered my question; what if Other Nails comes back?”

Sweet scowled but said nothing. Just watched Nails trying to talk to the Navigator on the other side of the room.

“I’ll kill him,” a voice from behind me said. I turned.

Copper.

Everyone turned to the goblin atop BigCat. He had his bow, arrow nocked, resting on his leg.

“How?” I asked. “No spells work on him, no weapons hurt….”

Copper fingered the arrow in his bow. My jaw dropped.

“The red arrows,” Sweet muttered. And Judge had the fourth.

“Things get out of hand,” Copper said with a shrug, “I’ll shoot him. No problem.” I couldn’t tell if he meant, then there would be no more problem, or it would not be a problem for him to shoot another officer.

“You’re talking about killing a senior officer,” Sweet said, but his eyes were unfocused, he was looking at nothing. He was trying to figure out what this meant.

It was time for me to speak up. “I can bring him back,” I said.

“What?” Sweet demanded, irritated. We were all irritating the Commander today. I have never known that to end well.

“As long as he hasn’t been dead too long, I can bring him back,” I said. Sweet stared at me. A plan was organizing itself. Nails was his friend, but Sweet had been Lieutenant for three years. He was a sucker for a plan.

“Other Nails comes back,” Judge said, “we say his name. He’s mortal again. Copper shoots him with a red arrow, kills him. Releases... whatever’s inside him. Then King brings him back. Brings back the man we knew.”

“*If* Other Nails comes back.”

“Come on, boss, you’ve seen our luck these past two days,” Copper said. “What do you think happens next?”

“I can’t kill my friend,” Sweet said.

“Tell me his Name,” Judge said. He was fingering the fletchings of the red arrow stuck into his belt. “I’ll do the rest.”

“I swore…,” Sweet said, looking at Nails again. This was not what he signed up for when he took command.

“You made a promise to Nails. You swore an oath to the Chain. Which is more important to you?”

Suddenly a voice echoed in our heads. “FORWARD.” The boat lurched. We were underway. “THAT’S BETTER.”

Nails turned around. But it had been his voice in our heads. We knew what we were going to see.

His eyes were solid silver again. And it wasn’t just his eyes, his whole demeanor changed. His body language changed, he didn’t move like a man who’d been everywhere and seen it all. He moved  like... like this was his ship. Like he didn’t need eyes to see anymore. Like he knew everything that was happening everywhere. Did he know what we were thinking? No. No probably not. If he did, he’d stop us.

“SHALL WE?” Other Nails said, walking past us to the moving room. “THERE ARE THREE MORE LEVELS ABOVE THIS ONE. YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO FIND THE PILOT. THIS WAY.”

He walked into the moving room. Its door opened for him automatically.

We followed. Sweet was the last. As Judge walked past him, he said, under his voice, “You’ve got a decision to make, Commander.”

**The changeling:**

As you know, we’ve taken a lot of losses in the recent days. We were almost 400 when we arrived in Blackbottom. Now we're less than 30. Commander Red is dead, his successor Commander Sweet is dead, Sr. Officer Nails is dead. They live forever in the Chronicle.

Three days ago I was a junior officer. Some of you knew me. Now that I’m Commander everyone’s asking who I am. Where was I born? What did I do before? Here’s the only answer you need: I was born here. In the Chain. Before this, I was the Chronicler.

The Chronicle tells of many times when the Chain was even smaller than it is now. But we survived. While we remain, the Chain is unbroken. While the Chronicle endures, the Chain is unbroken.

We’ve made an enemy of Ajax. It seems he’s made our deaths personal. But for us, death is business.

Our outstanding contract is to kill one of Ajax’s closest advisors. He has sent his agents across worlds to find us and hunt us. He means to kill us. I intend to fulfill the contract. The one place we know Ajax does not want to be is where we are headed: Capital. We will find allies there. I think it is likely many of our comrades from Blackbottom survived. They will know to find their way to Capital.

The Somnium Tenebris is ours. It will be our base of operations until further notice. Those of you served on a ship before, report to Boots, he is in charge of forming the crew that will maintain the ship. Our new friend, Slim, is piloting it.

A new Lieutenant will be appointed once we have established in Capital. For now, report to your sergeants, to the junior officers, Sr. officer Judge, or myself.

In Capital, we will need to rebuild our ranks. Capital is a city of intrigue and marvels. I'm sure you'll find plenty of opportunity to keep your “talents” sharp.

You may think “Ajax can’t be beaten”. Three days ago, I might have agreed with you. But there is only one explanation for why he’s chased us across the timescape. **He fears us.** He fears us because he thinks we can win. And now, so do I.

*Characters:*

**King:**

Name: King

Player: Lars

Class: Cleric of the zeal domain

Race: Human

Background: Noble

King is the commander of the Chain. He hasn’t been commander for long and before this he used to be the lieutenant for the former commander, but as they fell he became the commander.

King being the commander of the Chain means that he has no retainers specifically for himself.

**Boots:**

Name: Boots

Player: Tom

Class: Duellist Rogue

Race: Human

Background: unknown

Boots Is one of the senior officers of the Chain. He has three retainers: Ox a dragonborn knight-sorcerer, Roach a half elf Exorcist and Worm a troubadour warrior.

**Slim**

Name: D’jeck the Impious or “Slim”

Player: Phil

Class: Fighter

Race: Githyanki

Background: Soldier

Until recently Slim was a captive slave of the illithd mindflayers on the somnium tenebris. Then the Chain came along and they took over the ship and freed Slim. Slim, having nowhere to go, decided to join their ranks and soon became a senior officer.

Slim has one retainer and that is Angel, a Drow executioner.

**Judge:**

Name: Judge

Player: Anna

Class: Illrigger

Race: Tiefling

Background: Noble

Judge is a tiefling illrigger, which is to say a former lord of the underworld. She is basically a paladin with Asmodeus as god. This is a rather rare occurance.

Judge has 5 retainers: Two Shoes who is an Justicar of unspecified race, Flea a skinwalker, Buts a half elf conjurer, Cook a halfling Cutpruse and Toad an elvish beastloard.

**Copper and bigcat:**

Name: Copper

Player: Tom

Class: Beast Master

Race: Goblin

Background: Folk Hero

Copper himself is not too imposing but on the back of bigcat, his enormous cat-like displacer beast, he is rather intimidating. Because of the fact that he has bigcat, Copper has no retainers.

*Calendar:*

Hello there and welcome to the calender. Here you can find the streaming schedule and any upcoming live events. Enjoy!

*Contact:*

Want to talk to us about a problem, question or anything else? Feel free to fill in the form underneath and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Thanks!