

world: Shara

- world is in a dreary state.
- major food shortages
- govt is kinda scary
- controlled by dragons: they have a rigidly strict discipline that they always claim is for the greater good
- the dragons have been incrementally decreasing all freedoms. cancelled all holidays. discouraged ppl from attending school and then just made it impossible. they cancelled hospitals. they cancelled science. everyone must be a farmer or a sailor or something that is working directly towards making food.
- in the near future they are maybe planning on killing old people and cancelling sailing
- oh also there are moving islands in the story! this makes sailing a very difficult thing. the islands move because of turtles
- Dragons maintain power in part via a monopoly on the understanding and use of command-phrases
- Dragons are very invested in ensuring that the secrets of command-phrases do not leave their small circle: with good reason!

magic: command-phrases (“commands”)

- sight off | sight on — blind someone. let them see in the dark potentially?
- smell off | smell on — this is the secret one; smell off kills dragon. smell on makes you take in a lot of air
- taste off | taste on — makes stuff taste good or lose your sense of taste.
- touch off | touch on — don’t feel pain for a bit. incredibly sensitive to stuff
- sound off | sound on — hear nothing. hear really quiet things?

there is generally a 5 min cool down for these things, after which affects of original command end and new command can be given

The commands require magical bracelets But also it requires natural talent to be able to use the power, as well as practice to use it in more refined ways.

command phrases can be used for blanket attacks versus people or for more targeted and more specific stuff. (details tbd). power of blanket attack is also correlated with natural talent and practice.

more magic.

Also there are a couple of teleporters. maybe. not really sure how this one works.

characters

Dragons

Trying to do the altruistic right thing in misguided ways. also slightly favors dragons a lot over other people.

Eventually, after being shook by Sol knowing the secret to destroying them and choosing to give it up they are touched, and step down from the position as oppressors. a multi-species democracy is established and they all work together to improve the world.

Anyone who will not accept their terms is punished harshly.

Foxes

trying to lead Sol on a quest to destroy the dragons, although she only catches onto this over time. originally its painted as a quest to solve the food problem, but its kind of revealed over time that they just want to destroy the dragons. eventually Sol will leave some of the not nice foxes and maybe keep going with a nice one named Hap.

Sol [human]

- dreams of exploring the ocean, charting the world
- values freedom a lot.
- also values being a good person
- sometimes her resolve in these things is not so strong though
- she also really likes her dad, who is kinda old.

Nezal [foxoid]

- not so nice. he and some people close to him really hate the dragons a lot.

Hap [foxoid]

- nice fox; kind of oblivious / awkward; but very kind

Alice [human]

- tries to be kind of silly; kind of as a defence mechanism vs dealing with serious situations
- she is in charge of. being a map expert.

haosen [dragon]

- has been severely wronged by the dragons. is kind of angry which is why he's willing to help out. They help him escape from prison early on.

Lisa

she is the captain of the ship initially. dies in chapter 1 but Sol really looked up to her.

plot ideas

- On boat with Foxes. Attacked by Dragons. They kind of defeat the Dragons, but lose a lot of Foxes along the way and some Dragons get away to report back.
- it is revealed by the dragons that the dragons plan to soon get rid of sailing and kill the old ppl so other ppl will have enough food
- it is also discovered that Sol is passable at commands. (after the attack)
- she gets the bracelets from a fallen fox
- and she is kinda roped into the foxes plot thing because it seems like a really good thing to do to her
- Sol is elevated to be first in command.
- so basically there is this quest thing, they have to go to 5 different locations to retrieve the 5 bracelets
- along the way there are various obstacles in the sea and on the lands that they must traverse, testing everyone's resolve.
- Sol thinks of a lot of ways out, but we keep the stakes high for her
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quest outline

chapter 1, attempt 3

Sol was very tired. This wasn't particularly relevant as it was mid-day: another 10 hours until she could conceivably rest. But she made a point of acknowledging her fatigue anyways. Understanding yourself is something very important. If she didn't know that she was tired she might place too much trust in her instincts and reflexes. This could be very dangerous for a sailor: what if she was clumsy, lost her footing and fell to her death? That wouldn't do! Although at least then she wouldn't have such a bad headache.

Sol surveyed her surroundings. The sea was a vast fairly calm blue extending into the distance. The calm surface hid what she knew to be underneath: sharks! This part of the waters had lots of sharks that would eat her if she fell in the water. Or at least had in the past. There was so little to eat these days that some large predators like sharks had a hard time surviving. Didn't everyone.

She looked down at the deck where her fox passengers were gathered in discussion. These passengers were particularly insistent that they arrive swiftly at their destination, but overall seemed like quite nice people.

She went down to check with her island-ogropher how much longer until they would reach the passenger's destination island. She headed down the deck towards the captain's room. Before she could get there however, one of the passengers approached her. "Sol! I'm glad I ran into you. You should get more sleep." Sol felt a spike of shame: how did he remember her name? and why couldn't she remember his? also how did he know she had been having trouble sleeping? Mustering a what she judged to be a moderately convincing cheerful countenance she responded with some appropriate pleasantries, without revealing that she had forgotten the passenger's name.

"Sol, Have you observed any boats nearby?" the passenger asked, cutting off her pleasantries, not rude rather as if oblivious due to anxiousness.

"I don't see what you're so worried about," Sol said, "the dragons keep very tight control over these waters. One could not last long as a pirate out here. All ships we pass will be peaceful trading vessels, closely regulated by the dragons more likely than not". Many people got quite anxious on the waters, but usually people worried about storms or falling off the boat, not pirates. Although she did not appreciate the dragons encroaching on the ocean, and personally was still a private ship owner rather than running a ship owned by the dragons, she did have to admit that the waters were safer for the dragons intervention.

"Yes, yes, of course" the man replied. "All the same, please let me know immediately if you do see a ship."

Sol placated the fox with promises that she would of course inform him of any ships they saw, and then continued on to the captain's room to confer with Alice, their map expert, trying to shake off the slight sense of unease that the man's worry had left her with. There really was no need to be worried, she had sailed for many years! Yes, sailing was dangerous. She knew many people who had lost careless passengers to the waters. Getting caught in a storm was far worse, she had heard tales of unfortunate ships caught in storms. But danger from other ships? Not likely now a days. Sol supposed the foxes were just anxious and worried about irrational things.

"Good morning Sol"! Alice exclaimed without looking up as she walked in. "How are you?" "Fine" she said forcibly pushing down the pain of her headache. "Although it's hardly morning! Can I take a look at the maps?" "Ah! your entrance brings sunshine to the room, I must have mistaken that for it being

morning.” Alice glibly retorted. “The maps are on the table”.

Sol snorted and sat down at the desk, trying to study the maps. Island-ography was a complex art: they had a position map synced at their last island stop-point and had estimates of island trajectories. But of course, these were only local estimates and quickly diverged from reality. They were headed towards a larger island where they were supposed to restock on food before continuing their journey. It shouldn’t be too hard to run into, but she tried to check the calculations herself. She couldn’t do it, her mind scattered into different threads as she tried to concentrate on the problem. She once again was reminded how painful her headache was. Whenever she got like this even the most simple tasks seemed impossible. Her whole body tingled as if some kind of charged blood ran through her viens making her itch to move. But the thought of moving also paralyzed her. With effort she dragged herself out of the state of motionlessness. Moving around, finding distractions always helped. If she went fast enough sometimes she could forget the fatigue.

“Have the crew seen anything strange” she asked Alice. “The passengers are being weird about it again.” “Nothing strange. Weather patterns all look normal, haven’t passed many ships, but that’s not too uncommon these days. The dragons don’t exactly encourage sailors these days. say it’s taking people away from the farms.” The thought angered Sol. As if the sailors would be of more use in the farms. Sailors served an essential function for Shara. And yet, the same had been said of education, which now was nearly eliminated by the dragons in the name of survival. Sol wondered what kind of a world the dragon’s thought they were creating. What point was food if you couldn’t live? explore? She herself would never be a farmer, regardless of however the dragons tried to restrict their freedoms. They would not steal the ocean from her!

“Well, all the same let me know if you do see any other ships. I promised our fox friends”. “ez!”

“Alice, why do you sail?” Sol asked. “Makes good money!” Alice exclaimed. “No it doesn’t”. “with the taxes the dragons charge for us to ‘license’ our ship there’s hardly enough for food!” “Well, I didn’t say it makes me good money. someone’s probably getting rich though” Alice joked. Sol fell silent. Alice usually wasn’t the most serious sailor she knew. She could understand that: being too serious could be dangerous, sometimes it was better to avoid these things. Alice made to leave the room, but as she did Alice whispered “because it’s beautiful. it’s hard sometimes. but i do it to see the sea. i do not think, having this long been with the sea i could stand the thought of replacing it with a farm field.” Sol continued on and went to check on the crew.

Hours later, Sol stood at the prow of the ship to watch the sun fall into the sea. It was spectacular. Darkness fell and the ship continued to push forward. She stood there for a while and thought. Eventually she turned away, and went to bed.

She woke to someone shaking her softly. "What wrong?" "Dragon ship." Alice responded, "approaching. maybe wants to inspect our ship or something? normally I'd handle it, but you specifically said to let you know, so I thought it best to tell you." Groaning silently she got up to inspect. Her body helpfully provided a surge of adreniline to counterbalance the fact that she was operating on like 4 hours of sleep. She knew it would wear off soon though, leaving her feeling much worse.

The approaching ship as Alice had said appeared to be a standard Dragon patrol ship. The dragon's were very strict about enforcing their law. It wouldn't be a problem, Sol had the necessary documents. But it would certainly prove an annoyance. "Can you tell one of the Foxes", Sol requested. "I-" "I know. on it!" Alice said.

The fox, barely awakened by Alice, ran to look. "No! They've found us." the fox cursed. "It'll be fine she said." "No! Can we escape it?" "Not really. it takes some time to change the direction of a ship this big!" "no, no, no!" the fox hyperventilated. "We were so careful" Sol's stomach sank. Were the foxes fugitives from the dragons or something? This could get bad.

Suddenly, her vision went black. The other crew members and foxes screamed. "What happened?" "I can't see!"

"it's the dragons. they have the command of sight." command-phrases? the dragons magic that partially enabled their control of Shara. She didn't really know how they worked, but there were supposedly 10 command phrases: one to somehow turn on or off each sense. The dragons had come to capture the Foxes. Or worse.

They had bigger problems too. What about steering the ship? "Stop the ship!" she yelled! "We don't want to crash into anything." "We'll wait. there's probably just some misunderstanding" "No!" the fox yelled. "we have to escape."

Suddenly she heard the sound of wings and then thumps: clearly dragons were dropping to the deck. How had they gotten so close so fast?

"Nezal!" a dragon roared from the deck. Sol knew her way around the ship even without sight. She hurried as conspicuously as she could to a spot where she could hear but hopefully not be seen by the dragons. "We know you seek the dragon-death-sword". "You would enslave the dragons or kill them!"

"all we seek is freedom for Shara!" a fox said.

"there is no time for such inefficiency. We come with an offer of peace. relinquish your quest. we will permit you to live as farmers, closely supervised."

"never!", the fox, apparently Nezal shouted.

Sol's vision was starting to return a little bit. Chaos ensued: Sol observed in horror from her hiding spot as the dragons. Battle ensued for a few minutes.

The foxes fared rather poorly, even as their vision was clearly somewhat returned. A fox managed to get a box open and revealed a very large fire. The foxes were all wearing sunglasses for some reason. Then one of the foxes said something that she couldn't quite make out, but felt that she could just almost understand and her vision burned. The inverse effect of the vision removal that she had experienced a moment ago. The dragon's shrieked, and the foxes started to have success. The dragons realized this and decided to fly away. "you will not succeed!" the dragon's yelled. the remaining foxes offered no reply.

"How are you? Are you ok?" Alice asked. "I'm fine." she asserted, and passed out.