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## Captain John Archer

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*"I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings."*

*— John Magee*

You always joked that you had two daughters, and could never decide which was the lovelier. The first, of course, is the *HMS Dauntless*, finest ship is Her Majesty's aerial navy. She boasts a groundbreaking design, a flawless construction, a talented crew, and a fine captain. Back in the Steam War, you flew smaller, lighter, slower craft. A wood and metal chassis really, with a noisy steam engine strapped to the back, and a daredevil pilot in front with nothing but an artillery piece and his training for survival in the brutal skies. You don't dwell on it too long. The Steam War is something you have mixed feelings on. On the one hand, for mere hours a day you could escape the low earth, and soar among the clouds. On the other hand, war is hell. It's not an experience you would wish on your worst enemies. Not even on your former wife. Still, you and your wingman, Lord Cornelius Blackwell, survived somehow, found a little bit of glory up in the skies, and made a lasting and deep friendship.

So you love the *HMS Dauntless* as if it were a child. And it is, to some extent. You conceived of its revolutionary design, found the creditors to finance the project, and brought this dream to life. The ship grew much as your other daughter did, dreamed up by you just a few weeks after she was born on a rainy day just over eighteen years ago. . . . The project was a small one at first, and the first few years were quite stormy. Mary was a rambunctious little girl, always getting herself into one form of trouble or another, usually involving her refusal to respect other people's possessions. You remember fondly, and often retell at dinner parties, a certain comical incident at a candy store. This must have been in '76, when Mary was but five years old. You let her wander around freely while you bought some crushed licorice for an upcoming party. When the two of you turned to leave the store, a single caramel dropped from the inside of Mary's dress. As she reached down to pick it up, a literal torrent of sweets exploded from her clothing, covering the ground. She had a dozen pounds' worth of cheap sugar, all hidden away in her clothing. You tease her about that every once in a while, in a warm fatherly way, and you and Cornelius have had many laughs about that.

*She's still yours.* Every day you thank God that Mary is. And the *Dauntless* as well. See, your ex-wife (this is how you like to refer to her in polite company), Elizabeth Anderson, wanted to take both of your daughters away. You can't even remember why in the nine circles of Hell you married that woman. That controlling, arrogant, sadistic harpy bitch. You're just glad the law was able to pry her bloody talons from your back. It was idyllic, wonderful at first. You, a pilot and later a war hero, and her, a brilliant engineer with the second highest ranking position in Her Majesty's Engineering Corps. Then things fell apart. You decided to design a revolutionary fleet of airships for the good of the British Empire. Excitedly, the two of you talked about designs and features for weeks, until you came up with what was later to become the *HMS Dauntless*, first of the new D-class of the Her Majesty's Aerial Navy. Of course, the *Dauntless* is a luxury ship, not a military one, but the underlying technology is still the same. But claiming the designs for the ship was not Elizabeth's greatest offense. That is reserved for her treatment of Mary. You love your daughter, and want her to grow up to be a respectable young lady. But your ex-wife had other ideas. She was a part of some "feminist movement", which as far as you can tell is an excuse for women to act like rude men. She wanted to make Mary like some sort of free spirited street woman, like some common whore. You can't fully comprehend it, even. She always tried to get her to wear boys' clothes and play violent games and do other things not suitable for decent young ladies. When you married Elizabeth, you had no idea you were actually sharing wedding rings with the spawn of Lucifer. You wanted her to cook dinner, and teach your lovely daughter how to be a decent lady. But she fell deeper into the bizarre - she wanted to have all sorts of disreputable deviants in your house, and she even took Mary to a suffragette demonstration!

Living became unbearable. You became morose, and more reserved, and took to the bottle. Heavily. How could you bring up such faults in open conversation? If she didn't know her mistakes, you certainly weren't going to tell her. You two argued constantly, and her insistence that she dreamed up the designs to the ship began to grate on your ever-thinning nerves. One day you came home to find her things missing and a terse angrily worded note. Mary was four at the time, and you hope she doesn't

remember her terrible mother. You ransacked London looking for your daughter, and when you couldn't find her, resorted to the courts. You sought a divorce. Hell, the Anglican Church itself is founded on divorce. A bitter custody battle ensued, over your daughter and your designs. Thank heaven you had Lord Blackwell to stand with you in court and your brother help you keep your sanity. Elizabeth raged and lied and called you names unmentionable in a polite setting. But the law prevailed. Mary was yours to raise, and so was the *Dauntless*. You daresay you've done a splendid job with both.

You're not really sure what Elizabeth has done in the interim, but you heard about her recent appointment to the position of President of Her Majesty's Engineering Corps, much to your surprise. It has been almost fifteen years, though, and the men in charge now never knew the harpy in her heyday. Not that Mary should know any of this. Last time she saw her mother, Elizabeth kidnapped her and took her to France. You were insane with worry. Thankfully Lord Blackwell stood by you and went with you to France to track them down. After three months she was found by some locals you had hired. The British courts sent her to prison and banned her from contacting Mary as long as she remained a minor. Mary has been told that her mother passed away, and seems to intuitively know not to ask questions, but you can't help but wonder if she ever thinks about her mother. What a horrible role model she would be. Better off dead in the child's mind, than around to corrupt her. But, like you said, Mary has been blossoming nicely. You hired a new tutor for her a few weeks ago, to continue her voice lessons. Mary sings like an angel, and she's only getting better. You hope this lady, Judy Watson, will teach her how to be a proper lady. You'll be watching to make sure. In fact, Mary is beginning to get suitors. This would be exciting if they didn't seem so Goddamn... lewd. The culture of this country has fallen, you're sure of that, since you were a young man. When you courted Elizabeth - curse the day you ever decided upon that track! - you did all a gentlemen ought to have done. You brought her flowers, called upon her to join you and your family at operas and dinners, asked her parents permission to marry her, and in general conducted yourself in a way that made your heritage, education and bloodline clear to all. In fact, you fear Mary has an eye for Sidney, your foul-mouthed head engineer. That's not right at all. Sidney is a fine strong man who knows the ship better than you do, but he's from a lower class than what is fit for Mary. He could never do. It's times like this you regret that Lord Blackwell didn't have a son.

You felt so honored when the British government decided to publicize the maiden voyage of your ship, although you're sure your war buddy Lord Blackwell had a hand in this. He's a politician, and a powerful one, in the House of Lords. Practically the de facto leader of the Conservative Party. You've been proudly voting the Conservative ticket for two decades now. Lord Major, the prominent leader of the Labour Party, will also be there. What shocked you, though, was that your ex-wife, in her position as President of such an influential and relevant group, decided to come herself. You haven't seen her in almost fourteen years, and will at least try to be civil, even though you hear she has been publicly speaking ill of the ship. The full passenger list is in your pocket now, and you keep thumbing through it. Your brother Reginald happens to be minister to Lord Major's family, and is coming, too. He's a fine man of God, and though he's been travelling all over the world recently, you're glad to have him back. He looks different, though, as of late. You wouldn't say sickly, but something has changed in his demeanor. Perhaps he saw things in the savage lands across the Ocean that civilized men were not supposed to see. Perhaps his heart is heavy from some unspoken burden. You've been meaning to speak with him, and maybe you can find some time off to talk with him. Nonetheless, you're ecstatic to have him on board, and to have had him staying with you lately. He sees Mary so rarely nowadays, and you're sure there is no better influence on a young woman than a caring Anglican priest. He always took care of Mary when she was younger and you had to travel away from home.

But this should be a fun flight. You have an excellent list of distinguished passengers, and a fine crew. Really, the only thing you need to worry about is running the Dedication in the middle of the flight. The ship is to be dedicated to the glory of England and the Queen. And while you're sure Cornelius will give a wonderful speech, you still haven't really thought of an introduction. You're sure Lady Major's display of the Neptune's Tear, and your brother's Convocation will go off splendidly. Oh, about that. Lady Major's security detail locked the Tear in a hard to get into box and given it to her. Half of the locks can be opened by you, and the other half by her. Sort of a dual security system. You're not entirely sure why - it's not like there are thieves on board. Besides, you're really much more interested in Mary's singing than anything else. She has the voice of an angel, you tell anyone who will stand still long enough to hear. A voice somewhat like Elizabeth's, but you don't dwell on that. Your ex-wife

had some strange, “liberated” way of singing, and you wouldn’t want Mary to get any ideas. The current music tutor seems to be fine, though you’re tone deaf and can’t really tell. She’d better be fine. You’re paying a pretty amount of pence for her.

*Oh.* Your heart grows weak again, and you need to sit down. Back in the Steam War - there was a time when your ship was shot down by enemy fire. Your parachute jammed, and you landed on the coast of France, the twisted jagged metal exploding all around you and impaling your broken body. When you awoke in a military hospital, you learned that it was Lord Blackwell who fought off a half dozen French airships, landed next to you, defeated a few land-based forces with his survival hatchet, clawed and dragged you out of that melted ship, and flew back to Britain just in time to save your life. Your old war wounds overcome you sometimes. You used to take drugs, opium in particular, to dull the numbing pain in your bones while young. You remember the months after the war filled with that unfeeling everpresent black haze, one which it took God to pull you out of, and marry your wife, and raise your daughter. But you’re not young anymore, and some of the old pains have been returning more and more frequently. But this is just a four-hour journey to Paris. Surely you’ll be okay in the meanwhile. Old soldiers never die, Lord Blackwell told you once. They just fade away...

### Goals

- Ensure that the maiden voyage of the *HMS Dauntless* is a peaceful, safe success.
- Preside over the Dedication, and make sure those that are a part of it are ready.
- Compose a speech for the Dedication.

### Notes

- You are the captain of the ship. Act like it.
- The Dedication is scheduled to take place two and a half hours after takeoff.
- No suitor of Mary’s who can’t prove to you that they are a gentleman can ever have your blessing.

### Contacts

- Mary Elizabeth Archer (Thief’s Player): Your daughter, whom you love more than life and flight itself. Well, maybe just life. She has just turned eighteen years old.
- Lord Cornelius Blackwell (Peter Litwack): The two of you go a long way back.
- Sidney Davis (Cid’s Player): A crude, tempestuous young man, but a loyal worker, and one of the best engineers you know.
- Judy Watson (Whore’s Player): Mary’s music and literature teacher.
- Elizabeth Anderson (Curie’s Player): Your estranged wife. You don’t want her influencing your daughter.
- Reginald Archer: Your brother, a good upstanding man.
- William (Robot’s Player): A small boy who shovels coal in the back your the ship.

### Memory/Event Packets

- Open at game start.
- X Packet
- If you see **item # 35-C** or **item # 152**.

### Greensheets

- none

### Abilities

- First Aid
- Assist
- Knock Out
- Wound
- Disarm
- Restrain
- Bare-Handed Knock Out

### Items

- A Ceremonial Sword (67)
  - A large well-weathered key. (30)
- a list of names (in-game document)
  - a party invitation (in-game document)

### Stats

- Combat Rating: 3