

It is said that Poseidon's fickle mood guides the seas, the weight of his emotions manifesting into the tempests and swells of the ever shifting seas. This has come with a prevalent theory by both [Pirates] and [Sailors] that the god is in a constant state of anger unless quelled.

And quelling His anger comes at a cost.

Quasi watches Jenah pick up a barrel of rum and lean it over the ship. The alcoholic fluid flows down from the side of the boat and into the calm seas.

"So, Poseidon is always angry except when he's drunk?" he asks. "I'd think he would be more violent with alcohol flowing through his veins."

She grunts as she tips the barrel a bit more. "That just means he hasn't drunk enough," she answers. "With enough rum, even the most terrible of drunks will go silent." With a free hand, she points at the ship trailing behind them, sailed by a skeletal crew. "I normally wouldn't've given anything to Poseidon, as he rules the seas above and I travel the seas below, but that there ship won't be coming down below unless we sink it."

Quasi raises an eyebrow, "I'm pretty sure that your violent weather is because you have two damn moons and not because a god is having a hissy fit."

She snorts. "Really? Moons? You sound like a [Physicist]. Next you'll be telling me Orbis rotates around the sun and the firmament above ain't real." Jenah finishes emptying the barrel and then puts it on the deck. "Every [Sailor], [Pirate], and their mother knows Poseidon controls the seas above and Aegir and Ran control the depths below."

Quasi opens his mouth to explain the intricacies of the moon's gravitational forces and its effect on the ocean's tides, but he doesn't get the chance as her head whips to the front of the ship. She smiles, "Ahh, perfect. They're still there."

Quasi follows her gaze, landing on the distant... island? Ship? Castle? Turtle? "What the fuck am I looking at?"

Jenah smirks. "That's the *Navis Archipelago*."

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Naunet folds her arms across her chest and glares at the woman before her. "Malaka, what are you doing here? How did you even come aboard? Why are you here? Have you gone mad!?"

"Mad?" Malaka bristles. "How can you be so cruel, sister! We've finally been reunited after a decade apart, and then you plan to disappear a day later. You expect me to let you out of my sight again? Never."

Naunet rolls her eyes. "Don't lie to me Malaka. It may have been a decade since we were apart, but you're still a manipulative little brat. You can fool the people at the academy, but not me. Now tell me what this is all about."

Malaka stops pouting and sniffs as she glares back at her older sister who remains unphased at the change. "It's not fair for you to hog an [Emperor] all to yourself, especially one as accessible as Quasi."

The older sister sighs as she rubs her temples at the naivety of the situation. Was she so impulsive at her age? "Birthing an [Emperor's] child isn't something you should be striving for," Naunet says, but her younger sister raises an eyebrow, easily noticing how false the words seem coming from Naunet. A servant's job is to serve a master, and one of the greatest and most honorable ways to do that is to sire the master's children.

"Look, Malaka. Being with Quasi is dangerous and you could lose your life," she waves her hand, "I mean, just yesterday he made you fight [Pirates]! [Maids] fighting pirates! It's insane and dangerous! You could die!"

Malaka reaches to her side. She grabs the enchanted ivory staff gifted to her and feels the enchantments activate on touch, strengthening her in ways she'd never dreamed of. "This staff," she waves it about, "and this armor," she taps the enchanted steel that weighs nothing on her, "allowed me to kill a [Pirate Captain] more than twice my level!" She expertly twirls the staff. "He gave me and all the [Slave Maids] expensive artifacts to defend ourselves from danger. I doubt I'll meet another master who would ever do such a thing for mere [Maids]."

Naunet shakes her head. "No, I won't have it. The moment we make port, I will request Quasi have you removed. I'm not going to allow my little sister to put her life in danger just so she can have a chance at sleeping with him."

Malaka laughs evilly as she reaches into a pocket and produces a scroll.

"I am contracted as a servant to Quasi for a year. A contract that cannot be broken and requires the master to impregnate all [Maids] under his service."

Naunet's eyes go wide. "What? Impossible! That wasn't in the contract. You weren't in the contract!"

"Everything was in the contract, it's not my fault you didn't read the fine print."

"You used a skill on me, didn't you?" Naunet asks the smirking Malaka.

She shrugs. "Maybe, but the contract is signed by you using the Master's authority. If you want to blame someone, then blame yourself."

Naunet makes a fist and grinds her teeth as she gazes at her cocky little sister, whom she had thoroughly underestimated. A little sister Naunet is forced to grudgingly admit has become a woman of means.

Naunet allows her hands to dangle freely at her sides. She frowns. "Fine, it seems I've been played and there's nothing to do." She turns to the door, "Come on, sis. Let me formally introduce you to the master and explain the full situation of my blunder."

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In my many lives and summons, I've seen many interesting and amazing things; Verdant flying islands, trees forged of fire and glass, coral reefs stretching as wide as a country, four separate cities carved from the corpses of behemoths... What I'm saying is that after all this time, it takes a lot to instill awe in me.

The Navis Archipelago does just that. A ramshackle construction of a thousand thousand ships, brought together with skills and strength, built into the shape of an island. The wide base of the island carries aloft a mountain of fused boats, forced into the facsimile of a fortress. With its height, one can naturally intuit that there must be even more below the surface, just to keep buoyancy..

Dragging the amalgamation forward is a colossal turtle, easily the size of a castle, with one built atop its back to boot. Dozens of thick chains stick into the beast's shell and connect to the "island," fettering it to the combined mass trailing behind it.

I give it an eight point five out of ten. Some of those corpse cities did better.

"Amazing, isn't it?" Tueta smirks at my bewildered expression.

"Yeah," I grudgingly nod with my face pointed at the island. "So why are we here again? I thought you said we would be heading directly to the guild?"

She rolls her eyes at me. "We're here because you wanted to waste your time raiding a ship with [Maids]."

"Raiding a ship with [Maids] is never a waste of time," I correct the clearly uninformed woman.

From my shoulder, Barglesmash releases a mighty caw of agreement.

Jenah raises an eyebrow at the bird, trying to look scornful when in reality I know she is extraordinarily impressed.

After another moment, she sighs and looks away, clearly incapable of beholding the gloriousness that is Barglesmash for any long length of time.

“When we get t’ Navis, keep yer bird out’a sight. [Merchant Lord Admiral] Testudo is get’n on in age, an’ a phoenix ‘d be somethin’ for which he’d sell ‘is left nut.”

“I can try, but it probably won’t happen. He’s his own bird after all. Anyway, back to my question: Why are we here?”

“T’ sell tha boat,” she points at the ship trailing behind the Deadheart.

“What? Why would we sell my ship?” I frown. “I haven’t even painted it red yet.”

“Cause the Necromancer guild can only be reached underwater,” she explains slowly. , “Wait,” she frowns, “why’d ya need to paint it red?” She pauses again. “Why th’ hell’d ya paint my ship red?”

I roll my eyes at her ignorance, “To make it faster, of course. Everyone knows that.”

She squints, “How th’ fuck does that makes sense?”

“What doesn’t make any sense?”

We both turn to find Jessica and Fiona arriving from the ship’s depths. They take several glances at the island of ships, but unlike me, aren’t overly impressed compared to the giant crystal worm city they’d seen.

“Many things in life don’t make sense at a first glance,” I quickly begin, “and understanding that is an important part of life. Sometimes, in this world or the next, or the one before, or even that other one we don’t like to talk about, the deepest, realest knowledge of the cosmos may never be fully comprehended, even after millenia of study. Even gods, the oldest farts that ever existed, cannot explain everything.” I shrug. “I mean, they’ll try, and they will have every answer you can think of, but that doesn’t make them right. Anyone as old as them learns to answer the unanswerable with bullshit most shiny. It is the law of existence, and existence has no true beginning and end.”

“Right, thank you Quasi, that was very informative,” Jessica smoothly slides in. “Anyway, Abernick is seasick and he’s asking if you know any way to alleviate his problem.”

“He’s fucked,” Jenah announces, “There’s no spell or potion can help ‘im. Only a [Skipper] who specializes ‘n ferry’n people would ‘ave a skill to fix ‘m.”

Jessica frowns. “I wasn’t asking you,” she says to Jenah and then looks at me expectantly.

I can't help but smile at the trust given to me and the slightly pissed off look on Jenah. Jessica isn't the type to be mean to people she barely knows. I wonder what's up.

"Huh, poor guy. Yeah, I can fix it by enchanting his cabin. Shouldn't be hard."

"Impossible," Jenah interrupts, "No enchantment like that exists."

I roll my eyes at the woman, "Tell me Jenah, why do some people suffer from motion sickness and others don't?"

"Cause the Gods forbid 'em from tak'n to the Sea," she states matter of factly.

"Uh-huh. Well, blaming the gods is one way to cope with things that don't make sense." I tell her, which gets that all too nice glare that only the opposite sex can ever give me.

"Mortals aren't meant to understand the logic of Gods," she sneers.

"Motion sickness is not some curse by the gods. It's a physiological phenomenon brought on by a mismatch between your sensory perceptions. Basically, your inner ear says you're moving, but your eyes say you aren't, and then your brain panics. Then you barf."

Jenah folds her arms and tilts her head. "So? Even if that's true, which it ain't, how would you enchant a cure?"

I shrug. "Simple, I'll enchant his cabin so that it blocks all external stimuli, including gravity. I'll make his cabin feel as though it is just a room on land."

Jenah opens her mouth, then closes it. Then opens it again and frowns. She taps her finger on the wooden rail and then glances at Jessica's smug smile. Jenah sighs. "I can see why ya told me not t' sleep with 'im. He's slightly off 'is rock'r."

I watch with amusement as Jessica's smile wars between pride and irritation at being called out.

"Seriously, Jessica? Are you expecting me to sleep with every woman on this ship or something? I don't go around trying to get into every woman's pants. I have standards," I point at Fiona, "and a wife."

Jessica blushes at being called out again. Her cheeks turn bright red as her head avoids eye contact with me.

She whispers something under her breath.

"What was that?"

She sighs. "I said i'm sorr--"

"Master!"

A voice interrupts Jessica and we all turn to Naunet arriving with a [Maid]. A [Maid] that looks very similar to Naunet now that I see them together.

They both bow at the same time.

"What's up, Naunet? Something wrong?"

Naunet nods. "My apologies master, but my ineptitude has laid a further burden upon you. Snuck into the contract by my snake of a sister is a clause that requires you to impregnate all of the [Maids] in your service before the end of the contract. For my failure to properly evaluate the documents in their entirety, I shall..."

Neither I, nor Jessica continues to listen to the rest of the conversation as we lock eyes. For the duration of Naunet's apology, the two of us carefully watch the other. Waiting for the other to make the first move.

As soon as Naunet finishes speaking, I start running and Jessica's mana swirls into her hands.