

# Deathling

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**Dedicated to Theresa Mulligan for always  
taking care of me in the summer**

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## Prologue

Vulgar was finished. She was a medium sized ship with nine sails, but she could outstrip the best crafts in the Navy. Her hull loomed a solitary brown. Her sails a ghostly grey. She was destined to sail to the Capital, Unara. "Get those bags of flour and then fetch the men," Fane said to Hur. "We're casting off." Suddenly a big ship sailed in and that's the last Fane or Hur saw. Captain Bartholomew aboard the Sea Demon shouted, "Avast, ye maties. Give no quarter." His black, leather boots stamped on the deck as he kept shouting orders. "Toss the ropes and board the ship. We are leaving this sea bucket and making their crew our oar slaves." Eight grappling hooks shot from the main mast of the Sea Demon and latched onto the Vulgar. Hoards of men ziplined with their swords down to the deck. When all were aboard Captain Bartholomew told First Mate Nain to choose twenty men and take Vugar's crew into captivity. "Have them find as much black paint as possible." As he walked away Nain grumbled under his breath but he knew better than to speak out against the captain. He returned with a line of bedraggled looking crew and ordered them to start painting. The ship's name would henceforth be the Deathling

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# Chapter One

## Tempest

In an alternate world on the Artak Sea a pirate ship, the Deathling, with nine sails and massive oak timbers skimmed across the mass of dark churning waters. On the bow of the deck Captain Bartholomew stared into the dark expanse under the storm. He squinted at a speck in the distance. He shouted, "Nain, fetch me spyglass."

He heard a muffled, "Aye, Cap'n" and then the slap of feet on the rain-soaked deck. As he peered through the spyglass, he could smell the sweat and blood of the oar slaves. Over the thunder and lightning, he could hear the fast tempo of the oar drum, the crack of the whip and the screams following it. He felt the wind whipping his hair into his face. He shouted. "Avast, me maties. All hands on deck. Hoist the colors. Full speed ahead if you want booty."

## Chapter Two

### Shipwreck

Just as they began to close the gap on the trading ship, The Deathling shuddered and the crew heard a loud snap from the rudder and the steering wheel went limp. The ship began to steer towards an immense patch of fog. When Captain Bartholomew ran out of his cabin, and spied the fog his eyes widened and he shouted, "Whirlpool dead ahead. All hands on deck. Oar slaves row backwards. We need to lose weight, Throw Whit, Will and Steven overboard." The three crewmen struggled against the crew. But they were subdued. Each man was hauled overboard and thrown screaming into the sea headfirst. They plunged in with shrieks of pain because their heads had hit ground. Captain Bartholomew yelled, "All men overboard". Nets and ropes sailed overboard and the men streamed down them onto the reef. When everyone was settled they used their paddles to build up the reef to make dry land.

Captain Bartholomew then ordered a search party to find driftwood to repair the tiller. Every day the men searched but could only find small pieces, The men began to run out of food so the slaves were not fed. Then one day a great piece of thick, grey wood drifted onto the reef, They shaped it into a tiller and bound it to the ship with seaweed, All the oar slaves and the crew used ropes to pull the ship off the reef.

## Chapter Three

### Pursuit

When they finally got the ship moving, all the crew and oar slaves climbed the nets. One of the oar slaves fell off into the sea but the ship did not wait for him. Captain Bartholomew called for his spyglass. When he looked through to see the trade ship, all he saw was a large fleet of Marine vessels chasing after him. He cursed, "Take every scrap of canvas aboard and tie it up to the mast. We have to be fast. He ordered the oar slaves to start rowing. But the Marines were stealing the Deathling's wind. Captain Bartholomew did not think they were going to make it. But then he remembered the whirlpool. After they passed, the tides would whip it up again and the Marine fleet would be swept in unless they had to skirt around it giving the Deathling time to get away. Then the crows nest yelled, "Land ahoy. I think it is the Isles of Urunuin. I think we can lose them there." "Who cares what you think? I am the Captain here. Full sail for the Urunuins." He turned the wheel and they sped away to the islands.

After an hour they reached the islands. The crew and the oar slaves were exhausted. The oars moved like snails and the crew slumped in their posts. They circled one of the islands that was shaped like a horseshoe. It was unreachable because there was a waterfall pounding into the bay. The crows nest spied a delta hidden by the trees where a stream was spewing water. There was just enough room to squeeze through. The oar slaves poled the Deathling up the stream. A loud, shrrrr sounded in the trees and the ship's hull ground against a boulder. They could see a stretch of rapids ahead. Strong currents led to a small waterfall. It was all Captain Bartholomew could do to keep the ship from running aground. But he knew that the Deathling could make it but the Marine fleet would not come out on the other side. This would be a safe haven.

## Chapter Four

### Capture

Aboard the Marine fleet everyone was scurrying about. They had just lost the Deathling in the Urunuin Islands as it went around a peninsula. Captain Stavis ordered his crew to skirt around the peninsula. He asked his first mate, Rowan, to relay the information to the fleet. As the land sped by he saw little cabins hidden in the trees, smoke billowing from the chimneys. He thought he would want to settle down and live there someday, get married and have kids. They finally reached the tip of the peninsula. He saw a dark rock jutting from the waves towering over the ship. He looked in the other direction and saw a blue expanse and far away a small island with snowy peaks and green, lush jungles. But it couldn't be where the Deathling had gone because the crow's nest would have seen them before he had gotten to the island.

Captain Stavis shouted, "Stay near these cliffs. They have to be here." A cloud passed over the sun, darkening the sky. He finally came to a horseshoe shaped island.

Meanwhile on the Deathling, the crew were halfway through the rapids. They had dropped to the deck to avoid the branches. The oar slaves were being scraped by the overhanging branches. Captain Bartholomew was crouching behind the wheel trying to navigate the vicious rocks. The crew began worming along the deck toward the aft or forward hatches. As they thumped down into the hatches. The Deathling broke through into a stretch of calm water. Then the ship went down the waterfall. The oar slaves clung to their oars over their heads. Then KABOOM!!! The ship's hull cracked and the ship started to sink but the oar slaves poled the ship onto the shore.

Captain Bartholomew shouted, "All hands on deck. Lone, take a scouting party of five and check if there are any natives on the island." Six men wearing black slid down the ropes and disappeared into the jungle. While they were gone Captain Bartholomew gave orders to make camp. The men set up a captain's quarters and lean-tos for themselves. When the scouting party came back, they entered the camp and went to the captain's quarters. They told him about an

enormous fortress situated deep in the woods. A native tribe was patrolling the walls. Hearing this he went out and told the men that tomorrow night they would be attacking the fortress.

The next night everyone armed themselves with swords, turtle shell shields, spears and arrows. Ten men carried shovels to dig under the walls while the natives were distracted by the main attack. As the advance squad led them to the fortress the captain secretly carried a torch and matches hidden under his cloak. On the way the men chopped down a tree and removed its branches. When the men arrived at the fortress the tunneling crew began to tunnel at the back of the fortress. At dawn the battering crew launched their attack. The native tribe was surprised to see shrieking men running at the fortress with a battering ram. They regained their wits and blew a large conch shell. The sound reverberated over the trees and that the Marines heard while they were circling the island. They readied themselves for battle. The crew continued to batter the gates with little success. Meanwhile the tunneling crew, hot and sweaty from working all night were almost under the walls. Then Captain Bartholomew used his torch to set fire to the end of the battering ram. With the next push the battering ram crew set fire to the front gates. As the fire consumed the gates and kept the natives busy, the entire crew and oar slaves entered the fortress through the tunnels. The fortress was theirs.

## Chapter Five

### Battle

The natives streamed out of the burning gates and fled toward the shores. The Marines were unable to navigate into the islands so they had to leave their ships behind and travel on foot toward the fortress. They met the natives in the jungle and joined together to fight Captain Bartholomew. Captain Bartholomew ordered his crew to retrieve the cannons from the Deathling and hoist them to the fortress walls. They struggled the heavy cannons upward until they were in place.

The attackers charged the fortress. Captain Bartholomew just had time to prepare the cannons to fire. Explosions blasted men skyward. Men were torn apart and pieces of flesh littered the battlefield. It rained blood. The attackers fled into the woods. Captain used a grappling hook to grab one of the injured Natives and dragged him over the walls. He threatened to kill him on the spot but the Native said, "Wait, wait. Don't kill me. I have information you could use. There are spikes that are embedded in the walls that can kill anyone trying to scale the walls. The Captain said,"Even if that is true, why would I save you." Then he threw him off the wall.

While the cannons were being reloaded the Marines and Natives attacked again. They tried to scale the fortress walls but were impaled by the spikes that jumped out at them from the walls. More of the attacker's bodies littered the ground. The Marines and Natives began to run but the cannons fired once again. One body sailed over the attackers and into the trees. Many more followed, some even slamming into their retreating comrades. A final stand was made by the attackers but a final cannon blast sent them into oblivion.

The Deathling crew cheered and shouted their victory. The celebratory feast began.

## Chapter Six

### The Pirates' Life For Me

Captain Bartholomew and his men made their way to the abandoned Marine fleet. They were able to easily overcome the few sailors aboard the ships and seized control of three Marine ships. He divided the crew and oar slaves into four groups and ordered each group to board one of the ships or the Deathling. Nain, Lone, Kien would take command of one of each marine ship. Captain Bartholomew would command the Deathling. Nain was put in charge of removing the tiller from one of the remaining ships. Lone was in charge of getting the tiller on board the Deathling and Kien was in charge of removing Deathling's broken tiller and putting in the new one. The captured Marines were added to the oar slaves which were settled into their rowing stations for each ship.

Under the complete command of the victorious Captain Bartholomew, the pirate fleet then set out to sea to board and pillage any trading ships they ran across. They captured many ships and added two more to his fleet. He was the most feared pirate on the Artak Sea.

# The End