

## Captain Gird

To get to Anmar-amar, the great university city, Gird had to cross the sea of Burda-baaha. As he could not command the titan, Gird decided to just grab a rowing boat and start rowing. Being the lord of Lazzarroth he could do as he pleased. Gird was a bit apprehensive as the Great East Bay was known for its storms and sea monsters. Gird took the biggest rowing boat he could master.

As he was provisioning the boat and ordering boatmen around. No one dared to ask what he was doing spare a young boatman.

'My Lord, may I ask you where you are going?'

'Why do you want to know?' Gird snapped.

'Begging your pardon, but it helps with the provisioning,' the young man cowered.

'Ah, right, I'm going to cross the sea of Burda-baaha.'

'In a rowing boat, my Lord?'

'Yes.'

'Well, you did conquer this city alone with your titan. So why not cross a hazardous sea alone, my Lord? I understand.'

'Great, now help me.'

'Yes, Sir.'

An hour later Gird was ready to depart.

'You, young man! What are you called?'

'Cronan, my Lord.'

'Right, follow me Cronan.'

Gird walked over to where the majority of the people could see and hear him.

'Now listen up!' Gird raised the hand of Cronan. 'This man, Cronan is now my warden of the city. You will do whatever he demands as if he were me. When I return and any harm has come to him, I will lay waste this city and all the lands you can cross in three days. I will hunt down he who had harmed my warden and kill him and his family and friends and anyone who has had dealings with him. DO I make myself clear?'

An eery silence was all he got in reply.

Cronan was too overwhelmed to react, as were most of the people.

'Do I make myself clear.'

Finally, people woke from their dumbstruck awe.

'Yes, my Lord,' it echoed through the streets.

'Well, Cronan, my warden, the city is yours. I'm off. Good luck.'

Gird stepped in the rowing boat and started paddling. He looked around one more time and saw Cronan gaining confidence. He started to order people around. Cronan would off course never be revenged when he would be killed. Gird was not planning on returning ever again, but perhaps Cronan could live a couple of years in peace, before people would forget the threat Gird had made. The titan followed.

When Gird had paddled a mile the titan was fully submerged and only an island-like part of the skull was still above the waves. Waves that somehow were less high around the titan. The weather was also better. Gird decided to pause. He waited until the titan was right next

to him and then grabbed a string of hair. It was the size of a ship's cable. Gird fastened the boat and climbed on top of the titan. He lay down his backpack and made himself comfortable.

'Ah, this is the life!'

Gird dozed off. He woke from a shudder that went through the titan island. He looked around to see what could have caused that and saw a rowing boat with pirates. They had arrived with a big pirate ship and were now landing on Gird's island. Gird wondered why pirates always dressed in a way that made them stand out for what they were. Now it was a useful habit. Gird knew what he could expect. Better try to be nice to them.

Gird stood up and waved. 'Hello there!'

The one who clearly was the captain gazed at him while the rest was struggling to get the boat on shore, so to speak. 'What matter of island is this?' he growled at Gird. 'I don't know,' Gird called back. 'It is rock hard, but not made of rock. I gave up getting through the surface.' The captain said something to the rest, and the just hauled the boat further on to the island. He, himself, walked over to Gird.

'So laddy, what are ya doin in me waters?'

'Erhm, just resting.'

'That'll cost ya.'

'O, o really, I wasn't aware there was a toll in these waters.'

'Har, ar ar,' the captain laughed.'Or I'll ..' 'Please sir, no need to threaten me. I'll cooperate.'

The captain looked at him slightly puzzled.

'What if the price is keelhauling?' 'Gloop!!'

The pirate ship just had vanished beneath the waves. The crew on the island staggered away from the shore.

'What happened!?' the captain yelled. He drew his sword.

'Please, please put away your sword. I don't want you all to die.'

'You a sorcerer?! Come on laddies, let's kill this man hag!'

The captain attacked.

'Captain!!'

The captain stopped, looked at his crew and then up. He saw a gargantuan finger plummeting down on top of him. With a final effort he had his revenge. The captain stabbed Gird full in the gut and then was crushed.

'Aaaa!!' they both screamed one last time.

The crew was stricken with fear.

Gird had fallen was now trying to keep his guts in. Blood ran between his fingers and he felt his life slip away.

'Help,' he mumbled. 'Help me, Xaerenthouliantismas. Save me from dying.'

The finger that has hovered over Gird, and the crew shot forward towards Gird and touched him ever so softly. All the blood that had been spilled started to crawl back to its master, and the wound healed after its return. An energy filled Gird and strengthened his body. Within ten seconds the dying Gird was up and about again.

'Xaerenthouliantismas! Make me invulnerable for all sword, guns and explosives.'

Gird had just finished his sentence, and a shell crashed on top of the island. The explosion blew everyone from the island killing all but Gird and a young boatman who was protected by the rowing boat.

Gird had been knocked prone and lay face down in the water. The blast had not killed him, but would still be his end. Not that Gird could swim. The young boatman could and he saw the distress Gird was in. He quickly swam to Gird and helped him back to the titan island. When the two men were safely back on the shore the battle was already over. The small armada that had sailed out to wipe out captain Karbass had been wiped out itself. Gird came to and looked up to a young man who apparently had saved his life.

'Captain, you're back!'

'What?'

'You're back.'

'No, before that.'

'Captain.'

'Yes, why are you calling me captain?'

'Well, you killed my captain and thus are my captain.'

'What happened?'

'Don't you remember?'

'No, I was talking to your captain and then I woke up.'

'You don't remember being stabbed and shelled and being cured by your titan. You mumbled its name and his finger healed you and gave you the power to withstand harm, but apparently not to stay conscious or breath water. Perhaps you can now ask for that.'

Gird stared at the young man.

'I don't know its name anymore. Have you heard it?'

'No, I'm sorry, captain. I have not.'

'Crap!'