

"Red sky at night sailors delight, red sky at morning sailors take warning" Captain Graham smiled at the old adage, thinking to herself "what if you sail in the sky?". She peered out over the edge of her airship at the world asleep below. The sun was hinting at its arrival as the sky was lightening and the Excelsior sailed among the early morning clouds. Captain Sonya Graham always made sure she caught this part of the morning, not only was she making sure the watch changed, but the beauty of this time of day is what really gets her up. It gained her a lot more respect from her crew than she would ever know. It gave them a sense ever present leadership, she was there at the helm when they went to bed and she was there when they woke up. Even the new crew, who weren't sure what to expect from a lady captain, soon respected her for that devotion. In return they wanted to show her the same devotion and this was going to be that day. They were making their way through dangerous air space. Bandits on the ground in this territory had figured out how to snare airships with harpoons and nets and bring them crashing to the earth, knowing that the cargo hold would be one of the only things to survive the crash. The Excelsior was becoming known for its cargo of crystals, but Captain Grahams machine was the real prize. It converted those crystals into energy to power machines. If you couldn't get the machine (she has installed fail safes to insure it's safety) the captain might be the next best thing. She was brilliant with machines and her knowledge of crystal chemistry made her a target. That's why she was always on the move, docking at one island or another, not only to keep herself and her crew safe, but to share her machine with the world. So there she was on the deck of her ship looking at a beautiful sunrise on her way to another island when a feeling hit her, something wasn't right. She looked around the quiet deck to try and find the source of her unease, but didn't find anything until she looked up into the watchman's crows nest, it was empty. She abandoned her place at the helm to investigate further, maybe he had come down already and she missed (not likely, but what the heck). As she made her way across the deck she turned around just in time to see the butt end of a sword coming into view. Then the world went dark. Nelson was always the first one up, well first one of the crew anyway, the captain was always up first, he had tried to beat her as the first one up, but found that a fruitless endeavor. Being the cook it was important for him to have at least the coffee ready before any of the crew crawled out of their bunks. He always brought the first cup to the captain, who he knew didn't drink coffee, but it was their routine for him to bring her a cup and her to politely refuse it and then he drank the cup as that sat on the bridge together taking in the view. Then he would return to the kitchen to prepare the days meals. However, when he came up on deck on this particular morning didn't see the captain at the helm taking in the sunrise, he saw the tail end of a kidnapping. Shady Scotty, the watchman now living up to his name, was picking the captain up off the deck and loading her into a waiting ship. Nelson threw the only thing he had, the coffee, in the direction of the ship, but only to the effect on the cup hitting the floor and the ship taking off with Shady Scotty smirking back in his direction. Nelson shouldn't have been, but he was surprised at how quickly the rescue party was formed after he raised the crew. The sun hadn't even completely cleared the horizon and the 5 best crew were on the shuttle boat to retrieve their captain. The rest of the crew prepared the ship to be ready if they were needed. Weapons were made ready, important cargo other than the crystal machine were safely stowed. Then they waited. Error Eddy, headed the rescue party. With a nickname like that you are probably thinking "really?", but it was a name more fitting for this situation than you might think. He always managed to find his way out of danger, but not by careful planning. He once saved the whole ship from going up in flames by accidentally tripping over a water barrel, things like that were always happening to E.E. and somehow the Excelsior always found it's way out of harm. I guess it's weird to hope things don't go as planned, but they were all hoping it didn't today. Their rescue ship was floored and believe it or not they caught up with the kidnapers just as they landed. They tried to make it to the safety of the bandit leaders camp, but crew of the Excelsior descended on the camp like a fury and in E.E. haste to rescue his captain he jumped from the rescue early sending it spinning and just when the crew thought they had not only lost their ride back, but also a safe place to hide the engine stalled and the ship came down between the kidnapers and the bandit leaders tent forcing the kidnapers to stop. Then the engines gave out one last burst and happened to catch the tent on fire. The kidnapers seeing their situation go from slightly inconvenient to barely any hope threw the captain to the ground and fled. The crew made haste, gathered up the captain, (still unconscious) piled in to the rescue ship, and made their way back to the Excelsior. Nelson

and the rest of the crew, waited for what seemed like centuries. Nobody talked, everyone held their breath as long their bodies would allow, they could see the smoke rising from the ground. They all looked at one another, should they help? Who's call was it? So instead they waited in silence, even the Excelsior seemed to be more quiet than usual, she too waited. Slim Pim was in the crows nest, his eyes watering as he tried not to blink afraid he'd miss something. He saw the smoke and from that he saw something coming towards them. What started as maybe a bird, turned in the shape of the rescue ship. Slim Pim couldn't tell who was on board just yet, but he alerted those on deck. You could almost see the anxiety level raise as the ship got closer. The crew tightened their grips and their stomachs as ship now came in to view. "Avast and ahoy" E.E. called from the rescue ship "Scrubbin' and scrappin' " answered Nelson E.E. called back "Swab the deck....and the get the doc". Four days later the ship had docked at its destination. Captain Graham was stirring around her cabin. The crack on the head she got had knocked her out for almost a whole day. When she came to, Doc T had filled her on what happened and insisted she stay in her cabin until they reached their destination. Captain Graham wasn't quite used to taking orders, but after trying to get herself out of bed and having her knees buckle and head spin she thought it best to listen to the Doc. The only member of the crew to come see her was Nelson, who brought her food and coffee (which she didn't drink), that doesn't mean that the crew didn't show their concern. Captain Graham figured it was Doc T's doing, making sure the captain rested properly, but the crew slipped notes under her door and sent things with Nelson. She wasn't quite used to this attention from her crew, in fact she was sure that not a whole lot of them even liked her, but their affection for her brought a smile to her face. Now the ship was re-loaded with supplies and the Doc had finally given her permission to leave her cabin. She made sure the crew was ashore and that she had the ship to herself before stepping out. Her head was still full of cobwebs and her balance was off, but the fresh air of the deck settled her. The giant egg that had been on her head had turned into a yellow mess and when she stood up too fast she could feel the blood rush to it. But on deck she breathed deep and lovingly put her hands on the wheel feeling complete once more. The crew came on board to a welcome sight, the captain at the helm. Each one of them smiled deep seeing her there and she smiled back at them. Nothing needed to be said, she took care of them and they took care of her, her smile was one of thanks and they all knew it. Everyone got to work getting the ship ready to make way, each one of them stealing a glance at the helm and feeling a sense of pride. Once free from the moorings the Excelsior also came to life a little more spiritedly as well, everyone happy to have their captain back where she belonged, steering them to their next adventure.