

# **Ard-Ladanna: The Pirate Captain**

## **By Calum M**

### **Chapter One: Freelancers**

*As the docking door opened, I almost choked in revulsion, the Minaloch had been a pirate waystation for almost 10,000 years but the rustic, and mainly poor nature of the pirates meant they did not have any plans to upgrade it and, from my guess, would'nt anytime soon.*

Swinging into the last remaining bay, I opened the canopy and jumped out next to Rhinaloch, "Horrible isn't it?" he said. "Yes, but there's time for sightseeing later. The shipwright is probably closing soon, so get over there and refuel this eagle. I'm going to see where we can get a bed in this place and remember, Rhinaloch, watch your back." With a nod, Rhinaloch turned on his heel and walked down the balcony, heading for the nearest lowlife to ask directions. Heading for the barbarically fortified door, a myriad of outlandish shapes passed my eyes, from dumpy Mon-keigh to thin and bony Kroot.

Ducking through yet another door I straightened up to an enormous bar. A ghastly racket filled the whole room with drunken laughter and bar room brawls. Weaving my way through the chaos, I sat on a stool and ordered a cheap be'er from the primitive servitor and took a sip. A second, more detailed look did not reveal much more but a large and elderly figure sat in the corner, pouring over a large map.

He was an interesting figure, sallow, scarred skin upon his face but his only eye (the other was replaced with a metallic eyepiece) sparkled with inner-youth, like a youngling getting of his first ride on a jetbike. His clothes were tattered and dirty; covering his back was a long well-travelled brown cloak and strange runes of deep red seem to glow over various parts of it, but I could never seem to focus on them. I put it down to the dodgy be'er but what was most peculiar was the apparently new shirt and breeches. Why he kept that old piece of crap I don't know.

After catching his eye more than once, I took a heavy swig of be'er and decided to talk to this man. "Excuse me sir, I couldn't help noticing your map, may I have a look?" I had asked politely. "Not if ye know what's bloody good for ya, laddie, there's places on

this map that have the power to rip the sanity from you in seconds" He replied. "My name's Rhilayeda, and I can take whatever this place or any other has to throw at me!" I shouted back, angry at the abruptness of the comment. Calming myself I carried on, "Look, I've just had to kill a high ranking noble and I need to get going. Me and my brother can offer you an eagle if you take us to wherever you're going."

With this, the man looked up, slightly bewildered by this new revelation, "The name's Captain Macistann, me and my crew are making our way to the 'Ometron System.' An Eagle's not much use to us, but a Vyper, now that's a different story."

*Sitting down next to my new captain, I was regaled with tales of adventure and heroics and by the end of the day we'd hit three mon-keigh with one shot, a job, a place to stay, and most of all, a way out of here.*