Dionysius and the Pirates

Pass: GO TO ZEUS TO PLEAD FOR HER LIFE

Hey, I just found something that you will love! While I was in the system hub waiting for my transfer to Cypres I decided to go bar hopping. I was low on cash and didn’t want to go through the hell that is transferring savings on an out-of-network station, so I went cheap with it. In some dingy nook-in-the-bulkhead place that was just a bar and a couple tables between some pipes and an emergency bulkhead I found fucking gold. There was this dingy guy leaning on the counter nursing a big cup of some cheap swill.

Now yes, I know that the general rule in these places is “don’t ask don’t tell” but this poor bastard looked absolutely shell-shocked. Not depressed, or anxious, but properly shell-shocked like he was a grunt on a border gore mudball eating slugs for breakfast. Mega-klick stare and drinking with a shaking hand, the works. Something had obviously terrified him, and there’s always a good story in that, and I know you love good stories. It’s a long one, he went into a lot of detail and let me record it exactly, but trust me it’s worth it.

So, I buy him some more booze, still just fermented piss but a slightly more expensive brand that what he was drinking. Don’t get excited it was something only available on that station and I don’t remember the name anyway. I was expecting to have to butter’em up, get him to spill the spuds. But no, it was like he was waiting for someone to hear his story. He takes the drink and asks, “What do you want.”

You could hear the terror in his voice, he was legitimately terrified of something. At this point I felt bad for him, I was about to tell him to just keep the drink and then go somewhere else. But I realized that he wasn’t terrified of me. That was my second hint that this would be great. Now you know that I’m a big guy, if this dude had done something boring like owe some gangster money or get into it with the regime of some mudball he would’ve been on the lookout for strange, big, muscley, handsome men like myself. But it wasn’t me he was afraid of.

So, I tell him, “What happened to you?”

For the first time he faces me, and you can tell by his face that he’s seen some shit, and says, “You don’t want to know”

I couldn’t help myself there, I chuckled.

“I’m serious”, he says

I apologize and tell him that everyone says that, and that whatever follows it is rarely worth the severity of the warning. He chugs the rest of the cup, slams it down, “Okay”

Then he freezes and stops for a moment, “Wait you probably won’t believe my story anyway.”, he shrugs, “Probably for the better.”

I ask him if I can record it and he says yes. So I set that up and he gets right into it.

I was a pirate. Was. I’m not risking that shit anymore. Not sure what I’ll do now. Anyway I was a pirate. Specifically, the helmsman on a retrofitted cargo ship. Under captain Gregor. No last name, that I know of at least. We all just called him, “Captain”. A few times I overheard the first officer call him Gregor. We had been prowling around the Edge, going back and forth between pioneer worlds and the mudballs. Intercepting supply ships bound for the pioneer

Pass: SAY IT TO ESCAPE

worlds and knocking over what little valuable trade the mudballs could muster. Basic piracy stuff.

You ever been a pirate? No? Well the thing to know about how pirate ships are run is that they are not at all run like merchant or military ships. We didn’t really bother ranks or any of that shit. The captain did give his close buddies fancy titles that we had to call them by, officer of this, officer of that, but it didn’t really change anything. I was the helmsman, not the navigation officer. That’s an important distinction as only he, the first officer, and the captain would know where exactly we were headed. The vast majority of the crew were just technicians, they fixed and occasionally operated shit. Some roles like weapons crews or helmsman required specialization but we were still equal with the rest of the crew. That was the setup, the captain and first officer, then the rest of us. The guys in charge would decide where to go, and the navigation officer would plot the jumps. All I did was make sure the warp sails opened properly and I controlled the sub-light movement of the ship.

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o they couldn’t just “run away”. These civvie ships are made to run on razor thin profit margins. They take exactly as much fuel as they need and no more. If they started making evasive burns they would run out of delta-v and be left to drift, in which case we get them anyway. If they had attempted to warp while that close to the planet the gravity would be strong enough to interfere with the warp and probably rip the ship to shreds and smear the shrapnel across half the arm. They had made their escape burn, setting a delta-v efficient but time-consuming course for the disruption threshold. We had better acceleration and more delta-v, we would get to them before they would be able to warp and there was nothing they could do about it.

When we did intercept the ship, my job was over. We would have the entire transaction done before they ever got close to the warp threshold. Captain messaged their captain, weapons crews took aim, sent a couple warning shots over the bow. Turns out the reason the civvie captain was being so adamant was because his ship was a transport, taking a couple dozen poor bastards from one mudball to another. No cargo to loot and sell. Meaning no payday for the crew. Everyone, myself included, was pissed. Especially because we knew the captain wouldn’t care, in fact he was thrilled that he had found a “liner” as he called it.

Pass: PSYCHIATRIC HELP

are content with prostitutes on shore leave and our hands the rest of the time. Hell, some are happy to go at each other instead. Our captain was very much an outlier, and worse, he was wasting the time and money of the crew while doing it.

No, we never considered mutiny. We grumbled and complained but this was a rare thing that we accidently caught a transport instead of a cargo ship. He never intentionally screwed us out of a payday, and when we did get paid, we got paid alright. A pain in the ass, but not anything worth making an even bigger mess over. Or at least that’s what we all thought.

The captain took a few men, armed them, then took a shuttle over to the transport to pick out

He was over there for a worryingly long time, but the first officer was using a personal communicator to keep tabs on the captain while he was away. Eventually the ugly motherfucker comes back aboard, and I start our getaway burn. Just kick away from the transport then decelerate tangential to the mudball and we’d hit the disruption threshold a full twelve hours before the transport.

After returning to the ship the captain comes to the bridge, asking about anyone that might be after us. There must’ve not been anyone as I did the burns as usual, a clean getaway. At least from any authorities on the mudball. Just as I had finished the burn the captain started shouting. I turned to look at the commotion. The captain was yelling at a very pretty boy, turns out there hadn’t been any richmen’s daughters aboard the transport. Well, he looked like a young adult, but handsome though he was, he appeared to be woefully inexperienced. For starters he did not seem to be the least bit scared of anyone, least of all the captain. Us, the pirates, that had kidnapped him, several of the ‘officers’ very visibly having guns on them.

And when I say he was pretty, I mean beautiful, he put heavily modified coreworld super models to shame. An athlete’s body, a real athlete’s body, muscular but not over-muscled. His face was defined, not sharp but perfectly cut lines of bone, like a jewel. Stupidly curly, bouncy, almost fluffy hair. Bright blue eyes, looking right at the captain as his perfect face wore an amused expression.

The captain had evidently locked him in a room, with no way for anyone to possibly escape. After overcoming his surprise, the captain turned to accusing others of letting the boy out of his cabin. He charged off the bridge to go find the culprit, dragging to boy along with him. As I was the helmsman I had to stay on the bridge, my job may have been done but I wasn’t off duty until we warped, just in case something unexpected happened and we needed to start burning. So I stayed put while the commotion went elsewhere.

About twenty minutes later the captain and his captive returned to the bridge. The captain asked some inane questions and gave some non-orders to look busy and competent before handcuffing the boy to the handholds on a chair. The chairs in the bridge were very securely attached to the deck, with the restraints in them also being very strong, to prevent people from flying around in the case of an impact shaking the ship or the crew module experiencing explosive decompression. So there was no way the boy was getting out of that without breaking the cuffs, which were made of tempered steel, or his wrist. The captain barked at those of us required to stay on the bridge, “Don’t let this fucker out of your sight”

Pass: THE DOCTOR IS IN

The captain and officers leave the bridge, going someplace less cramped with chairs, monitors, and consoles to talk, plan, fuck around, whatever it was they did in their meetings. That left a communications technician, a sensors technician, the boy, and me on the bridge. The other two pirates talked for a few minutes then pulled out their personal communicators and played games on them. I made sure everything with the ship was fine, then checked my own communicator for a moment.

I turned to look at the boy. He was calmly sitting in a chair, staring straight at me. I froze as soon as our eyes made contact, but he just started moving. With a casual roll of his wrist the handcuff just fell off, clanking against the side of the chair. One of the other pirates told the boy to quiet down without looking up from his communicator. The boy leaned back in the chair, resting his elbows on the arms, crossing his legs, and tenting his fingers in front of his chin. His body and facial language were completely different, he lounged like a king, instead of coming across as young and inexperienced I got the unshakeable idea that he was far wiser than any of us, and far, far older. I don’t know how long it was that he held me in place like that.

The spell was broken when one of the others remarked, “What, you wanna

hell you starin’ like that for?”

My gaze snapped to the man that had spoken, he was still looking down at his communicator, he had glanced at me but not the boy. Without thinking I said, “Something isn’t right with him.”

“Like what?”

Realizing what I had said I quickly covered my ass, “Well for starters he just effortlessly broke out of the handcuffs.”

The other two look up, “Well then cuff him again, dumbass”

I look back at the boy only for him to meet my eyes again, “I ain’t fucking with him. He gives me the creeps”, I spoke without thinking again.

The communications technician gets out of his seat, grumbling obscenities at me. He goes over to the boy, who resumed his juvenile mannerisms as soon as the other pirate turned towards him. The pirate roughly grabbed and cuffed him again before returning to his seat with more complaints. Before he sat down, I looked forwards, at the console in front of me and kept my gaze there.

I heard the handcuffs clank again behind me. I refused to turn and look, I kept my eyes glued to the screen in front of me. My confusion and unease quickly turned to terror. It ripped at my heart, and it wasn’t long before the rapid-fire beat of it was the only thing I could hear. I was shaking and sweating. I didn’t know what came over me. I wanted to run but I didn’t dare. Not because I was supposed to stay on the bridge, but because leaving would mean turning around, looking at him, walking by him. To escape I would have to get closer to him. I couldn’t bear that.

Instead I made myself busy. In a poor attempt to distract myself I reached over to a nearby console and began looking over everything I was able to. The controls for a lot of stuff were locked to specifical consoles, and some information was locked by the captain and his officers for security reasons, but a vast majority of all the information on the status of much of

Pass: IT

the ship was available from any of the universal consoles. A military vessel would never have a system like this, but a retrofitted civilian ship would. I busied myself with the sheer mundanity of it all. Never succeeding in boring away the terror but succeeding in holding down the urge to run.

I kept at it until the ship was approaching the disruption threshold. The captain and navigation officer came to the bridge for the jump. The captain was furious that the boy was out of his handcuffs, but I didn’t listen. I focused on the navigation’s officer’s voice. I quickly went through my part in the process of opening the warp sails almost before he could give the order.

Even with more people present my terror was not lessened, in fact it grew. I found myself thinking, “These fools”

They didn’t see what I saw when looking at that boy. They didn’t realize how dangerous he was. How dangerous it was. I had no idea where those ideas were coming from, but now I can guess. The addition to my already absolute terror was the fear that their antics would provoke the boy. I didn’t know what sort of danger he posed, and I didn’t want to know.

Once we had warped and were sailing through interstellar space at many times the speed of light everyone was dismissed. The captain dragged the boy off the bridge and the rest of us followed them. I made sure that I was the last to leave, the furthest behind the captain and the boy.

It was early evening, ship time, and we all went to the mess to eat dinner. I ate quickly and silently, I wanted to be able to go off alone as soon as possible. The boy was no longer staring into the back of my skull, but he was still aboard. After eating I went to a secluded spot within the crew module, near the aft end where a lot of the life support equipment was located. Once I was sure I was alone, I collapsed into an alcove and lost it. After the boy and having to keep my composure I was overwhelmed. At some point I stopped freaking out and went into a light doze.

I was brought back to my senses by some commotion on the decks above. It was enough that the noise was transferred through the metal of the crew module. The first thing I noticed was vibrations shaking the pipe my head was leaning against. The next was distant shouts. My heart froze, something had happened. The boy.

At first, I wanted to stay there, just hide and wait out whatever undoubtedly horrible things were happening above. However, eventually my curiosity, or something else, drove me out of my hiding spot and towards what was guaranteed danger. Though being on the same ship as the boy, hell being in the same solar system as it, was just as dangerous than being on the same deck or in the same cabin I still didn’t want to get any closer. Save the odd compulsion drove me onwards.

I went up several decks, it sounded like the commotion was on the highest of the crew quarters decks, the officers’ quarters. The ship had been heavily retrofitted on this level, and it was a bit convoluted, and I had never had any reason to be up there either, so right out of the stairwell I was lost.

Confused, I followed the sounds of shouting through the cramped, short, twisting corridors. Of course, the noise was no help, it was probably coming from multiple locations to

Pass: OMG EASTER EGG LOLOL!!!!!!111!!1

begin with and the dense maze of aluminum did odd things to the sound. I had walked down to long corridors that had apparently went nowhere only for me to find they led to a single cabin by going around it. I was just deciding to turn back and return to my hiding spot when I got to an intersection of corridors and turned a corner.

There, with a completely different demeanor, was the boy. Instead of childish, or imposing, he stood in the middle of the narrow corridor appearing amused, satisfied. He was leaning against the bulkhead, picking his teeth then cleaning out under his nails, flicking the debris against the opposite bulkhead, all the time with a massive grin on his face. I was frozen in place, I watched him for several moments as he hummed to himself. I noticed that the flecks he was flicking away were red, there was a small group of red dots forming on the bulkhead. One impacted with a barely audible splatter as another began to drip down the wall. He looked up at me then, despite my best efforts his eyes locked with mine. He giggled at me.

I stumbled backwards in terror. I couldn’t stop the urge to run that time, it was too great. So I stumbled backwards through the corridor until I tripped over the threshold of a hatch and into the officer’s mess, which was more of a small lounge. Another pirate broke my fall and swore at me for it. I quickly righted myself and looked around, the cabin was full of men, most of them craning to get a look down a corridor through a hatch on the opposite side of the cabin. I rapidly looked back to the corridor I had come from, but the boy was nowhere to be seen.

The guy I had stumbled into asked what was wrong with me. I asked him what had happened.

He answered, “Well it’s hard to tell with all these assholes in the way, but from what I’ve heard the captain was found dead in his cabin, brutally murdered by the sound of it.”

“The boy”, I whispered in shock.

He laughed, “You think the little kid the captain dragged aboard would be able to overpower and murder him? Unless of course you’re suggestin;laksjdf;alsjd;alskjfd

The conversation of all the pirates in the lounge carried on. I barely heard any of it. My face flushed and my ears whined, filling with white noise, filling with my racing thoughts. Through the buzz I heard snatches of the surrounding conversations.

“Ahahaha, can you believe what that dumbass over there said?”

“Do you really believe what some of these idiots are on about?”

“I heard he was ripped limb from limb.”

“They found his guts on the ceiling.”

“Everyone is a suspect.”

“Well, the boy was the last one with the Captain…”

“Don’t be fucking ridiculous.”

I lurched around for a few seconds, eventually finding a bulkhead to lean against. I fished my communicator out of a jumpsuit pocket and checked the time. I had been napping in life support for a couple of hours. It would be many more before the ship left warp.

Pass: MEDIAFIRE MYTH

After a few minutes to catch my breath I started to leave the lounge. I wasn’t sure where I would go, to my bunk, back down the life support, just that I needed to go. As I was exiting the officers began shooing all the crew members out of the lounge. I didn’t want to head to any calm hiding spots with half the ship following me, so I just went to my bunk.

Once there I lay down, ignoring the chatter of my crewmates and attempting to get some rest. I didn’t get any as shortly after the intercom started up and the first officer’s slimy voice hissed and fizzed throughout the ship.

“As many of you are well aware by now, the captain is dead. No, we do not know who killed him, why, or how. And yes, we will be conducting an investigation to discover the murderer of our dear captain. He was a good man, a brave man, and I am saddened at his lost. Effective immediately I am now acting captain.”

There was some more grumbling after that. Shipboard politics wasn’t my concern, however. My concern was the boy, the thing that had come aboard. If it was killing people already there would be no reason for it to stop now. I had to figure out a way to survive. I tried to figure something out, but I just couldn’t. The more my mind raced the further from any conclusion I got. I thought myself in circles, considering ways to convince the rest of the ship, trying to figure out a way to escape on my own, but it was hopeless. Every so briefly I considered taking care of the problem myself, before physically recoiling with terror. It was literally unthinkable to resist him. Escape was my only option. But there was no escape. I was a rat in a tin can, wrapped in an unstable physical phenomenon that rarely failed but did so spectacularly when it did, and lightyears of void around that.

I needed to clear my head. I left my bunk and took a very indirect route to another one of my hiding places. In the back of a short access corridor next to redundant communications terminal no one ever used was a big bundle of cables. Behind those cables was a small stash of alcohol. I took one of the tiny bottles and began sipping from it. It was cheap and there wasn’t a lot of it, but it was something. I leaned against the bulkhead and started thinking.

Only my thoughts were slipping away again. Like before but much worse. I slid down the bulkhead, bumping my back against the probably important shit all over it. I clutched my head, I had to think of something, some way to get out of there. My heart raced, my breath came fast and ragged, I was losing it again. My mind became dense slurry, twisting, twirling, slowly rotating, picking up speed until it was a vicious whirlpool of whitecaps and chaotic collisions of untold vast quantities of thoughts and emotions. Time meant nothing; space meant nothing.

The center of the whirlpool opened, widening as the maelstrom grew in fury, roaring between my ears like a dragon from the wild depths.

The center grew.

The whirling storm of Self became so chaotic it formed order.

Turbulent sound became laminar.

A million million layers of insanity at once formed a solid crystal of clear, bright, singular clarity.

The mindless roar of crashing waves resolved.

Pass: ECHIDNA

Music.

Wild, shrill, and fast.

Instruments unknown.

Daemons of tubes screamed.

Daemons of hollow expanses bellowed.

Daemons of razor thin edges cackled.

Music.

The center widened every more.

The maelstrom now a smooth ring.

Through it I saw a face.

A laughing face.

A face I recognized.

I came to with a start, curled up in a ball on the deck, clutching my head. I felt something in one of my hands. I look at it, the small bottle of cheap beer so tame it couldn’t get a featherweight drunk. It was completely empty. I cursed and whipped it into the barely organized wall of cables. It momentarily tangled in them before bouncing to the ground and rolling along the slightly uneven deck until coming to a stop in the corner with a small impact.

I shakily stood. I was terrified. I stumbled along the access corridor, trying to break into a run but never finding the footing to do so. I made my way from there down a main corridor.

Eventually I ran into another pirate. He threw me off of him and I fell to the deck before scrambling back up.

“Where the fuck have you been? We thought you were fucking dead! Fucking hell what is that smell? You goddamn reek, what kinda shit did you hide away? Holy fuck I might just get drunk sniffin’ you fucking hell.”

“T-t-t-the boy! H-h-it’s… it’s… we- we need to… we’ve, uh, too late. All we can do now is uh, uh…”

“Goddamn stop stuttering you drunk motherfucker. Fuckers have been dying left and right and all you can think of

I haven’t even seen him since before the captain died.”

As I was attempting to collect my thoughts, the pirate vanished. In his place stood the boy. He laughed at me. The sound echoed down the corridor and shook my bones.

I screamed and tried to get away. But I couldn’t turn to run, I couldn’t look away! All I could do was fall on my ass like a fucking idiot and half-heartedly crawl blindly backwards. It became me, an exact copy of me down to the last detail. But it moved in a way I never would, it winked at me with my eyes, and giggled with my voice, before walking away and turning a corner.

I wanted to shout, to ask questions, maybe just scream some more. But my throat was hoarse, and my breath was ragged. I got back to my feet and ran down the corridor, away from where the boy had gone.

Pass: BALL OF SIN

I don’t know how long I ran, blinded with fear. The cramped corridors of the crew module blurred together. I wasn’t sure where I was running to, I was just running away. Though some part of me was looking for help, or at least to just be around another human before I died, some comfort the other pirates would be of course.

I was only shaken from the stupor when my communicator began to ring. I fumbled it out of my pocket, dropping it onto the deck, accidentally answering it as I did so. I could hear someone screaming from it, but not clearly. I dropped down and scooped it up, “-YOU SICK FUCK, I’M GOING TO HUNT YOU DOWN AND KILL YOU.”

The distorted but unmistakable sound of a gun being chambered was heard before the line was cut.

I kneeled there on the deck for a moment in confusion before I remembered. The boy had been wearing my face. I could no longer seek even the simple comfort of my fellow man. I grabbed my hair and screamed. I couldn’t take it anymore.

I threw the communicator down, stood, and stomped on it. I set off towards the life support controls.

The interior of the crew module was cramped and often labyrinthine, but when you’ve spent so much time in one place, you can get used to even the weirdest things. As such, for basically all areas of the crew module save the officers’ quarters, I knew it like the back of my hand. However, the ship was not the same as I remembered it. I noticed a few oddities on my way to life support, but ignored them, instead focusing on my goal. I didn’t want to let whatever magical bullshit the boy was doing stop me so easily. I ignored flowers and weeds poking up through the hexagonal grating that made up much of the deck surface. I ignored vines curling around pipes and cables. I ignored the mist filling the ship. I ignored the sounds of distant, inhuman movement, the sounds of solid things clinking on metal walls and floors, the sound transmitted by the bulkheads and piping. I ignored the gunshots and screams.

I shouldn’t have.

I turned the corner into the short corridor that held the life support controls, and I was in a jungle. Not a mess of unnatural vegetation choking the already crowded corridors of a spaceship, I had already trudged through that. No, I mean a jungle, recognizable only from the stories of wild worlds. Gone were the tight confines of metal, in their place the constricting mass of vegetation, the oppressive humidity, the darkness, the sounds of animals, the life, the chaos.

Still, I kept on, making my way though dense foliage. Collecting cuts and bruises. Falling on my face and eating soft, black, necrotic soil. It took far too long for the short distance to cover, but I made the journey, I got to the life support controls.

The consoles were destroyed. Completely and utterly destroyed. Housings bent and rent. The remains of cables and boards spilling out of the holes. It was half submerged in litter. I yanked open a small access hatch on the side of one of the consoles, and arthropods without name or number came tumbling out in a cacophony of clattering chitin. Some dried out husks, others with exoskeletons still gleaming and tiny eyes full of hunger.

Pass: CLEAR YOUR MIND

I screamed and fell back, falling through a wall of vines and out of the tiny clearing. On the other side it was dark, the draping plant life falling before me, closing the hole I had opened, blocking out the single flickering light that had hung over the consoles. I landed on hard metal covered in softer but far less forgiving growth. On solid ground I got up and ran.

It would not be as easy as cutting the life support. I knew that nearby was an airlock. There were many fail-safes that would attempt to prevent me from opening both hatches at once and spilling everything to the void, but there were ways around that, especially on a ship like this. Back in what was still recognizable as a ship it was a short journey. A short journey to another inexplicable patch of dense jungle. This time guarded by a large mammalian beast. I had tripped over yet another root and ended up kneeling just before the thing. My face hanging just over the frozen scream of another pirate. The beast growled, the pirate’s entrails hanging from its maw, its dark fur matted with human blood. Evidently, I was not the first to have that idea.

I slowly backed away. At this point the terror was all-consuming. I no longer felt it, as if it were just the air. I sat in it, surrounded by it, with each breath it filled me. For once, I was calm, though my heart hammered, and my mind flew.

Away from the beast, I made my way to the bridge. The last hope for ending this.

The ship was filled with it, the wilds. More areas that fell into pure wilderness, all vestiges of human creation destroyed or simply gone. The gunfire and screams became fewer and longer between. In their stead was the sounds of animals and tearing flesh. I have no idea how long it was, but I did eventually make it to the bridge.

Going through that final hatch was like moving between wildly different worlds. Through one last patch of brambles and low-hanging branches and I was into the bridge. Pristine, brightly lit. All the electronics and computers functioning flawlessly. The sounds of hell were gone, replaced by the soft muttering crunch and fluttering lights of idle computers.

I stumbled to my seat, the helmsman’s station. Dripping blood and dirt onto the mostly clean floor. By the time I reached the chair I was leaning on the armrests. I slowly lifted myself over the seat and dropped into it with a sigh. I swiped my hand across the controls and the consoles woke up, screens flaring to life. We were still in warp but would be exiting soon.

I took the moment to close my eyes and relax.

A noise behind me. I froze. I had let my immersion in the terror break. I was above the surface, and subject to the storm-whipped waves. They battered me with unrelenting fury. I was stuck to my chair, eyes wide open, and chest heaving, but unable to move.

I felt something touch the top of the headrest, and slightly shake the chair. It moved down, coming to rest on my head. A hand. With a gentle, almost sensuous touch it wove its fingers into my hair.

A deep, smooth voice spoke right next to my ear, “Hello, helmsman.”

I could hear the smile in it as it continued, “Would you please dock with the first civilian station we come across? If I remember correctly there should be a rather small one near the edge of the system we are about to enter, it should serve me just fine.”

“W-what are you?”, I stuttered.

Pass: ZAMPANIO IS A VERY GOOD GAME YOU SHOULD PLAY IT

It lifted its hand from my head and walked around into my view. It sat with both laziness and grace on a console to my left. A man, tall and muscular. His body was thick and powerful. His face was cut like a fine jewel. His eyes shone like a pair of them. His countenance betrayed great experience that lent his unmarred and wrinkle-free face a sense of extreme maturity. Long curly hair fell from his head, and a great bushy beard covered the lower half of his face. He wore the torn remains of a jumpsuit that left his powerful chest and arms in plain view, thick curly hair covering much of those as well. From the curls just above the corners of his forehead emerged two long horns, bending back in an elegant curve. A garland of fruit-bearing vine circled his head.

“I am a god”, he waved his hand in a dismissive gesture, with a voice to match.

“W-which one?”, I had never been a religious man myself, but I had heard of multiple religions, all of which contradicted not only each other but themselves.

His massive chest moved with a sigh, “Ah, it has been far too long since one of my many names has been spoken. You wouldn’t recognize any of them. Just know that I am Madness. I will always be there when the hypocritical nature of man is dressed in the stolen garb of Order and its false “justice” is forced upon you.

He reached up and took one of the purple fruits growing on his ‘crown’ before popping it into his mouth.

The pirate’s story ended there. Obviously, he made it back to port somehow, as he was there. I tried to get more out of him, at least if the station I had found him on was the one he had docked at, but he wouldn’t talk. He just whispered something and took a drink. He ignored me after that.

Well I had found the story quite entertaining! I hope you do as well. I hope this finds you well. I write as I travel out to Cypres, once I conclude my business there, I’ll be heading right back, see you soon!