Pirate’s toy

Captain Fletcher slowly woke up, suddenly emerging as his sleep wasn’t intentional. Panicking, the young blond pirate captain looked around. Everything was good, he was in the cabin of the silver shark, his vessel, with all his clothes and jewels.
He didn’t remember what happened before sleeping but he was sure thankful that nothing happened to him. A pirate being caught while sleeping could send his name down to the cemetery of shame where many other captains were already.
Just imagine, dozens of guardsmen waking you up to put you in the gaol. Or taken hostage by a rival captain and end up walking on the plank in any way.
All stories were more frightful by another and no one would be up to live it. And for Fletcher and crews, it was another day on the sea where a certain treasure was awaiting them. Something big and even more valuable than any of the riches the Spanish fleet could be transporting.

Fletcher exited his big and luxurious cabin to inspect his crewmen who seemed to be exactly in the same state as him. Just waking up and wondering what just happened before they went to sleep. Everybody on the pirate ship of the line seems to have taken a visit to dreamland, even the ones who weren’t supposed to.
The mystery was thickening and the captain had a hard time coming up with an answer, seemingly losing his voice.

Contrary to the very loud one who seemed to come from heaven itself. “CAPTAINS! SAILORS! PIRATES! I’M CAPTAIN BIG BEARD, I’M GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO BE PART OF MY GLORIOUS CREW AND FLEET!
THE RULES ARE SIMPLE… THERE’S FOUR OF YOU IN THIS ARCHIPELAGO AND YOU’RE GOING TO FIGHT FOR THE PRIVILEGE TO JOIN ME.
YOU CAN ALLY WITH ANOTHER CAPTAIN AND HIS SHIP BUT ONLY ONE. IF YOU MANAGE TO CONVINCE THEM.
YOU CANNOT FLEE FROM THE ARCHIPELAGO.
YOU CANNOT SURRENDER WITHOUT FIGHTING.
IF YOU LIVE AFTER BEING DEFEATED I MAY GIVE YOU ANOTHER CHANCE.
FOR THE REST, NO HOLDS BARRED.
ANYONE DISOBEYING THE RULE WILL MEET A CRUEL AND PAINFUL DEATH… YOU ALL CAN HEAR MY VOICE AND MY POWER IS AS BIG AS IT SO DON’T CHALLENGE MY WORDS. I’LL BE WATCHING YOU ALL SO ENTERTAIN ME AND REMEMBER ALL OF YOUR LIFE ARE IN THE PALM OF MY HAND.”
The silence came back but it would only be for a certain time.

“Get on your battle posts!!! ready the cannons! full sail ahead!” Fletcher screamed. This was no joke. Captain Big Beard is a living legend, the man was powerful and his fleet feared by any captain or sailors transporting gold. There were a lot of stories     about him, scary, strange  and some of them who pretended he had magic was now proven true.
The captain of the silver took out his telescope and surveyed the horizon. Still not believing he could join Big beard’s fleet. Lots of pirates would kill to have this chance and that’s exactly what they were going to do. But if the famous Pirate was picky about who could join him, that would also mean the 3 other captains are going to be hard pieces to chew.
Fletcher wasn’t afraid, he too was indeed good and got some fame but he has readying himself for a harsh battle.
  “Ship to starboard!!!” announced the man posted at the lookout. The captain orientated the telescope to see the detail of it. Seeing what kind of ship it was, what flag it was hoisting and trying to figure out who was the captain.
For a second, Fletcher took away his eyes before looking again. He knew that ship, it was Le Formidable and he perfectly knew the one commanding it as he saw that man was also looking at him with his own telescope. Captain Dumont from the french navy.
What a stroke of luck, Not because he could easily win but he personally knew that man. He earned a pretty big sum of gold, the Frenchman was pretty generous. Especially when he was taking on British ships of the East India Company.
Fletcher went beside the helmsman, tasking the flagman to send a message.
*Ally.* That's what the flag said and he waited for the answer but he was also ready for any ill intention from the other captain.
The Frenchs pulled 3 flags. *Yes*

Gods seemed to be on their side for the moment, if the 2 other ships didn’t allied together at this moment then the odds could seriously be in their favor.
The ships were now sailing side by side, both of them surveying the horizon. They didn’t wait long until they saw who they were going to fight.
Two ships right ahead. One was a british galleon, the other one, a dutch ship of line. At first, Fletcher thought they were allied but seeing the English ship was in front. And when the dutch one made a turn it cleared the situation. The fragile truce quickly established shattered and now it was every man for himself.
Fletcher looked at Dumont, the two of them exactly knew how to do it. The French made a turn but not a sharp one like the cowardly adversary.
He was at a good distance but it was the captain's specialty, long range shot, and the British ship was right into his aim.
“FIRE!!!” Dumont screamed and his crew answered as the left side of his ship spewed fire with several booms.
Woods were flying, holes appeared on sails and black smoke rose at some part of the English ship. They were taking some damage. Not heavy ones but enough to cause a retaliation.
Of course the French vessel was too far as he went right after the dutch, knowing this was Fletcher's moment.
The English were trying to make a turn to the right, the left side cannons all shots to Dumont but in vain. Sadly, for them, they were going to learn why this ship was named, the Silver Shark.
Before the other ship could do anything, Fletcher's vessel rammed it at full speed. knocking off most of the English sailors and damaging the whole right side.
“Fire!” Fletcher ordered too. If the ramming wasn’t enough, the canon shots were going to finish the work. It would be a miracle if the British ship wouldn’t sink after that. The pirates wanted to put all the chances on their side.
“Everyone! On board!” The only way left for the Englishmen to win as they launched their hook on ropes on the Silver Shark. Blades clinking and gunshots were now the only who could be heard as the sailors were fighting on both boats.
When Fletcher located the British captain, isolated at the helm, he decided to hop on the enemy ship too.
Jumping right in front of the other captain pointed his saber and ordered him. “Surrender and you and your men will be spared.”

“You filthy traitor! I will put an end to that disgrace in the name of the crown.” The English captain answered in rage as he drawed out his saber. Both of them were British after but one of them decide to hoist the black flag instead of the union jack.
The duel lasted for several minutes, each captain trying to deliver and dodge blows from their blades.
But the turn finally turned into fletcher as the enemy captain started to get tired and when he delivered a horizontal slash, the other saber flought from the british captain's hand. Disarmed, he tried to seek help from his men but the pirates overwhelmed them as they were too few and surrendered to them. This was the end for them.
“No, no, NOOO!!!” The English captain fled to the wheelhouse in disbelief.

Fletcher joined him and put the blade under his neck. “You’re finished! Just accept your fate with dignity.

This was the routine but suddenly a very loud laugh was heard and shook the core of everyone. “HAHAHAHA, EXCELLENT!!!” The pirate captain didn’t know what was going on but he suddenly saw something big, bigger than anything he saw in his life, descending from the sky. He couldn’t really make out the details of it but he felt his body got slightly compressed and taken up. The ocean went farther and farther away as he was ascending in the sky and he wasn’t alone. The English captain too was making his ascent but the question was where. It couldn’t be heaven, this what Fletcher thought as pirates were far from fitting the rule to enter the kingdom of angels.

When the ascension finally stopped they realised they weren’t closer of god. Unless he was a giant black bearded man wearing a black tricorn and smoking a wood pipe. “Congratulations captain Fletcher, you'll be a perfect addition to my fleet.” The giant announced.
It became clear to the pirate, this was captain Big Beard and right now he was merely a bug pinched between two titanic fingers. “As for you, Captain Hastings… I hope that not all the kingdom of england captains are as useless as you. Otherwise I seriously have doubts about the future of the British isles.” This was no doubt the legendary captain, not only was he fearful but his tongue and mind was as sharp as a blade.

“Please, Captain Big Beard! Give me another chance!!!” He begged. This officer was doing the ultimate disgrace of begging to his enemy. If he wasn’t hanged by the massive appendage, he would get on his knees and maybe licking boots.

The giant pirate exhaled smoke through his nose before he sternly addressed the pathetic captain, in size and as a man. “It was your 3rd one. You survived each time and too many sailors died due to your incompetence…” He seemed to hesitate for a few seconds before he brought the tiny captain compared to him, closer to his pipe.

“NO! \*cough\* \*cough\* I don’t want to \*cough\* You forced me!!!” the Englishman said as he was coughing from smoke coming from the pipe.

The giant just ignored him and simply bided. “Goodbye captain Hastings.” Before he released his grip on the bug sized man.
The British captain screamed and coughed as felled into the opening where the smoke was coming out. Fletcher was horrified when he saw him disappear into a brown wood tube. knowing the fate of the other captain being the same as the leaves inside it, if he actually survives the fall.
Big beard took a long drag on his pipe, like he wanted to make sure the micro captain would be burned. Before puffing out the smoke and turning his gaze to his other hand. With an unexpected smile the giant pirate announced. “Let’s see where the 2 remaining contestants are.” Before he bent forward allowing the tiny captain to see.

Fletcher forgot the gruesome killing, being amazed by the place he was just a few minutes ago. The whole thing looked like a miniature archipelago like a toy or a model some nobles have for showing their estates and lands.
But this one felt real, he experienced it and still could see it. There were some winds to make the vessels go, waves and sun. A little part of the world was reduced and sealed into 4 walls made of glass. Speaking about them, the tiny pirate captain could finally see his friend Dumont was still chasing the still fleeing dutch.

“You mustn’t go out of the archipelago captain Velde!” Big beard warned.
But it fell on deaf ears, which is pretty hard considering how powerful the voice is. Fletcher didn’t remember seeing any glass wall at the horizon when he was in and wondered what was going to happen when the sheep would reach it.
The answer didn’t wait, the dutch boat crashed right into it adding big damages to the ones done earlier. The vessel was zigzagging, stunned by the crash as the giant captain got his hand onto the bridge. He then pinched and craned something back at his eye level.
“I told you to not try to flee and fight.” Big beard then smiled and licked his lips. “You broke the rule and lost so I must apply a punishment. Before he opened his mouth a little and deposed the tiny dutch who screamed some words but Fletcher didn’t speak the language to understand it.
Then the mouth closed, sealing the tiny captain's fate as the giant one didn’t chew but swallowed him whole. Sending him straight into his stomach where tides of another genre would promise an awful death to the dutch man.
Fletcher saw all this and was terrified by it. The giant pirate captain then fetched Dumont before he congratulated the tiny pair. “Well done gentlemen, you’ve brilliantly vanquished your enemies.” Before he walked to what seemed to be a model boat and tapped his foot twice.
The upper deck opened revealing a tiny captain cabin with a tiny man who looked like Big Beard with his red coat.
The giant gently dropped the two men who were trying to understand. The pirate captain was beside them, at their size and interacting with the tiny boat. But he was also the giant above them and closing the roof.
Big Beard then walked to them. “I figured I needed you to be normal sized if I wanted to shake your hands and have a drink to welcome you into my glorious fleet.” Which he promptly did.
After a glass of rum, the freshly arrived captain prepared for their leaves but the pirate captain with the big balck beard warned them. “I must remind you that if you deceive me or betray me, well, I let your imagination run on what I can do to an insect sized man. what you already saw was just a taste.” He then smiled. “As for the moment, enjoy the island of Tortuga where we are docked while your vessels are repaired. I’ll see you later.”

A week passed.
Fletcher entered the captain's Big Beard cabin as he got summoned by the bearded pirate, who wasn’t there at the moment.
He waited a few minutes before his gaze went to the miniature archipelago once. Then two and three times before he decided to get closer to examine it in detail. He thought about how amazing it was before he noticed that a bunch of men were actually on one of the 6 islands making the archipelago.
They were dancing and cheering as a bottle who surely would like a giant monolith for them were lying beside.
The normal sized captain wanted to get his hand into it, trying to see how it feels.

“Fascinating isn’t it?” A voice erupted, making Fletcher flinch, scared by the sudden sound.

When he turned, he saw captain Big Beard who just entered without a sound and was smiling. “Ah! Hum...Yeah… Truly amazing.”

The bearded pirate captain chuckled. “If you bring me back a big loot I will let you play with tiny prisoners but right now it’s only my men who are partying.” He then carefully put a box aside the tiny men before absentmindedly said. “Being tiny can sometimes bring some advantages.”

Curious, Fletcher asked. “Nobody ever escaped from this?” Looking down, thinking it was already the case.

The pirate captain who was going to sit at the desk nonchalantly explained. “I already found some in my beard but no one on the floor and I’m going on four to look. If they are, I wish them good luck. Between boots, rats and insects, it’s not a wise choice to wander around with such a small size.”

The new subordinate cleared his voice as he got back on the main subject. “You actually wanted to see me captain?” Picturing himself battling against ants and spiders before being smothered by a big black boot.

“Ha! Yes. I want you and your friend Dumont to sail to Port Royale. I heard about a Spanish boat transporting a chest with precious gems, especially... Big diamonds. discover which boat it is and get back here to tell me before they join their treasure fleet.” The captain explained and then threatened. “Dismiss but before... You perfectly know what’s happening to the captains who deceived me.” Tapping his finger on his stomach.

Fletcher turned and said before opening the door. “I know… And I won’t, captain.” before leaving, not showing his actual fear. Last week's vision was still haunting him.
When he got on his ship, as he was still wondering how Big Beard managed to get it back to normal size, he called for the french captain before going into the Silver Shark’s cabin.

“Rester ici et faites en sorte que personne ne nous écoute." He said in French, ordering his subordinate to stay and make sure nobody spy on them. “So, What are the orders from captain Big Beard?” He asked.

Fletcher simply explained. “He’s sending us to Port Royale to locate a ship transporting a treasure. I may know some people who could help us over there.”

Captain Dumont noded simply saying. “Alright, nothing hard. As for the other thing?”

The English pirate looked at him puzzled. “What other thing? I told you the plan before we parted away.”

“I mean…” The French man looked at captain Big Beard's vessel through the window. “Are we really going to stay under Big Beard’s commandement?”

“Of course not! I don’t think anyone would like to stay with a captain who will literally smoke us or even worse, gobble us, If he’s dissatisfied.” Fletcher hesitated which was the worse between the two.

Dumont asked, a little worried. “So what do we do?”

The pirate captain raised his head, thinking. Before answering. “We obey his orders, without any question, like good dogs. We make some gold and we stick to our original plan. Once we will have the lamp we will wish for a treasure beyond imagination and we’ll give him a part big enough to buy our freedom.”

The french captain snorted. “Sharing with him?”

“I don’t want to make an enemy of that man and we can have many more with the lamp.” Fletcher assured him. “But you’re right, if he doesn’t agree we’ll have to get rid of him…”

Dumont nodded before he went to the door. “You’re the one leading this plan but don’t forget you owe me one for the time you almost got yourself at the end of the rope. I will try to hasten the search for the cave location. The sooner I will be away from that bearded guy, the better I will be.” He quickly opened it and went away with his subordinate.

But the pirate captain couldn’t rest yet, as soon as the French man left, another man entered, his arms full of papers and others rolled into his pocket. “Captain Big Beard sent me to see if you have any requests for this mission. Weapons, powder or any other resource.”

“Just some gold to bribe some mens.” He quickly said, clearly annoyed by the man.

“Just a second.” The seemingly secretary took a charcoal from his pocket, making a roll of paper fall from it. “So how much do you think you need?”

Fletcher rolled his eyes. “A full sack of it, I don't know how much it is but I don’t need full chests of it. Does he really have to know?”

The secretary nodded. “Yes, he needs to know. Especially if it’s gold or costly.” A disguised and elegant way to say he was a cheapskate. “Is there anything else you need?” the man insisted.

“No!” The captain answered, getting more and more angered.

“Are you really sure? it’s better to be well prepared even if you bring some back we can always store it back.” The secretary didn’t really got the message despite Fletcher’s face and tone.

“Get out!” At this moment he would have been ready to feed this guy to the sharks if he didn’t leave on the spot.
But his scream seemed to work as the man collected the paper his pocket lost and ran from the cabin. Some alone time at last.
Fletcher exhaled in relief, comfy in his chair as his mind wandered around as he waited for his vessel to set sail.

For a moment, when he played with a grape he almost crushed, he wondered how it could feel to have a tiny in the palm of his hand. He actually wanted to learn the secret of captain Big Beard.

A few moments later, after the departure of the Silver Shark and Le Formidable.
Captain Big Beard was still in his cabin lighting his pipe to puff. When his “secretary” entered.

“Ah.” He welcomed him with eagerness in his tone. “Have you retrieved our bug?” He asked.

"Absolutely!”  He deposed the paper that earlier fell from his pocket on the captain’s desk.

The bearded man smiled. “Excellent, dismiss I don’t need you anymore for today.” The secretary nodded and left without adding anything.
Once he was away the pirate captain took the roll and taped it on his desk, like he wanted to get something out of it. When a tiny man the size of an ant actually got out, landing on the wood.
Captain Big Beard disposed of the paper before he addressed the man on his desk. “So! Have you heard anything useful? Like if those two are going to betray me?” He then blow some smoke at him. “Hurry, I don’t have the day.”

The shrunken man coughed a few times, before facing the way bigger than him, captain. “No they won’t. They’re afraid of you, captain.”

Big Beard chuckled. “That’s how I keep my men, 2 doses of care, 1 dose of terror. Anything else.”

The ant sized man cleared his voice. “But like a lot of them, they want to flee. They are talking about a treasure beyond any imagination and giving you a part of it to let them go.”

The pirate captain exhaled, making the tiny man tumble by the stream of smoke. “I heard that tale too many times to believe that promise without any proof.” Before he took his “spy” between his fingers and brought him to his face. “Have you heard anything else?”

But the shrunken man just answered. “No… Nothing else. They’re still looking for the cave which contains it. That’s all.”
  But that doesn’t satisfy the captain's hunger for info on Fletcher and Dumont. “Are you sure? You don’t know anything else?” He angrily said as he dangled the tiny spy above his pipe.

The shrunken man coughed due to the smoke coming out of the wooden thing. “That's all I know, I swear! \*cough\* \*cough\* They say that to obtain the treasure they had to make a wish to a lamp to have it!” \*cough\*

Bigbeard moved his spy away from the stream of smoke. “Wait! You said a lamp and wish?”

The small man just said “Yes…” which for some reason made the pirate captain laugh.

Big beard stood up, laughing like crazy for a few minutes before he concluded. “I can’t believe the 2 men I just recruited will lead me to the fabled genie lamp.” He laughed a last time before he got closer to the mini archipelago and looked at his shrunken spy who was still in his hand.

He crept him closer to the pipe. “Captain, please no! I did what you wanted.” Fearing of being burned alive with the leaves the pirate was smoking.

Before Big Beard changed and dropped him into the archipelago just adding. “You earned it.”

Once on the island, the spy who was now in place scaled to his size, was welcomed by one of subordinate. “Senor Santos, you're back! I feared the worst happening to you, are you okay?”

“Never been better.” The man answered, dusting himself. “I just found a possible way out and maybe how to get rid of those damn pirates once for all.”

The adventure only started.