

Paturally, a recent regional drought had left the Mornstallinar channel slightly drier than usual, leaving Marlton’s low-hulled ship stranded halfway down its length. I couldn’t tell if Jeffers was laughing or crying at the coincidence.

While Marlton screamed at the short, stocky Mornstallinarian carpenters now tearing his ship apart, I found myself sitting under a nearby tree and chatting to his first mate, a spritely lass named Ebby.

“I’ve never seen the captain this angry,” she said. “Or anyone.”

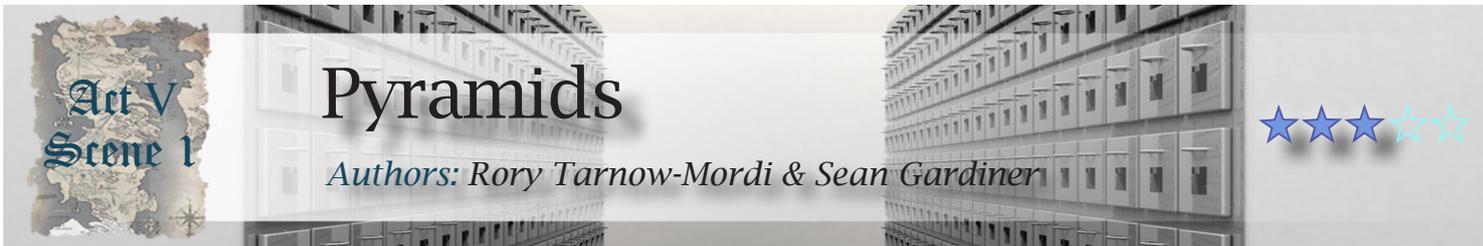
“He does seem to be taking the destruction of his vessel quite poorly,” I said dryly. “How long have you been in his crew?”

“Ever since I ran away from Lord Holayn’s navy. He was an absolutely horrible captain and a worse person. He built these huge ships, much too big considering he rules the smallest region, and used them to harass Lady Jacquelis and Lady Gyrook to no end. Whoever was closest, I guess.”

“EBBY!” roared Captain Marlton. “Get off the ground and get back here!”

“Yes Cap’n!” she yelled back, and ran off without another word.

I paid the rest of my due to Marlton and set off walking again towards my next destination – no time for dismantling ships.



meets the expense of
 dressed, often for a special occasion
 examined financial accounts
 alert; not sleeping
 that guy
 fate; many
 covers with green oxidation
 device for calling people
 sped; organised
 sing tunelessly; hit
 decay; nonsense
 lounge that folds out to become a sleeping area
 pilfered; scarf
 hackneyed; rubbed by use
 liquid animal waste

