

Chapter 40: Dread Faction Advances!

"Welcome back, Captain! I have a few updates for you regarding the missions you assigned."

Pedro's voice was the first sensation that James registered as he logged into the game. As he opened his eyes, it surprised him to see Pedro covered in a mixture of blood, sweat and soot. He was behind his desk, pouring out two glasses of Camila's special reserve whiskey. A tired smile appeared on his face as he offered James one glass.

"What happened, Pedro? Are you okay?"

James asked as he took the whiskey.

Pedro leaned against his own desk as he reached forward and clinked James' glass with his own, a wide smile appearing on his face.

"We've been very busy while you were away."

Taking a long drink, Pedro unfurled one of his fingers from the glass and gestured at the map on the wall.

James turned his head, but the map had reverted to a mixture of weird shapes and indecipherable text. He was so curious to know what the results were of the missions, but he knew that if he activated the locket around his neck, then he'd be at a severe disadvantage in the upcoming battle. Being able to identify things and use the in-game prompts were important skills that he'd rather save for later.

"Sorry, Pedro. I can't activate the locket yet, I'm going to need it later."

Pedro's eyes snapped down to the locket before he grunted in understanding.

"Trust me. Use it now."

A coy smile crossed his face as he took another drink of whiskey, and James sighed in defeat. He thought his resolve would be better than this, but a moment later he was activating the locket.

Just like before, the entire office transformed as James gained a single, temporary point of intelligence. He gained the ability to read, comprehend, and identify things around him. The map that decorated the wall shimmered momentarily before finally revealing its secrets.

"Whoa, that's a lot of notifications! What the hell happened?"

James muttered as he stepped closer to the map of Rayth, his outstretched finger pressed against one light near the centre of the town.

Quest Success!

- **Recruit the Merchant:**
 - Luis Maravedí has joined the Dread Faction
 - 10% Trade Bonus
 - Selling: Tools, Trinkets and Construction Materials
 - Buying: Weapons and Armour.

Pedro convinced Luis, the travelling Merchant, to align with the Dread Faction.

"That wasn't a mission that I gave you?"

James turned around in confusion, wondering what caused Pedro to go against his wishes.

The Quartermaster merely took another drink as he gestured again at the board, as if to tell James to continue.

Quest Success!

- **Subjugate the Goblins**
 - Reputation with the Faction Bosses of Rayth has increased.
 - Reputation with the People of Rayth has increased.
 - Defeated Goblin Skirmishers (30/30)
 - Defeated Goblin Champions (3/3)
 - Defeated Goblin Hero (1/1)
 - Uncovered Plot of Goblin Invasion

The Goblins have been banding together to attack travellers in the woods. After investigating, the Dread Faction found that they've been following the orders of a Goblin Hero that recently ranked up. Further investigation at their camp shows their plans to launch an attack on Rayth!

Quest Success!

- **Thwarting the Goblin Invasion**

- Reputation with the Faction Bosses of Rayth has increased.
- Reputation with the People of Rayth has increased.
- Defeated Goblin Soldiers (45/45)
- Defeated Goblin Generals (4/4)
- Defeated Goblin War Chief(1/1)

Before dying, the Goblin War Chief pulled out a strange artifact and attempted to teleport away from the battle! Thankfully, Shari was too fast for him and cut him down. On his body was a parchment, written in the common tongue... explaining how to breach Rayth's defences. It also highlighted where the next weapon supply drop would be.

Quest Success!

- **Drawing out the Culprit**

- Reputation with the Faction Bosses of Rayth has increased.
- Reputation with the People of Rayth has increased.
- Defeated Robed Assailants (10/10)
- Successfully Raided the Supply Drop (1/1)
- Defeated Lead Cultist (1/1)

The Cultist took his own life before we could interrogate him, but we raided his inventory and found some notes in an unknown language... Maybe a scholar in the Galar Faction would know something about it?

"Not bad for a single day of work, if you ask me."

Pedro admitted nonchalantly as he refilled his now empty glass. The smug expression on his face didn't waver in the slightest as James continued to speed through the notifications on the map.

When he received no answer from the Dread Pirate, he continued to make a few remarks.

"Recruiting Shelf was such a good idea. He made the Protection Racket mission so much easier just by being beside me."

James shook his head for a second, not sure if he heard that sentence correctly.

"Shelf?"

Pedro simply nodded as though it was obvious.

"Yeah, the Chef that's an Elf. The one with the impossible name. I was calling him Chef Elf and it just kinda became Shelf after a while."

James just stared at the large man for a few moments.

"I think he likes it, if I'm honest."

Pedro added as he raised the whiskey bottle invitingly.

James merely shook his head on both accounts before looking back at the map. Just as Pedro had said, they had completed the mission that had made him anxious.

Quest Success!

- **Establish a Foothold in Rayth**
 - The Dread Faction now controls over 25% of Rayth
 - The Dread Faction has reestablished their Protection Racket

"Pedro, there are dozens of completed quests here... how is this even possible? In less than a day, too. All of this would take me weeks to get through!"

James asked in confusion as he continued to go through the quests. He hadn't yet come across a single failure. Some reports were for the acquisition of territory, others were successful trading partnerships with the local businesses. They all had one other factor in common, other than being successful.

"You took part in all of them?"

Pedro shrugged as he walked around to the other side of his desk.

"I genuinely haven't had this much fun in a long time. The morale of the men was incredible, and I wish you saw Shari and Otto in that forest!"

He reached down into his desk, much like the other evening where he presented James with the Trinket that granted his intelligence. This time he took out a small wooden box with an intricate latch on the side.

"The way they killed those Goblins with such passion! You trained them well."

Pedro remarked as he turned the box around and slid it across the desk toward James.

"We gained a lot of loot from the Forest, and our new trader friend bought practically everything we showed him."

Taking his hand away from the whiskey for the briefest moment, Pedro opened the box to reveal a neatly folded piece of black cloth.

"Except this. I thought it might come in useful for when we recruit a tailor or something. We could make it into a great little piece of armour for you."

James' mouth opened in surprise as the locket around his neck identified the item immediately.

- **Cultist's Sash** (Rare Crafting Component)
 - Grants Intelligence Bonus.

"Why doesn't it say a specific number?"

James asked aloud, wondering if Pedro knew the answer.

"It gets a value based on the skill of the Artisan that makes the piece of armour for you. I already went around the entire town, and there's nobody skilled enough to use it... or willing to try."

Pedro shrugged sadly. But James had another thought.

Without another word, the Dread Pirate picked up the piece of fabric and pulled it around his waist underneath his large great cloak. Tying it into a firm knot, he waited.

Pedro raised his hands in expectation, and James just laughed as he inspected his new 'equipment' to see if it worked.

You have received a new piece of Equipment!

- **Crude Cultist Garb** (Uncommon)
 - +2 to Intellect
 - Ability Granted: Inspect
 - Ability Granted: Learning
 - Ability Granted: Comprehension

"I don't think I've ever seen anyone so happy to ruin a Rare piece of equipment."

Pedro laughed as he gestured at it.

"It looks... terrible."

James couldn't have cared less about how it looked. He was finally free of the curse that Calista had put on him.

"Thank you so much, Pedro. For this gift, for completing all of those quests... even when you didn't need to! I really appreciate it."

The Dread Pirate was genuinely earnest in his thanks and praise, which clearly resonated with Pedro, who coughed awkwardly.

"Don't worry about that, come on... I want you to see the Merchant shop thing that Luis is setting up. It looks impressive!"

James opened the door to the office and gestured for the Butcher to lead the way.

"Do you think he has any Health Tonics or Potions?"

The Butcher nodded as he exited the office.

"Tonnes of them. The Goblins didn't drop any in the forest, but those Cultists? You wouldn't believe the amount of them. Cut one down, and the little bottles of tonic just burst out of them. It was crazy."

Pedro turned and made an explosive gesture with his hands.

"Why do you need them? I can tell you're at full health already."

James paused for a moment as he looked down across the railing, to where the Dread Faction members were sparring with each other or taking care of their equipment. It was a completely different scene to the boisterous atmosphere of the Escravo Cartel.

Looking back up to meet Pedro's quizzical expression, James simply blurted out his plan.

"I'm going to go to the bottom of the Dread Lake, get a Legendary ship called the Tempest... and kill the Void Kraken that guards it."

Pedro just stared at James for a few seconds before he burst out laughing.

"Is that all?"

James returned the laugh as he shook his head.

"No. I'm also going to Break the Wall."

Pedro's laughter only grew louder as he descended the stairs.

"Ha, ahh... where did I leave my gauntlets?"

James sat at the edge of the table and wrote a few figures on a nearby piece of parchment. He had spent the better part of an hour listing out everything he had learned with Jackal and was brainstorming on a few undecided pieces of his plan. There was an opportunity available to him at the moment that wasn't in his original plans, and he wanted to see if he could incorporate it into his strategy.

Shari and Pedro had completed a lot more quests than James had thought possible... which left him with a massive pool of experience. He couldn't use his share as he had reached the maximum level for his rank. So, instead of just leaving it there, James utilised it.

You have Created a Quest Line!

The Quest: 'Breaking the Wall' has been updated!

Pedro grunted as he shuffled through the door with an armful of papers. Camila gave the Butcher a wary eye as continued to lean against the bar. Her face was a picture of disbelief as her gaze darted between James and Pedro, but neither men from the Dread Faction paid her any heed.

After a few more moments of being ignored, the club owner threw up her hands in the air in exasperation.

"Are you going to explain why I keep getting issued quests from you?"

Camila exploded as she pulled a single glass from the countertop, her eyes darting across the various bottles of wine that littered the surrounding shelves.

Pulling open the parchment, James ignored the notifications that appeared at the edge of his vision. Since he had equipped the sash around his waist, the world of Abidden had been throwing countless tool-tips and prompts at him.

"I'll explain everything once the other faction leaders get here."

James answered absentmindedly as he continued to scratch numbers onto the pages.

Camila shook her head as she uncorked a bottle of her reserve Whiskey.

"I'm telling you, they won't come here. This plan is suicide!"

Pedro casually walked across to Camila and reached over the bar to retrieve a glass. With a presumptuous smile, he placed it deliberately beside her own glass as he looked longingly at the whiskey.

Camila stared at him as she poured for herself. Without so much as a blink, she corked the bottle and returned it to its shelf, leaving Pedro visibly dismayed.

The Butcher glanced at his empty glass for a moment before he spoke.

"I'm sensing... you're upset?"

Camila stared daggers at the former leader of the Escravo Cartel.

"You lost, to a fucking Pirate that wants to get us all killed. What do you think?"

James looked up with a frown on his face.

"This is your only chance to break the wall and have access to the outside world, is that not worth the risk?"

Camila crossed her arms as she looked squarely at the Dread Pirate.

"Your plan requires the participation of all the Faction Leaders, at substantial risk... that primarily benefits you. Please excuse me for not falling at your feet or begging for the opportunity to die."

Pedro, sensing an opportunity, lunged forward and grabbed the glass of whiskey from the countertop.

Camila hissed at the Butcher who immediately regretted his decision and replaced the glass where he found it.

The owner of the Veil picked up the glass and downed it in one go, much to Pedro's dismay.

James smiled at her words. It was easy to pick out her primary concern.

"What type of benefits would you like, that would outweigh the risk?"

Camila's expression transformed immediately as the negotiation began.

"I want ownership of the docks to start with. I want a stake in the Dread Faction's protection ring, with no incurred costs for myself and my VIP clientele. Then..."

Camila went on the offensive as she pulled two glasses from the shelf and walked over to where James sat. She poured him a drink as she continued to list her demands.

"... I'd like to change the nature of our relationship from mutual help to an equal alliance. Lastly, Pedro needs to stop stealing from my reserve."

Her smile was radiant as she raised her glass to make a toast, but James merely shook his head.

"I know the usual tactic is to start from a high point and negotiate down, but don't you think that's a little excessive?"

Camila tilted her head to one side.

"As I said, it's a substantial risk... so I need to make it worth my while."

Pedro shook his head vehemently, advising James to reject the deal, and the Dread Pirate knew exactly which clause was concerning the Butcher.

Placing the quill back into the inkwell, James sighed and leaned back in his chair. He really needed this to work, but he would not tie his own noose.

"We'll zone a segment of the docks that doesn't affect our plans for a future Shipyard, and you'll have ownership of it. You can have a 10% stake in the protection ring. You can be exempt, but your VIPs still will get hit. We can enter an alliance and Pedro will stop stealing your whiskey."

James raised his own glass to mirror Camila's gesture, but the owner of the Veil wasn't impressed.

"50% of the Protection Racket. 50% of the Docks. Alliance between Factions and my VIPs are exempt."

James looked around the room and had a thought.

"If you give me 50% of the Viska Network, with joint-ownership of the Veil, then you have a deal."

Camila's expression darkened as she leaned back in her own chair with arms folded.

"You're not very good at negotiating, are you?"

James gave a wry expression as he shrugged his shoulders.

"Not really... I didn't exactly negotiate with Pedro. I just used violence and took what I wanted by force. I'm still a little new to this."

The Dread Pirate's tone was friendly, but his intent carried across the table with ease.

Camila frowned as she looked at Pedro, as if the Butcher could help her in this situation.

The large man just waved his hand dismissively.

"Don't worry, Sylvian guaranteed me you'd be safe if we went to war with your Faction."

All colour left Camila's face as she turned back to James.

"Not the Bar... can we go back to the previous terms?"

Her voice was strained and there was anger in her eyes, which made James very careful about what he said next.

"I'll give you 25% of the Protection Racket with the Veil and your VIPs being exempt from payments. You'll get 25% of the Docks... but Pedro can still have the Whiskey. Our factions will also enter an Alliance. Deal?"

Camila's eyes narrowed, wondering why the Dread Pirate had suddenly eased off on the negotiation.

Pedro whistled softly in the background.

"Sounds like a pretty amazing deal, Camila."

Camila raised her glass and clinked it against James'.

Camila from the Viska Network has accepted your Quest.

The Viska Network has entered an Alliance with The Dread Faction.

Pedro sighed with relief as he pulled a chair over to their table.

"With us having already accepted, that just leaves Yerstis, Lucius and Fibber!"

Camila exhaled slowly as she looked back at James with a reluctant expression.

"Lucius and Yerstis are dependable and fair. Fibber is a piece of shit that cannot be trusted... you should create a plan that doesn't involve him."

Pedro nodded in agreement, but James gestured at the notes he had written in front of him.

"The plan becomes practically impossible without Fibber."

A raspy laughter filled the room, and James turned to see Fibber standing in the bar's doorway. His frilly plume was bobbing as he turned his head, a shit-eating grin plastered on his face.

"Practically impossible without me? Such flattery, and you're not using your Roguish Charm abilities... I'm intrigued!"

Fibber made his way towards the main table covered in parchment, his eyes flitting over the various scrolls as he did so.

"Topography of the surrounding areas, maps from before the construction of the wall... and written testimonials of the Void Kraken sightings?"

Fibber's voice barely disguised his surprise and confusion, but it was enough to impress James. The faction leader could instantly identify the assortment of scrolls with nothing but a cursory glance.

A group of cowed figures followed Fibber into the room, tomes clasped under their arms.

Camila gave the Faction Leader a withering look, but Fibber merely waved his hand as though it was obvious.

"I'm at war with most of you, and I wasn't about to walk into my death. They'll be standing by while we talk..."

Fibber's face darkened and his voice became strained.

"I would advise you... to choose your next actions carefully, Lucius."

James gave Pedro a look of confusion, but it was Camila that reacted fastest.

"Stop it right now!"

As if by magic, the air beside Fibber glimmered momentarily to reveal a short man with a wicked grin on his face. In his hand was a dagger that was resting against Fibber's neck.

"At least let me cut off the feather?"

Lucius pleaded of Camila, who was storming toward the short man. In a flash, he disappeared and reappeared over James' right shoulder, looking at all the maps with genuine interest.

Pedro's laughter ripped through the empty bar as Fibber practically growled at the owner of the Alldark Orphanage.

As James turned to introduce himself, it surprised him to see Otto perched happily on Lucius' shoulder.

James extended his hand, but Lucius' eyes were fixed on the documents in front of James. After a moment, a wide smile appeared on his face.

"This looks like fun."

Lucius has accepted your Quest.

Before James could say a word, another notification popped up.

Yerstis has accepted your Quest.

As if in explanation, Lucius spoke up.

"Yerstis said he'd accept if I accepted. We're allied with each other and he trusts my judgement. The Galar Faction is in a bit of an upheaval at the moment, so he can't make it to the meeting today."

James turned to look at Fibber, who was the integral piece of the plan. He wondered what sort of terms and conditions the Vigo Syndicate would ask of him in exchange for help.

Fibber didn't follow Lucius' behaviour and ignored the maps and notes. Instead, he looked at the Dread Pirate directly with a curious expression on his face.

"We can play this charade back and forth, or we can just come out and say what it is we want. What do you say?"

James knew it was a tactic, but wanted to keep Fibber sweet, so he merely nodded. The Faction Leader wanted to know what James wanted most, which would put the Dread Pirate in a bad negotiation position.

Yet, much to the surprise of everyone in the room... Fibber spoke first.

"I will support you in your Quest as it aligns with my own ambitions."

James could barely disguise his surprise as Fibber explained what he wanted.

Camila nodded as she added her own perspective.

"While that wall remains, we're big fish in a little pond. Albeit, a pond filled with nightmarish horrors that keep us trapped on this bastard of an island."

Lucius and Pedro nodded in agreement, but Fibber shook his head.

"Don't misunderstand, the wall isn't a problem for me... which is why you want me for your plan."

James couldn't help but laugh. Fibber had already figured out what the Dread Pirate wanted from him.

Fibber took a seat as he looked at James with a thoughtful expression.

"I want to help you with that other quest you have."

The Leader of the Vigo Syndicate gestured at James' missing eye.

A terrifyingly resolute expression crossed his face as he spoke his genuine desire.

"I want to help you kill Calista."

Fibber has accepted your Quest.

James sighed in relief as the pop-up appeared in front of him.

All Required Members have Accepted your Quest!

Would you like to begin: *Legendary Alliance*?

"You've gone silent."

James taunted the larger man as they stood at what remained of the old docks, but Pedro didn't take the bait. He continued to look out to the eerily quiet black waters of the Dread Lake. It was as ominous as it was terrifying, and Pedro wanted absolutely nothing to do with it.

"I'm just thinking that there has to be another way. You saw how quickly we cleared out the forest and took back control of our districts. We could probably have a shipyard built in no time at all."

The Dread Pirate turned around in surprise as Pedro waved his arm in the forest's direction and the town. His attention and focus was anywhere but the dark waters ahead.

"You don't have to come with me. I understand that you're scared, some people are just more suited to enslaving helpless women and children. Leave the *Legendary Battle* to me."

It was as though James had flicked a switch. All anxiety and worry disappeared from the larger man, leaving an unimpressed look on his face.

"Wow."

Pedro just shook his head with a wry smile on his face.

"I should have expected that from you..."

He gestured at the *Moonlight Pistol* at James' hip.

"... since you love taking cheap shots."

Shari's voice interrupted both of the men as she called out excitedly.

"Sylvian! Are we ready to start?"

James turned to greet his Follower when the words suddenly caught in his mouth. Whatever he had expected, the current Shari was not it.

Name:	Shari
Class:	Death Blade
Title:	Goblin Massacrer
Level:	3
Rank:	Unique
Deity:	Dervius
Race:	Human
Alignment:	Villain
Affinity:	Darkness, Poison
Domain:	Rayth

Shari's equipment had grown along with her Class. It looked like her clothing was of darkness itself, with slight tendrils of smoke moving silently with her imperceptible movements. Her once porcelain face was now ashen, as though something had drained her life force. James' attention snapped to the ethereal green glow of Shari's eyes, that glimmered regardless of the lighting. The only remaining characteristics of Shari that he recognised was the knife she equipped at her side, and the beaming smile on her face.

"You're Unique Class? The same as Pedro?"

James asked in both shock and awe. The dramatic rise to power was possible for people like the Paragons, but he didn't expect NPC's being able to match that meteoric ascension.

Shari turned her head and clicked her fingers expectantly. Before James could even blink, men and women covered in dark robes surrounded Shari. Their equipment was familiar to James, as he had seen Shari wearing them when she was a Rogue.

"Dervius encouraged me to create a kill team, and I've been training them all night. We've been taking down all the different Goblin factions in the forest, and most recently we've been killing Cultists during their secret meetings and supply drops."

Before James could say anything, Pedro cut in with a beaming smile on his face.

"Shari has been a fantastic leader for the lower ranks in the Dread Faction. Their kill team could probably take me out if they tried at this point."

In a flash, Shari appeared on the other side of Pedro and gave him a gentle nudge in the side.

"Same team, remember? But thanks."

James marvelled at how quickly she could move and wanted to know more about her new class when a thought struck him.

"Where have you been all day? I didn't see you at the Headquarters."

Shari gestured behind her where a group of over a hundred people were slowly marching forward.

"Had to round up the Dread Faction."

James followed Shari's gesture and watched as an enormous group of people made their way towards the shoreline.

"Did we always have this many people?"

He asked in bewilderment.

Pedro was the one that answered this time.

"We're officially respected in Rayth these days, which boosted the influx of recruits. Guess that's what happens when you put someone as charismatic as me in charge of the Faction Quests."

The Butcher puffed up his chest ever so slightly and tilted his head in mock embarrassment.

Shari snorted at those words.

"Yeah, and nothing to do with the fact that public safety has never been higher?"

James tried counting the number of people that were approaching the shore, but he couldn't keep track of the numbers.

"What's the headcount for the Dread Faction?"

James asked Pedro, who scratched at his beard as he thought about the answer.

Shari gave the Butcher a withering look as she reeled off the numbers.

"We have over one hundred members in the Dread Faction. Recruitment of former slaves brought up the numbers dramatically, and we've had an influx of new recruits coming in off the street too. We have three members at Unique Level which include, myself, Pedro and Aos Si..."

James raised a hand to interrupt Shari.

"We've another Unique Rank in the Dread Faction? Who is Aos Si?"

Pedro started to laugh but Shari gave him a harder jab in the ribs which caused the larger man to cough apologetically.

"That's the guy I was telling you about before. Shelf. The Chef Elf."

James just stared at Pedro for another moment before the larger man relented.

"Fine. Aos Si."

Shari continued her report, but this time with a slight edge to her voice.

"Since Pedro and Aos Si are eligible to be a part of the Dread Pirate's Crew, they have decided to not create their own teams or divisions within the Dread Faction."

James grimaced at those words and felt bad that Shari wasn't eligible for his crew. He idly wondered if he could take Shari as a member, anyway.

"We currently have thirty-eight faction members at Mastery rank. Over three quarters of them are former slaves. The remaining sixty-four members are Standard rank, with many on the cusp of ranking up."

Pedro nodded enthusiastically and at the end of Shari's explanation, repeated some numbers as though he was concurring with her.

"Yes, that's right. Sixty-four still at Standard. Excellent work, Shari."

Shari rolled her eyes with a smile as she appeared beside her kill team in a flash of movement.

As the crowd reached the Dread Lake's shoreline, James couldn't help but get excited. He wondered how it was going to look on screen, that an entire army was practically out on the edge of the docks to support him as he fought the Void Kraken.

"Shari, I need you to make sure that Fibber is safe. He has a large role to play in the upcoming battle. Pedro will explain the plan to you while I retrieve the ship."

Instead of answering, Shari drew her dagger. As if it was a signal, over a hundred members of the Dread Faction drew their swords, bows, scythes, pistols and daggers.

"Understood, Sylvian!"

Suddenly, a gigantic raven soared overhead with a resounding squawk as it carried its master on its back.

The Plague Faction has arrived!

James turned and saw Fibber further down the shore, adorned in Mage robes. Similarly dressed men and women, who all looked to be chanting in unison, surrounded him.

His face was a mask of deep concentration as dozens of mages fed their magical energy into him. At his feet was a series of runes, carved deeply into the sand with magical energy.

The Faction Leader had advised James that he would require a lot of preparation time, but that he would be ready when the Dread Pirate needed him.

The Vigo Syndicate is preparing for Battle!

Lucius appeared beside James with a thoughtful expression on his face.

"I've briefed my fastest kids. They'll work with The Doctor and get remedies and tonics to any injured parties. We'll make sure that there are no casualties."

The Alldark Orphanage is preparing for Battle!

James frowned for a moment.

"Weren't the Scholars a part of the Galar Faction? Who is this Doctor?"

Lucius glanced to his left before stepping aside with a smile.

A familiar voice was the one that answered his question.

"It's the Plague Faction now."

James stared at the unknown figure that was standing beside the enormous raven mount.

A feathered coat draped across leather wrappings that obscured most of their body.

A Plague Doctor mask covered their face, but James knew he recognised the voice.

The figure offered a hand, which James accepted.

You have received a Friend Request from Elvira Corbeau

"So, Sylvian... are you ready to take down this wall?"

James laughed at the question as he shook his head.

"Not yet. I need to get my ship first!"

With that said, James walked forward and entered the Dread Lake.