

THE GATHERING STORM

The last three months in Madruga have been a confusing time as the Grendel prepared to defend their holding in the Siroc Plains, the armies of the Empire pushed round them to enter Feroz, and the supporters of Siakah - the Children of Wrecks - work on securing their island fastness and sending out ships to pillage the territories of the Bay. It is towards the isles of Free Landing that many Freeborn gaze as they seek to reclaim their lives. The shores seem more distant, the light of the Shining Pillar has gone, and the waters teem with voracious predators and the prowling sails of raiding ships.

The Grendel spymaster known as Sea-Wraith has played a dangerous game, aiding the Empire since the Spring Equinox by providing information passed from their agent Sea Mage Tuairisc. This season, the informant has sent word that the Children of Wrecks are massing outside Atalaya, on the Freeborn Plain, the very place where the Freeborn nation came into being. The island is busy with crews of sailors, cultists, and scattered neerdowells who have flocked to the Children's banner. If Sea Wraith is to be believed, it seems that someone is intent on founding a new nation.

It would be foolish to trust Sea Wraith entirely of course. Imperial scouts have checked the details provided by the Grendel informant, and also discovered information the spy conveniently omitted to pass on, about a pair of valuable items that will be in the area.

OBJECTIVE: STOP THE WRECKS FORMING A NAVY

- **Four ship captains are planning to bind their fleets together to form a navy**
- **Each one slain will reduce the starting strength of the new navy by 1250**
- **Killing three or more will be enough to prevent the attempt altogether**

Four of the most powerful captains of the Children of Wrecks have come together to bind their disparate fleets with powerful oaths and magic of the Autumn realm. By drawing on the support of The Lictors, and employing the captured marina the captains plan to perform a ceremony that will unite their disparate ships and ramshackle fleets together. If they are successful, then the Children of Wrecks will be able to field a navy capable of going toe-to-toe with the Grendel or comparable forces. Operating from Free Landing, they would be able to threaten coastal waters right around the Bay of Catazar, allowing the Children of Wrecks to strike against the territories of the Empire, the Iron Confederacy and the Grendel alike. Combined with the numerous fleets and units of marines already berthing at Free Landing, this assemblage of ships would pose a significant hazard going forward.

The four captains have been identified as:

- **Murchadh Lughaidh**, a charismatic figure who brought the Ships of Salt fleet to the Children's when the Grendel purged their forces
- **Alejandra i Flores i Riqueza**, "The Black Corsair", an adventurer from Cazar who claims to have sailed all seven seas in the Flying Sabre
- **An orc pirate known only as the "Reaver of Attar"**, commander of a heavy trireme named the Scourge of Vorlach
- **Friar Arwenack**, sailing with his cursed crew of Mitwold sailors aboard a cog known as the Barrel of Best

Killing any one of the captains would see their crews dispersed and their ship/s unable to join the navy. For each captain slain the navy would be formed at a strength 1250 lower than normal. Killing three or more of the captains would prevent the navy being formed at all.

If the captains are able to draw on the Lictors to found their navy's, then it would be able to use the docks at Atalaya as a home port, and slowly draw strength and resupply from the region. It would however still be vulnerable to Foam and Spittle of the Furious Sea as any other navy.

OBJECTIVE: STOP THE TURN OF THE GYRE COVEN

- **Siakha favours the Turn of the Gyre with her boons**
- **They have been bidden to cast an empowered Thunderous Deluge once again**
- **If they fail then they will fall from favour and lose access to Siakha's boon**

One of the covens involved in the rituals at Siakha's Maw has grown in favour with the Mistress of Wrecks, earning an extension to the boon she offered at the Spring equinox to all those who live around the Bay. The Turn of the Gyre are seeking to once again use illium to cast Thunderous Deluge and draw on the boon to unleash the Maelstrom in the skies of Madruga.

The Children of Wrecks are not well-resourced. They lack ready access to large amounts of mana, and have very limited ability to secure most ritual paraphernalia. Illium is an especially rare commodity but is essential to secure Siakha's boon. This means that any strike against their magical capabilities will have a lasting impact. Stopping the ritual, and if possible, killing the coven responsible, will end the ability of the Children of Wrecks to utilise large-scale spring rituals, and the enhanced powers of Siakha's boon, for the next year.

OBJECTIVE: RECOVER THE STORM'S CHILD FIGUREHEAD

- **A figurehead has washed ashore from the prow of a sunken Freeborn Storm vessel**
- **It has little economic value but would make a fine prow for a Freeborn fleet**
- **It could serve as a powerful symbol to rally support for a new navy in the Brass Coast**

The waters outside the former port harbour the rotting and now kraken-filled skeleton hulls of the Freeborn Storm, the ill-fated Brass Coast navy. Some of the Children are beachcombers, scavenging the shores for flotsam and jetsam and one of them has recovered a hunk of silver-gilded weirwood that washed ashore outside of Atalaya following a recent storm - the figurehead from the ship "Storm's Child".

The figurehead would make a fine prow for any Freeborn fleet, inspiring everyone who sailed in it (it would allow a Freeborn fleet owner to upgrade their fleet for two wains less than normal). Alternatively the prow could be given to the Freeborn egregore who would use it to rally Freeborn families to support the creation of a new navy, creating an opportunity for the Freeborn Storm to ride the waves again.

OBJECTIVE: RECOVER THE CHEST OF SAND

- **A Grendel Sand Mage in the area has a valuable boon from an unknown Autumn eternal**
- **The boon is believed to shorten the time it takes to commission a navy**

The Sand Mage, Arhrun Fhearghes, is in possession of a potent boon, the Chest of Sand, granted by an unknown Autumn eternal. It was originally traded to a Grendel ritualist several years ago. That ritualist, heavily indebted at the time, died in a tavern brawl and was found bereft of all their possessions, save the robes upon their back. The boon disappeared without a trace. Somehow the Children of Wrecks have got their hands on it.

The boon draws on the Autumn resonance of craftsmanship, speeding the work of shipwrights and chandlers, aiding them to make progress whatever the weather. If activated during the building of a navy it would reduce the length of time taken before it could set sail. The Cult plan to use the boon as part of their efforts to raise a navy, so recovering it will slow them down if they cannot be stopped. However the boon is a valuable object in its own right.

The boon, the Chest of Sand, takes the form of a tiny wooden chest, with a hasp but no lock. It appears to be empty, but you can apparently feel sand pouring through your fingers if you hold it in your hand and upend it. Recovering the boon should be easy, provided that the Arhrun Fhearghes can be found and killed.