

Brine Blood Bay (Maraeve)

The politics of Mareave continue to twist and turn in unprecedented ways. The invasion of the territory has evidently rattled the leadership of the territory and placed many of the people living there in a surprising situation. The shifting alliances, potential for uprisings and nefarious deals has made it hard for the prognosticators to understand exactly what could happen from season to season.

The Brine Turtles are not just an army, they are a sept of orcs that have resided in the region of Fleisardh since before the Grendel arose as a major power in the Bay. Culturally distinct, they have the freedom of Mareave and beyond, yet hold no political power or influence amongst the Salt Lords, despite their army. Now, through the information offered by Salt Lord Ehsan, the Empire has an opportunity to neutralise this threat.

There are other opportunities here as well - Catella Cerularios, the captain of an Asavean mercenary band is here. The presence of this daring raider is a chance to extract some vengeance for the burning of Siroc, but it could yield other fruit. Meanwhile, the Unblinking Eye has a proposal to help the Citadel Guard gain valuable information if the Empire can provide the eternal with enough assistance. The presence of the Golden Portan might be of little interest to the Military Council, but it is a chance for someone to win fame and riches if they can seize it.

Objective: Poach the Brine Turtles

- **Steal the clutches of turtle eggs and return them to Anvil**
- **Success will enable the Empire to persuade the Brine Turtle sept to stand down their army**

The local orc sept take their name from the large sea-going turtles that live in the Bay of Catazar. Every year at this time, these brine turtles return en masse to their natural spawning grounds nestled in the high cliffs of Fleisardh. Each year the shaman carefully collect clutches of eggs from the sand dunes, move them away from the threat of winter storms or hungry iguanas, and set guards to watch over the makeshift nests until the hatchlings emerge in summer and are carried down to the warm waters of Catazar. The eggs provide a vital link to their ancestors who long ago swore mighty oaths to protect the habitat of their namesake. Young Brine Turtles who are coming of age, must fight their way through these defenders to steal an egg to prove they are strong enough to join the septs warriors in battle.

According to legend, when Rucraic the Storm Lord was forced to do battle with the Brine Turtles he defeated them by leading a band of pirates and reavers on a daring raid to steal the turtle's eggs. His band overpowered the guards and got away with all the eggs before the Brine Turtles could rally to protect them. Forced to acknowledge the legendary pirate's cunning and audacity, the Brine Turtles reluctantly surrendered, agreeing to become part of the Grendel chieftain's army.

That was centuries ago, if it ever even happened. There is no chance of the Brine Turtles switching sides now. But Ehsan claims that if the Empire could repeat Rucraic's audacious raid, defeating the guards, stealing the eggs, and taking them back to Anvil they could force the sept to accept that had been beaten. If that happened, the Empire could order the leaders of the Brine Turtles to disband their army. All their soldiers would stand down, abandoning their positions and returning to their homes.

It would be an extraordinary accomplishment. And all the Empire would need to do was prove they are as audacious and cunning as the first Grendel...

Objective: Recover the Golden Portan

- **A citizen could capture the Hamsin's army standard**
- **The Salt Lords will pay 25 thrones to get the standard back**

The Hamsin are a newly force from the Broken Shore, fresh and eager to prove themselves in battle and in defence of the dominions of Dubhtraig. The army has been commissioned at great cost to the Grendel ready for war with the Empire. Elements of the army are present here in Mareave to convene with the Brine Turtles ahead of the coming season. Keen-eyed sentinels have spotted the army's new standard, above battle lines over the last season, emboldening troops and signifying the riches the army will soon possess. The flag itself is a typical affair of fine indigo-dyed fabric, but what makes it remarkable is the golden standard top in the image of a giant crustacean.

It seems the decision to raise the Hamsin was something of an emergency, triggered by the betrayal of Salt Lord Kaliact. The Grendel do not usually raise armies of their own, preferring to pay the local sept of the Broken Shore to fight for them instead. As a result, the Salt Lords had to pay over the odds to convince enough soldiers to join the new army, offering inflated wages and promises of loot. In a show of Audacity and Prosperity, they have endowed the army with a golden crab for its new army standard. This sculpture may be gaudy, but it is wrought from gold and orichalcum and is worth a small fortune.

According to Ehsan, the Salt Lords have a standing arrangement with the City of Gold and Lead that if the Golden Crab does get traded to the city they will buy it back. It's too big to be sent to the Autumn realm via Ephesis' Scale but the heralds of Ephesus are currently planning to visit the Anvil summits each Sunday morning to complete their trades with the Empire. It does not have any strategic value, but an enterprising citizen could make themselves rich if they can get the crab off the battlefield. According to Ehsan, anyone who sold the Golden Portan to Ephesis would receive twenty-five thrones for their endeavours.

Objective: Engage with Catella Cerularios

- **Killing Catella and her retinue will prevent the Bone Nautilus employing any reavers for the next year**
- **Alternatively, gifting Catella with Glistening could enable future religious opportunities within Asavea**

Catella Cerularios is an Asavean mercenary captain, ostensibly a devotee of the Black Bull. The warlord is, unusually, a blood relative of a distinguished Plenum family. They are well-connected and influential back home, but have taken a different path in life, choosing to form a mercenary company in search of fame and fortune

As a sell-sword in service to the Grendel, Catella supported their assault upon the shores of Madruga. They were present during the sack of Siroc a season ago, though they took no part in the firing of the city. Currently under contract to the Bone Nautilus' general, her company provide the mercenary army with the skills and experience to loot a region when called on. The Empire have a chance to take revenge against the Asaveans, and in doing so eliminate a potentially useful military resource for the Grendel. Killing Catella Cerularios will deny the Bone Nautilus the ability to use the foraging quality for the next year.

There is another option however. Catella visited Ehsan's court several years ago seeking the relic Glistening - one of the artefact Pilgrim's Shields. At the time the item was held in the Salt Lord's vaults whilst he negotiated with the Empire for its return, a fact he cheerfully admits he held from the mercenary. Now it seems that the Asavean's interest in the shield may be more than it seems. According to the missionaries who travelled to Asavean the Cerularios are in fact members of a secret cult of Prosperity. The family appear to have little knowledge or understanding of the Way, but they are devout and most of the family are dedicated to the Virtue.

Given that Catella has been searching for Glistening for many years, the Empire could make contact with the Asavean and pass the shield into her care. This would demonstrate that they were serious about reaching out to the followers of the Virtues in Asavea and providing them with support. It is impossible to know what future opportunities that might bring.

Objective: Five Eyes On The Heavens

- **The Unblinking Eye offers Urizen the ability to scry the lands east of Mareave and south of Skoura**
- **The eternal's aid requires the Empire to cast Eyes of the High Places on five pillars scattered through the area**
- **If the Empire succeeds the Citadel Guard will be able to take a unique order this season coming**

Just before the equinox a veiled herald of the Seer Clad in Veils of Light emerged from the Imperial Regio and headed for the civil service offices. Depositing an intricate crystalline eye on the desk of a busy prognosticator they carefully announce that a gift has been prepared for Urizen to permit them “to see what the water of the crimson river sees when it falls as snow on the high peaks to the east.” After some questions clarity emerges; it seems that the Thousand Eyes of the Sun and Moon is offering a chance for the mages of the Citadel Guard to call on the eternal's help to scry the lands to the south and east of Mareave.

To allow the Satrap of Dawn to act in Mareave, the Empire would need to help the eternal focus their power here. There are five pillars of travertine scattered through the area. This strange stone is well known among the Grendel for its affinity with Sky magic. If the Empire can take the crystalline eye to each of the pillars in turn and cast Eye of the High Places there then the eternal would be in a position to offer valuable clarity to the mages of the Citadel Guard in the season ahead.

With that help, the Urizen army could take a special order to scry the distant heavens. This order would allow the army to gather information on surrounding territories. The information gained will be limited in scope, it won't be enough to produce the kind of detailed maps needed to scry a territory, but it would give the Empire basic information on all the surrounding lands. If one or two pillars are invoked, then the order would reveal little more than the names of the adjoining territories. If the Empire succeeds in activating three or four pillars, then the Citadel Guard would gain more information on the territories - roughly the same level of detail first gained about the Mallum. If all five pillars can be enchanted with Kimus' Eye, then the Guard could create a rough outline map, like the ones made of the Bay of Catazar.