

# The Kingdom of Sails



## *Lands in Shadow for Shadow of the Demon Lord*

Five days sailing east of the Northern Reach's city of Gateway, if the wind favors you, there rises the first of a series of sixteen islands arrayed over the Auroral Ocean in a massive crescent that stretches southwards over hundreds of miles. The cultures across the islands are diverse, yet they all regard themselves as one people, the Tide Born, and owe allegiance to a single nation: the Kingdom of Sails.

This entry into the Lands in Shadow series reveals details about the Kingdom of Sails, one of the nations that managed to resist falling under the Empire's influence. The details are meant to be a starting point for campaigns set on the edges of Rûl, offering you information to spark your imagination and ignite your creative fires. You can use the material as written or adapt it in any way you choose to make it fit the stories you want to tell.

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## Fight and Flight

The records of Old Edene note that when their ancestors first crossed the Auroral Ocean, they encountered beautiful islands men had abandoned and few wished to tarry upon, so they pressed on to Rûl. The stories of their crossing passed into legend and were all but forgotten until the Gog poured out of the north, with demons and undead horrors in tow. Many folk fought against the forces of the Witch-King but were defeated by the many terrible powers at Ashrakal's disposal. At last, one of the sharpest thorns in the Witch-King's side, a charismatic rebel leader named Einar, gathered survivors from different groups who had fought against the invaders and proposed that they flee east, over the ocean, as a slim chance of survival was better than the so-called mercy of the Gog. Many agreed and no small number gave their lives to allow Einar and their fellow rebels time to escape via ship from Gateway, which was burned behind them by the Witch-King's forces.

## The Founding

The rebels' small fleet sailed over the Auroral Ocean for several weeks, suffering losses to storms and titanic sea creatures. They journeyed on until they came upon an enormous isle with a huge natural harbor that seemed perfect for them. Einar declared the island a rare jewel and named it Opal, but it wasn't long before their newfound paradise turned violently against them. Beasts that originally seemed placid and docile would suddenly attack in a mad frenzy. Sudden storms would appear in clear skies and kill dozens with lightning strikes. The sea itself seemed to seize individuals and pull them under to drown beneath jagged coral reefs.

Advised by the Druid Ash-heart, Einar took a group of warriors and headed into the interior of Opal, seeking for what she told him was the source of the island's fury. Three days later, the "attacks" halted and Einar returned alone. Saying only that the fallen had given their lives for his, Einar set about establishing a settlement, but he was a changed man. Strong traces of the charming rebel leader remained, but he soon proved to have become a ravenous voluptuary, consuming vast quantities of liquor, plants with hallucinogenic properties, and rapidly had an endless cavalcade of lovers passing through his bedchambers.

Confronted by his most trusted and influential followers, he confessed the truth: he had struck a bargain with the "goddess" who ruled over the islands. Einar called her the Lady of the Tides and said that she had demanded that he constantly sample sensual delights that she could experience through him. He confessed to doing far worse than they were aware of at her bidding—everything from coupling with strange creatures, to consuming excrement, to necrophilia. So long as he and his descendants kept the bargain, the

Lady declared Opal and the surrounding islands would be safe for all his folk. Awed and horrified, Einar's counselors agreed to keep his secret and assist him as much as they could.

The Kingdom of Sails had found its first king.

## The Kalasan Storm

Far from the Witch-King's rule, the folk of the islands prospered. They slowly spread out from Opal, cautiously exploring the surrounding isles, colonizing some, cataloguing others. They became masters of wind and tide, learning the skills and magic that would help them one day dominate the Auroral Ocean. They quietly continued their rebellion against Ashrakal, assisting rebels with weapons and equipment, while helping others to flee the continent for the islands.

After long centuries of resisting the Witch King, a unique opportunity presented itself when scouts from the Kingdom discovered the massive fleet of the Kalasans. Here was an army that could accomplish what the Tide Born could not. It was no mere accident that storms drove the Kalasans toward Rûl.

Within a month of the Kalasans making landfall, agents of the Kingdom of Sails approached the High Warlord, Eronymous, the man who would one day be the first Emperor, and presented him with valuable tactical information about the Witch-King's forces along with detailed plans of various strong holds. The Kingdom looked on in satisfaction when the Gog were finally destroyed.



## Lords of the Sea

The Kingdom of Sails has thrived alongside the Empire, despite occasional periods of tension. During the Empire's second great expansion, the Kingdom of Sails utterly crushed a massive Empire fleet that had attempted to annex one of the Kingdom's isles. Diplomats from the Kingdom noted to their Imperial counterparts that while the orcs were indeed fearsome, they still needed a target that they could reach to be effective.

The Kingdom still does regular business with the Empire, though the present troubles of the Alabaster Throne have riled trade considerably. The Tide Born are actively friendly with the folk of Old Edene, Balgrendia, and the Freehold of Nar, though any that can reach their ports are welcome. They find the folk of the Pirate Isles amusing more than anything else—though they've occasionally been forced to teach the pirates a lesson when their ships have dared to attack the Kingdom's vessels.



The Tide Born are not without their own problems. Early in their history they discovered, to their horror, that elements of the Brotherhood of Shadows had infiltrated the Kingdom of Sails. With the darkness that is besetting all peoples, hidden cults dedicated to the Demon Lord have arisen on the islands to foment rebellion and cause trouble. The Tide Born are singularly ruthless in dispatching cultists whenever they have the opportunity, which alarmingly, are becoming more frequent.

## Government and Politics

The Kingdom of Sails is a monarchy, which both kings and queens have presided over during its long history. The current ruler, King Sasul, is directly descended from King Einar and notionally rules from Opal. In practice, the formal rulers of the Kingdom of Sails spend the majority of their time answering the carnal demands of the Lady of the Tides. The King's Counsel, made up of leaders from the various islands and notable captains from the Kingdom's Fleet hold the real power. For the moment, the Counsel has taken a wait-and-see attitude toward the Empire's troubles.

The islands generally manage their own affairs, with trade freely flowing between them. Each island has its own ships, which serve in the greater fleets of the Kingdom as needed. The islands pick their leaders in a variety of ways; some are elected, some are hereditary, others are claimed. For example, on Blöthome, the leader is chosen in a trial by combat that occurs every three years.

## The Tide Born

The folk of the Kingdom of Sails refer to themselves as the Tide Born. Though they originally derived from several cultures and contain many different races, they are all now connected by their island homes and the sea. The settlements of the Kingdom are cosmopolitan affairs, where one can rub elbows with every people on Urth from clockworks to jotun. While relatively welcoming to outsiders, at least those with coin, they are notably harsh with those who transgress their laws or betray their trust.

## Religion at Sea

The people who founded the Kingdom of Sails followed the old ways, and the Tide Born practice the Old Faith, the tenets of which were laid down by Ash-heart long ago. Druids are the most common spiritual guides among them. Though they respect the World Mother, they consider the Lady of the Tides and the Dreamer in the Deep to be more important to their daily lives. Followers of the Lord and the Lady are welcome among them; however, the Tide Born take a very dim view on



followers of the New God actively proselytizing on their islands and tolerate them only so long as they keep silent.

## The Lady of the Tides

The patron goddess of the Kingdom of Sails, the Lady is generally depicted as either the silhouette of a woman wearing diaphanous robes or as an abstract crystalline jellyfish. The Lady generally stands in place of the Queen of Summer and Revel among the Tide Born.

## The Dreamer in the Deep

God of the sea along with the bounty it brings and useful lore therefrom, the Dreamer is sometimes regarded as an alternate guise of the Seer. The Dreamer is generally depicted as a humpback whale, with one eye as a blazing star.

## Apelyha the Fire Dancer

Some of the Tide Born belong to an ecstatic fire cult called the Burned. The Burned revere Apelyha, the Fire Dancer, during their ceremonies and seek her guidance in the vapors that arise from the volcano caldera, Fyros, on their island. Apelyha is regarded as being the introspective daughter of Revel.



## The Islands

The Kingdom of Sails spreads across a chain of islands. Notable details of each one follow.

### Opal

The largest island of the Kingdom of Sails, Opal is the seat of the monarchy, from which King Sasul rules from his Palace of Sighs. Opal's massive port, Fair Harbor, can easily hold a hundred galleons, with room to spare. The leaders of the Kingdom generally plot their plans from the grand building known as the **Compass Rose** that sits on a peak overlooking Fair Harbor. King Sasul has little interest in the island's day-to-day affairs, which are run by the retired clockwork Captain Ithiod, famed for both his administrative skills and his habit of setting his pet cockatrice Stropo on annoying petitioners.

Opal is blessed with rich soil and year-round perfect weather. Farming and fishing settlements cover much of the island, though the interior is forbidden by order of the crown and none but the royal family ventures there.

### Green Hell

Beautiful to behold but widely infamous for its deadly reputation, Green Hell is heavily forested, covered with foliage that has a mind of its own. From the massive trees slowly shifting across the island, to the many forms of mobile plants that actively hunt for blood, the vegetation of Green Hell is sentient and lethal. The interior of the island is said to hold rune-covered menhir rings that were ancient long before the rise of the Witch-King. The folk here pay special homage to the Horned King and live in small mobile settlements amidst the branches of the tallest trees, coating their arrows with virulent poisons lethal to men and plants.

### Cloud Anchor

Named for the rolling mists that never leave its lofty summit, Cloud Anchor is the name of both the tallest mountain in the Kingdom of Sails and the island that holds it. Carved out of the stone and ice not far from the mountain's summit sits an unusual monastery of sorts—the **House of Silence**. The House of Silence is both a training ground for mystics and an observatory, run by the Astromancer-Monk Valmorden. The regimen here is famously brutal to both mind and spirit, more than a few students have plummeted to their death from the heights, many of which were suicides.





## Langala

Langala is a wide isle of dubious ambitions and low cunning. A favored haunt of the goblins living among the Tide Born, the shabby port of **Driftwood** is the island's sole settlement. Driftwood is the home of the Kingdom of Sail's salvage fleet. The port itself is a ramshackle collection of rogues, rubbish, and skullduggery, with all sorts of strange relics to be found, if one has the patience to sort through a lot of junk to find them.

## Fyros

A massive volcanic island where the sane do not lightly venture, Fyros is the blazing heart of the ecstatic fire cult known as the Burned. Here, the devotees of Apelyha seek visions of the future induced by the steaming vapors that lift from the heart of the volcano's caldera. Most find nothing more than terrible hallucinations and eventually death, but powerful Oracles who speak with tongues of fire have arisen on Fyros with enough regularity to inspire hopeful delusions in other members of the cult. That most will be found unworthy to join their august ranks is just accepted as the way of such things.

Other folk with a desperate need to glimpse the future occasionally venture to Fyros in search of the wisdom of the Burned, for they count some of the more powerful of the Dreamer's followers among their ranks, and the accuracy of their divinations is legendary. The terrible prices they ask for such favors, though, serve to keep away all but the most determined, which is as the Oracles of the Burned wish it.

The port of Fyros is the infamous **Obsidian Run**, which serves as both the stronghold of the Burned and as a prison for convicts the Kingdom of Sails has sentenced to particularly excruciating deaths. Prisoners burned to death with fire spells or sacrificed to the volcano are the lucky ones—the worst are given to the firewyrms. Firewyrms are strange sea slugs that feed on heat, found on the sea floor about Fyros. The Burned place them, along with a prisoner, into barrels filled with seawater. The firewyrms promptly burrow into the guts of the prisoner, seeking their heat. The blood of the host of firewyrms swiftly becomes both impossibly flammable and incredibly volatile. The Burned keep the screaming prisoners alive long enough to use as ammunition. They catapult them, barrel and all, onto enemy ships, where they splatter across the decks, promptly igniting everything, their remains burning straight down to the waterline.

## Suspareth

A jungle-covered island with dense swamps, Suspareth is famed for the inexplicable arcs of electricity that regularly crackle up from its interior to pierce the night sky. Suspareth holds a mostly intact and unplundered city of the lizardmen from before their slide into degeneracy. Unfortunately for would-be explorers, multiple tribes of carnivorous lizardmen make their homes in the swamps about their ancient city and regard all others as either slaves or meat for their larders. The folk of Suspareth are adept at navigating the swamps of their home, while pointedly avoiding the interior, though they're happy to tell all sorts of outlandish stories to visitors about what secrets the Lizardmen city holds.

## Machitol

The artificers of Machitol are regarded as among the most clever folk in the Kingdom of Sails. Widely known for their innovative constructs, they discovered long ago that sea air worked havoc on standard mechanisms and so were forced to adapt. In present times, their wooden and brass "ship monkeys" are their most famous designs, though their coral golems are certainly their most feared. Machitol's biggest settlement, **Scuttlebutt**, is a whirlwind of bustling techno-magical activity and explosions... lots and lots of explosions.

## Coral

A massive atoll large enough to provide a mooring for larger vessels, Coral is more of a makeshift berth and watering hole for ships of the Kingdom of Sails than an actual island. Coral's sole settlement is the Drifter, a massive barge that floats above the center of the atoll. The Drifter is run by a Hydromancer named One-Ton and functions as a sort of raucous tavern, brothel, trading house, and fish market all in one.

## Ebonheart

The black sheep member of the Kingdom of Sails, Ebonheart is a fair island to behold but is ruled by the Thall, a devil-worshipping folk notorious for their dark rites and terrible hungers. The story of how the Thall came to join the Tide Born varies greatly with who tells it. Most such tales eventually end declaring you're better off with the devil you know and that the Thall are tolerated because they are so good at catching demon-sworn cultists (it takes a dark cultist to know one, as the saying goes). For their part, the Thall merely flash sharp filed-teeth grins and note that the Gog were always unacceptably crude.



The Thall have a pact with the infernal grindylow, and the sea about the Thall's ships is forever roiling with creatures called up from the depths that can blast a man's mind to look upon. Their largest vessels are sometimes lent speed by nameless monstrosities bound with rune-lined silver chains. The Thall are led by the wickedly clever cambion, Halfgrin, who is always in need of courageous souls up for bloody deeds against the followers of the Demon Lord. Ebonheart's sole port, **Shard**, is a dangerous place where souls are literally bought and sold, along with all manner of dangerous magic.

## Giant's Crown

A series of four up-thrust spears of large vegetation-covered stony peaks, surrounded by dozens of smaller islets, comprise Giant's Crown. Its distinct appearance is not the only reason for its name, a powerful family of sea giants led by the ancient Karshoon make their home in the waters here. Undines are common as well, ambassadors from the great undersea kingdom of their kind. The Tide Born have multiple fishing and farming settlements here, including a rum distillery that utilizes the sugarcane grown on the island. The Kingdom of Sails has an ancient pact with the giants and a fair amount of each season's rum heads undersea from the Crown.

## Storm Catcher

A strange isle tormented by energy discharges and bizarre weather patterns that emerge without warning, while the fishing about it is excellent, Storm Catcher itself isn't very hospitable. Still, a few brave souls occasionally venture here following rumors of the basalt city deep within the isle where time moves in inexplicable ways. The folk of the city are said to speak an odd referential language based on myths that originate somewhere other than Urth. They are plagued by terrible creatures that can cross dimensional barriers through sharp angles.

## Windfall & Capstone

Called the Twin-isles by the Tide Born, Windfall and Capstone are pleasant medium-sized islands that are merely a long bowshot apart. The folk of the Twin-isles were the first to discover how to build catamarans, an innovation they shared with the Kingdom of Sails. The **Wind Dock** at Capstone still builds the fastest ships in the Kingdom's fleet.

## Blothome

A century or two ago, a large raiding party of jotun from the Teeth attempted to ransack the islands of the Kingdom of Sails. Soundly thrashed and to the jotun's dismay, completely outsailed long before they even reached the islands, the jotun prepared to sell their lives dearly. To their great surprise, they were instead offered a place in the Kingdom if they were interested. The island they were given is not a particularly hospitable one, filled with sharp rocks, jagged crags, and ill-suited for farming—the jotun loved it at first sight. They now lend their fierce strength to the Tide Born's boarding parties and (mostly) keep their promises to avoid attacking merchant vessels bound for the Kingdom.

## Tranquil

A beautiful isle that holds a deadly secret—the Tide Born study Tranquil but avoid staying here. The reason why is fairly simple—all sentient life that remains on Tranquil for more than a day lays down to sleep and never awakens, dying soon after. Great mages, diviners, druids, witches, and all manner of other wise folk have studied Tranquil over the years to no avail: Tranquil's secret remains hidden. The Tide Born maintain a small outpost near Tranquil's shore that serves as a watering station for their ships, and a place for researchers of the island to stay, but few like to remain here long.

## Kelbarhar

Once a prominent island within the Kingdom of Sails, the many settlements and fishing villages of Kelbarhar now stand abandoned, their entire populations slain or taken in less than a day by waves of beasts pouring out from the island's interior. Once every decade or so, the Tide Born try to reclaim the island, but they are invariably beaten back by the sheer ferocity of the island's inhabitants that have, disturbingly, grown both more astute and more upright over the years. The interior is completely unknown, for no one has ventured there and managed to return.

