
Horizon's Edge

by Rob Vaux

Horizon's Edge began with yet another death at the hands of the Crimson Rogers. Reis found "Lyn" John Fox in a tavern somewhere in southern Montaigne. Alone and bereft of allies, he was no match for the bestial pirate. When the Rogers were finished, they left his corpse in a gibbet, hanging from the docks at Carleon. The Rogers had tacked a message to his lifeless body — "On the Island of the Sunken Eye" — intended for Captain McGee. The Sea Dogs discovered Fox's body a short time later, and after a hurried conversation with the Queen's seer, Derwyddon — who had seen visions of the Isle along with numerous other mystics — set sail for the Mirror.

Other ships were already on their way there. Yngvild Olafssdottir and the crew of the *Revensj* launched upon the lengthy trip, seeking to set loose the promised apocalypse. They were doggedly pursued by Jorund Guttormson who, though unaware of their precise activities, was determined to finally destroy the crew he had betrayed.

So too did the *Black Freighter* turn towards the mirror. In his desire for power and revenge, Necros sought to control Cabora, as he had once controlled the Spear of the West Wind. He was pursued by Philip Gosse who, like Guttormson, intended to stop his adversary. Gosse had commissioned Red the Adventurer to steal a second ship for him, and with the added firepower, set out to stop Necros from fulfilling his unholy crusade.

Other events in Horizon's Edge had little to do with the chase to the Island, at least directly. The General, for example, had little inkling of what was taking place in the mirror. With reformed crew, he hatched upon a bold plan to snatch Admiral Orduño from the largest and most heavily guarded fortress in the world. His ship launched a perilous journey up the *Rio de Delia*. Though bombarded with Castillian shells, The General's ship deftly navigated the gauntlet between the river mouth and *El Morro*. The General drew close enough to the imposing edifice for his sniper to fire mate's blood. The vessel then retreated to a

safe distance while Timothy le Beau teleported a small band into the fortress.

They arrived in the middle of the courtyard, surrounded by Castillian soldiers. Orduño execution pyre was quickly lit, even as the gunfire rose and The General and his crew fought their way towards him. They reached the stake just as the flames began to catch and teleported Orduño away before the Castillians could overwhelm them. But their travails were not over. Every Castillian fortress on the river had been altered to their presence, and now stood ready to shell them into oblivion. Further two Castillian galleons had witnessed The General's arrival and quickly gave chase. The grapeshot flew thick around the Eisen's small vessel, and for a time, it looked like his mission would end in fire and bloodshed.

But again, the crafty mercenary had prepared. While he and his crew were rescuing Orduño, the other Porté mages in his crew were preparing an escape. In a calm tributary of *El Rio de Delia*, they readied a gigantic Porté hole — one large enough for The General's ship to pass through. The mate had readied an exit at the mouth of the river allowing them to bypass the Castillian fortresses completely. The galleons chased The General's ship into the tributary, thinking they had the vessel captured. They watched in disbelief as their prize slid effortlessly into the Porté hole and vanished from sight. Two of the mages who created the hole were killed by the effort. The others were racked with pain, and one went irretrievably mad, but The General had done it.

Or he would have were it not for one small detail. They never emerged from the Porté hole as they had intended. Whatever void they passed through prevented them from emerging out the other side. The General, Orduño, the crew, and the entire vessel had simply vanished — disappearing from the face of Théah.

Admiral Valoix heard news of Orduño's rescue as he was readying another blow at his enemy. Castille had been battered and demoralized by his earlier strikes, but he resolved to end conflict once and for all. He intended to destroy the very

heart of Castille: *San Cristobal*, the effective capital and nerve center for the country's war effort. If he could bring the city to the ground, the army would lose its direction, leaving them ripe to be overrun. Valoix launched a daring assault against the coastal town, using an elite arm of the Montaigne fleet and the finest cannons *l'Empereur's* funds could buy. The attack took place but a few scant days after The General's disappearance.

The Castillian fleet was far from helpless, but remained uncoordinated without Orduño at their head. Valoix had dispersed the rest of his fleet to engage the Castillians, thus preventing them from closing on *San Cristobal*. His elite ships easily battered aside the harbor defenses and began shelling the town. One Castillian vessel stood capable of dispersing Valoix's attack: the ship captained by Margareta Orduño, but she would not come to her capital's defense. Burning with anger at the inquisition's treatment of her husband, she wrestled with her conscience as Valoix's ships attacked. She would not defend those who had taken her husband from her, she would not save them from their folly, and yet, she felt that she could not simply abandon her nation to a foreigner's depredation. She contemplated the decision for some time...and all the while, Valoix's cannons continued to pound at *San Cristobal*.

Meanwhile, Cosette and the mutinous Explorers had not forgotten their friend Maggie Malone, kidnapped and held hostage aboard the Corsairs' ship. Rather than futilely chase the *Strange Skies* across the seas, they waited for the Corsairs — and their former Captain Guy McCormick — to arrive at the sixth switch. The *Discovery* caught the corsairs in the heart of the Forbidden Sea, laying into it with broadsides and launching a boarding party to rescue their wayward comrade. Out numbered and surprised, the Corsairs were no match for Cosette and her men. They were forced to flee again, abandoning Malone to her comrades and unable to reach the final switch. They would have perished were it not for the unique Synchron device which allowed them to escape yet again. The device opened up a tunnel hole to the 7th Sea — a huge waterspout that led to the mystic realm. Kheired-Din had used it to move across the oceans in the blink of an eye, and now he used it to complete their mission.

And what of this sixth switch, the last barrier between Cabora and the world? Unlike the previous five, it was not hidden in some remote locale, unknown to civilized man. It lay at the heart of one of the most populous cities in

Théah: *Reinascineza*, the bustling metropolis atop Caligari's Island in Vodacce. The sixth switch, the great Synchron engine keeping Cabora hidden, was currently being utilized to support Caligari's Island. The switch had never been activated; rather its power had been diverted upward, keeping an entire land mass from sinking beneath the waves. A great Synchron watercraft had been used to divert the power, channeling it through its machinery and into the island above.

Both Jacob Faust and Captain Allende were held captive on the island. Faust had been caught in the cavern housing the fifth switch, while Allende was tortured in an effort to transform him into the Inquisition's puppet. He remained strong, however, and with the addition of Faust to his cell, he saw an opportunity to escape; the two began plotting in-between interrogation sessions, searching for some way to escape their confinement.

Further help was on the way. Led by Jeremiah Berek, Allende's crew from the Brotherhood had searched night and day for some sign of his whereabouts. He and the Brotherhood broke into the cell, freeing both the Pirate King and his new found companion. Still mindful of his obligation to McCormick, Faust convinced his rescuers to let him lead them to freedom. Using a set of sewage pipes, he took them down to the hidden cave where the Synchron watercraft awaited. He urged them on board and began activating its power source. The ship rumbled to life, moving for the first time in thousands of years. As Faust activated the vessel, the island above them groaned; the power that had held them up was being diverted away, across the sea towards Cabora. At Faust's direction Allende flipped a switch and the ship slowly pulled out of the cavern into the open sea. Behind it, Caligari's island sank helplessly into the ocean.

With that, the sixth switch had been triggered. The barriers were free, the locks all broken. In the heart of the Mirror, Cabora stirred, rising from the depths towards the surface. The great island stirred to life once more, unearthing its secrets for the brave (or the foolish) to find. Its gateway lay exposed, its power within the grasp of those who sought it. The Island of the Sunken Eye had risen, and Théah would never be the same.

