

The Sable Rose - Captain Elman Royal's Journal

May 24th, 1712 - Port Fairview

We took refuge beneath the old Brine & Cutlass tavern. The air reeked of low tide and treachery. Captain Gnash of the Triton came first, with his mates trailing like hounds behind him. Captain Oscar Dukes of the Wake arrived near dusk, his spyglass tucked in a worn sash.

I recall their faces were creased and wary. No man among us trusted the other highly, but the promise of the vault at Caidin Cay was too rich to turn away.

The Hale twins claim they have the key to identifying the location. As a first mate goes, I couldn't ask for a better man than Hudson Hale, so I place great value upon his judgement. His brother, Essex, sailing with Dukes at least gives a strong bond between both our ships. Whether they are right or not, we cannot trust every member of each crew beyond the first mates.

The Hales put forward some method of charting the currents by the arcs and curves of cannon-fire. Not by stars or sounding leads, but by the echo of iron striking water and tracking locations.

May 25th, 1712 - Port Fairview

We spoke in riddles, and perhaps it was safer.

A pact was struck: each ship to sail alone by day, feigning quarrel before sunset. Cannon-fire to keep the Navy guessing. Pennants to signal the truth of our progress.

We chose three words, one for each deck, known to captains alone. When all three were fired in sequence and the hourglass flag flown true, we would converge and claim the treasure. Seeing red would mean no good.

May 28th, 1712 - Dead Rook Rocks

The captains met today for an exchange. Dukes pressed a brass spyglass into my hand, engraved with an unfamiliar verse and provided a similar one to Gnash. Gnash presented us both with tankards, dulled by time. In turn, I gave them a set of my compasses.

Tokens, or so we told the men. But each will aid in the understanding of the messages we send to each other. It's the Hale twins' proofs etched into metal and a language the first mates would understand. Keeps the rest of the crew guessing, and the captain's words can verify there has not been a mutiny.

June 2nd, 1712 - Caidin Cay, Outer Shoals

The men are restless. Hale's verse still haunts me: "The mirrored rise greets the cannon's arc". He, Essex, and Byford Pratt of the Triton claim to grasp it entirely.

Me? I've no clue.

Essex tried to explain it to me last night. Has something to do with the cannon shots and where they hit. Started going on about shapes and symmetry and e-e-clipses? Or ellip-something. I don't know, I stopped listening when he started calling points rational. Sounds like sorcery to me.

I've been calling it battle geometry, which if you ask me sounds damn impressive. Hale keeps telling me that's "not technically correct." Whatever. If it gets us the treasure and keeps the Navy blind, he can call it whatever he likes.

Grash suspects a traitor among us. If there is, he has not yet shown himself. Tomorrow marks the first night of cannonfire.

June 4th, 1712 - Caidin Cay, Outer Shoals

We fired a volley last eve... an agreed pattern meant to test our signals. Dukes flew the hourglass but the Triton flew red. Grash fired four times, then went dark. Whether caution or duplicity, I cannot say.

Still baffled by this battle geometry. I asked Hale again about it tonight, but I'm still stuck on his instruction: "When sum is calculated, the abscissa will reveal the letter you're seeking; yet mind the compass rose, for every twenty and six marks she resets. Mind ye, A be naught!"

June 5th, 1712 - Caidin Cay, Outer Shoals

This morning, Essex Hale sent word: he believes Stafford and Rowe of the Triton have been trading secrets. The thought of it chills me more than any storm. Grash has not confirmed yet, but I suspect we will learn more when fire is exchanged tonight.

We will fire one final pattern on the morrow if everything is cleared up. Should it align, the hourglass will rise. If not... we go alone

June 6th, 1712 - Caidin Cay, Outer Shoals

By dusk tomorrow, the sea will have our answer. God help any man who dares cross me now.

