

WEALTH OF WATER

The campaign this season in Mareave has been a brutal grinding affair, as the Empire first push the orcs back in Fleisardh only to then face a retaliatory force that drove the fighting into Clisearn. The actions of the Winter Sun and Seventh Wave slowed the advance of five armies backed by two Grendel navies. It has been a hard series of engagements and it would have been far worse if not for the magical allies summoned to the territory.

The invasion has left the families of Clisearn, former members of the Grendel, facing a difficult situation. Openly hostile to the Empire at first, relations have slowly improved and some of them are beginning to question where their future really lies. Thus far, the smart money has been sat on the fence. Better to keep your distance from both the thinking goes. But the advance of the Grendel armies is threatening that delicate balancing act, forcing the three influential orc families, the Adahr, the Tholdie and the Marr to pick a side.

Against this backdrop, the situation is ripe to build the standing of the Empire. There is a short window of opportunity for the Imperial Orcs to forge stronger ties with the septs of Mareave and prove the sincerity of their people, to strengthen the defences in Clisearn, and to stymie the Grendel preparations for the next three months. There is a conjunction of the Sentinel Gate to travel to Ohwinn Scour in Clisearn and engage the Grendel on either the Saturday or the Sunday of the equinox.

OBJECTIVE: SUMMON ISKANDERS DONJON

- **Casting Frozen Citadel at the regio will summon Iskanders Donjon for the coming season**
- **The Donjon increases the victory points needed to take the region by 20 and has a battalion of 4000 strength that defend the territory**
- **These benefits only apply if there is an Imperial Orc army fighting in Mareave this season**

The Immovable One is perturbed to see the Empire moving armies out of Mareave and giving ground before their enemies, but she is pleased to see that the Imperial Orc armies are fighting here, defending the lands they have claimed. If the armies of the Unshackled commit to protect their new home, then the Mistress of Blizzards offers a boon. Keen to see the fledgling nation solidify their demense, build roots as strong as mountains, and defy any who would try to take their lands from them, the Lady of Frost offers the Empire to chance to call Iskanders Donjon.

There is a powerful Summer regio here at the Ohwinn Scour. If the Empire performs Frozen Citadel of Cathan Canae at this regio, and calls on the Mistress of Blizzards imploring her to grant access to Iskanders Donjon during the ritual, then the Immovable One will respond. A powerful fortress will emerge in the mortal world supporting the Imperial armies campaigning here until the Summer Solstice. She has but one requirement, the Imperial Orcs must promise that at least one of their armies will fight in Mareave in the coming season. If the Empire take the boon but break the promise, there will be consequences.

Iskanders Donjon is potent, increasing the total number of victory points needed by twenty and providing a battalion of heralds wreathed in flames that provides 4,000 strength towards determining victory and casualties.

OBJECTIVE: OPEN NEGOTIATIONS

- **Scutt-Tadhg is a prominent member of the Brine Turtle sept**
- **They are a natural negotiator with good connections, a canny mind, and a pragmatic ear**
- **How, or if, the orc survives the battle will influence future opportunities with the sept**

The Brine Turtles are a sept of proud orcs that have long-dwelled in Fleisardh as part of the Grendel hegemony. They have little true affection for the distant rulers in Dubtraigh, but the actions of the Empire have failed to win them over. Season after season the orcs of the Brine Turtles have like their new overlords less and less.

The sand mage, Scutt-Tadhg, a reputable negotiator, widely regarded as skilled at his craft and well respected is currently in the Ohwinn Scour conducting discussions with representatives of the armies and the Saanite orcs. The well-respected orc is said to be fascinated by the giving and receiving of small personal yet highly symbolic gifts; a trait that has helped him win favour and deliver stinging insults without saying anything openly.

Tadhg is not a leader of the Brine Turtles; their position is more akin to a Wintermark mediator, someone trusted to negotiate on behalf of the sept. Travelling to the area offers a chance to kill them, denying the Brine Turtles of their most skilled negotiator. Killing him will stymie any negotiations between the Brine Turtles and the other orcs of Mareave.

Alternatively, an attempt could be made to return Scutt-Tadhg to Anvil via a casting of The Cuckoo's Egg. It will be exceptionally difficult to persuade the orc to agree to the ritual, as he has no reason to come and will assume he is going to his death. If he can be persuaded to surrender and accede to being taken to Anvil then the Empire could try to negotiate with him. He won't cut any deals on the day, but if the Empire can persuade Scutt-Tadhg it is worth negotiating then he could convince a delegation of Brine Turtles to attend the Summer Solstice.

OBJECTIVE: ESCORT THE THOLDIE ROTARY

- **The Grendel have seized members of the Tholdie family**
- **If the merchants are rescued and returned to Anvil then Clisearn will cease to be recalcitrant**

The Tholdie Rotary are a well-connected Saanite trade concern in Clisearn. Members of the influential Tholdie family, they have carved out influence and eked out a profit over the decades through all manner of mercantile activities. Their links across the sept are deep, acting as an informal network of connected merchants, drinking fellows, and sometime venturing investors. Exactly how they fell foul of the Grendel is unknown, but they are being held against their will. The captors intend to use them to force the Clisarn families to cooperate.

The party numbers five orcs, all of whom are most certainly not capable of holding their own in a fight or indeed fleeing from one. If they can be freed from the clutches of the Grendel, these five will be only too glad to escape to Anvil, assuming someone can perform The Cuckoo's Egg.

There is of course the possibility of a small reward for rescuing the party but they are not wealthy by Imperial standards. The more valuable outcome is to further the connections between the orcs of the sept, the Imperial Orcs, and the wider Empire. If the group are safely returned to Anvil, it will cement position relations between the all three Clisarn families and the Imperial Orcs. If they are rescued and allowed to go free, then Clisearn will cease to be recalcitrant and gain the "Three Families" quality instead representing the support the Empire commands from these three influential families.

OBJECTIVE: DEFEAT THE BLADES OF EVDOKIA

- **Captain Evdokia is a noted mercenary on the up and up**
- **Killing Evdokia will prevent a thousand mercenaries contracting with the Grendel**

The Plenum of the Asavean Archipelago continues to send ships in support of the Grendel's war against the Empire. Whilst they certainly have every reason to engage in open war with the imperial forces, the Grendel's seemingly bottomless coin purses and thirst for hired swords is also a motivator for many captains. Evdokia Bakirtzis, devotee of the Red God, and leader of a small force known as the Blades of Evdokia, is one such mercenary, and an effective one at that.

Reports indicates that Evdokia has already forged a solid reputation dispatching the foes of the Plenum before venturing to foreign lands to seek greater wealth. She has travelled to Mareave with her closest compatriots to engage in contract negotiations with the Grendel commanders, seeking an extended contract to fight the Empire. If this promising mercenary captain isn't dealt with soon then the Empire will likely face the full strength of the Blades of Evdokia in coming seasons, adding a thousand fighting strength to the forces already arrayed against them.

OBJECTIVE: CURSE FERGUS KONNAUGH

- **Fergus Konnaugh, a Bone Nautilus' paymaster is on the battlefield**
- **Casting Like Water Through Your Fingers on Fergus will ruin him and reduce the current strength of the Bone Nautilus by 500**
- **If Fergus is cursed, Clisearn will give the Grandmaster of the Golden Pyramid two illium**

Fergus Konnaugh is one of the paymasters of the Bone Nautilus. The elderly orc helps to direct the consumables, hack-coin, and resources that the Salt Lords allocate to the army. Fergus is travelling without his bodyguards or indeed any sizeable box or pack that might contain the warchest. There is no bounty here, but there is an opportunity. If Fergus is killed, he'll simply be replaced, but if he is cursed, it would be a different matter.

If the Autumn curse Like Water Through Your Fingers can be cast upon the orc during the battle then he will lose a great deal of his own wealth, and more importantly the funds he directs to various groups that up the Bone Nautilus will be sapped. Fergus will be unable to pay a large number of the mercenaries the army routinely employs sapping the fighting forces of the Bone Nautilus by 500 strength as the unpaid soldiers quickly desert. The curse lasts an entire year, but the paymaster will be utterly ruined by this turn of events, so the Salt Lords will swiftly ensure a replacement is found before the start of the next campaign season.

Better still, Fergus appears to have made plenty of enemies in Clisearn over the years. Members of the Adahr family in particular, loathe him and would like nothing more than to see him ruined. If he is cursed then they will reward the Grandmaster of the Golden Pyramid with two ingots of ilium shortly before the summer solstice. Of course, all of this will only work if the orc actually *survives* the battle.