

BREAKING BURHFÆST

Even though the Strong Reeds continue to hide across the wide fens, the barbarians are able to act here without contention, moving where they wish, and consolidating their positions. The farms, the scattered gardens, and the cottage workshops are now all under Jotun rule. Stores are taken to support the warriors, blacksmiths turned to support the repair of armour and sharpening of weapons. Barns turned into lodgings. Breagasland is now fully controlled by the Jotun.

One year ago Adamant sent a mighty Mountain Bulwark to join Faraldi Blutesson and the Ice Fishers at Graven Rock. There, the elderly ghodi invoked a boon from the King Under the Mountain and sent the guardian through the Graven Door, returning the Burhfæst from the summer realm. During the last twelve months the mighty fortress has stood sentinel in eastern Bregasland, offering the Jotun a fine vantage point looking across Mitwold and the Mourn. The warband from Ldansk have remained inside the Burhfæst, and no effort has been taken by the Empire to assail the fortification. Adamant's boon was only a gift for a year and a day, and when the sun sets on the solstice the white granite walls will once again depart to the summer realm.

Yet, watchful eyes in Bregasland have informed the war scouts of a Jotun force heading to the fort, escorting another vast guardian of King Adamant's realm towards Graven Rock. The behemoth has made a path eastwards, smashing through any obstacle in the way. With it come a great number of Jotun warriors in high spirits and filled with purpose, these are some of the orcs that swiftly brought an end to Imperial control of Ottery and the Bregas end of the Otterway. Prognosticators have determined that the guardian can be intercepted on the Saturday of the solstice as it marches along the Cinder Drove. This offers an opportunity to defeat the guardian before it leaves The Rushes and arrives at the foot of Graven Rock.

OBJECTIVE: ENSURE THE BURHFÆST'S DISMISSAL

- **Stop the procession of the Mountain Bulwark towards Gravenrock**
- **Incapacitate the guardian and then destroy it with a powerful ritual**
- **If not stopped then the Burhfæst's enchantment on Graven Rock will last another year**

The Mountain Bulwark, one of Adamant's colossal summer guardians, are massive walking mountains of enduring stone. They have fists of hardened granite that can smash foes to the ground, splinter weapons or shields, and cast soldiers through the air with ease. Hewn from the deepest stones in Adamant's domain, these creatures are nigh on impossible to stop and pose a serious risk to Imperial lives should it break the line of battle. Last time one of these creatures headed to Graven Rock it was accompanied by a band of summerborn champions who drew inspiration and fighting prowess from its presence.

To defeat the monster it must first be incapacitated by the blows of the Empire's warriors. Only then will it be possible to destroy it - by casting one of the destructive rituals of spring or winter - Rising Roots that Rend Stone or Inevitable Collapse into Ruin. These rituals won't harm it while it is still active. Given the importance of the summer guardian to the Jotun, it is certain that they would not simply abandon it into the Empire's hands and will make every attempt to restore its vitality and continue the march to Graven Rock.

OBJECTIVE: SAVE THE CLAKES

- **Rescue the Clake family from Jarl Aertha to lift the resentful mood in The Rushes**

When Mathilda Fisher sought to become Steward of Bregasland, the Clakes were quick to throw in their lot and join her council. Tattling on their neighbours who had long disdained them, the family were well rewarded for their help. Following the downfall of the Fishers, the Clakes paid a heavy price as stolen possessions were recovered and grudges settled. Thirty-six were sent to the gallows once the magistrates were done. Yet Sammy Clakes and the core of his inner circle and immediate family escaped the noose. They went to ground out in the sodden expanses of The Rushes. Mistrust and a grim-faced cynicism holds fast in The Rushes.

Last season there was word that the Clakes had welcomed the return of the Jotun to Bregasland and that Sammy Clake had met with the traitor Stephen of Sarcombe to join his cause. If so, it appears someone has recently had a change of heart. Details are scant, but the rumour is that the orcs asked something of the Clakes they were not prepared to give. Truth is, nobody knows why, but Jarl Aertha has spent the last month searching for them on command of the Jarl-of-Jarls. Now she has caught them, she has bound the Clakes in rope and is leading them to the Burhfæst. The orcs give short shrift to criminals and turncoats and it is highly likely they will be executed by the Jotun.

If this group of Clakes are executed, then the current resentful mood in the Rushes will rumble on unchanged. The ill feelings will endure with the family's cousins and their cousins' cousins. No-one nurses a grudge like a Marcher. But if the Empire rescued the Clakes, it would be bound to put a few noses out of joint (they're not popular after all), but it would put a stop to the current bitterness, permanently ending the resentful mood in the region.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: BRING IN SAMMY CLAKES

- **Freeing the Clakes will see Sammy turn himself in**
- **The ringleader can be returned to the magistrates in Anvil to face the law**
- **If Sammy Clake is brought to justice it will draw a line under the whole sorry affair with the Clakes**

Sammy Clake is not among Aertha's captives. Surprisingly, he has sent a missive to the Empire desperately seeking help to rescue his household. He is offering his own head if the Empire will save his family members. The head of the Clakes is ultimately responsible for the actions the family took during the Steward's Invasion. His request is simple, free the family and see them set free, in return he has promised to turn himself in on the battlefield.

If Sammy Clake can be brought in, he will face trial for the Clake's support for Mathilda Fisher and the misdemeanours of the family. He will face whatever punishment may be laid down, even though that is most certainly a quick execution. This will draw a line under the whole sorry matter and ensure everyone can move on. The local populace will come to remember a family saved by the heroes of the Marches, an enemy denied a poignant and symbolic victory, and the head of a household who saw saving his kin as being more important than keeping his own head. It's far from perfect, but as Clake himself writes, *"There's two ways to bury a hatchet."*