

A BROKEN ROCK

Campaigning in Bregasland has been focused in the east of the territory this season. After heavy fighting the Imperial armies have liberated Graven March and pushed the Jotun back, but the fate of the territory still hangs in the balance. The Empire have yet to reach the vast fenland expanses of the Grey Fens where the orcs patrol the dispersed settlements, ensuring those who labour are kept in line, and keeping a watch out for signs of infiltration by the Strong Reeds.

On the edge of Drayham Mere is the found the Ullsmere Rock. A huge dolman, it has stood unmarked and unremarked for as long as anyone can remember. According to local legend it was erected centuries ago by visiting friars to ward the settlement from restless spirits. It clearly works well because there have never been any ghosts in the area that anyone can ever recall. As a result, sensible folk just leave the Rock be.

To date the Jotun had paid the Rock no more attention than the Bregas ever did, but that seems to have suddenly changed. Sunne Astar, a ghodi with a quixotic reputation, has gathered warriors from the Howling Night army and ordered them to drag the enormous stone all the way back to Vallorberg in Hordalant. The ghodi claims the stone is a relic of Ulven, and that the orc hero hurled it at a troll to kill the monster without being close enough to touch it.

Astar intends to take the stone back to Hordalant and place it in the Howling Night Kirkja sacred to Ulven in the belief that its power will inspire the army to new heights. It doesn't matter how unlikely any of Aster's story is, if the Jotun believe it, then there is good reason to think it might work. As if that weren't bad enough, it seems at least one legend about the Ullsmere Rock is true. Moving it, has broken the warding and restless shades, dubbed Grey Walkers by terrified locals, are already rising from the murky waters.

There is a conjunction of the Sentinel Gate that offers an opportunity to travel to Drayham Mere in the Grey Fens and put a stop to this.

OBJECTIVE: RECOVER THE ULLSMERE ROCK

- **Godhi Aster has sent the Howling Night warriors to steal the Ullsmere Rock**
- **With the warding broken, shades are rising from the marshes**
- **Killing ghodi Aster will prevent the Howling Night army improving their quality**
- **Restoring the stone to its rightful location will curtail the haunting**
- **Grey Fens will gain the haunted quality if the stone is not restored**

Sunne Astar, a ghodi who hears the voice of Ulven, has led a host of warriors to this remote village in the Grey Fens in search of the Ullsmere Rock. Astar believes the Rock was once a weapon, a relic of Ulven. They plan to drag it all the way back to Vallorborg in Hordalant. If the ghodi places the Rock in the kirkja to Ulven in Vallorborg then he will be able to improve the fighting spirit of the Howling Night army.

The Jotun have succeeded in pulling the stone out of the ground and have begun to drag it away from the area on a rudimentary sled. The Ullsmere Rock, is a massive block of hewn rock that is not possible to be moved without concerted effort. If the gohdi Sunne Aster is slain then it will put an end to the plan to upgrade the quality of the Howling Night army. If the Jotun are killed, or driven off, then citizens can return it to where it was originally placed. The sled is essential to shift the weighty cargo, and even then it will take six unarmed individuals to move it slowly back into position. Should one of those labouring on the sled be struck down or unable to contribute, then the party will have to wait until a full six are able to work together on the task.

Dragging the Rock back where it belong is half the battle. Once there, Marchers can use rough music to drive off the shades and restore the hearth magics that allow the Rock to ward the marshes. If the Ullsmere Rock is restored then the Grey Walkers will sink back into the waters of the Fens - if the stone is not returned then the dead will spread out across the bleak landscape and the Grey Fens will become Region_qualities#haunted.

BATTLE OPPORTUNITY: OPEN RELATIONS WITH HOUSE BRAWNNESS

- **Friar Bloughton came her to try to tackle the shades but has been capture by the Jotun**
- **Rescuing the friar offers a chance to extend an olive branch to House Brawnness**
- **If that happens, the nation could invite the household to come to Anvil to see if they can bury the hatchet**

Friar Bloughton tends to the spiritual needs of House Brawnness. He came to Drayham Mere to do what he could to exorcise the shades but was quickly captured by the Jotun. House Brawnness were among Mathilda Fisher's closest supporters nearly five years ago and suffered at the hands of the magistrates as a result. Since then they have kept to their farm, avoiding trouble but there is still considerable resentment and the stench of rebellion still pools in the dank air of the North Fens.

Rebellious or not, he's still a Marcher and he was still here helping when the Jotun took him. If the Friar can be rescued, it might be possible to convince him to get the rest of his household to talk to the nation. It won't be easy - his family have felt the heavy hand of Imperial law - but if he is brought back to Anvil and reasoned with, then he might be amenable to opening discussions with the remains of his house. If that happens House Brawnness will send representatives to Anvil at the Summer Solstice creating an opening to resolve the Rebellious spirit once and for all. Of course that assumes that the Marchers in Anvil are even remotely minded to treat with the Friar and his household, given their whole-hearted support for Mathilda Fisher.

One element that might help is the House Brawnness banner depicting a Roaring Bear. This item was one of a number of items that were confiscated by the magistrates from the Brawnness Household when they were tried. The Roaring Bear was an old barbarian banner that proudly hung in the house's hall for generations. It had a questionable aura at the time of the rebellion, but that has long since faded. Simple, of no expert design, and unlikely to ever have held an enchantment, it depicts a great bear roaring at the morning star. The trophy is thought to have been captured around the founding of the Empire as the unified Marcher nation drove back the Jotun from Bregasland, and new lands were claimed for the plough. Not a mighty war banner, but a memento of a house's arrival in a new land and symbol of what the household had won for themselves, Brawnness would undoubtedly like it back.

OBJECTIVE: DISMISS THE GREY WALKERSEDITION

- **Shades are slowly escaping the binding of the Ullsmere Rock**
- **Priests can exorcise the shades to prevent them cursing those trespassing on their fields**

With the toppling of the Rock, the fields and fenland surrounding Drayham are being beset by restless spirits. The shadowy figures, dubbed Grey Walkers by the locals, have not been seen in centuries. They are clearly Marchers, wearing garb common in the fens hundreds of years ago, and draped in the tatters of funeral bindings. They move slowly and without sound across the fields to seek out any who trespass on what was once their land and drive them forth. Whilst easily dispatched they simply dissipate into thin air, only to coalesce again several minutes and a short distance away. It is within the power of a skilled priest to ascertain the strength of a shade using the insight ceremony and to then exorcise the apparition.

Several of the shades are clad for battle and retaining more faculties of their previous existence. These individuals can deliver a potent curse to those nearby that will slowly manifest over time. It is certain that these notable Grey Walkers will be more difficult to dismiss via exorcism, and may require priests to collaborate, draw on ritual powers, imbibe potions or use magical items to overcome the shades' strength of will. The civil service prognosticators have prepared a separate briefing for the High Exorcist, currently Belial De Courtenay-Wyldrose, with more details on the shades, how best to combat them, and how exorcists can remove any curse inflicted by the Grey Walkers on citizens during the battle.

Whatever the grey walkers are, they don't appear to respond the way a ghost might. They don't talk, even when Voice for the Dead is cast on them. Exorcism appears to be the only way to drive them from this world.

BATTLEFIELD THREAT: CURSE OF THE DEAD MERES

- **Several of the Grey Walkers will inflict potent curses on those they approach in battle**
- **They will denote this with a call of "CURSE"**
- **If you are struck by a "CURSE" call then seek out a referee as you exit the battlefield**
- **The curse will not manifest until you have seen a referee**

The Grey Walkers surrounding the village of Drayham can inflict a powerful curse on those they strike or draw near to. The curse does not manifest immediately, often taking up to an hour before the effect becomes apparent. Anyone struck by a Grey Walker (using the call CURSE) should speak with a referee as they leave the battlefield and before exiting the Sentinel Gate. A referee will be stationed at the battlefield exit ready to brief any players that have been struck by the CURSE call.