

# TINKER'S TRIBUTE

The Empire has pushed into Liathaven, known as Ashvale by the Jotun, during the last season seizing a fortification in Liath's Glen and pressing on to take Liath Ring. The orc armies have been forced back westward, driven from farmsteads and hamlets all so recently established. It is clear that many of those leaving are answering the call of Jarl Sederholm, taking up spears and shields in a growing fyrd. The Empire's arrival has been lightning swift but the road ahead shows signs of being a slower one.

As the solstice draws nearer the first scouts from the Narwhal's Spear and the Seventh Wave begin to trickle back. There are sightings of particular warbands, accounts of individual jarls and their retinues moving hither and thither, of reports on the movements of supply wagons. It seems that in addition to the hurried raising of the fyrd and the orc generals preparing to defend the lands of their thralls, the Jotun are engaged in a mighty construction in West Ranging.

Out in the open ash-swept reaches of the once dense forest they are engaged in the building of a new fortification. Nearly half way built, the spies report on a multitude of cranes, gantries, and ramps being employed to heft great white granite blocks into place. More worryingly is the unmistakable mark of the autumn realm here. A magical effect appears to be at work, influencing the building effort, silently greasing hoists, reinforcing ropes, and keeping the wheels of craftship turning day and night. There is an opportunity to use the Sentinel Gate on the Saturday of the solstice to travel to Far Steading and stop the Jotun's attempt to hurry forth the completion of the new fortification in West Ranging.

## OBJECTIVE: DISRUPT THE AUTUMN MECHANISM

- **Cast There Is No Welcome Here and then Words of Ending to destroy the device**
- **Conclave could accept a boon from Skathe to send the device to her for her favour**
- **Success will deny the heralds the magic they need to finish the new fort in West Ranging**

To speed the completion of the defences in West Ranging, the Jotun have turned to Estavus, to offer them aide and support what is now a race to complete the structures. Scouts have identified a strange mechanism at Far Steading, an esoteric contrivance of Bronze Artisan, the device is surrounded by etched dials akin to the contraptions encountered several years ago at the Well of Whispers in Skallahn. This is much smaller than Blade Quencher's Hall, but appears to be acting in a similar way, amplifying a weak autumn regio and drawing magic into the area and towards the site of construction.

Imperial forces will need to reach the mechanism, and defeat the elite Jotun kirkja warriors and soldier-heralds loyal to the Prince of Shikaal. Once the guards are driven, the Empire would need to empower wards around the device and perform There Is No Welcome Here. If the item is warded then Estavus power won't protect it, and Words of Ending at Magnitude 30 could then be used to destroy the device. The alternative would be to try and simply overpower the Bronze Artisan, but that would require a single Magnitude 80 Words of Ending, which might be much more difficult.

If destroyed then the defences in West Ranging will not be completed in the coming days. This would enable Imperial forces to continue their westward advance without further impediment and potentially even capture the new part-built fortification before it is complete. If the autumn contraption is not destroyed, then it will continue to suffuse the region with Autumn magic, ushering forth servitors and crafters from Estavus' forges to complete the fastness in the space of a few weeks. The armies of the Empire would then face a further three thousand strength fortification in their path.

There is one other option for what to do about the mechanism. Enchantrix Conium, herald of the Hag Queen, has made an offer to the Empire. If the Conclave were to pass a declaration of acceptance on Friday night, accepting her aid then Enchantrix Conium will visit the Hall of Worlds with a Cover of Malice for the raising magician, allowing a ritualist to send the mechanism to Skathe using Tribute to the Thrice-Cursed Court. The ritualist would receive twenty heart's blood and Skathe's favour. She will be very grateful for such a gift of superlative artistic expression, and will very much enjoy twisting it.

## **ALTERNATIVE OBJECTIVE: ACCEPT SURUT'S OFFER**

- **Surut offers to cleanse West Ranging as he has done before**
- **Conclave must use a declaration of alignment to accept this boon and then send the Archmage or their proxy to receive it**
- **Unleashing the boon would burn the fortress the Jotun are constructing and scour the region with the flames of Winter**

Surut has once again offered a magical boon to the Empire, that would unleash his magical fire across the region of West Ranging. To accept the boon, the Imperial Conclave would need to use a declaration of alignment to accept the boon and then send the Archmage of Winter or their proxy to receive it on the battlefield. Surut's herald, Hastak the Ash Bearer, will not recognise the Archmage, so whoever is sent must be bearing at least one piece of the regalia of the Winter Archmage to prove their standing. If that happens, Hestak will give them a box containing the wildfire ashes. The ashes must be activated on the battlefield to take effect, otherwise the boon will lose its power.

The boon would have three significant effects:

- **Magical flames would engulf the fortification and completely destroy it**
- **Fire would ravage the region, depositing layers of fertile ash, and destroying many of the barns, workshops and dwellings built in West Ranging by the Jotun**
- **The act would enrage the Jotun who consider such magic to be utterly dishonourable**

## **BATTLEFIELD OBJECTIVE: SPEAK TO THE MOON**

- **Seek out the Feni in the forests**
- **Aid two injured Feni of Sings-to-the-Moon**
- **Seeing their safe return will establish further ties with the wildfolk**
- **Sacrificing them to the Bound King will retain Tharim's favour for the Empire**

Since meeting with the Bounders' soldiers in recent weeks, there has been a suspicion among the war scouts that warriors of the Feni have begun following the Imperial advance, stalking the forests ahead of the army vanguard, and watching the Jotun from the shadows. At least one group of Winterfolk claims they were alerted to a Jotun warband's arrival by the folk of the woods. A message has been received from the Feni that are patiently following the barbarian's actions in Far Steading. Delivered by an elderly yet sprightly man speaking in broken words he passes instructions from the unnamed woman who spoke with the Marchers several weeks before.

The Feni ask the Empire to recover two of their number lost whilst spying on the Jotun's building works. They are Iourde a fierce warrior, and Urgallan a mage, skilled crafter and nephew to the one-eyed spokesperson from Hotter's Mire. The people of the Empire are asked to find and rescue them both; but if Urgallan already lies dead then the amulet he wore should be found and passed to the Imperial Advisor for the Feni to be returned in future. Should Urgallan and Iourde be found alive, then no means has been specified for exactly how to get them out of danger. It is unclear if the pair will permit Cuckoo's Egg to be cast to let them reach the safety of Anvil or if they will head off on their own once healed.

Sadly it appears these Feni may have done something to incur the wrath of Tharim the Bound King. Rather than allowing them to go free, Stoneheart demands that the Empire bring his justice to these two miscreants. His messenger is quick to point out that the Bound King has aided the Empire greatly in recent seasons, sending armies of heralds to fight and die in support of the Empire. All he asks now is that the Empire give him these two so that their temerity may receive the punishment it so rightly deserves. Each of the Feni are wearing a piece of jewellery - Tharim demands the Empire send these items to him using Tribute to the Thrice Cursed Court once the deed is done.

Of course if the Empire don't take this battle opportunity, the two Feni will die anyway, which is equally acceptable to Stoneheart.

## BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: REPAIR FORGE'S AEGIS

- **Vaarnastor requests aide in recovering a Bronze Titan**
- **Perform an empowered casting of Anvil of Estavus on the servitor**
- **The coven responsible for repairs will be rewarded by the herald**

Herald-Exacti, Vaarnastor of Calx, has sent word to the civil service that one of the masterworked constructions of Shikaal that supported the Autumn Hammers has stopped working and is currently unable to reach an regio to return to the City of Fire and Stone. The fabricator is keen to see the device returned as quickly as possible, but no specific reason has been elaborated upon as to why; perhaps the herald merely wishes the craft of Estavus to be kept from prying eyes, or because the construct is required elsewhere to work on another contract this coming season.

The herald has given instructions for restoring and sending the construct on its way. A coven will need to locate the bronze titan and cast Anvil of Estavus at Magnitude 30 on it. Once complete, the clanking engine of destruction will seek out the nearest autumn regio through which to return. Care should be taken to stay out of it's path once it is restored; it will not stop once activated and will no longer follow orders to fight for the Autumn Hammers general. Instead it will certainly seek to destroy anyone, Imperial soldier or Jotun warrior, that stands between it and the distant regio. If the construct is engaged in combat and further damaged, a repeated casting of the ritual may be required.