

NOT ONE MORE INCH

A decisive strategic victory was achieved in Mournwold as autumn turned to winter. The armies of the Empire turned back a Jotun advance that would have seen the end of the Tusks. Instead it was the orcs of Narkyst and Kalsea that were forced to retreat. Faced with a potentially disastrous situation, the Jotun withdrew their armies back into the forests of Ashvale.

But not every orc has departed. The garrison of Farstrider's Watch holds firm, and warbands of veterans from the last decade of campaigning in the western Empire hold Greensward, eager to clash blades. These warriors are oathsworn to Jarl Haakon Gydasson, the would-be Jarl of the Mourn. Whilst the Empire may have gained dominion over the territory, it is far from being under firm control.

On the final day of the solstice, Haakon will be at Old Tam Shaffer's Farm, where Nedry Cullach went into the wicker man five years ago. Importantly, this places Haakon outside the garrison at Farstrider's Watch. He is not going anywhere, so if he is not slain there will be more opportunities to kill him in battle in the future, but he is here *now*.

OBJECTIVE: KILL JARL HAAKON GYDASSON

- **Haakon and his closest warriors have been located in the Mourn**
- **Engage the Jotun and draw Haakon to battle, he can be identified by his personal standard**
- **Killing Haakon will bring a potential peace with the Jotun one step closer**
- **It doesn't matter how Haakon is killed, but he must die in battle**

Naomi of Virtue's Rest recently conducted an appraisal laying out how to end the war with the Jotun. The first requirement was the death of Haakon Gydasson. The jarl ruled Mournwold when the twin curses were unleashed on the territory. The Jarl and his warriors hold themselves responsible for failing to ensure the safety of the thralls living there. Their failure has dishonoured them, and the stain can only be removed by death. For the Jotun to stop fighting the Empire while the Jarl and his warriors still carry this shame would condemn them to the Abyss. They won't do that, they will fight on until the Jarl and all his people have redeemed themselves by dying in battle.

Haakon is accompanied by his closest veteran warriors, patrolling away from his forces in Farstrider's Watch. He will not be in the immediate area of battle, but he is eager for any chance to fight the Empire and will arrive between thirty and fifty minutes after the Jotun are engaged. War scouts might be able to provide further information, but when and where he will arrive cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty. His presence will be signified by his battle standard when he does arrive, the war scouts will provide details of the standard to the Military Council.

All that matters, for a chance at peace, is that the jarl dies fighting the Empire. The Empire's allies do care how he dies however.

OPTIONAL APPROACH: HEED THE GENERAL

- **Zakalwe asks the Empire arrange a fitting demise for Jarl Haakon that respects Jotun honour**

Phronesis asks that Haakon be slain in a manner befitting his status as a brave hero and a good general. To the Jotun, a good death is one where your warband faces off against another of equal size in a clash of honour and steel. Should a notable warrior from Wintermark or the Marches be among those to face off against the jarl, should he be bested in battle by someone he can recognise as a great foe, then Haakon believes his spirit will be worthy of becoming an ancestor.

It won't affect the course of the Empire's negotiations with the Jotun, but Zakalwe favours Haakon and wants him to find the noble death in battle against his enemies. If the Empire succeeds in giving Haakon and the triumphant defeat he craves, they will win Zakalwe's favour, and the eternal will be more inclined to favour them with boons.

OPTIONAL APPROACH: REGARD THE CROWN

- **Basileia asks the Empire kill Haakon's honour at the same time as they murder the Jarl**

Mistress Alabaster, a herald of the Guild of Accountants has been observing Haakon since last season, contracted by an unspecified party in the Empire. They point out that Haakon is an implacable enemy of the Empire, a jarl who enslaved hundreds of Marchers that he personally took as thralls. The Jotun's honour is nothing more than an attempt to force the Empire to fight battles in ways that favour the Jotun. The Empire should give the jarl the send-off he really deserves: an ambush on the battlefield when he is least expecting it, a poisoned knife to the belly, and his body rolled into a ditch.

It won't affect the course of the Empire's negotiations with the Jotun, but Basileia wants Haakon's delusions of honour stripped from him before he dies. If the Empire succeeds in using surprise, poison or treachery to kill Haakon, then they will win Basileia's favour and the eternal will be more inclined to favour them with boons.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: PROTECT FRIAR ROSEMUND

- **Friar Heggy Rosemund will join the battle**
- **Her ministrations have kept spirits up under the Jotun's rule**
- **Protect Rosemund and take up her offer of shriving**

The Rosemunds have roots in the Greensward that date back centuries. Heggy's many connections across the region and her 'can-do' attitude made her a popular figure during the Jotun's long occupation of the rest of the Mourn. Following the fall of Greensward in late 380YE, the cursing of the Mourn, and Nedry's later journey to the wicker man, Rosemund consecrated the site of the general's demise.

Heggy keeps Cullach's Folly, the site of Nedry's death consecrated to Ambition all year round, even though it's now little more than a ring of old ashes. The site has a profound spiritual resonance for Marchers, especially those who feel the weight of their failures bearing them down. Heggy will be heading for the Folly as soon as the battle is joined and invites other Marcher priests of Ambition to join her there, so that they can boost the fighting spirit of the Marchers.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: SEEK COUNSEL WITH THE MYRMIDONS

- **At the request of the Archmage, Zakalwe has sent myrmidons to aid Imperial commanders**

The Polemarch of Strategy wishes to make clear that the Master Strategist has not been able to help the Empire take the battle to Jarl Haakon. He can provide information to the Empire's scouts and prognosticators, but he cannot control the Sentinel Gate. However, he can provide aid in the battle and is more than happy to do so.

The eternal will support the Imperial Military Council with a pair of his most capable myrmidons at Old Tam Shaffer's Farm. The myrmidons are capable warriors, but more important is their ability to provide counsel and information on the battlefield. They will be happy to give advice and suggestions to any commanders who ask for help. Most importantly of all, the minds of the myrmidons are linked by magic, allowing them to communicate quickly and effectively with each other. A wise commander may be able to find ways to take advantage of their abilities.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: INVESTIGATE AN APPEARANCE

- **A cloaked soldier has been reported in the area**
- **Discover who they are and why they are there**

War scouts and beaters have noted the appearance of a cloaked soldier - presumably a Marcher - moving along the hedgerows and hilltops near Farstrider's Watch, keeping a vigil over the barbarians that dwell within the walls. None have been able to get close to the soldier and speak with them; a sudden distraction diverts attention, and the figure slips away. There is an opportunity to locate and learn who the individual might be.

BATTLE OUTCOME: DIVIDE THE SPOILS

- **There is widespread interest in Haakon's personal effects should he be slain**

Jarl Haakon is well-equipped when marching to war. He carries several notable magical items into battle, as well as his own personal battle standard. Several parties have made it known that they, or others they represent, have an interest in securing the jarl's effects. Some offer coin, others the promise of a replacement of equivalent value, or a future favour. There is no urgency in deciding what should happen to the objects, or who they should go to. Indeed, the Imperial citizens who claim the items from the dead jarl are well within their rights to simply keep them.

- Zakalwe would like to honour Haakon by displaying his armour in his great hall
- Ephesis offers payment in orichalcum for the orc's shield
- Jaheris desires the fallen banner of Haakon as tribute
- Callidus' greed would be satisfied by being gifted any item, the more valuable the better
- Basilica Brazen seeks any items of worth she can use to gain influence over the Jotun
- A Sarvosian consortium offers to negotiate a considerable sum for the entire collection to be placed in a museum in the city

The miners of the Mourn have also proposed that some of Haakon's personal effects could be taken into the stewardship of the nation. He owns a talisman forged from green iron taken from beneath the Mourn by the orcs. Perhaps it, or another of Haakon's items, could become a fitting regalia for the new Senator of the Mournwold so that they remember the importance of defending the land?