

TWIN HORRORS - NESUSTAK FOREST

The legendary spite of the Druj admits no peer. Defeated and broken by grappling with the Empire's armies in the Sarangrave they mean to plunge the territory into chaos - they would rather see their ancient homelands consumed by the vallorn than be claimed by the Empire. A final stab aimed at the heart of the people they hate so much. The leaders of the Basilisk have risked everything, unleashing the vallorn to ensure that everyone goes down together.

In Bloodwater Marsh, the plans of the Druj have been stymied by the actions of the Boyar's Hasta. Without their Vigilance, the vallorn would have already escaped the bounds of its prison and the entire territory would now be at risk. Their actions slowed the Druj and made it harder for them to tear down the wards that imprison the vallorn in the ancient gaol of Béantal Dol.

There is a conjunction of the Sentinel Gate on the Saturday of the equinox that opens at the Mantifent's Bier in Bloodwater Marsh. It offers a risky opportunity to try to save the region from the onrushing vallorn and rescue those who have been captured by the Druj. Maddened by fear, the Druj will never surrender - their soldiers are already here, determined to ensure that the fall of Sarangrave consumes everything.

OBJECTIVE: STRENGTHEN THE MANTIFENT STONES

- **The five stones at Mantifent's Bier that once held back the power of the vallorn are failing**
- **Wardens of the Black Waste creates powerful wards against the vallorn that last for a season**
- **Each stone that is warded will reduce the strength of the vallorn pushing into Bloodwater Marsh this season by 6000**

The five ancient stones that stand sentinel in Mantifent's Bier have contained the power of this vallorn for hundreds of years. Created centuries ago by the Terunael people as their empire collapsed, they are threatened by the Druj. The actions of the Boyar's Hasta has checked the plans of the buruk tepel but they have only created a short delay. A small window has opened, just wide enough to offer a chance to stall the roiling advance of the vallorn into Bloodwater Marsh.

While the magic of the stones is failing, they are still powerful winter totems, built to anchor a ward. Winter ritualists will need to cast Wardens of the Black Waste on each one of the ancient pillars. The stone will anchor the ritual, so fragile warding posts are not required, the ritual can simply target the pillar itself. This will also prevent the Druj from simply destroying the ward by scattering the post markers. The ritual will weaken any vallorn that approach countering the spring magic that enervates them. Each warding placed upon the stones here will iteratively sap the strength of the encroaching vallorn mass, slowing the movements of giant ettercap and abominations, and draining the animating force that propels the vallornspawn onwards.

Each stone that is still warded at the end of the battle will reduce the strength of the vallorn heading southwards by 6000. If all five pillars are warded, then the full force of the vallorn threatening Bloodwater Marsh this coming season will be held back, before it returns to quiescence. This will enable Imperial forces to concentrate fully on the vallorn presence that is advancing southwards into the Nesustak Forest.

OBJECTIVE THREAT: DRUJ COUNTER RITUALS

- **Mages from the Tainted Basilisk threaten to counter any wardings**
- **They will seek to use a spring ritual to remove any ward raised on a stone**
- **The warded stones will need to be guarded, or the small covens hunted down and killed**
- **Detect magic can be used at any time to ascertain the status of a warding stone**

Whilst the vast majority of the Tainted Basilisk's ritual covens have been utterly destroyed by unleashing the vallorn, scant few have survived and are now preparing to ensure that the army's final work is seen to the end. Everyone of the army's remaining ghulai and cicatrix ritualists have spread across the area, tasked with breaking the power of the Terunael magic, and allowing the vallorn to issue forth.

Once the Druj realise that the Empire is attempting to erect wards, they will direct any remaining ritualists to counter them. Druj ritualists will attempt to cast Spring rituals to overwhelm the wards on each stone, undoing the Empire's work. Detect magic can be cast on a stone at any time to check whether a ward is in place or not. If the ward is down then Warden of the Black Waste will need to be performed to restore it.

The surest way to prevent the Druj from countering Imperial efforts is to hunt down and eliminate these small ritual teams before they can become a threat.

OBJECTIVE: SHATTER THE BILIOUS BREATH

- **The Bilious Breath vikari are the last remnants of the Tainted Basilisk army's leadership**
- **Killing or scattering this force will destroy any chance of the army holding together**
- **If the Breath are overrun, then the Tainted Basilisk will collapse, disbanding into scattered bands of Druj fighters**

The capture of Tower of the Skink has broken the back of army and the Tainted Basilisk is close to collapse. With the deaths of many senior Buruk Tepel and the loss of the ritual covens that roused the vallorn, the vikari arkad of the Bilious Breath harbour the last few ritual covens capable of casting large battlefield rituals. Once battle is joined the covens will most certainly seek to cast Fetid Breath of Teeming Plague with their last reserves of mana then use the magic on massed troops. The ritual poses a serious threat to the forces of the Empire on the field, especially given the miasma that blankets the area.

The Bilious Breath will be on the battlefield together, under a distinctive banner, along with key people that form an essential part of the leadership of the Tainted Basilisk. If the Empire can decisively engage the group and kill or scatter them, it will deal a devastating final blow to the Tainted Basilisk. Without the leadership of the Breath's het and cicatrix then all sense of cohesion will quickly collapse. The army will disband as the campaign season begins, breaking up into small units and warbands, all eager to go to ground. Individual bands under a charismatic or particularly cruel orc, will be a problem for Imperial heroes to deal with, but the military threat to Imperial armies will be ended.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: RESCUE THE SEERS

- **Five Urizeni seers have been seized by the Druj while they were investigating the miasma pillars in the Bloodwater Marsh**
- **They have vital information on the location of the pillars in the region**
- **Rescuing the group of seers from the Druj will give the Empire a chance to deal with the miasma in Bloodwater Marsh**

At the winter solstice the Urizeni National Assembly directed seers of their nation to find ways to gather knowledge and insights on the crushing pall of dread that blankets the Sarangrave. This is dangerous work with Druj forces still active in the territory. The Druj caught up with one group after they managed to find the location of the key pillars in the Bloodwater Marsh. They have been torturing their prisoners seeking to break their will, but thus far without success. The seers are together on the battlefield, if more than half the group can be rescued and returned to Anvil, then they the civil service will gather crucial information that will create an opportunity to deal with any pillars in the Bloodwater Marsh at the Summer Solstice.

BATTLEFIELD ENVIRONMENT: MIASMA OF DESPAIR

- **The entire battlefield is affected by an oppressive Druj miasma**
- **The miasma causes WEAKNESS unless you have a way to overcome it**

The entire area at Feverbank Trees, is under the effect of the Druj miasma, a pall of potent fear that blankets the lands the Druj claim dominion over. Anyone entering the area will need to protect themselves from the clawing dread or succumb to a weakening terror that creeps into their mind.

The primary effect of the miasma is that it weakens anyone exposed to it who does not have the ability to overcome it. The easiest method to overcome the miasma is to receive an anointing, but particularly heroic individuals, or those in possession of certain enchantments or magic items may also be able to counteract the effect. In particular, those of the changeling lineage are able to fight the effects of the miasma, by only by becoming extremely angry - which can cause problems all its own.