

Weird Goodbye

"Sure, but what is it?" Tove understood that the overseer had every reason to be skeptical, but this was going a bit too far.

"It's an Artok, y'know one of them big fuckers that wander out of Sydanjaa sometimes..." She waved in a direction that was probably northward. Surely they would get how useful having such a creature would be.

"And you are certain it won't attack any of my crew?" The overseer tried to figure out where the catch was, there was almost always something with icewalkers. "I have a real difficulty getting people out here sometimes, and the last thing I want is to have to send down for more from Wreck."

"Nah, none of that. We'll look after it and make sure it doesn't do anything." And make sure none of your lot do anything too Tove kept that last bit to herself. The last thing she needed was for the overseer to start thinking about what an overzealous guard might do. "Besides, more mithril is more mithril. It's not like the nation's swimming in it."

The overseer grimaced at that last bit. "Fine, if you get the go ahead then I'll allow it, but any funny business and it is out back into the storm."

Overview

Two seasons ago reports of the Icebarn twins - a pair of Artok - reached the people of Wintermark. The two icy giants tread a strange, shifting route that sees them vanish into Sydanjaa for years at a time. Their coming was forewarned by the *Cold Hand of Sarda*, a small group of icewalkers who reported that the pair were being tracked by two warbands of Jotun. During the Summer Solstice, the Banner-bearer of Atkonaroq and the Keeper of the Runegrott were each charged with leading a group of Imperial heroes through the Sentinel Gate to kill the Jotun and deal with *Big Icebarn* and *Little Icebarn* respectively.

Both warbands of Jotun were dealt with, and Big Icebarn was marked with the runes of Dominion and Battle, whilst Little Icebarn was marked with the runes of Dominion and Wealth. The *Cold Hands of Sarda* have been observing the Artok and now, six months later, present what could be done with these massive creatures of ice.

Big Icebarn

- **Big Icebarn was marked with the runes of Hirmok and Jotra**
- **The Banner-bearer of Atkonaroq can decide which task to set Big Icebarn to**

The first of the Artok was marked with the runes of Scythe and Swords. *Dominion* allows a degree of control over the artok, or at least enough that it will not destroy its

surroundings. Marked with *battle*, the artok is focused and strengthened it in its tasks. The icewalkers of the Cold Hand of Sarda have two suggestions for what could be done with Big Icebarn: it could be sent into Kalsea, the Jotun kingdom of the north to cause destruction and distraction; or it could be kept within Sermersuaq and tasked with killing the monsters of Agramant or the beasts of Hayaak.

Ultimately, the decision of what to do with Big Icebarn is the responsibility of the Banner-bearer of Atkonaroq, **Liv Tidgaring**. The decision must be made at the upcoming summit by informing Sulkavaris, and once decided, cannot be changed.

Jotra

- **Big Icebarn could be used to distract the Jotun of Skallahn or Tromsa**
- **Sending Big Icebarn raiding would increase production of any Wintermark military unit captains who raided the Jotun this season by one rank**
- **Big Icebarn could be used to kill either monsters of Agramant or beasts of Hayaak in Sermersuaq**
- **Sending Big Icebarn hunting would increase production of any Wintermark military unit captains who hunted monsters in Sermersuaq this season by one rank**
- **If either option was supported by a thousand strength, then it would continue next season**

The Empire has raided the Jotun several times in recent years.

The attack into Sermersuaq, the raid on Skallahn and its subsequent follow-up. The ongoing efforts to raid the coast, and the recent resurgence in raiding the Jotun have demonstrated the Empire's willingness to give as good as they get from the Jotun - whose warbands also raid into Imperial lands. The largest barrier to raiding the Jotun is the many jarls and their fyrds. Sending Big Icebarn into Kalsea would be akin to unleashing a toddler onto a stall of sweet treats; every jarl would need to respond, drawing their oathsworn warriors to them and defending their thralls. Such a move would allow the military units of the Winterfolk to take full advantage; ambushing warriors, pillaging abandoned halls, or simply forcing a warband into fight. The destructive nature of the Artok, and the aggression of jarls, will drive Big Icebarn back north if it is not supported. If at least a thousand strength is assigned from the military units of Wintermark this season, then it will be available again after the Spring Equinox. Otherwise, Big Icebarn will retreat northwards back into Sydanjaa.

Alternatively, the empty plains of Sermersuaq have been plagued by monsters for two years. Heroes and glory-hunters have travelled to the territory to battle the monsters of Agramant, and to hunt the beasts of Hayaak. Sending Big Icebarn hunting would be lighting a flame near the hives of a blood-moth; the monsters and beasts couldn't help but be drawn to such a powerful creature. This would give Wintermark military units a much easier time, able to slay more

of the dangerous hunters of the Suaq wastes. So many heralds, beasts, and monsters drawn to the Artok would see it driven into Sydanjaa, unless supported by enough Winterfolk. If at least a thousand strength is assigned from the military units of Wintermark this season, then it will be available again after the Spring Equinox. Otherwise, Big Icebarn will retreat northwards.

Little Icebarn

- **Little Icebarn was marked with the runes of Hirmok and Pallas**
- **The Keeper of the Runegrott can decide which task to set Little Icebarn to**

The second of the Artok was marked with the runes of Scythe and Apple Tree. The rune of *dominion* hopefully exerts a small modicum of control, or at least enough that the Artok would remain where it was kept. Marked with *wealth*, to focus and bind it in its task. The icewalkers of the Cold Hand of Sarda have two suggestions for what Little Icebarn could be tasked with: it could be sent into the Pride of Ikka's Tears, the mithril mine in Suaq Fount, to hammer and claw at the ore veins; or it could be set to constructing and hauling for new commissions in the territory.

Ultimately, the decision of what to do with Little Icebarn is the responsibility of the Keeper of the Runegrott, **Derowen**. The decision must be made at the upcoming summit by

informing Sulkavaris, and once decided, cannot be changed.

Pallas

- **Little Icebarn could be used to mine mithril in the Pride of Ikka's Tears**
- **Sending Little Icebarn mining would increase production of the Pride by four wains of mithril a season for a year**
- **Little Icebarn could be used to build constructions in Sermersuaq**
- **Sending Little Icebarn building would allow a commission that would not count towards the Senate's limited supply and would fulfil all labour costs for a year**

The Pride of Ikka's Tears was first discovered seven years ago by noted civil servant *Peter of Hintown*. The Senate passed a motion to develop the mine that season. This was followed two years later by the dispatching of prospectors to explore expanding the workings of the mine. The Pride was expanded once the territory had been reclaimed from the Jotun. There are large veins within the workings that are just too inaccessible - and too dangerous - for the workers to make it worthwhile. But an Artok set to work could claw out great hunks of the ore and deliver it back to the overseers without danger. Little Icebarn could be set to mine mithril - equivalent to four wains each season - for the next year.

Alternatively, Little Icebarn could be set to build all kinds of things for the benefit of the territory. The Cold Hands of Sarda

have planned for how to best keep the Artok moving and active; reapplying the runes of Hirmok and Pallas each day with rendered mammoth tallow. Little Icebarn could be used to build any civilian commission in the territory, the huge creature of ice set to hauling and lifting vast amounts of stone and timber. Architects and labourers would be drawn from across Wintermark, and beyond, to get to work alongside an Artok. Each construction would still need to be raised and passed as a motion, but would not use one of the limited commissions available to the Senate. The labour of Little Icebarn would also count towards all labour costs; only the mithril, weirwood, or white granite would need to be provided for a commission overseen by the Artok.