

# TO DEAL OUT DEATH IN JUDGEMENT

The situation in the south of Sarangrave has seen Druj leaders attempting to bring up reinforcements; perhaps in an effort to hunt down the rebels in Whisperwood, or to prepare to assail the Winter Sun with as large a force as possible. It is a desperate gambit that requires the drawing of elite arkad troops from Thornfen, where they currently aid the defence of the Tower of the Skink.

The Druj are on the back foot, their supply lines are stretched to breaking point and cut into pieces by the Imperial advance. The hammer blow dealt by the Empire has clearly rattled the barbarians - forcing them onto the back foot. There is a brief opportunity to strike against them before they can regroup to take advantage of their disarray. It would be wise to be Vigilant however, the Druj are at their most deadly and determined when cornered.

On the Saturday of the equinox, the Sentinel Gate can be used to access the Uklead Groves in the central Whisperwood.

## OBJECTIVE: SEIZE THE WHISPERWOOD

- **The Empire has a chance to capture the region of Whisperwood**
- **There are two approaches that can be taken to secure victory**
- **Success with either approach will give the Empire control of the Whisperwood and dominion over the Sarangrave**

The two approaches offer a choice for the Field Marshal on how to approach the engagement. That will force the Druj to adapt their own strategies in response. The battlefield presents a difficult environment in which to operate, and threats will most certainly change how they fight to deny the Empire's strengths and expose their vulnerabilities.

Success with either approach will see the Druj forces lose cohesion and force them to withdraw from the region. The arkad forces will fall back to Thornfen, the last bastion of Druj power in the Sarangrave. The Winter Sun, and independent military units operating in the area will be able to quickly wrest control of the area, securing the Whisperwood for the Empire. That will tip control of the entire Sarangrave to the Empire, granting dominion over the territory and enabling it to be assigned to an Imperial nation.

If the Military Council can arrange the capture of the Whisperwood, then a Senator could raise a motion to assign the territory to an Imperial nation. Otherwise, the Civil Service will raise an administrative motion at the following summit, once they have had time to prepare a briefing on the new territory with an assessment of how each nation might benefit from it.

## TACTICAL OPTION: DISMISS THE MIASMA

- **There are three pillars in the area that anchor the miasma across the region**
- **If they are destroyed with Chimes of Annulment or Consecration they must all be done within ten minutes of each other**
- **If they are destroyed with Dreadful Ending, they can be done sequentially**
- **If all three are destroyed, the Druj will fall back and the Empire will capture the Whisperwood**

The Druj miasma is a boon to the enemy who are used to fighting under its effects but it requires a network of pillars to maintain it. The pillars here in the Uklead Groves anchor the miasma in place across the Whisperwood - if they can be destroyed, then the miasma in this region will fade. This would enable the Empire to swiftly advance as the Druj fall back, giving them control of the region. It would also and make it easier for Imperial forces to operate in the Whisperwood in future, either during seasonal campaigns or when accessed through conjunctions of the Sentinel Gate.

The Empire has destroyed miasma pillars using the Day ritual, Chimes of Annulment and with powerful consecrations in the past. These pillars appear more powerful than those the Empire encountered in Zenith and may require more than fifteen doses of liao to overcome their auras. The weakness of this approach is that all three pillars have to be destroyed within ten minutes of each other which requires very careful strategic planning given the distances involved. The untested alternative is to use the Winter ritual, Dreadful Ending, which is much harder to cast but would allow the Empire to destroy the pillars one by one.

If all three pillars are destroyed, then the Druj will fall back, allowing the Empire to seize control of the Whisperwood and with it the territory of Sarangrave.

#### **TACTICAL OPTION: HOLD THE GROUND**

- **Hold the ground between the pillars to tie up the Druj's forces for an hour**
- **The Druj will give up after an hour and retreat if they cannot force the Empire to retreat**

Instead of striking out to destroy the miasma pillars, the Field Marshal could elect to hold the ground between them against the advancing Druj. This would require Imperial forces to secure the area, and capture at least one or more of the pillars to force the Druj to engage them. Once they control one or more of the pillars, that will draw Druj to their position like wasps to honey as they seek to engage the Empire and protect the pillars.

With the Druj on the back foot and their forces outmanoeuvred, they don't have the numbers to press the attack indefinitely. If the Empire can hold the field for an hour, the Druj morale will break and they will give up the attack. At that point, the battlefield would be theirs, the Druj forces would fall back, and the Imperial forces could return to Anvil in good order.

If the Empire hold the ground between the pillars for an hour and weather the Druj counter-attack, then the Druj will fall back, allowing the Empire to seize control of the Whisperwood and with it the territory of Sarangrave.

#### **BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: ELIMINATE THE FIREBLOOD SKINKS**

- **Bassk Bloodburner has brought their arkad fighters to Uklead Groves**
- **Slay the het and his Chikad force on the field of battle**
- **Killing Bassk and the arkad fighters will prevent the Druj from using poison or venom in the Sarangrave next season**

The Druj are infamous across the continent for their use of poison and venom. The local expert in this area is Het Bassk, the Bloodburner, and his Chikad. Adept at brewing their own concoctions and applying them in combat, the Fireblood Skinks have already reaped a painful toll on Imperial soldiers this season, killing those that could not get to the apothecaries in time.

Eliminating Bassk and the unit will deny the Druj crucial skills, making it impossible for them to employ any poisons or venoms in the Sarangrave next season. Their venomous armies won't be able to employ Fire in the Blood and they won't have poisons or venoms to deploy on battlefields and skirmishes. The Buruk Tepel will soon replace Het Bassk, but it will give the Empire a season's grace from the Druj's murderous ways.

#### **BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: SAVE THE FALLEN SENTINEL**

- **Rescue Corisande of Vertigon Spire and save their soul**
- **The Druj have begun to transform the sentinel into a tortured soul**
- **Priests and apothecaries will need to work together to bring the sentinel back from the brink of death**

A captured Urizen sentinel, Corisande, is being broken and tortured close to the Uklead Groves. She is physically wounded, and has been forced to imbibe dire concoctions by the tepel who are holding her. Her will is broken, and she is close to death - it is clear that the Druj are trying to use her to create one of their tortured souls. There is every chance that the lost sentinel can be rescued and saved, which could save their soul and provide valuable intelligence on how the corrupted Druj alchemy is employed. Priests and apothecaries might both be needed to alleviate Corisande's suffering; healing her physical wounds, purifying the toxins from her body and exorcising the affliction on her soul.

### **BATTLEFIELD THREAT: TORTURED SOULS**

- **The Druj have unleashed their twisted creations into the area**
- **Priests can exorcise these corrupted souls**

As the Empire has pressed deeper into the Sarangrave, they have begun to encounter more of the Druj's twisted and wracked creatures. Some postulate that the eastern barbarians have dank dungeons filled with these hideous monsters. Others argue that the increase in numbers is merely a response to the Empire's aggression, and the Druj have tasked their tepel with creating as many as they can to slow the advance of their foes.

Tortured Souls are created by the hideous poisons used by the Tepel when they break an individual's will and turn them into a monster full of wrath and malice towards any they face. They are fearsome foes, often still clad in the garb of their former Imperial lives; they are capable of inflicting a grievous curse with blows from their weapons. Whilst it is possible to put down and execute their physical forms, their spiritual presence can quickly return. The only way to defeat one permanently is for priests to ascertain the strength of the aura on it using Insight and then overcome it with a powerful enough exorcism to dismiss the soul once it has been dropped.

### **BATTLEFIELD ENVIRONMENT: MIASMA OF DESPAIR**

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

The entire area at Uklead Groves, 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.