

JAWS OF THE LEOMARID

Nine months ago a secretive cult emerged from Attar and offered the power of the Hawser of the Drowned to the Salt Lords allowing them to collapse the cliffs along the coast of Fleisardh. As the campaign has increasingly focused on the interior of Mareave, they Grendel desperately need the support of their navies to counter the Imperial presence in the territory. The greatest barrier is the stubborn neutrality of the port city of Beoraidh, and the towering coastal cliffs of Icarion.

The Tempest and Simoom have appraised an opportunity to overcome the natural sea defences of Icarion and create a way to effect a beachhead in the region. Through repeated dumping of rocks, sand, and rubble from ancient buildings, a flotilla of small fleets of independent captains have spent the last month building up basic quays beneath the cliffs in what are normally treacherous waters surround the Syagrian Haven. The headland above contains several old ruined settlements, beneath which the limestone cliffs are riddled with cracks, fissures, and tunnels. The tunnels extend inland, spreading out in all directions. Some of these are large enough to move people and supplies through, passageways of a former minor Urizeni port and more recent enlargements by Grendel smugglers. A whole tunnel network exists, capable of hiding away bands of smugglers or spies for months, but only four of the tunnels are large enough to be of use to military forces.

If the Grendel's work is left uninterrupted then their navies - four of which are currently in Mareave - would be able to land marines onto the makeshift docks and then quickly bring elite moridun soldiers up into Icarion. With no coastal defences to speak of it would be hard for the Empire to deter their ships, and the steep drop would offer the orcs making landfall ample protection whilst they entered the tunnels. From there, Wave Riders could quickly spread out into the region, allowing the Stone Born to consolidate their gains. If this cunning innovation by the Grendel is not stopped, it will serve as a beachhead through which they can rapidly deploy their forces for the next year.

The civil service has identified a conjunction that will enable heroes to reach the Syagrian Haven in Icarion on the Saturday of the Autumn Equinox.

OBJECTIVE: LOCATE AND COLLAPSE THE TUNNEL NETWORK

- **The tunnels have a system of shafts to ventilate the briney caverns**
- **There are six vents that lead to the tunnels below, but only four connect to active tunnels**
- **Clear Lens of the Eternal River can be used to divine which vents link with the tunnels**
- **Once an active tunnel has been located, actions can be taken to collapse it**
- **Zakalwe offers the Spheres of Tarachi to assist in this endeavour**
- **The Grendel plan will allow them to treat Icarion as if it were coastal for the next year**
- **Each destroyed tunnel will reduce the time they can maintain this by one season**

The tunnels that extend inland from the Syagrian Haven are the focus of the Grendel's scheme, and they already have an exploratory force in place on the headland above. The first hurdle to thwarting the Grendel in the area is to actually determine where to focus efforts. There are six shaft vents that connect down to the tunnels below, bringing fresh air into the caverns and storehouses, regulating temperature and evacuating the often stale brine-filled atmosphere. Not all of them are useful, two connect to dead-end chambers or old passageways; simply hoping for the best risks collapsing an unused tunnel or empty cavern, wasting resources with little impact on the Grendel.

To determine if a vent connects to an actively used tunnel, a day mage can cast the ritual Clear Lens of the Eternal River to learn factual information about the immediate area connected to the shaft. This will allow Imperial forces to decide if the tunnel is worth destroying. The tunnels themselves are deep underground and protected from direct assault or magical destruction that could be achieved through spring or winter rituals. This means the tunnels must be destroyed from inside.

Zakalwe has offered the Spheres of Tarachi to assist the Empire in this matter. Each sphere is a crystalline cage that can bind and deliver powerful magical forces in battle. Normally they can be lofted into enemy ranks to burst open, hurling soldiers aside, and pinning advancing troops. The Master Strategist has adapted these alembics so that each orb can contain the magical power from rituals of the other realms. This allows ritualists to imbue the object in a manner similar to enchanting an implement, via the Rising Roots that Rend Stone or the Inevitable Collapse into Ruin rituals. If dropped down one of the tunnel shafts, the crystalline globe will shatter when it reaches the bottom, loosing the destructive energies and collapsing the tunnel.

The Grendel opportunity will allow them to treat Icarion as coastal for one year if they are not stopped. Over time the coastal forces of the Bay will slowly eat away at the makeshift docks, wearing down the quays and washing out the tunnel entrances. After a year the temporary landings will be lost, unless a significant engineering project is undertaken to secure the docks against the action of the tides. Each of the four active tunnels that is destroyed will impede the Grendel efforts, reducing the time the barbarians can maintain their coastal access by a single season. If all four tunnels can be located and dealt with, then the threat to Icarion from the sea will be completely stopped.

OBJECTIVE: DEFLECT THE QUINTIAN SPEARS

- **Zarides is a representative of The Plenum supporting the Grendel in Mareave**
- **Mercenaries under her command are ready to assist the Simoon navy in a coastal assault**
- **The prefectoi can be convinced, or coerced, to call off support for the navy this season**

Trichas Manouelites Zarides is a representative of the ruling Plenum council in Asavea, and one of many prefectoi assigned to assist efforts in furthering the war against the Empire. Zarides is in frequent contact with her seniors back in Asavea, and is involved in securing contracts for the Guardians of the Black Bull and Adherents of the Red God mercenaries. With the flick of a quill, exchange of coin, and magical missive she has the authority to arrange contracts, make key tactical decisions, and determine how best to further Asavea's ultimate aims in its long-range proxy war through their Grendel allies. Even though she has considerable influence with the Asavean mercenaries she can order and contract, there are limits to what she can do, and indeed what she is bound to do by law or oaths to the Plenum.

Targeting the prefectoi during this opportunity offers a chance to make a small intervention and change the direction of the next season's campaigning. While Zarides is a loyal subject of the Plenum, but she is no hero. A career of sending mercenaries to the deaths to achieve greater goals, doesn't always steel one's own mind against the horrors of battle and bloodshed. If she can be located on the field, separated from her bodyguards, and then in some way threatened, she could be forced to change the orders she has given to the Quintian Spears, a mercenary force operating at her behest, to get them to stand down.

If the Empire can locate Zarides and convince her that her life is on the line, they could extract a promise to stand down the Quintian Spears. She might not be brave, but her word is good. If the Empire can secure a promise from her to call her mercenaries off, then it will reduce the strength of the Simoon by one thousand in the coming season until the Grendel can replace the missing mercenaries. If Zarides is killed, then it will not be possible to stop the Quintian Spears from supporting the Grendel this season.

