

Million miles of water

Tom furrowed his brow. "Why do you want to farm here?" Jord made a face: to the young Sunstorm orc, it was obvious. "I've done my years in the legions, and now I want to settle down. I want to make things grow with my hands. Been listening to the Yerende talk a lot about that lately."

The older man laughed. "Sure, fine, but you misunderstand me. Why here? I'm not saying it's easy growing up in Skarsind but you can make a living there. The soil..." He bent down and picked up a pile of earth. Letting it crumble under his fingers, the dry, arid ground of the eastern shore of the Bay spun off into the winter wind. "You're fighting the land, every step of the way here. It doesn't want to grow. Now, up in the hills, maybe, there's enough shelter and enough scrubs to support some herding. It'll hardly be straightforward, though. 'Strive, toil, and claim the just rewards of your labours', yes, but there's no sense striving for the sake of striving. You catch me, youngster?"

Jord made a sullen face. "I catch you. You reckon we should mine, then, like they do in your Mournwold?"

Tom cocked his head. "It isn't my Mourn. I'm a Stockland man born and bred, myself. But, yes, maybe. There's good mining here. That's what the wizards said, who checked it out, didn't they? And that's what they say, isn't it?" He gestured towards the travellers, who were camped a little distance away.

From here, Jord could see the lights of their fires, fading now as the night grew long, and not for the first time he found himself intrigued by the visitors, the first foreigners he'd ever met. He'd liked them. They'd treated him and the other Imperial Orcs like - like this was their home, not just the Empire's land but theirs, which it was, of course, but they'd shown that they knew it. Polite guests - just as Tom and the other Marchers, and the Freeborn and the rest were polite

guests, of course. The funny thing about the Skourans, though, is that the voices in his head didn't quite know what to do with them. There was no history there, no ancient warnings and ancestral urgings to heed or ignore.

Tom spoke again. "The Skourans know their stuff. I'm not disputing that. It sounds like they can bring the water down from the deep hills. The question is, young one, what'll you do with it when it comes? I'm sure the Freeborn'll do you right and give the soil the drink it needs, and I can tell you, the land's got potential, there's no doubt about that. If this place got as much rain in a year as my house does in springtime you'd have no issue. Mineral-rich, the soil is. Won't grow as good as Marcher land, though, as we've been mangling it a long long time, so's to be expected. You'll be doing all that work, spending all that coin, just to get a fairly decent crop. Farming isn't about what you plant, young one, it's about what it cost you to sow and what you'll sell it for."

Jord fell silent, thoughtful. He looked across the plains and hills of Mareave. It was a clear night, and from here you could even see the twinkling lights of Beoraidh in the far distance. He thought about all that he'd done - all that everyone had done - to get here, to make this place theirs. He thought of gardens. After a little while spending time with his friend in the silence, he spoke.

"Sometimes it isn't about that. Sometimes it's about making the world bloom. Because you can. It's about planting trees so that the next generation has a place to sit in the shade. We're not growing crops, here, Tom. We're..." He waved his hands, trying to articulate the point. "We're growing time."

The landskeeper smiled. "Fine, then. Let's talk in a little more practical detail about what that might mean, shall we...?"

Overview

The Imperial Orcs were recently assigned the territory of Mareave, and have given every indication that they intend to make it a permanent home, just as they have done with Skarsind. On top of the political and logistical problems facing Mareave - some of which the Empire has taken steps to address - there are the challenges posed by its geography. Like the rest of the Broken Shore, Mareave is warm and dry with little in the way of large-scale vegetation. Three of its regions - Icarion, Nadir, and Eoradal - are arid, with little access to fresh water and consequently food. This is a major barrier to growing the territory's prosperity and attracting more Imperial Orcs from distant Skarsind to venture here. Farms struggle to grow crops or raise herds on such dry ground.

Marcher experts from Mitwold and Upwold, and Freeborn talented in drawing prosperity and growth from barren earth have been invited to the territory on the urging of their National Assemblies: after all, the Freeborn have some familiarity with living in arid lands, and the green hands of the Marchers are legendary. Neither can work miracles, however. They cannot strike water from the stone where there is none.

The experts from the Brass Coast and the Marches gather together and set themselves to studying the problem immediately. The Brass Coast delegation includes some of those who designed the Iron Qanat over in Segura. They have similar visions for underground channels here in Mareave, but there is no good source of water in Eoradal or Icarion. The Marchers are even less optimistic - "Good cider takes good apples" one says - inferring that the land here is poor and unlikely to ever become fertile - at least not without great effort.

The Eoradal Tunnels

Restore the Great Aqueduct of Eoradal

Commission Type: Edifice

Location: Eoradal in Mareave

Cost:

- 15 white granite, 5 weirwood, 5 mithril, and 75 crowns (not factoring in the under-developed nature of Mareave)
- Requires a source of water from Jedefall

Special:

- Supplies fresh water to the main settlement in Eoradal.
- Enables the region to support a large town once Curstag's Way is also completed, increasing taxation here by 4 thrones a season.
- Removes the arid quality from the region while it is operational
- **The Great Aqueduct of Eoradal could be repaired and used to bring water to the region from the border with Skoura**
- **Once the aqueduct is built, the Empire would need to acquire the water from Skoura**
- **A good fresh water supply would support a large town here once Curstag's Way is also completed**
- **This settlement would increase taxation by 4 thrones a season**
- **The aqueduct will remove the arid quality for as long as it is operational.**

After a couple of weeks, the deadlock is broken by the arrival of another set of visitors - the Skourans. They are dressed in dour and practical clothes, off-whites, dark fabrics, hooded and gloved to protect themselves from the winter chill. Over them they wear finely worked necklaces and distinctive bracelets with ornate designs. The fabric of their garments might be shabby, but their jewellery is impressive. Their leader introduces herself as "Nerra, who brings forth water's wonders". She is a tall, stout woman, with blond hair tied back in a practical ponytail, and hands calloused from a lifetime of work.

Nerra explains that she and her companions represent the Jedefall Water-guardian's Cooperative. Jedefall, it seems, is the territory directly to the east of Mareave. She has been sent to assess how Skoura could bring their water's bounty to Mareave (she names it quite carefully, avoiding referring to it by its Skouran name). Apparently, a deal has been struck in principle between a representative of Jedefall's Principal Council and the Senator and Legion Engineer, confirming both that the Imperial Orcs are serious about the long-term development of the territory and that Skoura are interested in prosperous trade to help that happen.

According to Nerra, the ruins that lie in the east of Mareave, in Eoradal, include the remains of a great aqueduct and irrigation network. This ruin was once Eorli, one of the Skouran settlements here. When the Skourans lived there, they would transport the water they needed from their holdings in the mountains to the east and distribute it across the region. This was hundreds of years ago, but the irrigation ditches are still there, and the aqueduct could be repaired. If it is rebuilt and the connection to Jedefall restored, water could be supplied to the territory.

That would allow a new settlement in Eoradal to prosper, once Curstag's Way is completed. When both were accomplished, the rising population in the area would increase

the taxation from the territory by 4 thrones a season. Perhaps most importantly of all, the improved water supply would remove the arid quality from the region, for as long as the aqueduct was working.

Restoring the Great Aqueduct of Eoradal would require 15 white granite, 5 weirwood and 5 mithril, plus labour costs. This would require a commission for an edifice and 75 crowns normally (increased to 90 crowns while neighbouring Icarion is underdeveloped). The biggest cost may be that the aqueduct will only function while the Skourans provide water - and they drive a hard bargain.

A Fair Trade

- **The Skourans want 12 thrones a season to supply water to the aqueduct from Jedefall**
- **The alternative is to grant exclusive mining rights to the Skourans in place of payments for the water**
- **This would remove the 12 throne upkeep and any benefits to Imperial Orc mines in the territory**
- **Skourans would open new mines as they settled in Eoradal, Clisearn, and Nadir**

The Skourans claim their supplies of water are limited and they value them highly. They are not prepared to provide the water for free, but they would be willing to sign a contract with the Empire to sell the Imperial Orcs the water they need. After some negotiation, the Skourans settle on a price of 12 thrones a season for their water. If that happens, then Jedefall Water-guardian's Cooperative, guarantee no interruption of service longer than a few weeks except in the event of war or 'the Hand of the Creator'.

If this cost proves too much of an ongoing financial commitment for the Senate to bear, then the Skourans would be prepared to take payment in a different form. Instead of

paying the Skourans for their water, the Imperial Senate could grant them the exclusive right to mine the eastern hills of Mareave, in Eoradal, Clisearn, and Nadir. It would mean giving up the benefits the Golden Pyramid have recently uncovered for the miners of Mareave, but it might be an easier ask, a more straightforward trade of resource for resource.

This would add another factor to Mareave's already-complicated political situation. Once the Skourans have built mineworkings in the hills, it could prove challenging to remove them should relations sour. One somewhat cynical Sannite participating in the discussions points out that, from a purely military point of view, allowing the Skourans to work the eastern hills would mean that an invading army acting with Skouran aid would not need a beachhead to begin its conquest. There is no indication that they might, but these regions used to be part of Skoura - are they really so sanguine about giving up any claim to them as they appear? Still, this only represents a cost if there is any risk of such a thing, and every indication is that the Skourans are eager for a positive diplomatic relationship with the Empire for the moment.

A Healing Pool

Build Healer's Pool in Eoradal

Commission Type: Ministry

Location: Eoradal

Cost: 12 wains of White Granite, 36 crowns (not factoring in the under-developed nature of Mareave)

Title: Creates the title Bonesetter of the Healer's Pool

Special: Increases the taxation from the region by an additional 2 thrones

Bonesetter of the Healer's Pool

Appointment: Tally of the Votes

Powers: Can purchase Phials of the Sun filled with water from the pool

Responsibilities: To oversee the healing pools and share skills with the Skouran water-guardians.

Special: Only functional if a bonesetter is appointed to the position.

Healing Waters

150 rings	1 Phial of the Sun
320 rings	2 Phials of the Sun
660 rings	3 Phials of the Sun

- **If the Empire make a deal with the Skourans then the Senate could commission a Healer's Pool in Eoradal**
- **The Healer's Pool would, among other things, increase taxation from the region by two thrones**

Many of the Skouran water-guardians carry physician's tools alongside their engineering tools. It appears that Skourans perceive a close link between health and water. According to their magicians, regularly imbibing clean, fresh water can cure many ills and flush sickness and disease from the body while daily immersion enhances vitality and strength. Just as water is used to soak the sharpening stone of a knife, regular immersion in water sharpens the mind and the body, allowing for a longer and more fulfilling life.

Yet, within the deepholds and the other lands of the Skourans, water is rarely where it is needed. Deep underground reservoirs must be pumped and aqueducts built to bring water to those it can give life to. The role of a water-guardian, therefore, is equal parts practical engineer of civil constructions and healer - albeit one that tends to the health of the whole community, rather than just those who have fallen

sick.

As it is the Skouran practice to combine the provision of water with healthcare and healing, they offer to do the same in Eoradal, once the aqueduct is restored. If a suitable healer's hall is built, it would help the new settlement grow increasing taxation, and the Skourans would share their skills with the Imperial Orcs. They seem enthusiastic about the idea of water-guardians and bonesetters working alongside one another - they are eager to learn from the Imperial Orc physicians as well as share their own learning.

The Healer's Pool would need 12 wains of white granite and 60 crowns. Once complete, the Imperial Orcs could use Tally of the Votes to appoint the Bonesetter of the Healer's Pool annually. Provided the Imperial Orcs elected a genuine bonesetter to the role then they would be able to purchase crafted Skouran medical tools each season.

A Long Drift

Extend the Yellow Fish Adit

Commission Type: Edifice

Location: Eoradal in Mareave

Cost: 20 white granite, 10 weirwood, 5 mithril, and 105 crowns (not factoring in the under-developed nature of Mareave)

Special:

- Supplies fresh water to the main settlement in Eoradal without any agreement with the Skourans.
- Could be commissioned at the same time as the aqueduct is restored by combining the costs.
- **The Empire could dig a tunnel under the mountains to**

steal the Skourans' water

- **The additional constructions would replace the 12 throne upkeep but would infuriate the Skourans once the theft was discovered**

One of the local orcs, a former enterprising Grendel magician-merchant called Ila Bared, has an alternative proposal. Ila is a sand mage and has many years experience working profitably with a water-merchant who is a herald of the Mistress of Falls. Together the two have cooked up a proposal by which the Empire could obtain the water they need without having to pay the greedy Skourans for it.

There is an old mine working on the edge of Eoradal, rather oddly known as the Yellow Fish Adit. The Adit is largely played out now, but one of the main drifts extends for many miles under the mountains and all the way into Jadedfall. In fact it appears the reason the Mahal Skourans stopped excavating the drift is because it was getting perilously close to one of their largest subterranean lakes. With the help of the Mistress of Falls, Ila's team could extend the drift to the lake. At that point, the Empire could tap as much water as they needed and they wouldn't have to pay anyone for it!

The Skourans would soon realise it was happening of course, but they couldn't stop it, because they wouldn't know where the Empire was tapping the lake. They'd complain, bitterly in all likelihood, but who really owns a giant underground lake? Ila's audacious plan relies on restoring the aqueduct so it can carry water from the Adit to the ruins. This means the aqueduct would still have to be restored - but the work would all be done with a single commission.

Of course the Skourans are not going to provide any help with this proposal, so the Empire would have to operate the aqueduct themselves, but it's just water running down a chute - how complicated can it be? Once the work was complete it would ensure a continuous supply of water to the Eoradal

region, without having to pay the Skourans any money and without any risk of the supply ever being interrupted if relations with them soured.

The Nadir Hills

While the aqueduct could provide enough water to irrigate Eoradal, the Skourans are clear that it couldn't provide enough water to cover either of the neighbouring regions. Even if there were enough water, Icarion is simply too far away and Nadir is too high. No aqueduct can carry water uphill without expensive engineering and a source of power to lift the water. A different solution will be needed elsewhere in the territory.

Fortunately, the Marchers may have a solution. Nadir experiences more rainfall than other parts of Mareave, but the high hills trap the water in tarns, leaving the lowlands parched and arid. As a result, there isn't enough water to grow crops here, but it is possible to stock the hills with sheep and cattle. What if the Imperial Orcs worked with what they had and farmed cattle? The Imperial Orc nation already has experience in this area - they pioneered new techniques in Skarsind when they raised the Great Herd. Why not build on that advantage and raise new herds here in Nadir?

The Cattle Markets

The Southern Herd

Commission Type: None Required (Senate motion only)

Location: Nadir, Mareave

Cost: 5 thrones

Special:

- Creates a new venture - *drive cattle to market* available to

Marcher farmers in Mitwold and Upwold for the downtime after the Winter Solstice.

- Creates a new venture - *escort the drovers* available to Marcher and Imperial Orc military units for two seasons after the Spring Equinox. The venture would require 1000 strength of military units each season to make effective progress and take two seasons to complete.
- Removes the arid quality from Nadir once the drovers have been escorted.
- If enough cattle were acquired it would create a new sinecure - the greater the herd, the more income the sinecure will generate.

Shephard of the Southern Herd

Type: Imperial Orc

Appointment: Tally of the Votes

Powers: Receives an income each season

Special: The more cattle acquired for the herd, the greater the income will be

Responsibilities: To look after the Southern Herd, protect it from drakes, and help it grow to rival the size of the Great Herd of Skarsind.

- **The Imperial Senate could use a Senate motion to temporarily expand the cattle markets in the Marches**
- **This would allow Marcher farmers bringing cattle to market to exchange them for bonds they could use to sell the cattle to the Imperial Orcs**
- **The herd would need to be driven to Mareave but once**

there it would remove the arid quality from Nadir

- **If enough cattle were bought it would also create a wealthy new sinecure**

It's not possible to use local cattle to establish a new great herd in Eoradal, there simply aren't anywhere near enough of them. To establish a new herd, the Imperial Orcs would need to buy a huge number of cattle from elsewhere in the Empire and then drive them all the way to Mareave. There are only two places in the Empire where they could possibly acquire the number of animals they need - the busy cattle markets of Stockland in Upwold and Wayford in Mitwold.

To enable the Imperial Orcs to purchase as many cattle as possible, the civil service propose to create some large temporary holding pens at the two markets. Marcher farmers from Mitwold and Upwold could drive cattle to the market as usual, but rather than selling them immediately, they could register them with the civil service. The farmer would be issued with a bond for their cattle, which they could then take to Anvil to facilitate the disposal of their herd. The Imperial Orcs could negotiate to purchase the cattle directly from the Marcher farmers at the Spring Equinox, with the cattle-bonds guaranteeing the sale. In effect, they would employ the same approach used for bourse notes.

If the Imperial Senate use a motion to create the title of Shephard of the Southern Herd, then in the following downtime, any Marcher farm holder that wants to take part could use the coming season to invest in cattle to take the market. Of course many Marcher farms are arable, but those farmers could buy cattle from their neighbours. They can then drive the cattle to their market and exchange them for cattle-bonds with the civil service. The larger the farm, the more cattle-bonds they will receive.

At the Spring Equinox, Marcher farmers will be able to use their bonds to sell their cattle to the Imperial Orcs. It will be up

to each individual Marcher what price they want to set for their bonds, but the more cattle the Imperial Orcs are able to acquire, the bigger the new herd will be. If the herd is substantial then it will be large enough to fund a new sinecure, the larger the herd the greater the income the sinecure will receive. The civil service will issue additional guidance next season, once they know how many Marcher farmers have taken the cattle-bonds.

No Marcher should lose out in this arrangement, since if they change their mind and elect not to sell their cattle-bonds to the Imperial Orcs, they can simply hand them back to the civil service to sell their cattle in the local markets. In fact, individuals might profit from these arrangements, since there could be a shortage of stock available in the two markets in the Spring Equinox. Each bond will always be worth at least 18 rings when disposed of in Stockland or Wayford, but the fewer cattle-bonds that are sold in the local markets, the more each bond will be worth.

Resolution

If the Imperial Senate pass the motion to create this sinecure at this event, then Marcher farm owners in Mitwold and Upwold will have a new downtime option "Drive cattle to market" for the next event only. If they choose this option then at the Spring event, they will receive cattle-bonds for their cattle *in place of the regular production of their farm*.

Those character who opt in won't receive the normal income from their farm - instead they will get bonds they can sell to other characters at the event. The higher rank the farm, the more cattle-bonds they will receive. Imperial Orc players will be able to purchase the bonds and then pass them to the civil service to have the cattle added to the great herd.

If a Marcher farmer chooses not to sell their cattle-bonds to the Imperial Orcs, they can hand them back to the civil service to sell the cattle in the local market. Each cattle-bond will be

worth at least 18 rings, but buying up the cattle will create a temporary shortage, so the value of cattle-bonds in the local market may be higher in the single season immediately following the Spring Equinox. The fewer bonds are disposed of in the local Marcher markets, the more each bond will be worth.

A Long Drive

- **Imperial Orc and Marcher military units would need to escort the drovers as they drive the herd to Mareave**
- **This guarding action would last at least two seasons and would not provide any reward by default**
- **The action would need a military strength of at least 1000 each season, to make progress**

Once these cattle are purchased then the second problem arises - they will need to be driven across the Empire, from the Marchers to Mareave. That would be no easy task, it would need skilled drovers and a substantial escort of guards to ensure the herd reached their destination safely. The trods would help of course, but even so it would take six months to achieve. Could the Marchers and the Imperial Orcs spare enough military units to guard the herds and the drovers while they complete the dangerous journey?

After the Spring Equinox, a new guarding venture for Marcher and Imperial Orc military units would be created, allowing them to escort the drovers to Mareave. The venture wouldn't provide any returns by default: either the Quartermaster would need to apply the guerdon to the venture or Imperial Orc bonesetters would need to arrange payments individually for those who supported the project. Otherwise, captains would go without.

Either way, the Imperial Orcs would need to ensure that the venture had an effective military strength of at least a thousand for the two seasons required to drive the herd to Mareave. If

there was a shortfall of guards, then the cattle drive would make no progress that season.

Once the cows have arrived, Nadir will lose the arid quality, reflecting the sustainable and prosperous ecosystem created in the area. If enough cattle have been procured from the Marcher markets, then the new sinecure will be created. There will be an ongoing problem with the wild drakes that threaten the area. They will inevitably be drawn to the cattle, as easy prey, so the new Shephard of the Southern Herd will have their work cut out for them.

A Short Cut

- **An archmage could use a plenipotentiary with Kimus or Ossegrahn to seek their aid accessing water in Nadir**
- **Both eternal are certain to want something significant in return for their aid**
- **The Skourans would be interested in buying water from Nadir, if the Empire pursued either option**

The plan for a new Great Herd is ambitious and complex, requiring a market for cattle stock in the Marchers and the goodwill of military unit captains. Members of the Golden Pyramid present in the territory are able to offer an alternative proposal. Their surveys indicate that there may be very deep water reservoirs in Nadir, far below the usual level of groundwater. Why not ask a suitable eternal to provide help accessing them?

The question is, which eternal? After consultation with various mages, a consensus is formed. There are two obvious potential choices - Kimus or Ossegrahn. Both are eternal the Empire has dealt with before and whose concerns are known to them, so while the details of any negotiation would presumably be for the relevant archmage to conduct, it is possible to estimate what their likely responses will be.

Kimus will certainly be able to pinpoint the location of the deep water sources in the territory, allowing the Empire to dig boreholes to get at the water. Ossegrahn might be able to provide a magical means to bring water to the surface Nadir, the eternal could presumably cause water sources to bubble and rise from the deep earth to the living soils above if they wanted. Whichever eternal the Empire asks, they are likely to want something significant in return for their aid. It is difficult to know what Kimus might ask for, but Cupbearer's pacifist nature is at odds with many actions the Empire would wish to take so any negotiations would have to be handled carefully.

To pursue either option would require the Archmage of the relevant realm to use a plenipotentiary to ask the eternal for their aid.

The Skourans are nonplussed at the notion of treating with eternals; it appears to be an activity they have very little familiarity with. If the Empire succeeded at finding water by any means, they would be very interested in buying any surplus water back off the Empire, if they could agree an ongoing fee for the supply with the Empire.

The Icarion Streams

- **There are sources of water in Icarion and in neighbouring Spiral**
- **Either, or both, could be used to transform the region**

None of the plans discussed for Nadar or Eoradal would help in Icarion. The region is windswept, overlooking the sea from jutting cliffs. A lighthouse stands here in the old Urizeni style, but no lightstone shines there. The hills of neighbouring Apulus run down into Icarion leaving a few mining settlements here and there, small camps who dwell in the dry ruins of Urizen's forgotten expansion south. These settlements deliver wagons of iron and copper, along with crates of orichalcum and green iron down to the town of Aghnayadh in Sinfoyard.

The hills are lower here, more exposed and licked at by the bitter winds of the bay. There are plenty of streams in the foothills, but the precious water hurries down to the sea. Unlike Eoradal, there are no remnants of previous irrigation works here, so any efforts to get that water to the right location will be expensive and require significant expertise. Fortunately the Freeborn have a great deal of expertise doing exactly that.

A New Qanat

Build the Icarion Qanat

Commission Type: Edifice

Location: Icarion in Mareave

Cost: 40 weirwood and 120 crowns (not factoring in the under-developed nature of Icarion)

Special:

- Removes the arid quality from Icarion
- Would allow the Imperial Orcs to choose a sept to travel to the Coast to seek an [opportunity](#) to help the Freeborn instead of helping in Mareave
- **The Freeborn visitors to Mareave are experienced at building a qanat - a network of tunnels that would distribute water across the region**
- **If the Empire builds a qanat in Mareave, it will remove the arid quality**
- **If the work is commissioned, the Imperial Orcs could ask a sept to help the Brass Coast in Feroz or Madruga instead of Mareave**

The Freeborn visitors to Mareave are experts at

creating qanats, underground channels that protect water from the heat of the sun as it is distributed over a large area. They could help the Imperial Orcs living here build a new Icarion Qanat to rival the one the Zemress Islanders created in Segura.

The irrigation provided by the Qanat would supply much needed water, but it would not be cheap. It would need 40 wains of weirwood and 120 crowns (increased to 144 crowns while Icarion remains under-developed) and take two seasons to construct. Once complete, the new network of tunnels would remove the arid quality from the region.

Building the Icarion Qanat would be impossible without the help of the Freeborn farmers and business owners who have come to the territory at the urging of their assembly. The civil service will provide oversight for the project as normal, if it is commissioned by the Imperial Senate, but the input of the Freeborn with experience creating and maintaining a qanat network will be essential to oversee the labour.

In an ideal world, the people from the Brass Coast might expect to be well paid for their services. The Freeborn are not a greedy people, but they know the value of their skills and they are not usually shy about asking for payment. This qanat can't be built without their help, but those who have come to Mareave at the urging of their assembly seem unwilling to exploit their monopoly. Perhaps they can see how poor Mareave is, or maybe it is just a genuine desire to help. Freeborn will always offer to pay before sitting down to eat at a friend's table, but if you are welcome at the feast then the price is a token payment in rings.

Either way, there is a blunt reality that these people could have been back home on the Coast, looking to their own problems in Madrugá and Feroz. Instead, they are here, offering their skills to the people of Maraevé. A few Imperial Orcs are keen to find a way to repay the Brass Coast for this aid. There isn't the wealth in the nation to pay them what their skills are worth,

but perhaps there is a way the Imperial Orcs could return this favour.

For the next year, each of the six septs of the Imperial Orcs is in a position to come to Mareave to look for ways to use their unique skills and outlook to explore the opportunities there. Given the generosity of the Freeborn in offering to help the Imperial Orcs even when their own lands are suffering, there are enough orcs in every sept who would be prepared to return the favour. Rather than exploring Mareave for a season, the Imperial Orc Assembly could ask one of their septs to Madruga or Feroz instead. The Imperial Orcs could settle the debt, paying in kind by seeking ways to offer their unique help to the Freeborn as they try to rebuild their lands with a simple mandate.

Our people know the worth of all things. We send (named priest) with 25 doses of liao to urge the (sept) to find ways to help in (Feroz/Madruga). Let us show them what their help was worth to us.

Synod Mandate, Imperial Orcs National Assembly

If this mandate is passed, members of the named sept will make a point of travelling to either Feroz or Madruga to explore the opportunities there. This mandate would replace one of the opportunities to ask a sept to seek ways to help in Mareave. It can be used for as long as that opportunity remains available, but it must be a sept that has not already been asked to help in Mareave or the Brass Coast.

The Way Less Taken

Dam the Doubt

Commission Type: Edifice

Location: Apstrus in Spiral

Cost: 30 white granite and the labour of the Towerjacks or an enchanted Imperial army for a season

Special:

- Can only be constructed with labour provided by the Towerjacks or any army under the [Bound by Common Cause](#) enchantment
 - Diverts fresh water to the region of Icarion removing the arid quality
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- **The Empire could dam the river Doubt in Spiral to divert water into Icarion**
 - **The project would require less bourse materials but would need the support of an Imperial army**
 - **If the Empire dam the Doubt, it will remove the arid quality**
 - **The archmage could use plenipotentiary to ask Ylenwe to help protect the army from the effects of the Black Plateau**

A visiting Urizeni, Severina, has an alternative suggestion to building a new qanat network in Icarion. There is water on the Urizen side of the border - there are rivers that run from the mountains of Apstrus, down to Apulus and then to the sea. Apulus is too low to bring water from there to Icarion economically, but Apstrus is not. The largest river in the area, the River Doubt, used to be home to a large spire. Potentially, a dam could be constructed on the Doubt, flooding the area to create a reservoir and, with care, diverting some of the waters of Apstrus through the narrow mountain passes and into Icarion.

That now abandoned spire is called Solen's Doubt. The name

has a foreboding pedigree. It was at Solen's Doubt, five years ago, that the madness that had been building in Spiral came to a crescendo from which it has not quieted since. It was here that the dark forces of the Black Plateau awoke in full, unleashed by the depredations of the Iron Helms and the frenzied killing of blood-strained battles. In an instant, three Grendel armies were broken. Only the bravest travellers make the trip up to that haunted place. Ghosts of the battle still linger there.

The civil service confirm it would be possible to build the dam, but there are problems. The Empire could commission the dam as an edifice requiring 30 wains of white granite. Since the bulk of the work would be in Spiral, it wouldn't suffer any economic penalties due to Icarion being under-developed. Unfortunately the work would need to be done out in the open, in one of the most troubled sites in Spiral, outside Screed itself. Given the bloody reputation of the area, the hauntings and the pernicious influence of the Black Plateau, it would be impossible to hire any normal labourers to carry out the work.

The only practical way the dam could be constructed is if the Towerjacks or an Imperial army under the Bound by Common Cause enchantment carried out the work. The Towerjacks include some of the Empire's most experienced engineers which makes them the natural choice, but any Imperial army that was Bound by Common Cause could work closely with the various groups involved. The army would need to be given appropriate defensive orders that explicitly said to construct a dam and turn the area in Apustrus into a reservoir, then the work could be accomplished.

That would mean the army spending time in Spiral, which would exert a heavy toll on the forces. It is impossible for armies to resupply in Spiral and any army that sends a season there loses 5% of its maximum fighting strength each season, even if it is not engaged, due to the baleful influence of the Plateau. Hundreds of Imperial lives would be lost constructing

this dam. There might be a solution to this problem however - Severina mentions that she has taken to travelling Spiral with water supplied to her by a herald of the Swan. She claims the water provides respite from the Plateau, allowing her trouble-free dreams when she drinks it. Could the Archmage of Day implore Zie of the Perfect Morning to provide such protection to an entire Imperial army? And if they did, what might that strange eternal demand for such a boon?

Whether or not that could be solved, there is one problem that no eternal can resolve. The ideal spot to dam the Doubt and create a reservoir is the Fallen Valley. However, this is where the majority of those who fell the day the Black Plateau awoke are buried. Thousands died that day - countless soldiers from eight Imperial armies lost their lives. The Red Wind Corsairs, the Towerjacks, the Summer Storm, the Wolves of War, the Winter Sun, the Citadel Guard, the Northern Eagle and of course the Iron Helms themselves. The national Assemblies of the Imperial Orcs, the League, the Brass Coast and Varushka might all have something to say about a plan that involves flooding the last resting place of so many of their heroes who gave their lives trying to free Spiral from the Grendel.

Back and Forth

- **The Empire could build the qanat network and damn the Doubt**
- **Doing so would provide a massive boost to irrigation in the region**
- **Icarion would cease to be arid and instead become an oasis**
- **Taxation produced by the region would increase by 6 thrones a season**
- **It would remove the uncooperative quality from Eoradal**

The two proposals for Icarion are not mutually exclusive. It

would be expensive, but the Empire could decide to damn the Doubt and build the Icarion Qanat. They would need a separate Senate motion for each project - and the costs would be high, but the outcome would be truly impressive. The region would cease to be arid, but with so much water to spare, it would quickly become a green and verdant oasis in this dry land.

If that happened, then the resulting boost to agriculture and water supply would help all settlements throughout the region grow. That would immediately improve Imperial taxation for the territory, providing an additional 6 thrones per season to the Imperial treasury, for as long as the area remained an oasis.

It would also create something truly astonishing, an extraordinary feat of engineering that could not help but impress the orcs who live in Eoradal by demonstrating the depths of the Empire's commitment to the territory. As a result it would also remove the uncooperative quality from Eoradal.

Timing

- **The Icarion Qanat, the Great Southern Herd and the chance to get help from Skoura are available until the end of the Summer Solstice 387YE**
- **Asking Kimus, Ylenwe or Ossegrahn for help, damming the Doubt or extending the Yellow Fish Adit are available at any time**

Some of these opportunities will not be available forever. The enthusiasm of the Skourans, the Marchers and the Freeborn will inevitably diminish and they will lose interest in the project if nothing happens. This means the Icarion Qanat, the Great Southern Herd, the Healing Pools and repairing the aqueduct are only available until the start of the Autumn Equinox 387YE. If they have not been commissioned by the end of that summit, the opportunity will be lost.

The Doubt could be damned at any time. Likewise there is no time limit on extending the Yellow Fish Adit or asking any of the named eternal for aid.