

ALL THAT IS GOLD

The loss of the Fist of the Mountains has sent shockwaves across Naris and all of Redoubt. Some who chose to remain in the region now flee. Once secure in the belief that the army and the Court of the White Fountain would hold back the invaders, now the dead also stalk the coasts of the territory. The fear grows further when news of the raid on Sarvos and the advance of the Grendel in Mareave. Will aid come this season? Can armies be spared from the eastern front with the Druj? Those who were once refugees from Zenith remember the death and misery they endured. Refugees from Elos and the surrounding spires steam north and east, away from the coast.

The Grendel, too, are perhaps taken aback. Their initial plan to destroy Elos has been thwarted; hundreds of mercenary soldiers lost for nothing, money wasted. Imperial war scouts report that there is some contention between Moridun forces eager to find blame, or at least ensure they are not ascribed with failure in the eyes of the Salt Lords back home. But slowly, as the equinox approaches, an understanding is gained of what the Naguerro are attempting. Their focus has shifted from the rubble-strewn streets of Elos to the wider coastline as units of wave riders spread out in search of regioes and to explore every corner of the rugged shores.

The prognosticators have identified an opportunity, amid the confusion and uncertainty of the interaction between the Lock and the Key, to reach the Tilphussian Approach an area of scattered heath and woodland that rises up to the cliffs of Naris and the hidden Tower of Light and Shadow. Heroes can travel through the Sentinel Gate on either day of the equinox to reach the location.

OBJECTIVE: PRESERVE THE SHROUDS

- **The Tower of Light and Shadow is under threat from Grendel Sky ritualists**
- **Preventing the ritual team from casting Piercing Light of Revelation will protect the Tower**
- **Without intervention, the Grendel will be able to locate the Tower and loot and destroy it after the summit**
- **The Naguerro are hoping to make use of whatever resources they take from the Tower**

The Grendel have been made aware of the existence of the Tower of Light and Shadow, the residence of the Penumbra Watcher, from their now shattered espionage ring. Thus far, the arcane nature of the structure and the eldritch nature of the magics emanating from the Tilphussian Reach have prevented them from actually discovering the tower's physical location. Caoimhe Kalleghan, a senior magician operating alongside the Bone Nautilus, has dispatched a Sky coven, the Rays of Uanán, to the Naris peninsula to locate the Reach and pierce the shrouds that hide the Tower from the Grendel's forces.

The coven sustained several key losses when the Fist of the Mountains sacrificed themselves to save the harbour. Information indicates the ritualists have secure supplies of mana crystals and to assist their work and make up for the loss of mastery they faced. Due to the strange character of the tower's shrouds, they need to cast Piercing Light of Revelation at Magnitude 30 at a strong Day regio at the Tilphussian Approach on both Saturday and the Sunday of the equinox, otherwise the tower will remain hidden.

Killing the Rays of Uanán coven would utterly defeat Kalleghan's schemes, but the coven could simply be prevented from accessing the regio to thwart their plans. If the opportunity is not taken, or the coven are not stopped from casting their rituals, then the Sky mage Kalleghan will be able to loot the magical knowledge found there. Given how delicate the magic is, there will be nothing left of the tower's strange dweomer afterwards - if the Grendel loot the tower, the Penumbra Watcher will be no more. The Naguerro are skilled magicians and reportedly have plans to make use of whatever treasures the tower gives up.

OBJECTIVE: CONTROL THE SPIRITS

- **Hundreds of Winter spirits animate the bodies of the dead across Naris**
- **The Thrice-Cursed Court collectively offer to take control of these terrors**
- **Successfully completing the offer will give the Thrice Cursed Court control of the horde**

Since the death of Empress Britta, the Winter ritual of Quickening Cold Meat has been used a number of times to call forth spirits to animate the dead to fight alongside the forces of the Empire. It is a powerful ritual, but all too often, there are unwelcome consequences when the ritual reaches its duration or is cut short. With the fall of the Fist of the Mountains, there are nigh on a thousand shambling cadavers that plague Naris, threatening both the fleeing citizens of Elos, the garrison of the Court of the White Fountain, and the Grendel invaders.

A way to contain the threat comes from an unexpected quarter. A meek and emaciated figure, more scar tissue and rent flesh than normal skin, stumbles from the Anvil regio to the Hub. There it offers a boon of the Three Acting as One, a rare proposition from the Three who so often bicker and conspire between them. The Court propose to claim the spirits, seize control of them and thereby stop them running amok.

All that is asked of the Empire is for three people to bear a bound gemstone with them onto the battlefield. Each stone, one from each member of the Court, will allow the bearer to endure great hardship in combat, but come at the expense of their vitality, as if they were afflicted by a powerful venom. The bearers will need to head into the horde of dead and locate three white granite pillars. The gems must each be left at the base of one of the pillars as an offering to the Bound, enabling them to focus their power and seize control of the spirits across the region in the days that follow.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: RECOVER THE PINNACLE

- **Pinnacle is a relic of the founding of the Fist of the Mountains**
- **With the loss of the army, the stone has been looted by the Grendel**
- **Recovering Pinnacle will prevent the Grendel selling or utilising the relic in future**

The story of Mountain's Pinnacle is a tale from the founding of the Fist of the Mountains. Reeta Larksong of Fernhal, a stormcrow of Hahnmark who helped found the army, was the first bearer of the relic. According to the tales, Reeta climbed to the highest peak of the Fingers and ripped a stone from the mountainside with her bare hands. Hardly an ostentatious memento, it was carried without pomp for centuries by the stormcrows, serving as a reminder of the steadfast mountains from where the first warriors journeyed to join the army. Its existence was once a well-kept secret, and with few outside the army even aware of its existence. But with it falling into the hands of the Grendel, the surviving crows are keen to see Pinnacle recovered. If it can be found, the Wintermark egregore can ensure it is returned to the summit of the Fingers, a symbol of the Pride in those heroes who gave their lives against the southern barbarians. Otherwise, the Grendel are bound to try and find some nefarious use for it.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: EXFILTRATE THE TURNCOAT

- **Muirgheal Cuindlis wishes to defect to the League**
- **The maistir will seek out League free companies carrying pikes wrapped in purple**
- **They will need help fleeing the battlefield, someone would need to cast Cuckoo's Egg**
- **Cuindlis will offer jewels worth ten thrones to those who bring her to safety**

The mercurial Grendel agent known only as the Red Ibis has surfaced once again, contacting the civil service on behalf of one Muirgheal Cuindlis. She is understood to be a merchant formerly based in Dubtraigh, with previous links to Feroz during the occupation of Governor Rahab. Having lost considerable amounts of money in the changing tides of the war with the Empire, Muirghael has evidently decided to break ties with the Salt Lords and seek a better life in the Empire. Using the last of her amassed wealth, she bought a maistir commission in the Hamsin army and reached out to the Red Ibis to seek assistance in escaping the Broken Shore.

Despite her military rank, Muirgheal has no access to military secrets or campaign intelligence that is not already known to the Imperial civil service. However, she is wealthy and willing to pay those who help her get out. Understood to be eager to join the League and settle in the port city of Sarvos, Muirghael will need locating, and then returning to Anvil via the Cuckoo's Egg. The maistir has made it clear that she will seek out "pikes wrapped in purple" on any battlefield, taking this to be a sign of the League's acceptance of her defection. The biggest difficulty will likely be the commander's unit that will not let her escape with her life should treachery be evident. If successfully brought to Anvil, Cuindlis has promised those ten thrones and goodwill from any future business endeavours she is able to establish in Sarvos.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: RECOVER TASSATAN GRAVEGOODS

- **The dead of Tassato still bear with them their burial finery**
- **Jewellery of value may be found on the shambling dead**
- **An agent will visit the League camp after the battle to discuss suitable rewards**

When the Fist of the Mountains were enchanted with Quickening Cold Meat, it wasn't just the bodies of the dead that rose from mortuary slabs or crawled from family vaults. Valuables of the dead, masks and rings especially, were born from crypts with their former owners. Many citizens of the twin city are keen to recover these family heirlooms; the lost jewellery of their forebears. Even more so, the distraught city-folk are keen to ensure that the jewellery is not pillaged by the Grendel. Should any citizen recover valuable jewellery from the husks on the battlefield, a merchant prince acting on behalf of the deceased's families will be available at 13:00, at the League crossroads to negotiate rewards for their return.

BATTLEFIELD THREAT: WINTER HUSKS

- **Hundreds of dead shamble the area, animated by spirits of the Winter realm**
- **The husks can be destroyed through various means**

The spirits of the Winter realm are able to animate the bodies of the deceased, making recently fallen corpses or long-dead skeletons rise and shamble into combat. Rarely are such husks a major threat; their jerking movements and decaying equipment are no match for a skilled soldier or hero of the Empire, but in great numbers, they can overwhelm unprepared foes.

Wise heads and keen minds are the best weapons when combating Winter-animated husks on a large scale. Priests will be able to exorcise a husk with a single dose of liao, firm in the knowledge that the possessing spirits cannot resist such force of will. Skilled warriors able to land cleaving strikes or mortal blows can make short work of the monsters, severing limbs and bisecting the torsos of the monsters with ease. Even simple strikes will be sufficient to bring down a corpse, enabling a swift decapitating strike to prevent the body from rising again.

BATTLEFIELD THREAT: STRANGE CONJUNCTION

- **The strange interaction between the Lock and the Key is interfering with the Conjunction**
- **The nations going through the gate will be split in two**
- **The first half of the nations will emerge in the forest, near the husks**
- **The second half of the nations will emerge in the open near the Grendel forces**
- **The war scout will discuss the order if the Military Council choose this battle**

The inexplicable astronomic effect involving The Key and The Lock is affecting the conjunction of the Sentinel Gate. After careful investigation, the prognosticators are confident that the Gate will work as predicted, but it won't be as straightforward as usual.

Because of the strange magic, the forces going through the Gate will be divided into two groups. The first half will emerge near the husks. Those who go through after them will appear in the open near the Grendel forces. The war scout will discuss the implications and the order that nations should go through with the Field Marshal if the Military Council elect to take advantage of this strange conjunction.