

Hazel

Thanks to a friend I've found a conjunction of your Sentinel Gate that fits our needs. We're moving our own people into place, but we need your help.

In Murderdale, in the Barrens, there's a place called the Forest Labour Camp. It's right on the edge of the forest, down on the southern border of Murderdale. We think around two hundred Dawnish yeofolk and a handful of nobles are being held there. The Druj are putting them to work in the woods proper, but they house them in Murderdale. Don't think the Druj like Peytaht very much.

Some of our people have already come up through Hope's Rest. There's orcs with us – they're not friends of the people of Dawn but they hate the Druj more – and with your help we think we can take the camp defenders.

The labour camp is guarded but there's a series of watch posts around the edges of the forest. An attack against one of these during the Solstice will pull the other defenders out of position. The Druj are bound to assume it's a major force of Dawnish knights and witches. Our people can take advantage of that confusion – while the Druj are focused southwards we'll attack from the east and west. They won't be expecting an attack by orcs who know the land, they'll be expecting idiots in shiny armour.

What we need you to do is get together a band who can be trusted not to kill us on sight. Get them to the Sentinel Gate. The conjunction opens at half past eight on Saturday evening. It's a narrow window – no more than twenty minutes to get in and out.

My friend at Anvil says that the gate will take a total of twenty people – no more – and I suggest you don't take much less than that if you can avoid it.

I'll meet you at the gate, if I can. I'll pretend to be a Navarr maybe, unless you give me the word that I can speak freely.

We've got scouts in a rough ring around the target; they'll contact you as soon as they can and give you any other details they've uncovered. They'll then run to warn our people that you're about to start your attack.

I suggest you start your attack stealthily, but once the battle starts you need to make as much noise as you can. Horns and drums and shouting. Loud choruses of "GLORY!" so the Druj definitely think it's Dawn attacking them.

You'll need to kill all the Druj if you can – if any escape then we run the risk they'll warn the rest it's a distraction not a major attack.

Once the Druj are dead, get out of there as fast as you can. Any humans you find should be Dawnish so you can get them back to Anvil through the gate.

There's one other major obstacle, though. I've left it until last.

The whole area is under an aura of fear. It's strong enough to sap the strength from you. The Great Forest say it's one of the ways the Druj keep their slaves in line. It's centred around a big grey stone – which is near where the conjunction is likely to arrive. We've no idea how to destroy it, but if you do, and you can, it'll mean that we can rouse the slaves to help us fight the Druj. It'll make our mission a lot easier, and it'll save lives.

According to the shaman, the Stone Toad built these things all over Reikos while they were occupying it. I hope your people have found a way to deal with them.

What we do know is that without a source of spiritual strength, it's very hard to fight the Druj here. Weakness quickly beats your spirit down. The more you try to fight, the weaker you get. It's pure evil. We can deal with it ourselves, just about, but you need to do something for your people or they'll be cut to ribbons.

I can offer some help when I meet you at the Sentinel Gate but I don't have much liao and it'll also be risky. Freedom isn't welcome in the Empire after all.

So that's the plan. A conjunction at half eight on Saturday for twenty people. A quick raid on the Druj so they think a big Dawnish assault is underway. Kill as many as you can. If you're able, take out the grey pillar of Fear. Then back through the Sentinel Gate with any slaves you find.

We'll raid the main camp and free as many people as we can. Then we'll head back south on paths the Druj won't follow us along. We'll get as many as we can save down into northern Reikos, to your people. I hope they have the sense to realise we're not enemies when it comes to freeing people from the Druj.