# Barrens

* A major conjunction has been identified in the Barrens

During the Summer Solstice, it seems that there is a major conjunction connecting the Sentinel Gate to the vicinity of Dourfell Keep in the Barrens. Details are light at the moment, but it appears it will allow access to a Night regio that, with some preparation, the Empire might be able to manipulate to perform some powerful enchantments or curses that could affect the Barrens. Perhaps more significantly, there is also an opportunity to secure the Imperial presence in the Barrens - whether the Empire's armies intend to remain or not - and possibly even to mend some broken fences and cement an alliance aimed at liberating the Barrens from the Druj once and for all.

## Key Objective

* If the Great Forest Orcs conduct a ceremony of reconciliation with the Dawnish generals at Hope's Rest the orcs will begin to forgive them for the conquest of the Barrens
* If successful, the Spears of the Pines, the Great Forest Orcs military force of a thousand strength will fight alongside any Imperial army liberating the Barrens
* If successful, the Great Forest Orcs will guide Imperial army moving through the Forest of Peytaht, allowing them to travel into or out of the Barrens safely
* If attempted, the Great Forest Orcs will establish a free spy network in the Barrens for the Empire to use for the coming year

There is a major conjunction in the Hope's Rest area, to the site that was once the home of the "freedom Briars" - the descendants of survivors from the ill-starred attempt to start a secessionist haven in the Barrens for those who embraced the malign spiritual force of anarchy. The centre of their community was Dourfell Keep - a fortified haven in the hills of the southern Barrens. It was destroyed in 380YE during the fall of the Barrens. Whatever happened to it was quite catastrophic in nature - the keep was utterly destroyed along with the Druj who were attempting to storm it. All the defenders died - the only survivors were those who fled south with the Great Forest Orcs before the Druj attacked.

Located somewhere in the expansive woodlands is a small shrine. It was built by the Dourfell Keep briars to commemorate the first meeting with the orcs who would later go on to rise up against the Druj. The Dourfell Keep briars were instrumental in uniting the defenders of the Barrens - the independent orcs who originally drove the Druj out of the Barrens for that brief period of time before the Empire and the Mallum orcs split the territory between them. Driven by their commitment to Freedom, they provided neutral ground for the rival septs to meet. That meeting ultimately lead to the alliance between the Great Forest and the Rhavin sept of orcs that broke Druj power in the Barrens.

The Great Forest Orcs blame the Dawnish for the return of the Druj, the subsequent collapse of their alliance with the other septs, and the deaths of thousands of their people. However, more than anything else the Great Forest Orcs wish to return to their traditional home beneath the Eaves of Peytaht. The Steel Causeway presents a glimmer of hope - that the Druj might again be driven from the Barrens. That the orcs will be able to return to their homes. When they first emerged from the woods they offered to help the Navarr fight in the Barrens; yet in the years since many of their number have explored the Empire among the stridings. They understand how large the Empire is and how varied its people are.

With that in mind, Chief Valak of the Great Forest Orcs and Galahad Weaver of the briars present a possible route to put the past behind them and focus on the future. If the Empire will escort three Great Forest Orc elders and Galahad to the shrine where the first alliance to drive the Druj from the Barrens was sworn, they will perform a ceremony of reconciliation. This is a traditional ceremony among the Great Forest Orcs in which people lay aside the desire for hate and vengeance in the name of the greater good. It involves each participant accepting the accusations of the other, acknowledging their wrongdoing, and pledging to create a better future. It was this particular ceremony that formed the first part of the original alliance. Conducting a new ceremony at the historic site would provide a basis to overcome the conflicts of the past.

Performing the ceremony is apparently quite straightforward, but it will require representatives of each of the Dawnish armies who took part in the original invasion of the Barrens to be present and to wholeheartedly take part. Each participant must bring flowers - it is part of the ceremony for all aggrieved parties to decorate the area with flowers as a symbol of new beginnings. It will also need the shrine to be protected from the Druj while the ceremony takes place. If the ceremony is successful, then the Great Forest Orcs and their allies will not forget their anger for the Dawnish, but the wounds will begin the heal.

This will remove an obstacle that stops them being wholly committed to driving the Druj out of the Barrens. That means that the Spears of the Pine will muster and make ready to assist in any battle in the Barrens where the Empire fights the Druj regardless of which armies are involved. Even if the attempt to reach the site and carry out the ceremony fails, the hunters and rangers of the Great Forest will leave the Tarn Valley and establish a spy network in the Barrens - supporting Imperial scouts as they gather intelligence about the Barrens. The Empire would need to convince military units to operate the network but there would be no cost to the Senate to establish the network or to pay for the upkeep.

Finally, if successful, the elders of the Great Forest Orcs will stand ready to aid any Imperial armies who wish to move through the Forest of Peytaht, either into or out of the Barrens. The Druj will not expect an attack from this direction, nor expect that Imperial troops will be able to move between Eaves of Peytaht and Reikos.

## The Staff of Conviction

* The Dourfell Keep Briars are looking to recover the Staff of Conviction from the area
* The staff is protected by a powerful monster that the Druj have set to guard it
* If the Staff is returned to them, they will provide support to all Imperial attempts to liberate Hope's Rest while it is under Druj control

Galahad is an old priest of the Dourfell Keep Briars and one of the original participants in the alliance to free the Barrens. He wishes to accompany the Great Forest Orcs; his intention however is to recover something from the area; the Staff of Conviction, a powerful relic hallowed to the malign spiritual force of Anarchy by the Freeborn sutannir Crescencia i Marusa i Riqueza using a stolen dose of true liao.

The Staff used to be kept in the shrine, but during the fall of Dourfell Keep it was wielded by one of the briar defenders. While scouting the area, the staff has been located in one of the glades in the woods - thrust into the ground no doubt by the wielder when they died. By all accounts there is some kind of powerful monster guarding it. The creature doesn't appear to be chained up in anyway, but it doesn't leave the glade. The Druj bring it fresh meat every day, so it appears that it is either a trained guardbeast, or else bound with magic to the glade in some way. It might be possible to defeat the monster, or possibly to distract it while the staff is recovered - assuming it can be moved. It seems strange that the Druj have not relocated or destroyed it themselves. But determining exactly why it is still there will have to wait until Imperial heroes can reach it.

If the Staff is returned to the briar friends of the Great Forest Orcs, then they will do more than let bygones be bygones; they will work with their allies to establish a permanent presence in the woods of Hope's Rest. They were able to avoid the Druj for more than five decades, and they do not doubt they will continue to be able to do so. Along with their Great Forest Orc allies, they will provide support to any Imperial armies in the Barrens. As a result, Hope's Rest will gain the allied insurgents quality - meaning that if Imperial forces attack it it will always be considered a beachhead while the region is under Druj control. This is similar to the situation the Druj have created in Ossium - but it will benefit the Empire rather than presenting a risk to them.

The staff could be handed to Galahad directly, before Imperial heroes pass through the Sentinel Gate. If it is brought back to Anvil, then the civil service will be able to arrange to have it delivered to the Lower Tarn Valley - assuming it is handed over to the Herald of the Council before the end of the summit.

## Shadows and Nets

* There is a potent Night regio near the edge of the forest
* The Empire could cast Night rituals at the regio or use Align the Celestial Net to perform rituals of other realms

On the plains near the edge of the forest, there is a powerful Night regio, which the Druj have been making use of. Any regio on a battlefield in an enemy controlled territory represents a potential opportunity - since it gives the Empire a chance to cast rituals in that territory that would not otherwise be possible. Unfortunately Night magic is dissonant with many of the themes of war, like destruction or strength, making it very difficult to use a night regio to aid the Imperial war effort.

However, one of the Navarr prognosticators, Drustan Brocs Guard, an experienced and well-travelled vate and a practitioner of Night magic, points out that it could be made useful through use of Align the Celestial Net. A single casting of the ritual could easily align the net to either Spring or Summer - and in theory multiple castings could align it to allow several rituals of both realms to be cast. Hope's Rest is an ideal location to raise a Frozen Citadel of Cathan Canae if the regio were aligned to Summer; alternatively the regio could be used to unleash any number of Spring magic curses into the Barrens if the Empire plans to withdraw. Or both! Drustan knows that the ritual has been used by heroes passing through the Sentinel Gate before - and that there are a lot of practitioners of Night magic in the Empire who might be able to study the ritual ahead of the Summer Solstice.

## Battlefield Situation

* The forest is under the effect of a powerful aura:

**Woods Aura**

**Every character who enters the main woods on the battlefield on this conjunction will experience the following roleplaying effect:**

**You feel a profound sense that you can only reach your true potential if you are absolutely free. You feel an urge to take command of your destiny and do whatever is necessary to secure your freedom.**

**The effect of the aura can be avoided in the usual way - by spending a hero point, through an anointing, or via Crystal Clarity of the Rational Soul.**

While most Druj give the Dourfell Keep area a wide berth, there are certainly orcs here. By all accounts they belong to the Emerald Harvester clan - a minor clan of Druj originally from Sarangrave whose symbol is a delicate green spider. They have a higher-than-normal number of vikari among them, and their leader is believed to be a former apprentice of the ghulai Greenmask. The Druj are here for two reasons - to keep an eye on the area in case the Empire returns, and to study the peculiar aura that hangs over the woods with an eye towards destroying it. Imperial scouts report that they are being reinforced by warriors from the garrison of the Tower of the Dusk. There are too few of them to provide much threat to the Empire's armies, but they will certainly try to stop Imperial heroes interfering with the regio or the forest.

Imperial heroes who fight the Druj are familiar with the horror of the Druj miasma. Those who have fought in Spiral know about the unique oppression that hangs over that territory. A powerful aura likewise hangs over the forest that surrounds the ruins of Dourfell Keep. Those who have experienced it talk about experiencing a need to be completely free - to be in complete command of their own destiny and to be prepared to do whatever it takes to secure that freedom. It is perhaps no wonder that the Druj tend to avoid the area. The Emerald Harvester orcs apparently make use of potions that allow them to ignore the urge to turn against the authority of their leaders, but even so they limit their exposure to the forest. Only the presence of the Imperial armies has driven them into the woodlands at all.

The aura has an additional effect on any briar or cambion who embraces the aura. The FIRST TIME a briar enters the forest they immediately regain all expended hero points and gain an additional temporary hero point that remains available as long as they roleplay resistance to authority and the need for personal freedom until they return through the Sentinel Gate to Anvil (similar to the effect of a Elixir of Exalted Puissance). Similarly, the FIRST TIME any cambion enters the forest they immediately regain one spent hero point. These benefits only apply if the briar or cambion experiences the roleplaying effect of the aura - if they are anointed for example they will gain no benefit.

# Zenith

* A major conjunction has been identified in Zenith
* The Druj Miasma is in place across the battlefield

The Imperial prognosticators have identified a major conjunction that will reach Clypion during the Summer Solstice. They believe it offers an opportunity to claim the beach head in Zenith, as well as a chance to capitalise on the renewed hope of the Urizeni people - inspiring the spires of Redoubt and Morrow. Along with former Zenith refugees, a clear victory over the Druj might create an opening for those citizens to offer significant assistance in driving the remaining Druj out of Iteri - potentially leaving Imperial forces free to address the daunting challenge of conquering ruined Proceris.

## Key Objective

* Kill Karvor Eyepeel to collapse the salient at Mount Ossa and seize a beachhead in Zenith
* The Druj leader will be attempting to sneak across the battlefield

The Empire is finally gaining the upper hand in Zenith, in the face of fierce opposition from the Druj. With the forces on either side so evenly matched, progress is murderously slow, but on the eve of the Summer Solstice, an opportunity has arisen for the Empire to turn the tide of the campaign in their favour.

Karvor Eyepeel, the loathsome Buruk Tepel, has been personally responsible for much of the callous brutality inflicted on the territory. Granted control of the territory by the leaders of the Druj, he has turned Zenith into a hellscape, raising the miasma pillars and exacting agonizing deaths from any Imperials who dare resist his rule to create an army of tortured souls. Unusually for the Druj, he has been frequently in the field, inspecting his forces and issuing orders, apparently unwilling to leave such things to his subordinates.

It seems the Buruk Tepel has been overconfident. He gave his generals orders to push the Empire back out of Zenith. Outwitted by General Nicassia the Citadel Guard pulled back while their allies held firm. The resulting pincer movement has trapped the advancing Druj in a dangerous salient in the shadow of Mount Ossa. The plan was for the Empire to attack the Druj position on all sides and wpie them out, but it is now clear that the strategy has succeeded beyond all expectations, with the Druj leader trapped in the salient along with his personal retinue.

Having finally realized the danger he is in, Karvor is attempting to reach the safety of the Druj lines, but the only avenue of escape from the salient is to flee through Tempest Woods, a Druj-held partially-wooded ravine that connects the salient back to the relative safety of Proceris. If the Imperial heroes take advantage of the conjunction to travel to the ravine they have an opportunity to intercept and kill the Buruk Tepel when he appears.

Killing Karvor will cause of the collapse of the salient at Mount Ossa, forcing the Druj to rout and abandon their positions in the Clypion Hills. The Imperial armies will take the region, seizing a beachhead and cutting Zenith in two. The magicians of the Citadel Guard point out that seizing Clypion in this fashion during the summit will raise the possibility of Imperial magicians conjuring a Frozen Citadel of Cathan Canae in the rugged hills, and using the fortification and magical garrison to further improve their situation in Zenith.

## Vital Supplies

* Kill Karvor's tepel and loot the precious herbs to weaken the Druj forces in Iteri
* The tepel will be attempting to sneak across the battlefield, they will be carrying a bag or satchel containing herbs and potions
* Each tepel killed means the Empire will need one less victory point to take Iteri if they attack next season

The successful advance by the Imperial armies into Clypion this season has threatened the Druj supplies to their garrisons and forces in Iteri. Desperate to hold on to the region, Karvor is being accompanied by a half-a-dozen tepel, each of whom is carrying potions and herbs that will be essential to reinforce and resupply the Druj defending the western region in the coming season.

The tepel are trying to flee the collapsing salient with Karvor, but they won't be fleeing in one group, since the valuable resources they carry are at risk of being robbed if brought together in one spot. Instead, they will have split up and will be attempting to make their way through the Imperial lines back to the relative safety of the Druj lines.

All Imperial heroes taking the battlefield should keep an eye out for any Druj carrying large sacks, satchels or bags. Killing the tepel who carry them will weaken the Druj leadership, and provide valuable potions and herbs to the Imperial heroes who claim them. Crucially denying these essential supplies to the Druj will weaken their forces. For every tepel that the Empire are able to kill and loot, they will require one less victory point to take Iteri if they attack there in the coming season. If the Empire doesn't attack Iteri next season, then any benefits from this opportunity will be lost.

Like Karvor, the tepel will be looking to sneak across the battlefield avoiding any conflict with Imperial forces.

## Battlefield Assistance

* Zakalwe has sent three heralds who can help the Empire locate Karvor Eyepeel on the battlefield
* If the Empire can capture the two mine workings and escort one herald to each at the same time then they will be use their magic to signal Karvor's position

Tempest Woods probably takes its name from the extensive seams of Tempest Jade located in the enclosing mountains. Before the arrival of the Druj, there were two simple mine workings located in the valley, with tunnels extending from each, deep into the surrounding rock. The tunnels were excavated by ushabti and are much too small for a human or an orc to enter or pass through. However, their continued existence creates a way for one of Urizen's eternal allies, Zakalwe, the General of Day, to offer aid in the coming battle if the Military Council chose this option.

Karvor Eyepeel won't be present immediately when the battle starts, he is due to arrive some time after the fighting would begin. When he does appear, he is very unlikely to do anything foolish to give himself away on the battlefield. Karvor is a herbalist, he is not a powerful warrior - defeating him won't be difficult for Imperial heroes - but finding him might well be - especially in the dense woods. He won't care how many Druj die, his only concern will be to escape the battlefield as safely as possible.

To help the Empire locate Karvor, the Master Strategist stands ready to send three heralds to the battlefield. The entrance to each of the two mineworkings is protected by a crude wooden stockade, simple defensive structures that are currently held by the Druj. If the Empire can capture these two stockades and successfully escort one herald to both locations, then the heralds will be able to invoke the power of Zakalwe to help the Empire.

To achieve this magic, there will need to be one herald in each stockade at the same time. If that happens, then Zakalwe will be able to extend his senses through the fine network of tunnels that criss-cross the valley floor. With his abilities boosted by the presence of the Tempest Jade, he will be able to sense the arrival of Karvor Eyepeel as soon as he appears in the valley and, even more importantly, give a signal to indicate his position to the waiting Imperial forces.

# Kahraman

* A major conjunction has been identified in Kahraman

There is a major conjunction that will reach Kahraman during the Summer Solstice. The Imperial prognosticators have examined the conjunction and believe it offers two opportunities. A chance to prevent the Lasambrian Jotun making a decisive strike into the northern mountains that will jeopardise the defence of the territory, and a chance to secure an advantage for the Empire if they engage the orcs in Kahraman this season.

## Key Objective

* Open as many of the three crates as possible and destroy the contents to prevent the Lasambrians isolating Braydon's Jasse, Serra Briante, Serra Damate
* The locks can be picked or opened with the keys which are in the possession of the ghodi
* Each ghodi has the keys needed to open one crate
* The more crates the Empire destroys, the fewer regions will be affected

News has reached Fort Braydon that the Lasambrian Jotun forces in Kahraman are on the move. Their plan appears to be to destroy vital bridges and block key roads across Serra Briante. Even before the most recent invasion it has been common knowledge that traveling through the hills of northern Kahraman has become increasingly difficult. This is why the caravans from the Great Mines and the Damatian Cliffs tend to head south along the road past Rogota, rather than simply head east through the hills. The problem of travelling through the hills east-to-west has been a concern for the garrison of Fort Braydon for the last few years, and the Lasasmbrian Jotun plan to capitalize on this weakness.

If they are successful, travel through Serra Damata, Serra Briante, and Braydon's Jasse will be crippled. As a result, armies will struggle to move between Braydon's Jasse and Serra Briante, or between Serra Briante and Serra Damata. This will make it impossible for the invaders to attack more than one of these regions in the same season. However it will also deal a devastating blow to the effectiveness of Fort Braydon - and to any other fortifications in the surrounding area. Any fortification in Serra Briante, Serra Damata or Braydon's Jasse will be able to defend the region it is in, but will not provide any benefit in either of the other two regions. This situation will persist until the Empire is able to commit the time and money needed to repair the roads and bridges - something that will be difficult to do while the territory is under attack.

To enact their scheme the Lasambrian Jotun and their Yegarra allies need a lot of equipment - picks, shovels, spades, ropes, grapples, and the like. These tools are being transported into the hills of Serra Briante to be distributed to the Yeggara and orcs with mining and engineering experience under careful guard. Scouts have reported that the tools and supplies are held in weirwood rune boxes constructed by Jotun artisans. At the moment they are stored in a makeshift fortification in the southern hills of Serra Briante; they are due to be distributed on Sunday morning. Secured with mithril chains and locks, it will prove impossible to simply smash them up within the timeframe of a Sentinel Gate conjunction and moving them is not practical.

If the Military Council wants to foil the Lasambrian plan, they will first need to get the boxes open. The locks might feasibly be picked - although scouts have no idea how difficult that might be. If the Empire wishes to ensure their success, they will need to secure the keys to the padlocks. The keys are among the forces guarding the chests. In a show of mutual loyalty each of the ghodi has the keys to open one crate - a priest - from each of the forces present in Serra Briante. One set of keys is in the hands of the Lasambrian Jotun, one in the hands of the Mournwold Yegarra, and one in the hands of the Jotun orcs of Narkyst. Each ghodi has the keys needed to open one of the crates. Since these ghodi are also bannerbearers, their honour will compel them to remain on the field fighting alongside the troops they support.

There are three runeboxes on the field. If the Empire is able to destroy the contents of even one of them they will prevent the Lasambrian Jotun isolating Braydon's Jasse. If they destroy two, they will prevent the Jotun isolating Serra Briante, and if they destroy all three they will prevent the Jotun isolating any of the hills regions.

## The Sarcombe Target

* Kill Steven of Sarcombe to cause Steve's Yegarra to withdraw from campaign for two seasons and motivate the Mournwold miners to reinforce Fort Braydon for a season

In addition to the obvious threat, there is an opportunity here as well. Stephen of Sarcombe, the leader of the Mournwold yegarra, is present on the battlefield at the heart of his troops. Mad with rage following the death of his beloved Wallis during the Spring Equinox, he and his soldiers will be at the fore of any conflict in Serra Briante. He is a formidable opponent, and while he is full of anger and vengeance he is no fool. If he can be located and killed - he is not an Imperial citizen so capture is impossible - then it will strike a serious blow to his Yegarra. They will appoint a new leader in time, but they won't contribute to the conquest of Kahraman until after the Autumn Equinox.

More importantly perhaps, there are many from Sarcombe who would welcome the death of their town's most notorious resident. If his death can be proved by cutting off his head and delivering it to the Marcher egregore then she will convey word of the traitor's death back to the Mournwold. If that is accomplished, the residents of Sarcombe will demonstrate their thanks by send support to the exhausted defenders of Fort Braydon. This will increase the ability of the Fort to resist the Lasambrians during the coming season - effectively increasing it's strength from 3000 to 5000. Combined with the loss of the Yegarra for a season this could shift the defence of Kahraman decisively in favour of the Empire at least in the months immediately following the Summer Solstice.

## Opportunistic Malediction

* Curse Meketh of the Flames, General of the Corazón army

Finally, there is another potential target on the field. The general of the Corazón army, Meketh of the Flames, has taken personal responsibility on behalf of the Lasambrian Jotun for ensuring that the tools get to their destination. Their fast-moving army. with many raiders adept at moving through dangerous territory, is the perfect choice for distributing the tools and ensuring they are used in exactly the right location. Killing Meketh will have minimal impact on the Jotun armies - the orcs will simply appoint a new general, just as an Imperial army would.

However, the presence of an enemy general offers a magical opportunity. If Meketh can be captured, then a coven of Imperial magicians might be able to use the Law of Dominion to place a curse on the Corazón army. This is likely to be a challenging and risky endeavour - such a curse will need to be formulated by an Imperial magician as an arcane projection and the magical technique of a pronouncement of doom means that there will be only a limited window to deliver such a malediction. The ritual will most likely need to be cast on the battlefield, and must be delivered to Meketh while he is still alive.

## Identifying the Enemy Targets

* Each of the three ghodi will be bearing banners carrying symbols of the Jotun, the Lasambrians and the Yegarra respectively
* Stephen of Sarcombe and Meketh of the Flames are too proud to hide on the battlefield

One of the key elements for getting the most out of this opportunity will be identifying individuals on the battlefield. Freeborn scouts are doing everything they can to ensure the generals can be briefed with as much information as possible. The fact the three ghodi are banner bearers should make it easy to spot them - they will not abandon their banners for fear of spreading panic in the ranks. Stephen of Sarcombe and Meketh of the Flames likewise should both be identifiable. As leaders of their respective forces they are likely to dress distinctively and to be surrounded by their personal warband. Given what is known of the characters of each antagonist, it is very unlikely they will conceal themselves - quite the contrary. Any kind of credible challenge or insult is likely to get them to reveal themselves.

# Sermersuaq

* A major conjunction has been identified in Sermersuaq

There is a major conjunction of the Sentinel Gate during the Summer Solstice that will allow Imperial heroes to travel to Tanikipari. Details of what they will be able to achieve there are still being put together, but it appears that at the very least it will present a chance to delay the completion of the work on Olgafsdottirshal, preventing the full fortification of Tanikipari and presenting the possibility that the Empire might be able to capture the Jotun citadel and complete it themselves potentially gaining a potent fortification in a single season.

## Key Objective

* Destroy at least two of the Stonetoothed Obelisks in Tanikipari to delay the expansion of the Jotun fortification at Tanikipari by one season
* Destroy three of the obelisks to delay the expansion by two seasons
* Destroy all four of the obelisks to nullify all the work carried out on the expansion and damage buildings throughout the area

The advance of the Imperial armies has forced the Jotun to try desperately to complete the expansion of their two fortifications in Tanikipari and Stark before they come under direct attack. The architect of these giant citadels is Igya Olgafsdottir; a champion of the Jotun, the eldest child of the Jarl of Tromska, and one of the finest siege engineers of the Jotun. She is allegedly a respected advisor and friend of Yrsa Jansdóttir, Queen of Kalsea. The expansion she has overseen represents a significant problem for the Empire - a single fortification of this size is nearly the equal of an Imperial army - or two Imperial armies when it is being directly attacked.

The work on the fortress of Kalant in Stark is further on and there is nothing the Empire can now do to prevent it being completed. However there is still a chance to delay completion of Olgafsdottirshal in Tanikipari. What's more, if successful, it would create a brief opening for the Imperial armies to try to seize the castle and turn the Jotun's siege engineering against them.

The opportunity depends on the hot springs of Tanikipari, the pools and lakes of naturally heated water that are well known across the Empire. The source of that heat lies deep underground and in the past it was the source of semi-regular earth tremors in western Sermersuaq. During the reign of Empress Richilde, the wily Senator for Sermersuaq Annike Stonetoothed convinced the Senate to let her build a series of stone obelisks that helped to subdue the chaotic earthpower of Tanikipari. For over three hundred years the earth in Tanikipari has been quiescent, bound in slumber by white granite obelisks marked with the rune of dominion, the rune of disaster, and the rune of strength.

## Battlefield Rituals

**Both Rising Roots that Rend Stone and Inevitable Collapse into Ruin are challenging rituals to perform on the battlefield. The opportunity would require one or more Imperial covens to pass through the Sentinel Gate and perform the rituals on the battlefield. Tools such as retraining and Infant Starts with a Blank Slate can both be used to help ensure that a coven can perform one of these rituals, and the way the rituals work means that they can be performed behind the front lines and a single contributor sent out to attack the stones.**

**Only a magician who contributed to the ritual can use the implement that holds the charge - it's not possible for a bystander to wield the implement. The most reliable way to do this would be to capture the obelisk and perform the ritual there - but each ritual requires ten minutes to complete. The Military Council might also want to bear in mind that a typical coven can perform only two rituals a day.**

**Both these rituals require assistance from a referee, so any coven taking the battlefield that intends to do perform one of these rituals must let the ref team know by 10am on the morning of the battle at the latest.**

One of Annike Stonetoothed's distant descendants proposes to harness the natural volatility of the hot springs. By destroying carefully selected Stonetoothed Obelisks, a series of mild earth tremors will be triggered that will seriously disrupt all construction work in Tanikipari. There is no risk of anything catastrophic - as long as the rest of the obelisks are left unharmed. Unfortunately the obelisks were built to last - Verys renders them resistant to the elements and almost impossible to damage by mundane means. To actually disrupt one of the obelisks will need ritual magic - the rituals Rising Roots that Rend Stone and Inevitable Collapse into Ruin would both be just as effective on the obelisks as they are on the walls of a fortification.

Destroying one of the obelisks won't be enough - at least two will need to be destroyed to ensure the resulting tremors are potent enough. If two are ruined, it will delay completion of Olgafsdottishal for an entire season. It will count as only a basic fortification for the coming campaign season. If the Empire and Thule alliance are able to capture Tanikipari during that time they will be able to complete the fortification following the Autumn Equinox and gain control of an improved fortification with which to secure their own dominion of Sermersuaq. If three of the obelisks are destroyed, the prognosticators predicts that the resulting tremors will be powerful enough that work will have to be halted and some of the half-complete construction will be damaged and have to be redone. As a result, it will take the Jotun until the Winter Solstice to complete Olgafsdottirshal.

The war scouts are confident that work is so far advanced on the fortification that even if the Empire goes all out they will definitely be able to capture the fortification while it is still intact - and with the use of magic such as Hammers of the Brilliant Shore any damage can be quickly repaired.

## Completing Olgafsdottirshal

**Completion of Olgafsdottirshal will need the Empire to control the entire region of Tanikipari; it will cost 25 wains of white granite, 50 crowns, and require either a Senate motion or an announcement by a suitable title with the ability to improve fortifications (such as the Imperial Master of Works). It will count as one of the Empire's limited number of commissions for that season.**

**Finally, if the Empire takes the decision that it is better to try and destroy all four of the Stonetooth Obelisks - the resulting tremors will be felt not only in Tanikipari but also in northern Stark and southern Suaq Wastes. The tremors will continue for several days, and will be potent enough to destroy all the improvements currently being made to Olgafsdottirshal. The fortification will still be a basic fortification, but the work to upgrade it will need to be started again from scratch. While the tremors are unlikely to cause significant loss of life, they will disrupt fishing in the Atkonartok and will likely damage vulnerable halls and buildings throughout the regions.**

## Champions of the West

* Killing Eisa Winterborn or Yanya Uranduln's will cause their elite unit to withdraw from the campaign in Sermersuaq. They will not return to fighting the Empire for two seasons

There is a complication presented by the presence of two large warbands of Jotun in the vicinity of the destination. The Yegarra of Eisa Winterborn and the aggressive orc warriors of Yanya Uranduln's Howling Bears have both been very active in the Sermersuaq campaign. Indeed the Howling Bears helped conquer the hot springs of Taniki in the first place. A complex rivalry exists between the two warbands and both were involved in the destruction of the western end of Pakanaan's Pass.

Their presence is a significant threat but they also represent an opportunity. Both Eisa Winterborn and Yanya Uranduln are renowned heroes of the Jotun - between them their warbands are the equivalent of nearly half an Imperial army and they represent a major obstacle for the Empire for as long as they campaign here. Killing either or both of them will deal a major blow to their respective warbands - both are held together by the heroic charisma of their leaders as much as anything else. In time, new Jotun champions will arise to replace them - but it will take at least six months and there is no guarantee that these new warbands will be as effective as those who fight under the Walrus Banner or the Banner of the Howling Bear, nor that they will be motived to fight in Sermersuaq.

The Suaq scouts will try to provide the muster with the best description available of the two Jotun champions. Neither hero will be in the area when the Empire arrive, but they will both head for the battlefield as soon as the alarm is raised. The Empire can expect them to announce their presence on the battlefield shortly after they arrive.

## Battlefield Situation

* The Jotun have been alerted to the Imperial interest in the area
* Jotun troops have formed a defensive picket protecting one of the obelisks
* Eisa Winterborn and her Yegarra and Yanya Uranduln's and her Howling Bears will arrive after the battle begins

Somehow the Jotun have got wind of a potential Imperial attack. As a result Jotun troops have secured the field and set up a multi-layered defensive perimeter near the Stonetoothed obelisks. The prognosticators believe it is possible that the Jotun's rune casters, their magicians, may have used magic to alert them to the risks. They are unlikely to know precisely what the Empire plans, but they have obviously alerted somehow.

According to the reports, there are two obelisks located in the field, one in the centre of the open ground and one further back behind the defensive line. The remaining pair of obelisks are located somewhere in the adjacent woods.

The warscouts expect that Eisa Winterborn, her Yegarra and Yanya Uranduln and her Howling Bears will arrive some time after the battle begins.

## Assistance

* The artisans of Runegrott have arranged for six ritual staffs to be made available to the Empire if the Military Council chose to take the battle in Sermersuaq
* The Military Council can choose either Sanguine Staffs or Phlegmatic Staffs
* The staffs are a gift from Wintermark to help any ritual team that commits to attempting the rituals on the battlefield

The success of the military campaign in Sermersuaq this season, has raised hope in Wintermark that the Empire may soon drive the Jotun from the territory completely. Keen to support the effort, the artisans of Runegrott have rallied the people of Hahnmark to gather the resources needed to create up to six powerful ritual staves. Depending on the advice received from the Military Council, they plan to use Timeless Hammer Rhythm to create either Sanguine Staffs or Phlegmatic Staffs. (The Military Council should let the Herald know if they would like six of one or the other, or three of each). The magical staffs will be delivered to the Herald of the Council, and available for the military council to distribute after the Saturday afternoon council session - a grateful gift from Wintermark to thank them for their bravery and heroism - assuming the military council chooses to attempt this battle.