

Summary Prepared for the Advisor on the Vallorn by Eilian Sweetwater

Most of the information gathered in Brocéliande has been packaged for transportation to the Great Library at Hacynian. We're estimating that along with the first-hand accounts from people who took part in Rhianos' grand adventure this will prove to be a significant boost to our ability to build a solution to the vallorn that may finally see it destroyed within our lifetimes. Many of these documents came from the stronghold of the Heirs of Terunael, secured by those heroes who braved its abominable innards. Without their courage and their sacrifice, we'd surely have managed to find only a fraction of what we have here.

I've been asked to prepare a summary of what we have uncovered about the Heirs of Terunael, their understanding of the vallorn, and their plans. Some of this might not be new information but I think it's still useful to gather it in one place even if the Heirs themselves appear to have been dealt a fatal blow.

The Nature of the Heirs of Terunael

There are no Heirs of Terunael, it seems. Or rather, there are, but they are not a single unified force. It seems that over the last few years a number of diverse sects, cults, and cabals within or on the outskirts of the Navarr began to come together, united by their opinion that the nation was taking the "wrong" approach to the vallorn. Something drew these groups together, and the common thread appears to be Liathaven. A few documents mention "Drustan Briarborn", "Durstan Greenhand", and "Wise Durustan" as having met with, corresponded with, or inspired some of these groups to reach out to each other. Others found each other naturally, drawn together by their ostracism from the Navarr for their crazed theories.

The other thing they have in common, broadly speaking, is they seem to have believed that the Navarr were wrong to fight the vallorn and that they were "unfit" heirs to the legacy of Terunael. In their particular eschatology, the vallorn was "intended" to spread across the entire world, transforming it into a green paradise. Once the false life of towns and cities and nations was overthrown, the truly strong would live in harmony with the vallorn, enjoying not only great longevity but also the ability to recover almost instantly from any injury. It's interesting to note that this ability to recover quickly from wounds seems to be a quality shared by a number of vallornspawn and arguably by the vallorn itself. It's this unnatural vitality that the various groups making up the Heirs of Terunael sought to harness.

Some of these groups are quite extreme, practicing self-mutilation in the pursuit of their twisted understanding of the vallorn. One sect intentionally blinded themselves, gouging out

their own eyes as a "sacrifice" to the vallorn, and claimed that they were able to cultivate a special vegetative sense that they presented as a unique blessing but actually seems to have been a particularly unpleasant ritual enchantment. Another group - the one that appears to have led the attempt to rouse the Brocéliande vallorn that served as a "trigger point" for the current cycle of conflict, seem to have been infiltrated early on by agents of the Green Mother - the Spring eternal Yaw'nagrah. It was their influence that allowed the vallorn-focused Navarr groups to form common cause with idolaters who considered the Green Mother to be a goddess of sorts - we've seen the impact of that alliance in places such as Return, or in the covens of Urizen and Varushkan magicians that actively supported the Heirs of Terunael uprising.

It's interesting to note that for all their talk of living in harmony with the vallorn, there's not very much sign that the Heirs actually had any enduring ability to protect themselves from the vallornspawn. Their abilities to rouse the spawn and their efforts to spread the vallorn seemed mostly predicated on a series of magical effects that could exert only the minimum of dominion over the spawn themselves, and none over the actual vallorn. As any scholar of Spring magic knows, this is unsurprising. Spring magic is notoriously hard to control, and can at best be channeled in a certain direction - and even that is not certain. But there's plenty of evidence that the Heirs possessed a small body of ritual lore that was not part of Imperial Lore (for obvious reasons). The source of some of the lore were rituals codified long ago by antecedents of the various groups, but some is more recently developed.

The Tree of Magic

The Brocéliande group that first called themselves Heirs of Terunael, with the aid of Yaw'nagrah, were responsible for raising the twisted base of operations deep within the Brocéliande vallorn. It became their sanctum, from which they fought to spread the vallorn throughout the territory, and also a place where they hosted visitors from Therunin, Hercynia, and Liathaven. It also appears to have served as something approaching a school of magic, but in the most abominable way.

The heroes who fought through the thorn bastion spoke of a dreadful monster like a moving, elastic tree with the heads of tormented humans among its branches. This appears to have been a truly powerful herald of Yaw'nagrah, that served as a kind of oracle, helping the Heirs to create rituals of Spring lore. In return it exacted an unspeakable price; consuming the bodies and essences of magicians from among the Heirs of Terunael who would then join their knowledge and some aspect of their personality to the creature. The individual heads apparently retained enough knowledge that they could offer a kind of tutelage to magicians who came before them, passing on their ritual lore to successive generations of Heirs of Terunael.

When it became clear the Heirs had failed in their attempt to rouse the vallorns of the Empire, this herald apparently went on a rampage through the thorn bastion, devouring every magician of the cabal that it could find and incorporating them into its bulk. It seems that the alliance between Yaw'nagrah and the Heirs of Terunael ended when their plans were shattered by Imperial heroes.

That creature is dead now, taking most of the Heirs' magical lore with it, and good riddance frankly.

Harmony With The Vallorn

The recurrent theme in a lot of the Heirs of Terunael writing is that they believe in *harmony with the vallorn*. They seem convinced that there is a way for mortal humans - and possibly orcs - to draw on the vitality of the vallorn whenever they are within its bounds. This would prevent aging, and grant incredible healing abilities. It would come at the cost, however, of civilisation. Made-things do not survive the vallorn intact; they are ruined by the plants and in many cases slowly consumed by the miasma.

But the Heirs of Terunael do not seem to see this as a bad thing. They appear to firmly believe that everything they need - weapons, armour, food, water, security - can be provided by the vallorn. Living wood, venom, thorns, bark, the hides of animals, all can be shaped to provide them with the tools they need to survive in the wilderness of the vallorn. Those who achieve *true harmony* no longer draw the attention of vallornspawn husks, or so they claim. The other more vicious vallornspawn remain a problem but one they are prepared to tolerate. The cunning, they believe, can turn and hunt the hunters.

They favour the briar lineage not because of any particular connection to the vallorn but because those touched by Spring magic are better suited for life in the vallorn. The attitudes Spring magic encourages, they believe, align well with the kinds of behaviour that survival in the vallorn would require. They firmly believe that in time all of humanity could become briars, with the other lineages failing to thrive in their brave new world of green and red. Unlineaged humans joining the Heirs actively sought out the *fruit of the oak* from the Green Mother to allow them to "attain" the powers of the briar.

The trods are a matter of hot debate among the various sections of the Heirs of Terunael. The largest faction apparently believed as the Navarr do that the trods weaken the vallorn, and must be destroyed, A second, smaller, faction believed that the trods were a necessary evil that ultimately served their purpose - spreading the vitality of the vallorn across the entire Empire albeit in a much diluted form. They argued that once the vallorn had reached its full potential, it would spill out along the trods with such force that it would spread to all corners of the Empire and that the Heirs of Terunael would then harness the "Dance of Navarr and

Thorn" to spread it across the world. They pointed to the vitality the trods provide as proof of their belief. These two factions disagreed - violently on occasion - but neither could quite gain the upper hand over the other.

A Final Word About Drustan

A lot of ink has been spent speculating about "Drustan of Liathaven" who appears to be some kind of corrupt "prophet" of the Navarr. His involvement with the Heirs of Terunael seems to have been as an inspiration, rather than an organiser. It appears that Drustan was extremely cautious of the alliance with Yaw'nagrah sending several messages urging the Heirs to take only the boons that they could afford. He seems particularly horrified by the existence of the tree-herald at the heart of the thorn bastion, denouncing it in one of his final messages as an abomination that should be "slain with fire."

There's no information here about how to contact Drustan, and given recent developments at Hotter's Mire it seems likely that he will now drop out of history for a time, content to wait until next time dissatisfaction and foolishness prompt the rise of groups who believe the vallorn represents their salvation. Perhaps, though, the fact the failure of the Heirs has been so profound this time will mean that future generations learn the lesson and resist the temptations offered by those who think the Error of Terunael is some kind of paradise.