

SIXTY YEARS GONE

The General of the Tusks, Stanley Of Chalkdown, is faced with a grim choice. He swore a solemn oath, witnessed by his peers, to fight to defend the Mournwold at any cost. True to his word, he has led the army into battle against the Jotun; but now, badly outnumbered, they have been pushed back and bled dry. The Jotun are near certain to advance again this season, aiming to drive the Empire out once again, the Tusks are in a dire place and close to breaking point. If the Tusks are broken, then the Jotun will surely be victorious. The strategic choice here for most generals would be to retreat from the Mournwold, but then Stanley's oath would be broken and in the worst possible way. Already, some among the Ore Hills have jokingly make reference to "gathering a wicker harvest". The situation looks impossible for the general, the Tusks, and the Mournwold.

Yet, a lifeline has emerged for the beleaguered General, coming from an unlikely quarter. The leaders of the Mournwold miners have organised their workforces to oppose the Jotun's advance, harrying them and waging small skirmishes against the larger foe. Those leaders are now encircled at Jade Wood near the Matilda Stone Quarries. The woodland, an old open quarry over two-hundred years ago has been a gathering point for the partisans, but now the leadership has been found by a Jotun warband, who have sent word for reinforcements. They won't last long, unless the Empire can reach them, hold off the Jotun, then ensure the ringleaders can make it back to the other miners.

OBJECTIVE: RESCUE THE MINERS

- **Leaders of the Mournwold miners have been located by Jotun scouts**
- **Rescuing the miners and reconciling them with the general of the Tusks, will see them aid the army over the next year**
- **This aid would see the Tusks become resourceful so long as they remain in the Mournwold**

The wealth of the Mourn is said to lie not just in the earth of the field, but under it. In the rock and stone, in veins of rich ore and deep deposits of valuable minerals. The hard graft and labour of the territory lies as much with the miners, cart-hands, and smelters as it does with the farmhands, herders, and plough-guides. There are however long-standing feuds between the two halves of the Mourn, between farmer and miner; sixty years ago those grudges flared into violence during the Ore Hills Rebellion.

The miners are every bit as proud as the yeofolk of the Marches and just as determined to do their bit to oppose the Jotun. None of them wish to face the Choice. Their stubborn Pride and the bitter history of the region makes cooperation with the stewards difficult, so they have taken to fighting in their own way, using the mines to hide and sally forth from to attack the Jotun. Now that fierce streak of independence has cost them - a group of prominent miners have been found by Jotun scouts and trapped at the entrance to a collapse mine. Neither side can break the stalemate, but massive Jotun reinforcements are on the way. If Imperial forces can reach the mine before the Jotun, then they can hold off the assault and rescue the trapped miners. If they are saved, then there is a chance for the Marchers to secure support of the Ore Hills miners for the Tusks, before the miners can quit the area.

However, a hurried discussion with a few quick talking Mitwolders won't seal the deal. The miners will want to speak directly with Stanley and have asked for Jedediah Boon to join the deliberations. Any other Mournwolders, especially those with mines of their own, are more than welcome to attend and throw in their two rings. Those from the Chalkdowns, Stanley aside, might be best keeping their tongues still.

Pride in small things, loyalty to great ones, as the Marchers say. The best way to get the miners on side would be a convincing pledge from the general of the Tusks. Restating their oath to protect the Mourn, and celebrating their shared bonds of Loyalty. A battle is a difficult time for a ceremony but any priests present might anoint the miners with auras of Loyalty, helping things along. The only certain way to convince the miners to put aside their proud pasts, is to emphasise the Loyalty all honest Marchers feel for the nation.

If the Empire can ensure a suitable ceremony on the battlefield, anointing the miners with auras of Loyalty and swearing to protect them and the Mourn, then the miners will throw their support behind the Tusks. If that happens, then the Tusks will be resourceful, allowing them to benefit from emergency resupply for the next year, provided they remain in the Mournwold.

OBJECTIVE: DEFEAT THE SUMMERBORN CHAMPIONS

- **Five army champions touched by Summer are among the Jotun's ranks**
- **Defeating a champion will deny the benefit of their inspiration in the coming season**

Jotun armies are led by their jarls, experienced leaders who are wise enough to balance the demand of honour with the needs of the campaign. To inspire their warriors, the jarls often pick champions from among their number, chosen for their bravery and skill, these inspiring warriors are given powerful boons from the Jotun's allies in the Summer realm, becoming Summerborn Champions.

Their presence is a huge inspiration to the Jotun warriors who fight with them. As champions they are expected to lead from the front, and to go where the fighting is thickest, so it is no surprise that five of them are heading for this location. These champions are given the pick of the armour and weapons to better stand out in battle and be seen by their fellow Jotun.

- **Halla Oxhide**, Champion of the Bear Who Swims
- **Dagna Thundrasdottir**, Champion of the Shield of the Mountain
- **Hrafnir Yrelson**, Champion of the Fell Hammers
- **Jol Eifhalbarn**, Champion of the Tower of the North
- **Froda Ulfune**, Champion of the Mandowlas Roar

If an army's champion is defeated, then the army will not be as inspired this season, fighting with less fervour. This loss means an army's ability to capture territory will decrease by a fifth over the season.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: SPEAK WITH THE HOOPER GHOSTS

- **The arrival of the Jotun in the Ore Hills has roused the ghosts of the Hoopers**
- **The ghosts may be encountered roaming the battlefield**

The Matilda Stone Quarries were once owned by a cantankerous mining family, the Hoopers, who were outspoken opponents of the farming families who dominated Marcher political life. Their leader, Esme Hooper, was executed by the magistrates for her part in the Ore Hills Rebellion. According to legends her family died shortly afterwards, refusing to surrender Matilda Stone Quarries to the invading Jotun.

That was decades ago, but it seems the ghosts of the Hoopers have now been roused by the return of the Jotun. The war scouts have reported sightings of several miners in the area. Ghostly figures carrying picks, ropes or hefting mined ore have been seen, but the scouts have done no more than confirm their identity.

If these are the ghosts of the Hoopers, then they are no friends of the Jotun, but the egregores of the Marchers express some caution and candour in how they are dealt with. Tensions ran high at the time, and the ghosts might not take well to learning certain things that have happened in the world, or more about the general who now leads the Tusks in defence of the Mourn.