

Tarn Bend (Therunin)

The Druj have stormed into Therunin and slaughtered all who opposed them. Their savage onslaught has left the Holt of the Oak a charred ruin, and key steadings across the east of the territory similarly burn or are strewn with the corpses of the Navarr who tried to stop the Druj advance. Currently, there is no apparent safe haven among the deep forests and trackless swamps that blanket East Ashes, East Ring, and the Lower Tarn Valley. A stream of refugees has begun making their way north, out of the barbarians' path and away from the perhaps greater danger of the vallorn in Greenheart. Those fleeing are making their way to the Barrens and the safety of the Great Forest of Peytaht.

A conjunction of the Sentinel Gate will allow the heroes of Anvil to reach the forests around Tarn Bend. Here a great loop of the murky river is forcing the Druj through an expanse of near impassable swampland, and into an area that will slow their progress over the days of the Summer Solstice. A chance to intervene can be made on either day as the orcs move through the area.

Objective: Slow the Druj advance

- **Engage the Druj in two strategic locations and hold ground for sixty minutes**
- **Force the barbarians to battle and distract them from the fleeing Navarr and Great Forest Orcs**
- **Not taking the battle, or failing to stop the Druj will see a massive slaughter of innocents**

The Great Forest Orcs who have escaped the destruction of their homes and the groves of the Thimble, along with many Navarr citizens are fleeing north. The fast-footed arkad fighters of the Druj are several miles behind them. It is certain that the pursuit will be over by the end of the solstice, one way or another. Thankfully, the barbarians have yet to ascertain how close they are to their quarry, so a strike against them will divert their attention from the pursuit and onto the more present threat of the Empire's heroes appearing in their midst.

The war scouts have identified several key areas across Tarn Bend that provide excellent locations to attract and tie up the Druj. On either opportunity, two civil servant scouts will direct the Empire towards two strategic locations and advise the Field Marshall in bringing the barbarians to battle. Once the orcs are engaged, Imperial forces will need to hold ground, rotate troops, and resist Druj assaults until a full hour has passed. By this point, the Druj forces on the field will either have claimed victory or exhausted their troops to the point they abandon the wider chance and retreat to their armies to lick their wounds.

Success will see the fleeing citizens of Navarr and the streaming columns of the Great Forest Orcs reach the protection of the Heart of Peytaht in the Barrens, safe from the Druj's pursuit, at least for now.

Objective: Prevent the use of the Sephals Cauldron

- **Locate and then investigate the contents of the tepel's cauldron**
- **Apothecaries will need to examine the nature of the poisons in the container to determine an effective counter**
- **If the battle is not taken, or the cauldron remains in Druj hands, then it will be used to poison the swamps of the Lower Tarn Valley and Hopes Rest**

In the wake of the barbarian assault has come the Druj tepel, Thyla Handsplitter, understood to be a learned apothecary from the citadel of Sephals in the Sarangrave. With them they bring a giant iron cauldron that brims with a noxious mix of toxins, venoms, poisons, and brews. Known as the Sephals Cauldron, it is rumoured to be a relic from the time of the original Druj ancestors, when the Buruk Tepel first mastered the arts of brewing and distilling to create the first potions and poisons.

The concoctions within the container pose a serious threat to the wider Tarn Valley basin from the seeping of Return to the lake below the ruins of Dourfell Keep in the Barrens. This area has a maze of connected aquifers and springs that the Druj now aim to taint with the cauldron, contaminating the very land beneath the Empire's feet. The tepel have already begun to poison the land they control with similar foul brews, steeping the waters of the swamps with poison, but the work is not yet complete. To get the maximum effect they need to pour the waters of the cauldron into the Tarn to unleash the poison. If this happens it will cause the regions of the Lower Tarn Valley and Hope's Rest to gain the Poisoned quality as the ground waters are tainted.

Should the cauldron be spilt during the battle then it will still poison the Tarn Valley, but Hope's Rest will be saved. To save both the Empire must find a way to neutralise the liquids within the Sephals Cauldron. The civil service propose the following course of action to render the cauldron's contents inactive:

- **Apothecaries will need to gain access to the cauldron**
- **A volunteer will need to test the liquid by sampling it**
- **The apothecaries will need to identify the poison from the volunteer's symptoms**
- **Identify the antidote, then prepare it and pour it into the cauldron**
- **Repeat the process until all the poisons are dealt with**

Battlefield threat: The Beasts of Eastring

- **The Druj have controlled some of the monstrous insects found in Therunin**

Therunin is famed for the plethora of insects that inhabit the forests and swamps of the territory. Crucially they grow big here, some of the dire insects can end up bigger than an adult human.

During their assault into East Ashes the warriors of the Druj were able to capture a number of monstrous creatures that they are now driving alongside their forces. Among them are numerous scuttling purple beetles known as Dire Elytra that can shatter shields and weapons with their great claws, and at least one hulking Dire Canthon bug twice the size of a human and capable of flinging ranks of soldiers with sweeping blows of its forelimbs.

The creatures are a monstrous threat that the Druj will employ against any Imperial force they encounter.

Battlefield assistance: Zakalwe's Heralds

- **Zakalwe will provide two of his myrmidons to help the Empire coordinate their forces on the battlefield if they wish**

Heralds of the Master Strategist have informed the civil service of Zakalwe's desire to assist the Empire in combating the orcs of the Mallum, and he is offering the assistance of two of his Myrmidons during this venture to Tarn Bend. These warriors are able to commune with one another over distance, greatly enhancing the ability of forces alongside them to coordinate and tactically respond to happenings on the battlefield. One will remain with the Field Marshal, whilst the other Myrmidon will shadow another citizen chosen by the Field Marshal.