

# As it is when it was

## Mortal Magic

Not every strange event is magic, not every magical thing is strange. Magic can be familiar or alien, and may be different things to different people. It isn't always the purview of magicians either - there is magic in all kinds of places from the herbs favoured by physick and apothecary to the materials drawn from mines and forests. One thing is sure though, from the most mundane hearth magic to the strange influence of the stars, to the vagaries of fate and chance, it changes what it touches. And, as the philosophers say, you cannot cross the same river twice.

This wind of fortune mostly deals with things happening around the Empire that relate to mortals, or whose provenance is uncertain. Magical events relating specifically to the eternal are detailed in the companion piece, Hey now how you doing?.

## Umbar's Sun

- The skies over Casinea have been enchanted to show a glowing figure

Just after the Autumn Equinox, a glowing figure appeared in the sky over Casinea. An apparition of a powerfully built, almost naked, bearded man bearing monarchical regalia, visible across most of the territory but particularly clear above Anvil, with a beard and radiant wings. The figure delivers a silent tirade, eyes flashing and making great sweeping gestures that leave none who see it in any doubt as to its message - one of defiance to the Empire's enemies. Rumbles of thunder, and the occasional

bright flashes as of lightning accompany the image even in a cloudless sky.

The majestic image slowly loses power over the course of the season; at first the image appears every day around noon for an hour but then becomes more intermittent until by the end of the season it appears only once a week or so for around ten minutes. The image also loses clarity - barely six weeks after its first appearance it becomes difficult to determine much detail beyond the fact it is a human with wings. During its last appearance, nine days before the Equinox, it is little more than a brightly glowing outline.

This is hardly the first such image to appear in the sky above the Empire - last summer a giant miner inspired a great deal of debate in the Mournwold for example. This time however the reception is significantly more mixed. It's obvious that this is the result of Summer ritual magic, and that if good faith is assumed it is meant to inspire people to fight the enemies of the Empire but... the enchantment is easily divined to be of the fiftieth magnitude, meaning fifty mana crystals - more than seven whole mana sites - were spent to create it. Is that really a good use of mana? Some might argue it is prosperous - obviously citizens can do what they want with their mana but still.

The noise and light has not been well received either. While the Marchers used the appearance of the Ore Hills miner as an excuse for a picnic, and the various sky-images of yesteryear in the Brass Coast inspired wonder, this is Highguard and the image of a big winged man in the sky shaking his fist falls flat. More, it leads to complaints about lost sleep, disrupted routines, and frightened animals; the waste of mana. Crucially a significant number of Highborn are questioning whether this might be a form of idolatry? Several magisters and Casinean

priests are of the opinion that the Imperial Censor Cassandra i Periera i Erigo might consider investigating whether creating glowing images in the sky for a season ought not to be subject to interdiction by the Imperial Conclave. Others are less concerned - this does appear after all to be a well-meaning if misguided attempt to raise morale and encourage people to think about the need to defend the Empire.

Most of the Empire's enemies are obviously unaware of the illusory figure in the sky, but perhaps inevitably there is further dissatisfaction about the image. A few days before the Autumn equinox, a Suranni merchant turns up to the Hub at Anvil to complain that the figure is clearly an insult directed at the Iron Confederacy. The civil service placate the woman, promising to bring the matter up with the Conclave... which was perhaps ill advised as it causes the merchant to become even more angry. It is unfortunately not entirely clear exactly what has angered her, but it seems to be that members of the Suranni pantheon are often depicted winged, to represent their divinity and this is taken to be a parody of such images. It's almost certainly not intentional, and so far there's been no official complaint to the Ambassador to the Iron Confederacy Tethros i Zuhri i Erigo. So far.

Then someone points out that the figure bears a remarkable resemblance to Umbar i Radah i Guerra, the Freeborn master of the "Star Bar" at Anvil and a little bit of the assumption of good faith drains away in the face of speculation that this is nothing more than a form of self-aggrandisement or perhaps advertising for the parador's services.

## **Participation**

Characters living in or visiting Casinea cannot help but be aware of the giant figure in the sky. Anyone who knows Umbar

i Radah i Guerra will spot the resemblance immediately. Rather than using Night magic , this image used Summer magic and is almost overpoweringly majestic making it almost impossible to ignore when it was present, thanks to the rumbling of thunder and occasional bright flashes. It's entirely up to the individual how they wish to respond to the appearance of this image. Any magician in Casinea can use detect magic to confirm the known facts - that it is an enchantment on the territory using Summer Magic of magnitude 50.

## Rune and Tale

### Invited Runesmiths

Adrix Nev Grislebrand

Eydis Tuuling of Issglenhal

Hellevi of Gryphon's Watch

Kullervo Skjalning of Skjalfell Keep

Lytelman, Hearthholder of  
Ravenholm

Matthias Tzoref

Osberht

Runa

Sigurd Sunhood of Snowperch  
Hall

Skáldsgrym of Eyrie's Ward Sect

Theodric Hilbrand

Ugla Vardovichof House Gerís

- Novice artisans from Wintermark who are interested in becoming the apprentice of Valasheim should approach their egregore

In the Valasmark, in the settlement of Valasheim stands the Valashal, a hall that dedicates itself to training the greatest warriors of Wintermark. It is almost entirely peopled by groups of Steinr, though it accepts warriors from all over the nation who seek to prove themselves heroes. The stated intent of Valashal is to be the greatest focus of martial heroism in the nation and therefore the world. The nearby Galenhall houses the many scops who come to Valasheim to celebrate the deeds of the heroes who dwell here.

Ursula Starhammer is the forgemistress of the Aflhal, the premier forge of Valasheim. For many years, she and her predecessors have forged the weapons and armour of the heroes here. There are few who know how to create a hero's panapoly better than those who work the forge of the Aflhal. It is said that there are secrets passed down from master to apprentice here, ancient lore of the Steinr people regarding the secrets of the rare star-metal. Isenbrad himself is said to have once worked the bellows here for a season, training the smiths who dwelled here. All times come to an end, however, and Ursula knows that hers will one day come. Unfortunately, her previous apprentice died nearly a year ago: zie gave zir life, blade in hand, in the defence of the Valashal when the Cold Sun came to destroy the tales of heroes past. Nothing remains of zir now but ash.

She is therefore seeking a new apprentice, someone who is ready and worthy to take on the mantle of the forge of Aflhal. This will not be straightforward: she has consulted with the nations egregores and they have divined a list of twelve runesmiths - all artisans who might still be seeking to master their crafts. She can only take one apprentice but there is no

reason to believe all twelve smiths will be interested in this opportunity. There is a conjunction to the The Forge of Valashal, in Valasmark, at one in the afternoon on Saturday during the summit - any who are interested in a chance to become the forgemistress' apprentice should use the Sentinel Gate to meet with Ursula. She has prepared a challenge for them which will narrow the field.

Out of professional courtesy, the forgemistress has also invited her peer, the Keeper of Runegrott to attend if they wish to do so. Obviously they are a master of their craft already, but they are welcome to observe. She also mentions that she will be calling on the stormcrows and scops to help support her challenge, and asks that a renowned member of each of these vocations also attends to relay a message to their fellows. She has asked the egregores to identify the scop and the stormcrow best suited to help if more than one wish to attend.

### **Accessibility**

This visit is a combat unlikely encounter. The conjunction will allow up to fifteen people to travel to the Forge of Valashal, and while the forgemistress has asked for specific people - any of the twelve named artisans, a scop, and a stormcrow, and the Keeper of Runegrott to witness.

## **Song of Thorns**

- Thornsong House, the college of herbalism, has been completed in Therunin
- The first Thornsinger will be appointed at the Autumn

## Equinox

- They will be able to use their power of address to guide the research at Thornsong House

Shortly before the Autumn Equinox, work is completed on Thornsong House in Therunin. The first Thornsinger will be appointed at the coming summit by Tally of the Votes - every Navarr herb garden owner can have a say in who claims the title. While the Thornsinger gains access to the wealth of the bayou, overseeing a rich ministry of herb and potion, the title likely causes more excitement for its power to guide the apothecaries who gather at the house. The Thornsinger will choose which of three proposed potions the herb masters will explore, and create a herbal which will allow those with access to it to benefit from their research and brew an entirely new preparation.

Research will require a significant number of herbs, take a year, and magic will not be able to speed the process up. Once the Thornsinger informs the Senate which potion is to be researched, a commission will be created that will allow citizens to provide the needed herbs. As discussed in the original wind of fortune, there are three possible potions that might be researched. The civil service are preparing estimates of the research costs for the new Thornsinger.

- By studying the comparatively recent Talonvine Infusion tonic, a similar potion that uses realmsroot and vital honey rather than ilium could be created. This would likely open the door to creating similar tonics for empowering magicians in the other five realms.
- Building on some of the principles involved in the Tonics of the Open Sky, a tonic could be developed that provides protection from the vallorn miasma to the drinker.

- Expanding on the lore of the Philtres of the High Peaks, a tonic that greatly enhances the magical reserves of magicians might be created (OOC Note: a tonic that grants the drinker an additional 3 points of personal mana for an extended duration).

Once work is completed on a potion, the savants of herb lore will present a new list for the Thornsinger, likely including any remaining suggestions from the previous year plus at least one new one.

Pessimistic Navarr point out that all this might be moot if the Druj successfully conquer Therunin (which seems very unlikely), but also note that the House itself is under threat of the vallorn. The nation may wish to give some thought as to how it, and Peakedge Song, will be protected from vallornspawn if the Greenheart is triggered.

## **Trods and New Life**

- The trods have been restored in every Imperial territory
- The Wither the Seed curse on Liathaven has been removed

When Cold Sun ravaged Miaren, his scions tore apart the trods there, sending a burst of destructive energy that injured vates and rent the pathways of Spring magic apart. During the Summer Solstice, the Wildfire's Ever Shifting Dance coven enacted the Dance of Navarr and Thorn repairing and restoring them. It's notable, however, that some of their paths have shifted slightly, possibly due to the subtle but obviously impactful changes wrought on the territory by the Empty Hand before their destruction. The trods in Volodmartz and Karov, also rent by servants of the malicious eternal were both restored during the Spring equinox. This final casting restores the trods across the Empire. While a great many



Navarr stridings have chosen to return home, the trods still serve a purpose. The recent decision taken by the nation means that they are no longer seen as a way to defeat the vallorn, but they are still the best way to move large numbers of people around the Empire - still used by armies and merchants alike. The stridings who have stuck to their peregrinations keep the trods fresh, and keep them providing their energy to those who walk them, even if their days are now clearly numbered.

While ensuring that the trods are in good functional order, an interesting development has been reported in Liathaven. It seems the curse of Wither the Seed that the Navarr placed to keep the vallorn there quiescent has been removed or ended. There was talk at the start of the year that the Feni in the territory were gathering resources to some end, and that Wise Rangara was involved. The Empire chose not to fight in Liathaven, and the fate of the Feni there is unknown, but some vates point to the fact that at least some of the Jotun of the north in particular seek her counsel. It's not impossible that she prevailed on them to release the Feni or even help them in their quest to break the spell the Navarr placed. Regardless of how it happened, the curse is gone. Life has returned to Liathaven, and that may prove to be a mixed blessing. While it means that the humans and orcs there can again have children, it also means that there is nothing keeping the vallorn down. Given the widescale destruction of the forest the Jotun are engaging in the territory they have taken to calling Ashvale it seems likely that the Jotun will have to make plans of their own to deal with the Feni.

Some concerned citizens - not just Navarr but also those of the Brass Coast and the Marches whose lands border Liathaven - have raised the question of whether it might be a good time to replace the old spy network that once allowed Imperial citizens to keep an eye on the territory. Perhaps the Imperial

Spymaster Bernard Dugdale - themselves a Marcher - could be persuaded to do so? Beyond the military intelligence the spy network might gather, it might also be able to get a better idea of what is going on with the Feni? Or perhaps the Imperial Advisor for the Feni Syn Truth-Walker Returned might be able to contact them directly and ask what is happening.

There's also some grumbling that maybe one of the Conclave orders could look into the matter, or at least try to make contact with the wizards the Feni clearly have. Unfortunately, there's not enough impetus behind this odd discovery to engage the interest of many wizards outside the affected area, in the absence of a grand lodge it's not possible to guide an order without an opportunity.

## **Journeymage Towers**

- The Senate has commissioned the Journeymage Towers to support the Wavewatchers sodality to address the threat of Dho'uala
- The creation of the Watcher of the Semmerlak will be decided by the Senate the Autumn Equinox

During the Solstice, the Imperial Senate decided to construct the Journeymage Towers proposed by in the recent appraisal (as laid out in last season's Less welcome tenants wind of fortune). Work on the towers was completed with commendable alacrity. The Wisdom assembly chose to support the new-formed sodality of Wavewatchers, with Kalina Jadwigowna Piosnkowa Prochnost enacting a mandate encouraging virtuous folk from around the Semmerlak and beyond to contribute to the Journeymage Towers, and assuring the Varushkans that the Wise approve of this coming-together of nations. While guisers and mountebanks are

not often trusted by their people, their skills are nonetheless important. The Wavewatchers are enthusiastically recruiting members from the three nations bordering the Semmerlak.

The title of Watcher of the Semmerlak, who would help ensure the Wavewatchers are able to go about their business, has not yet been created but is the subject of an administrative motion for the Imperial Senate to decide. If it is created then it will be first available to elect this season. It will be available to be appointed by the Vigilance assembly. Note that to enjoy the benefits awarded to the title, and to have the best effectiveness when dealing with the sodality, the title holder must themselves be a Dawnish guiser, League mountebank, or Varushkan volhov.

More importantly, the efforts of the cunning and unorthodox magicians of the three nations is already having an effect. The threat to ships crossing the Semmerlak from the sovereign Dho'uuala has been countered. The beast is still awake, but their ability to harm Imperial citizens is contained. Not every problem is dealt with - there is still the matter of ilium and fish taken from the lake to consider, but a major step has been taken to corralling the power of the sovereign and protecting the people of the nearby lands.

Imperial prognosticator Lutomysla Niegoslava is apparently pleased by the swift response to her appraisal, but also points out that there is nothing to stop the Blades of the Semmerlak as well if they want to be particularly thorough (although the opportunity for the Pride assembly to support the Blades is no longer available a suitably worded statement of principle in the assembly might lead to something similar if the Imperial Senate did choose to recruit warriors, as well as wizards, to keep an eye on the sovereigns.

## Participation

As laid out in the wind of fortune, the Wavewatchers sodality was created to establish wards around the lake, and on the vessels of ships at port along its banks, as well as responding quickly to any threat of Dho'uala's creatures arising from the depths. Membership is welcome to any volhov, guiser, or mountebank and characters with these archetypes are free to roleplay membership of the group if they wish. There is already discussion about whether the remit of the sodality might be expanded to address other threats related to the dark powers of Varushka, and adopting this sodality might encourage you to get involved in future plots relating to them. After all, as the situation with Dho'uala shows, the powers of Varushka can have an impact on more than a single nation.

## Castles of Ice

- The Thule have placed obvious enchantments on all the fortifications they have built in Imperial territories

It's common knowledge that the Thule have established fortifications in each of the regions of Sermersuaq, Skarsind, and Varushka they control. These forts serve a dual purpose; protecting the regions where they stand and serving as administrative centres for the orcs who live there. Those Imperial citizens who visit, or in some cases live in, the regions conceded to the masters of Otkodov are encouraged to visit and do business there - in Varushka especially there are monthly markets held where Imperial and Thule traders meet.

Shortly before the Autumn Equinox, news emerges from these regions of powerful enchantments falling over the fortifications. The garrison of the Citadel of Silver and Bone in the Silver Peaks have been reinforced by ice giants, presumably called

from the realm of Cathan Canae, while those of Crow's Keep on Crow's Ridge burn night and day with a pale red-green flame. Eldfell in Mierchenya and Krevsatyzmei in Krevsaty both are attended by great white wolves, seeming gifts from the court of Sorin, the Tomb King. Finally, Flajajokep in the Bonewood bears an enchantment of Autumn magic that sees glowing runes covering its surface, and a surprising number of heralds of the Autumn cities of Gold and Lead and of Stone and Flame attending the markets there.

It's unlikely that this is a prelude to a surprise attack - but not impossible. It's more likely that this is a show of strength, reminding the Empire that the Thule are more than capable of wielding powerful magic and that they have the resources to "waste" just flexing their muscles. Either way it's likely not a coincidence that they have done this as the Ambassador to Otkodov Kindra Surefoot is due to have the first meeting with the Thule Ambassador since relations between the two nations began to founder.

## **Letters still fly**

- Feather tokens that were given out to people who expressed an interest in sending Letters of Longing to Lashonar, will now operate to send letters to the Eternal via the Imperial Regio at any time during the Autumn Equinox
- Anyone who did not manage to collect their token on the Sunday of the Summer Solstice has another chance to do so from the Hall of Worlds on the Friday evening of the Solstice not long after the summit begins

The beaked purple face of the chiruppy herald Melflee is familiar to the civil service, though when they arrive on this visit, they seem considerably less perky than usual. The first

news they have to impart is not too dark though. The Herald Rossignol is saddened, she says, that the Imperial magicians have chosen to show that they feel that communication, listening, dreams and longing should no longer be spread around the Empire. Saddened too, that without Amity, the power in the tokens that were given out to those folk who value language and its power to persuade will not be strong enough to open portals, and that there will be no great visit to the Night realm, at least not this season. But glad to tell that the tokens will have enough strength in them, that if they are activated by visiting the Imperial Regio, they will send any letter held out to the realm of the Gibbering Serpent.

'We can still read your letters, make something of them, and celebrate those we enjoy most' finished Melflee. "People who send us letters this equinox can expect to hear from the Speaker in Dreams at the Winter Solstice".

Melflee isn't finished. She also makes clear to the stalwarts of the Castle of Thorns, that Rossignol knows that not everyone who was due to collect a feather managed to do so at the Summer Solstice. She intends to come to Anvil herself, not long after the summit starts on the Friday of the Equinox, to meet any who still need to collect their feathers. She points out carefully to the civil servants that she will only be able to take 3 steps into the Hall of Worlds and that there may well be non mages among those who still need to gather tokens. If that is the case, she suggests they send a mage to invite her out, rather than bothering themselves with trying to get a Pauper's Key, just to collect a small feather of Night.

## **OOO Directions**

To use your feather, take it, or have it taken, to the Imperial Regio. Standing in the Regio will activate it and enable you to send a letter of longing directly to the Eternal Lashonar by

handing it to the Regio referee. Make sure your letter includes the name and PID of the letter writer. If you cannot reach the Imperial Regio, for accessibility reasons, you can also go to GoD or the ref desk and tell them you are using the accessibility rules for using another location to represent the Imperial Regio. There will be OOC storage boxes for the letters in all 3 locations.

## **Between the Lines (Mournwold)**

- A conjunction to a part of Mournwold that is contested by the Empire and the Jotun has been detected
- Citizens in the area have mentioned oddly behaving figures in robes around a dolmen near Tilly's Howe
- Prognosticators note that this seems to be a problem to be solved with magic and investigation rather than violence
- The Keeper of the Happiston Fields is responsible for this skirmish
- This is a combat possible encounter
- There may be innocent people present on this conjunction; magistrates advise caution must be taken to avoid innocent casualties

Amid the chaos of confusion of the Jotun invasion of the Mourn, odd events have been reported in the heart of the Chalk Downs. The Jotun occupation means that communication is difficult with those Marchers who were left behind or elected to stay, but messages come out from beaters walking the boundary of the valley of Tilly's Howe. Reports of strange disappearances abound, of hooded figures behaving oddly and stalking folk who wander through the valley, adding to the fear of the those who are attempting to resist or evade the Jotun occupiers.

The Imperial Prognosticators have identified a conjunction to this area at 19:15 to Tilly's Howe, Chalk Downs, Mournwold, for 10 people. While the obvious thing to prepare for would be armed Jotun, The Claw is major decline in relating to this conjunction; the presence of the Great Wyrn and the Chain indicate that something other than violence is likely afoot and should be prepared for when investigating the mysterious goings on here.

## Sanvar Isk

*To all the brave orphans of Tassato, Who told the greedy herald where to go. The folks who come to Anvil see your deeds, And think you've got the mindset to succeed. He built a college in the town, You threw veggies to knock him down. You can better than this guest, And show who's best. A challenging rival is hard to beat, So show us your proposal for the way you'll compete. Isk got a grant to give him a start, Pitch us your better plan and we'll do our part.*

*Esrasmus di Tassato, League assembly, Summer Solstice  
386YE, Vote: Greater Majority 286-30*

- Access to the Loom of Spells will be auctioned at 14:00 on Sunday at the Imperial Regio
- Sanvar Isk continues to lose his battle with Tassato's orphans
- Representatives of the Church of the Little Mother wish to meet with interested parties, including representatives from the Academy, the Archmage of Autumn, Erasmo di Tassato, and anyone planning on bidding on the Loom of Spells this season, in the Hub at 19:30 on Friday

As the season begins, the gossips of Tassato wait with bated breath to see what new foolishness Sanvar Isk will grace them



with. Yet as the days tick by, they wait in vain. Weeks pass, then months, and it seems that Sanvar Isk has decided to lie low. There are a few rumours of him being seen running furtive missions around the streets, but nothing concrete. The gossips move on, and people lose interest.

...Or at least they do until word starts to spread like wildfire that Sanvar Isk has been thrown out of a Magistrate's office twice, and hit with a serious fine for attempting to pervert the course of justice. Rumours begin to run wild, until pamphlets begin to circulate through salons and street corners alike. Published by the Church of the Little Mother, they detail what has actually been happening for the last two months. Sanvar Isk has been the victim of an elaborate confidence trick, where some of their orphans posed as whistle-blowers trying to expose corruption within the Church. The tale itself is long and detailed, but it culminates with Sanvar Isk marching into a Magistrate's office with a dossier of 'evidence' detailing these supposed crimes. When the Magistrate informed him that this dossier was actually detailing the plot of a popular crime drama from five years ago, Isk apparently flew into a rage and demanded that the children be arrested on general principle. He was informed that fraud is not in fact a crime, and thrown out. When he returned a day later and attempted to bribe the Magistrate to open a case against the children on fabricated charges, he was promptly heavily fined and thrown out again with orders not to come back.

Isk, likely hoping to recoup his substantial losses, will once again attend the Imperial Regio at two o'clock on the Sunday of the forthcoming summit to auction access to the Loom of Spells. Bids should once again be given in any combination of mine and forest materials, with only the total quantity mattering. However, word has come that a party from the Church of the Little Mother will also be attending the summit in

response to the judgement of Erasmo di Tassato. They intend to arrive at the Hub at 19:30 on Friday, and wish to speak with the Archmage of Autumn, representatives from the Academy, Erasmo di Tassato, and anyone planning on bidding on the Loom of Spells this season, along with any other interested parties. Their intentions remain unknown.

### Regarding Colleges of Magic

As well as having access to the Loom of Spells, the Empire directly controls three colleges of magic: the Lyceum (which thanks to the Brother of Wizards is able to codify texts again despite being hidden behind magical wards); the Icy Crag of the Eternal Sun, and the nationwide efforts of the Urizen overseen by the Doyen of the Spires.

Starting at the Autumn Equinox, we will no longer be accepting requests to codify rituals that come in after the end of downtime. Previously we have done our best to keep up with late submissions, but as the game grows that has become increasingly difficult. Going forward, you must email rules with the name of the arcane projection you are codifying before downtime closes after the event. Otherwise the assumption will be that the magicians and scholars at that college will engage in personal research. The exception is that you don't need to email in every season if you are codifying a multi-season ritual, unless you want to change that ritual.

This also applies to any "special" colleges such as the Loom of Spells, or Sadogua's Well of Shadows.

## **A Different Dance (Volodmartz)**

- The wolves of Nadezhdikov have awoken and are threatening nearby outposts

- This skirmish is a combat possible encounter
- This conjunction is against barbarians; magistrates advise that lethal force is fully justified
- The Grim Gardener is responsible for soothing the wolves of Nadezhdikov

The lost souls of Nadezhdikov have awoken once again. Centuries ago, on the orders of the Iron Boyar, the people were bound up and forced to watch as their hall was destroyed; every warding, everything that made it home, burned. Then every single inhabitant was put to the sword by the ruthless Iron Boyar for refusing to pay a tithe for the protection offered by her schlecta. The corpses were deliberately left abandoned so that they would have no sense of home or family in the labyrinth.

Now, the inhabitants have risen again in the Choked Forest; only a few miles from the Gardens of the Grim. They have spread across the forest and are lashing out at those who come too close. Anastasia Kelspickov, a local and revered stzena, tells a tale of his youth; of bringing those who were alone together. Of leading them - though blind and furious - together so they could feel familial warmth again. Of creating a home for them with wardings and of soothing them with songs and tales. The Grim Gardener is responsible for soothing these wolves before they spread and threaten more of the forest, including the Gardens of the Grim.