

ALL ALONG THE LAKESIDE

The campaign in Therunin has suddenly swung back against the Druj this season, with the Empire quickly recovering lost land in the Lower Tarn Valley, and pushing most of the way through East Ring. However, where the Druj retreat, the pain and misery they have inflicted on the Navarr is all too clear. Steadings and waystations are charred ruins, evidence of ambushes and tortured killings on the trods, despoiled mana sites and forest groves abound. The war in the territory has not been one of conquest, but a brutal and crushing psychological message from the eastern barbarians.

However, it is evident that the Druj are not done with Therunin yet, they have pulled back and consolidated their forces, carefully preparing their plans. From the mass of the armies in East Ring, a force has headed south-west into East Ashes. Initially, the war scouts and prognosticators were in the firm belief that the Druj were committing to the direct destruction of the Feverwater Docks, preparing to deny the Empire access to the inland sea.

At the last moment, it became clear that this assault, terrible though it is, may only be a ruse to disguise their true goals. The orcs have pushed west, into the foreboding vallorn-infested woods at Ashborder in Sweetglades, where they intend to commit their greatest atrocity yet.

OBJECTIVE: STOP THE BLOOD DRAINERS COVEN

- **Siakha has gifted the “Blood Drainers” coven a powerful spring magic boon to empower Thunderous Deluge**
- **If the empowered ritual is cast at a regio in Therunin, then East Ashes will become impassable for a year and the Feverwater Docks will be destroyed**

The war scouts have identified a Druj spring coven named the Blood Drainers, whose ghulai curry favour with Siakha. This is the first known association between the eastern barbarians and the eternal they know as Depths of the Dark Marsh. It is however no surprise that the Druj would court with such a ferocious and deadly entity. The Blood Drainers are believed to hail from the far east of the Salt Flats of Sanath. The Maelstrom has offered the coven a powerful boon that they plan to use to bring cascading rains across the territory.

Should Thunderous Deluge be cast in Therunin with Siakha’s boon then over the coming weeks the skies will darken and the clouds will stream with an unceasing torrent of rain. The marshes flood often but East Ashes is different, it lies surrounded on two sides by the towering peaks of Morrow and Zenith, massive barriers of rock that will contain and direct any forming storm clouds, funnelling the true wrath of the rain back down on the region. The languid backwaters of East Ashes are certain to swell with the rain coming from the peaks and this will raise the level of the swamps to new heights. Over the coming season the swamps will deepen, the few dry areas will turn to quagmires, and the foundations of tracks, bridges and docks will sink into the dark murk.

The ritual’s impact will result in the region of East Ashes becoming impassable for army movement. It would no longer be possible for an army to move between East Ashes in Therunin and Perego in Morrow, or Lustris in Zenith. Transit would still be possible from Morrow into Therunin via Peakedge Song. This dire situation will last a year, unless a solution can be found to lower the water in the swamps.

The floods will be a diaster for the Feverwater Docks, which will be completely destroyed, sucked down into the rising waters.

OBJECTIVE: STOP CINTRA BLACKSTAFF

- **The mysterious ghulai Cintra Blackstaff is with the Druj forces at Sweetmarsh**
- **Blackstaff's coven intends to rouse the vallorn by casting a powerful spring ritual in the Sweetglades**

The Druj ghulai known as Cintra Blackstaff has been a thorn in the Empire's side for years. She looted the ruined spires of Zenith for knowledge of spring magic, and tortured two Navarri vates to extract information on the vallorn. Where she has been since the Empire last encountered her is unknown, but she has strong connections at the Palace of the Sleepers in Sarangrave. She has spent years developing her extensive understanding of the vallorn, always seeking a way to use it as a weapon against the Empire. Now at last she is ready to strike.

An escaped slave, a broken and half-starved stevedore from the Feverwater Docks, was able to provide war scouts with a vital warning. The expedition, including her coven and a guard of elite fighters, plan to enter the vallorn in Sweetglades and cast an arcane projection that will rouse the creatures of the vallorn in the region. Such magics are known to be possible - rituals like Rivers of Life can affect the vallorn and the Heirs of Terunael have used Spring magic to directly stir the vallorn into life. Blackstaff has spent years preparing for this moment, she wouldn't be risking her life in this way, unless she was sure of her magic.

Unless the ritual is interrupted, the coven waylaid, or the resources they require to cast it are captured then Blackstaff will stir the vallorn to life. Should this happen, then swarms of vallornspawn husks, ettercaps, vallornspawn briars, and twisted abberations will issue forth from the depths of the forests and pour out into Peakedge Song. The vallorn won't be unstoppable - but the region will be threatened by a force of at least fifteen thousand strength, requiring a huge effort to hold it back. The vallorn would be vulnerable and weakened if that happened, but by then it might be too late.

BATTLEFIELD THREAT: THE BEASTS OF SWEETGLADES

- **The Druj have taken control of 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, with some of the dire insects growing larger than an adult human.

As the Druj have rampaged through the east of Therunin they goaded a number of monstrous creatures against the citizens of the Empire. The situation is no different here in Sweetglades, with the barbarians driving forth scuttling Dire Elytra that can shatter shields and weapons with their great claws, and a hulking Dire Canthon bug twice the size of a human and capable of flinging ranks of soldiers aside with sweeping blows of its forelimbs.

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

BATTLEFIELD ENVIRONMENT: MIASMA OF THE SWEETGLADES

- **A vallorn miasma reaches through the woodlands of Ashborder**
- **Any creatures - human or orc - that enters the woodland will be affected by the miasma**

The woodland at Ashborder lies along the edges of Sweetglades, one of the vallorn-infested regions of Therunin that has existed since the fall of the Terunael. The spore-filled air will make anyone who encounters it feel feverish or sick, suffering in short time from an envenomed blood.

A venture of this scale into the vallorn miasma comes with many risks, especially for those who die of their wounds in its cloying depths. Citizens are reminded that The Gift of Kaela and the winter ritual Surcease of Sorrow can be used ensure that if the worst happens, ones corpse will not be able to rise as a vallornspawn. Likewise, the spring ritual Turns the Circle can be cast upon a fallen citizen to prevent their inevitable reanimation.