

# TWIN HORRORS - NESUSTAK FOREST

The legendary spite of the Druj admits no peer. Defeated and broken by grappling with the Empire's armies in the Sarangrave they mean to plunge the territory into chaos - they would rather see their ancient homelands consumed by the vallorn than be claimed by the Empire. A final stab aimed at the heart of the people they hate so much. The leaders of the Basilisk have risked everything, unleashing the vallorn to ensure that everyone goes down together.

In Nesustak Forest, they have turned their ire on the septs that have betrayed the Druj by throwing off the shackles of their rule. This season they would have killed and slaughtered the rebels were it not for the timely intervention of the Gryphon's Pride. Their gloriously desperate defence placed a steel-clad wall of gleaming knights and robe-clad fearsome war witches around the rebels, stopping the Druj assault in its tracks. Shielded by the Dawnish soldiers Courage, heralds of Shackle Smasher have worked tirelessly to save those they can.

There is a conjunction of the Sentinel Gate on the Saturday of the equinox that opens on the Feverbank Trees in Nesustak Forest. It offers a dangerous opportunity to try to save the region and the people who live here from the onrushing vallorn. Driven by hate, the Druj will not give up easily however - their forces are already in the area, determined to see the slaughter through to the bloody end.

## OBJECTIVE: WARD THE FEVERBANK STONES

- **The stones at Feverbank Trees that once held back the power of the vallorn are failing**
- **Wardens of the Black Waste creates powerful wards against the vallorn that last for a season**
- **Each stone that is warded will reduce the strength of the vallorn pushing into Neustak Forest this season by 6000**

The five ancient stones that stand sentinel in Feverbank Trees have held back the power of this vallorn for hundreds of years. Created centuries ago by the Terunael people as their empire collapsed, they have been fatally weakened by the Druj creating an opening for the ancient enemy to escape through. The valiant defense by the Boyar's Hasta has created a narrow opening, offering a chance to weaken the roiling advance of the vallorn into Nesustak Forest before it can become an unstoppable flood.

While the magic of the stones is failing, they are still powerful winter totems, built to anchor a ward. Winter ritualists will need to cast Wardens of the Black Waste on each one of the ancient pillars. The stone will anchor the ritual, so fragile warding posts are not required, the ritual can simply target the pillar itself. This will also prevent the Druj from simply destroying the ward by scattering the post markers. The ritual will weaken any vallorn that approach nearby countering the spring magic that enervates them. Each warding placed upon the stones here will iteratively sap the strength of the encroaching vallorn mass, slowing the movements of giant ettercap and abominations, and draining the animating force that propels the vallornspawn onwards.

Each stone that is still warded at the end of the battle will reduce the strength of the vallorn heading northwards by 6000. If all five pillars are warded, then the full force of the vallorn threatening Nesustak Forest this coming season will be held back, before it returns to quiescence. This will enable Imperial forces to concentrate fully on the vallorn presence that is advancing southwards into the Bloodwater Marsh.

## OBJECTIVE THREAT: DRUJ COUNTER RITUALS

- **Mages from the Tainted Basilisk threaten to counter any wardings**
- **They will seek to use a spring ritual to weaken any stone that has been restored**
- **The wards will need to be guarded, or the small covens need to be hunted down and killed**
- **Detect magic can be used at any time to ascertain the status of a warding stone**

Whilst the vast majority of the Tainted Basilisk's ritual covens have been utterly destroyed by unleashing the vallorn, scant few have survived and are now preparing to ensure that the army's final work is seen to the end. Everyone of the army's remaining ghulai and cicatrix ritualists have spread across the area, tasked with breaking the power of the Terunael magic, and allowing the vallorn to issue forth.

Once the Druj realise that the Empire is attempting to erect wards, they will direct any remaining ritualists to counter them. Druj ritualists will attempt to cast Spring rituals to overwhelm the wards on each stone, undoing the Empire's work. Detect magic can be cast on a stone at any time to check whether a ward is in place or not. If the ward is down then Warden of the Black Waste will need to be performed to restore it.

The surest way to prevent the Druj from countering Imperial efforts is to hunt down and eliminate these small ritual teams before they can become a threat.

### **OBJECTIVE: BREAK THE ENVENOMED CLAWS**

- **The Envenomed Claws vikari are the last remnants of the Tainted Basilisk army's leadership**
- **Killing or scattering this force will destroy any chance of the army holding together**
- **If the Claws are overrun, then the Tainted Basilisk will collapse, into scattered bands of Druj**

The vikari of the Envenomed Claws are leading the remnants of the army active to the north of the vallorn of Béantal Dol. Feared mage-fighters, they are known to employ all manner of blade poisons on their weapons, and travel with several of the sadistic kallad torturers among their number. Redwillow Paste and Oil of Blackthorn will be used with wild abandon, whilst even worse concoctions will be dispensed by the remaining tepel in a panicked frenzy.

The Envenomed Claws will be on the battlefield together, under a distinctive banner, along with key people that form an essential part of the leadership of the Tainted Basilisk. If the Empire can decisively engage the group and kill or scatter them, it will deal a devastating final blow to the Tainted Basilisk. Killing these prominent arkad fighters, the commanders, and any tepel with them, will seal the fate of the army. It will disband as the campaign season begins, breaking up into small units and warbands, all eager to go to ground. Individual bands under a charismatic or particularly cruel orc, will be a problem for Imperial heroes to deal with, but the military threat to Imperial armies will be ended.

### **BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: AID THE HARES**

- **Five Hares, heralds of Irra Harah are being hunted by the Druj**
- **These lively companions will be keen to offer assistance against the Druj, running messages and helping out those in dire need**
- **The Spring Archmage may claim a boon of Irra Harah if all five Hares survive the battle**

Shacklebreaker has sent his heralds to aid the rebels of Nesustak Forest. The Hares of the Desperate Folly are excitable, earnest, and incredibly persistent beings. They have been helping guide the lost and meek away from vicious blades and poisoned arrows. In response, the Druj have taken great delight in killing these servants of Irra Harah whenever they have been cornered.

There are five Hares on the battlefield that could aid the Empire. They will not engage in direct conflict with the wicked orcs, but they can help in other ways if asked. The fleeting may offer services running messages across the battlefield to distant captains, the fretful may offer healing magics to those in dire need, while the fearful may seek to enchant heroes of the Empire with magical powers.

If all five of the heralds survive the battle, then the Archmage of Spring can point out the service the Empire provided the next time they plenipotentiary the eternal. If the text of the plenipotentiary reminds Irra Harah that the Empire saved five of the Hares of the Desperate Folly, then the grateful eternal will create a boon to give the Archmage the next time they meet.

### **BATTLEFIELD ENVIRONMENT: MIASMA OF DESPAIR**

- **The entire battlefield is affected by an oppressive Druj miasma**
- **The miasma causes WEAKNESS unless you have a way to overcome it**

The entire area at Feverbank Trees, is under the effect of the Druj miasma, a pall of potent fear that blankets the lands the Druj claim dominion over. Anyone entering the area will need to protect themselves from the clawing dread or succumb to a weakening terror that creeps into their mind.

The primary effect of the miasma is that it weakens anyone exposed to it who does not have the ability to overcome it. The easiest method to overcome the miasma is to receive an anointing, but particularly heroic individuals, or those in possession of certain enchantments or magic items may also be able to counteract the effect. In particular, those of the changeling lineage are able to fight the effects of the miasma, by only by becoming extremely angry - which can cause problems all its own.