

HOW WILL THEY RISE UP?

The Strong Reeds are in a perilous situation. Through the actions of the Lion of the North, the Queen of Kalsea's personal army, and with assistance from skilled trackers, elite Ulfur kirkja, and fadir-guided shaman, the army of Bregasland is increasingly vulnerable to the Jotun. The orcs know that they are not a single fighting force, but a dedicated force of partisans and guerrilla fighters spread though the territory that will be able to sow havoc among the barbarian warbands. The current methods employed by the Strong Reeds are diametrically opposed to how the Jotun practice warcraft and view combat as a clash of champions. It cuts at the very heart of the western barbarian's culture, and their annoyance is easy to see.

Aware that a sizeable Imperial force is operating beneath their very noses, the Jotun have laid plans to locate and eliminate the Marchers hiding in their midst. The elite scouts of the Lions of the North have been going house to house, searching for any sign of the partisans. Every conceivable hiding place is being ransacked, every barn and store searched to deny the enemy any possible hiding place. Finally the search has paid off.

There is a muster at Leakey Moss in the Grey Fens during the equinox. A force of Jotun warriors, meeting with several notable jarls and packs of elite kirkja Ulfur hunters, all preparing to strike against the Strong Reeds soon. From the intelligence gathered by the Lions' scouts, the general has distributed three sets of orders sending forces to strike against disparate pockets of the Marcher army. While some will get away, death will surely follow and as many as six hundred soldiers will be die without further action.

The orders also put the barbarians across the territory on high alert for any potential strike, halving the benefits should the army rise from the reeds this season and go on the offensive.

The Sentinel Gate can be used to undertake an opportunity to strike against the Jotun forces mustering at Leaky Moss on either day of the equinox. Just taking the battle will help to keep the element of surprise, but if the Empire can be victorious they can wipe out the Jotun's gains this season.

OBJECTIVE: RECOVER THE SCOUTING ORDERS

- **Three Jotun leaders have orders directing them to suspected hideouts of the Strong Reeds**
- **With access to the orders Marcher soldiers can evade the Jotun this season**
- **Taking the battle means that the benefits of Rise from the Reeds are cut by 30% not 50%**
- **Each set of orders recovered will ensure 150 soldiers escape the Jotun**
- **Each set of orders that are captured will cut the penalty by a further 10%, down to zero if all three are regained**

Key to the Jotun's counter actions against the Strong Reeds are the three sets of orders issued by Idun Yrsasdóttir - daughter of the Queen of Kalsea. These are not army orders for the coming season, they are tactical directives to tackle specific targets in the coming weeks. They will guide the Jotun to key hideouts of the Reeds. Capturing the orders is essential to safeguard vital hideouts and allow the forces to remain hidden and preserve the element of surprise if they rise from the reeds in the coming season.

As things stand currently the army stands to lose 500 soldiers and see the benefits of taking rise from the reeds halved. Simply taking the battle will preserve some of that advantage - the penalty will be reduced to 30%. Each set of orders captured and passed to the Herald of the Military Council will reduce the penalty by a further 10% and will also save the lives of a hundred and fifty soldiers this season as it enables them to evade the advancing Jotun and slip away to new hiding places.

If all three orders can be recovered, then the Jotun will be hamstrung in their efforts to keep watch for the Strong Reeds, enabling the army to spring from their hideaways and rise from the reeds to full effect this season.

The leaders carrying the orders are:

- **Ghodi Melker - a shaman of Raðljóst well practiced in the casting of the runes of prescience**
- **Seeker Alma - a skilled tracker from Reinos who leads a band of fleet-footed raiders**
- **Eisa Winterborn - a prominent yegarra warband leader and her personal oathsworn retinue**

ALTERNATIVE OBJECTIVE: STAND AT THE STONES

- **The Jotun are moving to cut off routes out of Bregasland**
- **Imperial forces would need to defend the stones for 75 minutes until the Jotun withdraw**
- **Holding at the stones will prevent any casualties to the Strong Reeds if they quit Bregasland**

According to legends, there have been three standing stones at Leakey Moss since the first yeofolk marched here from Dawn. One local fable claims that the stones will rise up to defend the area from invasion, while another story says the stones will sink into the mire should Bregasland ever truly fall. Neither outcome has happened yet, but the three stones are still an important landmark in the centre of the otherwise unremarkable Grey Fens.

With the massing of Jotun forces in the area, the field surrounding the stones offers a chance to bring the Jotun to battle and stand fast against all that they can throw against the Empire. A prolonged conflict during the equinox, lasting a full 75 minutes, would draw in sufficient barbarian warriors and force jarls to commit their warbands to overcoming those who stand against them. This would disrupt existing plans for rooting out the Strong Reeds and interdicting the army's escape from the territory. By bringing the Jotun to battle in a protracted engagement, the Empire could force the barbarian's hands and disrupt their plans in the region. A lengthy battle here would create a distraction and give the 'Reeds the cover they need to slip away past Jotun patrols and blockades. If successful, this would allow the army to slip out of Bregasland without notable losses of life.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: DEFEAT EISA WINTERBORN

- **Eisa's Shields have come to root out the Strong Reeds in the area**
- **There is a chance to confront Eisa and kill her oathsworn warriors in battle**
- **If killed, Eisa's warband will withdraw for four seasons**

Eisa Winterborn has engaged the Empire at pivotal moments over the last four years: during the campaign in Sermersuaq, during the Fisher uprising, and in raids against the League and Freeborn alongside Stephen of Sarcombe. She has now brought her great warband of northern yegarra to Bregasland at the request of the Jotun queen. Whereas the other jarls and heroes among the western barbarians are adept hunters, trackers, and scouts, Eisa leads solid and stoic warriors, capable of grinding advances that will crush any resistance offered by the scattered soldiers of the Strong Reeds. The engagement at Leakey Moss offers an opportunity to defeat Eisa Winterborn and end her story as a human champion of Kalsea. If killed, her death will be a significant event that would see the warband formerly under her command withdraw from active campaigning for four seasons. The yegarra that fought under her walrus banner would return to their homeland and await a new champion to step forward and lead them once more.

BATTLEFIELD THREAT: ULFUR PACKS

- **Several bands of Ulfur warriors stalk the area**
- **They are hunting the Strong Reeds but will execute any Imperials they defeat**

The followers of Ulfur - the faðir known as the patient hunter - are the least encountered group of kirkja warriors on the Empire's battlefields. They are commonly deployed as scouts and hunters. They are gathering here to hunt the Strong Reeds and have orders to kill any Imperial soldiers they defeat. Most Jotun won't execute a downed foe; they fight for the thrill of battle, not butchery, but the Ulfur have no such scruples.