

ROCKS FALL

Imperial actions in recent months have consolidated gains in southern Mareave, driving the orcs of Attar out of Clisearn and into Fleisardh. The combined effort of armies from Highguard, the League and the Imperial Orcs have been instrumental in stemming the landside advance of Grendel soliders, and forcing the barbarians onto the back foot. Recent victories have had a deep impact on the Brine Turtle army, with the orcs among their ranks becoming increasingly desperate when fighting to save the very lands from which their sept hails.

Fleisardh holds an important place in the sept's culture - they claim to trace their history back to before the rise of the Grendel. That could be true, certainly the sept are tied to the coastal lands and sandy coves from whence they draw their name and many traditions, centred around the custodianship of the leathery sea beasts that nest along the littoral reaches. These links to the region have offered the military council a previous opportunity to strike against the Brine Turtles.

Where Fleisardh meets the Bay of Catazar, there are high cliffs, that make coming ashore impossible except in the smallest of ships. Two huge statues are perched precariously on the sea front, they depict two humans facing the sea. The crumbling rock beneath their feet threatens to do more than just topple the statues, the entire cliff face is in danger of giving way. The doom of these two ancient defenders is assured - one day the cliffs will come down and they will topple into the sea. Ever the masters of opportunity, a coven of Grendel salt mages have enacted a plan to make that end happen in weeks, instead of years. The Empire will need to move decisively to stop them, otherwise Fleisardh will be exposed to assaults from the sea.

A conjunction to Capstone Veld has been detected on either day of the solstice, just inland from the Blood Red Colossi. Here the coven appears to have drawn on the magical power of a boon they have been gifted. The coven have since departed, but their handiwork remains, accelerating the crumbling of the cliffs.

OBJECTIVE: SHORE UP THE COAST

- **Destroy the boon of the Sunken Rope**
- **Sever the power of the Hawser of the Drowned from the Winter realm**
- **Once severed it can either be unbound or destroyed with ritual magic**
- **If the Hawser's power is not stopped, then Fleisardh will become a coastal region**

The Haulers of the Tide, a winter coven from Attar, came to Fleisardh to bolster the forces currently opposing the Empire. Little is known of the orcs themselves, but a mage of Beoriadh remarked that "They are servants, not of the Salt Lords, but of the Lord of Salt...". They carried with them a great twisted and knotted rope, akin to an anchor rope tangled by a writhing storm. The hawser pulses with the fell magic of the Winter realm - a powerful boon from the Sunken Rope of the Winter realm.

The Haulers dragged Sunken Rope's boon to the seaward edge of the territory, less than a mile from the cliff tops. There they have driven wooden stakes deep into the ground, bound the hawser to them and then activated its magic. If left alone, the boon will draw on the power of Winter to hasten the end of the cliffs, causing them to collapse into the waiting sea below. At least one of the Blood Red Colossi will also fall, and much worse, Fleisardh will become exposed to seaborne attacks as the coast becomes easier to disembark troops onto.

Stopping the magic will not be easy. Imperial magicians will need to bring stakes of their own to perform There Is No Welcome Here and ward the hawser off from the winter power that sustains it. Only once this is complete will they be able to untangle it from the wooden stakes. That will be enough to stop the magic in it's tracks provided it is completed before midday. The only alternative to unravelling the great coiling mass, is to directly destroy the Hawser with ritual magic, using a casting of Words of Ending at a magnitude of 36.

OBJECTIVE: DESTROY THE WELTSILVER SEALS

- **Magical seals protect Fleisardh from blood-red waters that rise from the depths**
- **There is a chance to break one of the seals and drive the Brine Turtle sept from Mareave**
- **Opening the seal will allow the exploitation of the Crimson Springs**

The Brine Turtles have long considered Fleisardh their ancestral home. Life here is precarious - much of Mareave is dry and arid and the Brine Turtle settlement of Fioroult is reliant on the nearby lake. The lake is potable, but only due to the presence of powerful magic that prevents the poisons in the ground seeping into the water. Elsewhere in the region, the water is tainted with a crimson hue that makes the water thick like blood and dangerous to drink.

The magic that protects the lake is vulnerable. One of the crucial weltsilver seals that keeps the water fresh is at Capstone Veld, not far from where the Grendel have set their boon. Ritual magic could be used to destroy the seal, either Words of Ending cast at magnitude 32, or Inevitable Collapse into Ruin, either would have enough power to shatter the metal seal.

If that happened, the poison in the ground would quickly leech into the waters of the lake, rendering it as foul and besmirched as the river. The loss of the lake waters would be devastating for the Brine Turtles, who could not continue their lives here without it. They would be forced to withdraw south over the border, removing a major threat to the Empire from Mareave. It seems brutal to use magic in such a way, but the Brine Turtles have remained adamantly hostile to Imperial interests since the territory was conquered. The undeniable truth is that the longer they remain in Fleisardh, the more likely it becomes that the current conflict turns deadly. Denying them their ancestral lands will be a bitter blow to the sept, but it may be better than denying them their lives.

The opportunity could also open up new economic prospects for the Empire in Mareave. If the seals in place over the Crimson Springs are sundered, then following the successful capture of the region of Fleisardh, the civil service could investigate the caverns and ascertain the extent of the mineral wealth that could be extracted there.

OBJECTIVE: EXTRACT PINERUNNER PATTAR

- **An Imperial Orc reaver has infiltrated the Grendel to find the location of a supply cache**
- **Recovering Pattar from the battlefield will lead to an opportunity to raid the cache**

A bold Imperial Orc reaver, Pinerunner Pattar, has managed to infiltrate the Grendel forces, posing as a Brine Turtle. Their charade won't last forever, but they've been able to keep it up long enough to discover useful strategic information. He has identified the location of a supply cache prepared by the Grendel should their lines be cut and is keen to get back with the information before the risk becomes too great.

The battle in Capstone Veld is the best chance for the military council to extract the reaver, ensure the orc's safety, and determine where the cache is hidden. Pinerunner Pattar is masquerading as a regular Grendel soldier, albeit one who is not fighting very effectively. Once it's safe to do so, Pattar will try to identify themselves to nearby Imperial heroes. The most danger will come when they make themselves known - the Grendel will not take lightly to those trying to flee the service of the Salt Lords. Once recovered, the reaver can be returned to Anvil via the Sentinel Gate and will be debriefed by the war scouts and prognosticators. In Patter can be recovered there will be a chance to raid the Grendel's supply cache next summit, gaining valuable materiel, and denying them to the enemy.

BATTLEFIELD OPPORTUNITY: KILL QUESTIONNER KESTER

- **The Adahr has asked the Empire to "send a message" to General Ansleah**
- **They are prepared to pay seven thrones to the Imperial citizen who kills Kester**
- **Kester has a valuable piece of jewellery that will need to be provided as proof**

Clisearn is home to a number of wealthy Grendel families who have remained behind after the Empire conquered the territory. The Adahr, Marr, and Tholdie were hostile to the Imperial Orcs at first, but there have been ongoing efforts to win them over. It seems these efforts have born fruit, at least of a kind. The three families appear to responded badly to the attempt by General Ansleah to "liberate" their lands for the Salt Lords.

A member of the Adahr has discovered that one of Ansleah's people, a questionner named Kester, will be at Capstone Veld. Kester's role is to keep an eye out for troublemakers and similar problems and then report back to the general. Crucially he's someone Ansleah relies on, the general won't be happy if the questioner turns up dead.

The families of Clisearn want to send a message to General Ansleah that a failure to respect their position will come with a price that he does not want to pay. They are offering seven thrones, via trade with Ephesus, to any Imperial citizen who ensures that Kester meets an untimely end on the battlefield. The questioner wears a peculiar bracelet that should help identify him. If the bracelet is sent via a ritual box to Ephesus by the end of the summit, the sender will receive seven thrones from the Lady of the Counting House. While the offer may seem a little unsavoury, the magistrates note there is nothing illegal about this transaction.