

SALT AND STONE

As the campaign raged on in Clisearn, various factions have been looking for ways to profit. One such group is led by Maistir Brothaigh, a well-connected military commander who has made as much of his fortune from looting priceless relics, than he has from military campaigning. Brothaigh has followed up a string of rumours and clues that he has been able to corroborate as Grendel forces have progressed through Clisearn. They have led the commander and his force to the Ruins of Sinat - once a historic Skouran trading station. He is here hoping to secure a valuable magical scroll.

Unfortunately for the Maistir, he has been betrayed. Overseer Hook of the Surveyors' Cartel in the City of Locks has made a profitable introduction between civil servants supporting the Imperial Spymaster and Colm Firewater, a disgruntled rival of the Brothaigh and a Grendel defector. Colm was ruined five years ago by the Maistir when a deal fell through and has been searching for a way to get his revenge ever since. Overseer Hook has helped him spill his guts to the Empire in exchange for a heavy purse and passage on a ship to Sarcophan. Colm's treachery to Brothaigh has revealed the Grendel's plans to the Empire and offered a chance to thwart their actions.

The Maistir is planning to retrieve the the Saltbound Stone, which according to legend is a partially complete ritual text provided by an eternal of the Autumn realm. Once completed it would enable a ritual coven to summon a citadel and a flotilla to defend the coast. Imperial magicians have tried for years to convince an eternal to provide an assurance for something like this, and never found one that would agree. The Grendel Maistir is gambling everything he has on the legend being true, if he is right then the stone is almost certainly priceless.

Imperial prognosticators have detected a conjunction to the Ruins of Sinat in Clisearn, Mareave. The Sentinel Gate will enable travel to the location on the Sunday of the Summer Solstice.

OBJECTIVE: SECURE THE SALTBOUND STONE

- **Grendel troops have located the resting place of a part-complete Skouran ritual, the Saltbound Stone**
- **The Empire will need to recover the Brazen Clavis to unlock the Autumn chamber**
- **Fifty heroes can then enter the chamber to recover the Saltbound Stone**
- **A puzzle and the repository's guardians will need to be overcome to release it**
- **Once unbound the Stone can be returned to Anvil**

Soldiers from the Broken Shore have advanced to the Ruins of Sinat under the command of Maistir Brothaigh and have set up a temporary camp to await the arrival of a Sand Mage ritual coven. Brothaigh has secured a magical key - The Brazen Clavis - that is needed to unseal the Autumn regio and enable passage through to the Vaults of the Chainbound. There he hopes to recover the Saltbound Stone, a partially complete ritual text for an ancient Skouran ritual. If completed the ritual would allow a coven to conjure sea-wards in a coastal region.

If Imperial heroes can secure the Brazen Clavis, they can "unlock" the portal to the regio. Once unlocked, mages will be able to open a portal and then transverse the regio to the chamber beyond. A total of 50 people will be able to enter and explore the mysterious chamber. Passage through this type of portal is only possible for a mage, or someone with a Pauper's Key or with the help of the ritual Ambassadorial Gatekeeper.

Inside they should expect the regio to be defended by Autumn constructs and the binding chains of the Brass Magistrates. The Saltbound stone, the ritual text, is a heavy stone secured in a wooden chest that is held in place by an arcane device of some kind. It cannot be moved until the construction that secures it has been released. The device will need to be deactivated, whilst fending off the guardians who secure the Vault, before the chest and the Saltbound Stone can be recovered.

OPPORTUNITY: PAY OFF THE ILIUM JACKALS

- **Representatives of a Sarcophan mercenary outfit are working for the Grendel**
- **The Empire could hire them to fight for the Wolves of War or the Boyar's Hasta**
- **Doing so would allow the army to use the plunder order freely for the next year**

Led by Maarten Nydeggen Vam Braam, the Ilium Jackals are a far-travelled group that originate from the great city of Sarcophan. Operating ostensibly as a mercenary company, the outfit are more focused on exploration, seeking lost wealth, but like many sell swords they are experienced at plunder and pillaging. Arriving in Mareave as a 'third party' to the conflict in the territory, they were hired by the Maistir to help him locate the Brazen Clavis that the Grendel require to open the Vaults; an act for which they have been richly rewarded.

With the Maistir close to recovering the scroll, the Jackals are aware that they will soon be out of contract. According to Overseer Hook, they would be open to swapping sides if paid handsomely. If the Jackals can be contacted during the battle by citizens of the League, acting at the behest of the Wolves of War general, or citizens of Varushka acting on behalf of the general of the Boyar's Hasta then they are likely to be amenable to negotiation. The company would offer their services to act as looters and raiders - allowing the Imperial army they sign up with to freely take the foraging action for the next year. According to Hook, they will ask for 40 thrones for a year's contract, but could be had for half that figure if the Empire has time to haggle. They won't expect to be paid immediately - they won't want coin delivered on an active battlefield - but the general would be wise to ensure payment is provided before the end of the Autumn Equinox. It's not wise to welch on your debts with a mercenary group of thieves and raiders who have contact with the City of Locks.

OPPORTUNITY: SEND REGARDS TO IONTACH LEAGSAIDH

- **Several members of the Uthni sept are willing to pay handsomely for anyone who sends a message to their old enemy**
- **Leagsaidh Saim-garoth, an iontach mage healer, is the target of the Uthni's ire**
- **A reward ten thrones will be forthcoming for the individual who can return the healers named healing wand**

Political and social intrigue runs deep within Grendel society, just like it does in the League. This is true as well of the septs in Mareave, even as they cast off the strings of Dubtraigh's influence. Bitter rivalries and internecine feuds are found in all strata of life, from the rich sept merchants to the lowest drudges who break rocks, dig the dry fields, or haul cargoes between trading outposts. Scores are to be settled, debts are called in, everyone expects payment one way or another...

Leagsaidh Saim-garoth is understood to be an iontach, a Grendel mage healer, of some standing among the moriduns currently engaged in the Clisearn campaign. Reports indicate that she is supported by a number of orc and human orderlies, tending to injured soldiers both during and following engagements with Imperial forces. The Uthni have been in contact with Leagsaidh via Call Winged Messenger as part of a long-running feud between the two parties. The orcs are owed considerable resources from business dealings and a supply of forged healing draughts that the mage delivered years ago. They have been attempting for some time to cajole her into making good on her old promises and offer recompense for the bad deal. Now they plan to send a different message.

Ten thrones are promised to whoever can ruin both Leagsaidh's legs, curse her, or mete out some other suitable punishment to her, sending a very obvious message that the Uthni are serious about getting what is theirs. However the healer must survive, no payment will be made if Saim-garoth is slain in battle. The orcs are able to contact her via autumn ritual and will eventually learn that she has died, along with their chances of recovering their losses. Leagsaidh owns a powerful Grimnir's Hearthfire with their name inscribed on it. To claim the bounty, a citizen need merely place Leagsaidh's wand in an Ephesis box and payment will be forthcoming in time for the Autumn Equinox as soon as the Uthni have confirmed that the healer has survived.

OPPORTUNITY: RELEASE THE SPITERI BEQUEST

- **Maistir Guaidre carries a small necklace looted during the raid on Sarvos**
- **Returning the jewellery will fulfill the conditions of Spiteri Bequest**
- **Whoever gives the necklaces to the League egregore can claim a level three fleet**

Prince Mathilda Spiteri di Sarvos - socialite, supporter of the city's orphanages, and patron of the theatre - made her wealth in trade deals, artworks, and through a suspected spy ring around the territories of the Bay. She died not long after the death of Empress Britta and was interred in the family mausoleum. However, her wider estate has been prevented from dispersal after her death due to a long series of clauses and preconditions that had to be met. Unfortunately, the one final item required by the executor to release her wealth and life's collection was lost when the Grendel sacked the city seven years ago. Now, through a series of random events, or the influence of the constellations, the location of the delicate necklace so sought after by Maddalena's relatives has been determined.

Surprisingly, the necklace is in the possession of Maistir Gaudre, a captain of a Wave Rider unit active in Mareave. If the jewellery can be recovered and returned to the League egregore, then the Spiteri Bequest can finally be disseminated to the dead Prince's family, friends, and cityfolk. Whoever returns the precious piece of jewellery in this way will receive the right to claim the Spinning Gybe, a sleek trading schooner that is equivalent to a level three fleet. They will need to abandon or sell their own resource to take it as usual.

THE SKOURAN CONSOLIDATION

- **The Saltstone is the property of the Skourans according to the treaty**
- **Refusing to return it create a diplomatic incident**
- **The Skourans have almost no use for the Saltstone**

If the Empire can recover the Saltstone there is still the matter of who it belongs to. The Empire have signed a treaty with the Skouran Consolidation, in which they pledge to "return, at reasonable costs, any cultural and historical artefacts of the Skouran people that are uncovered as they developed the territory". Technically that means the Saltstone will need to be returned to the Skourans.

Of course that is surely better than allowing such a powerful item from falling into the hands of the Grendel? What's more, the treaty says "at reasonable costs", which certainly implies there is room to negotiate these things. Ancient Skoura once included the coast of what is modern Mareave, but what remains of their nation has been completely land-locked for centuries.

That Saltstone is almost useless to people with no coast. They are no fools, they will understand how valuable it is, but surely the Skourans would be willing to negotiate?