



WARHAMMER
AGE OF SIGMAR
CAMPAIGN

SEASON OF WAR

ORDER RESURGENT

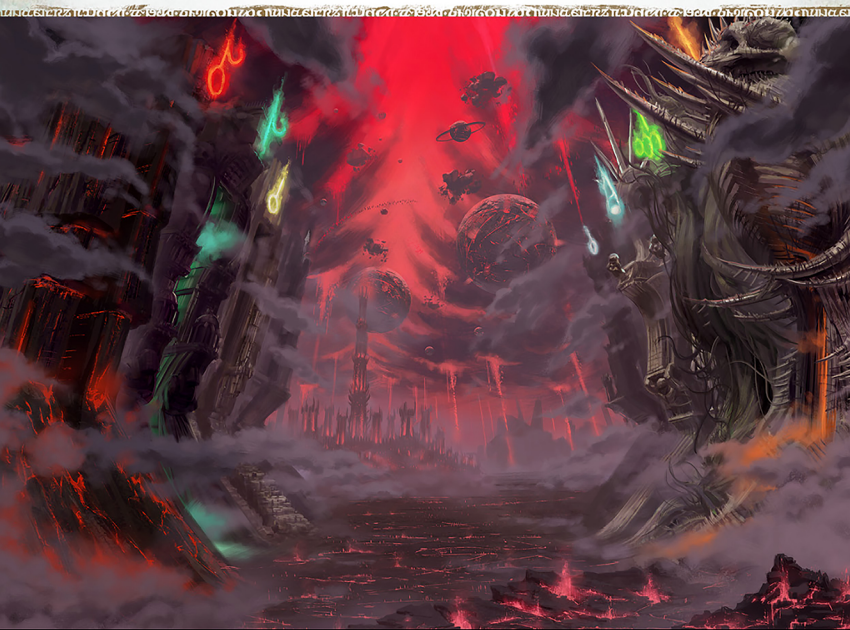
The Realmgate Wars began with a furious tempest, and ended in fire and blood.

The alliances of Order, Destruction and Death won many great battles, but they were still outnumbered and divided. Archagon and the Dark Gods continued to funnel endless hordes of warriors, monsters and daemons through the All-gates and into the Mortal Realms, using the reality-spanning Eightpoints to maintain supremacy on almost every front.

It was Sigmar who recognised that any attempt to reclaim the realms while this continued was doomed to fail. Instead, he concocted a brave but desperate plan to strike

against every All-gate at once. The battles that ensued were vast and terrible, drawing in even the titanic Godbeasts of the Mortal Realms and pitting the greatest heroes of the age against one another in clashes that shook the firmament. Though the alliance of Order was hurled back at several of the All-gates, they knew victory also. Led by the reborn goddess Alarielle, a great host of sylvaneth and Stormcast Eternals were able to seal the Genesis Gate in Ghyran, the Realm of Life. In so doing, they compounded Nurgle's defeats in that mystical realm. The tides of war had turned.

So began a new period of change and consolidation. Across the Mortal Realms, the forces of Order moved with renewed purpose. Stormcast Eternals raised towering Stormkeeps to watch over key Realmgates. Processions of Devoted moved out into the Desolation of Chaos, cleansing the land through the shedding of their blessed blood. Engineers of the Ironweld Arsenal and wizards of the Collegiate Arcane directed great labours of construction. Slowly but surely, the first new cities of Order began to rise in the Mortal Realms.



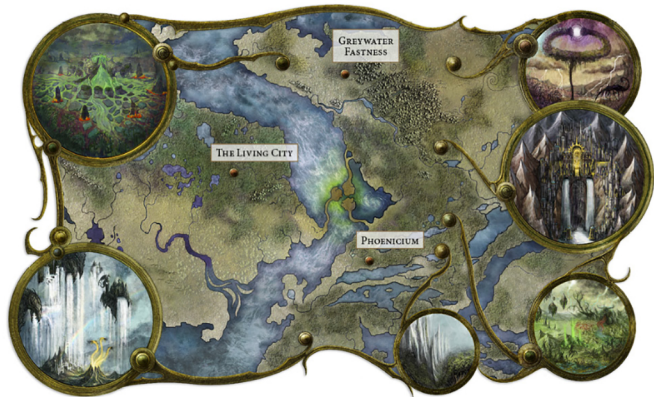
THE TWIN-TAILED CITY

Amongst the cities built by the forces of Order following the Realmgate Wars, none was greater than Hammerhal, the Twin-tailed City. The Cities of Sigmar – as they came to be known – were mostly built around fortified Realmgates, claimed initially by chambers of Stormcast Eternals. It was not uncommon for the cities to be named to honour those immortal heroes. Thus was Hammerhal named for those Hammers of Sigmar who claimed the Stormrift Realmgate in a spectacular, bloody war. Sigmar's warriors crushed the vast orruk tribes that had long made savage migrations through the Realmgate. The greenskins were purged in both Aqshy and Ghyran for leagues around that mystic portal. Amongst the ashes of the greenskins' tribal territories the Stormcasts raised the first foundations of what gradually grew into a singularly spectacular city.

Hammerhal is named the Twin-tailed City because, to all intents and purposes, it is in fact two settlements ruled as one. The city sprawls out around its Realmgate in both the Ashlands of the Realm of Fire and the Jade Kingdom of Verdia in the Realm of Life. Hammerhal Aqsha is a harsh and heavily fortified place, its myriad banners and pennants dancing on hot, angry winds. The Ironweld Arsenal maintain a strong presence amongst Hammerhal Aqsha's towering bastions and batteries. Their genius maintains the city's crackling lightning shield and keeps its mobile forts lumbering ever outward to extend Hammerhal's boundaries, even as the self-flagellating processions of the Devoted cleanse the hard lands around the city. Hammerhal Ghyra, conversely, is a stronghold of aelf-kind, and of many other Free Peoples. To hold back the aggressively exuberant growth of the Realm of

Life, this side of the city channels lava through from Hammerhal Aqsha. The molten rock flows out through carefully cut trenches and forms a wall of fire that protects the city's celestial spires and golden domes. In return, a steady supply of foodstuffs flows back through the Realmgate from Hammerhal Ghyra, the life-city's endless abundance keeping its Aqshyan districts fed.

Governed by a Grand Conclave of lords chosen from amongst the best and brightest of Azyrheim, defended by countless armies including no less than twelve chambers of Stormcast Eternals, Hammerhal is the spiritual capital of the Cities of Sigmar and the greatest of their number.





THE SEEDS OF HOPE

From prophecy-rich Excelsis in the Realm of Beasts, to volcanic Vindicarum in the Realm of Metal, the cities of Order are many and varied. Most have taken decades to build, growing slowly from fortified encampments to huge and bustling hubs of civilisation. There were three cities that sprung up far more swiftly, however, known as the Seeds of Hope.

In the Realm of Life, with the Season of War burgeoning, the forces of Order sought to follow their victory at the Genesis Gate with swift and purposeful construction. Much of the realm still festered beneath Grandfather Nurgle's rancid touch, but with the Queen of the Radiant Wood driving the pestilent hordes back every day, the forces of Order were filled with confidence.

It was Alarielle herself who raised the first of the Seeds of Hope. In the Jade Kingdom of Thyria, the Everqueen defeated the swarms of Clan Morbidus and drove them from the Hollow Forest. Once a trackless ocean of vibrant flora, this immense woodland had come by its bleak name after the Clans Pestilens gnawed away its roots and left it to desiccate and die. The Everqueen restored it to life, her purifying energies flowing through the rattling husks of ghost-elm and sighing willows. Amidst the reborn woodlands, Alarielle raised a mighty city through the power of natural magic. Her song soared, high and lilting, as it brought forth great bulwarks of entwined ironoak and bedrock. Towers and fortifications she fashioned from thorn-studded

vines and seams of song-forged metal. For fourteen days and nights, the ground shuddered and the forests swayed as Alarielle went about her work. Eventually, a new city of prodigious size stood atop the plateau, a mighty fastness to watch over the Hollow Forest. Alarielle knew that her children were too fey and mercurial to be confined as the garrison for such a place. Instead she offered it to her mortal allies, a place of safety to call their own in exchange for watching over the Everqueen's wondrous forest. Though some feared this city of plant and stone, many accepted Alarielle's offer and became the wardens of the Living City.



A NEW POWER

The second of the Seeds of Hope could not have been more different from the first. Led by the visionary architect Valius Maliti, a collective of artisans and labourers poured through the Festermere Realmgate into Greywater Reach, ready to build a fastness against the powers of Chaos. Guarded by the Anvils of the Heldenhammer, the spellcraft of the Eldritch Council and many regiments of Freeguild soldiery, the work began in earnest.

Throughout the Mortal Realms existed concentrations of raw magic, coalesced into disparate substances known collectively as realmstone. Whether the blue-hot prisms of crystallized anger found

in Aqshy, the geometric deposits of enlightenment in Hysh, or the shimmering jade tendrils of vitality found in Ghyran, realmstone had always been seen as volatile and dangerous. It was Valius Maliti who first made the intuitive leap of suggesting that this hazardous manifestation could be used as a source of power. Between the architect's genius, the boundless wisdom of the aelven enchanter, and the pragmatic skill of the Ironweld engineers, history was made in Greywater Reach as a deposit of Ghyran realmstone was harnessed with arcane machinery.

Suddenly, the forces of Order had all the power they needed and

more. The bog-grot tribes that had harassed their stockades were driven back by crackling war machines. The swamp waters were drained away in a matter of days, and the land baked to hardened clay. Walls rose. Towers spiralled upward. Trees were felled by the hundred, and the region's resources were plundered to fuel the lightning-fast growth of the Greywater Fastness. The children of Alarielle looked on in horror at this rapacious industry, some even coming to blows with their erstwhile allies in their sorrow and anger. Yet still the Fastness rose, a towering stronghold of ironclad walls, roaring furnaces, sorcerous wards and lowering cannon batteries that dominated the region all around.



RUIN RECLAIMED

The third of the Seeds of Hope was the Phoenixium. Before it became a symbol of rebirth, the Phoenixium was a vast and sprawling ruin that dated back to the Age of Myth. Ancient and enigmatic, it sat at the foot of the tree-like Arborean Mountain, its structures haunted by strange entities and inhabited by bands of brigands and wanderers. During the early stages of the Chaos invasion, a fierce battle was fought amidst the nameless ruins and a terrible catastrophe engulfed everyone involved. Whether by some mighty spell or weapon, the wooden slopes of the Arborean Mountain were torn open, and an oozing tidal wave of sap was released. The sap-tide rolled inexorably down upon the ruins, immersing them entirely before setting as a glacier of

amber. So was the nameless citadel preserved, like some ancient insect, for hundreds of years. Perhaps it could have stayed that way forever, untouched by both the corrupting power of Nurgle and the healing magics of Alariele, but such was not to be the ruined city's fate.

It was the Anointed of the Phoenix Temple who found the preserved ruins, after their defeat of a Rotbringer host at the Dreamless Realmgate. Battered but victorious, the aelves marvelled in silence at the incredible spectacle before them. It was then that their Flamespyre and Frostheart Phoenixes took to the air, crying out to one another as they began a mystic aerial dance. Back and forth the magical creatures flew, sorcerous fires and whirling cold trailing across the

encased ruins. Slowly, impossibly, the amber began to melt away, becoming a beautiful golden mist that rolled out to surround the ruins. Though it took many hours, and the Phoenixes were utterly exhausted by the time they were done, the nameless ruins were fully revealed, empty and ready to be reclaimed.

Aided by the children of Alariele, Sigmar's Stormcast Eternals and many of the Azyrite peoples, the Phoenix Temple resettled the nameless city and raised it up from the twilight limbo in which it had languished for so long. So did it become the Phoenixium, a city where the inner ruins and deep tunnels still harbour many strange secrets, and whose borders are veiled in a magical golden mist.



THE SEASON OF WAR

The Seeds of Hope had been planted, and though each was different to its counterparts, all three cities were enclaves of civilisation amidst the war-torn bedlam of the Realm of Life. They swiftly became symbols, in Azyrheim and beyond, of what the forces of Order could achieve in spite of the Dark Gods' malice. In founding the Seeds of Hope, however, Sigmar and Alarielle had overreached themselves. Where most of the new cities of Order were built steadily, carefully, under the watchful eye of countless Stormcast Eternals, this trio of enclaves had risen with breathtaking speed. Each was isolated, so far away from the others that the cities might as well have been in different realms. Though they could be reached by forces moving through Realmgates from Azyr, the terrain around the cities was still corrupted by the touch of Chaos and swarming with myriad foes. Those dwelling within the Seeds of Hope found themselves fighting daily to repel attacks not only from the servants of Chaos, but from other powers also.

Nagash had taken an interest in the War of Life, and had been secretly

feeding deathless armies into the ongoing conflict. His servants had struck at both sides, their motivations mysterious and their methods merciless. Now, as these first cities of Order were springing up in Ghyran, those deathless armies turned upon them. None could say whether the dead were simply continuing to follow the original commands of Nagash – automata that had exceeded their remit – or whether the Great Necromancer ordered the attacks himself. To those on the battlements, the distinction mattered little, as battle was joined either way.

At the same time, vast hordes of orruks, grots, ogors, gargants and troggoths closed in upon the fragile bastions of Order. Though the War of Life had taken its toll upon the tribes of the Jade Kingdoms, untold numbers of greenskins and their ilk still scratched a living amid the horror and the filth. Surrounded by constant war and strife, many had even prospered, while more tribes were drawn in daily from other Mortal Realms as word spread of the bounty to be had in Ghyran. Though no official order was given, and no commanding figure could be named, the hordes of Destruction were drawn to the Seeds of Hope like silkwings to a firebloom, hurling themselves gleefully into battle with any who got in their way. Rumour had it that even the mighty Gordrak had crossed from the Realm of Beasts into the Realm of Life, just to tear down these new-found places of Order.

The foremost threat, of course, came from the worshippers of the Dark Gods. Nurgle was outraged that such places of purity and purpose should mar the bountiful entropy he had spread across Ghyran. His festering children were quick to regather their strength, marching to war once again beneath their rotting banners and rust-peeling bells. The worshippers of Khorne and Slaanesh gathered too, while from on high came sky-riding hosts of Tzeentchian daemons, and sorcerers seeking to destroy these new cities and plunder their secrets for themselves.

As the Season of War raged and the armies of Order marched out to defend their newly established enclaves, the gods looked on with hope and with hate. The coming days would determine whether the Seeds of Hope would flourish into something greater, or be left as blackened husks, sad memorials to the glory that might have been.





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