The Cindere Herald

OCTOBER '26

Mire Fields Forces Buckle

Three weeks past, the Meteor in the Mire Fields loosed a sudden flood of Void-marked creatures upon the defenders of Cindere. Since that night the battles after dark have raged three times as fierce as any before them, and the lines that held through the summer now bend beneath the weight.

Soldiers returning from the front describe nights without end. Where the star-sickened creatures once came in waves, they now come without pause, pouring out of the fog from the direction of the Meteor until first light. Those who spoke of sleeping in their armor last month say they no longer sleep at all.

The day brings no relief. The goblins of the Kuro Clan attack from sunrise to sunset without rest, and they have turned to a new and terrible weapon. With crude catapults hauled to the edge of the bogs, the Clan now hurls small chunks of the meteorite itself into the elven and orcish battle camps.

The stones do not need to strike a soldier to do their harm. Those who fall near them are taken by star sickness. Some sicken and slowly recover. Others become completely lost in themselves, staring at nothing and answering to no name. Still others are driven raving mad and must be restrained by the very comrades they fought beside.

The camps must now guard their own wounded as closely as they guard the line. Healers speak of tents filled not with the cut and the broken, but with the star-sick. The death toll, by every account, is immensely high.

Cindere has answered with all it can spare. Reserves of dwarves, giants, and the undead have been teleported into the Mire to stand alongside the elves and orcs. Yet each fresh company is drawn into the fighting almost as soon as it arrives, and still the battle presses the forces of Cindere thin.

Nor are the defenders as well fed as they once were. Since three weeks past, the shipments of food that West Arden sends to the lines have slowed, and quartermasters along the front report thinner rations in the camps with each passing week.

As of this printing, the line holds. How long it can is a question no one at the front will answer.

— A Cindere Herald Correspondent

From the Desk of Mayor Alden Narbeth

Rumors abound regarding recent events in the city of Tordille, many of which are misleading if not outright false. Please, dear reader, allow me to set the record straight. First and foremost, there has been no attempt on my life. With the brave warriors of West Arden valiantly sacrificing abroad in defense of all of Cindere, and a foreign fleet docked near our own borders and shores, I believed there was a need for additional security at home. The mercenary soldiers arriving in Tordille a few Saturdays ago, and throughout West Arden over the days following, are in my employ for the good of our people, not a threat to my life or our sovereignty.

In light of that need for increased security, access to certain locations around West Arden will be restricted to those not verified as citizens of ours. Some will find a larger than previous guard regiment, while others will require a writ from my office directly in order to gain entry. Export of goods from West Arden will be restricted, to better prioritize the needs of the warriors and citizens of West Arden above all other interests. After all, if we cannot feed, clothe, and supply our own first and foremost, then what are our brave warriors fighting for? Those goods that will be made available to the greater folk of Cindere will be had at a temporary premium, to fund the mercenary security forces I have retained. Thank you all for your patience and understanding in this difficult time throughout the lands of Cindere. Sincerely,

Mayor Alden Narbeth

Scroll Prices May Rise as Rebuilding Begins

Word around the Veneration of Arrumel is that crafting and ritual scrolls may soon grow dearer, a tale traced to Gretchen, one of the Veneration's cashiers. No new prices have been an-

nounced, and the Master of Keys kept his lips sealed when asked.

With rebuilding underway after the meteor strikes in Illodria, the Ironcrest Mountains, and the Mire Fields, demand is sure to climb. Those with scrolls to buy would do well to place an order with their local merchant contact sooner rather than later.

Former Lion Goes Out With a Whimper, Not a Roar

At dawn of October the First, after a speedy trial and extended incarceration, Sir Jaeryle, former knight captain of the guard and the right hand of Cerro himself, was executed for treason against the nation of Lashmir. This once great and noble warrior, exemplar of elven honor and martial skill, was found to have orchestrated the escape of a convict and inmate from prison within the fair nation of the elves. For how long this traitorous rot lurked beneath the shining surface of this former leader of so many successful campaigns, as well as the scope of the conspiracy to execute the prison break, is unknown thanks to the old warrior's stubborn refusal to answer for his crimes both during and after his trial. When asked for a statement regarding the execution, Lord D'mitar, Minister of Law and Punishment in Lashmir, had only this to say: "It is time to move on from this dark moment for our people. While it may seem like a long ordeal now, in the history of our great nation, it will be a mere single stitch in the grand tapestry of Lashmir." Indeed, to the mind of this author, this scoundrel will be forgotten the moment my pen completes this humble article.

Weeping Harvest Brings Solace in Desperate Times

The Weeping Harvest has begun. As the fields empty and autumn settles over Cindere, candles appear in windows, bonfires are raised, and families gather to remember their dead. Some names spoken this season have been remembered for generations. Others are being spoken for the first time.

The customs differ from land to land. Some light candles, some gather at great fires, and some raise a glass and tell old stories. Others simply leave an empty place at the table. The traditions differ. The purpose does not.

In Port Birka, where a fallen star struck Chillhound Peak and Void-marked creatures came against the city, families gather in the great hall at long wooden tables. Drinking horns are filled and set before empty chairs, and stories told a hundred times are told once more. The city survived. Not everyone did.

Beneath the Ironcrest Mountains, dwarves place small lamps beside names cut into stone. Long after voices fade, the stone holds what has been entrusted to it.

In the Mire Fields, the Harvest arrived while the fighting continued. Orc families keep small fires outside weathered homes, and goblins arrange keepsakes beside rows of candles. For some, grief has become harder still. The one they mourn may not be dead at all, but walking somewhere beyond the firelight, Void-marked and no longer known to them. There are many ways to lose someone, and the Harvest has room for them all.

At Stonebridge, families feed the great Harvest fire one piece of wood at a time, each carrying a name. Laughter mingles with tears, and children listen as their elders describe people they never met and will now remember.

It is no celebration of death. It is a promise made by the living that absence will not become forgetting.