

Unto the Mouth
From a lonely toe somewhere South of Hanal

Honored Mouth,

As you know, I was stationed with the Vad of Vitrian, and thus was close to the Imperial seat. In recent year I had been sent by my Lady back to the estate along with her Senechal, to see to the wintering of her people.

I do not know what has happened in the Capital. My Lady was loyal to the Queen Empress as best I know, but out of nowhere, forces that appear to be Imperial fell on us. The Knights and the House guard fell attempting to stop the attack. I and a number of hundred house servants and villagers in the village that serviced the castle fled.

The military... there was something wrong with them. They were nearly slaving. Their eyes, I saw their eyes, there was a sort of desperation there, even as they cut us down. One of the Lady's handmaidens pleaded for her life, but the soldier, it was as if he was not even in control of himself and he hacked her down. I therefore did not hesitate in stabbing him with the special pin I keep. The poison in it quickly downed him, but even as he fell his hands kept making violent gestures. As he died though, his eyes cleared and he whispered... thank you?

In any event, we fled south, across the whole of Hanal. While most of the minor stromnates and nearly all of the Pallanates still do not seem to know what is going on, beyond that there is a civil war, there were places where we saw evidence of madmen having been, and once, just once we saw a crystal volder, the most beautiful I had ever witnessed pass over like a ghost high above. We also saw our own vollers on occasion, and after one bombarded us with powerbows as we scattered, killing dozens, when we did see Hanalian vollers, we hid.

Many of the unclaimed villages, who had neither Strom nor Pallan of their own were abandoned, and I believe their people had fled. Fields appeared unfinished in the snow, BUT the farm animals were gone. One time we came upon a terrible scene where such a caravan had been set upon and slaughtered, man and beast, though we could not be sure by whom.

Yesterday we passed the Southern border, today we are camped a days walk out of the Southern Kovnate, and have had food dropped to us by another beautiful volder, as we see what appears to be a small army massing south of us. Their scouts checked our camp and told us to be of good cheer, but I do not know why or what they hope to do. They are not the equivalent of a single one of the Iron legions.

I am trying to convince my fellow... I wanted to say travelers, but I guess refugees is more accurate... to head east along and south at an angle. Some are talking about the Pass of Death, but though I dread being alone, I will not go there, and will set off on my own if I must.

So far, I remain.