

General,

I give you grave news. The season has been one of hard work, and hard arguments with the Highborn Yael-lickers of the Granite Pillar, yes, but this was not so bad. Hard work is virtuous work, and we discovered that perhaps not all the Highborn are so bad despite their grovelling worship of the heretic Yael. Indeed, one of our best captains, Olegev, fell in love with a Highborn officer! Now this is usually not a matter worth regaling a general with, I know, and you may yet be wondering where the grave news is.

Olegev and Hammer, their love was inspirational. I do not jest in this. It was a true and moving romance to see, and even many of our soldiers and theirs decided that perhaps it was better to tell stories of these two round a campfire and drink together than it was to have yet another argument about the mad Yael.

Then the expected happened, and tragedy struck the lovers. Olegev should have known better – to keep on the well-trod paths, even in somewhere far from Varushka like Redoubt. The two went to pick a frost orchid, some rare flower that grows in Urizen only rarely, when they were snatched away by the Eater of Love.

Now, this Eater is a beast of Night, a predator that exudes a piece of itself into our world, the cabalists say. It eats the part of love and passion that stays in your thoughts and memories even when the night is cold and you are alone. It can only come into our world where the magic of Night is strong – but Night has been strong here, this season, due to some magical disaster the cabalists say happened in the south. The skies have been lit with auroras, and there have been strange birds here. I myself have encountered three ravens that insisted on prophesying my doom to me.

The Eater stole the lovers away, and has taken them to its nest. Our scouts say it is at Mount Siluri, in Siluri, which is named for the mountain because the Urizen do not fear to stack the same word upon itself until it collapses under its own recursion. There is some Night regio there that it squats and gibbers in. The Urizen rangers, they are making sure this is so before any action is taken, which is wise. Their magicians say there will be a conjunction of the Sentinel gate. You should take this opportunity to deal with this thing. I think the Highborn will say the same to their general. Talk to their general. Ensure that no-one does anything stupid and that this Eater, it is sent back to the Realm of Night where it belongs. If you can get Olegev back too, that would be helpful, but maybe if Olegev doesn't come back the rest of my fellow officers will learn to be more vigilant.

This Eater, the Cabalists say it must riddle its riddles and those who beat it, maybe they can win something from it – but be careful, for these stakes, they will be high. Simply cutting it to pieces will not work, because the part of the Eater you see is just a hand, a limb, no more – it is big, and most of it is still in the Realm. Slicing its palm will make it retreat for a while, yes, but will not get Olegev back, and it will soon return.

Win at its riddles, outwit it, and it will go, yes, for a good while – and maybe this Night magic washing through Redoubt will be gone before it comes back, so it cannot come back at all. But some of the cabalists, they say there are stories of this thing when it has been loose in Varushka too. There, wisefolk dealt with it through song, the magicians say. They came and sang to the Eater, sang of lost love, love poisoned, of tragedy and mourning lovers who never had their passion fulfilled. Send folk to sing to the Eater, the magicians say, and it will be driven into a frantic frenzy and be forced to retreat for a very long time indeed, until it can draw the venom of the music's sadness from its soul – if it ever can.

Singing will be dangerous, of course. When it panicks, it will lash out – not with claws, not to scar their flesh, but to feed on their own memories of love and romance. If they can withstand the assault, though, it will be forced to flee, leaving its victims behind. But what of the singers, and their wounded passions? I do not know. The magicians say these things might be healed in time. Might. But they cannot provide certainty. It will be a sacrifice not of life but of love.

Think these things over. Then act.

- Captain Radomir, Northern Eagle