

We face all kinds of death for drake's sake.

LOCAL

DEATH ALL DAY: From famine to danger to thirst — region faces many threats, yet loves.

Daubode Gutermuth, Poinarium

Due to the Vritra drought, the region faces many forms of extinction, even though the merchants from surrounding worlds continue to benefit from -- and exploit -- the capital city for its goods. Drought in the region threatens to dry up more than the drake: several have died of thirst in the foothills and in the mountain peaks. Famine has followed, with now our third season of dead crops. The pressure on the economy has added danger to the countryside, danger to the mountainside, trouble to the shipping lanes, and hardship to the mines. Yet, still the region thrives wit love.

Archers have taken to guarding fruit pickers and, if an apple or a pear falls to the ground before it can be picked, they shoot them midair to keep them from decay: we must save whatever rations we can. And if even the least fruit falls and is spared, the region will thrive. However, even the smallest greencrown warbler will go after such bolted fruits (pictured right). The archers seem not to mind: they consider it to be something of a gift to be out there hunting apples right alongside the birds. It seems to them the least violent application of their craft since the tullestringing of the Emperor's wedding fifty years hitherto.

Rations have started in every corner of the Imperial Crescent, but this has not brought despair in the most homey and hospitable types. Potlatch has returned to the land once populated by natives who viewed power as coming from he who is most willing to sacrifice, most willing to give, most willing to offer the

ultimate gift for a friend in need: those who conquer through wielding their deaths as an armament for their friends. In this case, we find local hovels and huts filled to brimming with those who seem to be collaborating on large events of shared hospitality. Very, very few in the surrounding regions are going hungry, but not for surplus of food (we are found wanting) nor for want of exploitation (plenty have come to take advantage of us), but rather through the generosity of the locals.

Some, still under what influence remains of the northern storyweavers, swear up

Greencrown warblers will go after fruits bolted by archers hunting for the leavings the pickers miss.

and down that the author of this story has made us as similitudes of himself and is whispering for us to be like him in taking care of neighbor and the like. Those seem to think that if said author -- or authors -- is for us, then the antagonists of our story have no real substantive opposition in the end, be it theft or hoarding or active draining and burning (see also the election of the next Woodward, p. 2). Unseparated from the love of said authrs, such storyweavers and their ilk assume that none of the celestial powers causing the pain in Vritra's core, none of the threats of death or life, none



Local archers shot through falling apple, warbler stole it. /// AVALONA

of the potential presents or futures or pasts available to us via memorium threshold can sever this link.

Others, present author included, find the idea of an author patently absurd. Simpler solutions must exist for the presence of mementomes, of the spontaneous scrawlings on the mountainsides, and of the contingency of the world itself. No author or gamers will save us from the present malady, whatever Patricia Bonnet says in her (as of this

issue) "Book of the Year." I find such fantasies nonsense.

But the present author cannot deny watching people act as if nothing could separate them from the love of said authors or gamers does inspire. It's moving to watch the so-deluded offer fruits to the warblers as if they were brothers, of a kind. To face the mountain swords with smiles and turn the forest fires to ice. It gives one courage, at least. But so can an insane asylum, in the right mood. ■

MASSIVE influx of insane patients storm Stornheist

Saga Jäger, Bella

As the resources in the surrounding parishes spread thinner, mental and spiritual health of the population at large keeps declining while the resources of both small lakeland asylums and small lakeland religious communities remain over capacity. The spill over has flooded the asylums of Stornheist.



Seen in the figure above, the 50-day moving average of admissions has crossed the 200-day moving average of admissions in what statisticians at Herman Brothers and Co. call a "golden cross." Though it sounds like something to do with the nature of thresholds within The Vale, it does not: it indicates a significant change in upward momentum regarding both moving averages. Meaning not only is Stornheist and asylums like it overwhelmed (not to mention functioning under capacity already for the beds taken out by the crash of Vritra), but that the momentum in psychiatric patients will only continue.

As I write this from Bella in the lakeland region, one woman -- the firstborn among many brothers and sisters -- has been forced into a caravan heading north to be admitted to the asylum. Where will they go when they arrive to find Stornheist booked to the brim?

Though medical laws in the north ban me from saying things outright, I can say this much about this particular patient: she feels a calling and justification to find two nicknamer children and a muse she seems to have lost, an experience she wrote about before her mind cracked. Do with that information what you will, but it seems that some sort of feline hallucination has her twitching like a caught little bird.

Sad case, of course, but she remains only one of a large migration of clinically insane or spiritually possessed persons heading towards Dragonsmaw. ■

