

# ~ CHIRAM'S HOLLOW ~

## Shiney Dreadfuls Newspaper

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### *Elements Out of Control*

Since late fall of last year, many citizens around the Bastions have claimed the elements themselves have abandoned us. In one evening, people felt as if they were freezing to death, that the world had fallen out from under them, and even felt as if the world had descended into chaos and had no order – but each of these sensations passed. One day later however, Thelucia fell into the Earth as if the ground itself had swallowed it up.



Some say it was an explosion, yet others say that the icons themselves were punishing the Bastion's people for their transgressions against the plane of life.

Anger by the Icons is nothing new – after the first assault on the plane of life the Declaration of Severance caused the planes to be closed off from ours. This time, however, seems different. The oceans and seas are churning out of control, bastion fires have been unstable and over the bitter winter there was little comfort to be found in hearth fires. Small tremors are becoming common – causing many to fear another collapse like Thelucia. Have the icons become determined to destroy us for the second transgression of mortals against their planes? Has something more sinister happened? Is this the work of Void and or the Withering?

Rumors are flying that powerful elemental kin are also feeling the effects. Paladin Brunswick is reported to have taken gravely ill, hence the need for Justicar Tavistock had to take over. Some say that the life-touched Edgar has also taken to the ruins of Thelucia because only by being near the new synthesized unicorn can he feel any peace. There are whispers of powerful water kin literally throwing themselves into the sea to their deaths in despair since the elements began to act up. If this is the case now, what awaits us as time passes? Will the elements settle down, or is it only a matter of time before they swallow us up completely?

**\*Do you have information to share?\***

**Speak to your local Shiney Dreadfuls Delivery Agent!\***

## *A Letter to the People of Eire*

The following letter has been seen reproduced (sometimes shoddily, sometimes paraphrased) and posted in countless places all across the nation. Despite its inflammatory tone and the unrest that it seems to be causing in certain quarters and among the martial and adventuring sectors of the Eirean populace, the Crown and the Council of Paladins have not offered an official statement in response.

It has been reported on multiple occasions that the siege at North Fortress has not been lifted or relieved. A source who spoke on condition of anonymity has suggested that "The barons of Eire sympathize with the plight of the beleaguered citizens of North Fortress, and would gladly lend their supplies and their strength of arms to the cause as soon as the word was given by the Crown."

The letter is reproduced as written below for the pleasure and information of our readers.

TO THE CITIZENS OF EIRE,

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO KNOW THAT THE BASTION OF NORTH FORTRESS IS UNDER SIEGE. IT HAS BEEN SINCE SEPTEMBER. THEY HAVE RECEIVED NO AID OR SUPPORT FROM THE NATION OF EIRE. THE PALADINIC COUNCIL, WHO REPRESENT AND ADVISE THE QUEEN HAVE REFUSED TO AID THESE CITIZENS OF EIRE WHO ARE BEING DESTROYED, ROOT AND BRANCH, BY ENEMIES OF EIRE. AND YET THEY WILL NOT HELP. THEY REFUSED.

IF OUR NOBLES WILL NOT PROTECT THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SWORN FEALTY TO THEM, THEY HAVE BROKEN THEIR PROMISE TO US. THEY HAVE FAILED THE PEOPLE THEY ARE SWORN TO PROTECT. I, FOR ONE, BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE HORRIBLY, HORRIBLY WRONG IN THIS. ON SO MANY LEVELS.

I AND MY FRIENDS GO TO AID MY FELLOWS. THE DWARVES, THE HASTIR VOLG, THE ROM WHO CALLED NORTH FORTRESS HOME. WE WILL NEED HELP.....

THE ENEMIES WHO ATTACK US ARE CALLED THE HORDE WALL. A FORCE OF DWARVES WHO ONCE PROTECTED NORTH FORTRESS. THEY LONG AGO BECAME CORRUPTED AND CURSED. THEY WERE OFFERED REDEMPTION, A CURE FOR THEIR CURSE. INSTEAD, THEY HAVE CHOSEN TO REMAIN CURSED. THEY DESERVE NO QUARTER. NO MERCY... THEY WILL GET NONE FROM ME.

I BELIEVE THAT THE HORDE WALL WERE NOT ALONE IN THEIR ATTACK ON THE BASTION. I AND OTHER ADVENTURERS WENT THERE SHORTLY AFTER THE DISASTROUS EARTHQUAKE THAT SIGNALLED THE START OF THE SIEGE. AS WE ARRIVED THROUGH THE PORTAL, ANOTHER GROUP OF PEOPLE WERE RIFTING AWAY FROM THE SCENE OF THE DISASTER. I BELIEVE THAT THOSE RIFTING WERE ALLIES OF THE HORDE WALL. THELUCIANS WHO WERE SEEKING SOME MAGIC IN THE TUNNELS BELOW NORTH FORTRESS. THESE THELUCIANS ARE JUST AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION AS THE HORDE WALL. I BELIEVE THAT THEY AIDED THE HORDE WALL IN BRINGING ABOUT THE EARTHQUAKE. WE WERE SENT TO NORTH FORTRESS TO BY THE THELUCIANS TO GATHER SOME ITEM FOR THE GREAT SPELL THEY WERE WORKING ON. WHILE WE WERE THERE, FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES, THE THELUCIANS STOLE A MAJOR ARTIFACT, THE FORGE OF ESSENCES, TO FURTHER THEIR OWN PLANS. DECEPTION UPON DECEPTION. IF THEY MANAGED TO DESTROY NORTH FORTRESS, AND THE BRAVE ADVENTURERS WHO WENT THERE ON THEIR BEHALF, SO MUCH THE BETTER. THE CREATURES WE ENCOUNTERED BELOW NORTH FORTRESS, WHO WERE LITERALLY EATING AWAY AT ITS FOUNDATIONS WERE CONSTRUCTS AND ELEMENTALLY ENHANCED CREATURES. FURTHER PROOF OF THE THELUCIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THIS ATTACK.

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT EIRE'S CITIZENS SHOULD NOT BE LEFT DEFENSELESS BY ITS ROYALTY AND CHOSEN PROTECTORS, I ASK THAT YOU AID ME AND MINE IN PROVIDING AID AND FREEING THE PEOPLE OF NORTH FORTRESS FROM THEIR ATTACKERS. I VOW TO WAGE WAR ON THEM... TO ENSURE THAT THEY WILL THREATEN NO ONE EVER AGAIN.

I SWEAR THIS ON STONE, ON ICE, ON LIGHTNING, AND ON FIRE.

DUORN BRONZEBEARD  
MAGE AND SCRIBE OF THE GRIFFON GUARD

SO SWORN ON THE OATHRING

IVAR FORKBEARD  
ELDER OF CLAN DEEPELVER

# *Understanding Tragedy*

In order to better understand the recent tragedy in Thelucia, the Shiny Dreadfuls has been scouting around for sources. In our travels, we came upon this interesting find

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*It was the week following the incident, though which day I cannot truly say. In the wake of such events, time becomes a jumble, until the torments and elations of one day are all days; there is no sun up nor sun down, there is only one long blur in which we watched our home collapse into the ocean.*

*The Pattern was our great hubris, though many will defend the actions of our magi in its creation, still others ... well, what does it truly matter now? Suffice to say, it drew attention from across the planes, and some of that attention was less than desirable, and we all paid the price.*

*Truly though, the explosion was barely a taste of what was to come. In binding the Pattern to the city, the Magi used the power of an artifact they only barely understood, mixed with magic only a few could even read, never mind truly comprehend. Bottom line, our people altered the very fabric of reality, not just for our plane, but for life itself. In its wake, we saw the waves of vermin, the diseases that never die, the people who cannot sleep ... such was the barest hint of the powers at work. And just like that, those powers were destroyed.*

*As any first year scholar can tell you though, nothing can truly be destroyed; only changed. So it was for the pattern, an ocean of power and possibility now unmoored from its tethers. You will hear stories of stones cracking, towers crumbling, the cobbled streets of Thelucia rising and falling like waves on the ocean, of obelisks of stone rising from the earth like the broken ribs of a corpse laid out to rot. You'll hear men say stone towers were changed to glass, then to steel, then back to stone, all in the blink of an eye. You'll hear elves claim they were humans, and humans claim they were elementals.*

*I personally watched as a bucket of water turned to a bucket of gold, and fish rained from the sky, ringing like a bell as they struck the ground and in a flash they turned into wisps, only to float back to the sky. Lest you think this all one grand adventure, I also watched as Death elementals walked the streets like revelers on Solstice, claiming any who crossed their path. I watched in horror as a man wandered too close to a flash of light, and it turned him to stone from the inside out. And I saw a room full of children age in reverse, until they were babies, and then stillbirths, a fetus outside the womb, gasping for air. And then they were nothing at all, not even a blood stain left behind.*

*What I am saying is they're all true, every story you year. The power of the Pattern altered the very fabric of Thelucia, turning reality into a precocious child, who treated us like playthings, without a concern for our wellbeing. In the wake of the explosion we found the magic of the earth no longer functioned, our spells and powers wiped from our minds as if they were never there. In a flash the circle of earth no longer recognized us, while our celestial brethren found themselves at the mercy of fate, attempting to control magic that was altogether unwilling to bend to their will.*

*Without my magics I may not be much of a healer, but I am Thelucian born, and I would serve my city in her time of need. Like so many of my fellows, I ran with all haste to the center of our city - the Library, where Knights and Magi would assemble to organize aid and response to what had happened. How does one evacuate a city? I do not know... but they would; of that I was certain. Only, when I arrived, every plan went out the window. The Library - the greatest store of learning, the center of civilization for countless generations, was crumbling into the sea.*

*It may surprise you, but on any other day this would be a minor inconvenience at best. The magics that protect the library and its contents are some of - if not the - strongest in all Thelucia. A man could light a bonfire thirty feet across, burning nothing but rust and oil, and not a single book thrown in would catch fire. The stone does not crumble, the pages do not wear... even finding it submerged in the ocean would only require anyone wishing to read be able to breathe water. Indeed, The Goodfather and all his Pure Lords would be hard pressed to put a dent in the magics that protect the books of the Library.*

*Only now, all bets were off. The magic might work, or it might not. Or it might sometimes, for some books and not others. It might transform the words, or give the books wings to fly, or turn them to dust. The bottom line is, those books are more than our city - they belong to the people, to be read not just by Thelucians but to all those with eyes to see. They are our collected wisdom, they are enlightenment. When the Deadlands finally emerge from this dark time, those books will be the foundation of our future is built on,*

*telling countless generations of the folly that lead us into this terrible place, lest it be repeated.*

*We would see that future preserved. As one people we dove into the Library, the Magi organizing the frenetic, frenzied rescue. Without regard for life or limb we ran past crumbling walls and collapsing stone, all eyes for books alone. Requests for aid flew in from across the city, all Thelucia knowing the Library was where a rescue would be organized.*

*When they learned we already were fully engaged trying to save the library, the requests changed - no more asking what they might have, but rather what they might do.*

*By sundown, the requests stopped entirely. Soon we would learn why.*

*The magic of the Earth Circle was altered in the explosion - not only did it forsake those of us invested, but at sundown it changed - the magics of Earth receding into the soil, replaced in the night with the magic of Death.. A Circle of Death ... a day before, all Thelucia would gather about to marvel at such a thing; how much can change in but a day.*

*The city already full of elementals, the plane of death took seemingly perverse joy in running wild in the city that once housed the pattern that restored the plane of life.*

*Fortunately the chaotic magics that plagued the city were as bad for the elementals as they were for us ... but that was the end of the good news. What was a nightmare by day, was now a living hell by night.*

*At sunup, the Circle changed back... amazingly, once the death circle was closed, the city felt almost peaceful. Again, how much can change in a single night.*

*So it would go, for how long I cannot say. By day we saved what books we could, propping up the library with what resources we could find, volunteers flooding in to save any part of the accumulated wisdom of our people. By night, we split our attention one half protecting the others who kept on after the books.*

*Then ... help arrived.*

*I should say, it was less the arrival and more the orders which grabbed our attention. At just before sundown an elf, a noble from Eire came, promising his fellows could both work healing magics and restore ours to us. In addition, his celestialist could control her magics, and help ours control theirs.*

*Our nobles - what few there were - protested, claiming his writ of authority held no domain here. "I give less than two shits about your fucking title, your fucking traditions, and your fucking ego," the Elf raged at him. "We have come to save those we can, and in Queen Beah's name I will have your assistance. I will have healers to man the Earth Circle, and I will have them now."*

*A chill grabbed me as I understood what he intended.*

*Stumbling over myself, I ran to him, screaming of the death circle, pointing to the sky and screaming about time, about how little we had. The pounding in my ears was too great; I could neither hear his words nor mine, for all I know I spoke gibberish, yet somehow he understood.*

*We ran, as more of my fellows followed behind, a score or more of casters struck dumb in the explosion, hoping to reach his people, to warn them, before the circle changed again, and death itself walked Thelucia..*

*Hoping to save the people who might be the only means by which we save ourselves.*

*— Excerpt of the recorded histories of Thelucia, as spoken by High Magus Tellin Shorn, Earth Scholar*

# Shiney Dreadfuls:



~The sinking of both Thelucia and North Fortress are the direct results of a secret war between the Eirean crown and the Deep Spiders, a race of subterranean arachnids with elemental magical powers.

~One out of every three meals served to humans last year was just paper trash and lumber waste. How would they even know the difference?

~Bands of warriors are gathering on the outskirts of North Fortress, preparing for war with a mysterious army that grows despite no reinforcements coming to their aid.

~A small troupe of immensely powerful flame elementals has been seen roaming the Deadlands. They are content to argue fiercely amongst themselves, pausing only in their debate to annihilate any unliving foolish enough to approach them.

~The Sadeen Moorian knight, Lord Carver, has built for himself a homunculus made of straw and offal and brought it to hideous, unnatural life with his mysterious alchemy. Upon rising, the creature reportedly hurled its creator across the room and stormed off into the night, and was last seen trapped in a ruined castle by an angry mob carrying torches and pitchforks.

~Qiu Jun-wu and Ling-ma Sun had a vicious fight for the position of Guildmaster in Finn Castle.

~The forests claimed by the dryad people as First Forest have begun to flourish in dramatic ways, as new, lively and voracious undergrowth appears by the day and threatens even to uproot the existing flora.

~There are rumors flying around Sadeen Moore that one of its Purelords have gone missing, and very possibly gone rogue.

~The Council of Paldins have all been uneasy as of late, word is spreading that one of them must be working with the Barons and yet no one can figure out who

~The seas have become even more hazardous as of late – with whispers by some it could be void –and others saying the beast in the brine. Yet others say that the icon of water itself abandoning us for good.

~There must be treasure buried somewhere in the Hollow, because so many High Ogres go there and High Ogres can smell treasure.