

Lofyn Ulfdottir and Gunnbrand Ironwill,

I wanted to thank you both for hearing us at the last Equinox. It was good to come to Anvil and find like-minded sorts, rather than closed eyes and closed ears. In particular, Lofyn, I offer my greatest respect to you for what you achieved – not just in your efforts building the Bloodhands into something to be proud of as successors to the Bloodcloaks, but for even managing to get the Empress to come to you. There, I think, is a sign of someone whose name is worth knowing, whose name has weight and meaning in this world.

I say to you this. I say we returned to our fellow Grimnir, to our fellow descendants, to our fellows who still have pride in the name of the Bloodcloaks and who hope to see the banner once again fly over that courageous, valiant army. We spread word of what we had been told and, I say, it lifted hearts. It lifted hopes. The tale of what was said, of meeting the Empress and hearing her words, has given much reassurance. The blighted, sour taste of the Mourn still hangs heavy, but now there is a thought that perhaps in this Empire we would not be threadcutters but could indeed be threadmenders again – mending frayed lives, not severing them.

It was good. It *is* good.

But words are not all, and we are judged by our actions.

We asked that the Wintermark generals not march into the Mourn again, and that they do not fight under cursed works of magic that slaughter our own men. But the Fist of the Mountains did again march into the Mourn. It is not a place for Wintermark warriors to fight, the Mourn. Restless spirits of those who died in the carnage and helplessness of the season last, and the Jotun fleeing before the use of Varushkan atrocities – what chance is there for glory, for heroism, in that?

So I ask you, both, to push forward on what we discussed, on what the Empress exhorted, and do what you can to change this in future. There are other places to fight. The Jotun still have a scrap of respect for Wintermark, which will be pissed away with every step we take alongside the Iron Helms in the Mourn. Now the orcs raid our borders. Bring the Fist out and defend the Mark itself, or send it forth to fight the Druj and Grendel in the east – both foes worth shattering under our heroic warriors' heels. Change our generals' ways. Get them to set a true example to the Military Council, to be the figures that the rest of the Empire aspires to be like.

Gunnbrand, I ask you thus. You said you would take up this cause, even revoking the generals should they persist in the course that led to the Mourn carnage, and so clouded the hopes of those who bear the Bloodcloaks' legacy. So I ask you to do that. Take the generals to task. Be the fearless, inspirational figure you so clearly can be, and do not hesitate to take their office from them if they prove not up to the task, to the standards, that are needed if the Bloodcloaks are to have peers of them.

Lofyn, I ask you thus. Bear that banner yet, and see it honoured, see it blooded by fallen heroes that they may be remembered. Prove to be the example needed on the field of battle, and on the field of Anvil. Be the proud and inspirational figure you so clearly can be, in pushing for the right path of war and battle. Make us proud to heed the call when the mustering of the Bloodcloaks is done. Be the example that the generals should aspire to be like, and push them hard to be better themselves. Sing the names of the glorious who fall in battle, and you shall be the one whose name we sing in turn.

Aaric Faulking