

To Drogon Morsini,

I doubt you will remember me, but I surely remember you. My name is Karl Rostov of Varushka, and I was the militia warrant officer charged with investigating the murder of your parents. It has been a case that haunted me my entire active life, and even into my retirement.

You were young at the time, and had not passed your citizenship test, so certain parts about the case were kept from you. It is long past time that you knew them and, from all that I hear about you, maybe you'll be able to do something about it.

You know that the ones who killed your parents – and many others – were part of a Winter Cult and that they were pursuing forbidden magic. Well, I can tell you that they were all members of a Navarr Striding called the Blood Ravens, and cultists of Wendigo. They are mostly humans and draughir.

I don't know what you know about Navarr wizards – that they call vates – but the traditions of the Navarr teach that magic is in the blood. Navarr ritualists may cut themselves as part of releasing the magic. The tradition goes that the blood-letting has to be willing to let the magic flow; murder and sacrifices do not work.

Well the Blood Ravens think the tradition is wrong, and that it is possible to get extra power and magic from unwilling victims, if one knows how. They were convinced that Wendigo had taught them the way. Truth is, their sacrifices may just have pleased Wendigo enough for it to grant them extra power, I don't know – you'd need to ask an Archmage or Grandmaster for that sort of thing.

Either way, that's why the Blood Ravens killed your parents – and why pretty much the whole Striding was branded Sorcerers, Idolators and Murderers by the Conclave, Synod and Magistrates respectively. Unfortunately, we did not get them all. Several of the Blood Ravens were able to escape into Hercynia and we lost track of them.

Anyway, attempts to find the remaining Blood Ravens proved fruitless. Some thought that the Vallorn got them. Other people claimed that they fled across the border into Skarsind and fell to the Thule. I never believed either. As a Navarr

Striding, I knew that the Blood Ravens were capable of remaining mobile and surviving hardships. I just did not know how to find them.

Until now.

With the Empire having retaken Skarsínd, I made a journey out to see if I could pick up the Blood Ravens' trail. I encountered a Wintermark refugee named Hela Starling. Hela told me she had been ambushed by "painted ghosts" who matched the description of draughir Blood Ravens.

The Blood Ravens had taken Hela and other Wintermark refugees to their camp where they threatened to kill their captives if they did not willingly accept anointing by an Ambition priest. The refugees agreed whereupon they received The Calling of Ambition and were filled with the urge to please Wendigo at any cost.

The Blood Ravens then proceeded to use them as "willing" sacrifices to power their blood magic. Hela - being possessed of a strong will - was able to throw off the effects of the aura that had been placed on her and made her escape. However, in her disorientated state, she could not lead me back to the Blood Raven camp.

Piecing together Hela's story and other stories I came across, I now believe that the Blood Ravens have been holed up in Northpines in Hercynia, near the Skarsínd border. They've been using the Thule occupation of Skarsínd to cover their tracks as they abducted refugees, war-wounded and scouts and practiced their sacrificial blood magic on them.

If I were a decade younger, and at Anvil, I would check the Sentinel Gate for a conjunction leading to Northpines - and where the Blood Ravens are hiding. I've written to the Head Magistrate, the Archmage of Winter and the Senator for Hercynia, as I felt that I should inform them. However, I also figured I owed it to you to tell you myself that your family's murderers will be punished.

Vardas guide you,

Karl Rostov

Retired Militia Warrant Officer, Varuskha