

*My dear friend,*

*It is a long and cold winter in Miechernya, is it not?*

*I feel, sometimes, that I would have it no other way. And while in some years the winds blow gentle, this year they blow bitter. Never more so than when they blow from the North, I find.*

*The winds blow from the North now in Miechernya, do they not? I find they bring the scent of bare stone, the chill of the icy floes. I find them unfamiliar to me, but perhaps more importantly, I find them unfamiliar with me. More than once already, they have strayed where they ought not, and I have wept that I could not defend the people of the Vales beneath.*

*When the winds from the North meet the southern rains, the two forces make a great storm over the Vales. Yet, in these months past, I have seen no such storm over Miechernya. My friend, is our land so easily scoured by those Northern winds?*

*A long long time ago, beyond seven mountains and seven forests, I might have commanded them to go back, but alas, it is no longer the time of such tales. I cannot merely command the North to turn back, nor ravage it with my warriors. Not while certain bargains remain unbroken... and certain wards.*

*So it is that I come to you in the spirit of generosity with an offer. Meet with me at the standing-stone daubed with the symbols of your wards in a fine cave on the hillside south of Czernushka Vale. There, we will drink together. We will eat together. We will contemplate the cold winds, and set the world to rights.*

*And when that is done, we will discuss the Sovereignty of Miechernya.*

*Yours,*

*Vlastitel Uezheviki*