

Chronicles of Nimrine

by

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This is a work in progress and not the final product

## Prizrak Ironcold

He shouldered open the door, doing his best not to break the hinge that was badly in need of replacement, since the bottom of the door dragged across the floor despite his lifting as he pushed. He was tall for his age and was covered in rock dust, having been down in a mine all day.

‘You’re home late again Prizrak,’ his mother stated as she looked up at him from the table.

‘Sorry mum,’ he chuckled as he ran his finger through his hair, dislodging even more rock dust from his naturally white hair, ‘Just a little extra work, some more money since Gavina’s birthday is coming up soon.’

‘Did you have to do that inside? I spent all day sweeping,’ his mother huffed as the rock dust fell to the floor around his feet.

‘Sorry,’ he apologised as he stepped back outside and did his best to get the rest of the rock dust out of his hair.

‘Go and clean yourself up,’ his mother demanded shaking her head, ‘Then put your sister to bed, she is being rowdy and won’t settle down. When you’re done, I’ll heat up your dinner for you.’

‘Thanks mum,’ he nodded before he trekked through the house and into the bathroom.

There was a small amount of lukewarm water remaining in the bottom of the bucket, so he quickly wiped the dust and grime off his body. His skin was a very pale white, not uncommon amongst the miners in the town since they rarely ever got to see the sun.

He finished washing quickly and poured the rest of the water out of the window onto the flowers, before staring out at the tree line. He knew that barely several hundred metres of forestry and open ground stood between him and the wastelands. A cool breeze rolled in through the window, from the direction of the lands belonging to the mythological Wraith tribe. He had been to the edge before, and spent long hours staring out over the vast expanse of ice, snow and sleet, even daring to venture several hundred metres into the inhospitable environment.

He sighed and shook his head, dismissing for the millionth time, the notion of running into the wastelands and getting lost in them, to end his life at the bottom of the barrel amongst the Centurion, his people. Gathering his thoughts, he pulled on a clean set of clothes, once more hiding his muscular physique, built from years of swinging a pickaxe and setting up supports.

He departed the bathroom and moved to his sister’s room. Upon opening the door, he found her lying in bed with the covers pulled up to her neck, but the rise and fall of the blankets betrayed the fact that she had been running around seconds prior to his entry into her room.

‘What am I going to do with you Ina?’ he sighed as he moved over to her.

He noticed that a bucket had been placed in her room and realised a hole had opened in the ceiling. A hole he would have to fix, when he had a spare moment.

‘Tell me a story Rak,’ Ina giggled happily ignoring his stern tone, ‘One of the ancient ones.’

‘As long as you promise to go to sleep when I am finished,’ he chided her with a chuckle.

She nodded eagerly, and he moved over to her, so that he could tuck her in.

‘Once upon a time there were eight tribes, each of the tribes had a purpose, and they revelled in this purpose,’ Prizrak started, ‘Each of the tribes had a single special person known as the Talynted, and they were seen as gods amongst their people, but they were not the leaders of their tribes. These Talynts had names. Aether’s Talynt was called Ayther, Nether’s Talynt was called Nethyr, Dragon’s Talynt was called Fyre, Mermaid’s Talynt was called Watyr, Golem’s Talynt was Eyrth, Wraith’s was Ice, Griffon’s was Wynd and Centurion’s was Styl. Each of the Talynt’s could control their own respective elements, and they co-existed with the Nimrine people in peace and prosperity.’

He paused in his tale and looked down to see his sister was already fast asleep. He smiled and kissed her forehead gently before quitting the room, after blowing out the candle, and returning to the kitchen where his mother was waiting.

‘So, how much did you earn?’ his mother asked as she got up to get his meal.

‘An extra handful of copper, enough to get Ina something warm for her birthday,’ he noted, ‘If I work late again for the next couple of nights, I can make sure I get enough time off to repair the holes in the roof for winter.’

‘Those Aetherians in *our* capital are want for nothing, and here we are struggling to fix the holes in our roof,’ his mother muttered darkly, ‘If they don’t loosen their iron grip soon, there is going to be another hundred years’ war.’

‘Don’t speak like that mother,’ Rak sighed, ‘While I agree with you, the only others who would join our cause would be the Golems, and we would all be slaughtered and made into actual slaves. Look, I’ll work late for the rest of the week, and we’ll get something we need.’

‘I don’t want you working late,’ his mother frowned unhappily, ‘Your father did the same thing, and look where it got him,’ she whispered as she brushed her fingers through his silver hair comfortingly, ‘A little box with six feet of earth on top.’

‘I’m being very careful mum, even the other miners have stopped being so sloppy in bracing their shafts,’ he smiled up at her softly, ‘If anything it has driven us to logging, so we don’t have to buy it all from the Aether, just so we can brace properly.’

‘Accidents still happen... I just don’t want to lose you as well Rak,’ she whispered, ‘I can’t afford to lose you... Gavina can’t afford to lose you.’

‘Don’t worry mum, even if something does happen to me the rest of the village will look out for you and Gavina,’ he nuzzled her hand which was still stroking his hair, ‘Just like they did when father died.’

‘I wasn’t talking about financially,’ she sighed, ‘But I don’t want that again. Everyone barely scrapes by as it is, without the added burden of others. Our only saving grace is the ore that we mine and refine, but it isn’t enough, no matter how much we give them.’

‘I know mother, but this is the life the Aether have granted us because of our ancestors,’ Rak sighed as he finished his meal, ‘All because they picked the *wrong* side of the war.’

‘I know sweetheart, but off to bed with you,’ she kissed him on the top of his head, ‘I’ll see you tomorrow night.’

‘Goodnight mum,’ he smiled and kissed her on the cheek before retreating to his room.

He lay down on his mattress and looked up at the night sky through the hole in his roof before rolling onto his side and closing his eyes.

*Of all the capital cities of the tribes, the Centurion City would have to be the strangest that I have visited. They have managed to turn their metals and gems into buildings. They mix their gems into the lower grade metals and create support columns. They also mix in a special component that denies rust and will stand the test of time. The outer shells are made of slightly higher-grade metals and minerals, also resistant to rust and time, while the gems serve to dull the metal. This dullness is quite peculiar as it doesn't reflect the light from the sun like a mirror. The moonlight however is reflected, making the city a beautiful place to be during a full moon.*

*Baile Sàmhach `Freiceadain, or in the Common tongue, the 'City of Silent Sentinels', was the brainchild of the first Centurion Talynted, and completed by the tenth. It covers an area of over one hundred and thirty square kilometres, and has several rivers running through it. In the centre of the city there is a statue dedicated to the Centurion people. The statue is made of the purest and highest-grade metals and depicts a male and a female Centurion, working over a forge, as they forge something that is yet to take shape. There is a plaque underneath that reads: 'Your future is forged with your own hands, only you can decide what shape it takes'.*

*The reason the city was given the name of Baile Sàmhach `Freiceadain, is due to each entrance having a larger than life statue of metal men and women guarding the gates, silent and unmoving. I will never forget my time in the city, especially during the Full Moon Festival, held once every two months when the moon was at its brightest. The streets were full of people talking, laughing and enjoying festival cuisine only available during the festival.*

*During the festival however, I bore witness to a strange phenomenon. One of the younger Centurions, a small girl of around eight or nine dragged me out to the nearest*

*entrance and bid me look at the statues guarding it. By some trick of the moonlight, the statues, which normally held stern expressions, seemed to be smiling as their charges enjoyed themselves inside the city.*

*Excerpt from 'Traveller's Diary' by 'Unknown'*

### Meon Steelpaw

The girl scrambled to her feet after having been knocked off them by the man standing in front of her. His mask depicted a demon, smiling in a sinister fashion revealing rows of sharp teeth, made for tearing flesh from bone. Not only did the mask cover their entire face, but the woman wasn't even able to tell what colour the person's eyes were, since they were hidden behind mirror like glass. Other than that, their entire body was covered head to toe, not even a hint of skin showing. While it wasn't uncommon for this time of year, it did unnerve her more than a little.

'Are you the one?' the demonic mask asked her, 'Are you her?'

She didn't stick around long enough to answer. Her flaming red hair streamed out behind her, having come free of its bun when she had been knocked to the ground, as she ran like a ghost was chasing after her. She ran back out of the gate she had entered, the large statues on either side of her ignoring her plight as she bolted past them. As if mocking her however, under their watchful gaze she tripped and fell flat on her face, sliding a few feet before coming to a stop.

She pushed herself up off the ground and was surprised to find someone offering her a hand to her feet. As she followed the arm up to the owners face her heart sank, when she found it belonged to the same person she had run from.

‘Why’d you run?’ the unidentifiable voice asked as they helped the girl to her feet, ‘I was only trying to have a conversation.’

‘Forgive me if I am not overly fond of your freaky looking mask,’ the red head huffed, ‘I thought you were a Centurion trying to kidnap me,’ she stated as she dusted herself off.

‘If I wanted to kidnap you, I wouldn’t have let you know I was there,’ the figure chuckled, ‘Although if anything, you were so distracted by your own thoughts, that you are the one who ran into me.’

‘Well, I wasn’t going to stick around to find out,’ she shook her head dismissively, ‘Can you take off that mask.’

‘No please?’ the figure cocked their head.

‘Could you please take off your mask?’ she asked venomously.

‘Unfortunately for you, I quite like where it is at the moment,’ the figure laughed, ‘So it will remain in place. But forgive me, I don’t know your name, Miss?’

‘Meon,’ the woman stated, ‘Meon Steelpaw. Can I have your name?’

‘Nope,’ the figure laughed, ‘However, if you must refer to me as something, I do answer to Demon.’

‘That’s not fair,’ Meon stomped her foot, ‘I gave you my name.’

‘Yes, you did,’ Demon laughed, ‘But I only asked for your name, you could have refused to answer.’

‘Fine,’ Meon seethed as she folded her arms over her chest, ‘What did you want to talk about.’

‘I will just confirm, Meon Steelpaw, fourteen years of age, attends Grimtok School for Gifted Girls?’ Demon enquired.

Meon glowered at the mask with increased suspicion and Demon laughed.

‘Well since there is no mistaking that you are the one I am after,’ Demon laughed as they opened up their cloak and started rummaging around in one of the pockets sewn into it, ‘I’ve got something for you, it’s a bit tatty from the journey, but it will still serve its purpose,’ Demon explained as they produced a scroll from the depths of the pocket.

‘Why are you giving this to me?’ Meon asked not taking the scroll.

‘Because it is addressed to you,’ Demon laughed, showing her her name written on the side.

Meon frowned and took the scroll, studying the outside carefully. It was warm to the touch which surprised her, but as she went to question Demon further, she looked up to notice that they had completely vanished. She cast around wildly looking for the figure, but not even footprints remained.

This creeped her out more than anything else, and not brave enough to stick around any longer, she turned her feet homeward, and walked briskly until she was safe behind the door of her house. She moved up to her room, and locked herself in, before pulling out the scroll she had stuffed into her shirt at some point. She didn’t trust Demon, but her natural curiosity was killing her in her thirst for knowledge, especially what could potentially be written on the scroll.

She battled with her curiosity for several minutes before it won out, and she broke the seal on the scroll before carefully opening it. She was disappointed when she realised the language written on it, was illegible, and didn't look anything like any writing she had ever seen before. She scowled at herself angrily, for having allowed herself to be fooled into her actions.

She moved over to the fire in her room and stoked it up before going to throw the scroll in. However, as the scroll grew closer to the fire something magical happened. The words began to glow and slowly formed into something she was able to read. She snatched the scroll away quickly; as the flames licked greedily at it and began reading.

She was slightly disappointed to learn that it was just an old fairy tale about the hundred years' war, the Dragon, Wraith and Nether tribes, but she digested the information none the less. Her eyes flew over the page, absorbing the words written there, as greedily as the flames had been licking at the paper it was written on. She didn't even realise how much time she had spent reading it until her mother called up the stairs.

'Meo it's time for dinner!'

'Coming mum!' she called back before hurriedly stuffing the scroll between the mattress and the bedframe before running downstairs to join her parents for dinner.

She itched to get back to the scroll, which made dinner a distracting affair, as her parents gave her the normal interrogation in regard to her day at school.

When her parents finally dismissed her, she raced back up to her room and engrossed herself in reading and re-reading the scroll with all the new information on it. But what puzzled her most about the whole thing was the last little bit of the scroll which read,

*I will come for you soon, so whatever you do until then... Stay safe.*

*D.*

She was so intrigued with it, she didn't even realise that she had read through the night, until she looked blearily out of her window to see the sky beginning to lighten as the sun began to rise. She sighed and stuffed the scroll under her bed before committing to getting a few hours of rest before she had to leave for school.

*In the time I got to spend with the Centurion Talynted during my travels, she taught me a lot that I didn't know about the various metals of the earth. She took me down into a mine and showed me that there were actually several types of gold, the gold we use for coinage and another gold that she referred to as 'Fool's gold'. When asked why it was called Fool's gold, she informed me, that while it looks like gold, it is completely worthless, and the way to tell the difference between the two, was that fool's gold sparkled while normal gold did not. However, neither type of gold shone a light to what she showed me next.*

*A fair way into the mine, where the minerals were abundant, she showed me several crystals, but by far the most expensive one was the gold crystal. While being the same colour as normal gold, it was translucent with a smoky interior, and while it was only about the size of the Talynted's thumbnail, it was probably worth over ten million gold coins. She offered it to me as a gift of good faith, but I had to refuse her profusely, more for my own safety than anything else.*

*She took me next to a refinery, where they melted down the raw materials, and purified them, before creating ingots or minting coins. The Centurion being in charge of all the minting amongst the tribes had several mints, each with the symbol for their respective tribe upon it. From the mints, the coins were distributed to their respective tribes, but since all the coins were worth the same no matter where you went, it wasn't all that uncommon to end up paying for something with coins from several different tribes at once.*

*Before ending my time with the Talynted, she gave me a parting gift which I couldn't refuse, a small statuette of myself, made from the same alloyed metal that the Centurion's made their homes with. It wasn't until later that I realised that the eyes had*

*been set with tiny gold crystals, each probably worth a thousand gold pieces. I couldn't say no to this gift, and so I kept it and now it sits across my desk watching over me as I work.*

*Excerpt from 'Time with the Talented' by 'Istorik'*

### A Fool's Gold

Prizrak rose early, as he always did, and got changed into his work clothes. He headed off to the mine and signed in with the supervisor, before heading down his branch of the shaft. He worked alone down his branch, which was good, because when he found the tiny vein of silver crystals, no one else knew of it. Silver crystals were brought for a fair price, unlike the rest of the common ores they dug up, and while he felt guilty about not telling anyone about the vein, he knew they would want to sell them.

While he couldn't deny that they needed the money, he had another plan in mind for the tiny crystals. All in all, he had managed to get seven crystals, about the size of his little fingernail, free of the wall, and was working on pulling out the eighth when a voice asked him.

'Would you like some help with that?' Prizrak jumped and the crystals he had managed to remove scattered over the floor in every direction.

'Don't worry,' the person chuckled from the darkness, just out of the light of his lantern, 'I have no need for those pretty crystals. I just came to see if you needed a hand with absolutely anything.'

‘Who... Who are you?’ Prizrak asked as he set about picking up the scattered crystals, ‘I don’t recognise your voice.’

‘You may call me Demon,’ the masked figure stepped into the lantern light, revealing the smiling demon motif, ‘May I ask your name, young miner?’

‘Prizrak, Prizrak Ironcold, but everyone just calls me Rak’ he stated, ‘Fifteen in case you were wondering.’

‘A little young to be down a mine, don’t you think?’ Demon asked.

‘It is... a necessity,’ Rak explained.

‘Well in any case, it is a pleasure to meet you Rak,’ Demon stated stepping over to the wall, gently pulling the last crystal free and laying it in his hand, ‘Is there anything I can help you with? Maybe an extra set of hands for a few hours? An escape from this hell of a life you live?’

‘What are you suggesting?’ Rak frowned as he finished gathering the crystals and got to his feet.

He picked up his pickaxe and secured his own mask over his face, before picking up the lantern and heading deeper into the mine. His mask was plain and stained in comparison to Demon’s, but it served its purpose of filtering out the rock dust and allowing him to see a little better, thanks to the green tinted glass.

‘I’m suggesting, that the life you are currently living, isn’t the life you want to live,’ Demon stated as they hefted their own pickaxe onto their shoulder, beginning to push Prizrak’s mine cart deeper into the mine after him, ‘You struggle with day to day life, you have trouble finding enough ore to make sure that your mother, and your little sister, eat and stay warm during the winter,’ Demon sighed as they started swinging at the vein of ore that Rak had found the day before, but not yet depleted, ‘You seek an

escape, a way to free yourself from the bottom of the pile of shit that you currently inhabit. You dream of running into the wastelands, and getting lost, so that no one from the Aether tribe will ever be able to find you.'

'Who are you?' he asked, stopping to look at Demon, 'How do you know all of this?'

'I know a lot of things,' Demon laughed softly, 'Not everything, but I tend to specialise in the things that people keep buried, deep in their hearts, and away from the light. But I also know history as well, did you know there used to be eight tribes?'

'I tell my sister that old fairy tale every night before she goes to sleep,' Rak chuckled as he resumed his work.

'Did you know that all the tribes were considered equal, and everyone held the same standing in life? Everyone doing what they wanted to do and not forced to do it,' Demon stated.

'I find that hard to believe, given our current circumstances,' Rak chuckled.

'I don't expect you to believe everything,' Demon laughed, 'It shows that you think, and do not take everything at face value, as it is presented to you. You are a truth-seeker... But, believe me when I tell you that the Wraith, Dragon and Nether tribes, are by no means, fairy tales. Their cities still remain and can be found... if you know where to look.'

'So, they existed before the war then? We do not get a proper education like the Aether, Mermaids and Griffons, but everyone knows of the war,' Rak stated.

'Yes, they very much existed before the hundred years' war,' Demon stated with a nod, 'It was during that war that the Aether decided they would become the rulers, the 'peacekeepers' as it were. In any case, in the beginning it was fair, but as time marched

onwards, the war became a victim of history, and then it was hidden away in the dark recesses of Aether libraries. Finally, the history which had been altered over and over, came to rest in the darkest corners, locked away from all but a select few,' Demon sighed as they helped Rak remove the normal rock, 'Although the war was forgotten, grudges were handed down through the generations and tyrants took power... and that is why you now inhabit the bottom of the shit pile.

All because, long ago the Centurion and Golem tribes took the *wrong* side of the battle, and even though the bones of those originally involved in the war have long since turned to dust, you still pay the price for their *mistakes*.'

'I have so many questions, but all in all it doesn't seem fair, that we are the ones who bear the brunt of the punishment, when we are the ones who have done nothing wrong,' Prizrak frowned

'I know Rak, but there is nothing that can be done about it, because no one wishes for another war,' Demon shook their head, 'Your future is forged by your hands, only you can decide what shape it will take,' Demon chuckled as the vein of ore collapsed out of the wall and revealed an even larger vein of ore behind it.

It took him by surprise as this had never happened before, and the second vein of ore had more iron ore in it than he had ever mined before.

'While the Talynt has faded into legend, their magic still runs through the earth,' Demon noted as Prizrak was absorbed by the sight before his eyes, 'There has been imbalance for too long, and the world is starting to shift. The future is made by men of action, young Rak, and there is a shit storm coming, and you can bet that the Aether Imperialists aren't going to lift a hand to help you. Who will look out for you, if not for you?'

‘I’m sorry,’ Prizrak shook his head, ‘I’m having trouble even hearing what you’re saying at the moment,’ he stated as he tried to calculate how much money this haul of ore would net him and the town.

‘Of course, you are,’ Demon laughed as they helped load some of the lode into his cart, ‘This conversation may seem completely irrelevant to you, and while you are right, it will not always be irrelevant. That, and I just wanted to meet you, and talk with you, find out what type of person you are,’ Demon stated to the still distracted Prizrak.

Demon pulled out a scroll and stuffed it securely into Prizrak’s shirt.

‘Did you know this much ore used to be worth a king’s ransom?’ Demon noted as they helped start pushing the cart back to the surface, ‘I bet you barely get a pittance for it now. Either way, just store what I said in the back of your mind and mull it over.’ Rak nodded, still barely paying attention to what Demon was saying.

It wasn’t until he was out in the sunlight that he realised he was alone, Demon seeming to have vanished into thin air. He cast about looking for the figure but saw no trace of the being who had helped him. Shrugging, he pushed his cart over to the Supervisor.

‘Did you see someone come into the tunnels wearing a fancy mask?’ Rak asked him, ‘It was all painted up like a demon.’

‘Sorry Rak, no one else has gone into the mine who doesn’t work here,’ the supervisor shook his head, picking up a piece of ore from the cart, hefting it up to study it, ‘Nice find, it is rather high grade, there will be a bonus for this.’

‘There is more,’ Rak noted, ‘I doubt that this is even a tenth of the entire lode.’

‘You’ve been fairly lucky in the past Rak, but I think you need to change your filter,’ the supervisor laughed, ‘No one is *that* lucky.’

‘Come with me then,’ Rak chuckled as he emptied his cart and headed into the mine once more with the supervisor in tow.

When they got to the vein, he showed the supervisor, who fell to his knees in disbelief, at the sight before his eyes.

‘This is the finest grade iron I have ever seen in my life,’ he whispered reverently as he picked up a piece of the ore and studied it, ‘With this we might actually be able to get the village up off its feet.’

He pulled out his whistle and blew several shrill blasts that echoed down the mine, summoning the other miners. After a few minutes had passed the first of many hurried footsteps drifted down the corridor as miners began to appear.

‘What is it? What happened?’ the first several there asked as they came to a stop.

‘We’ve had a massive stroke of good luck,’ the supervisor laughed and tossed the ore to the closest miner, ‘Rak found a fabled motherlode of ore.’

‘Quickly, let’s load it up and get it above ground,’ another miner stated, ‘We might be able to get it all out by tomorrow morning when the Peacekeepers come to collect.’

‘No, don’t do that,’ a third miner shook his head, ‘They won’t have brought enough money to pay for it all, and they will promise to pay us back, but never actually get around to doing so.’

‘Smart idea, we’ll give it to them in dribs and drabs, like normal, milk them for all this lode is worth,’ the supervisor laughed.

They all nodded in agreement and several started loading their carts, while several others started mining out the rest of the vein. Rak pitched in, helping clear the ore as the miners dug it out, and all of a sudden there was silence in the tunnel. Even the

talking stopped as everyone's attention was drawn to the wall of iron and the glittering anomaly within it.

The supervisor took a pick and gently started working around it, and when it finally fell free from its iron prison, a gold crystal the size of the supervisor's head lay on the shelf of rock. No one dared speak, as the supervisor picked it up and held it in front of him. Everyone knew that while silver crystals were worth a small fortune, gold crystals were worth kingdoms.

The supervisor looked from the crystal to all the stunned miners as they marvelled at the sheer size of the gem before them. The crystal was going to turn their town into a ghost town, and they all knew it, and not from migration either.

'We never speak of this to anyone, ever,' the supervisor declared, 'Someone take it out into the wasteland and throw it into the nearest crevice.'

'Rak, you do it,' one of the miners stated.

The supervisor nodded his agreement and wrapped the crystal in a thick cloth before thrusting it into Rak's arms. Rak held the crystal, and started heading for the entrance of the mine, and with the formerly jovial mood upset, the rest of the miners followed him out. As they milled around the entrance of the mine sorting out what to do with the ore, they congratulated Rak on the find and clapped him on the back, before he turned his feet towards the wasteland.

The crystal in his hand felt like he was holding the entire world's weight, as he trudged towards the wasteland. For him, and the rest of the town, it probably *was* the entire world. The town was only small, little more than a settlement of just over two hundred people. If the Aether were as fair and just as they claimed to be, the crystal

would have given them all property in their own capital city, now occupied purely by Aether and their turncoat dogs.

But he knew just as well as the others did, that if the crystal was even mentioned to the Aether, they would slaughter the entire town, whether they had it in their possession or not. Not only that, the several surrounding towns would also vanish without a trace, whether they had heard of the crystal or not.

As he made his way towards a chasm that he was aware of, he thought back to what Demon had told him earlier. As he stood looking down into the bottomless pit that seemed to never end, he sighed. The future is forged with your own hands, and with those hands he dropped all his hopes, dreams and promises for a cursed future into the abyss. He didn't watch it fall, instead his cold silver-blue eyes scanned the horizon of the wastelands before he turned and headed back to the town.

He steeled himself in doing so, everyone would be celebrating, and he would be showered in congratulations from the townsfolk, and hugs and kisses from his mother and sister. But he knew that tomorrow would see him once more down his corner of the mine, lengthening his tunnel even further.

*Deep within the Twisted Root Forest, there is an anomaly. A large clearing with grass that doesn't grow longer than a few inches. Many speculate that it is the place from which the All-Mother created everything, and once finished, decided to sleep there for a time before moving on. Others believe that it is a place of great power, such that only the Talynted can use. Even more speculate that it is a gate between worlds or even something from the sky.*

*I do not know what it may be, it is not my place to speculate, I just document things as I see them. I have been to the clearing, often referred to as Vel Clearing. I am not sure how it came to the name, but in the centre of the clearing is a single flower. It is a vivid and multi-coloured thing of beauty. This flower cannot be found anywhere else in all of Nimrine, and I have heard it only blooms once every one-hundred years, and lives for two before wilting away.*

*I cannot deny that there is something about the flower, and the clearing in general. I was lucky enough to see it in bloom, and I cannot deny the flower's breathtaking beauty. However, entering the clearing while the flower was in bloom, definitely had an effect on me I have never experienced before. The air becomes heavy, but not in an uncomfortable way, the air is sweet and seems to have a flavour compared to the rest of the forest.*

*Along with the air, I felt at peace, calm and as if all my worries couldn't be any further away. I can only liken it to my own mother's comforting hug when I was a babe. Approaching the flower, I felt content and satisfied, until I was able to make out its each individual colours. Blood Red, Ice Blue, Metal Black, Earthen Brown, Pure White, Midnight Black, Ocean Green and Sky Blue.*

*I am not sure if it was coincidence or by intelligent design, but I believe that the colours represent each of the eight tribes. Not many people come to the clearing, choosing to avoid the forest altogether, due to the vibe it seems to give off. I only heard of it because of an old wife's tale in a bar and decided to investigate it. I approached the flower, and as I did so, a single petal shed from the rest of the flower, and borne on a soft wind, deposited itself in my hand.*

*I had had no intention to disturb this flower, but the events seemed like a divine message, so I worked on preserving the flower petal and pressed it. I will eventually add it just under this segment, but for now it sits on my desk with all the other baubles I have collected in my travels.*

*Excerpt from 'Traveller's Diary' by 'Unknown'*