

The Lake of Sorrows

Location · Lake

Population: None (no permanent settlements on its shores)

Government: None

The Lake of Sorrows lies in a bowl of dark granite in the middle reaches of Kyrell, fed by mountain runoff and drained by no river anyone has mapped. Its water is clear at the edges -- cold and clean enough to drink -- and becomes a deep, lightless black at the center, where the bottom has never been reliably sounded. On calm days, the surface is still enough to reflect the sky with unsettling precision. On days when there is no wind, it moves anyway, the way water moves when something beneath it shifts.

The name predates the Reckoning of the Second Light. Early records give no explanation for it, as though the name required no explanation -- as though anyone standing at the shore would understand immediately. Travelers who camp nearby report unsettling dreams, not of violence or danger, but of loss: people they have forgotten, places they will never see again, choices that cannot be undone. The dreams are not unpleasant, exactly. That is considered the more troubling detail.

In the late Age of Myth, a meteor fell into the Lake and sank to the bottom. The Feybound smith Caelindra retrieved it from the lake bed -- an undertaking whose difficulty she declined to specify to anyone who asked -- and spent seven years working the metal into the rapier now called Thornwhisper. She said the metal told her what it wanted to be. Local tradition holds that the meteor had been in the lake for some time before Caelindra arrived, and that the lake had been doing something to it in the interim. What that means, and whether the lake retains any residual effect from the object's presence, is not a question that has been formally investigated.

The shores are accessible but rarely visited. There are no settlements. The fishing, theoretically possible given the water quality, is not practiced. No one who has tried to explain why they find this unremarkable has managed a satisfying answer.