

10-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR

2ND WATCH [WARM, PARTLY CLOUDY, SOUTHEAST BREEZE]

Berina tends to her stomach wound and it feels almost completely healed. [-1 IP, +1 physician]

Once awake and dressed, Rikoro heads over to Josrel and Lillia's room. He gives a gentle knock on the door, and when it is answered he asks with a soft smile, "Good morn, is there time this day for ablution?"

Clearing his throat Josrel returns: " Of course Rikoro please come in." Then Josrel with Lillia and Rikoro perform their morning ablutions ...

Afterwards Rikoro mentions to the two Haliki's, "Yesterday when I ventured to the Watch Barracks, I inquired about any informal gatherings similar to what the Haleans have here at the inn, but for followers of the Sage. They knew of none, but mentioned that a Rendig of Charaers - a harper, is a member of the laity. Perhaps we can speak with him and find out if either there is any practice in town or if he would be interested in partaking in one."

"Yes Rikoro, I believe we would like to meet with this Rendig of Charaers." Josrel says looking to Lillia for confirmation. "We were just speaking of finding someone of our faith here last night Lillia and I were. After we break our fast with the others we can set out to find him. thank you Rikoro."

As you all meet in the common room, you are served pork bacon, soft cheese, curds, blackberries, corn pone and apple cider to break your fast.

When the meal is set before her, Berina says: "Mmm...now this is a proper start to the day." and she digs in with gusto. Getting Melenda's attention, she calls out: "Mistress Melenda, this is wonderful! My complements to the cook!" Looking at Davas' amused expression caused by Berina's stuffing herself, she says around a mouthful of food: "Hey, I'm eating for two here!"

As Davas looks up from his food, he grins and Says "It will be a healthy small one I think ... and I fear, more like to me than you, if that's how much he eats". Ducking Berina's response, he grins again and returns to the food with glee.

Berina swallows her mouthful, follows Davas' dodging, and gives him a peck on the cheek.

Rikoro smells the curds and cheese carefully before eating it, then nibbles at the pork bacon a few times deciding upon the taste before committing to eating the entire meal.

When the finicky Fyvrian mage is finally finished, he reaches into his pack and pulls free his journal. While flipping through the pages, he says to the others seated with him, "Last eve before bed I quickly scribed an outline draft to Lords Odasart and Harabor. I thought it important to have everyone read it and provide any feedback in terms of changes, omissions and additions. This way we can come to a consensus and all sign it. I left the terms of our fee and any supplemental requests blank. Mainly because I have no experience with mercenary work and do not know what to ask. Berina, Davas and Josrel's own prior experience would be quite helpful as they've dealt with Lord Odasart in the past. Not to mention since Fyna's own profession

warrants extensive knowledge her voice would be invaluable. Finally Lillia may be best able to add a negotiators touch. And I will endeavour to examine it and see what I can do to make it legally binding and secure."

<http://www.duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Kaldor/FormalLetterOfRequest.pdf>

Berina takes the letter, and reads it. She then puts her head close to Davas' ear and reads the letter out loud, but just loud enough for Davas to hear. Turning to the others after she has finished reading the letter to Davas, she says: "Davas can't read."

"My only comments," says Lillia, "are that when dealing with the nobility, one should never give ultimatums so I would leave off the line starting with 'Without this aid...' I am sure they can figure out the consequences of lack of support without prompting. What kind of things were you thinking of under 'supplemental requests'? I think they will be more receptive if the only thing we ask for is not just money. The nobility tend to think of mercenaries as being more expendable than retainers...they can always 'buy' more mercenaries. Oh, and when you say 'per person' you should remind them of how many people you are referring to."

Nodding a few times, Rikoro replies contently, "Yes, very good points. I will remove the ultimatums. As to the supplementals, I must confess I have no ideas. I am not a mercenary by trade. I know that Berina and Davas were granted a townhouse and citizenship rings for their previous efforts. Perhaps a request for property or land? The true question is how to properly value our efforts in the nobility's eyes."

"I suspect that the value of our mission to the lords in Tashal would not be much more than that of mercenaries," Lillia says, "From what we have seen so far, I further believe the value to the local community will be much more. Of course that will depend on what we actually find out is going on. We could ask more than what they think the mission is worth and the most they can do is turn us down. The problem with that is the time involved in offers and counteroffers, along with the expense of messengers back and forth."

Rikoro, glancing over to Berina, "Do you think the chantry would be interested in our exploits for Kaldor by word of the noblemen? I imagine not since it does not extend into esoteric matters."

Berina says, "I would imagine that they would have some interest if our abilities have to be used to bring the task to a resolution. It's one thing to work on advancing our understanding of things Pvaric in the privacy of our rooms or other quiet locale, but quite another to use what we know to solve problems out in the wider world. I'm sure they would be interested in the practical application of our crafts."

Acquiescing quite easily to Berina's point, Rikoro responds, "Fair enough it could not hurt. We could ask for letters of recommendation detailing our actions for the kingdom. Though it would only benefit the two of us. Now that I think of it, I wonder if they may have treasuries or coffer with items possessing arcane properties. That would be far better received."

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Berina says, "Lords Harabor and Odasart know nothing of Fyna. I don't recall either of them saying we could take on extra people at their expense. Even if they have no objection to more people being added to the mission, I would be willing to bet that they will say that the support for such persons will be at our expense. I could be wrong here, but I wouldn't be surprised if that is how it plays out."

First raising a single spindly finger, then lowering and raising another as he speaks, Rikoro lets Berina know, "True, but with the departure of Isiel, and the addition of Fyna our numbers balance out from the start. Actually we are one less than the meeting as Thrid was present too. I do not think they would mind who completes the task over the success of said task."

Berina says, "Good point. I'm embarrassed to say that I'd forgotten about Isiel and Thrid. The letter will have to mention their departure and the reasons for same. The addition of Fyna will then make perfect sense and shouldn't raise any objections."

As he jots down his points in the margins of the journal, Rikoro speaks, "Very well, since the others have remained silent on the matter. These are the proposed changes I will make. First remove anything that appears to be a 'demand'. Second, indicate a change of those in our company. Third, ask for the warrant documentation. Fourth, add in a request for payment of equal or greater value for the errand Berina and Davas last performed and letters or esoteric items for Berina and myself."

Pausing to look up from his writing to regard Davas, Josrel, Fyna and Lillia each in turn, the ink smudged 'de facto' scribe inquires, "Unless someone desires something outside of monetary gain?"

Looking at Rikoro with a raised eyebrow, Berina says: "Asking them for esoteric items? Don't you think that's a bit presumptuous? If they know about 'esoteric items', I expect they'll also know how valuable they are as well. I suppose you can ask, but I'm not comfortable with the idea. Of course, asking for the sun, moon and stars may get us more money and other mundane assistance once they've stopped laughing and turned us down flat with regard to esoteric items."

Tipping his head slightly to Berina, Rikoro retorts, "As Lillia and I discussed a couple of days ago, one mans rock is another mans gold. Who is to say what value is put on such arcane items. Not just items, but even being granted esoteric lore. It is possible they hold original copies of tomes sought by our respective chantry, that are currently being used as door stops." A light chuckle escapes his lips then woefully, "If we ask for coin we appear little more then expendable mercenaries." As an aside, "No offense meant Fyna.", then continuing to further justify himself, "Not to mention I hold little care for monetary wealth beyond necessity of living. I prize wealth of knowledge as far superior over coin. As a Hlean you may take a different stance of course."

Berina says, "I understand. And I'm not saying that you shouldn't ask for things other than coin. Who knows, maybe we might actually get such things. I just wonder if you've considered the full range of possible reactions to such a request? I've suggested disdainful amusement as one possibility. Plain refusal is another. However, anger, or even outrage, is also possible...with predictable consequences. I leave it to you to decide if the

possible reward is worth the possible risks. I will support whatever course of action you choose."

Berina continues, "I prize wealth, not for itself, but for what it can be used to do. It's a tool. If a man were starving, and alone in the wilderness, gold would have no value whatsoever. Knowledge alone may please your psyche, but to me, if you have no means to apply your knowledge to the furtherance of your life, it's of no greater value than gold has to that man starving in the wilderness."

Berina says, "Lord Odasart told me that when I was sent on missions at his command, I was to receive a certain amount per day. I'm embarrassed to say that I can't remember the amount he quoted, but he's an honorable man and wouldn't short me just because I forgot. You could ask on my behalf that I get said pay rate for the time between our leaving Tashal to the end of the wool faire and our return to Tashal."

Berina continues, "More importantly, in my view, is a confirmation from them to Donar and Anesa that we are who we say we are, and urging Donar and Anesa in the firmest terms possible...without causing anger...to assist us to the fullest extent of their abilities. After all, we do have some money thanks to the brigands, and, hopefully, income from employment. What we need most, is co-operation from the people here in Minarsas. The confirmation should probably contain an explanation of why we were sent here."

The gangly bearded mage simple nods and says calmly, "Mrm very true. It is not just to gain information from these two, but they can act as liasons to others. Our biggest obstacle is that we are considered outsiders here. For someone to vouch on our behalf will grant us a surer foothold in terms of ease of navigating socially."

Pulling on the tip of his blonde beard, Rikoro adds, "Ah yes and one other item we should add, we never retrieved the documents from Lord Odasart concerning Anseri Walorn and Armenton of Soril outlaw status. They may provide us with a means to seeing them captured."

* * *

A young lad enters the inn and speaks briefly with the innkeeper. The innkeeper points out Josrel and the lad approaches to say, "My master, Sir Petral Aswain, has agreed to meet with you for a turn of the glass at the start of the fourth watch, here at the Green Dragon Inn. I am requested to wait for a reply."

Stifling a choking cough from drink Josrel was drinking at the time the lad comes over Josrel wipes his mouth : "Yes, very good, You may tell Sir Petral of Aswain that I look forward to our meeting and will await for him here at the start of the fourth watch."

The lad turns to leave with a frown on his face, when Lillia says to Josrel, "You should not be ungenerous for his good news, my dear." She gives the lad a penny for his efforts and he leaves in a happier mood.

After the the Lad leaves Josrel says "Wow, I didn't expect to get a response at all not to mention one this quickly. This is wonderful, we may have a caught a turn for the good here.

Hopefully Sir Petral of Aswain will be of some assistance to us in our cause."

"That is fantastic news! I cant wait to see him again!", Fyna says this as she claps Josrel on the back.

Flinching from Fyna Josrel returns: "Do you know Sir Petral well Fyna?" Josrel asks "The reason I ask is that Sir Petral is under the assumption of meeting me and though I don't think having Lillia here with me at the meeting, the fact that she is my wife. I am not sure how he would react to having another join us that he is not aware of. Perhaps I can ask him after he has made himself comfortable if it is alright with him to see you. I do not wish to irritate him by imposing on his generosity." Josrel continues."

Fyna says, "Josrel, I am well acquainted with Sir Petral. I am sure he wouldn't mind. I won't pipe up much unless he desires to talk to me. Since I don't have anything to ask of him it would be awkward for me to ask for a meeting and then not say anything, so if he sees that I am here and wants to talk to me, this will provide him the opportunity to do so."

She thinks for a moment to herself..."Though I am in need of work, but I don't want to come off as begging for it. I might bring it up in the natural course of conversation. I do want to see him again though. He is the only person in this town that I know."

Fyna leans her chin on her hand, " I should talk with Berina and Davas about how I can play a role with you guys. I think we all get along well."

Davas glances at Berina, grins, turns to Fyna and says half jokingly "I would much rather have you as a friend than an enemy, as I'm sure would those here".

A smile escapes Rikoro's lips as he jokingly comments, "Indeed, no need to root around in sewers and lose ones head. Much easier this way. We should inform the innkeep we will be having Sir Aswain for dinner this evening. Also I recommend not overwhelming him with the details of why we are here just yet for several notable reasons."

Rikoro buttons his cloak, readying himself to leave, but before rising informs the others, "These are my plans for the day. I will need to visit the lexigrapher for two parchments and a new journal. Though I am loathe to pay the additional taxes. He may also be able to recommend a courier. I would also like to again try to find employ with the people Master Donar mentioned." The pious lay follower looks to the two Haliki's as he mentions the next item, "Possibly visit the Harper, Rendig of Charaers about our faith. And lastly if there is time visit a clothier. That should keep me busy for the rest of the day. If anyone is interested in traveling with me at some or part of my errands, let me know."

Having watched the discussion about lords and rewards with apparent confusion, Davas stretches. "I have other plans ... but I hope things go well for you and I will see you this even".

Mostly to Berina, he says "I will go to the temple of Peoni to give thanks for the fortune that has brought us this far and thus far unharmed". He reaches for Berina's hand and squeezes it

with a smile. "At the start of the third watch I will meet the lord's ... hunt master? ... or gamekeeper?". He looks annoyed and mumbles a curse. "Ah ! ... I do not know and I cannot now remember his name or if he gave it me". He smacks his head. "I hope the work goes better than my memory and manners".

With a rueful smile, he adds " I know not when I will return ... but hopefully this evening ... before food". He grins, squeezes Berina's hand again, then goes to collect his belongings and begin his day.

Davas gets his belongings and once again gets to the door before realizing he has no idea where the temple of Peoni actually is and he has not seen it while wandering about town.

His hand on the door, Davas turns. "Ah ... does anyone know where the Peoni temple is here? I ... ah ... in my haste, I find I know not".

He waits for an answer. If he gets one he thanks them and hurries off.

One of the patrons says, "It is that big building in the middle of the graveyard south of town. You cannot miss it."

10-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [WARM, PARTLY CLOUDY, SOUTHEAST BREEZE]

Instead of following the directions to the temple of Peoni, Davas goes to the manor gate to make his appointment with the forester.

The forester peers at the position of the sun looking only slightly annoyed at Davas' late arrival. "Oh, you made it," he says to Davas.

Still panting a little from his run to just out of sight of the gate, Davas flashes the forrester a quick grin. After a few more seconds, he turns to him again. "My apologies, I am new in town and it was further than I remembered". With another broader grin he adds "I am Davas ... of Fainovirs. I am interested in your offer of work". He stands straighter, having recovered his breath. "Tell me what you need and I'm sure we can work something out. I am good in the wilds, can hunt as you supposed ...and I'm reliable ..." he grins again "once I know what is required. Take me on and you won't regret it". He smiles, and waits for the man's response.

Looking a bit unnerved at all of Davas' mugging, he says, "as I said yesterday, my name is Eochiebin of Elwudadril. You are not simple are you? I will pay you 10d per day if you help with the hunt but nothing if you get lost in the woods and I have to send out a search party."

He leads the way into the woods west of town. After an hour and a half, He points out a beaver trail that is several hours old.

With a quick grin, Davas says "of course you are ... and no, I'm not. Just a little forgetful recently. My apologies". After listening to what is required, Davas nods. "Agreed". He keeps his peace after that and watches and listens to learn what he can of Eochiebin, nodding occasionally if he speaks. When the beaver trail is pointed ou, Davas grins, nods again and examines the trail carefully before beginning to track.

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You follow the trail for another three turns of the glass and just at the point that the trail becomes so obscured that you cannot follow, you see a small pond created by a beaver dam across a creek.

Eochiebin stays your hand saying, “ a beaver is a poor serving for a nobleman’s table. They are greasy and almost impossible to prepare well. The grease is good to fortify a peasant’s pottage but not good for much more. We will note the location of this pond and send some of the spit boys to see if they can catch any fish but then we will look for other game and hope to find something before the day’s sun fails for the evening.”

Davas nods while continuing to watch the pond, then relaxes visibly. He turns to Eochiebin, nods again, then backs off the way they came. If he gets no other instructions, he will back up about 500 yards before starting to scout for other game.

* * *

Two men enter the inn, one is dressed in peasant rage and the other dressed as a freeman with the smell of blood on him. Melenda says, “welcome folks.” She then comes to your table and says, “I am afraid I am going to have to ask you to finish your conversation quickly and be on your business for the day. We are about to start our daily services to Halea.”

Speaking to Melenda, Berina asks: "Oh good, I'm ready for some worship. Once we've finished services, can I talk to you about that money matter I mentioned?"

“If you want me to take your confession,” Melenda says, “I can take it afterwards. If it is merely a question, you should bring it up during the mass so everyone can be enlightened. Really Berina, you are going to have to stop asking me to make judgments on such small hints. I cannot tell you this is possible or not possible until I have some idea what you are talking about.”

Sighing, Berina says (in a voice low enough to not be overheard by other people in the inn): "It is nothing improper, so is not a matter for confession, but it is private." Launching right in, she says: "Master Harabor was only able to redeem one of the two bearer bonds I took to him. The remaining bond he valued at 880d. Rikoro, the two Halilki, and Fyna have received their shares of the funds. That will leave Davas and I with the remaining coin, but short of our full share. Lysada is still owed her share...which comes to 529d. If we can redeem the 880d bond, Lysada can be given her share out of that and the remainder will give Davas and myself the rest of our share. I seek your advice on what to do."

“I am not entirely sure what it is you want from me,” she answers, “As you know, our teachings do not advocate all for this one and none for that one. By the Seven Coins, you should distribute what you have according to what each person is entitled to and wait for the rest until you can redeem the bond from the usurer. Considering the large sums you are speaking of, the usurer will surely have more funds by the time you have spent what you have. After all, 529d is almost as much as someone like Lysada will see in two years. On the other hand, if you have already distributed the funds as you have said, there is no use in asking for my advice...you cannot really go and take back what you have already given.”

"I have already paid those I've mentioned." Berina says. "I was hoping that you could suggest a way to get the last bond redeemed in a short period of time."

Pausing for a moment, she continues: "I can give Lysada the last gold Crown and 209d, which would settle the distribution of the booty. That would leave Davas and I with the remaining bond and about 100d or so. I was hoping to be able to keep a bit more cash, but Davas has found employment, and if I can do the same, the two of us should be able to get by."

"Since you have taken Lysada on, I wanted to ask your views on her having so much money before I actually give it to her. It IS her money, but I don't know how...if at all...the relationship between the two of you affects her receiving so much. What I guess I mean is, are you now effectively her guardian so that you would hold the money in trust for her?"

“Being her ‘guardian’, so to speak, matters not overmuch,” Melenda says, “sometimes it is handled one way, sometimes the other and does not affect the employer/employee relationship. Being her spiritual adviser, on the other hand, I can help her spend her money according to the seven coins.”

"Well then, how about this?" Berina begins. "You and I meet with Lysada...in private, away from prying eyes. I can give her the money, and you can begin her education about the seven coins then and there."

“That is acceptable,” Melenda says, “but it will have to be at the end of the third watch when she takes a short break in her labors. For now, let us begin our devotions.”

Turning to the other arrivals, Melenda says, “Today, let us speak of the fifth and sixth coins – ‘For thyne own and thy family’s necessary expenses spend but two coins. These coins are used for food and drink necessary to sustain life, clothing to fit thyne status and lodging for protection. Any extra amount from these coins should be saved to own these necessities instead of renting them from others’. Please, give us examples of how you can ‘own these necessities’ and what you have done in those efforts.”

Speaking up, Berina says: "I have a robe I think might be an example. I purchased beaver skins and had an acquaintance sew them into a robe. Her sewing skills were not the best, and I intend to have it re-sewn when I can, but it keeps the rain, snow and cold out, and me warm and dry within. The acquaintance did the work for free...to further her sewing skills...so the cost in coin was just for the skins. I did some things for her in return, so I gave value for value. Is that what you had in mind, Mistress Melenda?"

“Bartering goods for services is a step in the right direction,” Melenda says, “but that was not what is meant unless you own your friend as a slave. Since slavery is illegal in Kaldor, I take it that is not what you meant. A closer example would be if you had the right to sublease a building and you lease it to a clothier, who then paid you in kind with the garment. The reason this is a better example is because it is a longer term relationship with leases usually being for six months. Doe that make sense?”

"I think so." Berina says. ""The arraignment with my friend was a one-time affair. The example of the clothier could...if the terms

were agreeable to both parties...go on indefinitely, providing me with a steady supply of clothes. Is that what you meant?"

"Yes, exactly," Melenda says, "and the money you spend to create and maintain that relationship comes from the excess from the fifth and sixth coins."

Smiling with the pleasure of having understood what Mistress Melenda was talking about, Berina says: "So, if I wanted something a bit fancier than the agreement with the clothier called for...but still within my station..., I could add some extra coin to cover better fabric, trim and the like, but not have to spend a lot of money...making the money I have go much farther. Such an arraignment could apply to any tradesman who's wears I would need on an ongoing basis. Am I understanding this correctly?"

"Yes, as I just said," Melenda says, "Very well, that is enough for today. I hope to see you all again on the marrow."

* * *

The lanky Fyvrian mage immediately rises up as Melenda says her piece. He looks to the others seated before him, still awaiting a response, then after Berina has made her inquiry of the hostess, Rikoro inquires politely, "Mistress Tamorith, would you happen to know the location of Jita of Vaben or Barint of Ikabir?"

"Barint is the town physician and he lives on the river side of the market square," she says, "the other I have not heard of. You should pay one of the street urchins to show you the way."

"I shall, my thanks for the information.", replies Rikoro, before he leaves to head over to the lexigrapher, he visited the day before.

As you are traveling across town, an attractive blonde comes up behind you, smacks you on the shoulder and says, "I was at the toll bridge the other day when you were entering town. So you are the drug dealer who has been selling your filth to my sister. You had best leave town before I find someone to champion my cause and make you leave town."

Seeming deeply upset, Rikoro frowns and shakes his head, "You are correct in that I had in my possession a single dose of fanosel. Though it was unknowingly the case, and I assure you I am paying for my ignorance. However, you're assumption that from that one herb I am a supplier of narcotics is grossly misguided. First, I just arrived to Minarsas from Tashal, thus it is impossible for me to have ever met your sister. Second, the town watch has their eyes on me because of the incident so I will be the first one they come to in any and all matters concerning drug trafficking. It would simply be foolish on my part to involve myself in such matters in any way as I would end up in the gaol immediately."

Wistfully Rikoro continues on with his statements to the woman, "That being said I understand you're frustration and need to find someone accountable. If there was something I could do to help I would gladly aid you. Alas I have nothing at my disposal, unless you can think of something besides leaving. On that score I will be in town until the end of the Wool Faire on errand. When that time is up I shall leave and you will likely never see

me again. In the meantime I will do my best to avoid yourself and your sister, who I can only inference looks similar to you."

"So you say and I doubt you have a host in town who can speak for your character," she says, "You smoothed tongued types never do, always relying on being able to talk your way out of any troubles. Yes, see that you stay well away from me and my family." And she turns and walks away.

The rest of your journey is uneventful.

Upon entering the Lexigraphers, Rikoro moves to the counter to greet the man behind it, "Good day Master Runuld. It appears I have need of your services this day. I am in need of two parchments and a means to have them sealed for delivery as well as purchasing a new journal. Might you be able to help me?"

"You will have to be more specific," says the lexigrapher, "at the moment, I have not any loose parchment and I am waiting for more to be delivered. Try back in a tenday. Now if you mean to seal your letters from prying eyes, you will have to visit a jeweler for the seal and a chandler for the sealing wax. If you mean to seal the letters from damage of the elements, you will need to get a cloth from a clothier and have it waxed by a chandler. I have eight journals with twenty-five pages each that I can sell you for 35d per book. Other than that, I have three square feet of vellum, pens of metal and wood, and plenty of ink in black, blue, brown, green and red."

As the Lexigrapher lists his wares, Rikoro nods slowly, clearly in thought. After a brief moment of deliberation he says, "I suppose a journal will do for now, I can tear the pages carefully from it. Hrm and let me see how my supply of ink and quills are. I may need some refreshed."

He takes your money and gives you a journal.

[OO: For ease of accounting, lets say one quill pen per square foot of parchment (he's clearly used all he has), each wooden pen requires a writing check for each square foot (MF, CF means its used up or broken), a metal pen also requires a writing check each square foot (CF means used up or broken). A pint of ink will last until it's lost or the container is broken.]

"Hrm I appear fine for ink, but could do with either quills or a metal pen.", the Fyvrian mage mentions glancing up to the Master Lexigrapher.

"I am out of quill pens at the moment as well," the lexigrapher says, "I have wood pens for 1d each and I have a few metal pens. I can give you them for 5d each."

"I shall take eight wooden pens and one metal one then please.", Rikoro produces the appropriate coin for the lexigrapher.

While Rikoro reaches into his pack and fishes around with his long arm for the coin to pay Karbes, he inquires, "I plan to send two missives to Tashal and wished to ensure they arrived intact and unread. Though I have no official seal myself. It appears I will need to obtain one. However, I was told there was no licensed jeweler in town, would you happen to know where I could find one... and a chandler?"

"If you have not a seal, you will have to have your design approved by a member of the herald's college. The only one I

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know of in town is my lord's chancellor, Sir Gorlin Faragar. Getting an appointment with him will take a tenday or more depending on your status. As to a jeweler, we have not one that is licensed but my niece, Benlealina, does very fine work. Since she has not a franchise, she cannot hang a shingle. You can find her at the third door on the right from here. Let us see... Osar of Charaers is a chandler and you will find him around the corner, second door on the left. Frankly, he does poor work but he is better than nothing."

With the coin on the counter he then asks, "Would you by any chance know of a messenger or runner available in town to carry my penned words to Tashal?"

"I believe Tashal is 40 leagues from here so a message with a caravan would be 160d. An independent messenger would be at least double that and could be as much as ten times as much depending on how fast you want it delivered. I know not the caravans or messengers but Finmeld of Arwyn hauls freight and could probably tell you. He is at the north end of the market square. Other than that, the usurers who finance caravans could tell you. That would be Anerd of Harabor in the big common just south of here or Gotar of Vaben who is across the road from the teamster. I know not what they have their hands into so could not tell you which finances caravans, if either of them do."

Rikoro's eyes widen hearing the prices listed, eventually he nods and patiently listens to the rest of the details as they're explained. "With the cost so high I believe it best to discuss with the others, my thanks for all the information."

After stepping outside, Rikoro looks around for a street urchin wandering about. When he has any of their attention, he asks them in turn, "Do you happen to know where Jita of Vaben works or resides?"

"Zure ding, goodman," one of the lads says, "zhe be my aunt."

Upon hearing an affirmative, the bearded gangly mage offers, "Two farthing for directions and a denarii if you lead me there."

"Zhe lives een Runuld," and at the lack of understanding on your face, he points east and says, "dey village over dere." Starting toward the market square, he continues, "come along I weel zhow ee de way."

He leads you through the market and out the other side, along a path southeast, and, at a crossroad, he turns northeast. Passing through the village, he stops at the last house on the east side, holds out his hand and says, "dicky be de wan."

"Ah my many thanks.", Rikoro mentions as he roots around in his pack and produces a single silver coin which he hands to the boy. Immediately afterwards he steps to the doorway and gives it a knock with his staff.

"Come on in. It is open," comes the reply from within.

Once inside Rikoro looks about curiously eventually settling his eyes on the first person he sees and asks, "Would you happen to be one Jita of Vaben?"

"Yes," she says cautiously.

Once the matter of who is who is settled, the blond bearded mage continues, "I am Rikoro of Drelin. A pleasure."

While he talks, Rikoro smoothes over his cloak, "The other night I had the pleasure of speaking with Master Ostler Harabor and he informed me you were in the trade of creating apothecary solutions. I was wondering if you needed someone to aid you? Either in gathering materials or creating recipes? I have knowledge in both herb gathering and alchemical arts and was hoping to put it to use as a means to support myself."

"The Mule?" she says, "If he said I could hire you, he spoke out of place. I cannot hire you unless you are a guild member. I can buy herbs from you if I need them only if you can show proof that you had foraging rights where you got them. And before you ask, I cannot tell you what herbs I need as the guild would consider that commissioning you."

Rikoro bobs his head and asks, "Ah I understand completely. And no Master Harabor simply mentioned your name to me when I inquired. I am not a guild member at present, but it is something I could look into. The question I would then have for you is, would have need of me then? I ask this to save myself the effort if not."

With a chuckle, she answers, "Do you think so little of my craft that you believe you can just go pay a fee and become an apothecary? Who can tell what I will need years from now when you become a journeyman? On the other hand, if you are saying you want to go to the Mangai to apprentice to me, you should realize that you are making a commitment that will take years and seven pounds or more for an apprentice contract. I have not an apprentice at this time but I also have not a franchise. I would be allowed to take you on as an apprentice if you offer enough to the Mangai to convince them but it is not a decision to make lightly."

At a loss for words momentarily, Rikoro stammers, "A-Apologies. I had witnessed a friend yesterday sign an oath to work as a scribe under the Mangai's approval and I thought something similar could be achieved on my part. I thank you for the time and information you have provided for me. If I am successful finding a foraging license I shall see you again."

Once outside Rikoro endeavors to follow the directions given to him by innkeepers wife to pay a visit to Barint of Ikabir place.

At the edge of Runuld village, Rikoro has to step aside to avoid a patrol of guardsmen. Following the road back to the market square is uneventful, until he once again reaches the lexigrapher's shop. Standing there a moment remembering his instructions, Rikoro watches a furtive looking character pass down the road with a large bag over his shoulder. Rikoro was to find a shop on the other side of the market near the river. Following the line of shops on the opposite side of the road from the lexigrapher, Rikoro soon spies a shop at the end with the sign of a gold urn and surgeon's knife, marking a physician's shop. Just as he arrives, a leatherworker enters the shop with a number of leather goods under his arm.

Upon seeing the person acting strangely in broad daylight, Rikoro pauses to consider what he is seeing.

After the leatherworker steps inside, Rikoro follows suit and enters. He stands idly to the side of doorway, waiting to be acknowledged, not wishing to interrupt.

The physician takes some leather thongs from the bundle and then shakes out a leather apron. After examining them closely he says to the hideworker, "Thank you. They are just what I ordered." He then counts out some coin and bids the hideworker a good day.

Noticing Rikoro standing at the door, he says, "Can I help you?"

As the exchange is going on, Rikoro remains motionless, leaning on his staff quietly and content. When the physician takes notice of him, the Fyvrian mage steps forward with a nod and introduces himself, "Yes, I am Rikoro of Drelin. It is a pleasure Master Ikabir. Recently I arrived in Minarsas and am need of employ. I am uncertain whether you are in need of any aid, but came to inquire. In full disclosure I am not a member of the physicians guild and am not sure if this is required, but I have experience in the healing arts."

"As it so happens, I do have need of someone," he answers, "but it is not guild work and is quite unpleasant. It mostly consists of cleaning up and delivering wastes to the embalmer to be disposed of. I can offer 2d per day plus room and board at a modest level. Are you still interested?"

Rikoro mills over the offer and then asks, "Work is better then none at all. Might I ask what the hours I am needed and also when meals are expected to be had? Also are there any other details I should know about?"

"I think the third and fourth watch should be sufficient to do what is needed," the physician says, "I usually break my fast with a small meal at the end of the second watch, I have a plowman's lunch at noon and the main meal is at the start of the fifth watch. You will be allowed six days a month for holidays as long as you tell me in advance and two of those days are always the Yaelah on the 15th and the Yaelmor on the 30th. You can lay out a pallet on the floor of the surgery. The only other things you need to know now is that the embalmer has his shop in the village of Runuld to the east and the best leeches can be found on the shore of the river under the water wheel of the old mill to the north. Are you ready to start now or do you have to gather your belongings first?"

Rikoro nods in response to the physicians question, "I have been residing at an inn so I need to pay what I owe. As well I had one last errand to run. I am in need of some new clothes. I should also ask regarding the cleaning, will I be dealing with items that could stain? If so I should see about procuring some rags. Would you happen to know where the nearest clothier is in town?"

"Yes, you will be handling things soiled with the five bodily fluids," the physician answers, "You can find a clothier on the west side of the market square at the back of mercantylor Harabor's compound. Ebran of Harabor is the only clothier I know of near by. He handles quality merchandise but he may have some cast-offs that you can get for a pittance."

A smile escapes Rikoro's lips and he nods, saying, "My thanks Master Ikabir. I shall tend to these final matters and return. Though if it is late in the eve, I will be here first thing in tomorrow morning."

After saying good day, Rikoro sets off to visit the clothier following the direction given to him by the physician.

* * *

Following the directions he was given, Davas walks through the town and down the road on the south side. Just as he reaches the woods and comes in sight of his destination, a ragged man approaches him smelling of the sewers. "Pardon me gov'ner, bit wud ee 'appen to 'ave iny varmint dey ee wud be willing to pay me to get urd aw'mun?"

[Davas] With a smile Davas shakes his head. "No, I don't, sorry. If I do, I will seek you out". With a wave, Davas strides towards his destination. Once there, he enters and looks around.

10-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR

4TH WATCH [COOL, CLOUDY, SOUTHWEST WIND]

Davas can see a number of buildings both before him and behind him. On his right is a large graveyard and on his left is a well tended orchard. He enters the chapel and a thin hunchbacked priest approaches him. "Can I help you?" the priest asks.

* * *

.Rikoro's trip to the clothier is uneventful.

Once inside the shop, Rikoro offers the clothier a nod before glancing around. When the owner is free, he says, "Good day to you. I am currently looking to purchase some clothes. Gloves in particular. Something that will allow my fingers to move freely. Besides that anything that is of better quality then what I now own and with a bit of color. Green or brown would be ideal. With all of that in mind, my limit is around three hundred and fifty silver."

Then he adds as an addendum, "Oh and for a position of employment I will soon begin, that involves sullyng and possibly staining my clothes as I work, if you have any rags or cast-offs for a fair price that would be grand."

"As you can see, most of my goods are better than what you have now," the clothier says with a condescending look, "and, as I am sure you well know, better quality costs more money. So within your limits, I have russet gloves for 15d and silk gloves for 46d. I also have buckram gloves for 8d but they would be too stiff for your purpose."

Looking Rikoro over, he continues, "I have leather shirts for 86d and sealskin shirts for 215d. Those are without sleeves, which are extra. I have an ermine vest for 269d and a sealskin vest for 135d. I have leather leggings for 92d, quilt leggings for 184d, and sealskin leggings for 230d. Those are what I have of better quality than what you are wearing but still in your price range. That is un-dyed. Green or Brown will be 30d extra per item."

"For your work clothes, I have some serge tunics for 67d and I can give you a ten percent discount if you spend 100d or more on other goods," he concludes. "I have no 'cast-offs', as you call them since I give that sort of thing to the temple of Peoni for the aid of the poor."

Rikoro begins to pace in consideration of what to buy. He rubs the back of his neck slowly, then turns to face the clothier explaining his decision, "The leather pants will be ideal for now."

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They will afford protection from the elements. The ermine material I imagine is quite comfortable and extravagant. If I were in need of just one item I would indeed purchase that. Sadly that is not the case.

Instead I shall purchase the sealskin shirt. Which sounds quite exotic and would do well against rain I believe. What would the cost me to add sleeves?"

"Adding sleeves to the sealskin shirt would make it 275d and could be ready by the fifth watch on the marrow," the clothier answers.

Coming around to his hands, Rikoro wiggles his long spindly fingers, "In terms of gloves, would it be possible to have either some soft leather or sealskin commissioned? If not the russet gloves will do me quite well."

"Certainly, Goodman," the clothier says, "sealskin gloves would be 28d and soft leather gloves would be 11d."

Tugging on the tip of his beard, the Fyvrian mage decisively comments, "Hrm the sleeves are a bit more than I anticipated. Well then I shall take the leather leggings, soft leather gloves and sealskin shirt. I could then purchase one dye and maintain the maximum amount I set for myself if my math is right. I'll have to make due with my old clothes it seems for cleaning. Is there any chance I could convince you of a discount? Say the ten percent you mentioned? I will certainly be returning once I have more coin to add on sleeves and dye for the leggings. Possibly even a hat."

"Very well, that is leather leggings for 92d, soft leather gloves for 11d, a sealskin shirt for 215d, and an ounce of green dye for 30d" clothier says, "coming to a total of 348d. Since I did not account for your size, I am already giving you a 10% discount. I cannot give you better without impoverishing myself."

Disappointment crosses his features, as Rikoro says, "Fair enough."

After trying his hand at haggling, Rikoro inquires, "Oh I'll put the green dye on the sealskin shirt. Do you think the color will look good with the material?"

The clothier answers, "Since the sealskin is extremely waterproof and I use water-soluble, vegetable dyes, I doubt I could die the shirt without destroying it. I can give you the leggings and shirt today and the gloves will be ready early on the marrow."

"Since the dye can not be applied to the shirt, I have no need for the green then. Please brown the leather pants instead. Ah and my name is Rikoro of Drelin in case you are poor with faces. A pleasure doing trade with you." The lanky bearded man then reaches into his pack and retrieves the coins paying out the clothier in full.

"Pardon me for asking but I want to be sure what you are asking of me," the clothier says, "You want me to dye the brown leather more brown?"

Laughing at what he heard, Rikoro shakes his head, "Apologies. No. Then no dye at all. That will save my purse thirty silver. Unless you have any hats for that price or less?"

"As a matter of fact, I do," the clothier says, "In hats I have leather for 8d, sealskin for 20d, and worsted for 19d."

"Well considering I have the funds, I will splurge and purchase the sealskin one", Rikoro says definitively.

The clothier takes the khuzian crown and 18d and gives you the leather leggings, sealskin shirt, leather gloves, and a sealskin hat.

Once the transaction is complete Rikoro heads back to the inn.

As you are crossing the market square, you see someone watching you closely. They are dressed in a hooded cloak so you cannot tell their identity.

At the other end of the market square is a man-at-arms asking passer by's, "Are you interesting in taking the king's shilling and joining the watch." Turning to you he says, "What about you, mister. The girls love a man in uniform."

Rikoro asks in a serious tone, "What are the details of the position? Are there any requirements?" As he listens he glances around for the hooded person.

"The requirements are that you be alert, not wanted by the law and can focus your attention for more than a moment of your time," the soldier says, "Are you paying attention or am I boring you?"

The watcher notices you talking to the man-at-arms and decided there are more interesting things elsewhere – he wanders off.

Rikoro looks back to the watchman, with a firm nod, "I assure you, I am quite focused on your words. I saw a hooded man spying on me and upon gaining your attention they immediately parted. Though why or for what reason they would find me interesting enough to watch I've no idea. Back to the work you were speaking of, how well trained must one be in combat? And where would one join?"

"You would only need to be trained well enough to defend yourself until help arrives as you are not expected to take the law into your own hands," says the watchman, "and you apply to join at the watch barracks when you have someone from your frankpledge speak for your character."

Rikoro nods in response to the Watchman's words and offers his thanks for his time, then continues on his way back to the inn.

* * *

After the other worshipers have left, Berina says to Mistress Melenda: "How much time do you figure there is before we can have our meeting with Lysada?"

"Now would be best, before I have to attend to other duties," Melenda says. "Lysada! Attend us please," she calls out.

Before she can be answered, a nobleman enters the inn. "I am Sir Petral Aswain and I was told I could find one Josrel of Aswain here."

Melenda says to Berina, "I will take care of this and return anon."

She then says to Sir Petral, "That is he, sitting over there with his wife. Can I get you some refreshments?"

"A glass of your finest wine and drinks for Josrel and his wife," Sir Petral answers.

Standing as Sir Petral approaches Josrel bows and introduces himself " Sir Petral allow me to introduce myself Josrel of Aswain and this is my wife Lillia of Alkar." Josrel indicates Lillia. "Thank you for taking the time to meet with us, on such short notice and not knowing the nature of our request. " Josrel says. "We recently became acquainted with a woman, Fyna of Daarienna.." Josrel indicates Fyna. "who when we arrived here in Minarsas claimed to have some business with you and when given your name sparked and interest in me that we may be of some relation." Josrel pauses briefly "So I asked to come along and see if I can perhaps meet with you and so here we are. I have been raised by my Great Uncle Goshel of Aswain who is a physician as well in Tashal. Being that you are a physician as well though that we may have a connection there. Do you know Goshel of Aswain?" Josrel asks.

"Of course I know Goshel," Sir Petral says in a booming voice, "he is my cousin. And I know of you as well. Your aunt Cerieme has written to me that several years ago you left to join some church and have never returned – even for a visit. I know Sir Goshel can be a bit grouchy at times but he is family after all. You should go and visit him when you get the chance and mend any fences."

"Sir Goshel never seemed to have any interest in me, so I figured that going off on my own and not burdened him any longer would be what he wanted. I know that I should go back and visit, its just that I have recently established myself in both my personnel life and my professional life." Josrel says ashamedly. "When we return to Tashal I will take your advice and visit them and introduce Lillia to them. Who knows maybe Sir Goshel will be more receptive to me now that I am not a burden to him." Josrel says hopefully.

Taking Lillia's hand, he kisses her palm and says, "two ladies to attend you and such lovely ladies as well – you have done well for yourself, lad."

"Oh..ah its not like that, no no Fyna, we just met." Josrel stammers, then laughs. Changing subjects "So how are things with you here in Minarsas?"

"Quite well, quite well," Sir Petral answers, "Just as my cousin was once physician to the king, I am now physician to the Earl and his wife."

"I was wondering though if you could help, obviously we are new to Minarsas and although this is a very nice Inn some more permanent lodging would be nice could you recommend something? Also could you recommend a place for employment for us we do have some skill with the courts and have some experience with physicians as well?" Josrel asks.

With a wink, Sir Petral says, "Not as established as it seems, eh lad. Sorry, but I cannot help you as I have almost no business with commons. For a long term lease, you had best ask a money lender. They are the ones who usually manage that sort of thing. For guild work, make yourself known to the Hall of the Mangai. For unskilled work, you should not set your goals so high and should take whatever is made available to you."

"I may take your advice and go to the Mangai, if they require may I use your name as a reference. I will not do so unless I have your permission. I would not wish to impose on you?" Josrel asks.

"That is a serious request indeed," says Sir Petral, "I cannot recommend you by your skills since I know not what your skills are (and probably would not know their value if I did know what they are). The only thing I know of your character is that you have abandoned your family, temporarily I hope. That would not be a very good recommendation, I fear. No, it is best that you refrain from using me as a reference until we know each other better."

"Like I said, I do not want to put you in any unpleasant situation so I will not mention you at all. If you only see me as someone who abandoned my family that's fine I of course see it differently but that's ok too you are entitled to think as you wish. I can only hope to change that perception through my actions. In so doing hopefully changing those of Sir Goshel's as well which would ease my homecoming." Josrel explains. "I am very pleased to have the chance to get to know another of my kin and look forward to getting together with you in the future. That is of course if you wish to?"

"Certainly," Sir Petral replies, "just send a messenger when you want to meet again. Just make it not so often that it would interfere with my work. And bring all your lady friends to liven up the evening."

Getting her mirth under control, Berina says: "Sir Petral, as you've heard, we are all just recently arrived here in Minarsas, and I...like the others...am in need of employment. I do scribal work and have a good hand. I have paid for a license to take such work if I can find it. Do you know of such work...perhaps in the Earl's household, or among your fellow professionals, or" here she gives him 'The Look' again "maybe yourself?"

"I am afraid not, lass, nothing as fine as that" Sir Petral says, "I can probably get you a job as a scullery maid but the Earl is very nervous about strangers in the manor. As to others of the nobility, I am the wrong one to ask. Some of the fine ladies here disapprove of how I find my entertainment."

"Their loss, I suspect." Berina says. "I'm afraid I'm not cut out to be a scullery maid...myself in a kitchen would be like turning an enraged bull loose in a potter's shop.I'll check at the hall of the Mangai in the morning. They might know of some work I might secure."

Berina follows Sir Petral over to the table, and stands in a posture she hopes will remind Josrel to introduce her to Sir Petral.

Flinching his head and shoulders Josrel turns to see Berina glaring at him then turns to Berina : " Sir Petral I would like to introduce to you a friend of mine, Berina of Kyfa." Josrel motions his open hand to indicate Berina.

With a broad smile, Sir Petral takes Berina's hand and kisses it in her palm, saying "Sir Petral Aswain at your service." Turning to Josrel, he continues. "Another woman friend of young Josrel's. And I suppose you are going to tell me this one is 'not

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like that' as well. You do seem to have a number of untapped resources about you."

Berina claps a hand over her mouth, but can't suppress a laugh. "Sir Petral, you couldn't misread your kinsman more! Josrel is no 'lady's man'...sorry Josrel...but I can attest to the fact that when courage is needed, he can summon what is necessary."

"You can, can you?" Sir Petral says "perhaps not as untapped as I thought."

With an angry look Lillia says, "That will be well enough of that, thank you very much."

Blushing and stammering his words, Josrel says, " I I I, she she is a friend." Josrel turns to Berina glaring at her.

Berina gives Josrel one of those 'Oh, don't be so stuffy.' smiles.

Berina knows that among the Haleans at least, kissing the back of the hand is a sign of respect but kissing the palm is an invitation to a more intimate affair.

Laughing gaily, Berina says: "Why Sir Petral, even though I am a Halean, I'll have you know I'm a happily married woman!" and with a gleam in her eye, she gives him a broad smile in return. "My husband has recently gotten me pregnant...my first child. Would you care to see me in your professional capacity?", again with a gleam in her eye.

"How odd," Sir Petral exclaims, "I have never heard of a happily married Halean before. Oh well, where your husband gains, the rest of the world loses. Perhaps you will look me up in the future when you are less happy or less married."

Turning to Fyna, he continues, "and you have grown into a fine looking woman. Come, give us a hug."

After the departure of Sir Petral, Melenda leads Berina to the kitchen to meet with Lysada.

Berina follows Melenda into the kitchen and waits for her to say something to Lysada by way of getting Lysada's attention.

Berina looks around the kitchen, and if there are any other of Melenda's employees there, she will quietly ask Melenda to send them away: "Mistress Melenda, I think it wise that no one besides yourself, myself, and Lysada actually see the transfer of money. My other companions will know of it, of course, but I rely on them to be discrete and not mention it to anyone."

"Don't be presumptuous," I trust my employees to be as discrete as you trust your companions and I am able to order my own household," Melenda replies. "They have proven themselves on many occasions as there are many things of import discussed at this inn and there has yet to be any report of indiscretion."

Berina says, "I meant no disrespect, Mistress Melenda. Other than Lysada, I know none of them. As you have vouched for them, that's good enough for me."

Once Lysada's attention has been gained, and any other people have gone elsewhere, Berina says: "Lysada, I have told you that you were due a share of the booty we earned for the fight with the brigands on our way here to Minarsas. I am here now to give it to you and discharge my responsibility. Before I do, I advise you to entrust it to Mistress Melenda, and to heed her teachings

about what to do with it...the Seven Coins. If you heed her teaching, I'm sure the Maker of Bargains will reward you."

Berina guides Lysada over to an available flat surface, a preparation table, and sets her backpack down on it. Opening up the pack, Berina counts out 209d and places the last Khuzan Crown on top of the pile. Smiling broadly at Lysada's astonishment, Berina says: "As I said, if you pay close heed to Mistress Melenda's teachings, I'm sure that you have a bright future ahead of you."

Melenda grabs a number of soup bowls and sets them on the table as shown.

<http://www.duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Kaldor/seven.gif> and she tells Lysada, "if you take soup bowls, all of the same size and place them like so, you will have exactly seven." She then takes up the money and starts sewing it into the bowls in equal amounts, "then divide your money into seven parts. These are the seven coins of Halea: Halea's Magic, Debtor's, King's, Need's, Need's, Pleasure. You then take Halea's coin and give it to me to support our religious worship. The magic coin should be used to purchase and maintain the tools of your craft that will reward you with more income. What you will be doing here at the inn is mostly cooking, cleaning and sewing so you should use the magic coin to buy your own cooking utensils, sewing and cleaning tools and materials. The Debtor's coin should be used to pay what you owe to others. At this time your biggest debt is your manumission, so you should save this coin until you have enough to pay for your freedom. The King's coin should be used to pay taxes, tolls and fees. As a citizen of the town you owe 6d per year residence tax and another 6d per year for pannage rights to be able to forage in the woods for firewood, herbs and wild vegetables. The toll to cross the river comes from the king's coin as well. Always be ready to pay the fees of the government fully and with good humor. In that manner there are less questions about how you spend the rest of your money. The two coins for your needs, pay for food, clothing, medical expenses and other needs. Any extra from these coins should be used to purchase your needs rather than hire them to save money in the long term. In example, pay for food and cook it yourself rather than always eating at a cookhouse, sew and mend your own clothes rather than always buying them from a clothier. The last coin is for your pleasure and for the pleasure of others. You say you want to experience the pleasures of worshipping Halea. Use this last coin to enhance your pleasures by purchasing spices, unguents and perfumes for your body, food and drink. And dies and patterns for your clothes."

Fyna who had sat quietly during Sir Petral entire visit, seems to be deep in her own thoughts. And then left without comment.

At the conclusion of Mistress Melenda's instruction of Lysada, Berina asks: "Mistress Melenda, could you tell me how to get to the hall of the Mangai, please. Everyone I've asked so far has no work for me, and no ideas of who to ask. It seems that the Mangai is my last hope for gainful employment." and she sighs.

Sighing herself, Melenda says, "Yes I can but you and your companions are going to have to start looking around for places you want or paying the street urchins a penny to guide you. You should know better than others that information has a value and each time I give you or them directions for free I am taking from the poor which may mean for them whether they eat this day or

not. We Haleans know the value of money but we always give value for value and do not try to obtain money unjustly. Now I believe the Mangai are currently using the Mercantylers' Guildhall which is a small building and is the last before you reach the Zoben bridge directly west of the market square. If they turn you down have a street urchin lead you to the miner's guild or the bonding house. The bonding house in particular is usually in need of someone with a strong back."

"It would seem that I'm socially inept. My apologies, Mistress Melenda. I will do as you said. Thank you." Berina says.

Berina leaves the inn and follows the directions she was given on how to get to the Mercantylers' Guildhall.

She enters to find a clerk behind a tall desk, "Yes? What may be your business here, mistress?"

"I seek employment. I can do scribal work and have paid the fee to legally take such work." and Berina gets the oath she transcribed out of her backpack. "You can check with Master Karbes of Runuld with regard to the authenticity of this document."

"I can also do other sorts of work, but not as well as I can as a scribe. Please, if there is any work I might do, I would appreciate being considered for such." and she waits for a reply.

He looks over the paper and returns it to Berina. "That looks to be in order," he says, "but I can handle all the scribe work needed by the guild at this time. We do have an open position for a housekeeper if you are interested. Pay is 1d per day plus room and board. It is modest I know but it is all we have."

"I'm disinclined to turn down even modest employment, as jobs are not hanging from every tree, but I have a question. My husband is right now being tested for a job as a hunter. If he doesn't get the job...or he does, but room and board is not included...can he share my quarters?"

"Wages and levels of support are set by the mangai for all guild jobs," the clerk says, "If the job is a guild job and he is not offered sufficient support, he should bring it before the mangai. However, non-guild jobs such as hunter and maid are not regulated so you can be offered anything and you can accept it or not as you wish. You can inquire about support but it is not guaranteed. As to this job, no we cannot provide room and board for someone who does not work for us no matter what his relationship to other employees. We cannot even have him hanging around distracting you from your work. You will have four days off each month, Yaelah on the 15th, Yaelmor on the 30th and two other days with advanced notice.

Berina says, "Hmm. I'm afraid I'll have to decline the job. I thank you for the offer, though. A good day to you." and Berina leaves the building.

Spying one of the ever-present street urchins, Berina calls him/her over and says: "A penny if you will guide me to the Miner's Guildhall."

"yess, goodwefe," he says.

As they're walking along, she asks: "What's your name?"

"Magna of Runuld. Ef et please di," he answers.

The lad answers, "He es of my ken sen we have de same sername but e not de releatoean. E denk be meight be my uncle."

He leads you to the mercantylers' compound and along the south wall to a building.

Entering the building, Berina meets a scribe much like the other. "you look not like a miner, are you lost? He says.

"Not at all, but thank you for asking." Berina says. "I'm seeking employment. My best work is as a scribe such as yourself (as she's speaking, she gets out the certification oath). I have paid the fee to legally seek such work (here she shows him the oath), but I can do other things, such as housekeeper. Would there be any work here?"

The scribe answers, "yes, I suppose I could hire you to do scribe work (recording minerals brought in and their value) and watch the door for third and fourth watch each day at 16d per tenday plus room and board."

Berina says, "That sounds good. I have some small knowledge of mineralogy, so that would be of extra benefit."

Berina continues. "I have a question or two, though. I'm married, and would prefer to be able to live with my husband. Would he be able to share my quarters?"

"No, I am afraid not," the scribe says.

If not, do you know of any places we could rent that would be affordable for someone earning what I will be earning? "

"I have no knowledge of real estate, you would have to ask one of the money lenders, they handle that sort of thing," he answers.

"I'll do that as soon as we're done here." Berina smiles and says: "Yes, I'll take the job. Thank you. When do I start?"

"It is the end of the forth watch," he answers, "you can start promptly at the first of the third watch on the marrow."

And, if I'm not partaking of the room and board, what would I be earning?"

"I believe I could add an additional 2d per day for room and board but I would have to pay the housekeeper directly or receive receipts to be sure that is what it is spent for," he says.

Berina says, "Well, that certainly seems fair enough. If I'm able to arrange for a house, I'll bring the housekeeper to you."

Berina says, "Would watching the door require me to be armed? If so, I have some skill with a few weapons."

"I certainly hope not," he says with a shocked look on his face. "If one of our members is being accosted you should raise the hue-and-cry not raise a disturbance yourself. Are you known to be a violent sort?"

Berina says, "Not particularly, but I don't put up with illegal behavior either. I sincerely hope nothing untoward ever happens, but if it does, a hue-and-cry it is."

[OOC: Would this job grant Berina an automatic development roll for her minealogy skill at each appropriate time interval?]

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[OOO: that seems reasonable, say one development check per tenday when she gets paid.]

* * *

The rest of Rikoro's journey is uneventful and he arrives at the inn just as a member of the nobility is leaving. The nobleman says over his shoulder, "I must get back to my duties. It has been nice meeting you all. Even Fyna of the few words."

Immediately putting two and two together, Rikoro says in passing with a soft smile, "Good day to you Sir Petral".

The Fyvrian Mage then makes his way over to the others already seated, inquiring, "I trust everything went well with the nobleman?"

Josrel says, "Yes quite well, Sir Petral received us quite warmly I would say. Which is a pleasant surprise. It seems that Sir Petral and I are related although distantly. We have started on a good relationship that I hope to grow upon while here." Josrel recaps. "Did you happen to meet any other K'Norrians while you were out? I know you mentioned that there were two that you knew of. I don't recall if you ever got in touch with them." Josrel asks.

While listening to Josrel, Rikoro smiles hearing the good news, but his demeanour changes when asked about visiting the other K'Norrian, "Sadly there was not enough time to visit the Harper. I spent most of the day scouring for employ." Almost wistful he continues, "The most I could manage was the opportunity to clean a physicians workshop. Without being apprenticed, I find the restrictions the Mangai place on outsiders to be quite stifling. It is a shame my education is so easily dismissed to the point I must do menial tasks." After hearing from the group, Rikoro mentions, "I managed to find work with the physician in town, but unfortunately it is doing menial cleaning tasks and nothing more. Though I did happen upon a watchman who mentioned they were looking to hire. It may be wise to have one of us within their ranks. I am still considering it myself, but imagine Fyna the task may suit you well."

Once settled in Rikoro brings up another topic of discourse, "On a separate though related note, I spotted a hooded individual spying me from a distance, at the moment I happened upon the aforementioned watchman. So I decided to strike up further conversation in an effort to have the individual leave. It worked, but either this person is someone from the front gates who had issue with me for carrying that dose of fanosel, or it could be someone that recognized. Meaning someone we were brought here to find. If this is the case we have lost the element of surprise. However, I leave open the third possibility that this is entirely another matter. The reason I bring it up is that I felt it relevant to mention we should be on our best vigil while in town."

Rikoro says, "Since I begin by employment tomorrow, I will not have the chance to visit with Rendig of Charaers. Perhaps the two of you would be willing to go, Haliki's? I am certain it would warm his heart to have such a visit from two members of clergy."

Josrel says, "Of course we would go, refresh my memory again on where we could find?" Josrel asks Rikoro

In response, Rikoro says, "North from the Watch Barracks. Apparently his home is the last one before the end of the fence around the manor common.

When everyone has returned from their daily activities, Rikoro discusses with them what he uncovered, "On the matter of the letter to Tashal. I have a new journal and can scribe the two entries, but I fear the cost for delivery is exorbitantly high. It can range between one hundred and sixty denarii through a caravan to double that if an individual runner was sent. I recommend that we investigate further. Apparently an individual by the name Finmeld of Arwyn who hauls freight and resides in the northern end of the market square may be able to help in this regard. The alternative is to speak with Anerd of Harabor or Gotar of Vaben - both of whom finance the caravans."

Glancing over to Josrel and Lillia with a hopeful expression, Rikoro mentions, "The smaller matter is that I do not have a seal on my person to ensure it is not tampered with. Would either of you be in possession of one?"

Josrel says, shaking his head " Alas I do not have a seal, Lillia would you have one?"

"I have not, my dear but we could use our holy symbol and some candle wax to seal a letter," Lillia answers.

"Oh, well yes there is that too." Josrel stumbles his words. "By using our holy symbols we are not infringing on the church in any way are we? If this letter goes to someone other than our intended recipient, by having a symbol of Save K'Nor on it will imply that it is sent on behalf of the church?" Josrel asks.

"No, it merely implies it came from a worshipper," Lillia says, "Keep in mind though that as members of the clergy, we are representatives of the church at all times in all that we do. So we should not be concerned with the seal but we should be very concerned with what it is that we say in the letter."

Josrel says, Nodding Josrel agrees" Which is the point I was talking around." Leaning in closer Josrel whispers " The Church although knows that we are sent by Lord Odasart, but knows not the reason. I really would like for the church to remain outside of this matter, so concerned about the content of the letter is paramount. yes."

Rikoro chimes in, "Once I have a copy prepared I will give it to the both of you to review and ensure it meets with the standards that best befit the Church."

As time passes and the four at the table of the inn converse, Rikoro poses the question, "Josrel, I must confess the ring Fyna bears is still weighing on my mind. If you would be willing to risk it, perhaps an 'inspection' in private may bear some fruit. I intend do so myself in the coming days, but prefer to gather my full strength first."

" I can ask Sir Petral if he can recommend a more inexpensive way to get a message to Tashal, but I will wait some time since I do not wish to test his patience with me." Josrel says

" I hinted to Sir Petral about the subject of frankpledge for myself and he wanted no part of it since he has just meet me."

Then switching his attention to Berina and Davas, the Fyvrian Mage says in a hushed manner, "I have told this to Fyna, Josrel and Lillia, but it would benefit the two of you to hear it as well. Whilst I was out today, I caught sight of a hooded individual watching me. It could have been nothing, bear in mind we are known here by some of those we seek. I recommend to act cautiously when in town and be alert."

Leaning back in his chair, Rikoro finishes wistfully, "Lastly, I spoke with a member of the watch about joining. As some of you may desire work, the opportunity is there, but one needs a frankpledge. I myself was considering it over what I managed to find. Needless to say I begin work tomorrow as a cleaning aid to the physician, Barint of Ikabir. Whilst doing menial chores is less than ideal, the prospect of working for someone I do not know is further unsettling."

[Josrel says, " Hmmm, yes the ring, do you recall anything from your experience with it?" " I will take a look at the ring of course. But first I will take some time in prayer and meditation before I do. Seeing how things turned out with you I wish to be in the proper state of mind."

"Do you have the ring or does Fyna have it?" Josrel asks Rikoro.

" I believe I will retire to our room." Josrel tells Lillia. " I plan to fast and pray to Save- K'Nor for strength and guidance for this task, the rest of this day plus all day tomorrow. Then I will attempt to meditate on the ring."

Looking around you find that Fyna has left without saying goodbye and she took the ring with her. Lillia chuckles at the look of consternation on Josrel's face.

"It seems we were so engrossed in our conversation we did not see Fyna slip out. Well when she returns from her business we can inspect the ring." Rikoro says wistfully.

"Yes perhaps.... But I swear I never saw her leave." Josrel chuckles with Lillia.

* * *

After a half-hour of searching, Davas finds the tracks of a deer which appear to have been made early this morning.

[Davas] Davas kneels and scans the ground, pointing as he talks. "Hmm ... a deer. Heading that way". He stands, turns to Eochiebin, grins and says ruefully "but early this morning. Could be anywhere by now". He scans the area half heartedly. "Shall we go further back and look again?"

"Nay, it is getting late and we will have to start again on the marrow," Eochiebin answers. "We should give up for the day and start back to our homes. Unless you have the equipment and the desire to sleep under the stars this night."

With a nod and a grin, Davas says "nay, I did not bring overnight gear ... though I could if you wish it. Let us return as you say".

Eochiebin leads the way back to the manor entrance, pays Davas the 10d and says, "Can you be here again at the end of the second watch on the marrow?"

Berina says, "I'll be here. Anything I need to bring with me?"

"Nay, writing materials will be provided," the scribe says.

Berina says, "I'll see you in the morning. And thank you again."

Berina leaves the Miners Guildhall and goes to Master Harabor's to make an appointment for after the start of fifth watch on whatever day it is convenient for him. She states that she is looking to find a house to rent.

A guard stops her at the gate and another relays her message indoors. He returns to say, "Master Harabour will see you at the start of the fifth watch on the marrow."

Berina says, "Thank you, I'll return then." and Berina goes back to the inn.

"Thank you" Davas says as he takes the coin. "I can and I will. I will see you here tomorrow. Good een".

Once he has parted ways with Eochiebin, Davas chuckles quietly to himself, then his stride lengthens and he starts to whistle. He makes his way back to the inn kisses Berina if she is there, and tells the others of his day.

For the evening meal you are served buttered vegetables for an appetizer., a choice of entrée: (hot lamb stew; boiled mussels; or dressed swan; accompanied by amyndoun seaw (a vegetable gruel), manchets (hand-sized bread) and ale (brown-red color. tart aroma. softish texture. full, clean, slightly wheaty taste. with citric tang and hops coming through in the finish).

Berina has the hot lamb stew. When the others have gathered, she says: "Good news. I have gotten a job doing scribal work for the miner's guild." and she snuggles up to Davas and whispers to him: "Thank the Maker of Bargins!" After a moment, she continues: "I also have an appointment with Master Harabor to discuss renting a house.

Mistress Melenda runs a fine inn here, but it's too expensive long term. Are any of you interested in going in on this?"

Lillia says, "It depends on the cost. You may find that after you buy furniture, linens, dishes, and pots. hire a staff and all the other things necessary to run a household, it will be more expensive."

Melenda, passing by, overhears Berina's remarks and says, "I would advise you to consider carefully what you are proposing. To rent a house without using it for a business is only possible with a long term lease paid in advance. Renting with a business would require a franchise from the proper guild. Even having people stay and pay part of the costs would be a breach of the innkeeper's guild privilege. Unless you have dispensation from the Peoni temple, even having people stay without paying would be considered suspicious and charges would be brought forward by the Mangai court. Do you really want to attract that sort of trouble and attention?"

"The job I've gotten has room and board, but I don't want to have to live apart from my husband." and Berina snuggles even closer to Davas. "Davas my love, does your hunting job include room and board?"

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"hmmm ?". Davas looks up from his food and his eyes slowly focus on Berina. "... sorry my love, this is good". He gestures at the remains in front of him.

"Board ... well, only if you enjoy sleeping under the trees. A big room, cheap enough ... but hard to heat." He grins and ducks under her attempted swipe. "... but the good news is, payment each day." He pats his purse. "Not sure how long it will last of course" he adds quietly, "but I will do my best and hopefully, we will have some success". He grins. "Beaver was all we saw today ... and some tracks of deer. Ran out of day to follow them. I'll take overnight stuff tomorrow in case we get close, so don't worry if I'm not back".

After a thoughtful pause, he asks vaguely, "anyone know when the Peoni temple is open? I was going this morning, but ... luckily remembered the job before I was too late. Anyone?" He looks at the others in turn.

After Davas has replied, Berina asks Melenda:, "Mistress Melenda, how much would it cost to stay here long term?"

"The absolute minimum for room and board would be 4d per person per night and you would have to guarantee lodging a month at a time, meaning if you leave before a month you would still owe for the rest of the month," Melenda answers.

"My employer would provide 2d per day in lieu of the room and board. That would still leave the two of us owing 60d per tenday. My wage is 16d per tenday, so we'd still need to come up with 44d per tenday." With a bleak look on her face, Berina says: "We can't afford it." Turning to Davas, she says: "My love, I'm going to have to take the room and board. I don't know what we're going to do about living as a husband and wife should." and he sees unshed tears in her eyes.

"I follow you not. 4d per day minus 2d per day is 2d per day or 20d per tenday assuming you husband cannot provide for himself that still only puts you 4d short not 44d. It appears that this is an example of where following the seven coins would have avoided such complications," Melenda says.

Berina stirs out of Davas' arms and says to Melenda: "I'm confused. You said the rate is 4d per person per day. For a tenday, that would be 80d...8d per day...for both my husband and myself. Deducting the 2d per day my employer will pay for not having to provide room and board, that still leaves 60d for the two of us to pay for a tenday. My pay for the whole tenday is 16d. 60 less 16 is where I got the 44d for the tenday." As she is about to continue, Davas speaks up and says:

The moisture in her eyes adds an angry gleam as Berina says, with barely controlled fury: "Just as Rikoro says we may have been seen by those who we know would do us harm, circumstances are spitting us up so we can be picked-off one at a time. Have the Gods decided that now is the time we are to pass on to their realms?!"

"I will not have you blaspheming against the gods in this establishment. You can keep such thoughts to yourself or leave, no matter how much you can or cannot pay," Melenda says with an angry look to her eyes.

Once Lillia and Melenda have spoke their piece, Rikoro chimes in, "I suppose now would be a good time to tell the rest of you, I

found myself employment with a physician. Sadly it is doing menial chores. His name is Barint of Ikabir, I do not know much about him, but hopefully he is a fair man to deal with. Part of the employment entails residing with at his home, so I would not have been able to rent with you."

Patting his pack, the Fyvrian Mage points out, "On the matter of the letter to Tashal. I have procured a new journal and can scribe two missives. The problem is that the the cost for delivery is exorbitantly high. It can range between one hundred and sixty denarii through a caravan to double that if an individual runner was sent. I recommend that we investigate further. Apparently an individual by the name Finmeld of Arwyn who hauls freight and resides in the northern end of the market square may be able to help in this regard.

The alternative is to speak with Anerd of Harabor or Gotar of Vaben - both of whom finance the caravans."

Telling Berina and Davas specifically, Rikoro goes on to say, "Josrel and Lillia will probably have the most free time out of all of us tomorrow. I will finish the letter and have them review it once more and if they have time after visiting with Rendig of Charaers." Rikoro pauses to look to the two Haliki's for confirmation, "They can endeavor to find a messenger if they so choose."

"Yes, we can do that.& Hopefully this Rendig of Charaers will be able to help though."& " Then we should like into employment as well Lillia.& If we continue to stay here it will be quite costly for us."

"Yes, but we want not to help Berina get into more trouble with the Mangai than she usually does on her own," Lillia says.

Davas splutters as he tries to drink ale, breath and laugh at the same time. Once he recovers a little, he gives Lillia a huge smirk, then tries to wipe the smile off his face and turns quietly to Berina.

After a few seconds of apparent seriousness, he grins again.

"So it is with friends Berina ... they know us better than we do ourselves".

Concern etched on his face, Rikoro tells everyone, in some of their cases, for a second time, "Finally an important piece of knowledge I found, I spotted a hooded individual spying me from a distance, at that very moment I happened upon the a watchman. In an attempt to scare them off, I decided to strike up a conversation. The plan succeeded. Now the question remains who they were. Either this person is someone from the front gates who had issue with me for carrying that dose of fanosel, as I experienced a taste of that earlier in the day. Or it could be someone that recognized me. Meaning someone we were brought here to find. If this is the case - we have lost the element of surprise.

However, I leave open the third possibility that this is entirely another matter. The reason I bring it up is that I felt it relevant to mention we should be on our best vigil while in town."

As his eyes drift to an empty seat and then the door, the tall gangly bearded Shek-p'var states, "Fyna slipped out earlier, perhaps to speak with the Watch about the employment opportunity I mentioned. It would do us well to have someone

there to aid us. Hopefully she returns before Josrel retires so that he may examine the ring."

Rikoro settles back in his chair and asks Davas and Berina, "How did your morning and afternoons find the both of you? Anything of import?"

As you finish your meal, Melenda asks, "so what will it be folks? It appears you have three options, continue to rent by day for 6d per person per day, pledge to rent by month at 4d per person per day, or pay what you owe to date and find other lodging. You can probably find lodging for free at the temple of Peoni but, even though they would take you in without complaint which is their nature, the rest of the town has a dim view of freeloaders who take advantage of them simply because they are unwilling to support themselves by good honest labor."

With a sheepish look, Davas turns to Berina. "10d a day is good coin for doing something I enjoy ... but I do not know how many days it might be" he whispers. "I could ask, but ... " he trails into silence a moment, before adding quietly "... but I don't want to seem pushy. I was ... almost late yesterday, and would like Eochiebin to trust and value me a little before asking". He smiles and whispers again. "Were we to take a month's lodging, and at 10d per day, we come out a little ahead, do we not ? And we could use a little of the coin we have if we need to ..." an idea comes to him and whispers more urgently "... and sell those things we found as we are allowed, could we not ?"

[Berina]

"You're being paid 10d per DAY?!!" Berina blurts out. She looks at Melenda, her mouth open in astonishment, then back at Davas. "That is an amazingly good paying job! The Maker of Bargans has smiled on you my love." Turning to Melenda, Berina says: "I guess we CAN stay here. When do you require payment...monthly, each tenday, daily, and in advance or after?"

He gives her arm a gentle squeeze, smiles, then whispers again "we will survive ... Melenda seems friendly, and we should think of the future".

He glances at Berina's belly, smiles and takes her hand. "And we can go to Peoni if we have to, yes ?"

Josrel says, "Seeing as Lillia and I are already here and have a running bill with Melinda, I say we stay here. I am not willing to stay with the Peonians to tread on their hospitality either. Does this suit you Lillia?" Josrel asks

"Yes, my dear, We can stay at least a month with what we have in coin and I still have the bearer bond. Everyone else has found work whether of their expectations or not. I am not afraid of honest labor so I am sure we will as well. Inns almost always have need of extra labor and I can work as a bar maid if you will permit since I have no such lofty expectations. What ever feeds the belly, I say, I think we should take the by month offer at least for one month," Lillia says to Josrel.

Rikoro replies immediately, informing Melenda, "Option three is unacceptable to me as well Mistress. I will speak with my current employer Barint of Ikabir and see if he would allow me to rent here instead of room and board at his abode. It seems

doubtful he will grant it though. In the meantime I shall settle what is owed to you for your hospitality."