

12-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR

2ND WATCH [WARM, PARTLY CLOUDY, SOUTH BREEZE, LIGHT RAIN]

In the morning, Berina's stomach wound has completely healed but the unfamiliar smells of the minerals in the miner's guild set off her morning sickness and she pukes up last night's dinner.

With an exclamation of "what is that goddess awful smell? You will clean that up if you wish to continue working here." Berina gets bucket and mop from the kitchen and does a good job of cleaning it up. [+1 housekeeping]

To break her fast, Berina is served fried perch, chicken eggs, goose eggs, blueberries, and oatmeal, accompanied by a small ale version of the beer she had last evening.

In the morning, Rikoro hurries out the door as soon as the physician opens the door and before he breaks his fast to deliver the re-written letter to the inn for signatures.

http://www.duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Kaldor/FormalLetterOfRequest_final.pdf

At the Green Dragon Inn, the guests are served meatballs, sharp cheese, quail eggs, dates, flatbread and cider to break their fast

Upon waking Josrel performs his morning ablution.

While the others eat, Rikoro speaking much faster than his usual slow paced deeply considered words says, "Apologies for the terseness of my words, but I should return back to work. I have the two letters here for you to review and sign for each of Lord's Odasart and Harabor. My signature is on both. I hope you find it acceptable and within the boundary of what we discussed. Remember they should be sealed - if the two Haliki's find it acceptable with their own holy symbol. As I mentioned before in terms of delivery you should speak with Finmeld of Arwyn in the north end of the market. He hauls freight and so may be willing to carry the letter with him for a fee of which I'll gladly pay my portion. Or if the price is too high speak with the usurers about town."

Josrel says, "No, we have not as of yet spoken with Finmeld. Lillia and I are currently involved in a matter that we are unable to talk about at this time. We will speak with Finmeld today though. On another matter we ran into Armenton yesterday. It seems that he has the ear of the the Earl and is planning on heading to Chybisa. He has been accepted as part of the gentry down there or something."

Davas says, "You did? ... hmmm. Best we be on our guard then". "Damn !"he curses quietly and leans back, suddenly thoughtful.

There is a kind smile forming on Rikoro's face as he offers, "Ah well if you need any aid on the matter you are welcome to ask without me inquiring deeply on the subject." From which his demeanor shifts to something more serious, "As for Armenton hrm.Do you know if he is using his given name or another?"

Josrel says, "I appreciate the offer and I may take you up on it. I thank you also for not pressing the matter. I have given my word to not divulge the matter for persons involved wish to be unknown." Josrel says. "As for Armenton, I bumped into him by chance. Or he bumped into me in the village of Lothlarny. I

know not about how he calls himself now. Our conversation wasn't that long."

Changing topics, but keeping up the same speed of words the Fyvrian Mage mentions, "I have little to share about yesterday, it was filled with mundane tasks and chores. Though I am eager to hear news from all of you."

First he asks the two K'norrian Priests as he hands over the letters for review, "Haliki's did you have a chance to speak with the lay harper yet or did you have other matters to concern yourselves with? Hopefully once I've settled we can enjoy some time in prayer and sermons."

Then asking his friend the hunter, the gangly bearded mage swings around to inquire, "Davas, How did things turn out with Berina after I returned to town? I hope she saw reason and returned.. though I do not see her present amongst us." Rikoro frowns glancing around momentarily.

"With a little shake of his head, Davas replies "Ah Rikoro. Yes, she has returned to town ... but she does not feel she can remain here with us" he glances at Melenda "and has taken lodgings with her employer". He sighs quietly. "I have said what I may and prayed for guidance ... ah, but we do not always get what we ask of the gods, do we my friend" he adds with a grin.

"At least she is close ..." his eyes light up a little "and she had news of the castle which I meant to share last night". He glances around the room, settles into story telling mode and begins.

"I was hurried out of the castle after delivering the deer yesterday and thought it was odd. I asked Eochebin ... the one who employs me as a hunter, and he said that there had been ... an 'incident' I think he called it and that the earl was now wary of strangers. When I asked Berina to tell me if she had heard anything as to what this might have been, she said that apparently, someone tried to kill the earl (I think) and that they just appeared in the castle".

He looks around once more and continues more quietly. "Berina thought that they may have used the tunnels that Fyna mentioned .. so perhaps it is as well that you did not" he glances at the others. "He has been suspicious of the Khuzdul and ... oh yes ! ...Shek P'var since. Berina said that the new taxes on them started after that".

He pauses and drinks. "She also said that she has no idea why the temples seem to be mixed in with that group. Perhaps ... she did mention that his wife was ill and the temples could not cure it ? She is still sick I think. Or it could be that others are advising him poorly ? Anyway, Berina is as well as can be expected, and that is my news". He sits back, smiles quickly, and listens to the others as they speak.

Fyna speaks up to say, "That means not that we cannot go into the underground to win fame and fortune. It just means we have to be very careful where we come out. Best be to come out where we entered."

With a quick smile, Davas says simply "agreed".

Josrel says, "After Berina left and the rest of you followed after Lillia myself and Melinda were discussing how being new here

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we weren't trusted. Which is the crux of why Berina is feeling the way she is. So it was brought to my attention that if we got in the good graces of the local frankpledge that they would be able to vouch for us which in turn would grant us better standing the community and hopefully trust with the locals." Jorsel pauses " So Melinda arranged for a meeting with someone who is involved in a situation here in town that seems might be connected to the greater problem here in Minarsas. The situation is one of blackmail and Lillia and I are trying to get to the bottom of it."

Putting up his hand to forestall any comments: " Unfortunately I have given my word that I would not discuss the particulars of this matter to others and I must keep to my word."

Finally Rikoro cranes his neck in curiosity and turns his attention to his former roommate, "Ah and Fyna it is good to lay eyes upon you. I thought perhaps you left for other adventures. If you are planning to stay in town further I know the Watch is looking for others to join their rank. It may be to our benefit to have you situated amongst them. Of course the choice is yours."

Eyes widening he suddenly remembers, "Oh and the ring you bear from the assault has been creeping into my idle thoughts - of which I have many during my chores. Has Jorsel had a chance to inspect it? I think in the coming days I myself should be back to full strength to try again under the supervision of another."

Fyna spends an hour in prayer before breaking her fast and then signs the letter.

Fyna says, "Meeting Sir Petral again brought back old memories, some of which were not that pleasant and I have had to reconsider my religious beliefs – did I ever mention that I used to be a worshiper of Halea? I will look into the watch since I need a source of income but if the watch of Minarsas is the same as the village of Nubeth where I am from, they are not asked to try and stop any misdeeds they discover but merely to call for help. The only way this would help you lot is if I turn away from my duties and not report what I witness or act as witness when you are accused of that which you have not done. As to the former, I am not averse to doing that but not when it does me no benefit and I doubt you have the wherewithal necessary for my silence. As to the latter, from what I have seen so far you are seldom if ever accused when you are innocent since you seem to delight in misadventure and even seek it out. Now on the ring, it no longer speaks to me as it did, the last thing it said is that I need it not since I have what it can give me. I know not what that means but I must have it appraised before I could consider giving it to others. A girl has to make a living and I did not mean to imply I was good at worshipping Halea just enthusiastic. I could not feed myself lying on my back. And hopefully you would not ask that of me."

Rikoro nods slightly, trying to follow Fyna's train of thought as she speaks, "Erm, let me first make clear when I said the position in the Watch may benefit us, I did not mean to imply that you should break from your duties and bend the law on our behalf. As you said your task will be to provide reports, as will others. Being a follower of the Sage myself I believe in maintaining order above all us. But there is an added consideration in why I mentioned the position - in this case you will be privy to information concerning anything that may be

occurring that could be relevant to the task at hand. The Lord of Knowledge would agree such a thing is priceless. Especially in our disadvantaged state of being strangers in town."

"In that I would be at the command of those who hire me but what you say may be possible, although there is no guarantee." Fyna answers.

Stroking his beard lightly, Rikoro ponders as his speech slows back to normal, "As to the ring itself, I am not quite certain I grasped what you said. First the ring could speak with you in some capacity? And second it 'told' you that 'you no longer needed it because you now had what it would give'? Has anything changed for you since finding the ring? The most obvious to my mind is faith. Perhaps it is Peonian artifact?"

"Ah, it speaks not in words but more in impressions," Fyna says, "at first I had a driving need to possess it and now it only matters in its market value. The impression I get is what has changed is the amount of time I have had it in my possession. As if it needed time to get to know me. Frankly it creeps me out."

Rikoro bobs his head in response to Fyna's informative words, "Fascinating. Well if you plan to sell it after having it appraised I would appreciate if you let me know beforehand. If I have the coin I would gladly match the price so I could continue learning what I can of it."

The curious Shek-p'var, then adds, "I might be able to gauge what the range of the value may be when you have it appraised based off of the stone that is set in the ring. Would you mind present your hand to me a moment?"

Fyna holds out her hand and Rikoro examines the ring. He cannot tell the metal of the ring or the exact size and make of the stone but it is a large stone and Rikoro guesses it to be worth several hundred pennies for the stone alone. If the ring is truly a magical artifact the value depends on the buyer and how many charges are left in it.

"Based solely off of the gem itself, I would say it could be around several hundred silvers in value.", Rikoro informs Fyna in a low voice as his demeanor appears a bit deflated.

The Fyvrian mage just nods as he listens to Davis explain what he has found. Right after Fyna responds, Rikoro offers his own input, "Well we will likely end up below in the coming weeks. Thus in the meantime we should prepare ourselves for such an eventuality. For now though I should begin my day of labor. I will endeavor to meet you all again on the 'morrow. If you need to find me for any matter, feel free to visit. Good day." He offers the group a soft smile and makes his way off to the physicians.

"Fare well Rikoro ... and the rest of you too". He flashes the group a smile, then prepares for his day, gathering what he needs and making his way to the gate, aiming to be early by 15 minutes today.

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While Rikoro is cleaning the physician's shop, two of the village women enter and ask the physician to treat a headache. The physician starts mixing a potion and one woman gossips to the other, "you should have heard what he said about them. He said he had his way with the Earl's wife and he could arrange for

Anseri to have the Earl's daughter as well. Said the Earl would do what he told him since he was Evida the Bearer of the Loam like that meant something. Called Anseri Sir when I know the lad is merely a pawnbroker. I believe such things should not be said of any woman, especially ladies of the court." The other woman notices Rikoro and hushes her friend.

In response to the noticeable silence, the Fyvrian mage offers a polite nod to the two women looking at him. He continues to work quietly as the ladies wait.

The physician gives them a powder which he says will help them with their headache and they leave the shop, without saying goodbye, noses firmly in the air.

Rikoro doesn't lift his gaze until he heard the door close. He casually makes his way over to Barint as he methodically sweeps the floor and strikes up a conversation, "Master Ikabir, the powder you gave them, was it wandering spice you gave them to help alleviate their head pain?"

"Nay, I know not what you speak of," he answers, "I gave them a powder made from lavender I had left over from the summer. Do you have healing skills? If not, you should not concern yourself with such things. Even the right herbs made by the unskilled can do great harm."

Rikoro bobs his head in response to Barint, "I have some education in healing, alchemy and herblore but they are rudimentary when compared to your own knowledge. I apologize if I've interrupted your work. Curiosity sometimes gets the better of me."

As the conversation carries on the gangly cleaning aid asks the physician, "Is there anything particular you'd have me see to doing this day? Or continue with the same routine as yesterday?"

"Not at the moment," he says, "just continue as I told you yesterday."

"Of course", Rikoro replies and returns to his duties with the broom. He takes great care when sweeping up the dust and debris into neat piles before discarding them.

Throughout the day, whenever Rikoro pops into the infirmary to clean, he will take some time to look over those that are ill, injured or both. At first just trying to assess their condition based off of sight alone. If the opportunity presents itself by having someone unconscious or asleep and no witnesses around, the Fyvrian Mage will attempt to heal an individual in need with 'balm of gresan' only if he's certain of their ailment otherwise he'll first try to discern the nature of their condition with 'eye of perfection'.

Rikoro approaches a young woman while she is sleeping and touches her to cast Eye of Perfection. The spell tells him nothing and the physician walks in while he is still touching her.

"How dare you molest my patients!?! I will have to ask you to leave and not darken my doorstep again! Go now before I call the watch to escort you out!" He says forcefully.

Rikoro removes his hand from the woman's forehead, and simply nods in response to Barint's angry words. The Fyvrian

Mage collects his things from the room and casually makes his way out of the shop. Once on the street he glances about in consideration, then heads in the direction of the Green Dragon Inn.

12-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [WARM, CLEAR, SOUTHWEST WIND]

While Davas is standing around waiting, the guards watch him closely.

One approaches with his hand on his shortsword and says, "Are you lost? Have you not got something to occupy your time?"

Promptly at the start of the third watch, Eochebin arrives and speaks quietly with the guards. He then approaches Davas to say, "well met. I would advise a certain amount of promptness in the future. When you are early or late you make the guards nervous which may result in you being arrested for acting suspiciously."

The two of you travel to the wilderness again without interruption. It takes Davas an hour to find the first trail which turns out to be of a sheep that passed by a couple of hours ago.

Eochebin says it is not acceptable to be hunting stray sheep that most likely belong to some negligent peasant so you continue to search for signs of other game.

Another half turn of the glass and Davas finds the trail of a beaver that is approximately 10 hours old. Eochebin says, this to is unacceptable for his lord's table.

By the middle of the third watch Davas finds the trail of a large cat, possible a mountain lion, that appears to be several days old.

Davas kneels to examine the tracks, and looks up quickly when he realizes what they are. He looks around carefully then turns to the tracks again. "Hmmm. A big cat of some sort ... a few days ago." He glances at Eochebin. "What do you get around here ? ... and is there anything else that might be hunting us ?"

"What do we get? What ever do you mean?" Eochebin answers, "As a hunter, you must know it is always possible for something to be hunting us. Everything from natural predators to ivahsu."

He grins as he stands and waits for an answer, before looking around again and saying "it's well into the third watch now. Should we go on or turn back ?"

"No, let us call it a day. I does not look promising for us to find game today." Eochebin says.

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At the start of the third watch, Amarie enters the inn, spies Josrel and Lillia and hurries over. "Were you able to get the letters or find out who took them?" she asks eagerly.

"Unfortunately, not yet. We followed that women to her village and were promptly told to leave." Josrel says "Amarie in your dealings in the castle have you had any encounters with a man by the name of Armenton of Sorril?" Josrel asks.

"I know him not," Amarie answers, "Who told you to leave? This man Armenton of Sorril? Is he of the gentry that you do the

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bidding of a stranger? Will you be going back under the cover of darkness?"

"I believe it was the beadle who asked us to leave. No Armenton is not of the village but he is Gentry. I have not the skill to go skulking in the darkness Amarie. But I may have some friends who might have the skill if you will allow me to involve them. They are good people and I trust them and have trusted them with my life on many occasions. It is up to you though, I do not wish to break the trust that you have entrusted in me." Josrel asks of Amarie

"I have given my trust to you," Amarie answers, "If you pledge for their integrity and ability to get the job done, and get their oath, you may involve them."

Josrel nods his head to Amarie: " I hope to have a speedy end to your situation, Amarie."

"Thank you for your help. I will check again later for any progress," Amarie answers.

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On the way to the inn, a woman stops Rikoro saying, "Ello love, wud ee care vor a little slap and tickle. A strong and andsum gentry-cove like ee, it weel only cost a denier."

With a smile Rikor replies, "No, but thank you for the kind words. Have a pleasant day." Not waiting for a follow-up he continues on at languid pace towards his intended destination.

The rest of Rikoro's journey to the inn is uneventful.

Setting foot in the inn, Rikoro slumps his shoulders and sighs. He shakes his head slowly, followed by lifting his gaze to look around.

He can see Josrel and Lillia sitting in the same places they were in several hours ago when he left. Davas has left and the Haliki couple has been joined by a young freewoman who gets up and leaves just as Rikoro enters.

The Fyvrian mage holds the door open to allow the young woman to pass offering a courteous smile.

She nods, smiles and says, "good day to you."

He then joins Josrel and Lillia asking, "Good day Haliki's. It appears I have a free day to spare. Actually a good deal more than that. I can aid you with the sending the letter or any other task."

At one point when Melenda passes by, Rikoro informs her, "Mistress, if there is room in your fine inn I would very much like to rejoin my companions."

"Yes, we have some vacancies. If she agrees, you can share the room with Fyna as you did the last time, for 6d per night which includes 2 meals and 2 drinks," Melenda says.

"I shall ask her next when I see her. I do not believe it will be a problem though.", Rikoro replies.

"Ah Rikoro, shouldn't you be at place of employment?" Josrel asks.

"Lillia and I were about to head out and find Fynmeld, you can join us if you wish. I also have something to discuss with you

as well that and plan to share with the others but it is something that I have given my trust to someone." Josrel pauses.

Sliding closer to Rikoro and speaking softly to him. "When Berina left Lillia and I were wondering how we could get into the good graces of the local frankpledge. Melinda overheard us and arranged for a meeting with someone in the frankpledge who is having a bit of trouble. It seems that this person has had a relationship with a local priest. This person also is a guest at the castle and has a room there. This priest has sent this woman love letters where she kept them in her room. It appears that the letters have been stolen and that this priest is being blackmailed into doing things against his better judgment. We have been asked to find these letters and put an end to this situation." Josrel slides back over to his original spot.

The lanky bearded shek-p'var finds himself a seat as he joins the couple. He nods listening to Josrel inform him of what is going on. "I too have news. I know of two other individuals we seek are in town as well. Anseri and the Bearer of the Loam. In former's case he is posing as a pawnbroker. We must send that letter in haste so that we can receive the warrant documents." Then a slight frown forms on his lips, "As to why I am suddenly free, let us just say my need to help others outweighs my common sense. Not to mention I believe Berina's trouble finding skills have rubbed off on me. As a result it cost me my employment. Though I can not say I am sad to have lost it."

He then raises up from his seat with purposes and claims, "If you wish you can fill me in on the further details of your plans as we head to the market's north end to find this Finmeld."

"Very well we shall walk and talk. but quietly I fear that too many ears will be listening here." Josrel says as he goes with Rikoro.

While they are walking Rikoro brings up, "So the attempt at becoming part of a frankpledge, what does it involve exactly? And how can I be of aid?"

"Well, all we have to do is show we can be trusted by the frankpledge by doing something for them with no gain to ourselves. I always could use some help. We are trying to find these letters and I may have a lead to who may know of them." Josrel replies

Josrel, Lillia and Rikoro leave the inn and head for the market square. As you pass a shop with a sign of a sailmaker / canvas worker, a young man is just leaving. He turns back briefly to say, "You had better have my money by sunset if you want not some unfortunate accident to happen to your shop – a fire perhaps."

"I have not the time to guide foreigners around town," the soldier says and hurries off.

Casually looking around while chatting with Rikoro, Josrel tries to get a glimpse of the mans face or any distinguishing marks of him, while trying to not get noticed.

Josrel notices a tattoo on the man's neck that may be a skull, just as the man turns directly at Josrel and says, "What are you looking at? Meddle not in things that are no business of yours if you know what is good for you."

Rikoro makes a concentrated effort not to look at the threatening man, instead gazing around the market. After failing to find any signage, he signals a passing pedestrian and asks, "Apologies for the interruption, but would you happen to know where we could find Finmeld of Arwyn?"

"I have not the time to guide foreigners around town," the soldier says and hurries off.

The Fyvrian Mages nods slightly at the soldier's response. Then he looks to spot another person, this time saying, "Excuse me, would you be willing to point us to the location of Finmeld of Arwyn? If you could lead us to him I would give you two farthings for your time."

"I have not the time to lead you there but it is easy enough to find," he says holding out his hand, "you cross the market corner wise and his is the last building along that row of shops."

As the helpful yet forthcoming guide puts out his hand in expectation, Rikoro fishes out a silver, snaps it in half and hands one of the pieces to the man. "You have my thanks and a good day to you.", Rikoro says and then turns to regard Josrel who has managed to find himself in a confrontation.

You follow his instructions as he hurries off and you find the last two shops in the row to be empty.

"Well either he misled us or we can not follow simple instructions", Rikoro mentions with a sigh. The lanky bearded follower of the Sage then adds, "Judging by how quickly he made off I would think the former. Let us try this once more." Again he manages to stop a person in passing and asks, "Good day, I was hoping you may point us in the direction of Finmeld of Arwyn's place of business?"

"Well, if you must," he says, "but strangers who are lost in this town seldom come to any good ends, unless they are here to cause trouble and they can usually find that."

"See the gap between those two buildings?" he continues pointing across the market, "Go between them and you will see a row of shops. Go between the gap you find in those buildings and across that road and slightly to the left you will see the sign of an ostler. That is his shop. Now I suppose you plan on showing me your gratitude by robbing me. That is what most strangers do which is why they are so poorly treated."

The final words of the man cause Rikoro to look dismayed. "Oh my.. oh my no. Do I appear to be a ruffian?" He then looks over his person and shakes his head with mild concern. "We simply wish to see a letter delivered. Here for your time and assuage any fears." With that Rikoro pinches out from the top of his purse the second half of the silver coin and hands it over. "Now I must confess you have me concerned for ourselves. How often does one find themselves waylaid in this town?"

"Only if you meet with any strangers who belong not to a frankpledge or are from the city, where they know not a man's worth – you can get a full day's labor of even a peasant for a penny a day. I doubt many of the freeborn from a frankpledge will rob you as that would be robbing their neighbors as well would it not?" he says, with a forlorn look on his face.

He is dressed in rather shabby and faded homespun and he has a freeman's dagger at his side.

"Unfortunately not being a resident of Minarsas, it makes everyone a stranger to me. As much as I am to them obviously. I appreciate the candor and directions. Should we meet again, let it not be as strangers. I am Rikoro of Drelin.", the Fyvrian mage offers a smile to the man.

Once the direction giver has parted ways with the group, Rikoro comments, "Well shall we try to find this place based off of what we were just told? His words were almost foreboding."

The remainder of your journey to the ostler's stables is uneventful and you find it without trouble. Inside is a man caring for some mules.

Rikoro asks, "Excuse me, would you happen to be Master Arwyn?"

Once Finmeld has presented himself, Rikoro moves on to asking, "Apologies for interrupting you. I will try to be as quick as possible. I was told by Master Karbes you might be able to give us some information regarding delivering a letter to Tashal due to your experience hauling freight. We were looking for particulars on who to speak with and the potential costs."

"Yes, that is me in answer to both questions," Master Karbes answers, "to send a message at this time of year is 1d per league plus expenses. Since Tashal is 40 leagues away, that would be 40d plus 35d for five days food and lodging and 5d for tolls and taxes. At this time of year that would have to be doubled since the messenger would have to return or pay for food and lodging in Tashal until the spring caravans. That would be 160d total assuming all you are sending is a letter. If you are sending anything valuable, the amount would be doubled again for the accompaniment of a bodyguard with the messenger. What would be your preference?"

Rikoro turns his attention over to Lillia and Josrel and states, "This was the same fee Master Runuld had stated it would be. Divided between us it would be around twenty seven silver each."

Before they have a chance to respond the lanky Shek-p'var turns back and inquires with Finmeld, "Would the cost be around the same to have the runner return then? We would be expecting a response to the letter shortly thereafter is why I ask."

"That would be determined by if the messenger is expected to return immediately or not." Master Runuld answers, "If they are the only additional fee would be the 40d for the distance and that is usually paid by the person at the other end. If they are not expected to return until spring and the answer is to be returned immediately, the person at the other end would have to pay the entire amount, only one way so 80d."

With the additional information garnered by Finmeld, Rikoro once again looks to the two with him and says, "Haliki's what do you both say? I think it prudent and cost effective to pay for travel there and back."

"I cannot figure what you mean," says Lillia, "It takes not the skills of a mercantylor to tell that 27d times three people is not

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160d and certainly less than 200d. We cannot make the decision for those who are not here and double that is 47d and should require considerable thought before we spend it. We also have to provide for our living expenses for the tenday or more it will require for the answer to be returned and, if the lords cannot or will not provide for more, we are left stranded and starving in the streets."

Rikoro seems slightly hurt by Lillia's words as he manages, "I-I brought the cost up in front of the others and none seemed to show issue with it. What I meant was to split it between all six of us. If you are concerned we shall not see the coin from the others then I understand your position. My only feeling is to not delay this any further. Is your suggestion then to wait until the matter we have been tasked with is resolved and negotiate in person or do you wish to seek another avenue or even another suggestion? I am certainly open to alternatives."

"Was this before or after Berina had her temper tantrum and Fyna went off to who knows where. Since we have made very little progress in our task and are not even certain how to bring it to a successful conclusion, no, I am not suggesting we wait until it is resolved. On the other hand waiting a day or two more while you get the money from everyone and even get their signatures on the letter," Lillia says, with a tight lipped scowl.

"If I may, the reason we are sending this letter is to gain some sort of support and some sort of good standing from Lord Odasart that we can show here in Minarsas. Is that right? If so I say we hold off until we come to some conclusion of the matter with the local frankpledge. If we are successful with that then the letter is not needed." Josrel states

"Oh, I know not about it not being needed," says Lillia, "There is still the matter of compensation for your efforts which was not adequately explained when you rushed off from Tashal."

Doing his best to keep Lillia happy, Rikoro replies, "As I said I understand your concern Haliki. I thought everyone had signed it, but obviously Berina has not. It slipped my mind."

The Fyvrian mage looks back to Finmeld and lets him know, "It seems our group needs to come to a consensus. We should have this decided upon in the next couple of days. I appreciate your time."

Then pivoting on his staff, Rikoro asks the two priests of the Sage, "What is next on your agenda for the day?"

Rikoro offers a slightly nod in response to Josrel, "That is indeed part of it Haliki. I would rather not speak of it so openly, but it runs deeper than just support. Perhaps another reading will bring to light the reasons. Otherwise we can speak further on it when we return to the inn." With those words spoken he motions to Josrel and Lillia to leave, then offers Finmeld a departing "Goodday."

"Yes, yes, so leave already if that is what you intend. I have other things to do than stand around listening to your repeated goodbyes," the ostler says with a wearied expression.

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Experiencing a lull in her scribal work, Berina takes this opportunity to sweep out the entry room of the guildhall. As she

finishes sweeping the dust out into the street, Rikoro, Josrel and Lillia happen by.

Berina says, "Well, good to see you again. Anything of interest happen since I saw you last?"

A smile escapes Rikoro's lips as he spots his fellow Shek-P'var, "Ah Berina, grand to see you. We were just returning from visiting Finmeld about the costs associated with sending a letter."

Motioning to Josrel, "Haliki if you could show her the final letter and see if it warrants a signature. The cost is quite high so we will need to discuss as a group how to proceed."

"Hmm." Berina says at Rikoro's words. "I assume you will do your talking at the inn. I will never willingly set foot in there again, so you'll have to discuss issues without me. If you see Davas before I do, tell him that he has complete authority to decide things on my behalf if you think my input is necessary. If you still think you have to have me directly involved in any decision making, then you can find me here after working hours."

Josrel hands Berina the letter "Nice to see you decided to hang around Berina." Josrel says warmly with a smile.

Smiling at Josrel in return, Berina says: "Thank you, Josrel." Her smile takes on a wry look as she continues: "Apt choice of words, 'hang around'! Very likely prophetic Should that be my fate, I'll soon be forgotten by one and all."

Taking the letter from Josrel and reading it, she then says: "It reads well enough, but I'd guess that any result will be just the opposite of what you are seeking. Remember, Lords Harabor and Odasart wanted no tangible connection to what we may have to do here in Minarsas. This letter points directly back to them if it should fall into other hands than theirs. I doubt that they will be pleased with us if this happens. The only way I can see for us to have any chance of getting the things you ask for in this letter, is for one of us to go back to Tashal and ask them in person. And before someone suggests that I be the one to go do this, recall that I'm still banned from returning to Tashal for at least a while yet. If you all decide to send someone back to Tashal to make this case, " and she waves the letter in the air "then I think it ought to be you, Rikoro." and she gives him a wicked grin as she hands the letter back to Josrel.

Rikoro listens to Berina speak and then in a voice that is calm replies, "I agree with you on that point and have considered it myself. However, for one of us to return like this would only upset them further. Not to mention travel as a group was dangerous enough, on ones own it would be disastrous I fear. My plan was to have the parchment sealed. If the letter for whatever reason ends up in another's hands they can always deny knowledge or involvement of any sort of our activities as they would should it come from our own voices. On top of this, I have also gone through careful pains not to detail what it is we were assigned to do. This is simply a request for payment in kind for services rendered and warrants which we were promised originally."

"Yes, I know." Berina says. "That is why I council forgetting about this request, and doing what we can with what we have. If

we're successful in this mission, we can ask for these things in addition to any reward they might be inclined to give us."

There is a blank, puzzled look on Rikoro's face, he then turns his attention to Josrel and Lillia, "Do you both agree? I have no quarrel with this change of plans - though the time we have put into this is now lost."

Then the Fyvrian Shek-p'var shakes his head, as if coming out of a stupor and interrupts his own question, "Everyone is losing sight of the purpose behind this letter. You seem to be focusing far too much on the reward. I must point out this is not the case. The primary objective is to validate who we say we are to Donar and Anesa. A confirmation letter from Lord Harabor or Odasart will achieve this end. As well we need to receive the warrants we were promised in order to see justice carried out properly."

The gangly bearded mage cranes his neck back to Berina, but he steals glances at the two Haliki, "However if there is a new plan anyone has devised I am quite willing to hear it."

With his hand on his chin tapping his lips with his index finger Josrel adds : " I have something that I am working on that might aide us in what we are doing. As well as give some some standing here in the community. Unfortunately it is something that I cannot discuss here in the open. Too many ears are listening and what I have is somewhat sensitive."

"If, as Berina says, you were asked to keep your association with the lords of Tashal a secret, then I agree that they will not take kindly to you now asking for their pledge," Lillia says, "This is the first I have heard of this and of these warrants that you mention. What are these warrants? Are you now working for the Sheriff and the King's court? Why have you not mentioned this before? If you are, you can demand an audience before the Earl in the King's name - but not in the Sheriff's name, of course. I did not think you were strictly asking for a reward for deeds not yet done. I thought you were asking for support for enough time as it takes to accomplish what was asked of you. If you are simply asking for a character reference from those who wish to remain unknown, then I believe Josrel and I are making progress in that respect if you can trust us and aid us in what we are trying to accomplish."

Berina says, "I will keep my eyes and ears open, and if I find out anything of interest, I'll send word of it to the rest of you via Davas. I have to get back to work before I'm discharged for laziness. Be well my friends." and she goes back inside and back to work.

Rikoro takes everything Berina and Lillia have to say into consideration. He runs his spindly fingers through his beard and bobs his head on occasion. Finally the Fyvrian mage lists out his points in a careful manner, "It appears I have led you all astray. I had thought the missive was quite clear. It is why I drafted the first letter to ensure I had captured our needs clearly and then gave everyone the chance to review it. On the matter of a pledge, I am not asking for one - simply vouching for us to the two contacts they gave us. A couple of days ago we would have made little progress without such. However, the two Haliki's efforts to find a frankpledge may circumvent that need. As for

the warrants. We were promised them originally and I thought they may be of some use.

Perhaps pointing out to an official the presence of these men in town - using the documents as proof, as we are indeed not working on behalf of the Sheriff or King's Court. On the matter of payment for our time here, it seemed to be rebuked when we originally inquired about finding us employ and covering the costs of some of our residences - and there was never a single mention of reward.

Finally I raised the matter of communication during our meal at the Lord's manor and they were receptive to it - so I thought it would not be a bother. I leave this in your capable hands as I am still new to this sort of 'adventerous' lifestyle. It seems to me the letter should be dismissed and we take this new course of action."

Rikoro knows from listening to his father before the courts that a warrant is either a certification or a justification for the actions of an agent. In example, an arrest warrant is a justification for someone to detain another and bring them before the courts to face justice. The other type of warrant (or pledge) certifies that the agent is working under the authority of a noble and that noble is responsible for their agent's actions. On the other hand, all that he knows about "these men in town" is that they have been declared outlaw - this means their family is not responsible for their actions. It does not indicate that they are to be arrested and brought before the court on charges. All the Lords in Tashal promised was a document stating that the men had been declared outlaw - which means they could be killed on sight without starting a feud with the family of the victim. Even then the killer could be brought up on charges of murder - it would just be easier to show just cause - this would not be very likely since the family is usually the ones bringing forth such charges.

Raising his long index finger into the air and appearing as if he just had a flash of insight, Rikoro explains, "On consideration, the warrant spoken of was just an outlaw declaration. Meaning their families would have no right to a vendetta claim. If it was an arrest warrant it would have given us the ability to see them detained and brought to the courts. Thus there is little to be done with it at the moment. Should we require the warrant a request could always be made after the fact. Though I hope that would be unnecessary. I should have thought of this earlier, it would have saved us time.", the Fyvrian Mage shakes his head disappointed in himself, finishing up with, "Let us continue then with the Haliki's plans and free Berina back to her responsibilities."

When Berina departs, Rikoro inquires his gaze on Josrel and Lillia, "Is there anything to be done today to further your efforts into the frankpledge or should we partake in a friendly visit to the fellow lay member in town?"

12-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR

4TH WATCH [COOL, PARTLY CLOUDY, NORTHWEST GALE]

On the way back to town, the two hunters pass a small, well guarded caravan of merchant wagons. Just before they part company, Eochebin pays Davas his 10d wages for the day. Davas reaches the Green Dragon Inn at the same moment as Rikoro, Josrel, and Lillia. They find Fyna inside the inn.

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When the group spies Davas reaching the inn, Rikoro offers a greeting, "Ah Davas, good to see you. We just spoke with your wife, she seems in better spirits."

Davas grins and says cheerily "that is good news indeed Rikoro. I must visit her tonight. The hunting was bad ... well no, not bad. We found some tracks, just not of things that we wanted and I could use a little cheering up".

Once inside Rikoro approaches the woman mercenary and says, "Hello Fyna, I trust you had a fine and productive day? I am returning to the inn as a patron and spoke with Mistress Tamorith. She mentioned we could share a room again at the same rate as before and I was wondering if that was acceptable? We could even try to negotiate a better price since we will be here for an extended period."

"Productive? Hah," Fyna says with a snort, "I have just been sitting here on my ass all day doing nothing. Roommates is fine by me for the short term but for the longer term, I need to find some way to begin seeking my fortune instead of wasting away sitting around this inn."

A smile escapes Rikoro's lips at Fyna's response, "Grand. If you come up with something notable with regards to finding fortune, let me know if I can be of aid. I too need to establish some level of comfort. In the meantime though we may be able to save what coin we have if I try to negotiate a lower price for the room."

When the group finally manages to find a table and takes their seats, Fyvrian Mage brings up glancing to and from Josrel and Lillia, "I suppose it is good that we waited for everyone to be present. Are either of you willing to share with us the details of your plan to join a frankpledge and how one or all of us can aid you in the endeavor?"

"As Josrel explained," Lillia says, "we plan on gaining the trust of a local frankpledge by aiding them with their problems while not causing more problems of our own. This promiscuous mistress asked us to find and return the missing letters that are being used as blackmail and so we can then convince the priest to change his advice regarding these new taxes. We followed a suspect to the village north east of here where she appears to be lodging in a shack of a cottage. Before we could go further we were approached by the local beadle wanting to know our business. Feeling it was not advisable to break into the cottage under the nose of the beadle we returned here to plan further until something else takes the beadle's attention."

Rikoro appears tense at first, then a soft smile creeps onto his face as he responds, "It is a bit humorous in a sense. In order to gain the trust of a small community we must do something illegal."

The Fyvrian mage grows more thoughtful as he pulls on the tip of his beard, "Off of the top of my head I have an idea. It would involve all of us seated here however, and the chance for success would be slim. Still with input from everyone else and backup plans we could achieve success."

Here the gangly bearded Shek-p'var opens his right hand displaying his five spindly fingers, and in a quiet voice he begins, "Here is my idea. The key to this is to play off of our strengths. The two Haliki's and myself pose as mendicant priests

- looking to either convert followers or seek donations. We visit various abodes in the area to allay suspicion until we reach the one we believe holds these letters." Rikoro then collapses his thumb, fore and index fingers, as he continues, "In the meantime Fyna will distract the beadle with either her charms or a story that has him chasing a shadow. What you choose to say and do I leave in your capable hands." Indicating the mercenary, his ring finger comes slowly down, leaving his pinky still standing, "Davas will act as a scout - again utilizing his own abilities of a keen eye and staying hidden."

His task will be two-fold - to keep watch for anyone else approaching and distract them if they grow suspicious." With the final person's task mentioned he lowers his last finger forming a fist, "At this point I will endeavour to put this blackmailer under a spell of slumber. Thereby granting us entry into her abode for a short period of time and allowing us to search for the aforementioned letters. There are many variables that could cause the outcome to meet failure. This plan hinges on the fulcrum of my correctly weaving 'Syncope of Shalor' and the target not resisting it. Therefore prudence demands we have alternate plans in place."

If I fail in my task either we retreat and attempt to break-in under the cloak of darkness or we all collapse and overwhelm her with strength of numbers. I prefer the less direct route as always rather than brute force, but leave it open for discussion."

Rikoro leans back in his chair and inquires of the others present, "What do you all think? For - against - amendments?"

Having listened to Rikoro's plan for dealing with the frankpledge problem, Davas sits back and looks at the others waiting for them to speak first. After a long pause, where he realizes no one has anything to say, he leans forward has just begun to speak when the man enters. "Well, I think that could work ... but I think that after dark would be our best ..."
