

**9-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR**

2ND WATCH [COOL, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST BREEZE, HEAVY RAIN]

You awake the next morning to the sound of the heavy rain pattering on the roof. Josrel finds that his wound has completely healed. Berina's wound feels a little better and she does not have morning sickness today. Rikoro is still completely paralyzed.

Turning to Lillia Josrel says: "I shall get Rikoro so we can perform our Morning Ablutions."

Josrel goes to Rikoro's room and knocks on the door: "Rikoro, this is Josrel are you awake for Morning Ablutions?" Josrel asks through the door.

It is Berina that opens Rikoro's door. She says: "Josrel, I was just about to come find you. Come in." and she steps back into the room. "Last night, Rikoro was checking out the ring we got in the booty when he was suddenly rendered completely paralyzed. I've been here all night trying to think of something to do about this. I fell asleep for a time. I'm sad to say, I haven't been able to think of a thing. He being a devotee of Save K'nor, and you and Lillia being clergy for same, I'm hoping that you can intercede with Save K'nor and ask him to save Rikoro. If he remains paralyzed, he'll die of thirst soon." Berina looks at Josrel with pleading eyes. She adds: "That's the ring over there." and points it out.

Placing both of his hands on each of Berina's shoulders, but turning to Fyna, Josrel says: "Fyna can you go please get Lillia and have her come her please?"

Turning back to Berina: " Ok Berina what exactly have you done for Rikoro?"

"Well..." Berina begins "aside from getting Fyna to help get him off the floor and into his bed, not much. I've tried to think of ways to make him comfortable...like putting a pillow under his head. I confess, I'm at a complete loss for what to do."

Fyna says, "We can help him. He wont die of thirst, because we can hold him in a sitting position, tilt his head slightly back, and pour water very slowly on his tongue. It will take a while to cure his thirst this way, but it is safe."

Berina says, "But..." and Berina pauses in confusion "breathing seems all he's able to do. If you pour water in his mouth, won't that just go into his lungs? Swallowing is something a person does deliberately, isn't it? You could just end up drowning him. I'm for waiting to see if the paralysis wears off. A person can go without water for about three-quarters of a tenday before dying. We can try your suggestion as a last resort. I'm hoping Josrel can get Save K'nor to intervene." Berina scowls, and says: "By the Gods, I hate this feeling of helplessness...having no idea what to do to save someone!"

Berina then goes and kneels down next to where Fyna put the ring. Leaning close, she examines the ring in minute detail, looking for any inscription or other clue as to what the ring does. [OOO: Berina will use a piece of straw, or other similar item, to move the ring around for examination without having to touch it.] She wracks her brain trying to remember all she was ever

taught about enchanted items. [OOO: Berina knows about the existence of psionics, but I doubt she knows anything about antipathetic reactions, so her focus is on some sort of inimical magical effect.]

She knows that having enchanted artifacts around when an item is enchanted, or even being researched, can cause interference and spell misfires. Adverse effects can also happen when trying to work with an artifact of inverse convocation. In Rikoro's case, being of the Fyvarian convocation, the diametric convocation would be Lyahvian. Finally, when an item is enchanted, it can be given an ego, making it somewhat independent and able to use its enchantment to effect those who are greatly different in morality, religion or motivation.

Josrel kneels down next to Berina to see if anything medically is wrong with him. He looks for bite marks, sign of being poisoned if he knows of any.

He finds no bite marks or discoloration of the blood vessels or around the mouth that would indicate poisoning.

If there is nothing Josrel can do medically Josrel will first perform his morning abluion, then pray to Save-Knor to save Rikoro from this predicament. [+1 ritual]

Rikoro can feel the paralysis slip away with the tingling feeling of returning circulation. At the end of the hour of Josrel's prayers, the paralysis is completely gone.

As Josrel begins his prayers on Rikoro's behalf, the Fyvrian Mage slowly begins to exert effort into any possible movements. At first able to twitch his fingers and blink, while the hour passes more and more becomes possible as his lanky limbs begin to move more freely.

As the hour goes on and Rikoro's movements become more noticeable, Berina gets more and more antsy. She holds herself in check so as to not interrupt. When the paralysis is gone, she can no longer contain her pleasure and gives Rikoro and Josrel each one of her bear hugs, a broad smile on her face. "You two are on good terms with your God! I hope that someday I may enjoy such favor from Halea."

Josrel says, "There is only one way to get into good favor with your patron Diety Berina. Worship, Worship, Worship Lillia and I go through each day trying to serve Him as best as we can. So my advice to you is that to serve Halea each day."

Grinning and Blushing Josrel continues:" And knowing how your worship I envy Davas."

Berina returns Josrel's grin and says: "I try to not wear him out."

Once his voice is back, Rikoro says calmly, but hoarsely, "I am indebted to you and the Sage, Haliki. No telling how long I may have been in that state."

Josrel, placing his hand on Rikoro's shoulder, says: "Please no thanks are needed. It is to Save-Knor that thanks are owed. I am but his instrument."

Glancing over to Berina who is still poking at the ring, Rikoro says in her direction, "I had quite a lot of time to think. Considering my reaction to holding the ring, I believe it may

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have to do with my convocation over religious beliefs. Mainly due in part to Fyna's faith being in concert with my own."

Looking a little confused, Berina says: "I don't recall that Fyna has said which God she follows. You think she's a Save K'norran?" Turning to Fyna, she asks: "If you don't mind my asking, which God DO you follow?"

Rikoro interjects on Fyna's behalf, "Ah she mentioned her beliefs last night during the introductions to the innkeep and wife. Fyna is a follower of the Lady of Paladins."

Then with some hesitancy in his voice, Rikoro offers, "To be certain it was not merely a singular event I could try again. However, I am in no rush to do so. Perhaps in a few days when my resolve has returned. For now I suggest that since Fyna seems to be both unphased and unharmed by the ring, it should remain with her - under close scrutiny."

Berina says: "I agree. Fyna, would you take charge of the ring for now, please? If you wish to keep it as a portion of your share of the booty, I have no objection, but you'll have to get the ring appraised so its worth can be deducted from your share of the coin we'll receive when we redeem the bearer bonds and the silver we'll get for the gold crowns."

Rikoro tugs on the tip of his beard, before saying, "I am somewhat hesitant to put this ring into another persons hands until we determine its origins. Their reaction could be much worse than my own. Thus it may be hard to appraise."

Berina says, "A good point. I suppose we can just keep the ring to ourselves for now. If we determine later that the ring could be safely handled for the purposes of an appraisal, we can have it done at that time and make adjustments in money then."

Glancing over to Fyna, Rikoro musters in a serious tone, "If you feel any sort of presence in your thoughts or mind or something out of the ordinary occurs to you do let us know immediately."

As Fyna takes the ring from Rikoro, Josrel says, "If I may have a chance to meditate on the ring at some point, I'd like to try to see if I can gain some information about it. Sometimes when I hold an object Save-Knor grants me some insight into the object."

"Again, I agree. You saw what happened to Rikoro. Until we have a good understanding of what is going on with that ring, it's as potentially dangerous as a pregnant gargun loose in a city's sewers."

The Fyvrian Mage reaches for his newly acquired stave and uses it to prop himself up off the bed, "Before being rendered immobile, I had a chance to study this staff. It appears to be an open focus. Something that will take time to attune, but I would prefer to the old one I carried."

Berina says, "What I said to Fyna about her keeping the ring, will...out of fairness...have to apply to you as well with regard to the staff. I point out to both of you, that we should not make any mention of the items being magic. I would not be surprised if they were confiscated outright if we were to claim that they were magic in any way."

"Indeed.", the Fyvrian Mage chuckles, "Still it will be difficult to ascertain these items true worth from a simple visual inspection alone."

Berina says, "I would think that an unattuned focus can be safely handled by a woodcrafter. After all, he or she would only be appraising the staff's workmanship with regard to what it worth from a monetary standpoint."

Tilting his head to his side, Rikoro counters, "I meant it's intrinsic value, rather than physical worth. Still I suppose you are right."

"I mean not discourtesy in listening to your conversation," Lillia says, "but are not magic items value akin to art items...meaning what is very valuable to one person, complete rubbish to another?"

Rikoro says, "Well said Haliki. You managed to form what I was trying to voice much more eloquently. Still a baseline of the cost will help to further gauge the items worth.", Rikoro adds with a smile.

With a bit of a smile, Lillia says, "As an example, I can tell you approximately what a staff would cost – from free if you cut it as part of your pannage to a couple of shillings if you have a balanced and iron shod one. So are you willing to sell me your supposedly 'magical' staff for 50d?"

Pausing just for a brief moment, Rikoro starts, "Eh the one you hold now or the one I carry? In the former case the staff was handed to me by Berina so it is not mine to sell. Though I let Josrel know if he wished to carry and study it that would be quite fine. And in the latter case I would prefer to keep the staff myself as part of the collected 'spoils'. Still if there is contention for it I will gladly bid on the staff."

"Oh, I want not another staff," Lillia says, "I was just illustrating the point about the difference between the material value of something and what others value it at."

With a smile to Josrel, the bearded gangly man tells him, "If you wish to keep the other Haliki, please feel free too. I shall let you know it will keep the undead at bay of up to several feet. If you do not wish to hold it, it will make for a fine treasure to return to either Berina's or my own chantry as one of our unearthened relics needed for our progression."

Josrel says, "Well Rikoro, if you truly wish to thank the Sage of Heaven then I can take the staff as a donation to the church on your behalf. I can study the item myself and with your help we can put to parchment some facts about it to go along with the staff. It is up to you though." Josrel says to Rikoro.

"I shall gladly share what I know. I did not dig any deeper into its history, but we can certainly endeavor to do so during the evenings.", Rikoro says proudly at the offer by Josrel.

Berina says, "Josrel, if you do make a report of some kind regarding the staff I gave to Rikoro...which he is now offering to you...I would like a copy of that report for myself."

Quirking a brow, Rikoro mentions, "Perhaps the chantry would accept a report over the item itself?"

The corners of Berina's mouth twitch upward, and she fights to maintain her composure, but loses the battle and breaks out

laughing. When she has to pause to catch her breath, she blurts out: "You're joking, right?" then laughs some more. Once the laughter subsides, Berina says: "Thank you Rikoro. Laughter is good for the soul." She continues: "I suppose the Masters would view a report with some curiosity, but weight it as equivalent to the artifact itself? Not in my chantry anyway."

Rikoro's lips curl into a broad smile as he dips his head slowly, and responds with mirth in his voice, "Too true. Too true. I simply question how often it is we encounter such rarities. Still in the time I have known you I have seen two. So perhaps it is not so futile an endeavor as I originally thought."

Finally Rikoro says resolutely with a stamp of his staff, "Enough talk on my part, my head has heard enough of my own voice. Action is the order of the day and I wish to set to eating and drinking before finding some employ."

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When you come to the common room, you see that the staff is serving smoked sausage, chicken eggs, sharp cheese, melon, mush and perry (pear cider) to break your fast.

Waiting to be served his meal, Rikoro mentions to the others, "We should plan our day. I wish to make contact with the apothecary."

Then with a bit of a wistful sigh, "Also I need to inform the guard of my whereabouts. The other contact we were given was the man named 'Mule', otherwise known as Donar of Harabor who is an Ostler in town. Perhaps Davas should seek him out for information and possibly employ? I believe Fyna wished to meet with her physician friend who is likely a relative of Josrel's and Lillia by extension. Again another good venue for acquiring information. Berina you're more than welcome to come with me. Though I am sure Davas would not mind the company either."

Nodding in Agreement, Josrel says: " Yes I am so very much interested in meeting Sir Petral of Aswain. That was his name correct?" Josrel asks Fyna. "I can't seem to remember anyone by that name, Sir Petral of Aswain is a physician? I wonder if he is related to my great uncle Goshel of Aswain he is a physician in Tashal. hmm." Josrel rambles to himself.

Berina gets the attention of Rikoro, Fyna, Davas, and Josrel and Lillia and says: "I strongly urge that the very first order of business be taking the four gold crowns and the three bearer bonds and turning them into their worth in silver. The resulting coin can then be divided into seven shares...one for each person in the party when we acquired that booty. We are going to need to pay our way as we get established here in Minarsas. Besides, if one of us is robbed, only one-seventh of the money is lost, instead of maybe all of it. If it sounds like I'm overly concerned about being robbed, it's because I WAS robbed in Olokand. I had to play a dangerous game to get my belongings back. I'd prefer to not have to do that again."

"After we've gotten the money, we can attend to looking people up." Getting into details, Berina continues: "We shouldn't scatter to the four winds, though. Fyna, Josrel and Lillia can go find this Sir Petral of Aswain, while Davas and myself can accompany

Rikoro to see the apothecary Anesa of Fayrl. After that, the three of us can go introduce ourselves to Donar of Harabor. Fyna, if you would, take the extra weapons from the booty and see what the weaponcrafter Margan of Loda will give us for them. We'll all meet back here for the evening meal. Anyone have any objections to this set of activities?"

Rikoro shakes his head then tells Berina, "None from me, what you said makes sense."

" I agree as well" Josrel nods.

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Due to your late arrival, you are the last being served the morning meal. Just as you finish your meal, a couple of people arrive. The first is a man dressed in the gaudy clothes of a minstrel or thespian. The second is a woman dressed in the out-of-fashion but good quality clothes of a servant or lady's maid wearing the hand-me-downs of her mistress.

"Welcome folks," Melenda says, "I take it you are here for the daily mass of Halea." Turning to her lodgers, she continues, "May I introduce Vilmus of Arinas of the Cloudy Mountain Players and Hila, Lady's maid to the Earl's daughter."

"A pleasure." Rikoro responds with a bob of his head, offering a soft smile.

To the latter she asks, "I hope you have leave of your mistress to be away."

"Yes," Hila answers, "she has allowed me to attend my religious observations and asks not which religion it is. Of course, Lady Skona Valador, milady's chaperone, disapproves but will not oppose her ward for what she considers a trivial matter."

Once again addressing the lodgers, Melenda says, "if any of you are offended by our rituals, you had best finish you meal and be about your business for a few hours at least."

After being addressed, Rikoro replies to Melenda, "Apologies is it Shenasene? I fear I did not catch your title priestess."

"There is no need to address me by my title unless you are a worshiper of Halea," she answers, "Since you have already stated you are not and we are not on more familiar terms, you should address me as Mistress Tamorith."

When the matter of clerical rank is settled, Rikoro lets it be known, "Well met, I am Rikoro of Drelin and I am not offended by another's worship. However, I should depart to find employ. Would you happen to know of an apothecary in town by the name Anesa of Fayrl?"

"Yes, I do," Melenda says, "She has a shop down by the docks but she will not be able to deal with you until the first of the third watch since you are not a resident of the town."

Addressing Vilmus and Hila, Berina says: "A pleasure to meet you both. My name is Berina of Kyfa. I hope you come for services often, as I'd like to get to know you better." Turning to Melenda, she continues: "I hate to miss today's service, but I must attend to matters of the Seven Coins. Tomorrow though, for sure."

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With a frown, Melenda says, "I am certainly sorry to hear that. If you have not an hour to spend in worship of the Maker of Bargains, how can you expect Her to aid you in your time of need. Especially, considering that, being foreigners, you will get no business done before the start of the third watch – such things are forbidden in the town custumal. We will be finished by that time. However, do as you feel you must."

Turning to Melenda, Berina asks: "Could you tell me where the shop of the usurer Anerd of Harabor is located, please?"

"At the west side of the market and before the river, there is a large, fenced-in mansion and private common," says Melenda. "That is the home of Anerd, the Harabor clanhead. You and your companions apparently DO know some important people in town?"

Berina says, "Well, you were the one who said that Anerd was fair and able to handle larger transactions...although I wouldn't say that we have all that large a transaction. My friends and I had to defend ourselves from bandits on our way here to Minarsas. As you can see, we prevailed. We gained some booty and have to divide it up between the seven of us. Once that is done, my husband and I will each have to have a third of our shares turned into bonds for our respective liege lord's lawful portions. I leave it to the others as to how they will comply with the law."

"Ah, so I did," says Melenda, "I had forgotten."

Berina says, "As for knowing some important people here in Minarsas...we have been recommended to Donar of Harabor the ostler and Anesa of Fayrl the apothecary." Berina gets a mischievous look in her eye and adds: "And yourself, of course!" Smiling sincerely, she says: "As a Halean, any of Halea's clergy are important."

Berina says, "Thank you." Following the rest of the party out of the door, Berina says to them: "After Rikoro's business at the watch barracks is concluded, we can go to the usurer to deal with the money, then split into two groups as we discussed."

After hearing Melenda speak, Rikoro cranes his neck to regard Berina and says softly, "The Mistress has a point on many scores Berina. The matter at the barracks does not require all of our attention. We will return here for lunch if you wish to stay."

Berina says, "Hmm. I hadn't thought about the business ban." Berina says, "I owe my companions their shares of money and feel that our Mistress would expect me to honor such a debt immediately. However, since it is nearly impossible to attend to it until after services anyway, I'll stay and participate."

Speaking to the party members, Berina says: "Give me the bearer bonds and the crowns to hold until you return. They'll be safer here."

Rikoro simply bobs his head, then fishes around inside his pack to retrieve the crown, he tries his best to keep it carefully palmed inside his large hand as he passes it over to Berina as discretely as possible.

Berina also keeps the crown palmed and puts it away as if it is just another silver pence. She says: "The bearer bond?"

"Right you are," Rikoro mumbles with a look of remembrance as he yanks out a neatly folded parchment and hands it nonchalantly to Berina.

"Thank you." Berina says.

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Dabbing at the side of his mouth and with a final brush at his beard, Rikoro rises up from his seated position with the aid of his staff. "I have what I needed to know. As we all appear prepared, let us set off. My first stop must be at the watch barracks.", he says while moving towards the entry.

Lillia replies, "I see not the wisdom of having what is now our personal wealth all in your hands so a thief can take it all at once but I will follow as my husband leads."

Listening intently to both women Josrel adds: "Hmm..While it having all the money in one place has some merit to it, Berina, I have to agree with Lillia here. Separately we lose little money but if one carries all then we lose everything. Especially when a certain someone learns we are here we most certainly will be marked. I think we should keep what we have." Josrel says quietly

"Let me see if I can explain my thinking on this." Berina says to Fyna, Rikoro, Lillia and Josrel. "You all want to run all over town on various errands. I want to get the three bearer bonds and four crowns cashed in for their worth in silver and split up into the seven shares owing to each of us that were present at the fight where we got them. I think that this should be the first thing we do, before anything else. The problem with that, is that us strangers in town can't conduct business until later. I don't want to have to chase all over town later trying to find you. I wouldn't know where to start looking in any case."

"And I most definitely don't want the responsibility of taking care of even a small portion of monies belonging to the rest of you for any longer than I have to. I would prefer that you remain here until we CAN conduct business, get the money changing taken care of, THEN split up. That would take care of the theft concerns raised by Josrel. Obviously, I can't demand that you stay until later, but it will make life a lot easier for us if you do."

"I, for one, will not do anything that requires leaving the inn until we can go to the usurer and get our finances in order. If that means waiting all day while you all go wandering around town...then so be it. What will you do?"

Fyna says, "That sounds like a good plan. Here are the monies that I was holding"

Berina says, "Thank you, Fyna. We'll get the booty split up and you'll have your share before the day is out. I expect you'll come along to keep me honest." and she grins.

"Considering the number of times you have gotten into violent situations where you have been injured or robbed, I think my money is safest right where it is at," Lillia replies, "Unless, that is, you are going to force me to give it over, in which case I will decide it is safest for me to find others to associate with. I have not given you my allegiance nor sworn vassalage to you and I do not intend to do so. As to being a target to thieves, which will draw more attention, a single coin or a large bag of silver."

Startled Josrel replies: " Now Lillia no need to get nasty here. I know that Berina has best interest at heart. I have trusted with my life in the past and trust her with it in the future. She also was a tremendous help to me in finding you from Armenton. Having said that I still agree with Lillia about not splitting up the money. Something just occurred to me now, would exchanging a large sum of crowns bring attention to us? Why not exchange them over time instead of all at once."

Visibly containing her anger, Berina says to Lillia: "I have spent a bit of time calculating the value of the crowns and bearer bonds. Two of the bearer bonds are for four pounds each. The other bearer bond is for two pounds. A pound equals 240 pence. In addition, there are four crowns. Each crown is worth 320 pence. There were also 24 pence in silver as part of the booty. All totaled, that comes to 3,704 pence. Split seven ways, that comes to 529 and a fraction of a pence for each of us."

"Combining yours and Josrel's shares is 1,058 pence. You have one of the crowns and one of the bearer bonds. I don't know which of the bearer bonds you hold. If it's one of the four pound bonds, you have 1,280 pence worth of booty and the two of you owe the rest of us 222 pence. If, instead, you have the two pound bearer bond, you are holding 800 pence worth of booty and the rest of us owe the two of you 258 pence."

"Nothing can come between friends like a dispute over money...especially large sums of money. Now, maybe 222 or 258 pence is not a big concern to a noble, but to the likes of the lot of us, that's a large sum of money. To avoid such a dispute is why I want to cash it all in and get it split up."

"I note that the usurer will not handle our transaction for free, so we'll each end up with less than 529 pence, but I feel that an even division of the booty is essential for continued peace and harmony between us."

"Oh, and in case you have a problem with Lysada getting an equal share...I point out that she had her knife out and ready, as did you. That neither one of you actually had to fight, is just your good fortune. It could have easily turned out differently. That's why I felt that she, AND you, deserved an equal share."

"As to your concern about having a 'large bag of silver', you can either have the usurer make you a letter-of-credit that you can use around town, or you can take your share in one or more of the crowns, with the remainder of your share in silver."

"Josrel, we had to declare that we had booty when we came into town...although we were coy about how much we had gotten. I remind you that some of the bandits got away, so there are some people at large who do know what we got. Best that we deal with the split now, before they can set plans in motion to get it back."

"I have no quarrel with your calculations, even though I know not enough to tell of the truth of them," says Lillia, "although I am very surprised that you have suddenly become such an expert mercantylor. What I am concerned with is your demands without a 'by your leave'. I could possibly agree with what you want if it was not presented in such a high handed manner. You appear to not trust us with a single penny of your money while expecting us to completely trust you with large sums of ours. Do you not

think it would be more agreeable to come to an agreement than to be making such demands without consideration for the opinions of others? I am still of the opinion that it is safer to keep what each has until we can make the divisions. If you cannot agree with that, send your man Davas to prevent any imagined misdeeds of ours until we can make other arrangements. The more stubbornly you make your demands, the less I wish to accede to them."

Berina says, "Lillia, I had no idea that you had such thin skin and were so quick to take offense over something I had no intent to be giving offense with in the first place. I had thought that you knew my brash personality by now. I can see I was mistaken."

"I am who I am...just as you are who you are. As people, we are slow to change...if we even try. I HAVE been trying to put more thought into things before I act. If you doubt me, just ask your husband, mine, or Rikoro what I was like when they first met me."

"If you feel I have wronged you over specific things and want an apology for those things...you have it. I will not, however, apologize for being who I am. If that is not enough, then we will have to go our separate ways...and I wish you good fortune in whatever you do."

"As for the current situation, I have been trying very hard to explain why I want us to do what I've suggested...not very successfully apparently. I will try one more time."

"All of us, having just arrived here in Minarsas, have a number of things to attend to...most of which cost money. It has been in my mind to get everyone what they are owed right away so they can attend to them. It is my contention that this should occur first. Instead, everyone was about to scatter to the four winds...some with other people's money. I point out that, as a rule, most tradesmen cannot make change for a Khuzan Crown. Bearer bonds, by law, cannot be redeemed by other than a usurer. I'm sorry if I failed to ask your leave in order to get other people the money owed to them. It's not a matter of trust...it's a matter of what's right. If YOU don't trust ME, then come along to the usurer and keep me honest."

"As far as offense goes, I take exception to that comment about suddenly becoming an 'expert mercantylor'. I'm the daughter of a Master Craftsman. I could do basic sums almost before I could walk."

"So, what's it to be? Do we put all of this behind us? Or do we split up and go owe separate ways? Your choice."

"You keep explaining yourself using the same words over and over," Lillia says, "but you will still not accept any opinion but your own. Josrel and I have both said that we want to keep what we have for the moment so unless you plan to show yourself to be no better than the highwaymen we encountered, get out of our way and let us be. I will abide by my husband's decision and I know not what oaths he has given you, but my advice is to not to simply put up with your bullying and insults just 'because that is the way you have always been'. He is a freeman and should stand up to you like one. On the other hand, if he has married me without telling me he is your serf, our marriage can be put aside."

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During the whole exchange, Rikoro remains silent, but seems to want to interject between each bout. Clearly conflicted as to which side to take, his face contorts in odd ways. As he sees Berina inspect the bearer bond, a look of understanding dawns on him and he relaxes for the moment.

Berina says, "Josrel has sworn no oaths to me. My view of him is as a friend. With regard to myself, he is free to do, or not do, whatever he pleases...other than harm me and mine, of course."

"Very well," Berina says, "keep the bearer bond now in your possession...it's the one for two pounds...and the Khuzan crown. I am going to redeem the other two bearer bonds. When I have done that, I will give the two of you the 258 pence due to you...less two-sevenths of the fee the usurer charges to redeem the bonds. Do with it as you will. Again, if you do not trust me...and it looks to me like you don't...you can come along to the usurer and see that all ends as it should."

"I never meant to say I trust you not," Lillia says, "Ah well, let us leave it as settled then."

Berina says, "That suits me. Thank you."

Turning to Rikoro and Fyna, Berina hands back to them the Khuzan crowns they had given her and says: "The bearer bonds can't be redeemed by any of us until later this morning. I'm going to stay here for the Hlean service."

"Rikoro, I believe you said you are going to check in with the town watch, so your wanting to do so now is a good idea. I'll see you here when you are done."

"Fyna, you wanted to try and see your friend...Sir Petral Awain I believe. By all means see to it, but please try to return here at the time Mistress Melenda has said that it will be legal for us to do business with the usurer."

"All of you...please be careful." and Berina goes to attend the service Melenda conducts.

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After the others have left and while the inn staff clean around them, Melenda sits in the common room with Berina, Vilmus and Hila. She says a quick prayer to Halea and then says, "Today, let us speak of the Kings Coin. As the scriptures tell us 'Keep the Kings coin safe, that when the tax collector comes thyne own wealth will be beyond his reach. This coin should be used for property taxes, hawking taxes, bonding fees, highway tolls, bridge tolls, gate tolls, guild dues, wharfage, pilotage, registry fees and other money that goes to the government, Having this coin ready when it is needed, there are usually less questions about thyne other activities.' I am sure our new arrivals have had the new taxes brought to their notice so shall we discuss... 'Are these taxes unusual?', 'Are they onerous?', 'If they are what can and should we do about them?' and 'How are decisions on taxes made by the Earl?'"

"I think I can answer the last one," Hila says, "The Earl is still grieving for his invalid wife so he relies heavily on advisors...I believe there are about a dozen of them. On the question of the taxes, the advice given by his advisors is a bit unusual though. I believe somebody is influencing them. The one example I know of is the Larani Serolin Margon of Irin. I know he is being blackmailed into supporting the taxes...even the temple tax. I

like that not and would like to help him but I know not how. It would be indiscrete for me to go into more detail about the blackmail and that would make matters worse."

"I have no dealings with the two Shek P'var that I know in town so I have no opinion on the tax on writing materials," says Vilmus. "The khuzdul I have known are a course lot and, since they built most of the town, they must all be wealthy. The only reason they are upset about the khuzdul tax is that they are also a greedy lot."

"So many questions spring to my mind, I hardly know where to start." Berina says. "Please forgive my ignorance, but explain the difference between the King's Coin and one's own wealth. As I mentioned about the booty, I know a third of it is owed to one's immediate liege lord. Are other portions owed? If so, to whom and how much?"

"Are you serious? You know not of the seven coins which are one of the foundations of our belief?" asks Melenda with an incredulous look on her face. "You are either an imposter or you have been seriously lacking in your worship."

"The latter, I'm afraid." Berina says, almost hanging her head in shame. "Taxes are an arcane subject to me. I think I could better understand the inner workings of the arts of the Shek P'var."

"I had the seven coins briefly explained to me once. Ones' income is divided into seven portions between tithe...to the church I assume, although that wasn't explicitly stated..., investments...I have a good one in Tashal...bill paying, saving, taxes and fees, expenses, and recreation."

"The seven coins are, in order, Halea's coin (tithe), the Magic coin (investments), the debtor's coin (bill paying), the King's coin (taxes), two coins for expenses, and thyne own coin (pleasure)," Melenda says.

Berina says, "It's the taxes and fees...the King's Coin I presume...that confuse me. Strictly speaking, doesn't the King own everything, right down to the clothes on our backs? I mean, even the great lords hold what they do only by sufferance from the King, don't they? I understand that, as a practical matter, the King can't oversee every little thing in the kingdom. He has to let people use things as if THEY own them...still, it's my understanding that none of us really own anything from the skin out."

"No, the king owns all of the land," Melenda answers, "He does not own everything and we have not slavery in Kaldor as they do in other countries."

Berina says, "What confuses me, is that you say to use the King's Coin for bridge tolls and the like, and at the same time expect the tax collector to come around asking for the King's Coin. What portion of our income IS the King's Coin? Are we supposed to keep records of every bridge toll and such in order to explain why we don't have the full amount to hand over when the taxman comes around?"

"The King's coin is the portion of your money you use to pay all of the taxes and fees owed. It is an accounting between you and the Goddess. The King and the Tax Collector have no concern with our way of accounting for our money and what I was asking for our topic of discussion, is what are reasonable taxes.

As citizens of the kingdom, we should pay all taxes asked of us so that we are not arrested for tax evasion."

Berina says, "I'm sorry. There are too many things I don't understand. I'm hoping that worshipping under your tutelage will rectify my failings."

"The important thing is to be patient and steadfast in your studies," says Melenda, "It will take some time and effort."

Addressing Hila, Berina says: "Blackmail is the cowards way. Your wanting to help the Serolin is admirable, but if you don't know what to do, you have two choices...take one or more other people into your confidence who can assist you, or do nothing. The first choice requires you to make a leap of faith and trust others. As for the second choice...a saying I heard somewhere goes 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil, is for good men to do nothing.'"

"Yes, it is as you say," says Hila, "but how do you know who you can trust other than those who are bound to you by oath? The lives of at least two people other than myself are involved should the secret get out."

Berina says "I can't answer the question you raised. That's why I said that you either have to take a leap of faith, or stand by and do nothing."

Continuing with Hila, Berina says: "You said the Earl's wife is invalid. What is her affliction?"

"Nobody knows," answers Hila, "the imminent physician, Sir Petral Aswain, spends almost all his time trying to find out."

Speaking to Vilmus, Berina says: "Back in Tashal, I knew a few Shek P'var. They were good people, but hard to get to know, as they tended to spend most of their time in their researches and not much in mingling with other folks. Still, I liked them. If you would, please tell me who they are and where I might find them. I'd like to make their acquaintance."

"The only ones I know of are Barint of Ikabir, the town's physician, and Rendig of Charaers, the harper," answers Vilmus.

Berina says, "Thank you. I'll visit them when I can."

Berina says, "I've met a few Khuzdul, but I can't say I know much about them. I suppose they have their share of greedy sorts, just as we humans do."

\* \* \*

Rikoro makes his way across town to the watch barracks. There are few people about this early, the most notable being the street cleaners picking up the rubbish from the ditches along the sides of the roads. There are several times when you have to circle around their carts and their pigs.

Arriving at the watch barracks, you enter to find Eredos of Lothlar, apparently just starting duty and briefing the other watchmen. Noticing your arrival, he says, "Welcome. Was your night pleasant and do they have the debauchery at the inn I have heard of?"

Glancing over to Eredos, Rikoro inclines his head and steps forward, stating, "Ah good morning Captain. The night was well

appreciated. It did my weary bones well to know I was settled after several days on the road. As to the debauchery, I did not experience or witness any."

Rikoro pauses with a bit of a sheepish grin, continuing, "Though right now they are holding one of their -ceremony's-."

The Fyvrian mage shifts gears looking over the other members of the Watch, and begins to speak more quickly as his attention returns to Eredos, "I do not wish to hold you from briefing your men. My intention was to make it known where I was settled. Unfortunately my arrival yesterday was met with suspicion due to foolishness on my part - though you probably already read or heard the report. As you know I am at the Green Dragon. If I move elsewhere I will be sure to inform someone here immediately."

Eredos tells one of his men, "Pedel, take his full name and make a note of where he is residing, into the log books."

Hesitantly Rikoro then asks while running his hand through his beard, "Quickly before I go. As I understand it, there is no temple of Save- k'nor in Minarsas. Would you happen to know if there is any informal gathering of followers of Sage similar to those practicing their worship of Halea in the Green Dragon?"

"I know of nothing such as that," Eredos replies.

Pedal says, "My brother Rendig of Charaers the harper worships Save K'nor but I do not think there is a priest in town."

A smile creeps onto Rikoro's lips and he nods to Pedal, while speaking calmly, "Ah grand to hear. Well a Haliki had traveled with me. Perhaps we can organize something whilst we remain in town. Would you mind terribly giving me directions to where I could find him?"

"His home is the last one before the end of the fence around the manor common," Pedal says pointing almost straight north.

The Fyvrian mage squints following the finger north, envisioning the direction in his head through the building. Eventually he nods slowly and smiles slightly before telling Pedal, "My thanks I shall seek him out."

Then as if remembering, Rikoro states in a near official manner, "As to my full name it is Rikoro of Drelin, and I will be at the Green Dragon Inn until I can find more permanent lodging. Once I do so, I will be sure to inform you of the change."

"Thank you Goodman Drelin," Pedal replies.

\* \* \*

Fyna, Josrel and Lillia trudge through the heavy rain to the gate of the palisade around Caer Minarsas. As they approach, a guard steps out of the gate house next to the closed gate and says, "And where might you folks be going?"

"We are heading out to visit my friend, the physician named Sir Petral Aswain.", Fyna smiles politely as she says this.

"No you are not," he tells you. "I cannot just allow anyone to stroll in here like they live here. If you wish, I can have a message delivered and if Sir Petral wishes to see you he will tell me or meet you elsewhere."

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"If you could deliver a message to Sir Petral." Josrel asks the guard. "I am Josrel of Aswain and this is my wife Lillia." Josrel indicates Lillia. "I'm not sure if we are relations to Sir Petral but would like to see if I am, if he would meet with us that is of course."

"I will have your message delivered," the guard answers, "and if he agrees, where can I say you can be found? If he is a distant relation, are there any names of other relatives I can pass on? You look like you have not enough years for him to remember the likes of you."

"We are staying at the Green Dragon for now." Josrel answers. "As to other relations I have a Great Uncle Goshel of Aswain who is a physician in Tashal. That is why I thought there might be a connection. I thank you for delivering the message for me, I await for the invitation."

Josrel turns to Fyna " Is there anything more you need here Fyna?"

## 9-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [COOL, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST BREEZE, HEAVY RAIN]

"A good day to you Watchman Pedal.", Rikoro offers in return.

Once back on the street he looks to the sky then makes his way back to the inn. Before entering Rikoro tries to peek through any available window muttering to himself, "Best not interrupt.."

The windows that he finds are shuttered with small, diamond-shaped, colored glass panes on the inside...he can see nothing inside and the place where he is standing is open to view from passerby's. Some of the pedestrians are watching him from a distance.

Realizing the stares he's getting from onlookers, Rikoro steps away from the window and moves to the door. As he does so, he mutters under his breath, "Just what I need, another run at with the law, for peeping or skulking.. and in day light no less." The Fyvrian mage shakes his head, a smile almost forming on his lips.

While at the entry to the inn, Rikoro, creaks it open a crack and peeks inside hoping to catch someone's eye.

He can see that the staff is still working on cleaning the inn and the Halea worship group is just now breaking up. Melenda spots him at the door and calls to her husband, "fetch a towel for our guest so that he may dry off." Returning her attention to Rikoro she says, "You can come on in. We are just finishing up." To Berina she says, "Think over what we discussed and we will speak of it further on the morrow."

Rikoro steps inside looking content before speaking, "My thanks. I did not wish to interrupt the ceremony.". He then proceeds to stand idly by the side of the door, holding his staff.

Once Berina is ready to go Rikoro inquires, "Shall we be off to our days errands?"

Going over to where Melenda happens to be, Berina says to her: "Mistress Melenda, would you consent to a favor, please? My husband and I, and the very tall fellow there," pointing to Rikoro "are going to see Anerd of Harabor to take care of some business. If the other three of our associates...the woman fighter,

and the two Haliki of Save K'nor...should return here before we do, would you ask them to stay until we return? Thank you."

"Gladly will I do so," answers Melenda.

Rejoining Davas and Rikoro, Berina says: "I've requested that Mistress Melenda ask Fyna, Josrel and Lillia to stay here if they return before we do. Shall we be off to the usurer, then? We can stop in at shop of the Apothecary, Anesa of Fayrl, on the way to the usurer. Do either of you want to do these things in a different order?"

Looking to Davas briefly before speaking up, Rikoro lets Berina know, "We should also find the contact we were given, the Ostler who goes by the name Mule. Afterall, gathering information is why we are here. Not to mention it could mean a potential job for Davas. The order we do these activities in does not matter to me.

Berina says, "I seem to recall that his name was Donar of Harabor. That would make him kin to the usurer, so we can ask him where we can find the 'Mule'."

"A sudden thought occurs to Berina...as evidenced by her expression...and she says: "Wait a minute, I'll be right back." and she runs off to her and Davas' shared room. Carefully emptying out her backpack, she takes it with her back to the common room. She says to Davas and Rikoro: "It occurred to me that we might have a large number of coins to carry...and not enough belt pouches to put it all in...so I thought I had better bring my backpack just in case. I think we can go now...really." and she gives the two men an embarrassed grin.

When Berina dashes off, her fellow Shek-P'var simply watches, perplexed but not surprised. When she returns with the bag explaining her thoughts, Rikoro's features grow concerned a moment, before he finally speaks, "Hrm well I do not think it wise to carry all of it in coin. We will become an easy target for thieves, especially traipsing around town with it. I think breaking the bonds apart into more manageable sizes that can be divvied up would be best."

Berina says, "Well, I'm sure the usurer can do that...for additional fees. In fact, those of us who have liege lords, owe said liege lords one-third of their share of the booty. Davas will be getting a letter-of-credit or bond made out specifically to Lord Dasarayne, and I am going to get one made out to Lord Odasart. I'm not actually Lord Odasart's vassel, but I want to be. I'm not very knowledgeable about how those things are arraigned, so it may be that he'll require a Liege portion of my share of the booty to seal the deal, even though it was earned before I will have asked him. With my luck, he'll think I'm trying to bribe my way into his service and be even angrier with me than when I left Tashal. \*sigh\*"

"Tact I believe is the word. I would recommend trying that," Rikoro utters with a sheepish grin.

"Tact. I don't believe I've heard of that word before." Berina says with a gleam in her eye, and then tries to tickle Rikoro.

Berina says, "Once you have your share, you can then have the usurer do whatever you think needful for your money. Who knows? Maybe Davas and I will do what you're suggesting with some of what's left after getting the Liege bonds. I will get

SOME coin for immediate needs. As for the shares belonging to the others, I want to get them their shares in coin and they can do with it as they please...and I won't be accused of forcing my opinion on them! Besides, getting them smaller bonds will require usurer fees they haven't authorized me to pay."

Berina continues, "As for 'traipsing around town', it's my intention to go straight back to the inn after finishing up our business with the usurer and stay there until everyone has their shares. The responsibility of having other people's money is weighing heavily on me, and I want shed of it as soon as possible. Do you have any other concerns?"

Tugging on the tip of his beard as he mills over Berina's likely facetious comment, Rikoro shakes his head, adding, "None I can think of. What you said makes sense considering the current light. Shall we be off?"

Berina says, "Yes, let's go." and she heads for the door.

\* \* \*

Trudging through the heavy rain, you follow Melenda's directions to arrive at gate in the palisade around the manor of Anerd of Harabor. A guard at the gate asks your business and tells you that only one of you may enter at a time. You can see another guard standing inside the gate and a third under the eaves of the manor. The two at the gate appear soaked and miserable.

To the guard, Berina says: "I have some business to transact with Master Harabor in his role as usurer."

To Rikoro she says: "When I come out, I'll give you what you're owed and you can go in and make your arrangements. How's that?"

From under his hooded visage, Rikoro replies, "Quite alright with me." He then tries to find a bit of cover from the structure to stand out from under the beating rain.

Rikoro tries to peak inside as he stands out in the beating rain. His attention then turns to the guards, as he says, "You men must have the constitution of an ox. I fear even the slightest bit of dampness will cause me catch pneumonia." A slight chuckle escapes the hooded gangly mans lips, clearly amused by his own comment.

Looking Rikoro over, the guard says, "Yes, you look like you would not last long in the military. Now your companion on the other hand," nodding at the mercantylers door, "she looks as tough as leather. I just bet when she says jump you ask 'how high?' eh – is that not right?"

With a slight grin, Rikoro offers, "One would be wise to either do so or question softly her reason why; she has a fiery temperament." Then changing the topic he then asks, "We have just arrived in town. Is there anything of note you could offer us travelers to keep from trouble? I noticed the taxes on parchments and scholars. Anything to that you may know?"

"As to trouble, it is best if foreigners work hard at not causing a disturbance and speak very humbly to anyone you even looks important. Whatever you do, look not to the watch for help. Town watches are almost always charged with watching for

trouble and calling for the hue-and-cry when they see it, rather than trying to stop trouble themselves. The town watch here take that to heart and might possibly render aid but only if they think they will be rewarded. They might even help the troublemaker if that is where the money lies," he says, "Regarding the new taxes, they are on khuzdul, temples, writing materials and shek p'var – not things I have any dealings with so I can tell you know more. I would assume that, like most such things, the new taxes are to enrich those in power or give power to those who have it not."

Shifting his cloak to shake some of the rain out and to bring it further over his head, Rikoro politely says, "I appreciate the candor. Outside of greed for the taxes do you know if any incidents that occurred in recent months that may have led to them being imposed? Perhaps one too many Khuzdul stirring up tavern brawls." A faint grin can be seen through his hooded visage.

"I try to not involve myself with the nobility any more than I have to so I know nothing of their affairs. I personally have no quarrel with the small folk. They are a stout folk and a great help in defending the town. If they got out of hand at a tavern, it would be a matter for the watch, the manor lord's guardsmen or the local frankpledge (although, in the case of the khuzdul, it would be their clan and not a frankpledge). I know the manor lord has been more than usual cautious after the assassination attempt some time ago but I do not know of it involving the khuzdul. That is the reason we have more than the usual number of watchmen and manor guards," he says.

\* \* \*

Passing the gate guards, Berina crosses the enclosure to where the guard opens the door for her and then follows her inside. Master Harabor is old and white haired – he must be at least sixty.

"How can I help you, goodwife," he asks.

"Good morrow to you, Master Harabor." Berina says in greeting. "My name is Berina of Kyfa. My companions and I recently arrived in Minarsas. On our way here, we were attacked by some bandits. They picked the wrong people to accost, as we thrashed them and came away with booty. Part of that booty are some bearer bonds."

Here she digs in her pack and gets out the bonds, handing them to Master Harabor.

Berina continues: "I'm hoping you can redeem them, please, as I want to give my companions their shares. Also, my husband...Davas of Fainovirs...and I, have different Liege Lords and I am hoping you could issue letters of credit made out to them. We owe them a third of our shares and want to make sure that we pay them as required. Can you do that?"

Looking over the two bearer bonds, Master Harabor says, "I can give you 890d for the one or I can give you 880d for the other but I have not the coins to redeem both of them. I know not what these letters of credit are that you are asking for but I can make out new bearer bonds for 1d in ten or part thereof. I can make personal bonds, made to a specific person, for 2d in ten. That

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may sound high but it is due to the cost of redeeming the bonds of foreign guild members. What is it you would like?"

Berina stares up at the ceiling with unfocused eyes, her lips moving soundlessly as she is apparently doing sums in her head. She lowers her head and becomes alert again. Looking at Master Harabor, she says: "Please redeem the one for 890d." Handing over the Khuzan crown, she continues: "By my calculation, my husband and I will each owe our Lieges 177d. This is figured as our share of all of the booty, not just the one bond. Together, that comes to 354d. The crown plus 34d... taken from the proceeds of the bearer bond...should result in two personal bonds, each for 177d. I figure your fee as 71d...also to come from the proceeds of the bond. If I've figured correctly, the crown and the bond...less your fee...should end with my having 785d and two personal bonds for 177d each." Berina takes a deep breath, lets it out, and says: "I expect you'll check my figuring as a matter of course, and I'd like to know if I'm even remotely close to being correct." and she gives him a sheepish grin.

He pulls out an abacus and starts flipping the beads back and forth. When he finishes, he gets a rather frightened look in his eyes and says, "That is very impressive and you were only off by one penny. If I may be so bold as to ask, which god or goddess were you just praying to and where have you gotten your information regarding our guild secrets? If it is from mortal means, someone has been violating their oaths and will have to answer to the Mangai court."

"Well, I worship Halea, and I often ask Elomia to intercede on my behalf with the Lady of Bargains." Berina begins. Continuing: "In this particular case, I've effectively taught myself. I'm the daughter of a Master Weaponcrafter, and I grew up watching him figure his costs for materials, calculating what to charge his customers, determining his taxes and guild dues. I guess I have a talent for it, as I soon got better at it than him. I note that he did not teach me how to do sums...he didn't even know I had learned until I corrected his figuring one day." Here Berina grins sheepishly again.

"I wouldn't think that doing sums is a guild secret...although I guess that I'm better at it than most. After all, even a peasant farmer can at least count, so as to know how much his in-kind payments to his Liege Lord are."

"Once I had learned to add and subtract, I found working with large amounts tedious so I figured out a way to manipulate them faster. The method for dealing with increasing numbers I call multiplication, and the one for breaking down a large number I call division. If the guild does not already know how to do these things, I would be happy to teach you, or anyone you name, my method. If the guild wants to keep my methods as a guild monopoly, I'm thinking they'll have to grant me membership so I can be made to swear the necessary oaths. No, I'm not trying to extort anything from the guild...that would be stupid, as I'm sure the guild has many ways to make my life miserable if they should decide to do so. It's just that I that I've never taught anyone how to multiply or divide, and I'm not inclined to do so without some sort of benefit to myself, so you needn't worry that everyone in the kingdom will soon be experts at doing sums."

"Hrumph," he says, "While you were teaching yourself your multiplication and division you should have spent some time teaching yourself law as well. I can assure you that I am not required to give you guild membership for usurpation of our rights. If I even hear a hint of you practicing such things or trying to teach them to others, I will have you before the Mangai court for breach of guild privileged. And that includes giving of financial advice regarding 'letters of credit' whatever they may be. Now you said your name is Berina of Kyfa. Another point of law that you should take the time to learn is that any in-law relatives of your's are equally responsible for your actions. What is the name of your weponcrafter father?"

Berina gets a look of restraint on her face and says: "Master Harabor, I've meant no offense to you or any inclination to be in violation of guild privilege. You could have merely said 'We know of those things. Do not violate guild privilege by sharing your knowledge with anyone.' That would have been sufficient. You may rely on my keeping my knowledge to myself...I've no wish to get into trouble with the guild. Since you asked, my father's name is Obras of Kyfa and he plies his trade in Tashal. I assure you that I'll not do anything to make trouble for him. Oh, and the 'letter of credit' thing is what I thought a personal bond was called. Just illustrates my ignorance in these matters."

He takes the crown and the bearer bond and begins to write out the two personal bonds for 177d. He stops to ask, "Who should I make these out to?"

"The first one is for Lord Drojar Dasarayne, holder of Ovendel Manor in Meselyneshire. He is my husband's Liege Lord. The second one is for Lord Fugys Odasart, Royal Weaponcrafter in Tashal." Berina pauses, then says: "Lord Odasart is not actually my Liege Lord, but I was employed by him as a scribe, and he has offered to take me on as a vassal. I have determined to accept his offer, but while I was considering the offer, he paid me to come here to Minarsas to..." here she pauses, obviously searching for the right phrase "look into some things for him. I expect to be in Minarsas through the next Wool Faire."

"I am sure that I need not your life history," he says finishing the notes, "Their names are quite enough."

"Which reminds me...while Lord Odasart paid my expenses to travel here, I'll need employment during my time here if I'm to avoid starving. Do you know of anyone who could use a good scribe? I'm very literate in Lakise, and have an excellent hand."

"So are you now a member of the lexigraphers' guild?" he asks. "If you are not, then I know of nobody who will hire someone with such obvious contempt for the law. I now understand why they are taxing writing materials – in order to stop such nonsense."

He counts out 784d onto the counter and says, "and now I must bid you good day."

Berina counts out 209d and puts it to one side. As she puts the rest into her backpack, she says: "Being a scribe is not a guilded profession...at least it wasn't so in Tashal. Is it different here in Minarsas?" While Master Harabor is replying, she gathers up part of the hem of her robe into an impromptu pouch and puts the 209d into it.

“Yes, they are in the lexicographer’s guild. I am sure it is the same in Tashal. However, like the seaman’s guild, they sometimes hire non-guild labor in times of need but only with the guild’s permission. It sounds to me as if the guild laws are not being enforced in Tashal. I will have to discuss this with the Mangai,” he says looking quite disturbed, “You can only work as a scribe here with written permission from Karbes of Runuld, who is in a small house around the right side of my enclosure.”