

**12-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR**

5TH WATCH [WARM, CLEAR, SOUTHWEST WIND]

Just as Berina is setting down to her dinner of ...

buttered vegetables for an appetizer, an entrée of roast venison; accompanied by lemonhyt (lemon rice with almonds), manchets (hand-sized bread) and beer (light color. light fruity aroma. chewy texture. balanced malty-kippers flavor and nutty aftertaste); followed by pears in wine syrup for dessert...

A shepherd's wagon draws up in front of the miner's guild. The driver climbs down, unhitches the mules, takes a scroll from the passenger and leads the mules in the direction of the Green Dragon Inn. The passenger, a gangly man with stringy brown hair, dressed in robes, bangs on the door and shouts, "I have a message of importance for Berina of Kyfa. Is she within?"

Momentarily startled by someone pounding on the Guildhall door at this hour, Berina gets up and goes to answer it. Her eyes widen at the sight of the Sheppard's wagon, and then her attention focuses on the robed man with stringy hair, saying: "I am Berina of Kyfa. How may I help you?"

When Berina answers the door, he hands her a message scroll...

Seeing that the scroll is rather lengthy, Berina takes it, and before she begins to read it, says: "It is somewhat late, so I don't know if you will be able to find a meal at this hour. Please, come in and sit with me." Berina closes the door after Master Tobas enters. Indicating her meal, she offers: "If you wish, you can eat as much of my meal as you want while I read this."

"Thank you," Master Tobas says, "That is much appreciated."

She starts unrolling the scroll...

...which reads...

*"Berina, Rikoro and company,*

*I regret to inform you of the death of your patron, Lord Fugys Odasart."*

Berina takes in a sharp breath as she reads the first sentence, a hand coming up to cover her mouth to stifle a sob. Her hand goes back to holding the scroll as she continues reading...

*"Some of the rioters that came into conflict with Berina recently took offense at her being released without the punishment they felt she deserved and, in their vengeance, they arranged for the assassination of the high priestess of the Halean temple."*

Reading this, Berina's expression turns to one of anger.

*"The Haleans sent for a temple priestess from Ovendel, named Elalla of Forynidal, and promoted her to temple priestess of the Tashal temple. Elalla too seemed to have a disagreement with Berina ...she was overheard to comment regarding Berina taking 'her man'."*

An expression of wry satisfaction crosses Berina's face.

*"When Elalla learned of Berina's association with Lord Odasart, she began instructing Lord Odasart in the pleasures of the worship practices of Heleans. At his advanced age, Lord Odasart could not handle the strenuous rites, his heart gave out and he died."*

Berina's expression quickly turns to one of astonishment, then as she stares off into space, one of deadly calm. She mutters to herself just loudly enough to be heard by her dinner companion: "A very clever way to murder a man where no proof could ever be found to prove guilt. One day, Elalla, there will be a reckoning!" Returning her attention to the scroll, she continues reading.

*"In the disposition of his property, the care of the townhouse leased by Berina and Davas returned to its owner and their property has been transferred to the house of Berina's father. The care of the townhouse leased by Josrel and lillia has been turned over to their temple. Due to his death, I hereby release you from your commission. I am sending 6 crowns to compensate you for the time you have spent so far."*

*Meanwhile, the Mangai have received complaints from Tashal and Minarsas that Berina's father had taught her guild secrets of the weaponcrafter's guild and Pesera of Hendel taught her guild secrets of the mercantylers' guild. They have been fined and both ask that Berina be more circumspect in her actions and her comments."*

Berina gives a resigned sigh.

*"All is not bad news though. The guild of arcane lore received a message from Berina's chantry. They had finally received her message regarding the renegade Shek P'var and following messages from Lord Odasart regarding how Berina dealt with the situation. While they would have preferred to have waited until the Shek P'var in question was actually added to the rolls of the renegades they understand Berina's rashness due to her inexperience and are satisfied with the way the situation was resolved, especially in view of the fact that a nobleman was directing their actions. A short while later, a shepherd's wagon was delivered for Berina from Holdan and will be sent to Minarsas by the messenger mentioned below."*

Berina glances up at the closed door for a moment, envisioning the wagon beyond, then returns to her reading.

*"The guild finds themselves in need of people with your talents and approached Berina's father, Rikoro's father and myself to arrange their own commission. Berina's father complained that without using her skills with weaponcrafting and mathematics, Berina has no way to support herself and Rikoro is probably in the same situation. The guild of arcane lore petitioned the Mangai for dispensation and they have agreed to the following conditions. Berina and Rikoro must contact Karbes of Runuld and take instruction in mathematics, drawing, a second language and three scripts until they can qualify as journeymen scribes. If you apply yourself diligently, this should not take more than a month of dedicated study. You will then be able to provide for yourselves with that occupation. Further, you will both be allowed to join the guild of arcane lore, via their agent, join the scribes guild via Master Runuld and the Order of the White Hand via the guild of Arcane Lore's agent. This also supposes that Berina, Rikoro and their associates agree to take on a commission from the Guild of Arcane Lore as described by their agent."*

## ACT 5 SCENE 1 PAGE 2

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*I present to you the bearer of this message as being Tobas of Sharvan, a Peleahn Shek P'var, a member of the Order of the White Hand and an agent of the Guild of Arcane lore. He has single handedly brought no less than seven renegade Shek Pvar's to justice which he says were mostly journeymen Shek Pvar, filled with their own importance and unwilling to live within the restraints of a civilized society."*

Berina glances up at Master Tobas, one eyebrow raised, then returns her attention to the scroll.

*"He is a member of the litigant's guild and knows Rikoro's father. He will bear witness of the Mangai's permission to learn guild secrets of the scribe's guild (once they have taken the usual apprentice's oath) and will act as the guild of arcane lore's agent in this affair.*

*The commission offered by the Guild of Arcane Lore is to accompany Master Tobas into Orbaal to the city of Geldeheim. Once there, they will create a chapter of the Guild of Arcane Lore to support the Order of the White Hand with Master Tobas being the guildmaster of both. The guild's charter is to investigate mysteries that may prove to be of a magical nature while the charter of the Order of the White Hand is to identify and deal with renegade Shek P'var. If you successfully protect Master Tobas in his journey and aid him in his efforts at Geldeheim for an indefinite period, you will be provided with food, lodging and 3d per day.*

*Signed Lord Worton Harabor."*

Berina slowly rerolls the scroll, lost in thought. As she finishes the rolling, she asks Master Tobas: "You are Master Tobas of Sharvan, then? A Viran of the Peleahn convocation?"

Raising a burn scarred to the burn scars on the left side of his face, Master Tobas says, "Yes, I guess that is a bit obvious, is it not?"

"Pleased to meet you." Holding up the scroll a bit, Berina asks: "May I presume that Lord Harabor apprised you of the contents of this scroll?"

"Of the scroll, only the part that involves me," answers Master Tobas, "The Guild has given me instructions regarding what I am to do in Geldeheim and given me the resources to get us there and get us started. After that runs out, we are expected to fend for ourselves."

Berina's face is lost in thought again for a moment, then she begins: "There are some personal matters noted in the scroll. Beyond that, Lord Harabor said that he sent six Crowns to compensate us for our efforts to date and released use from our current assignment. I must say that I'm relieved to be quit of this task. It is one full of intrigue...I am a woman of action and confess that I'm ill-suited for intrigue."

"Yes, I was told there are six in your company," says Master Tobas, Handing Berina a gold coin, "I suppose the rest of your company is with Rikoro?"

"That is correct. You should be able to find them at the Green Dragon inn." Berina gives Master Tobas directions to the inn if he asks.

Berina continues, "The shepard's wagon belongs to Davas and myself. We had to leave it behind at Holdan manor when we were sent here to Minarsas. Once we are on the road north, I'll tell you the tale of how we acquired it." And she looks off into space for a moment and smiles a smile with a hint of pain.

"Lord Harabor also said that Rikoro and I are to spend the next month in intensive study with Master Karbes of Runuld...a local scribe whom I have already met...in order to become journeyman scribes. I expect that this is how we will be able to...as you said...'fend for ourselves' in Geldeheim." Going slightly off on a tangent, she says: "If a month seems like a very short time to attain journeyman status in any trade, I have...with proper permissions...done considerable work as a scribe before this current job." and she waves her hand to indicate their surroundings. "I already know much of the trade, so a month of focused training is not unreasonable for me to qualify as a journeyman scribe and legally join the scribe's guild. I will, of course, accept this offer."

"I take it you also accept the overall mission as all the offers are a package deal. I will discuss the situation with Master Runuld in the morning after I have gotten Rikoro's acceptance as well," says Master Tobas.

She gets an almost wry smile on her face as she adds: "I was unaware that Rikoro has had such training as well. I'll have to tickle him for not telling me. We've been friends for a while now, and I would have thought that he could have told me about it before now."

"I believe I was told he worked for one of the guilds as translator and scribe in a similar situation to what you now find yourself," says Master Tobas.

"I have to say, though, that the part that concerns you is the most pleasing to me...being able to join the Guild of Arcane Lore and the Order of the White Hand. I had no reservations about the tasks Lords Harabor and Odasart asked me to do, but I have to say that these tasks have very nearly curtailed my magical studies. It will be good to take them up again. I have developed one spell that I believe to be unique, and there are three others that I want to get back to work on."

Rushing on, she says: "I understand that there is much else to do...traveling to Geldeheim, getting established there, and who knows what else."

Getting a sheepish grin on her face, Berina finishes: "I'm sorry for rambling on so much...you haven't even extended an official offer yet...still, this is the most amazing turn of events that has ever happened to me! In case all of my babbling hasn't made it clear...and you do extend to me the offer that Lord Harabor has written of...I accept." and she finally lapses into silence.

"Yes, by permission of the Guild of Arcane Lore and the Order of the White Hand, I offer you membership in those august companies as soon as you renew your vows to the Shek P'var as they now apply to them," Master Tobaas says.

Berina says, "I stand ready to renew my vows whenever you are ready to administer them, Master Tobas. I will move myself and my belongings into the Sheppard's wagon, as I expect my studies to preclude holding this job over the next month. Naturally, I'll lose the room and board along with the job."

After Master Tobas leaves, Berina will eat anything he may have left of her meal. She then moves her things into the wagon. Seeking out her employer, Berina informs him that she will be leaving the job, and thanking him/her for having employed her. Berina says that she hopes that her work was at least satisfactory, and that it was an honor to have served the Miner's Guild. She then goes into the wagon, wraps herself in her robe, and tries to sleep, but lies awake for a while.

Master Tobas bids Berina a good evening saying, "I must away to the inn while they still have rooms available. I will meet with you again in the morning – say at the beginning of the third watch?"

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At the Green Dragon Inn, the teamster enters and says, "I have a message of importance for Rikoro of Drelin. Would one of you be him?" When Rikoro presents himself, the teamster gives him a copy of the above message scroll and says, "I am from Master Tobas of Sharvan who is currently meeting with Berina of Kyfa and I am to await your reply to him."

Davas grins broadly at mention of Berina, and looks at the messenger, perhaps a little longer than is polite, before turning with interest to watch Rikoro read.

Rikoro takes hold of the scroll and unfurls it. He reads over the details carefully, muttering to himself, "oh my, oh my." Then in disbelief rereads it again. Both times dismay and relief cross the Fyvrian Mage's features. He looks up to the man who handed him the note and nods and with an element of pride in his voice, "I shall most definitely accept. Let me inform the others and see if they shall join us. Please join me if you need to hear their answer too. And your name goodman?"

"My name is Giles of Gilam, Goodman," he answers, "and who your companions are in your journeys is your own business. I was just asked to get your reply and I must get back to give that. Once that is done, I need to find a place to stay and then see the ostler about selling some mules and buying some others. A goodday to you all." And he leaves.

A slight spring in his rather languid step moves Rikoro over to Davas, Fyna and the two Haliki's. He holds up the scroll and leans his lanky frame forward informing them, "It seems I have a measure of bad news, sad news, good news and better news. The bad news is that my well crafted plan will not be seeing the light of day. The sad news is that Lord Odasart died while being instructed in the ways of Hlean rites and worship. The good news is that we are relieved of the task we were given here. The better news is that we have a new assignment. One that will take us to the colder climes of Orbaal in a months time. I do hope you're all interested as I've grown to enjoy all of your company."

Again, Davas listens to Rikoro. A look of surprise crosses his face as he hears of lord Odasart's death, and he purses his lips grimly and gives a small shake of his head as Halea is mentioned.

When Rikoro has finished, Davas glances at the others before asking Rikoro "what task? ... and who is it, then, would have us do it if not lord Odasart?. While I enjoy new sights, there are

things I will not do, nor have my beloved do, particularly now. Remember, she is with child ... and her state of mind is perhaps ... has been better". His voice firms as he finishes the last sentence.

He hurries on. "And, if I may skip to something perhaps more important to me, ... um ... why is Berina first on the list for this news?" he asks nervously. "Has she ... is all well with her and her family ... in the law and in custom? Do I need now to go to her ... if all is ...well, if all is not well?"

He looks almost puppy like as he waits hopefully for Rikoro's answer.

Lillia quickly reads the scroll, hands it back and says quietly to Rikoro, "You might want to read it to Davas or relate the details in your own words as I believe Berina mentioned he is not a man of letters. You might also talk to this Master Tobas to see if he can arrange to have Davas trained as a teamster. If so, you will need to trust as few strangers as possible and you will need to have someone purchase and handle mules to pull that wagon that was mentioned. As for Josrel and I, I am of the opinion that we would be of little help to you in the north, we have not leave of the temple to accompany you and we should be getting back to Tashal to care for our own future. My only other advice is that you should try and persuade Berina to come to the worship of Save K'nor as I think she would be easier in her studies and Save K'nor is less duplicitous than Halea worship has proven to be."

"A teamster? Well, I have some knowledge of animals, but that small, and none of mules or oxen". At Lillia's thought that she and Josrel would be of little help, Davas shakes his head grimly, then grins. "I value you both ... at worst, you add a cool head where perhaps, they are not common?" He smiles at them in turn. "But you must do what you must of course, but were you to go your own way, I would miss you".

Fyna takes the scroll, reads through it and says with a smile, "I am for it. Travelling to the north has got to be better than wasting away around this town."

Davas gives Fyna a wry smile. "I too have reason to dislike this place Fyna. It will be good to have you ... if, of course, Rikoro ever gets around to telling us what it is he is talking about". Davas turns his attention again to Rikoro and waits, grinning.

Rikoro seems saddened to hear Lillia's and Josrel's decision to leave, and replies, "I understand your duties are to the temple in Tashal. I fear I grew far too accustomed to having two priests of the Sage to guide me this entire time. Your time and knowledge has been invaluable and I can't measure in words how truly grateful I am for it. Hopefully there is a branch of the faith up north for me to practice in. As to seeing Berina change her religious beliefs. Her mind is quite strong willed and nearly set in stone. If Davas had no success when the two were married to have her turn to Peoni, I do not believe I will have much success myself. Still I will endeavor to do so - with logic beside me, perhaps she will see reason from the light of Uhla.." With those words spoken, Rikoro steals a quick glance towards Davas, half grin forming on his lips. ".. perhaps not. Still I will look at it as

# ACT 5 SCENE 1 PAGE 4

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last challenge posed to me by two people I respect most immensely."

Receiving the scroll back from mercenary, the Fyvrian Mage replies, "Ah grand to hear Fyna. Familiar faces seem to be dwindling as of late and it will be good to have one we can trust especially your skilled sword arm." He then proceeds to read the contents to Davas in a low voice - filling him in on every detail of the note.

As the discussion continues, Melenda serves dinner, consisting of...

Towres (light "summer" omelette with chopped veal) for an appetizer; rota (barley fruit soup); choice of entrée: dilled veal balls, playce ysod (poached plaice with mustard sauce), or garbage pye (giblet custard pie); accompanied by amyndoun seaw (a vegetable gruel), cocket (cheap white bread) and ale (golden color. sharp aroma. soft texture. powerful taste of almonds. bitter-sweet finish.); followed by fygeye (a tricolored fig confection) for dessert.

At the Green Dragon inn, Master Tobas spies Rikoro and says to him, "by your description you must be Rikoro of Drelin. I am told that you have read my message and have agreed to my proposition. Am I misinformed?"

Rikoro while in discussions with the group perks up upon hearing his name. He looks over to the man standing before him and says, "I am indeed. You must be Master Tobas. It is truly a pleasure. Please do join us if you're road weary."

Master Tobas waves over Melenda and says, "a room and a meal if you please."

Melenda says, "Yes, right away." And she hurries off to serve him.

The Fyvrian mage smiles and continues, "I have with all certainty accepted your offer. And can only deduce based off of what was outlined within the letter that Berina has also. She has found it exceedingly difficult in town. Though I'll confess the constraints placed on us have been particularly stifling." Shaking out his head as a sudden thought has struck him, "Ah my manners. This is Davas of Fainovirs - Berina's husband. Josrel and Lillia of Aswain - Haliki's both and Fyna of Daarienna - Mercenary by trade. I just finished reading the letter here for Davas."

At mention of his name, Davas looks up, the thoughtful cast of his face passing quickly to a grin. He stands and nods. "Master Tobas is it. Good day to you. Please, sit". He suits the gesture to the word and reseats himself.

"She did indeed, quite exuberantly in fact, after saying much the same about her stay here. Are these then, your four companions that I was told of, which make up the remainder of your company?" Master Tobas asks.

His eyes sweep over his companions, before Rikoro looks back to Toban, with a nod, answering, "They are, though the names you were probably given have changed as some of the players have left for other matters. Fyna is a new addition after having parted ways with Isiel and Thrrid. Also, much to my own dismay, the two Haliki's will be returning to Tashal to resume

their clerical duties at the temple. So the company shall be - Davas, Berina, Fyna and myself. Will this be sufficient?"

"Do not equivocate - a simple yes or no is sufficient, I need not their history or what they currently call themselves and, as to their future, if they cannot make that decision for themselves they are of little use to me. The reason I asked is I was given payment for the services of six people and with Berina, whom I have settled with, I now have six companions to pass on those monies." With that he hands Rikoro, Fyna, Josrel, Lillia and Davas a gold, Khuzan crown and with each of the others, he asks, "Will you be taking on the commission of the Guild of Arcane Lore as described in this letter?"

Fyna looks at the coin and, smiling says, "Most certainly."

Josrel and Lillia say, "No, we cannot without leave of our masters at the temple but we thank them for the consideration."

Davas holds the coin and looks at it in astonishment, before grinning and shaking his head. "I can imagine Berina's answer, and mine is the same. Truly Peoni has smiled on us this day. If you excuse me, I will go to her. It has been a while since she has been truly happy ...and I intend to enjoy it while I may.

So saying, he grins at the others, stands and strides off to see Berina.

Once there, he stands grinning at her for a few seconds, before saying quietly "the gods are smiling on us it would seem. Does this news suit you perhaps ... despite the reason for it?"

He then opens his arms and hugs Berina until she runs out of things to say.

Davas arrives as Berina loads the last of her things into the Sheppard's wagon. She sits on the bottom step at the back of the wagon and grasps Davas around the hips, her head resting against his chest at the sternum.

Her voice a little muffled by his body, she says: "Oh Davas, my beloved, my feelings are all in a termoil. I'm happy, sad, and angry all at once. I'll be glad to see the last of this place. I'll be properly guilded as a scribe, a member of the Guild of Arcane Lore, and a companion of the Order of the White Hand. But it's purchased at the cost of Lord Odasart's life!" and there is a catch in her voice as she stifles a sob.

Leaning her head back and looking up into Davas' face, she says: "Fugys was like the grandfather I never knew...and now he's gone! We parted in anger, and now I'll never be able to make amends." she puts her head back against Davas' chest and cries for a while.

After a bit, her crying stops. She takes a couple of deep breaths, and leans her head back to look into his face again. Her cheeks are wet from her tears, but there is fiery anger in her eyes. "That murderess killed him, my love, as surely as if she had slipped a knife between his ribs! It takes no great imagination to know that a man of his age could not possibly withstand the exertions of a full-out Hlean ritual. The only way it could be shown that she was responsible for his death, would be if someone could prove that the drugs she almost certainly plied him with, caused his heart to fail. A Fyvrian Master could probably tell, but I'll wager that Fugys' body will never be seen by such a person, so justice will not be done." She takes a very deep breath and says: "It's a

good thing that we'll be leaving the kingdom for a good long time, or I might do something so rash that it would be extreme, even by my standards!"

Davas looks at her a while, before sighing, gently and saying "Berina, most justice needs proof of some sort love". He holds up his hand quickly to quiet her protests. "I know, I know ... you are probably right. I hardly knew lord Odasart, but what I saw I liked. As to Ellala ... well ... you know I have no liking for her. She seems ...sneaky and underhand, where others are ... well, not I suppose. But sneaky is not illegal" he glances around quickly and lowers his voice "... or many lords would be prisoned I think" he adds grinning.

As the smile fades, he says quietly "but as you say, I hope not to see her again".

Quietly, he adds "I thought her far beyond us, yet it was not so, so who knows. If our paths cross again, I pray that you are elsewhere ... to avoid the trouble that she seems to so richly deserve".

Berina lets go of Davas and leans back against the other steps of the wagon and observes his expression in response to her last statement. Her posture slumps, and it almost seems as if she deflates a little.

Changing the subject, Berina says: "I'm going to sleep in the wagon for the rest of our stay in Minarsas, unless Master Runald offers room during my training. We'll have to move the wagon, We can't leave it sitting here in the street. When you go back to the Green Dragon, see if you can arrange to have it moved before we get in trouble." and she pinches the bridge of her nose. Finally, she asks: "In the morning, after you've eaten, please bring me something to eat. I've quit my job to devote all of my energy to my studies...which I presume will start in the morning. Confirm that with Master Tobas, if you would."

Davas says, "I will do these things as you say. Look for me tomorrow".

He stops. "Will you be here or with your new master? ... and if with the master, where is that?" he asks suddenly.

She cuddles with her husband until he leaves.

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That night, just before falling into slumber Rikoro carefully documents the days events and tucks the letter safely into his journal for reference.

**13-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR**

2ND WATCH [WARM, CLEAR, SOUTHWEST WIND]

Berina awakens without the usual morning sickness but very stiff from sleeping on the wood floor of the shepherd's wagon.

At the Green Dragon Inn, everyone awakes refreshed and the Save K'norians perform their morning ablutions. Everyone gathers in the common room and are served smoked sausage, soft cheese, curds, blueberries, corn pone and apple cider to break their fast.

Davas attends to the food with his customary enthusiasm. After his hunger has been blunted he says thoughtfully to the others,

"so ...when do we leave again?" Grinning through some soft cheese, he admits "in all the excitement, some of the details may have escaped me ... and if it is some days off, then I should continue my job while I may".

Master Tobas says, "It will require at least a month for Berina and Rikoro to be re-trained so they can become journeyman scribes.

Fyna says, "Goodman Davas, that Shepherd's wagon mentioned in the letter will require a couple of mules and a teamster to tend to them. We were hoping that, rather than hiring a teamster, we could persuade Master Tobas to attend to the teamster's guild to have you retrained as a teamster. I doubt you would be able to continue your current job in the meantime. Since Master Tobas merely hired the mules to bring him here, a member of the teamster's guild may be able to get a discount in purchasing a couple of Sorkin Blues. Do you agree with that?"

"A month !" Davas exclaims. "Well, I hope that Berina ..." he pauses, "I hope she will study hard. I know she has been wanting time to do so, so let us hope ... yes, all will be well I'm sure". He grins suddenly.

"I never thought to see that wagon again ... assuming it is the one from ... Holdan ? And yes, I am happy to train as a teamster, if that will help. Tis a useful skill to have ... but I will have to work one more day at least, so I can explain to Eochebin and hopefully, he will not think the worse of me. Let me talk to him, then I will do what needs doing and what I can most help with the doing of. As to Sorkin Blues, well, I must think they are mules of some sort, so it is clear that I have much to learn". He grins again, then takes his leave of them.

He goes to Melenda. "Mistress, by some good fortune, we now have a wagon. Might we for some fee, keep it here at the inn? Or would we better discuss such matters with an ostler? ... and if that is so, who would you recommend?"

Once the wagon question is settled, he asks Meleanda "and could I buy extra food? A large break fast to begin with I think". If she agrees, Davas pays for it and takes it to Berina before meeting Eochebin.

"Each evening hot meal is 2d and each morning cold meal is 1d," Melenda answers, "As to a wagon, we have no provision for a wagon by itself but if you stable the horses or mules that draw the wagon, you can keep the wagon in our common for no additional charge. Stabling is 1d per animal per day without feed and 2d per animal per day with feed and grooming. We have our own ostler and you will find him at the stables in the back."

"My thanks" says Davas, before taking the meal to Berina.

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The Fyvrian Mage eats his fill for once, but as per usual it is a slow and tedious task as he inspects each dish carefully before committing. With the meal finished, Rikoro inquires of the newest Shek-p'var in their company, "Master Tobas, shall we head to the lexicographer's now and get underway? I have purged my mind this morning and am eager to begin learning anew."

# ACT 5 SCENE 1 PAGE 6

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"Yes, indeed," Master Tobas says, "as soon as your companion decides on his contribution to the mission. After all, the Guild should not be expected to pay for mere hangers-on."

Rikoro nods his head slowly and glances over to Davas before inquiring, "Have you decided on whether you will join our company?"

Davas gives Rikoro an odd look, then glances quickly at the others. "Was I not clear? Anything that takes us away from here is a good thing to me - to us. I must talk to Eochebin first and tell him that I cannot continue hunting with him ... but that aside, I would very much like to help where I can. If that is learning the life and skills of a teamster, then that is what I will do - and I would be glad to go with you all".

He gives Rikoro another odd look tinged with a little grin, then adds "knowing Berina has accepted, how could I not ?" ... then he grins and adds "or mayhap Rikoro has had too much of this fine ale ?"

## 13-HALÁNÈ-720 MINARSAS, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [COOL, PARTLY CLOUDY, NORTHWEST GALE]

On his way to the castle, Davas passes a young lad who looks furtively over his shoulder but says nothing as he passes by. Davas finds Eochebin waiting for him and Eochebin greets him with, "I believe we should call off the hunt today. Tracking in this wind will be neigh impossible."

Davas nods then spends a little time looking at the sky, trying to work out what the weather is likely to do later.

He hasn't a clue how the weather will fare later. [+1 weatherlore]

Davas says, "As you say, it does not look good today".

There is a pause as he continues to look around, then Davas turns to Eochebin. "Master Eochebin, I will not be able to continue hunting with you. I am sorry, but there are things I must do. I thank you for the work and hope I have been of service". He grins. "I have enjoyed it. As you guessed, I am not a man of the city. My thanks."

"As you wish," Master Eochebin says.

Davas waits to hear any reply, then bids Eochebin a good day and returns to the inn.

Davas reaches the inn just as Master Tobas is getting up to leave. Master Tobas says, "Are we all ready to get this venture started and," turning to Davas, " have you figured out how you are going to move that wagon out of the way and to where. That wagon cannot remain blocking the road. If we start not we can finish not."

Davas grin fades as he enters, then reforms. "Yes, all is ready. As to the wagon, well, Melenda says we could keep it here ... if we were stabling animals as well". He pauses and looks into the distance thoughtfully. "... though if we are to stay here a month, it would make little sense to buy animals now and pay for their keep at 1 or 2 pence per animal per day for so long. Hmmm ... perhaps Melenda might be persuaded to treat the wagon as a low keep animal ?" He grins. "What say you to offering her 1d per day for wagon alone until we get our animals ? We will need to get the animals towards the end of our stay, to make sure we

have them when we need them, so perhaps that might be all right with her?"

He turns to the others, then back to Tobas. "What say you?"

Rikoro mulls over Davas's thoughts and replies, "I suppose. There is no harm in inquiring."

Master Tobias says, "I think that you are ill-considering that wagon. If you leave it where it is, the town will probably begin fining you for trespass until it is removed. You will need a couple of mules to move it and no reputable ostler will rent or even sell mules to someone whose first concern is the cost of their upkeep. In fact they will probably even refuse to train someone who shows so little regard for the animals. While I may be able to convince the mangai to allow you to be trained as a teamster, I cannot force an ostler to train you. As to the inn, they will probably refuse to allow you to keep it in their common without the rent of one of their rooms so is there someone not currently resident at the inn who will be renting a room and needing their wagon to be cared for by the ostler?"

Davas nods, looking thoughtful as Tobias speaks. "Yes, we know it cannot be left where it is. And you can see how little I know of mules. Without coin to pay for their upkeep, well, I thought only to take responsibility for the animals once we could care for them properly. And after I had been trained ... or at least partly trained".

He grins. "But Melenda was definite. If we had animals as well then the wagon would cost no more. Without the animals, she seemed to think there was nowhere to put it, though she knows I am staying here ... and so I suggested that we offer to pay for it as though it was an animal". He looks thoughtful again.

"I had not thought, though, of how we would move it. You are right. Mules, or perhaps an ox, we will need, at least for a while".

Davas and Rikoro follow Master Tobias out the door, and they arrive at the gypsy wagon at the same time as the watch captain Eredos of Lothlar and a squad of watchmen. Looking at Master Tobias, the captain says, "Does this wagon belong to you? You cannot leave it here."

"Nay," replies Master Tobias, "it belongs to Berina and her husband," nodding at Davas.

The captain says to Berina, "Did you recommend me to your priestess? I am told you slept this night in the wagon. That is not allowed and they hang gypsies and vagrants here to prevent their thefts. You must have a proper place of residence by nightfall or be beyond five miles of town and this wagon must be gone from here or you will be arrested for trespass and vagrancy."