

The following letter was delivered from Astolat, being carried by a (slow) trader's caravan.

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Friend in Virtue, Quay Stone,

May this letter find you well - forgive its brevity and that it arrives by ox instead upon wings of powerful magics! While I am Proud in my learning to write, to work spells and send my newly earned words afar as you have is still an Ambition.

Though the Courage and Wisdom of your aims are plain, I ask you forgive me that I ask a price for the ~~knowings~~ Knowledge that you ask - this, as I have learned, is the heart of Prosperity - but it is a hard thing to ask as my imagination is ~~fatted~~ with visions of the freeing of those who I and my people left behind.

Below is a letter that I and as many other of the Free Folk that I could find this last season ~~did written~~ have written: we have heard in the market towns of a grand place of Pride - where relics and precious things of the Empire are kept so that others can visit and share in their wonder - and how it was burned by those who have no love for the Virtues. It was said that there would be a collection of Prosperity ~~so far to make~~ to restore it - and that those who are rebuilding burn with the Pride of The Sun Queen, Empress Richilde. To hear that such a thing has been done to the Empire who has sheltered us and given us back our own Pride stoked the Loyalty of every one of us and we have gathered together all we have earned working the earth of the Marches to help however we can.

If you could take this letter to 'Rafael Barossa di Tassato', we would owe you a great debt. The money we have gathered together I have entrusted to the Egregore of your Nation for safe keeping - they said they would find you with it come the summit.

Now, as to what you asked:

We are children of a nation known as Marracossa - but unlike the Nations of your Empire, Marracossa is a slave to the Empire of Asav: even its slave-owners have less freedoms than those of Nemoria - it ~~would~~ would be as if the Highborn were the only Nation who could be Senators, or Cardinals and told those of the Marches what Virtue was.

Of the other nations of Asavaea I knew only of Nithea and Emphedor - but have never travelled there. There was an Emphedori tutor who served in the Estate in which I was a slave, but they did not choose freedom in exchange for fighting in the rebellion. These other nations lay across the sea, as Nemoria did.

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Marracoss had many islands close together and small ships moved slaves and Plenum from place to place. This I did experience, as field slaves are often 'lent' to help harvests or building. On the largest island there was a place called Sulesca - there are many fields to be tended in Sulesca, but I was never taken inside it.

More northerly there is another town called Marilen, where many toil in the mines. This is at the heart of a region named Calatapos.

North still are the woods and fields where I lived much of my life - here the land and the sea join in many small islands and I have heard it told that the rocks there are very sharp and only small, swift boats travel. On the largest of these islands is Maragladia - a fortress larger than any I have seen in the Empire - it coated the largest of these islands like polished armour covers the whole of a warrior. It was in Maragladia that I fought my final battles before we escaped across the sea.

I am not ~~much~~ ~~sure~~ certain what else to say about the lands. As of the people - we have heard stories that when the Orcs of the Empire were slaves that they were struck with whips and kept in chains like animals. In Asavea there is only sea to flee into - so chains are not needed, save to remind the slave of their place. In Asavea too there are slaves that can read and write, or craft ships and lead soldiers - they do not live in barracks, but may be given homes or rooms in an estate to keep. They do not eat with field slaves nor servants and partake in ritual at the House of Chains or give donations to other priests. When the rebellion began to fail and I and my people chose to fight in exchange for freedom, few of these tutors and architects joined us. Why would a cat leave a warm lap just to hunt a mouse?

Wise Taylor was a bound servant of the God of Chains - I would ask you to look to her example - by recognising how her people - my people - were moved and kept she gave us our language and a history. Perhaps again today, as slaves are moved and traded across Asavea, your message of freedom might spread too.

I hope that this has been ~~helping~~ helpful and repays the request I have asked of you. May we speak again soon.

In Virtue,

- John Courage

(Below is my letter to Rafael of Tassato)

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*Dear Rafael the Barossa di Tassato,*

*Though we have never met, I write to you as a brother in Pride. I write on behalf of my Kinfolk - there are maybe ten score of us in your great Empire but we love it dearly as Loyal brothers and sisters along the path of Virtue.*

*Almost a season ago we ~~were hearing~~ heard in the Market Square, a traveller from your city as he spoke to all who would listen: they said that there had been a fire set by the Empire's enemies and that this fire sought to injure the Pride of the Empire by destroying a place where its relics and wonders are kept for the betterment and Wisdom of all.*

*The traveller spoke with a passion that moved us greatly: as a people, our Pride was denied to us by slavery - and it was the Empire and the Way that returned it to us. It was the Empire and the Way that gave us the Ambition to be free, the Courage to fight and the Wisdom to survive. Without the Way, we would still be ignorant of our destiny.*

*While our debt to the Nations and Peoples of the Empire can never be repaid, we have together gathered all our Prosperity - all that we have earned working in the fields these gone seasons - and offer it to you so we may, in even this small way, help build the Pride of your city - as you have built our Pride. As too you work in the spirit of La Suna Imperiestrino Richilde we too hold her in high esteem - you, like she, have inspired us!*

*We hope - every one of us - to one day visit the Museum and see it restored to glory. We dream of the glory and majesty of what your Virtue will create.*

*May you ever be Prosperous,*

*- John Courage of the Free Folk.*