

Dear sir,

Forgive me for this unprompted letter to you, but my flock in Holberg are particularly concerned with thanking you for your efforts, and I thought I might be able to transmit their wishes, as well as some of my concerns to you by this medium.

May I first congratulate you on the splendid effect of your efforts at the last summit. The judgement you passed in the assembly of the League has had a profound influence on the city. Vigilance has been at the forefront of everyone's mind as they looked to satiate the desire for the meal of their dreams, in a kind of frenzy that has overtaken the city. Tourists have come desirous for gristly gory details, to peer at a depraved city on the edge of cannibalistic collapse, and instead have had their questions and potential questions answered and headed off in one fell swoop. Everywhere in Holberg, small unofficial printed papers have been circulated, reporting where the custodian of the bloody great sausage was seen eating food, who they were seen praising, and who they were seen frowning at. Those in the former group have experienced unanticipated booms in trade, and the latter desperately pester the custodian to try and obtain some favourable sign, and revive their failing businesses. There are even restaurants that proudly affix on their ensign one, two or even three golden sausage icons – depending on the number of times the custodian has eaten there or mentioned them – as a badge of quality.

In short, it is, dear sir, a triumph.

But something strange has happened.

It was at the typically leaguish, elaborate funeral of Osear Herr van Flood – an important character in his own right, and one who sometimes in years past sought spiritual advice from me, to soothe the aches of a troubled soul. He never gave many details – the closest he came to was saying that he had sacrificed much on the altar of Ambition but would say no more despite being pressed. There were a great number of people at the wake – relations ever more distant, jostling for power and status even as they mourn the dead. But even in this crowd I saw a chilling sight.

The death guiser was there. There was something uncomfortable about the mask, I could see right away. What was that sardonic grin one could sometimes see, if the

light caught it just right? What were those traces of drool, or dribbles of food trickling down from the mouth? What were those odd patterned designs around the sides of the face?

Oscar had not been to confide in me in many a year. But there were tales of decadent parties in years past. Nothing illegal, but certainly bordering or frankly going over the limits of good taste. There was a certain amount of unexplained good fortune in business. But nothing recently. Curious quietness and lack of public activity during the last three months, when everyone else was out and about. And among those I know in Holberg, I can count about two or three who have been the same.

I am, frankly, concerned sir. Worried. Might it be possible that the frenzy, the desire to seek out what is dearest and most pleasant, might have delved into the secret desires of the depraved among us? Might it be possible that in the streets of Holberg, Agramant's claws might already be digging deep gory troughs? And what ought to be the direction we should take when faced with this menace?

I worry, sir, as I preach to those who come to listen to me. I see among them those two or three powerful, silent faces. What have they been up to, during these three months? What appetites have they been satiating? Open confrontation I fear, for it is not only possible to be wrong, but the consequences may spiral far out of control. Quiet, delicate engagement? But I do not know if it is possible to release someone from Agramant's clutches in this way. I do know, however, from some reading in the papers about what will transpire at Anvil this summit, that there will be a plenipotentiary held between the Archmage of winter and Agramant's representatives. I have never been to Anvil and know little how these things work, but I wonder whether the answers to the deeper corruption that might exist in Holberg might not be found there.

I thank you again, sir, for all that you have done, and are likely to do, for the greatest city in the world.

Helga Spraker van Almau und Holberg

Princez Bishop,

May Vigilance light your lamp, in this life and through the Labyrinth.

I am Georg Vallenhoeg van Holberg, and formerly of the Towerjacks, until I took an arrow to the knee.

I write to you in my capacity as a militiaman, leading a specialized group of military veterans who handle some of the more physically discourteous and psychologically perpendicular users of the service we in the militia provide. As such, I have had the dubious honour of being involved in some of the descents upon Agramant cultists. Our attention was drawn to them thanks to a flurry of reports by citizens, whose vigilance has been greatly enhanced, these last three months, by the judgements you and Paulus Adelaar van Holberg raised. If you have the occasion of seeing the above, please do transmit my earnest thanks for their efforts.

I am now thoroughly confident, princez bishop, that Holberg is free of many of the small fry cultists of Agramant who existed up to three months ago. Idiots of the sillier sort, those ready to give anything for anything, simply seeking to cause chaos and indulge their silly plans with no afterthought.

But as you know, these are not the only cultists that Agramant attracts.

The Childer of the Black Drop were without a shadow of a doubt cultists of a different breed. They were intelligent, had plans, objectives and cunning. And in light of the latest events, Divina Inquilina di Tassato Regario may have been one of the more dangerous ones.

I have personally, sir, scoured the city in search for any clue as to her presence here. I have found nothing. If she is present, then she is either hidden beyond the reach of a militia and a population motivated by two greater majority judgements encouraging vigilance. She is definitely not implicated in any of the recent Agramant activity. Though, I have known in the past public hunts for certain criminals can cause other fugitives to reach out to those hunted criminals, so perhaps we shall rouse her from her den yet.

What I am concerned by, however, is the fact that in the last three months, between the frenzy about food and the vigilance, we have managed to rouse out some low-lives, but, pardon my writing so sir, no one in gold lace, if you see what I mean.

Where are the rich and powerful, the corrupt and the decadent? Where are the scions of powerful families with more money than sense, bathing in decadence as Agramant whispers terrible words in their ears? We haven't raised even a whiff of them. Mind you, we weren't specifically looking out for them. But you'd expect at least one of them to be revealed as a cannibal, what with the mood gripping the city – we've had several folks who fancied eating mud, pencils, glue and paint revealed right in the militia over the past three months.

I have however taken some extra time out of my schedule to do some extra research, and have come across the following: there is to be a plenipotentiary, this summit, at Anvil, between Agramant's representatives and the archmage of winter. I have heard that the heralds of that creature are hard to extract information from, and I do not expect that path might yield much, but I do know that there is a prominent citizen in Holberg, by the name of Edel van Holberg (we suspect them of smuggling goods across the Catazar, and have been keeping an eye on them), who has made time to be at Anvil at just the right moment – Saturday evening. I thought that coincidence seemed a bit much, and submit their name for your attention.

Finally, I would like to offer my services to those in Anvil seeking to handle Agramant's potential presence in Holberg more directly. At present, myself and my assistants have a choice to make. We might be able, by using our influence, to crash straight through into one of the citizens we suspect of depravity with the most reason. From there we might be able to dig up some kind of proof, but this heavy-handed approach might alert any connections. We could also try to infiltrate any potential cult of Agramant, by having some connections pose as young princes in search of rare and illicit pleasures. This does of course include some risk. There are many other possibilities open to us, but I wished to send you these, and the details necessary to contact me, in order to request from you – or from anyone interested – guidance on how to proceed.

I trust, prince bishop, in your discretion and vigilance.

Georg Vallenhoegg van Holberg, Holfried, Holberg, The League

Dear Mr. Kanute Adelaar van Holberg,

My name is Mortimer Culpstone, and I work for the civil service, where I manage the transportation and distribution of messages and information in written format. In short, I am the civil service's postman.

I write to you because we currently hold a certain amount of mail for you, which has come in over the past three months. It currently amounts to about three wains. Much of it is comestible. Most of the correspondence seems to be either requesting your recommendations for safe and approved places to find sustenance, especially within Holberg but also abroad in the Empire, and even in foreign parts. There are also many requests for your opinion on whether certain food items obtained in various places are safe to eat, reports of eateries that were seen practising the preparation of food in ways perceived to be unsafe or not recommended, and requests for your review of the food that was sent attached.

It appears that recent events in Holberg have caused a sudden, unprecedented increase in your status – something you may have noticed yourself, if only a fraction of the mail that has been sent to you via us was also sent directly to you at your address.

A brief attempt at categorizing the mail has been carried out, and we have been able to formulate a few recommendations and conclusions based on this.

Firstly, it is impossible to forward all of this mail to you for you to answer – much of it is degraded due to the presence of food, or is now outdated. Should you wish to answer those requesting guidance on safe places to eat, we earnestly recommend that you investigate the possibility of publishing some form of document, or guide to the best eateries in certain locales. We cannot guarantee that this will have a permanent effect in the Empire at large, but it is possible that at least at Anvil, this may allow capitalization on recent events. Already in Holberg, some places have picked up on remarks or sins of your presence at their counters and bars, and have begun displaying golden sausage icons on their signs as a badge of quality.

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Secondly, we are glad to report that some of the more, shall we say, disturbing and specific messages which were sent to you, requesting certain definitely illegal and immoral sustenances, have been passed on to the relevant militias, and a small crop of Agramant cultists have been harvested, a few in Holberg itself. This does present the possibility that we will be able, if we receive further communications of these sorts, to keep you abreast of developments which touch the culinary world of the Empire. At the present stage, we have found, among the part of the correspondence that concerns reports of suspicious or immoral activities, traces of curious orders. It appears that a variety of parties have been purchasing items necessary for a moderately-sized feast, centred around a carnivorous main dish, but without ever purchasing the meat. The reports centred around this particularly highlight that these feasts, whatever they are, usually occur around the winter solstice period. We are however observing reports that indicate that this year's event has been hastened. Unfortunately, the names and identities of those involved in this order are heavily obscured beneath layers of subterfuge, and as a result we have not been able to confirm any identities, save one, which was provided to us thanks to some excellent work by a militiaman, name of Georg Vallenhoeg. Edel van Holberg, it seems, is a prominent Naga merchant who will be present at Anvil. Given the timing of their visit, and the suspicions of Mr. Vallenhoeg, we suspect they may be visiting at the same time as the planned plenipotentiary between the archmage of winter and the representatives of Agramant. Save for their typical Naga appearance, we unfortunately do not have much more of a description for them.

We are not, sir, certain at this stage whether this sudden increase in information for your position represents a permanent development of the position, or simply a temporary increase in engagement by imperial citizens, following the two judgements and the strange effects in Holberg witnessed during the past three months. Nor can we say whether an appraisal in senate would yield new improvements to the office of the Custodian.

We do hope, however, that this information will prove useful to you and your ambitions, and I remain at your disposal should you have specific requests concerning the mail which we still hold – and are still receiving – for you.

Mortimer Culpstone, Anvil outskirts, Marholm, Casinza, Highguard