

Unto Archduke Alastair of Canberry, Emperor of the Unsettled Lands  
By my hand this day,

Greetings!

Your fostering of my great nephew has set off shockwaves throughout the Great Houses. It has never before been done, and yet, many of the nobles believe it should be now that they see it. I offered him the choice, despite his age, of refusing his mother's final orders and coming instead to me, to the oldest of the Great Houses, to adoption into the House of Aufaugautha'rim itself. As a Prince of the du'tincmaeg. He refused. He would not be compelled from his course. He said that his father had died for your House, which is of course not exactly true, but it seems true at his age. He said that you showed kindness to his mother and to him inasmuch as you were capable. He said that his mother was right and soon we would all pass away and he wished to know the ways of those who would replace us in the world, for he said, you are a weaker people. All those things I knew, save that he cared for your folk. He said that he could learn much from you. He said that he respected your mistress of arms, the Dame (Grand Dame? I do not wish to slight her and he is still uncertain of your titles, and I have never learned them) Brionna. He wished to come to you, and therefore it is only right fitting that he do so.

Still, my heart was troubled and I knew not why. It was for that purpose that I went unto the Palantir `du e' gorg'a, sealed in the Tower of the Eternal Pain of Torment and dispatched its three guards for a hundred years (I think having to summon new triplets of Ultradaemons each time you use that damned thing is the actually Pain of Torment), and then slipped into the agony that consumes that ancient Elder palantir at being held in a tower devoted to the worship of the King of Pain.

There I beheld the truth. As my niece has said, much rests on you. The continent of Khamista is close fought, but our races and our gods alike are wearied of fighting and soon will depart this place. The mighty and well organized temples here will fight free of the Orcish, Urukish and Trollish hordes that arise unbridled as fewer and fewer command and check them. The humans will dominate on the surface, though long troubled by the vestiges of our breeding, for which I am sorry; and beneath the ground the great races of the Underdark will remain locked in torment and conflict for thousands of years. The continent of Zest'qua lies divided between the Light and the Shadow, and will remain so. A great blow has recently been struck for the Light and soon the lines may return to what they once were as Borsh'tro and his council snarl and snap in the shadows of their hunger for souls.

BUT, Drucien? Drucien. Rarely have I cast my eyes hither, True, the House of Curini'rim has a place of retreat there. True, the House of Moriquendi'rim has a holding there and 2 slaving districts, though who notices them except their highest Lords - they are little, well... enough of that, suffice it to say that their blood is thin. True, the Death Priests of Morgrath as Lord of Death and Rebirth are honored in several places, though they have no more to do with the true faith than any mortuary keepers. Now I have looked at it fully. The richest, largest, and most

populated of the continents, yet it has no central order and both Chaos and the most ancient abominations are rampant there. Your Canberry is the single strongest force of Light, for Singing Leaves will never come forth in strength again. Thar Ingmath may perhaps be the strongest force for "Darkness" among the humans there - for though the people are strange (mutants whether or not you know it) they are true to their faith.

Both Masque and Hanal are deep in heresy, but Masque far less so, consider a difference with its see, not actual intent to be heretics. Hanal, unless the Princess of your favor gains the throne will sink into an unutterable entropy that will destroy it, but only after consuming its citizens. Yet you come close to the closing of the way at last for she of the bone, and once that way is closed -- the dead hulk of Hanal will have no relevance to any, unless it be one of the other forbidden. The demons do not know what they are playing with, but that is often the truth.

The palantir reveals the following:

1. Your champions must indeed be your best, for not only is one guardian insane with evil, but the other seeks a place above its station and will obtain it if but only it can banish its fellow for a time. Further, others seek the relic and it is mobile. Move quickly and with vigor.
2. War comes to the North whether you will it or not, perhaps in one season, perhaps in a year - but it comes. Be ready and aid your allies as you can. Protect the princess, without her Hanal and its people are utterly doomed as if they were cast into the mountain of fire itself, incredibly, even their souls will not escape consumption. Yet one way or another the pretender is doomed and knows it not. With or without the souls of the humans there, you will triumph in your goal of preventing Hanal from overrunning all.
3. Bands will continue to harry you -- look for tunnels to the West, a way into the Underrealm is there, and thus the corruption and insanity that have invested that land.
4. You are now safe, but you must bear heirs, and other heirs. The princess cannot be kept close to you - not until some years from now, or her people will drift, yet she is in grave danger.
5. The lesser gates must be closed, and that your people must also do.

To help with the only one that fate permits me to help with, I have sent with this missive, not only my best wishes and my thanks for showing a new way for my great nephew, who is always a sensitive boy anyway, he would not even whip the slaves when they disobeyed him, it frightened my wife that he did not - for it marked him to be used, but also Sir Galith Pilin' til of the Cadet House of Claith'irin and the 20 proven soldiers I have sent with him together with a war sloop for their and her transport. He is not for your house, but for the house of your princess. I would not want my great nephew dishonored by the rule of three removes if she were to be assassinated, and frankly, as he likes you, I would not want your line to fail, since he will live to see it.

-Aufaugauthal'rim (the)