

Shudderingly you awake, the fan is calling to you in a way it never has before. As soon as you anchor your grip on it a familiar mind joins yours.

"Lady, I am so happy that I could reach you. I was afraid even imperative would not be enough. We are in flight with the Princess together with a Strom high in the regard of the Kov -- we are on a small group of Vallors headed East toward the City of Enclaves. We do not think we are pursued, but we do not know. I cannot maintain this for long, the ship is cramped. Please hear me out. The Kov is trying to draw most of the enemy off toward Magdag. He has an army there - but they cannot sustain a siege. They lack supplies and the winters here are brutal, without planting at most the siege will last until midwinter next and all will die.

"Thyastis is dead. The Middle daughter has gone mad, slain her mother and her older sister. She had allies of which no one dreamed among the great houses. This all started suddenly yesterday soon after the last of the Mouth's emissaries departed. Assassins came for the princess as well, but her loyal beloved and personal maid thwarted them, though he was injured in the process. The Archbishop is under House arrest. We escaped ahead of a wave of slaughters, the Kov of the Western Isles has been slain, as have several Stroms.

"I will continue to report as I can, but I believe we are now in exile. I cannot believe what is happening."

You have hardly finished shuddering and are considering whether or not to wake Alastair, and you hear a murmuring without as you prepare to do so. Opening the door to discover a nonplussed guard standing just outside with a sealed message tube. "Lady - this arrived unexpectedly at the teleport pad. I am glad to find you - it is addressed to you and marked urgent."

The message reads:

I thought you should hear this first from me. Your Emperor will get the official notice soon I am sure - but - despite the arrival of your redactor (for which I thank you) the Grand Duchess of Ergmoth, the Lady Fenris Ruthus, Protector and Defender of the Faith, Pack Leader of the Long Fang and former Mistress to the Second Mouth before he was First, Lady of the House of Aeval by her mother's line and by her fathers of the House of Gat'reus passed to the realm of the Eternal Dark earlier this night. The efforts of the First did not prevail and she cannot be drawn back from her rest to struggle upon this world.

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