

Jean Valois, by the Grace of the Holy Paragons, in the name of the Sentinel who guards the lands of the Highborn and their Empire, to the Virtuous Crusader Mordecai of Zephaniah's Lament, health and greetings.

For the good which you have done for us, I bow my head in thanks; I and all my loyal knights, who give our prayers to the Holy Paragons, give our thanks for our lives. We know the price at which our safety has been bought, and the chance to give our lives in service of a higher good than the scheming of the Ducal Court is welcome indeed.

It has been uncomfortable to learn of the Way of Loyalty in particular; some of our number have questioned the breaking of the oaths they swore to my father. Though he is a fool and a villain, nevertheless there are some among our number who wonder whether the right thing to do were to cleave to his family, counting his folly as hardship and misfortune, and fearing the darkness in their hearts, which he engendered many years ago with his slovenly and corrupt ways, as if it were some sign of their own wickedness. Yet for all this, trust me: they will be Loyal to you, as I am.

It is not easy to leave one's life and one's homeland. I suspect that I, and they, will always be Suranni, and the Gods who made Their thrones in our hearts will never leave us, even as we learn the greater strength of the Holy Paragons. Yet we know now of a better way, and a better people to serve: and both of those are Highborn. O! that we should have thought ourselves highborn by right of birth, never understanding the true and universal meaning of the name!

I do not mean to attend the Imperial capital again, save that you should order me. I will go where you order, and do as you order, and fight whom you order, and defend whom you order. Yet were I to take some part in the business of high governance, it would be only to caution the Empire against taking the hand of Dumon, for all too often, it seems the Empire thinks that all rebels against oppression must be worthy, as the Highborn were when they rebelled. Beware the oppressed oppressor, who seeks a better world only for themselves, as I did before my defeat.

In the love of new-found kinship, I remain your sworn knight.