

Ave, seeker of knowledge and beauty – Aseus has seen fit to lay your letter into my hands! Though the ugly storm of war churns the slate of the sea between our peoples, I will not hesitate to share my faith with you, for of all things Adevăr loves war the least – for what is war but a crucible of destruction for beautiful things?

I see in the Catazarri the hand of Adevăr – I have many beautiful things created by your nationfolk: portraits from Tassato, silvered mirrors of Sarvos – instruments of slender strings and oiled wood from Quzar and even a seat carved of Karsk oak which has been made all the more precious by many generations of use. For this I write eagerly as perhaps through my words I might help awaken you to that hallmark.

I hear Adevăr's voice in the laughter of children – the murmur of the wind between the gnarled weirwood on the hill above my bedchamber. I read his love-letters in the wisps of cloud at dawn, in the curves of her temple arch and the stone forms in the promenade of sculpture that lies outside it. I feel his guiding touch in the slip of a well-aged shuttle between weft and weave, her fingers tangle with mine as I work clay or coax harp-strings into song. When I behold that which is beautiful, when I create that which is beautiful and when I experience that which is beautiful – Adevăr is there, in a dialogue that goes beyond words. I am sure you have felt her too – how could you not in a land so awash in beautiful things? Adevăr is there where there is beauty – when I was young and still could I would play where the birds sang and the river laughed – and Adevăr was there with me. That is worship – the creation and appreciation of all that is lovely in creation. These days I worship at home – with my loom, or with inks and paints; I have spent many arcs of the sun in deep communion capturing the wizened divinity of that oakwood seat on canvas – enjoined with Adevăr. Some do set unequal value in the gods; as war approaches, many throng to the Red Goddess, seeking to thrill in the spilling of her sacrament. I believe the gods most deserving of worship are those whose presence you feel most keenly; open your eyes to that which is otherwise unexamined and find there your own answer.

A life in the pursuit of beauty – its beholding, its preservation and its creation – is what Adevăr asks of his followers; but it is for the followers to decide whether our lives were 'good': if one's spirit is numb to the wonders of creation, then how could a life lived in its service be good? If you wish a good life – find what you experience most keenly and draw it close. When you see the god of death's hand on your shoulder, greet them as a friend.

Red is the colour of blood – and hounds are oft humanity's partners in that ugly work. Perhaps the Red Goddess is abroad. If it is true then I beg you to make fast all that your people have given to the world that is wonderful and to be adored – then make ready for war. Thank you for your letter, stranger – I will never sail again and so will never see the land that created so many precious things – but I am blessed at this chance to at least touch one of its children.

– Hellidia of the Ochre Hill, Manse D'Oubil

Very dear Comrade,

You are indeed courageous to acknowledge your own limitations, and for that I commend you. The student who believes that they already have the answers is an insufferable little prick, and a drain on their teachers and fellow pupils alike. Give me one person in honest ignorance rather than a thousand know-it-alls and armchair generals any day!

It may surprise you to learn that I grew up in a Virtuist household. My parents attended meetings at a House of the Way, and though I only ever joined them out of a sense of filial duty, I still have some lingering fondness for the old philosophy. I certainly do not believe that the Way that guides Sumaah and the Casinean Empire is fundamentally incompatible with the Greater Good, as some of my more bombastic fellows have claimed. So let these be my first words of advice: what motivates you to do good is less important than the fact that you do good at all. First, action!

For the rest, I shall adopt the Roshanwe method – if you do not know of her, she is an Eternal of the realm of Day who teaches by asking questions and trusting you to find the answers. It is an old-fashioned method of teaching, but one that I have found useful.

You wish to do the Greatest Good. Excellent! What makes one Good greater than another? What examples can you think of to illustrate this? Are you guided in this first by reason, or by passion? How does the answer to that last question make you feel? You consider risks to the Soul and Spirit of great importance. Why? Is a risk to the soul categorically different than a risk to the body? Would it be worth accepting an injury to the soul in order to preserve a life of goodness? How does this make you feel?

Some of these questions, or the other questions they raise, may make you uncomfortable. Why? What are the unspoken impulses that pull and push you as you consider the path forwards? What will make you want to choose one answer over another? How does that make you feel?

I am not a hard Rationalist. We are not heralds, but people! We contain multitudes, pulling us in different directions. To demand perfect logic is absurd, we might as well demand that our students lift the college buildings over their heads! You want to know how to choose the way forward? Know yourself. Ask the difficult questions, and know the ways that you are pulled by your past. Your answers will, at the very least, not be boring.

Best Regards

Karl Tschentscher

Gisli,

*You think that you don't know the horrors of the world, but you're wrong. You know every single one of them. You are just numbed to them. You say, "That's just the way it is." The first step to waking up is to realise that just because things are a certain way, it does not mean that they have to be that way.*

*Imagine a child growing up in an abusive household. Their parents strike them constantly at the slightest imagined provocation. The child grows up thinking that this is normal, that the constant pain and degradation are just the way that parents act. It is only when the child hears from other people that no, this is not normal, this is not right, that they realise that they have been mistreated. Well, we are the creator's abused children, but we have to work out for ourselves that the blows are wrong.*

*Have you ever woken up with a headache for no reason at all? Just a tiny inconvenience, the smallest discomfort happening without rhyme or reason? Of course you have. You don't even think about it. Just drink some water and get on with your day. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself why that would even happen? What is the point of that? Why should we have that pain? What could it possibly achieve? That is the constant needling punishment of the creator. There is nothing you can do. You will always suffer. And now compare that to the sickness, the natural disasters, the endless, grinding disappointment. Why should we just accept that things have to be this way? We should be angry! We should be fucking furious! This was done to us, and it's not okay!*

*Some people claim that suffering is a test, or that it makes us strong. Imagine telling an abused child that their parent beating them is a test. That the abuse makes them strong. Fuck those people.*

*Something, somewhere, made the world. It set everything in motion, and either through stupidity or malice it made a world of suffering. I am not inclined to forgive such a being. Maybe I can't lash out at it. Maybe I can't get my revenge. But at the very least I can open my eyes and acknowledge that what has been done to me, and to everyone I have ever known, ever loved, ever hated, IS NOT JUST.*

*Teodoros of Maykop*

My Good and Dear Friend Nighthaven,

Oh how I have yearned to have my thoughts confirmed by others - even if those fears are dire of nature, and ignored by the ignorant. In my many travels I can not have found any that have studied and mastered the mysteries of the departed as well as the Illarchs of Axos, and what I found there as I explored their necropoli truly changed both my mind and soul.

I should explain that I have long studied the Mysteries of the Realms in the hopes of seeking enlightenment, but found the wisdom of the Principalities to be disturbingly limited in the knowledge of the nature of the afterlife. Perhaps it is such a thing that these details are held secretly in the Palaces of the Princes, but until I had ventured into Axos - and indeed until I had parted with sufficient wealth to buy access to some of the more reclusive scholars among that people - I had remained woefully unaware and unprepared for the horrors that seem to await us once this pale flesh has faltered to eld.

Even if what I had discovered there in those ancient and dusty halls were to prove false, and I am sure that they are not, then I know that it would still be wise to study this dread fate and seek to avert it. Perhaps in some happy contingent we might find that the efforts we should expend would merely serve to expand the knowledge of mortality, and our fears would be as naught. But, in my heart I know this hope to be false - I should lose nothing by expanding my knowledge if the hope were to be true, but would risk torment and dissolution in the sure inevitability that the students of the Necromantea were correct.

Unfortunately, my own people seems unwilling to heed the terror I have learned in lands across the seas - too many of our philosophies have chosen to close their eyes to the malignancy of the Creator, and so I find that I must study and research on my own - a task made ever the more difficult by the dire political situation that shakes the world, distracting us from the opportunities to save ourselves from a terrible fate by sealing scholarship across the seas way from our easy reach.

I find it difficult to express in words the grasping terror I feel as I see the seasons turn and I grow ever aware that I may not have enough time within me to replicate the arts practised by the Axou, nor that I might seek to persuade my fellow Magi to bend their will to this endeavour.

Even the audience with the King of the Empty Tomb that I purchased at great cost led me only to more mysteries than solutions - an enigmatic response that perhaps I should turn my gaze to lands where 'the sun fades to death' - but now my ambition to seek out some of the secrets perhaps hidden in 'Varkula's Iron Grasp' will be doomed to nothingness thanks to the conflicts now wracking the world.

I fear that the meagre successes I have achieved point only to the possibility of opening the Twilight Door in such a manner that one's essence might escape the eternal torment of the prison of death and instead be preserved in some more fitting receptacle, insulated at least from the whims of the Creator, but that is a far step from what should be our ambition to transcend the dissolution of the Essence of Persona by defying Death itself.

Alas, I fear I am in a tragedy where I can see all the pieces upon the board that would lead to success, but where the malign Creator has scattered those same tokens to places just beyond the reach of my grasp.

Seweryn Lyszyk of the Quartz Towers' Office

Lucilium Enduring,

I've got some bad news for you: there is no proof. You think that you can prove all of those things, but that's only because you have chosen to believe in simple cause and effect. And we use that most of the time, I'm not upset with you for doing that, I do it myself! But I can't prove that if I jump up into the air that I won't fly. All I know is that I never have before. That's not proof! That's inference at best.

Spiritual auras exist. Sure they do. And when I drink gin I get drunk, but that doesn't make it a religious truth. The use of a drug refined from a sap that makes you sleepy and gives you weird dreams seems more like proof of the infinite capacity of the human mind for addiction and pattern-seeking behaviour. People eat hallucinogenic mushrooms and contact spirits from beyond the veil, but I don't base my life around them. Why should you base your life around what can be done with liao?

Human souls reincarnate and past lives can be seen. That's weak. I've read Echoes of the Labyrinth. Sometimes people have hallucinations of events that happened in the past, and when you go looking for them you find that they really happened! Does that mean that the only possible explanation is reincarnation? Of course it doesn't. You could just be having visions from the perspective of a dead person. Or you could just be hallucinating. Some true liao visions can be overlaid onto historical events very clearly, others are completely unprovable. And do I recall something about a major religious schism within the last decade where someone lied about a vision that they saw and a bunch of people believed them? Scepticism is a healthy ally.

As for speeding up the time to reincarnation, unless you can measure the afterlife, you can't prove a damn thing. If, and it's a big if, reincarnation is real, some people come back slower and some faster. You don't know why. You just go looking for patterns because you assume they must be there. It could be random, and you're just jumping to conclusions.

You despise lies and desire truth. The truth is, you could be dreaming right now and just not know it. This could be a hallucination caused by the Night realm. A malicious eternal could be manipulating your senses, and nothing you can say proves otherwise. But nonetheless we choose to believe that the world exists, that our lives and actions have meaning. I know that I've been harsh, but I don't want to tear you down. Just accept that in some things, we need to make a leap of faith. We choose belief and a life of meaning instead of a life of fear and uncertainty. You don't have to have faith in your people's religion, but you have to have faith in something. Just choose with your eyes open.

Good luck!

Professor Angela Fehrenbach

*Exarch Luke,*

*The age-old question. Politics and Virtue. The higher truths of the Spirit and the low facts of the world. Settle in for disappointment, sibling. If you can solve this, you will find yourself a Paragon in seconds.*

*I joke, but I also feel your pain. Even here in the Republic we struggle with the petty clashes of ideology and personality that impede the pursuit of Virtue. It's hard to see what we can do to tame these worldly concerns. I do what I can from within the Assemblies, but it is an uphill struggle. So rather than offering answers, I offer advice.*

*You cannot control anyone else's actions, only your own. So ask yourself; are you truly doing the right thing? You think that you know what the Virtuous thing is to do, but no doubt the rest of your people do as well. Virtue walks in many guises, and there are many paths to Virtuous action. Wisdom teaches us that all knowledge is incomplete. Is it possible that they know something that you don't? Is it possible that what you state as Virtuous fact is in fact a matter of Virtuous opinion?*

*Beware also self-righteousness. Pride is a Virtue, but only when it truly inspires. I have known many obnoxious blowhards who claimed that their endless insistence on getting their own way no matter the circumstances was Pride, when it was nothing more than the belief that they were better than everyone else. We are not better than everyone else. We have our strengths, but also our weaknesses. Do not succumb to the feeling that you are inherently superior.*

*Last but not least, Courage teaches us to adapt our strategies and try anew. What have you tried? Why has it not worked? What things do you think are unchangeable in your own life that are in fact just a part of your strategy? You have more choices available to you than you know.*

*I leave you with this: one truly Virtuous soul can change the world. Even if it is in a small way, nothing you do lacks meaning. Take solace in that.*

*Yours in Virtue,  
Atlixotl*

Hugh,

*I understand you. We know the Druj well in my land. People who do not hate the Druj do not understand the Druj. They are a plague upon the world, a cancer. People think that if they can talk nicely to the cancer then it will stop killing you, but it won't. Making your peace with cancer is accepting your own death. The only thing to do is fight, fight it with every last breath of your body. Cancer will not give you the same consideration that you give it.*

*But for all we may be angry, enraged at the mere existence of this threat to our homes and families, never forget that this is not hatred truly. It is love. We love our people! We love our homes! We want to see them kept safe from all the dangers that would threaten them. We love our way of life, and we want to see it preserved. If we are angry, if we hate the Druj, it is because they threaten what we love! It isn't personal. The Druj can't help themselves. They're like a rabid dog that bites and does not stop to think why it does so. You don't blame the dog. But you do put it down, and keep your family safe.*

*If you want my advice, don't obsess too much over the Druj. They are not the real threat. They are just the obvious threat. Kill them, yes, but remember that the real enemies are within. They are the insidious voices that say, "If we just give up, maybe they won't hurt us!" They preach compassion and compromise with cancer. These people are the real threat, because they make you weak. They make your family weak, they make your people weak. When the enemy comes, they try to take away your sword. The Druj must be killed, but these people must be destroyed. They are traitors to their people. An enemy at least is honest. A traitor is lower than vermin.*

*Some people will not understand. That is alright. The child does not need to understand the motivation of the parent who protects them. Find others who agree with you, who agree that there can be no compromise and that we must protect our homes and families against those who would defile them. Organise together, and promote your agenda without getting caught up in theology. Theology is a trap, mental masturbation to keep you from doing what must be done. Their 'proof' is meaningless when the proof of how the world works is right there in front of your eyes. Trust your gut. It will serve you better than the so-called 'experts' whose expertise involves nothing but arguing for the breakdown of our culture.*

*Always keep in mind the dream of the future. Of your homeland safe, and a better future for your people's children. Let that be your guiding star.*

*Be Strong,  
Konstantin Dmitry Troshev*

*Adon i Martan i Erigo,*

*The Host of Hosts has tasked me with searching across your Empire and beyond for an individual who will prove a fruitful contact to discuss your Resurrection Salts with.*

*I have found such an individual, and they have agreed to meet you and up to 2 others in a summer chamber at 8pm on the Friday of the summer solstice. The group of you should assemble at the Anvil regio promptly, and the Keeper of Revels shall see to it that you are suitably transported.*

*Should you be unable to attend, you may send another in your stead.*

*I hope this meeting spurs your ventures onwards,*

*Hearth*



*Dear Gísli Baerson,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

*If you wish to order further product for the next season, feel free to find us dealing outside the Forge from 6:30pm on Saturday. You are also most welcome to contact us by Winged Messenger with the quantities you desire, and we will find you to discuss appropriate payment next summit.*

*Yours,*

*Evander & Hippolata*

*The Second Order Apothecaries' Guild of Kaban*

*Tunnels of Kaban*

*Kabanja*

*Axos*

*Dear Patches i Riquesa,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

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*Yours,*

*Evander & Hippolata*

*The Second Order Apothecaries' Guild of Kaban*

*Tunnels of Kaban*

*Kabanja*

*Axos*

*Dear Karg i Estrico i Erigo,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

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*Yours,*

*Evander & Hippolata*

*The Second Order Apothecaries' Guild of Kaban*

*Tunnels of Kaban*

*Kabanja*

*Axos*

*Dear Hypatia Rainecourt,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

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*Evander & Hippolata*

*The Second Order Apothecaries' Guild of Kaban*

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*Kabanja*

*Axos*



**PID: 7673.8**

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*Dear Lindir Thornheart,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

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*Yours,*

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*The Second Order Apothecaries' Guild of Kaban*

*Tunnels of Kaban*

*Kabanja*

*Axos*



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*Dear Czernobog Ollovich Borislav,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

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*Yours,*

*Evander & Hippolata*

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*Kabanja*

*Axos*



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*Dear Karo Di Yedinso,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

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*Yours,*

*Evander & Hippolata*

*The Second Order Apothecaries' Guild of Kaban*

*Tunnels of Kaban*

*Kabanja*

*Axos*

*Dear Thorn,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

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*Yours,*

*Evander & Hippolata*

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*Tunnels of Kaban*

*Kabanja*

*Axos*





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*Dear Wren Ironclaw,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

*If you wish to order further product for the next season, feel free to find us dealing outside the Forge from 6:30pm on Saturday. You are also most welcome to contact us by Winged Messenger with the quantities you desire, and we will find you to discuss appropriate payment next summit.*

*Yours,*

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*Tunnels of Kaban*

*Kabanja*

*Axos*



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*Dear Tobias,*

*Please find your latest order from our establishment enclosed.*

*Thank you again for your prosperous trade. Much of our profit goes straight back into the rebuilding efforts in Kaban - your business continues to aid our efforts to restore the citadel.*

*If you wish to order further product for the next season, feel free to find us dealing outside the Forge from 6:30pm on Saturday. You are also most welcome to contact us by Winged Messenger with the quantities you desire, and we will find you to discuss appropriate payment next summit.*

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