

*Honourable Lord Stepan,*

*I understand your frustration and desire to rectify the problem with Sarnak, but I am afraid we have been struck on all sides. Sarnak's new conquest caused an immediate stir in Orian's council, yet I am afraid no force will be offered nor any aggression made against. Lord Bela has grown stronger than ever, his supporters make a majority. He sought peaceful accord with Sarnak and they in turn assuaged his fears, but not mine.*

*I was surprised to say the least when Count Hirotha sided with Sarnak, but he has always been a Lord first and his people have been suffering at your increase in trade. I do believe his stance is unwarranted, but you both hold the only key routes to the south. With his new Alkatek Lords he has formed a strong defensible and safe passage from Relian to Orian.*

*Lord Lystor has declined to attend any more meetings or correspondence in the face of the danger from the Wyrn and Bickpentok's new status of which he seems unsure.*

*Difficulties face us on all sides. Baroness Midenna is involving herself with the growing dissent in Dynax — we can expect little to no help from her against Sarnak, for not only are her forces engaged around her own city in defence but also in Dynax.*

*ever, especially in the face of Sarnak. The Mynistran Church will resist the any northward invasion should Sarnak deem to do so, for their culture is atheist and domineering.*

*Myself, I am on a backfoot, support has waned within the council and I fear for my own position, though not for my life. What information we received from*

*Sarnak was that Bryce was captured and arrested for conspiracy against Sarnak. Many of his aides and men were cut down. The force that struck Sarnak as I understand it came through a diplomatic party sent with your letter, gaining admission within. The slaughter within the castle as I have heard was on a large scale, and I can assume the merciless Shaitan were those who masqueraded themselves as peace-mongers. Offshore, hidden by powerful magical storms the Navy swept on to Bentara's shores and some three-thousand of their Amazonian warriors took Bentara swiftly. None of these forces have been withdrawn and Sarnak has expanded its borders indefinitely. The Port of Izar will surely suffer under such regime as Sarnak will undoubtedly direct all trade to their city and not the port. This will change the face of trade across all of Hestra.*

*These women are not to be underestimated Stjepan. Watch your back, they already view you as an enemy if not openly then surreptitiously. I fear they would send assassins after you - take care my friend. I wish I could offer you more, but I have nothing that could aid you now. After so many years to have our meetings come to a close like this makes a man humble indeed.*

*Faithfully*

*Lord Imbrus Dall*