

My Dear Count

I was most disturbed to hear about your recent troubles. The fate of your sister is most unfortunate. But even in this failure, there is much than may be learned. The path of the true scholar never runs smooth - the fools that mocked and scorned you shall one day bow and scrape at your feet for scraps of knowledge.

If the result of this endeavour becomes difficult to manage, I would suggest a Minimus Binding as a potential solution.

My own situation remains unchanged. I must act with caution and remain constantly in motion. The decay that I experience is hard to describe. I find it intolerable, but I remain steadfast. The Great Race unravelled these secrets and more, and so shall I. Fate shall guide my progeny back to me, I am sure of it!

Remember that history will celebrate our discoveries and forget the sacrifices and transgressions made in their making. The insignificant lives of the rabble is a small price to pay for immortality.

Your respectful servant

AB

30th day of Kuthona 4713

My Esteemed Count

The tomes that you have sent to me have proven most useful, as has the aid of your servant Weiralai and her companion. I now have sufficient subjects for experimentation. The transference now holds for longer, but organic decay still advances with great speed. Tests now last for months rather than weeks. Nothing, it seems, is as efficacious as direct lineage.

I enclose some texts of my own, which may help you in your quest to communicate with those Beyond. Be warned though - the ritual is difficult and cannot be attempted alone. Furthermore, the slightest mistake may have dire consequences.

Both of us must persevere with our studies, unlocking the secrets of the universe while hiding from the eyes of the ignorant, superstitious world. Only through dedicated effort, repeatedly failing until we succeed, will our work be validated.

Yours in admiration

AB

7th day of Gezran 4706

Daridela

Send me more of your dream inducing brews, as well as more of that oil. It has proven most effective.

Payment will be made as usual.

Melisenn

Expedition Supplies

- Camels - 40
- Slaves - 20
- Guards - 20
- Food & water - 30 days (no need to plan for return journey)
- Tents

Contact Biting Lash

To Count Haserton Lows IV

*As a duly appointed Magistrate of Prince Aduard Ordranti III, I am writing to you regarding the settlement of the lawsuit brought against yourself by Abner Waithe, book dealer of Thorustep. I would like to remind you that the ruling of the court was in favour of Mr Waithe and you were directed to pay the outstanding price of 15,000gp for the claimed book entitled *The Revelations of Hali*.*

It has been over six months since this ruling and you have yet to pay the outstanding sum. If this payment does not occur within the next month, I will be forced to raise the matter to the Royal Magistrate. I urge you to comply with the ruling before such consequences are invoked.

Yours respectfully

Tillus Padgett, Magistrate

2nd day of Pharast, 4712

To Count Haserton Lowls IV

I am writing to you concerning the inquest into the death of your mother, Countess Namira Lowls. I would like to reiterate my condolences for the loss of both your mother and father two years ago. I understand the nature of their disease that claimed them both was never identified. Taking up the responsibilities of Count of Versex at such a young age could not have been easy.

However, the family of your mother insists that I communicate with you. They implore you to allow your mother's body be returned to their family crypt in Kerse. I fully understand your reluctance to disinter her body from the Lowls family crypt, but the fact that the funeral of your mother did not include any members of her family in attendance results in a lack of closure on their part.

They have offered a substantial sum of money to sway you in this matter. While this material offer may seem crass, it only highlights their desperation in seeking a resolution to their loss of a loved family member.

Yours respectfully

Tillus Padgett, Magistrate

22nd day of Rova, 4698

NOTICE OF SENTENCE OF DEATH FOR HIGH TREASON

**IN THE CASE OF THE COUNT OF VERSEX VERSUS DOCTOR CLYMES
PRETT FOR THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF COUNT HASERTON LOWLS
III BY POISON.**

**THE DEFENDANT IS FOUND GUILTY OF THE CHARGES BROUGHT
AGAINST HIM, HAVING CONFESSED UNDER INTERROGATION, AND IS
SENTENCED TO DIE IN HIS CELL. MAY HIS SOUL BE CURSED AND THE
GODS TURN THEIR BACKS UPON HIM.**

BY THE ORDER OF COUNT HASERTON LOWLS III

14TH DAY OF ABADIUS, 4696

To Count Haserton Lowls IV

I am pleased to deliver to you the alchemical agents that you requested. Please ensure that they are kept in a cool place, as some are very hard to come by!

In regard to your question, it seems that the Mad Poet you met in your dream journey was right. The book you seek, the Necronomicon, is located in a special collection called the Mysterium in the Qadiran city of Katheer, though it is written in Necril. If you can find a way to retrieve it and bring it to me, I can certainly help you translate and research it.

I look forward to seeing you again, my old friend.

Yours respectfully

Miachnian Mur

10th day of Desnus, 4716

To Count Haserton Lewis IV

I have recently received a copy of your self-published treatise "The Stars Are Not Among Us: An Undeniable Refutation of the Works of the Doomsaying Pseudo-Scholar Dr. Henri Meirtmane".

Doctor Meirtmane is one of the Sincemakti School's most respected and distinguished researchers, whose accomplishments over his many decades at this school have outstripped any other living academic. His expeditions are the stuff of legend and to be selected to accompany him on such an adventure is the highest honour. His research is always meticulous and his credibility is unshakeable.

However, on the other hand, your treatise (and I only grant it this title for the sake of courtesy) is a rambling, incoherent, under-researched collection of wild speculation, unproven connections and pure fantasy.

The direct attack on our most esteemed member cannot be ignored and as such we are severing all connections with you. Your membership is revoked, effective immediately, and you are no longer welcome to use our resources, attend our lectures or present at our facilities. This will be a disappointment for many of our students, who always looked forward to your so-called lectures, as their very absurdity gave them great entertainment.

Yours cordially

Tivior Cavius

Chancellor of the Sincemakti School of Sciences

7th day of Calistril 4716

Count Haserton Lowls IV Journals

4696: Haserton Lowls IV becomes count at the age of 20. He decides to keep journals to record his thoughts.

Soon after he records that his mother is “getting worse” and “needs to be taken out of the public view”.

He imagines himself as a great scholar and his studies are varied, covering history, nature, magic, astronomy, astrology, psychic research, alchemy and many more.

4701: Lowls records that he has met a fellow academic with whom he feels an affinity. He only refers to this person as AB. After this point, his studies take a more occult direction.

He begins to complain that the demands of being Count of Versex are a distraction from his “important work”.

4706: Lowls writes excitedly about contacting “one of the great entities from Beyond”. He states that it will take great preparation.

4708: Lowls starts noting that he is facing financial problems, as his expenditure on esoteric tomes and alchemical equipment outstrips his income.

4711: Lowls writes that his sister, Zaphira, whom he has paid virtually no attention to previously, may provide useful in his coming experiments.

4713: Lowls writes that his attempt at the “great ritual” was a disaster. He writes elusively about “Zaphira’s fate” and “dealing with the unfortunate consequences”. He blames the failure on her, on the weather, on the materials, but not on himself.

4715: Lowls becomes aware of Ulver Zandalus at Briarstone Asylum and his drawings. He states “that fool Meirtmane does not know what he has discarded.”

Lowls begins to interview Zandalus regularly. Though Zandalus was mute, Lowls would interview him while he drew his charcoal drawings of the mysterious city, and during the process details would emerge which Lowls would interpret.

4716: Lowls begins to use magic to read the man’s thoughts. Through this process, Lowls was able to learn about a distant lost city in some nameless desert that reportedly featured three Star Stelae, identical in

shape and arrangement to those in Thrushmoor.

Lowls begins writing with maniacal fervour about his obsession with the city and his belief that its discovery alone can repair his academic reputation.

Later he writes about having perfected the Dreamlands Excursion ritual and having met “The Mad Poet”. With furious excitement, he brags about making a deal with that person – the location of the mysterious city in return for the sacrifice of several “interesting minds”.

Count Haserton Lowl's IV Collection

- *Atop the Valley's Soul* (Osirian)
- *The Codex of Three Prescriptions* (Orisian)
- *Curses of the Black Lake* (Varisian)
- *Dichotomous Translations of Aklo Syntax*
- *Elements Through the Spirals of Time*
- *Emotions of the Past* (Elven)
- *The Falling Silk* (Elven)
- *Festival of the Snake*
- *The Forgotten Servants* (Kelish)
- *The Illusion of the Weeping Ones* (Varisian)
- *In Admiration of Keeping Pacts* (Kelish)
- *A Manual of Silence*
- *Men and Vultures: Denizens of the Darkened Depths and Dead Skies* (Skald)
- *Monuments of the Forest*
- *The Shadow's Ship* (Skald)
- *Shards of Sight* (Hallit)
- *Spiders of Sin and Sky*
- *Theological Agreements of the Kingdom*
- *Tigers and Flies* (Hallit)
- *The Unified Manual of Understanding*
- *Voyage of the Rainbow Servant*
- *The Wise Harmony*

Conversing with Snuffles

Where are you from?

The shifting lands. The magic forest.

How did you end up in Briarstone?

Yellow mist. Explored. Was there, alone. Trapped by nasty rats.

What does my patron want?

To grow and be strong. To be the gate and the key. To open the gate.

What am I? Who am I?

You are your father's child.

Who is my father?

He is Great and Old

Iris Hill Ledger

Various transactions concerning the estate, covering several months.

Key significant entries include:

Sarenith 4716: Count Lowls dismisses his entire staff. New staff to be obtained via ship, organised by Weiralai.

Erastus 4716: Receipt of a shipment of books from Cassomir, including:

- *Argument Against Reality*
- *Delusion: A Pact with Sanity*
- *Esoteric Delves into the Waking Mind*
- *Mystical Sites of Eastern Casmaron*

Ledger Note:

Melisenn – you were right! I cannot trust any of these ungrateful peasants. Dismiss them all at once. Weiralai tells me that she can obtain new servants – ones that are more obedient and less curious.

HL IV

Various apparently random notes about a variety of subjects, none of which are dated. Notable entries include:

Zandalus is key to discovering Neruzavin, I am sure of it! His drawings are undoubtedly of that lost city, and the edifices are clearly similar to Thrushmoor's own Star Stelae, if not identical. I am the verge of a great discovery – I can feel it!

What constitutes an "interesting mind", confound it? The Mad Poet demands gifts in return for an audience, and then demands the sacrifice of "interesting minds" in return for answering my question. The arrogance is intolerable! But I must bear this indignation until I have my prize. Then those fools at Sincomakti will beg for my forgiveness.

That fool Losandro is so easily manipulated. Briarstone is fertile ground for finding interesting minds. I have already found a number of ideal candidates.

- *A beautiful woman from Jalmeray, suffering from a period of amnesia. From her symptoms, I suspect she has been used by the Yfithians.*
- *A young scholar from Katheer with extreme schizophrenia; surely that must count as interesting? Two minds for the price of one!*
- *A peasant youth who appears to be a conduit between the living and the dead. However this happened to him, the Mad Poet must value such a mind.*
- *A young nobleman who claims to have terrible nightmares. I am sure this one is hiding something – he watches too closely, he asks too many questions, he tries to hide his origins. Secrets by their nature are interesting, and I wish to remove this unknown threat.*

Are four minds enough? I must be sure to satisfy the Mad Poet's demands. His wrath at disappointment is whispered to be terrible indeed.

Weiralai has a prisoner. Some Sleepless Agent who sought her out, the fool. She was going to cut his throat, but I can make use of him. A mind driven by revenge must be interesting to one who resides in dreams...

Perhaps if I included Blunder in the offering...? It is the only use that I can think of for him. It may be sufficient to tip the deal, and will rid me of a useless burden.

I will prepare the drug as directed by Miacknian Mun. My friend has proved so very useful to my researches. I will reward him when my greatness is recognised!

BRIARSTONE ASYLUM

Permit to Visit Patient: *Ulver Zandalus*

Issued: *10 Pharast 4715*

Signed: *Administrator Eliege Losandro*

Handwritten notes, describing many dream experiences. A figure referred to as "The Mad Poet" occurs several times. Scribbled entries include:

The Mad Poet accepted my gifts. The answers are close now.

The Mad Poet demands a sacrifice of interesting minds! What does that mean?

The Necronomicon - It is there that I shall find the answers.

My sacrifices are now mindless bodies, living but empty of thought. Melisenn says I should dispose of them, but I am not a savage. Their sacrifice has served me well. I shall hand them over to Briarstone before I depart. Losandro cannot refuse me.