

Dear Boss,

Bad times, indeed, in Alameda. I'm sorry I haven't written since my visit in March but once I had gotten over being pissed at you – you could have just *asked* me to take your blood again – all hell broke loose down here. I suppose I should be used to it by now, but the chaos keeps reaching new highs – or lows.

The attrition of the clan continues, as the chantry has been reduced to three members and the gargoyle. I'm second-in-command, now, but it really doesn't mean that much. I'm sure if someone with a more established chantry got sent here, I'd be back to bashing bytes on the network faster than you could say abracadabra. As it is, my access to the library has been restricted as Merette finally noticed the research I've been doing on your behalf. You don't have to worry, he doesn't know that you're dabbling with infernalism. Instead he thinks *I'm* the incipient demon worshipper – great.

But he does know that you're my Domitor. It's a long and stupid story but the situation can be salvaged, I think. Merette doesn't want to lose *anyone* at this point, so I don't have to fear his denouncing us – and I suspect he believes that the threat of blackmail will keep me in check for the foreseeable future. In check from *what*, I don't understand, but he's right in that he's got me by the throat – and how. The relationship between us took a severe turn into strange, a few weeks back. If I had known that regularly fucking the chantry leader would calm his ass down, I would have embarked upon it *months* ago. Who knew elders could be horny – well, when there's blood involved, at least.

Whoa, too much information.

Of course, I'm not supposed to breathe a word of any of this to anyone, particularly not you. Maybe Merette knows I'm going to keep talking to you. At this point, I don't particularly care as I have every intention of abandoning my obligations to Alameda and heading north again as soon as I can get approval from Sacramento.

The Cathayans are over-running the area and no-one can seem to do a thing about it. To further muddle matters, the Prince has admitted to a yearning for suicide. That would explain why he is trying to goad his own courtiers into killing him by making deals with the Sabbat, the Anarchs and every other contra-Camarilla clan he can make contact with. Nor is the Prince happy just trying to kill himself – he's driven the Ventrue Primogen to suicide and a Gangrel neonate (a friend of mine) who is bent on avenging that Primogen will no doubt die, also. And never mind how many of us are going to be mown down if the archons even *bother* to respond to our call for help against not just the Cathayans but our own Prince, also.

If the Prince is so hell-bent on killing himself, why doesn't he just embrace the sun? Why does he feel the need to take dozens of kindred with him? The ego of an elder, I suppose. He can't allow himself a quiet death...

The Prince continued to indulge in his ego at the last court. He decided to sell dozens of items salvaged from a ship being used by the Cathayans. The items all possessed magical properties and none of them were even *examined* by our clan before being put on the market. Naturally, the Tremere scrambled to obtain as many items as possible and we were forced to get a little creative with the bidding. So now I'm obligated to spend at least one – and probably two – evenings with our suicidal prince discussing the merits of Persian literature over Turkish coffee. God only knows how he took my bid to suck on his toes for an hour – I'm just glad he didn't accept it. Merette, of course, choked when I told him about *that* little offer, although it was hardly stranger than anything we've been getting up to, lately.

Sorry, was that too much information again?

If all goes well, the archons are going to come to Alameda, put Audran aside and send in the shock troops to burn the Cathayans out of the area – or shut Oakland down completely. Of course, we in the chantry have already locked ourselves inside and hung out the 'gone fishing' sign. If things *don't* go well... expect nothing but an eerie silence from Alameda for the next ten years or so, preceded by a intense flurry of exploding kindred.

Merette doesn't know – yet – about my request to return to Yakima (I'll settle for Seattle). I'm sure he's going to be furious when he finds out. I can only hope that he realizes the value of a tactical retreat at this point.

Frankly, I would rather cope with our little arguments about demon-summoning and pact-making over anything I've seen here. People just die too easily in this court. I feel like it's only a matter of time before it's my turn – why should I hang around and wait for it.

Things are getting crazy, I think this will be my last letter to you. Either I'll be seeing you in a couple of weeks, or I'll be dead. If it's the latter, just tell my family what we agreed upon.

In the hope that I will be seeing you again...

Rebecca.