

My dearest Karl,

I hope this finds you well. Marta sends her best to you, Katrine and young Irina. I was saddened to hear of little Konstantine's passing and of your recent troubles. However, I bear tidings that may lift your spirits.

My master and his fellow swordlords have recently sent word into Rostland and the surrounding lands about a charter they are to issue authorizing and endorsing exploration into the Greenbelt. It is one of a series of charters they've been issuing in a larger effort to once again establish a civilized presence in the Stolen Lands.

Three charters have already been issued and accepted, and this fourth charter is frankly the most opportune of them all, and is the reason I'm writing you with all due haste. The "limited" reaction we've heard thus far amazes me to no end. Our countrymen seem to have no sense of possibility—no sense of vision! So obsessed have they become, my nephew, with houses, and the disappearance, and political machinations, and with drinking away this terrible winter, that I fear there is no longer a spirit of hope or of wonder within them!

My master and many of the other swordlords sense this as well, but what are they to do? What can they do? For certainly, only those who with determination buy the small seed of wheat deserve the great harvest of bread. Do you remember the teachings, my nephew? Do you understand what I am saying to you? What I dare not put in writing!

Make all due haste. Katrine's skills would be helpful as well. If Irina's "issues" have rendered her unable to travel at this time, then send for her later. She will forgive you and indeed I suspect she may thrive in this old land made new.

Looking for your shadow on the horizon —uncle Yuri