

*Dearest friends*

*I am writing to you in the form of a portent, for even now I am watching as warships slide into the Lake and plough their mighty prows and heads through the waters. I fear for I have not heard from you in some time, and worry that you have passed beyond. My agent who has delivered these letters – the feisty postal worker of the Felster Pony Express – has told me that they have been gratefully received for coinage within Azilos, so I shall continue sending them. However, I must assume that it is our dire enemies, the spider demons, who are taking receipt of them – or, at least, keep that possibility high up in my mind. For that reason I must keep to myself certain secrets that I have come across and that I shall not pass over in writing for fear of tipping my hand.*

*That merchant friend of mine has revealed to me that he has been asked to purchase yet more lead tubes. He still refrains from divulging to me the full details of the matter. When I discern the details I will, perhaps, come in person and seek your aid?*

*In the interim I must return to work. Allia is claiming I tarry too much in my tasks, and I think he is starting to wonder whether he really did see a catapult being taken into the condemned outhouse (I swear I did a good job of convincing him otherwise, but the damn thing activated when I was not there. It took the whole roof off whilst Allia was away and, whilst I managed to fix it before his return, he has heard the odd rumour of a catapult arm spar sprouting from one of his building, and seems somewhat suspicious that I have taken to fixing a broken toilet.)*

*Yours sincerely, hoping that your minds are free of the influence of the spider legged demons that patrol the skull innards of the unlucky.*

*Francesco Carparttaa*