MOTHER.

COMING, SWEET. HANG ON.
MOTHER,
YOU ASKED NOT TO
BE DISTURBED, BUT AN
OCASION HAS ARISEN
THAT YOU HAVE ASKED
TO BE TOLD ABOUT,
AND SO I AM IN
CONFLICT.

DON'T GET
YOUR KNICKERS
IN A TWIST,
LOVE. WHAT
IS IT?

THE
AMBASSADOR,
FROM THE CITY,
COME TO
CALL.

HE
HAS PASSED
THE MILITARY
CORDON AND
WAITS AT THE
GATE.

PROSPER,
ODD. HE'S
NOT DUE FOR
MONTHS, IS
HE?

I DO NOT POSSESS
THAT INFORMATION.
I WILL ENQUIRY VIA
HIS ESCORT.

NO, NO, THAT'S
FINE. I'LL SEE HIM
IN THE RECEIVING
ROOM. ASK HIM TO
WAIT, PLEASE. I'LL
JUST NEED TO
WASH UP
FIRST.

OH, ASK THE GIRLS
TO JOIN US AFTER THEIR
LESSONS HAVE FINISHED.
THEY WANT TO SEE
HIM TOO.

I CANNOT.

WHICH OF THE
SUB-CLAUSES
PRESENTS A
PROBLEM?

Tori AND Aremma
DID NOT ATTEND
THEIR LESSONS, SO
THE LESSONS HAVE
NOT STARTED AND
SO I CANN--

ENOUGH!
THANK YOU.
I'VE GOT
IT.

LITTLE
RABBITS!
RIGHT?
Children, I would use your sight.
WHERE THE DEVILS ARE THEY?
NANA, WHERE ARE THE GIRLS?

ARGH!

They're missing! Have you seen them?

I TOLD YOU NOT TO DO THAT!

I'm worried. Where would they be?

Have you seen them, damn it?

They're not within sight of any of the children.

WELL, I'M SURE I DON'T KNOW.

NANA! NANA! please.

Well, they might have gone to the dead quarter. I suppose they mentioned wanting new books.

DEVS!!

But you should let them roam! It's not good for girls to be cooped up like this!

I'm sorry, Nana, mother is not with me anymore.

Oh, that girl. She won't learn.
I wish we could just fly away.

I said I wish we could just fly away, over the wall and up and out and into the city.

Wouldn't that be magical?

Oh, yes.

Flying from the bone tower, they'd cry as they burned us at the stake.

No, silly. We'd be disguised as... as courtesans! Yes, courtesans!

We'd glide into high society and dance and promenade!

I'm not sure that you've completely grasped the courtesan thing, you know.

If I could fly, I'd go the other way, off the map.

Who wants to go anywhere someone else hit?

What in all hells do you think you're doing here?

Hush, don't spoil it. I'm dancing.

Oh, dear.
M-MOTHER, I, WE--

WE'RE AT WAR. PEOPLE TRY TO KILL US.

YOU DO NOT LEAVE THE TOWER!

MOTHER, LOOK. THERE'S BEEN NO TROUBLE FOR YEA-

NO TROUBLE! THEY KILLED YOUR FATHER. HER MOTHER INVADED US.

DO YOU THINK THEY'VE GONE AWAY? FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT IT?

WELL. NO. CLEARLY NOT BUT I'D HAVE THOUGHT--

YOU DON'T THINK, VICTORIANNE. THAT'S THE PROBLEM!

WHOSE IDEA WAS THIS, NEED I ASK?

IT WAS--

IT WAS MINE. I'M BORED OF LESSONS. I CAN INSCRIBE THE RUNES IN MY SLEEP.

I WANT TO DO THE REAL WORK INSTEAD... BOND MYSELF IN LIKE YOU HAVE.
Absolutely not. You know why I’m forbidden that.

I know. You’re holding me back, even though you’ve done it.

Even though...

Tori, don’t!

I...

Can...

Do...

This...

No!

Tori!

Oh, Tori.

Damn it! Idiot girl. She’ll be out for hours after that.

Alder, ask Nana to tend her. I must see Prosper now but I’ll be there when I can.

Ariemma, you’ll go back under guard. We will discuss this later.
PROSPER, I’M SORRY TO KEEP YOU--

SIEGFRIED! THEY DIDN’T SAY YOU'D COME.

LIEBLING!

I’LL NEVER GET USED TO THIS PLACE. IT’S A WONDER.

THE CATHEDRAL IN THE CITY TOOK TWO HUNDRED YEARS TO BUILD; YET YOU’VE DONE THIS IN, WHAT, TWELVE?

THEM? DONE THIS, PROSPER. THE CHILDREN ARE CEASELESSLY INVENTIVE. THEY NEVER STOP UNTIL IT’S FINISHED.

I WONDER WHAT I COULD GET DONE WITHOUT THE DISTRACTIONS OF THE PLEASURES OF THE FLESH? EH!

YOU ARE A TERRIBLE MAN. PLEASE STOP.

ENOUGH, PROSPER. I’M NEEDED ELSEWHERE. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

YOU KNOW, I’VE NEVER REPRESENTED ANYONE WHO'S SECEDED BEFORE. IT’S AN INTERESTING AREA.

PROSPER, YOU'RE AVOIDING WHATEVER YOU'RE HERE TO SAY. GET TO THE BLOODY POINT!

VERY LITTLE REPEAT TRADE, THOUGH.

THEY'RE COMING FOR YOU ONCE MORE. YOU HAVE TO LEAVE WHILE YOU STILL CAN.
They tried that ten years ago when my girls were still small.

That grey army now wears white and guards our walls, let them come.

This is different. They’re bringing the whole eastern army home from the campaign, just for you.

But they’re in pitched battle over there, surely?

Your “White Night” delayed it for years, but victory was always inevitable. Now, you’re next.

Did you think they would suffer you to tower over them forever?

They will be here by winter! Can you not flee? Take the girls and sail far away?

Ahh! Siegfried, do you imagine I’d leave the rest of my children behind to suffer?

Why are they letting you tell me, Prosper? Do they imagine I’ll run scared?

Because they want you to know that there’s nothing you can do.

They are coming to end you.

They might be coming, Prosper, but I am already here. This is my home, a place where I keep us all safe.

I will not be threatened, ever again.
I'm not sure you understand the significance... I'm not sure they understand prosperity! Have they forgotten who they're dealing with?

I do not live in this city on their forbearance, but they on mine.

I hold, we hold, a power like none ever seen.

I will keep all my children safe and if they force me to remind them of that again...

Then I'll burn their whole army into ash...

And this city with it.

To be continued...
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