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Session 0-2, Mercredi 12 Harvest 882 (Nones)

You're relaxing in the *Salon de la Fleur Noire* in New Town with your contact and occasional mentor Élan de Gauss, a middle-aged fox with some skill in the Changing Way. You were... dare we even say it, *lucky*, to have found someone else with that rare talent in Calabria, but de Gauss is usually happy to spend half an hour or so helping you practice the knack, so long as you indulge his ramblings for a while after. You're not sure how he funds his life of leisure. He takes the odd denari for fortune-tellings and little blessings of good luck, but surely such a beggar's wage wouldn't furnish him the supply of exotic smoking-herbs he tends to go through during salon time.

Right now, he's segued a reassurance that you're making progress into some philosophical exposition about fortune itself. "...the world is predisposed to, if not chaos, then at least ruin. Roofs collapse and walls crumble if not regularly repaired. No surprise, then, that it is easier to hex a wagon wheel to break than to arrange matters that a wainwright be right around the corner to fix it."

Alba sips a herring smoothie as she listens. "If chaos is inevitable, I don't know why people ever expect otherwise," Alba sighs.

"Ha, exactly. It is our lot, as folk who like to build things up and try to hold them together." He puffs on his little roll. "Speaking of such. How have you been employing yourself, lately? Are you finding the Way... useful?"

"Oh, I uh..." Alba blushes, not wanting to tell her mentor about her less than legal activities, and disappoint him. "Yeah, I found some odd jobs here and there. It's hard, you know, with my... reputation." She stretches her wings expressively.

"Hmm." He stubs out his smoke, and gives you a long, appraising look. "Even a troubling reputation can be made useful."

"You think so?" she asks hopefully, perking up. "I know I'm working hard to make my luck better, but sometimes people don't even give me a chance to show them before they write me off."

"My thoughts aren't complete, but... well, I'm interested to hear what you think." He rubs the bridge of his nose, a claw scratching through the sigil on his head. "I try my best to keep track of other magical practitioners coming and going in Triskellian. It's the sort of gossip I like to pick up around here." He gestures to indicate the salon, and smiles. "Do you know what it means for a mage to go 'anonymous'?"

Alba tilts her head to one side, her beak parting as she thinks. "Hmmm does it make them harder to detect?" she hazards. "Like, hard to tell who they are?"

"Yes! Exactly." He beams, pleased that you nailed it. "If you thoroughly purge your name from use, you become very slippery when it comes to magic. Hard to find, hard to hex. It's a drastic move, as of course it's nice to have a name, isn't it? So you'd do it when you're worried about hostile or prying magic. And such a nameless mage has been knocking about Triskellian, hiring couriers and muscle."

"ohhhh interesting. I could learn how to ... but wait, no, I want people to KNOW I'm good. What's this

mage want with them?"

"That's what I'm wondering. It could be an opportunity, or something devious, and of course if she's rolled in Anonymous one must worry it's the latter, yes? But someone thus insulated from hexing and such might not be too troubled by your reputation."

"ohhh! You're SO smart, Elan! But uh... how would I find him? Or her? ..it?"

"Eheh." His ears color a bit at the flattery. "Her calls for crew have used the code word 'recondite' in lieu of a name. I imagine if you find some good places to drop the word, she'll be listening out for it."

"Recondite... recondite... ok... yeah I'll remember that!" She slurps more of her delicious shake, having remembered it exists when she almost hit herself in the face with it while trying to commit the word to memory.

After a moment or three, Alba tilts her head to the side again. "Do you think... that I could learn how to do that anonymous stuff, but in reverse?"

Elan's eyebrows go up. "In reverse? How do you mean?"

"Like... to make me famous! ...but in the right ways!"

"Ha! Is that what you dream of? Fame and glory? For the name of Alba to be known and loved far and wide?"

"For the name of all albatrosses to be lauded instead of reviled! If I have to be the face of the movement, then I will." Alba ruffles her feathers as she speaks, and then kind of catches herself and preens them back down. *It's not about you, Alba! It's about your family!*

The outburst seems to sober Elan a bit, and he sits back, turning a fresh smoke over in his fingers. "Well. I would say this: you are in the right style of magic, for that. The winds of fortune can blow the right words into the right ears, smooth over the repercussions of unpleasant events... but it is not a mighty and immediate magic. You nor I will not snap our fingers and erase prejudice."

"But it will work? If I keep doing it long enough?"

His head is tilted a bit, but he nods. "It will work best if your fate-casting aids something you're already doing, rather than producing an effect from a void. Achieve your great deed first, then bend the odds in your favor for it to catch fire. It may well be just as much work as turning heads without the aid of magic." He lights up, and there's a moment's twinkle in his eye reminiscent of a much younger fox. "...but one must admit, the way without magic is often less fun."

Alba laughs, her nervous tension easing. "You've got that right!" As her chuckles slow and she sips her drink again, she says "Great, cool, now I just have to do something... big. Big, and good and lucky. Maybe that hidden mage will have something..."

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