

To father Patrick of Port Erin, The Isle of Man

I have learned to think of You as a trusted friend and an ally in faith and therefore I must once more burden You with tidings from the Galf of Man, lately known by the covenfolk as the Cursed Island. After the masters of this little colony finally managed to get rid of the dragon dwelling under our very feet, we have again had our fair share of setbacks. One of our god-fearing hunters got shot in the back by an assassin while protecting Hersir Hakons game from pouchers and other godless villains. Though the wound didn't seem lethal at first, it proved fatal within hours. Very unfortunate.

Soon after this incident I overheard Profanus worrying about some lost artefact. Naturally I suspected he had lost some unholy pagan weapon for demonic rituals, but Tomas explained that an old and holy crucifix had gone missing and was presumably stolen. It came to happen that while guarding the sleeping quarters of these young masters, Rif, the half-minded custo of late Sir Argyle, actually caught and killed the thief who had been fool enough to return to the crime scene. But the corpse didn't belong to any human rogue. It seemed like the remains of a woman horribly distorted by a possessing demon or evil spirit.

All these strange events seemed to have a strong influence on our little community. Perhaps people were so paralyzed by fear or sorrow that it has made it hard for them to even take care of the easiest routines. Even the *magi* mostly stay in their quarters and always look tired and irritated. Many accuse the traveling merchant and his odd servant who only recently landed on the island. Others blame the heretic and hairy mercenaries. Fortunately our dedication to the service of God has given me and Father Laurentius strength even in a harsh time such as we are living in.

But even more drastic events took place a few days ago. While again guarding the Hersirs deers from pouching locals, a group of good men from our island came upon a strange sight. An old man lay wounded in a crossing, another red arrow sticking out of him. Some of our men took this man with them and brought him to our island while others stayed behind and tried to back-track the attackers. The tracks were very unusual, I have been told, and soon vanished towards the road.

He was feberish at first, and was mumbling non-sense about a beast and a boy. Fortunately he seems to survive the wound and has gained back some of his strength while resting in our little chapel. He seems to know a lot about the *Vulgata* and speaks several languages. I suspect him to be the holy man You wrote me about earlier. He keeps pretty much to himself, but gladly participates in any conversation with me or Father Laurentius. His wisdom can also be seen in his lack of trust towards Profanus.

I hope he will recover from this strange wound though I very much would like him to stay with us a little longer. I shall keep You posted, as usual.

Pax vobiscum, Bruce