

*My dearest daughter,*

*I am overjoyed to hear that you are safe in Ussura! While Mme. du Sices assured us you were being taken care of, it was reassuring to hear so from your own hand. And what an adventure you have had! I await with pleasure the chance to hear it all from you directly.*

*Unfortunately, that time may have to wait. Mr du Arrent is furious at the loss of his daughter Fleur, and, I'm afraid, now blames you for her disappearance. My contacts in the guard tell me there are standing orders to arrest anyone matching your appearance on sight for Treason- the artifact Fleur seems to have stolen was to have been a gift to l'Empereur for his birthday the week you disappeared. As is often the case with these things, l'Empereur had been... 'expecting' the gift, and was most put out when it did not arrive. du Arrent only escaped with his life by promising that his daughter- and you- would be brought to justice, and that the artifact would be retrieved.*

*You may remember the coachman's son Pierre. Always an excitable lad, I remember discussing with you that I feared he had fallen in with the wrong sort of crowd. I mention this because our fears turned out to be justified- the group of ruffians he had been hanging out with were arrested two weeks ago for plotting against l'Empereur, and were hanged last night. Pierre himself escaped, and his father believes that he may have followed your example and fled to Ussura. Be wary, Rae, for I fear he may seek you out should he make it there. Pierre may be harmless on his own, but he seems to have a nose for finding the wrong people.*

*I shall write to the v'Rissanova again soon, hopefully with better news. Your mother sends her love as well. Until then, stay safe.*

*Sine cere,*

*Nicholas du Ville*