

Chapter 9: Draklor

Laboratory

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Old Archades

Alley of Low Whispers

Filth

[The party emerges from Sochen into a dingy alleyway. Balthier stretches.]

Vaan: Smells less like a capital and more like a sewer.

Balthier: Even empires have need of sewers. The runoff from Archades proper pools here; those who lack papers to live in the city itself. The mighty who have fallen, and the fallen who would be mighty. Their eyes never leave Archades.

Vaan: I guess it must be a lot nicer than this place.

Balthier: Oh, to be sure. Archades reeks of a different filth. Let's be off! We can follow our noses to Draklor.

Archadian Vulgar/Man at the Gate: Hrm? Now this is new. Plenty o' worms come up out o' the ground 'ere, but not many of 'em are the sort wi' two legs. Come to make your fortune in th' capital? A word of advice, worms: turn back while ye've still some gil to yer name.

Archadian Vulgar/Precocious Girl: Come to buy information, or, perhaps, to sell? Information is what makes this town work. Why, if I had gil or a chop to spare, I'd make an offer for what ye know right now...

Stranded Merchant: Meh! Lost all my money... Can't even afford an airship back home to Rabanastre! Aye, I thought of going back through Sochen, but I hear some ancient wyrm lurks down there, and I don't much care to run into one of those. You think I could get away on *these* legs!? Bah! I'm stuck here for life. Look, wouldya buy something to help a fellow out? (*snort*)

Stranded Merchant (x2): I'm saving gil to get back home to Rabanastre. Buy something to help a fellow out?

Archadian Vulgar/Wary Woman: Welcome to Archades... Old Archades, that is. The people 'ere, they all took their dreams up to the City, 'ad 'em stripped away, an' fell back down.

Archadian Vulgar/Stairbottom Elder: Yours is an unfamiliar face. If you're here hoping to go up to the City, best find yourself information that's like to interest the ardents and gentry. Word travels fast in this town. New information is born, grows old, and dies in a day. The Emperor's assassination? Ancient history, my friend.

Archadian Vulgar/Hating Man: Now that's a face I dislike. It's the eyes... Beady, shinin'... Eyes that see but ne'er show. You know the sort. Eh, whom do I speak of? Vayne, or course! Only a man like that could do what he's done, killin' his own two brothers in cold blood for opposin' the Emperor...

Archadian Vulgar/Cautious Woman: Headed to the City, are ye? Going to be a soldier like the rest of 'em? I wish ye luck. Ye go up there, you die a little inside. Aye, a part of ye goes cold an' black. Just like them senators... I'd stay down here, if I were you.

Archadian Vulgar/Loiterer: I tire of swapping tidbits of information in the street... though there's naught else I fancy doin', truth be told. That's the problem with success...

Archadian Vulgar/Fisherman: What can ye catch here? Well, lots o' things, I s'pose. Depends on what yer fishin' for. Me? I'm fishin' fer ma past... fer the fire o' ma youth. What? No, ye cannae feed a family with the past. But ye can keep yerself warm at night.

Archadian Vulgar/Braggart: Me dad's the 'ead of one o' them big entry-prizes up in the City!

Defiant Lad: Ye mean 'e *was* the 'ead. 'E ain't the 'ead no more. There's lots o' them 'round 'ere. Them as *used be* 'ead, I mean.

Archadian Vulgar/Resting Man: D'ye wonder why I sit here, doin' naught day-come, day-go? I've done me bit for the Empire, that's why. I've *earned* me rest. Don't you ever fancy a rest, young 'un?

Archadian Vulgar/Frank Woman: Do you have business with us? I'll tell you straight out, we've no money, so don't even bother trying to relieve us of it.

Proper Gent/Ex-Broker: I **played many a man false** in the City, so I did. 'Course, I was bein' played just the same, though I didn't know it. I've ruined so many men... 'Tis all I can do now to hide meself here 'n' hope I don't run into any former "clients."

Archadian Vulgar/Busy Girl: Wot am I doin'? Gatherin' tidbits o' knowledge, that's wot! Think I got bags o' time like you oldies? 'Cos I ain't!

Archadian Vulgar/Dreaming Man: Brother, brother mine! If we'd only bought them cockatrices when we 'ad the chance, why, we'd be rich men today, so we would.

Sensible Man: Brother, brother mine. Cockatrice meat's not 'alf as tasty as they'd 'ave you believe. This recent int'rest in 'em's a fad, you mark my words. Nah, cockatrices or no, our fate's the same.

Cockatrice: Me? I've lived here for a good while, now, but I had a jolly hard time when I first arrived. The City was a far cry from my native Giza, you see. But I've seen much in this town. People of all walks of life... Life... now there's a fascinating thing. I've seen plenty of men who've failed at it. Lost their hope and then their happiness.... Most sad. Why, hope's the most important thing of all... We cockatrices,

we must hold on to hope even when our days in this world seem to be numbered. Me? I hope to see my homeland once more...

Proper Gent/Fresh Ardent: Who am I? Ain't it plain to see? I'm one o' the many wot tried to make it up in the City 'n' fell back down 'ere. If only I 'adn't signed that paper... Yeah, I was an ardent with the rest of 'em. All it took was one broker, one bindin' agreement, and nary a scruple in sight. If I find 'im, I'll... Eh? Did ya want somethin'? Oh, 'ow to get to the City? Up these stairs, then off to the west. Entrance's up there. Better be prepared, mate.

Archadian Vulgar/Sighing Boy: Once she gets goin', she don't half go on! I only hope her grandad sets her straight. Ain't my place to worry about it, I s'pose. (*sigh*)

Archadian Vulgar/Perplexed Grandpa: Me granddaughter claims she's seen a great airship. 'Course, I thought it was the *Alexander*, that being the biggest I know of. But her description... Mayhap they've made a new, bigger airship now?

Archadian Vulgar/Leaving Man: I'm off tomorrow... to destiny! Mark my words: I'll be the richest man in Archades soon, and I'll bring you a diamond big enough to prove it!

Waiting Woman: So soon? Ah, no, 'twould come in time. Spare me the diamond. Just... stay true. I'll be waiting.

Shady Seeq: Oi, you there. Ya look like someone who knows a good deal when 'e sees it. So... 'ows about some **moogles** then, eh? I've got eight of 'em. Discount if ya take the lot. It's a bargain! They're cute, they dance...

Archadian Vulgar/Suspicious Woman: That seeq over there seems a bit dodgy. Says he's a merchant of some sort, but I haven't seen him peddling any *wares*.

Archadian Vulgar/Indecisive Man: I've been told that joining the Watch is a good way to get on in the world... yet others tell me it's a hard life... full of hard choices. What to do...? What to be...? That's the problem with having too much information: 'tis difficult to make up your mind!

Archadian Vulgar/Wall Child: See that bridge up there? On the far side o' that is the Imperial City of Archades. When I get a bit bigger, I'm gonna be a soldier there.

The Moogles Eight: A seeq there was, he sought to play,

Kupo-podee-podillo.

Said he, "I'll take you far away."

Kupo-podee-podye.

A gourmet tour, he promised us.

Kupo-podee-podilly.

But all we've 'ad is curds and whey.

Kupo-podee-poday.

Archadian Vulgar/Proud Brother: Me little brother's back! The pride an' joy of the clan's come back with tales from the City!

So 'ow was it? Don't tell me: you made a mint, didn't ya? Nuff for all of us, I'll bet!

Weary Brother: Well, I, er, did set up a shop. But the competition... Let yer guard down for a moment, and the next store over'll slip a knife in yer ribs... How I've wanted to come home!

Archadian Vulgar/Distinguished Elder: Wot? We're ain't here for yer viewin' pleasure, nor are we beggin', nor are we blockin' up yer precious gutter. Not yet, at least. So get lost.

Granddaughter: Away! Away! My grandad was a right important man up in the City, don't ye know!

Distinguished Elder: Hush with ye, sweetheart. Beggin' yer pardon, sir. Pay no one to her. She talks about things she knows little of. Aye, I've a lot in me past, but today I'm just one o' the proud wretches of Oldtown, clingin' onto the underbelly o' the Empire. Now leave us be.

Archadian Vulgar/Hungry Child: I'm bloomin' 'ungry. Me mum and me gran keep tellin' me that sittin's best when yer 'ungry, but it don't seem to be workin' for me. Maybe if I 'ave a chat with me mum I'll forget about me empty belly... Or maybe not. ...I'm *bloomin'* 'ungry!

Archadian Vulgar/Returnee: 'Tis good to be home... Those who went up to the City and ne'er came back, they either made it, or fell by the wayside, forgotten. But not me.

Archadian Vulgar/Quiet Talker: This geezer? Nah, 'e ain't dead, not by a stretch. 'E was a soldier once. Made it pretty far, it seems. 'E's lived a full life, if ya ask me.

Alley of Muted Sighs

Archadian Vulgar/Little Sister: 'Ello there. Mmm? Oh, don't bother tryin' to talk to 'er. Me sister's not stopped lookin' off into the distance since 'er fella went up to the City...

Archadian Vulgar/Indefatigable Granny: Eh, me? I'm ready t' begin a new life up in the City, that's for sure. I been tricked out of all I owned before, but this time, I'll go prepared.

Archadian Vulgar/Shifty-eyed Man: Know where the Alley of Muted Sighs got ‘er name? See, there’s two kinds o’ people ‘ere: them as want to go up to the City... An’ them as want to keep *those* people down ‘ere where they belong, tellin’ ‘em lies, an’ spreadin’ misinformation to confuse ‘em. Them poor ones wot never made it up... they’re the ones wot are sighin’, see? You... weren’t ‘eaded up to the City, were ya?

Archadian Vulgar/Lucky Man: Psst. I’ll tell ye a secret, but it stays between us two, right? I spied summary in-credible jus’ now. What? Wouldn’t ye like to know! ‘‘Twas a **bag o’ coin**! Jus’ thrown in a barrel, it was. With a hoard like that, the City’ll be me oyster! Now don’t go tellin’ anyone, ye hear?

Archadian Vulgar/Disparaging Woman: Trying to go up to Archades, perchance? I know the type. All hopes an’ dreams, but never any *knowledge*. Ye wouldn’t venture into battle without a blade, am I right? To go to the City without the proper knowledge, why, ‘tis the same thing. And I’ll tell ya summat else: it was *knowledge* what brought them Senators to their knees, an’ that’s the truth. Still want to go to the City?

Archadian Vulgar/Worried Grandson: Me gran’s got me worried. She keeps on talkin’ about goin’ to the City, an’ makin’ ‘er fortune. Makin’ ‘er fortune!? She’s *old*!

Archadian Vulgar/Beasley: Don’t think ye can look down on me. I’m savin’ me gil to get out of here and up there. Why, I’ve got a bag full o’ coin put aside already... That is, I *had* a bag full o’ coin, till someone came along and stole it! Grr... I was sure it’d be safe as houses in that barrel, too...

Archadian Vulgar/Nay-Sayer: You going on from ‘ere? On from ‘ere’s Archades. You go there, you’d best watch yerself. People there, they’d pluck the feathers from a livin’ chocobo if they thought they could make a profit on ‘em. I’d turn back if I was you.

Proper Gent/Otto: You think you might.... not stare at me? I’m in the midst of a *very* important conversation.

Archadian Vulgar/Fermon: Come to hear a tale, perhaps? There’s a lot to be learned from the stories of the past... a lot you youngsters seem to have forgotten. To your peril. You should show a little more respect... for faerie tales.

Stretear/Jules: Might a boy be in the market for some... information? Sorry, I’ve none worth selling. Such a boy would be wise to pass on anything he heard to me, though... I’ll pay a good price for word of goings-on in the Ministry of Law and the Senate. A boy could stand to make a profit...

Archadian Vulgar/Frustrated Woman: I’ve plans to go up to the City with my beau... But he’s kept me waiting for hours! I expect he’s lost. (*sigh*) He’s *so* provincial.

Archadian Vulgar/Broken Man: I spent some time in the City, once... gatherin’ up all the information I could lay me ‘ands on. But it turns out some of it weren’t *true*... an’ before long I ended up back down ‘ere.

Archadian Vulgar/Nervous Seeq: The City's just up these stairs... Me head says all I've gotta do is walk up 'em, but me feet are tremblin', what with the assassination an' all.

Archadian Vulgar/Trembling Woman: People 'round 'ere? They're the ones wot didn't make it up *there*. Dregs. Dropouts. Ah, 'ow I tire o' the vulgar life... But I'll get out.

Archadian Vulgar/Fallen Man: Best not speak to me, lest my ill luck rub off on you. I lost everything... Everything! Ah, if I'd only had the right *information*...

Imperial: Entering the capital? You have credentials?

- I have.

Hm? Well I don't see any! We can't just throw open our gates to you vulgars, you know. Especially not the lying kind! Away with you!

- I have not.

No credentials!? We can't just throw open our gates to any old riff-raff who happen to be passing by. Be off with you, commoner!

Jules

[After being turned away by the Imperial, the party hears a strange voice.]

???: Well, well, well... there's a sight for sore eyes. Didn't think I'd be seeing you again. Not here.

[A man in raggedy street clothes leans against a wall nearby.]

Balthier: Oh wonderful. Enter the streetear.

???: A pirate would do well to smile. Wouldn't want to sour his reputation.

Vaan: You know this guy?

Balthier: An old... friend. He's a streetear — a peddler of rumor and hearsay, by the name of Jules. He'd bite a gil given him by his own mother, and shave it by half to pay for her funeral.

Jules: Sometimes an ear with tight purse strings's the order of the day. Like when a pirate decides he fancies going *up* in the world.

Vaan: To the city? You know a way?

Jules: In Archades, **knowledge** is power. And power has a way of opening doors, boy. Now, a fool will buy a sack of feathers for his pillow, but a wise man... He'll buy the whole stinking cockatrice and get his fill of meat into the bargain. So, wise man, how does 1500 gil sound?

- Pay up

Bright boy. You learn fast. I call this meeting to order. Tell me, boy, heard any rumors in town?

Vaan: Actually, I did hear about a man who picked a bag of coins out of a barrel.

Jules: Bags in barrels, eh...? A boy would do well to bring that morsel to a man named Beasley near here. Tell him what you've heard.

- Decline

You would do well to learn the ways of the world, boy, lest the world have its way with you.

Jules (x2) (if you declined to pay up): So, wise man, how does 1500 gil sound?

- Pay up

Bright boy. You learn fast. I call this meeting to order. Tell me, boy, heard any rumors in town?

Vaan: Actually, I did hear about a man who picked a bag of coins out of a barrel.

Jules: Bags in barrels, eh...? A boy would do well to bring that morsel to a man named Beasley near here. Tell him what you've heard.

- Decline

You would do well to learn the ways of the world, boy, lest the world have its way with you.

Jules (x2) (if you paid up): Boy. There's a man near here who goes by the name of "Beasley." Tell him what you just learned.

Beasley: Whaaat!? Yer tellin' me that ye know the bloke what's taken me coin!? Oh, it was *him*, was it?

The Prodigal Son

[Balthier and Vaan stand before Jules as he sits perched on a crate.]

Jules: You told him just as I told you? Good boy!

Vaan: I'm not sure what any of this has to do with going *up* in the world.

Jules: Oh? Witness the power of knowledge, m'boy. See? It begins.

[One of the residents of Oldtown runs up, shouting to the others.]

Commoner: 'Ey, 'tis a fight! Beasley's gone wild!

[People run toward the scene -- including the Imperials.]

Vaan: Now's our chance! Thanks, Jules.

[Vaan runs off, but Balthier hangs back.]

Balthier: Never thought you'd go for such a meager price.

Jules: A pirate should know that words are worth gil uncountable. Here's some words for you: The prodigal Bunansa son's come back to the Imperial roost. See? Words of much value, these.

Balthier: Bah.

[Balthier takes off.]

The Imperial City of Archades

Trant

In the Big City

[Now the group arrives in the city proper, with towering buildings and small airships flying overhead. Vaan checks it out.]

Penelo: You're gaping like a fish out of water.

Vaan: I'm just checking out the city. Even if it *is* the Empire.

Penelo: You've changed, Vaan. You were always marching to your own beat... almost like you were impatient, even. In a good way.

Vaan: Maybe it's because I've seen more now. Never imagined I'd ever come this far away from home. Hey, Larsa's here in the city, isn't he? He's a tough one. I wonder how he's doing.

Penelo: You always were a soft touch, Vaan. You know what's amazing? I thought I'd go my whole life without meeting people like the Princess, or Lord Larsa. And here we are in the capital!

Vaan: I know! It's a little over my head sometimes.

[Basch comes up behind him and claps a hand on his shoulder.]

Basch: Good, Vaan. You've come to understand the difficulties of serving royalty.

Vaan: Hey, I'm just along for the ride.

Penelo: That wasn't a complaint, was it, Basch?

[Basch clears his throat.]

Basch: Right. Let's get moving.

Penelo: Hey, don't change the subject!

Basch: Right.

[Ashe smiles, watching them fondly in the background.]

Imperial: There's word of trouble in Old Archades. I'd steer clear of the area. Not that anyone in their right mind would want to go there in the first place.

Archadian Gentry/Music Appreciator: I've an elderly friend, a court musician by trade. To hear him play the lute, you would think it sang!

Balthier: We go our separate ways here, Vaan. I've some business to attend to. We'll meet again later.

[He walks away.]

Vaan: Huh? Hey —

Archadian Gentry/Farce-goer: I do hope that girl found us tickets to the mummer's farce. And the right number, on the right day... She can't be trusted with such things.

Archadian Gentry/Boutiquere: It's been five years since I finally quit my lodgings in Old Archades, yet I still lack the gil to open a boutique of my own.

Archadian Gentry/Smitten Man: I've worked so hard, and so long. All for money. And indeed, I've accumulated *some* wealth. Yet, I feel there is something lacking in life...

Archadian Gentry/Artisan Architect: How many years have I trained... and still they mock my designs. Tradition, tradition! Fie! What good building aught that is already built?

Archadian Gentry/Lutenist: There are those who make crafts and sell them at market. I make not crafts, but music. By my lute's soothing voice do I earn my daily bread. There was a time when I did quite well by it, too. Sadly, people nowadays seem to enjoy cacophonous marches. Few have an ear for the lute's quiet song.

Archadian Gentry/Perceptive Man: We live in an Empire, but 'twas not always so. How did it come to be? Military might? Wise rule? No, it must take more than these things. How can we hope to carry the Empire's glory into the future if we know not her past? Yet our akademies teach us little of her *true* history.

Archadian Gentry/Builder: The population of this great city continues to soar. And buildings sprout like toadstools after the rain in this unruly garden of Archades!

Girl on an Errand: Oh my.

Oh my.

Oh my, my, my.

I was asked by my mother to buy tickets to the farce, yet I bought one too many! Oh, my mother *despises* waste. I shall be punished for sure!

[Yes, the above was formatted like that in-game.]

Archadian Gentry/Smitten Woman: I'm having trouble putting a man I met — a business associate of my father — from my mind. He was so *dashing*, so... mysterious. Of course, I'm certain a gentleman of his means would be affianced at the very least. Of course he would.

Archadian Gentry/Historian: I was born of Empire, raised by Empire, and within her walls did I grow old. Yet, this city was not always grand, nor the Empire always prosperous. Youths today, they know only of her glory, and *nothing* of her history. How little they think on the sacrifices of the past. It... troubles me.

Archadian Gentry/Moneyed Gentleman: Money is like a seed, do you not agree? Keep it locked away, it is as something dead. Yet use it poorly, and 'twill never live. There must be someone with use for my money, for I would have it live, and if I could but find the hands to tend it, I would gladly share its fruit.

Molberry

Archadian Gentry/Avid Traveler: I much enjoy traveling... seeing flora and fauna of faraway places... except for those flora and fauna with teeth! Perhaps some armor is in order?

Archadian Ardent/Poor Wife: It will soon be my wedding anniversary! Whatever shall I give my dearest? That reminds me, I found the oddest thing: a fine necklace at the back of the wardrobe! If only I could

remember when I bought it... But no matter, I've sold the thing now. We live well enough, but it's hard to save... I needed the gil to buy my dearest what he deserves!

Archadian Gentry/Tutor: A tutor by trade am I, yet of late, unemployed. Why? My pupil's transferred to Bhujerba, leaving me to seek out a new charge. It's grown harder in recent years to pass the examinations, yet I have utmost confidence in my ability to prepare *any* student.

Archadian Gentry/Proud Mother: Oh? Oh ho ho ho! My Reginald is quite the *brightest* child, I assure you! I blush to confess he has his mother's wit!

Archadian Ardent/Ardent Woman: My beau and I have been working together of late. We've got quite a stack of chops to show for our troubles, too!

Charlotte's Magickery Banner: With a lineage longer than most grimoires, we are the only Magickery recognized by the illustrious Archadian Akademy of Magick. Welcome!

Archadian Gentry/Judge's Wife: My husband was a Judge, a fine one at that. Filled with righteousness, and justice. Our house's pride. The pride, too, of our borough... It was his very own sense of justice that brought his end. To die attempting to save a child's life, and the child of a foeman, no less. How like him!

Archadian Gentry/Look-alike: Seen a swindler about? Not that you'd know if you did: he's a master of disguise. Why, he dressed like me and walked off with my earnings! If I don't find him quick, I'm ruined! Finished! End of story! Ah, I can't go back to scratchin' for gil in the old town. How'd he imitate me so well?

Archadian Ardent/Poor Husband: My anniversary's comin' up, see. Haven't got a lot of gil, but I still bought the missus somethin' special. Can you guess what it is? A necklace!

Archadian Ardent/Talented Woman: You know, I'm oft told I have a knack for magicks. Of course, I've little coin to buy such things... I should be handling magicks, not turnips. (*sigh*)

Archadian Gentry/Family-minded Girl: Did you see the mummer? Did you? I truly despise his kind. Who would want to watch such rubbish? Can he possibly hope to glean enough gil by his prancing to survive or raise a family? After all those years of training, to end up impoverished!

Archadian Ardent/Ardent Man: Here in the capital, if you take pride in your work, and do right by your customers, anyone can make a decent living. Now, your regular chops are made of pine, but the nobles use chops of sandal — sweet-smelling things, those. My girlfriend and I will get 'em someday!

Archadian Gentry/Look-alike: Seen a swindler about? Not that you'd know if you did: he's a master of disguise. Why, he dressed like me and walked off with my earnings!

Mummer: A travelin' mummer taught me this one. Used to live 'ere in the city, so 'e said.

Archadian Gentry/Daughter-in-Law: My dear husband's mother has asked for a trinket from Giza Plains. She's ever so particular, though, so I'm having a Giza craftsman come here.

Bulward's Technicks: Best selection of technicks in the Empire! Why, 'tis the same as saying "best in Ivalice"! Need technicks? You've come to the right shop!

Archadian Gentry/Akademician: I am chancellor at the Akademy of Magick. Sadly, there is little need for our art in this age of ready convenience. Applicant numbers are down. Indeed, the Akademy itself may be to blame for placing profit above the pursuit of quality in instruction. If not quality, what have we, I ask?

Archadian Ardent/Would-be Judge: O, to be a Judge! To bring order and peace to the world... and that just in a morning's work! O, to be — How does one become a Judge, anyway?

Man from Giza: I came here all the way from Giza Plains to make some trinket, but I got separated from my guide on the road and couldn't find the client! There's no way I'll make it back home on my own. Here I thought my fortunes were looking up... Ach, is my woman going to steam about this.

Archadian Gentry/Traveling Gentleman: Travel? My work has taken me far and wide. Why, I'm on the road for six months a year. Danger? Near misses? Daily affairs! Of course, I take care to wear the proper protectives, and my sword arm is good enough to hold off your average fell beast.

Archadian Gentry/Reminiscing Lady: Did you see the mummer at his act? Oh, it was truly splendid! It made me feel like a maiden in the spring of her youth once more! How I would love to share this with my daughter.

Charlotte's Magickery

Archadian Gentry/Foppish Man: Sweetling, had you heard? My good friend Otto's gone missing.

Sultry Woman: Oh, I heard, I heard. Fell in love with a — pardon me — *tart* down in Old Archades, they say? He always was a character.

[For dialogue with July, see the "July the Streetear" section on the side quests page.]

Archadian Ardent/Longing Man: Bah! You must think me foolish. I doubt it not. I *am* a fool. I should never have left her behind in Old Archades to come here... She always dreamed of a place where we could be happy together... and it made her sad. She would spend hours gazing into the distance... Me? I gazed up at the City, so sure it held the answer... that I was destined for greatness... But *that* was the most foolish dream of all.

Chopmaster: Hello, I'm the Chopmaster. Help you with aught?

- Trade pine chops for sandalwood.

Looks like you've nary a chop to your name. Are you sure you belong here in the City?

- What are pine and sandalwood chops?

Here in Archades, people spend their whole lives trying to get their hands on pine chops and, if they're lucky, a chop of fine sandalwood. Gil, they're only good for the buying and selling of goods. You can have all the gil in the world and it won't buy you respect. Only chops of pine, or a chop of sandal will win you that. You see, the chops represent your contribution to the greater good of the Empire. Common citizens might come by pinewood chops enough during their daily lives, but it takes a soldier, or some great deed to earn sandalwood.

- Just passing through.

Best of luck to you.

Magickery Proprietor: Welcome, welcome. I'm sure you'll find our selection of magicks befitting of the Empire's finest magickal emporium.

Bulward's Technicks

Archadian Gentry/Hesitant Man: That book I found last time is gone! It's just plain not here! Could it have been sold...? I knew I should've bought it when I had the chance.

Archadian Gentry/Eager Learner: I stumbled upon a rather good book of technicks the other day. Good as it was, it still missed out some of the best, so the search continues!

Cartographers' Guild:

[Tchita Uplands 3300

Archades 230

Cancel]

Archadian Ardent/Hopeful Writer: I'm researching the many varieties of technicks. When I know everything there is to know, I'll write a book — a guaranteed bestseller!

Archadian Ardent/Insecure Seeq: Bah! Tryin' to learn some more technicks — impresses the ladies — but there are too many big words in these books... hardly any pictures!

Technicks Seller: Good day to you, sir. We've technicks from far and wide, both new and old. Take a look around. I guarantee you shan't be disappointed. Shop menu

Rienna

Archadian Gentry/Lucky Man: Hello there! You... haven't dropped a letter, have you? You see... I found one in the street and I couldn't help but, um, read it. It said: "This is an epistle to Love. Freely have I released it. Should it return to me, then shall my love be made true." ...And that was all. Odd, wouldn't you agree?

Granch's Requisites Sign: Greetings, and welcome to the one store with all that you require. We even post bills for wanted marks inside. Adventurers take note!

Attendant/Happy Novelist: I've been writing novels in between trips. Each one I think to make a moving tale of tragic love, the sort that make grown men weep rivers... But when I sit down to read what I've written, I find it quite happy... droll, even! Why can I not write something *truly* miserable?

Archadian Gentry/Bhujerban Lady: I had thought to vacation in Bhujerba, you see, but I run a small enterprise, and just haven't been able to find the time. To my good fortune, I was recently permitted to go on leave. Straightaway, I went to reserve a ticket... and to my *misfortune*, the tour was full.

Archadian Gentry/Romantic Lady: I'm sorry, I cannot help myself... I'm in love! With whom? 'Tis a secret! Why, I've not told even him. Why not? Well... I wrote a letter, an epistle to Love, and I'll not confess my love until that letter finds its way back to my hand. Romantic, no?

Archadian Gentry/Waiting Woman: I've been waiting for an item I've wanted for such a long time. The proprietor said she'd order one straightaway... but that was over a month ago! I've my brother keeping an eye out for me, but he's not one to remember such things. Oh well, I suppose I shall have to make do without...

Archadian Gentry/Lazy Profiteer: Headhunters employ gambits during battle to aid their judgment, correct? Now, what I've been pondering is, what about a gambit for the market?

Archadian Ardent/Greenseller: Fresh vegetables, get your fresh vegetables! Why yes, they're all farm grown. None of those magicked greens here! All natural! All delicious!

Attendant/Tour Leader: Tour of the Aerial Gardens in Bhujerba are quite popular these days. We often find ourselves fully-booked and have to turn people away.

Archadian Ardent/Tarot Reader: Do you know the Tarot? I'm a reader here in town. You might think a modern city would have small use for such things, yet I feel just the opposite.

Archadian Gentry/Dangerous Chef: I do so love to cook! Why, the other day, I held an impromptu party at my house, and fed a new dish of mine to my closest acquaintances. Why, they told me 'twas a taste to tantalize the tongue of a philosopher of cuisine! Yet... their faces were sour as old nanna cheese. My new

dish was terrible, I'm sure of it. I've invited them back, of course, to no reply. Could it truly have been so bad?

Lebleu's Gambits Sign: Welcome to Lebleu's. Do you tire of the same old gambits? Want to fight like a clever fella, rather than a cave dweller? Step right this way!

Archadian Gentry/Good Brother: Have you been to the requisites shop? I must say, they've done a splendid job of improving the inventory of late. Quite a selection!

Archadian Ardent/Vegetable Seller: (*gasp*) M-Me? I've been runnin' all about town tryin' to sell enough greens to please me partner. She wants to build a farm out in Tchita, see. Aw, what was she sayin' she'd run out of again? Noses of somethin'...? Nah, that weren't it. Huh! No time for ponderin'. Got to sell, sell, sell!

Archadian Gentry/Philosopher of Cuisine: You don't know who I am? The only Philosopher of Cuisine recognized by the Senate, that's who.

Archadian Gentry/Researcher's Wife: My good husband works at Draklor Laboratory, and, well, I shouldn't say this, but he works on something so secret that he can't even tell me! Now, he's not the giving type, my husband, but just the other day he gave me the most unusual gift... a card. I've taken to carrying it around with me, and it's quite odd, but I feel the strangest urge to spend my gil at the raffle house, or on stock notes!

Granch's Requisites

Archadian Gentry/Adventuresome Child: Hello there! If you're after requisites, you've come to the right place! An' there's also a notice board upstairs if you fancy doin' a bit of huntin'! Me? I enjoy just readin' about the fiends out there. Maybe I'll go on a hunt meself someday. Make a few gil, get into scrapes... sounds brilliant!

Archadian Ardent/Bargain Hunter: Sometimes, you come to these places and you make an incredible find... Not today, though. Perhaps I should try my luck at the bazaar...

Malloud: Honestly, these people! They come up from the country and they stare, and they stare. But do they buy? Never! Maybe they lack the necessary coin... Oh, but I do grow weary of this...

Granch: Welcome, welcome. Requisites and items for all occasions, here for your perusing pleasure! If it's adventure you seek, better go prepared! Shop menu

Aerodrome

Archadian Gentry/Enthusiastic Boy: We're off on a family trip to Rabanastre! See, one o' me relatives got 'imself arrested by a Judge, and if we stay here, me dad's... Uh oh. I don't think I'm s'posed be tellin' you none o' this. Me mum'll go mad. Sorry!

Archadian Gentry/Three Timer: Yes, I'm off to Bhujerba. Again! 'Tis my third time. Oh, the views over her crystal spires, the sun setting below the clouds... I'll never tire of it!

Attendant: Lately, every other departing airship seems to be weighed down with the latest in construction technology from the Empire. But don't be alarmed. We take great care to load everything with passenger safety in mind. There's no danger at all. Have a good flight!

Archadian Gentry/Seeq-Hater: What're seeq doing here? Their kind don't belong in Archades. This is the *Empire*, for the love of the gods... not a farm.

Archadian Gentry/Single Gentry: I've a large manse in the City of course, yet I much prefer traveling. I live alone, you see. An extravagant lifestyle, I know...

Imperial: Should you encounter any problems durin' your voyage, problems of any kind, just you call for me. Ensurin' your comfort and safety's me job.

Erstwhile Adventurer: I came here to meet up with an old streetear friend of mine. What a warren this place is. I can't leave soon enough...

Lebleu's Gambits

Archadian Gentry/Impressed Nuncle: My nephew is collecting these gambit things, so I thought I'd see what all the fuss was about. I must admit, they're prettier than I expected.

Archadian Ardent/Patient Man: I'm trying to explain gambits to my dear mother, but she fails to grasp the most basic concepts. Perhaps if I took her to battle next time...

Lebleu's Gambits Sign: After gambits? Then look no further than Lebleu's. If I don't have it, you don't need it!

Archadian Gentry/Once-Commander: I went to battle once. A commander I was... Ach, I remember my gambits as though 'twere yesterday. There're so many new gambits these days, 'tis hard to tell one from another.

Lebleu's Daughter: Greetings! Welcome to Lebleu's Gambits! Helpin got add strategy to assault and battery! Shop menu

Nilbasse

Researcher/Determined Researcher: I heeded my father's wishes and became a researcher at a laboratory, but my colleagues' behavior has proven to be rather... *odd*. I've thought on this a great deal, and I've decided it's time to leave. Yet... my father was so happy, I haven't had the heart to tell him...

Archadian Gentry/Ex-Researcher: For many years, I researched but one thing. And when I retired, my daughter agreed to continue my work... How happy she made me! But the research, it knows no end. Someday, I hope to see my daughter marry, bear children... but still this great work will not be done. Yet, it is not in vain, no! Even though the pace may be slow, progress *is* being made. Such is the many-splendored thing that is scientific inquiry!

Archadian Gentry/Aspiring Starlet: The path to stardom is a difficult one, to be sure. To dance, to sing, all of this takes great effort. And, of course, you must know how to act!

Archadian Gentry/Faded Star: I'm terribly sorry, darling, but I've given up the stage. No more autographs, please. Very well, you may shake my hand, if you must... Oh? You didn't want a... Pardon me! I assumed... I was an actress, you see, quite famous in my day. I mistook you for an enthusiast! My apologies.

Archadian Gentry/Worried Husband: The enterprise at which I'm employed has fallen on hard times of late. This month... they've halved my wage. Halved! And things were going so well...

Researcher/Failed Researcher: I've made a mistake, a horrible mistake... I fear my superior is vexed. Quite vexed! That instrument I dropped... oh, oh dear.

Archadian Gentry/Athletic Woman: I may not look it, but I'm quite athletic, you know. My family boasts from a grand line of gamesmen, renowned for excellence on both track and field.

Archadian Gentry/Gentleman Onlooker: Have you seen those chaps running pell-mell about the city? Newcomers are always this way. Working up a sweat as they claw their way up the ladder.

Archadian Ardent/Eager Crier: Wot am I doin'? I'm cryin' wares for the arm'rer's. You should 'ave a gander if ya need aught. When I get enough chops, I'll be ridin' 'igh in one o' them cabs, and that'll be the end of all this. I'll be sittin' pretty up in 'Ighgarden, innit.

Archadian Gentry/Senior Researcher: A new employee of mine broke an instrument in his first day in the lab. I really want to give him some words of encouragement, but I'm so busy...

Vint's Armaments Sign: Come to Vint's, for the Arms that built an Empire! Ask the Man who went to Battle with rusty mail and a tarnished blade where he wishes he'd shopped, and he'll say: Vint's! Vint's Armaments: Because the Best in the Empire is the Best in Ivalice!

Vint's Armaments Sign: If it's Protectives you need, then it's us you need visit! Buying used Equipment for honest Prices. Welcome to Vint's!

Researcher/Avid Reader: I've recently begun work at a laboratory! 'Tis like heaven for me. Plenty to read, and no one telling me I ought do otherwise! Why, the laboratory library is the envy of every student in the Akademy. There's no greater store of obscure texts anywhere in Ivalice.

Archadian Gentry/Materialistic Woman: I yearn for some new jewelry... and one ring in particular. A rare blue diamond! I saw it just yesterday. Yet we can ill afford such luxury. And you never know when we might need extra for an emergency. Still, my husband's enterprise has done well... I'm sure we'll soon have gil enough.

Vint's Armaments

Archadian Ardent/Homesick Man: I'm headin' back to Balfonheim, but not by airship... can't bear the things. Plan on takin' the road through Sochen... Came here to get outfitted for the journey, but I got to thinkin'... what if I run across some beastie I can't handle along the way?

Archadian Gentry/Appreciator of Shields: It's official: the Ministry of Law has announced that the Senate conspired to oust House Solidor, and masterminded the Emperor's assassination! Ministry or no, these are lawless times, my friend. A good time to purchase some armor...

Archadian Gentry/Prospective Dealer: The forges of the Archadian Empire are surely the best at weaponcrafting in all Ivalice. It makes one think: what if one were to sell them abroad? One could make a healthy profit... an honest profit, too, not like those the fat-bellied senators were skimming from Imperial coffers! Makes one feel a fool for working at all.

Archadian Ardent/Willful Woman: You could at least buy one of those spears! Or weren't you planning to defend me!?

Meek Man: B-But I've never used one o' those, dearest. An-And what if I hurt someone? *(gulp)*

Armor Seller: Good day, sir. Looking for protectives? Shop menu

Weapon Seller: Greetings! Might I tempt sir with some quality armaments?

Nilbasse

Chops

Cab Guide: Only those with **3 or more chops** may ride this cab, boy. Nothing personal, I assure you.

Vaan: A chop? What's that?

Cab Attendant: If you lack a **chop**, you pay coin. That's... 1000000 gil, thank you.

Penelo: What? That's crazy!

???: Having a spot of trouble, are we?

[They look up to see Jules.]

Jules: I've a message from Master Balthier. He's waiting in Central. He says to come quickly.

Vaan: On this? But we need a... a chop. What is a chop, anyway?

Jules: When a boy wants information... that's right... A boy pays. 2500 gil sounds about right.

- Pay up

Why, any upstanding citizen of the Empire carries a **chop**. It's a mark of status sometimes, a writ of transit others. If you were aiming to go to Central, where the gentry live, I'd think you'd need 3 chops.

Vaan: How do you get them?

Jules: Like I've said, the key is knowledge, boy. You do your part here on the street, talk to the right people, you'll earn your **chops** in no time.

Vaan: That doesn't sound so bad.

Jules: Oh, people in Archades love doing good deeds. Why, if they're helping you out, it must mean they're *superior*. Understand, boy?

Vaan: Uh... Not sure I do, but I'll give it a try. Thanks, Jules!

[He runs off. Fran, hanging back, eyes him.]

Jules: A friend of Master Balthier's a friend of mine. *(cough)*

[Fran finally walks away.]

- Decline

A bit late in the game to be pinching gil, isn't it?

Archadian Gentry/Senior Researcher: A new employee of mine broke an instrument in his first day in the lab. I really want to give him some **words of encouragement**, but I'm so busy... "Worry not," I'd tell

him, “such things only cost one million gil or so. Your concern should be the bigger picture, not such trifling details!” I want him to know I’m on his side, you see.

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Researcher/Failed Researcher: I’ve made a mistake, a horrible mistake... I fear my superior is vexed. Quite vexed! That instrument I dropped... oh, oh dear.

- Relate the tale of the **words of encouragement**.

A message from my superior? Oh my, I’ll wager she’s just about had enough of me. Let’s see... “...*only cost one million gil or so...*” Yeeagh! One million! It cost that much!? Sh-She doesn’t want me to pay for it, please no! “*Your concern should be the bigger picture.*” Gak! I’ll admit, I’m weak at the finer points, but, she doesn’t mean to end my research, does she? “...*not such trifling details.*” Trifling!? Is that what I am? Trifling? I’m finished, *that’s* what I am. I would be a fool to think otherwise. And to say such things through another! If she’s to chastise me, I’d have her do it to my face. *(sigh)* My thanks. A chop for your trouble.

[You obtain a **Pinewood Chop**!]

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Senior Researcher (x2): There’s a new researcher in the laboratory, and, well, he seems frightened of me for some reason. I’ve never been cross with him! Have I?

Researcher/Failed Researcher (x2): ‘Tis a cruel world, this. I’ll never take research lightly again. A real laboratory is a far cry from the safety of the Akademy. I’m finished!

Archadian Gentry/Gentleman Onlooker: Have you seen those chaps running pell-mell about the city? Newcomers are always this way. **Working up a sweat** as they claw their way up the ladder. You look to be in much the same situation, as was I, long ago. Never fear, you’ll get there as I have. Chin up! Onwards and upwards, and all that!

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Ardent/Eager Crier: Wot am I doin’? I’m cryin’ wares for the arm’rer’s. You should ‘ave a gander if ya need aught. When I get enough chops, I’ll be ridin’ ‘igh in one o’ them cabs, and that’ll be the end of all this. I’ll be sittin’ pretty up in ‘Ighgarden, innit.

- Relate the tale of **working up a sweat**.

Wot's that? You've 'eard from some bloke who *was* in my shoes, and now 'e's made summin' of 'imself? That's good to 'ear. I'll get there someday. Ya look like a newcomer yerself. Ain't got many chops, I bet? I know 'ow it is, see. Look, I ain't got many meself, but up 'ere, yer've got to look out for each other. So ya can 'ave one o' my chops, and I'll see ya at the top!

[You obtain a **Pinewood Chop**!]

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Gentleman Onlooker: 'Tis a good thing, to work up a sweat. Reminds me of when I was a youth, freshly come to the capital.

Archadian Ardent/Eager Crier: I di'n't think I'd ever get nowhere when I first come 'ere. But me mates 'eloped me out. An' that's 'ow well make it to the top: together!

Archadian Gentry/Worried Husband: The enterprise at which I'm employed has fallen on hard times of late. This month... they've **halved my wages**. Halved! And things were going so well... How am I to tell my wife? I don't have the courage to face her. I can't go home like this!

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Materialistic Woman: I yearn for some new jewelry... and one ring in particular. A rare blue diamond! I saw it just yesterday. Yet we can ill afford such luxury. And you never know when we might need extra for an emergency. Still, my husband's enterprise has done well... I'm sure we'll soon have gil enough.

- Relate the tale of the **wages halved**.

His wages, halved!? What ill tidings are these? And what of my blue diamond!? Why, to afford it now, there's naught but my dowry purse to — Oh! Now *there's* a thought. I can't believe it never occurred to me before! I've more than enough gil to buy a piffling diamond. A fine idea! My thanks!

[You obtain a **Pinewood Chop**!]

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Materialistic Woman: My husband's wages are much diminished, and I fear there will be little extravagance in our future... So, now's the perfect time to spend, spend, SPEND! Ahem, this information will, of course, remain strictly between you and I.

Archadian Gentry/Worried Husband: Though the enterprise at which I toil be failing, and my wages cut by half, my wife merely smiled! Why, I do believe she still loves me. And I her!

Archadian Gentry/Athletic Woman: I may not look it, but I'm quite athletic, you know. My family boasts from a **grand line of gamesmen**, known for our skill at work, as well as the games. That said, my brother is overly fond of dusty old tomes — he spends most of his time with his nose in one. Why, do you know what he told me? He said, "Good sister, on the morrow, I shall go to the laboratory and become a researcher." He'll become as stiff and sedent'ry as... as a researcher!

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Researcher/Avid Reader: I've recently begun work at a laboratory! 'Tis like heaven for me. Plenty to read, and no one telling me I ought do otherwise! Why, the laboratory library is the envy of every student in the Akademy. There's no greater store of obscure texts anywhere in Ivalice.

- Relate the tale of the **grand line of gamesmen**.

My sister seems overly concerned with my health. She should know I get proper exercise, at least an hour daily, in the games room at the laboratory. Unusual for a laboratory man, I know. I suppose it's in the blood. But sport, or rather, the exercise involved *is* a subject of my research. You see, I'm jolly interested in how the body's energy might be regulated to lend strength to those muscles most taxed by a given action. I thank you for your kindness in relaying my dear sister's concern. Here, this should serve you in good stead during your time in Archades.

[You obtain a **Pinewood Chop**!]

- Do nothing.

Researcher/Avid Reader (x2): My good sister is quite fond of running. Why, she's a regular participant in the annual Balfenheim Dash.

Archadian Gentry/Athletic Woman (x2): My brother is a researcher at a laboratory, quite against my wishes. I feared he'd become slothful but now I hear there's a games room in the lab!

Archadian Gentry/Aspiring Starlet: The **path to stardom** is a difficult one, to be sure. To dance, to sing, all of this takes great effort. And, of course, you must know how to act! Imagine setting the stage aflame with but a word! I would be that sort of star... And I would ask advice of a mentor... but what to ask?

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Faded Star: I'm terribly sorry, darling, but I've given up the stage. No more autographs, please. Very well, you may shake my hand, if you must... Oh? You didn't want a... Pardon me! I assumed... I was an actress, you see, quite famous in my day. I mistook you for an enthusiast! My apologies.

- Relate the tale of the **path to stardom**.

The path to becoming a star? I don't believe such a thing exists, darling. At least, it's not the sort of thing one can search for and hope to find. One must work, and watch others at work! One cannot sit about, wiling away the hours at pretend. Only through *experience* do you learn. I wore many guises in my working life: armory clerk, airship attendant, personal secretary, headhunter, dread pirate... even the false queen of a lost land. Quite dangerous, that last one... not recommended. I learned much, and my acting was enriched by it. Yet when it no longer felt... true, I had to leave. Ah, I've a splendid idea! I shall write a novella of my adventures! That is one thing I've yet to do. Take this, darling, for your excellent advice.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Faded Star (x2): There are more would-be stars in this city than real ones in the night sky. Yet I wish her all the best... and myself as well, in our new careers!

Archadian Gentry/Aspiring Starlet (x2): To become a star takes experience. My mentor told me that the study of acting is the study of life! That's why I've decided to find a proper job!

Researcher/Determined Researcher: I heeded my father's wishes and became a researcher at a laboratory, but my colleagues' behavior has proven to be rather... *odd*. I've thought on this a great deal, and I've decided it's **time to leave**. Yet... my father was so happy, I haven't had the heart to tell him... Truth be told, our research project finished just the other day. It was quite a breakthrough. My father worked on it for tens of years... All those years without progress, then I join and within months it's done... and I *still* want to leave! However will I explain this to my father?

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Ex-Researcher: For many years, I researched but one thing. And when I retired, my daughter agreed to continue my work... How happy she made me! But the research, it knows no end. Someday, I hope to see my daughter marry, bear children... but still this great work will not be done. Yet, it is not in vain, no! Even though the pace may be slow, progress *is* being made. Such is the many-splendored thing that is scientific inquiry!

- Relate the tale of a **time to leave**.

Hrmm? What's this? My daughter...? No, surely not. My daughter would never say such things. A case of mistaken identity, perhaps? What? The research... complete!? How many years did I toil, finding nothing... Hmph. Huh. Hah. Hah ha ha ha! That's my girl! Well, if she's finished her work, why stay any longer? Boy, a chop for bringing me this news!

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Ex-Researcher (x2): The secrets of boot rot revealed at long last! No longer need Soldier and citizen scratch in vain at their feet! This is truly a momentous day!

Researcher/Determined Researcher (x2): Our research project was a success. Oh, we were researching, well... there's really no pretty way of saying this, is there? We researched boot rot. I come from a family of researchers, and our family has long been afflicted by boot rot. The itching, and the redness, and the... your pardon. My father was very pleased with our results!

Rienna

Archadian Gentry/Philosopher of Cuisine: You don't know who I am? The only Philosopher of Cuisine recognized by the Senate, that's who. Yet, I must confess, I'm troubled of late... You see, in my profession, one eats rather a lot of excellent food. But with too much excellence, one forgets to *enjoy* it! I long to be stimulated! Somewhere, there must be a **revolutionary dish**, made from naught but the best ingredients, by no one but the best chef in Archades.

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Dangerous Chef: I do so love to cook! Why, the other day, I held an impromptu party at my house, and fed a new dish of mine to my closest acquaintances. Why, they told me 'twas a taste to tantalize the tongue of a philosopher of cuisine! Yet... their faces were sour as old nanna cheese. My new dish was terrible, I'm sure of it. I've invited them back, of course, to no reply. Could it truly have been so bad?

- Relate the tale of the **revolutionary dish**.

A revolutionary dish? Well, I suppose one *could* call my new creation that. I'd be happy to give some to this gentleman you speak of... I used a base of puréed tomatoes, you see, adding to that several fish bones, upon which I poured a rich caramel sauce! Truth be told, I had quite a bit left over, and was wondering what to do with it. Here, take this chop in thanks... unless you'd like some food?

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Dangerous Chef (x2): Culinary creations are oft eaten fresh, but it is true that time can be the best chef. One must let one's sauces breathe, after all! Of course, leave a dish too long, and that curious blue powder grows atop it... Oh, but it's harmless enough, I'm sure.

Archadian Gentry/Philosopher of Cuisine (x2): I have spent long years in the pursuit of excellence in cuisine... have eaten food so rich and so sublime as to be well nigh inedible! But that chef... What is that dish she made? 'It's like food from another world!?' Aroma such as I have never known, taste to bring rapturous tears to my eyes! Ah, that tingle upon my tongue, that stab at the throat promising both pleasure and pain! That pointed wedging betwixt the teeth! I expected the best, and received the *beyond*. 'Twas that powd'ry blue garnish she used, I'm sure of it! Could it be some new, uncharted spice? Oh, my head rings still with the flavor!

Archadian Gentry/Good Brother: Have you been to the requisites shop? I must say, they've done a splendid job of improving the inventory of late. Quite a selection! Ah, I've just remembered, my sister's been looking for a certain thing, and last I visited, they had **just what she wants**. Now, where could she be?

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Waiting Woman: I've been waiting for an item I've wanted for such a long time. The proprietor said she'd order one straightaway... but that was over a month ago! I've my brother keeping an eye out for me, but he's not one to remember such things. Oh well, I suppose I shall have to make do without...

- Relate the tale of **what she wants**.

Really!? So he *did* remember. Why, I must go to the store before someone buys it! Thank you for the tip! Here, a chop.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Waiting Woman (x2): I wouldn't think a store without proper inventory could survive long here in the capital. Word of mouth travels fast. Faster still when it's bad.

Archadian Gentry/Good Brother (x2): The requisites shop finally has what my sister wanted! Why, I'd suppose she's in there shopping to her heart's content as we speak...

Archadian Ardent/Tarot Reader: Do you know the Tarot? I'm a reader here in town. You might think a modern city would have small use for such things, yet I feel just the opposite. And indeed, my prediction was correct! Yet, another unforeseen problem has shown itself in the cards. My readings reveal only tragedy! That is to say, whenever I deal the cards for someone, they meet with horrible ill luck. Almost as if my readings themselves beckon **misfortune**...

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Attendant/Happy Novelist: I've been writing novels in between trips. Each one I think to make a moving tale of tragic love, the sort that make grown men weep rivers... But when I sit down to read what I've written, I find it quite happy... droll, even! Why can I not write something *truly* miserable?

- Relate the tale of the **misfortune teller**.

A fortune teller that sees only misfortune!? Why, of course! I cannot write what I don't know, after all, and my life has been such a happy one. I have a mind to visit this reader of the cards and see just what tragedy lies in store for me! My thanks to you! A chop for your advice.

- Do nothing.

Attendant/Happy Novelist (x2): Of course, a happy life is better than one spent in sadness. But without misery, can we truly appreciate our good fortune?

Archadian Ardent/Tarot Reader (x2): I offered to tell someone of their misfortunes, and they accepted quite gladly! It proves the old adage "it takes all sorts." Would you like your misfortune told? For free?

- Read my misfortune.

Oh ho? Not afraid of the future? Then tell it I shall!

[She sits on the ground.]

Hmm... Yes! No? Hmm...

Ooh... Ooh? Ahh...

Ohh... Aaah!

[She stands back up.]

An answer reveals itself... Yet, its meaning is obscure to me. Hmm. I see 6 in Trant. I see 9 in Molberry. In Rienna... there are 4. I see nothing in Nilbasse... Well, I do hope that was of assistance to you. I'm sure many trials await in your future, but do face them with hope. It could always be worse!

- No, thanks.

Oh. Not interested in the future, perhaps? You should be. After all, 'Tis where you'll be spending the *rest of your life*.

[The “misfortune” the tarot reader tells to you is actually how many chops you have left to obtain in each area. For example, if she sees 4 in Rienna, that means there are 4 more chops you can get from the people of Rienna.]

Archadian Gentry/Lucky Man: Hello there! You... haven't dropped a letter, have you? You see... I found one in the street and I couldn't help but, um, read it. It said: “This is an **epistle to Love**. Freely have I released it. Should it return to me, then shall my love be made true.” ...And that was all. Odd, wouldn't you agree? I do wonder what it all means... I feared for a moment that, were I to find the writer, I would be propositioned on the spot! A groundless fear, but caution never hurts.

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Romantic Lady: I'm sorry, I cannot help myself... I'm in love! With whom? 'Tis a secret! Why, I've not told even him. Why not? Well... I wrote a letter, an epistle to Love, and I'll not confess my love until that letter finds its way back to my hand. Romantic, no?

- Relate the tale of an **epistle to Love**.

H-How did you know of that letter? Wait, does this mean my love is not (*sniff*) to be!? (*SNIFF*) Hmm? You... you've not come to return my letter? My, how foolish I must have seemed! I'm so sorry. So he *did* pick up my letter! How do I know who it was? Because I placed it in such a way that he would see it first, of course, being sure to stay out of sight. Many thanks for coming to tell me. Nice to know “fate” has triumphed once more. Here, a chop!

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Romantic Lady (x2): When will it return to me? When? Has my epistle to Love gone unread? Unheard? Unloved!?

Archadian Gentry/Lucky Man (x2): To think I picked up a love letter by chance, and it was *meant* to be picked up by me! Found, as if the Fates had willed it... How romantic!

Attendant/Tour Leader: Tours of the **Aerial Gardens** in Bhujerba are quite popular these days. Why, just a short while ago, I had to turn someone away from a full tour. Wouldn't you know that the next moment we had a cancellation! Pity, that poor lady did so want to go. She must still be nearby...

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Bhujerban Lady: I had thought to vacation in Bhujerba, you see, but I run a small enterprise, and just haven't been able to find the time. To my good fortune, I was recently permitted to go on leave. Straightaway, I went to reserve a ticket... and to my *misfortune*, the tour was full.

- Relate the tale of the **aerial gardens**.

What's that? A cancellation! Wonderful! My gratitude for coming to tell me. Every good deed deserves a chop! 'Tis custom. Here's yours.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Bhujerban Lady (x2): My father was born in Bhujerba, actually. I've always had a mind to go there... to see her arcs of shining crystal... and now I shall!

Attendant/Tour Leader (x2): Travel to Bhujerba's in vogue in the city of late. We have tours booked months in advance! And only rarely does anyone cancel.

Archadian Gentry/Lazy Profiteer: Headhunters employ gambits during battle to aid their judgment, correct? Now, what I've been pondering is, what about a **gambit for the market**? I know gambits can go awry if you don't keep an eye on them, but think of the coin you could make! Gil, gil, and more gil! That's worth any risk!

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Researcher's Wife: My good husband works at Draklor Laboratory, and, well, I shouldn't say this, but he works on something so secret that he can't even tell me! Now, he's not the giving type, my husband, but just the other day he gave me the most unusual gift... a card. I've taken to carrying it around with me, and it's quite odd, but I feel the strangest urge to spend my gil at the raffle house, or on stock notes!

- Relate the tale of a **gambit for the market**.

Do you think, perhaps, that his card might be one of these... gambits? In truth, I find it quite unsettling and was contemplating getting rid of it. Yet, it *was* a gift from my husband... I suppose I couldn't just give it away. I'm not even sure what it truly is. I thank you for your story, however. Here, a chop. May it serve you in good stead.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Researcher's Wife (x2): I've heard of artifacts that aid in decision-making. Gambits, were they? Still, it does not do to rely entirely on such aid. One must think for oneself.

Archadian Gentry/Lazy Profiteer (x2): If I had a gambit to tell me what to buy and what to sell... Ah, but I know that I must make the final decision, gambit or no. Back to business...

Archadian Ardent/Greenseller: Fresh vegetables, get your fresh vegetables! Why yes, they're all farm grown. None of those magicked greens here! All natural! All delicious! Of course, people used to scoff at my greens, but the taste is undeniable! I have so many loyal customers now, I'm rather overtaxed... Oh, and I've run **out of ears**, too! Pardon? Why, ears of *corn*, of course! Wherever has my associate gone? We can't keep customers waiting!

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Ardent/Vegetable Seller: (*gasp*) M-Me? I've been runnin' all about town tryin' to sell enough greens to please me partner. She wants to build a farm out in Tchita, see. Aw, what was she sayin' she'd run out of again? Noses of somethin'...? Nah, that weren't it. Huh! No time for ponderin'. Got to sell, sell, sell!

- Relate the tale of the lady **out of ears**.
- Ah, ears of *corn*! That was it! 'Ang about... I 'member see in' an empty corn bin at the storehouse. She's prob'ly forgotten there's none left. Makin' a fair few gil is all well an' good, but when you get too busy, you start forgettin' stuff. 'Ere's a chop, anyway. Thanks for remindin' me!
- Do nothing.

Archadian Ardent/Vegetable Seller (x2): Now's the time to do an 'onest day's work for an 'onest day's wage. Once we build that farm out in Tchita, we can 'ire others to do the work for us!

Archadian Ardent/Greenseller (x2): If I should sell enough fresh green, why, I might just be able to build that farm in Tchita... Hmm... No whole ears in the storehouse, either?

Trant

Archadian Gentry/Historian: I was born of Empire, raised by Empire, and within her walls did I grow old. Yet, this city was not always grand, nor the Empire always prosperous. Youths today, they know only of her glory, and *nothing* of **her history**. How little they think on the sacrifices of the past. It... troubles me.

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Perceptive Man: We live in an Empire, but 'twas not always so. How did it come to be? Military might? Wise rule? No, it must take more than these things. How can we hope to carry the

Empire's glory into the future if we know not her past? Yet our akademies teach us little of her *true* history.

- Relate the tale of a **history of Empire**.

What's that? You've an acquaintance who knows much of history? How long I've sought for this! Thank you, good sir, thank you! Please accept this chop... for the glory of the Empire!

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Perceptive Man (x2): I want to learn history's *truth*, not just what I'm told. It's important to know whence we come to know where we go. But there's so much to learn...

Archadian Gentry/Historian (x2): I don't suppose *all* youths are ignorant wastrels. And the young Lord Larsa shows much potential... I believe I see... a light in our Empire's future.

Archadian Gentry/Music Appreciator: I've an elderly friend, a court musician by trade. To hear him play the lute, you would think it sang! Yet, of late, his fingers fail him... He said he wanted to hear a song he used to play, so I seek a **lutenist** to play it for him. Yet... they seem a rare breed, these days.

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Lutenist: There are those who make crafts and sell them at market. I make not crafts, but music. By my lute's soothing voice do I earn my daily bread. There was a time when I did quite well by it, too. Sadly, people nowadays seem to enjoy cacophonous marches. Few have an ear for the lute's quiet song.

- Relate the tale of the **lutenist**.

Someone seeks a lutenist? You're sure!? How long I've waited... I would love nothing more than to play to an appreciative listener. I thank you for this, good sir. Here, a chop bearing the mark of the lute. It is yours.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Lutenist (x2): Nothing soothes the spirit like the dulcet song of the lute. I thought little of it myself, till I heard a master — a court musician — play, and then I knew.

Archadian Gentry/Music Appreciator (x2): I seek a lutenist to play for my friend who was once a court musician. They say music soothes the soul... even that if one whose music has left him.

Archadian Gentry/Farce-goer: Oh dear.

Oh dear.

Oh dear, dear, dear.

I asked my daughter to buy **tickets to the farce**, but I've asked her to buy one too few! What to do? I'm to entertain a *most* important client!

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Girl on an Errand: Oh my.

Oh my.

Oh my, my, my.

I was asked by my mother to buy tickets to the farce, yet I bought one too many! Oh, my mother *despises* waste. I shall be punished for sure!

- Relate the tale of the **tickets to the farce**.

Oh? She needed one more ticket for the farce? Then Lady Luck has smiled upon me! This is better than any amusement! A chop for your trouble!

- Do nothing.

Girl on an Errand (x2): I've just made reservations to see the Mummers of Tantalus perform! You know of them, surely? Quite popular these days. Hard to find tickets!

Archadian Gentry/Farce-goer (x2): My daughter's folly was my fortune! How happy was I not to have to disappoint. Truly, life is full of pleasant surprises.

Archadian Gentry/Boutiquere: It's been five years since I finally quit my lodgings in Old Archades, yet I still lack the gil to open a **boutique** of my own.

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Moneyed Gentleman: Money is like a seed, do you not agree? Keep it locked away, it is as something dead. Yet use it poorly, and 'twill never live. There must be someone with use for my money, for I would have it live, and if I could but find the hands to tend it, I would gladly share its fruit.

- Relate the tale of the **boutique**.

Hmm... A lady wishing to open a boutique, you say? This bears further inquiry. I would meet with her. Who knows where our discussion might lead? Such meetings are fertile soil for enterprise! Here, a chop for your aid.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Moneyed Gentleman (x2): Money is as nothing unless you *use* it. My advice to the shopkeeper who shall have the use of mine? Make of it what you will.

Archadian Gentry/Boutiquere (x2): Five years after dragging myself out of Old Archades, I am to have a boutique of my own at last! All thanks to that kind gentleman...

Archadian Gentry/Smitten Man: I've worked so hard, and so long. All for money. And indeed, I've accumulated *some* wealth. Yet, I've realized I want neither money nor power. Both I've had, and neither satisfied me. I found out what I wanted when I met *her*. A **client's daughter**. The moment I saw her, I knew.

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Smitten Woman: I'm having trouble putting a man I met — a business associate of my father — from my mind. He was so *dashing*, so... mysterious. Of course, I'm certain a gentleman of his means would be affianced at the very least. Of course he would.

- Relate the tale of the **client's daughter**.

What? He said that... about me? For true!? Are you — Is he sure!? Perhaps he meant another? If it is truly me he asks after, I certainly accept! I do believe I'm overjoyed! Look, it's not much, but I'd been saving this chop for a special occasion and, well, take it. It's yours.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Smitten Woman (x2): To think, an evening with *him*. I wonder what it is that he fancies? The theater, perhaps? This fluttering in my breast... could this be love?

Archadian Gentry/Smitten Man(x2): Money and influence left me wanting, but she, she *filled* me from the moment we met. Still, I've never been one for dallying... Frankly, I'm not sure what to do. Perhaps take her to the theater? Yes, that's just the thing!

Archadian Gentry/Builder: The population of this great city continues to soar. And buildings sprout like toadstools after the rain in this unruly garden of Archades! My consortium, too, is in the business of building, yet frankly, popular design gives me... indigestion. Oh for a man who is both **architect and artisan!**

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Artisan Architect: How many years have I trained... and still they mock my designs. Tradition, tradition! Fie! What good building aught that is already built?

- Relate the tale of the **artisan architect**.

One who understands that art and architecture need not be opposed to one another? Good tidings, these. I feel a design coming on... yes, a masterpiece! Ah, boy! In my business, it is customary to thank those who find us work. A chop for your trouble!

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Artisan Architect (x2): Hmm... yes... yes... no... no! Fie! I'm working on a new design, you see. Now, we're I go move the *catur* to the *sapta*, making an *eka*... then the *nava*...

Archadian Gentry/Builder (x2): How pleased I am to find genius *does* yet exist in this world. I asked a nameless architect to design for me, and he has created... a masterpiece!

Molberry

Archadian Gentry/Proud Mother: I do so hate to boast, but my Reginald is quite the *brightest* child. I blush to confess he has his mother's wit! Ahem! Imagine my surprise when my dear Reginald's **tutor** decided to abandon us without saying a word! Quite irresponsible, *quite*...

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Tutor: A tutor by trade am I, yet of late, unemployed. Why? My pupil's transferred to Bhujerba, leaving me to seek out a new charge. It's grown harder in recent years to pass the examinations, yet I have utmost confidence in my ability to prepare *any* student.

- Relate the tale of the **tutor**.

Ah, straight to the point! Leave it to me, good sir. A child under my care is a future Akademick! Here, a chop in payment for your kind word.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Tutor (x2): A child's brain is like to a sea-sponge, adrift in knowledge's brine! Squeeze it just so, and 'twill fill with the richest sort of learning.

Archadian Gentry/Proud Mother (x2): My Reginald is the brightest, and as such he was given naught but the best in tutelage! Why I'm sure he'll make the Akademy this year. To think, he'll be a grand thirty-three this coming name day! A feast! There must be a feast! Oh ho ho ho ho!

Archadian Ardent/Ardent Woman: My beau and I have been working together of late. We've got quite a stack of chops to show for our troubles, too! A full **eight-and-twenty** of them! I must tell him the good news.

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Ardent/Ardent Man: Here in the capital, if you take pride in your work, and do right by your customers, anyone can make a decent living. Now, your regular chops are made of pine, but the nobles use chops of sandal — sweet-smelling things, those. My girlfriend and I will get 'em someday!

- Relate the tale of **eight & twenty chops**.

What's that? Eight-and-twenty chops already? That's a fine amount, to be sure, but tell her this: Try to float up to Highgarden, and you'll drift off with the clouds. First get firm footing down here, then build your way up, brick by brick.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Ardent/Ardent Man (x2): Now is when we keep our noses to the grindstone, and work an honest day. When we've more chops than we know what to do with, we'll get respect. And my girl, my dear, sweet lass, she's been by my side through feast and famine, and I'll make her happy one day, you'll see.

Archadian Ardent/Ardent Woman (x2): We've worked our fingers to the bone for these chops... but there's still so much to be done! I'm just grateful I'm not doing it alone.

Archadian Ardent/Talented Woman: You know, I'm oft told I have a **knack for magicks**. Of course, I've little coin to buy such things... I should be handling magicks, not turnips. *(sigh)*

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Akademician: I am chancellor at the Akademy of Magick. Sadly, there is little need for our art in this age of ready convenience. Applicant numbers are down. Indeed, the Akademy itself may be to blame for placing profit above the pursuit of quality in instruction. If not quality, what have we, I ask?

- Relate the tale of the **knack for magick**.

Hrm? A lass with a knack for magick, yet no gil to pay for 't? How fortunate for her, I was thinking of starting a program for scholars in need. Of course, there will be an examination, but if she truly does have the knack, that should be little trouble. Here, a chop for your information.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Akademician (x2): For these special examinations, I'd been considering an interview of sorts, and a simple recital. I've prepared a basic floating magick for the latter. I hope to uncover many youths of potential who might formerly have passed by unnoticed.

Archadian Ardent/Talented Woman (x2): Oh oh oh! They saw it, they spotted the knack! I've been given permission to take a special examination for entry to the Akademy of Magicks! A poor waif from the old town, in that illustrious institute! F-First I'll need a m-magick to c-calm my n-nerves for that test...

Archadian Ardent/Would-be Judge: O, **to be a Judge!** To bring order and peace to the world... and that just in a morning's work! O, to be — How does one become a Judge, anyway?

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Judge's Wife: My husband was a Judge, a fine one at that. Filled with righteousness, and justice. Our house's pride. The pride, too, of our borough... It was his very own sense of justice that brought his end. To die attempting to save a child's life, and the child of a foeman, no less. How like him!

- Relate the tale of the **would-be judge**.

Someone wanting to be a Judge? Well, whoever they might be, I've advice for them: If they seek to be a Judge for the sake of justice, no good will come of it. Please tell him this. Tell him that above all else, his family must come first. Peace is a frail bloom that grows only in the soil of a family's love.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Judge's Wife (x2): We speak of Judges, but if *one* man judges another, is this justice? Thus my husband sought to prevent, rather than punish, wrongdoing.

Archadian Ardent/Would-be Judge (x2): I used to think only the Empire's justice could bring peace and order to the land. Perhaps I was in error...

Archadian Gentry/Daughter-in-Law: My dear husband's mother has asked for a **trinket from Giza Plains**. She's ever so particular, though, so I'm having a Giza craftsman come here. Speaking of which, he should be here by now... My good husband's mother is a fickle woman. I do hope she does not see fit to change her mind!

- Commit this tale to memory.

- Do nothing.

Man from Giza: I came here all the way from Giza Plains to make some trinket, but I got separated from my guide on the road and couldn't find the client! There's no way I'll make it back home on my own. Here I thought my fortunes were looking up... Ach, is my woman going to steam about this.

- Relate the tale of a **trinket from Giza**.

Eh? So the client was looking for me as well, now? That's a relief! I'm ready to get this here job done and get me home to my woman! So blinded by gil was I, I didn't even think to look at a map! Who knew Archades was so far away? Ah, that reminds me. They gave me this "chop" as retainer, but I've no need of the thing. Here!

- Do nothing.

Man from Giza (x2): This sure is a big city. Far cry from Giza. I knew I should have brought my woman along.

Archadian Gentry/Daughter-in-Law (x2): I've summoned a trinket-crafter from faraway Giza to fashion something for my husband's mother, but by the time he'd arrived, she'd lost interest! *Now* she wants a shawl — Soun from viera damask, no less. You see what I must endure? (*sigh*)

Archadian Gentry/Reminiscing Lady: Did you see **the mummer** at his act? Oh, it was truly splendid! It made me feel the spring maiden again. How I would love to show my daughter.

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Family-minded Girl: Did you see the mummer? Did you? I truly despise his kind. Who would want to watch such rubbish? Can he possibly hope to glean enough gil by his prancing to survive or raise a family? After all those years of training, to end up impoverished!

- Relate the tale of the **mummer**.

I told you, I detest the mummers. I'd sooner watch the mating dance of the malbo — What? My mother was weeping? Reminiscing, no doubt. My father... was a mummer, you see. He could never earn enough to put food on our table, try as he might. Eventually, it broke him... He fell ill, and to buy a salve, he borrowed. And so he worked, though he was sick and made little. ...Yet how can naught hope to repay aught? One day, a lord came calling. A man of means, he was, and he offered to take my father's debt on as his own, provided my father left his wife... Then the lord turned and proposed to my mother, for she was a rare beauty in her day. My father told her she should go with him. So was I torn, too, from my father. How I wept! I never saw him again, nor can I say where he is. I heard rumor he had moved far away, that is all... If he had not been so drunk with the mummer's life, it never would have come to that! So, you see, I've reason to hate

the prancing fools. ...And now I've spoken overmuch. My apologies. Though... tale told, I feel... better. Please, take this chop, for being so kind as to listen.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Family-minded Girl (x2): I despise mummers, the prancing fools! Yet... Truth be told, I watched in secret. Because my mother watched, and wept for him... for my father. His act was much the same, you know.

Archadian Gentry/Reminiscing Lady (x2): My daughter hates the mummers, I think... I believe they remind her of her father, the poor dear. He left his family to practice the art... Yet I would not have her disparage him, but honor him for his dedication... 'Tis a dream, I know.

Archadian Gentry/Look-alike (upper level): Seen a swindler about? Not that you'd know if you did: he's a **master of disguise**. Why, he dressed like me and walked off with my earnings! If I don't find him quick, I'm ruined! Finished! End of story! Ah, I can't go back to scratchin' for gil in the old town. How'd he imitate me so well?

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Look-alike (lower level): Seen a swindler about? Not that you'd know if you did: he's a master of disguise. Why, he dressed like me and walked off with my earnings! If I don't find him quick, I'm ruined! Finished! End of story! Ah, I can't go back to scratchin' for gil in the old town. How'd he imitate me so well?

- Relate the tale of the **master of disguise**.

Are you utterly daft? The one who's looking for the swindler *is* the swindler, don't you see? 'Tis the oldest trick in the grimoire, m'boy! What's that? He's still nearby? Good. Time to put an end to this once and for all. Don't worry, you'll have my gratitude, and a bit in your pocket.

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Look-alike (lower level) (x2): You seem a nice lad. Take care: there's many a cheat and swindler in this fine city. You'd do well to keep an eye out.

Archadian Gentry/Look-alike (upper level) (x2): There's a swindler out there who looks like me! Bah, people are going to think *I'm* the swindler! I'm the one who's being swindled, I say!

Archadian Ardent/Poor Husband: My **anniversary**'s comin' up, see. Haven't got a lot of gil, but I still bought the missus somethin' special. Can you guess what it is? A necklace! Of course it's well hidden! I'm not stupid. I put it well back in the wardrobe, where she's sure not to find it. Er, just between you and me, right?

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Ardent/Poor Wife: It will soon be my wedding anniversary! Whatever shall I give my dearest? That reminds me, I found the oddest thing: a fine necklace at the back of the wardrobe! If only I could remember when I bought it... But no matter, I've sold the thing now. We live well enough, but it's hard to save... I needed the gil to buy my dearest what he deserves!

- Relate the tale of the **anniversary**.

Wh-What? He bought that necklace for me!? As *my* anniversary present!? Oh dear, oh dear! Whatever shall I do? F-F-First things first. I'll have your silence on this. Not a peep to him! Not even a meaningful glance! I'll pay you not to speak. Are we agreed?

- Do nothing.

Archadian Ardent/Poor Wife (x2): I'm still having trouble believing that necklace was to be my anniversary present. No wonder it seemed so unfamiliar! What to do? What to do!? I'll buy it back, put it where I found it, then he can give it to me as though nothing had happened... but how will I afford a gift for him!?

Archadian Ardent/Poor Husband (x2): I'm giving the missus quite the present for our anniversary: a necklace! I've had to keep it in the back of my wardrobe so as to hide it from her. This city hasn't always been kind to us, but the missus, she's given it her all. If I don't show any appreciation now, when will I?

Archadian Gentry/Avid Traveler: I do so enjoy **traveling**... seeing flora and fauna of faraway places... except for those flora and fauna with fangs! Perhaps some armor is in order? Or so I thought, but did you know heavy armor leaves stripes and sores on one? And lumbering laden in metal does not a pleasant holiday make!

- Commit this tale to memory.
- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Traveling Gentleman: Travel? My work has taken me far and wide. Why, I'm on the road for six months a year. Danger? Near misses? Daily affairs! Of course, I take care to wear the proper protectives, and my sword arm is good enough to hold off your average fell beast.

- Relate the tale of the **traveler**.

A woman traveler concerned about armor, you say? Certainly, heavy armor is just that: heavy. But I'd worry more about beasts than bruises... Me, I find my greatest foe on the road is solitude. You say this lady you spoke to enjoys traveling? Perhaps you might, er, arrange a meeting? Why, if I could find someone of the feminine persuasion to share my travels, that'd solve all my woes. And perhaps I could solve hers?

- Do nothing.

Archadian Gentry/Traveling Gentleman (x2): Now, when you hear of someone lonely on the road, you might imagine pangs of solitude striking by night, but this is not the case! Solitude on the road comes when surrounded by other travelers. A fear that you are not who you think you are... who you thought you were.

Archadian Gentry/Avid Traveler (x2): I suppose if one is to travel widely, one must be properly garbed. Armor, not fashion, my dear. One's partner can make all the difference, too.

[After getting three chops...]

[You are now free to ride the cab.]

[If you gather all available pine chops and take them to a chop master...]

Chopmaster: Hello, I'm the Chopmaster. Help you with aught?

- Trade pine chops for sandalwood.

Very well, here's your sandalwood chop.

*[You obtain a **Sandalwood Chop**!]*

Congratulations on getting your sandalwood. This designates you as a most promising ardent. Why, you might even make gentry one day. Those with sandalwood May ride cabs, and get into Central.

- What are pine and sandalwood chops?

Here in Archades, people spend their whole lives trying to get their hands on pine chops and, if they're lucky, a chop of fine sandalwood. Gil, they're only good for the buying and selling of goods. You can have all the gil in the world and it won't buy you respect. Only chops of pine, or a chop of sandal will win you that. You see, the chops represent your contribution to the greater good of the Empire. Common citizens might come by pinewood chops enough during their daily lives, but it takes a soldier, or some great deed to earn sandalwood.

- Just passing through.

Best of luck to you.

[Dialogue with the cab guide if you have a sandalwood chop...]

Cab Guide: Is that a sandalwood chop I see? Very well! This cab is for Tsenoble, good sir.

- Take me to Tsenoble.
- No, thanks.

[Dialogue with the cab guide if you just have the requisite number of pine chops...]

Cab Guide: Ah, I see you have some chops, sir. Splendid. To Tsenoble?

- Take me to Tsenoble.
- No, thanks.

Cab Guide (x2) : Good day, good sir! To Tsenoble?

- Take me to Tsenoble.
- No, thanks.

Tsenoble

[When the cab arrives, Balthier is there waiting for them.]

Balthier: Ah, so pleased you could join me. Jules had a morsel for us: a light airship used by Draklor researchers is just up ahead. We'll take that and go on through the service entrance. Let's make haste, shall we?

Cab Guide: Welcome to Tsenoble! And be proud you've made it this far. Chops of pine, chops of sandal, they're worth more than life itself here. Don't let yours go lightly. Now, anyone for Nilbasse?

- Take me to Nilbasse.
- Decline.

Cab Guide (x2): Nilbasse! Cab for Nilbasse! Going to Nilbasse?

- Take me to Nilbasse.
- Decline.

Archadian Gentry/Prideful Boy: An ardent, are you? I'm *gentry*. I expect to be addressed as such. Peasant.

[If you teleport in with the crystal...]

Archadian Gentry/Prideful Boy: I saw you come in on the Gate Crystal. An ardent, aren't you. No upstanding *gentry* would use the things. Why leave the city, anyway?

Archadian Gentry/Entrepreneur: The time is ripe for enterprise, I say! To brave the markets, make some gil, and reach for the stars! Speak naught to me but *enterprise*!

Archadian Gentry/Ruined Woman: I used my last sandal to pay off my creditors... That's why I'm taking this cab down to Nilbasse. If I go down there... I shan't be coming back. Not until I've earned my status once again. Starting from scratch at my age... *(sigh)*

Archadian Gentry/Haughty Boy: So much time, and naught to do... Mayhap I'll pester some soldiers... The chase alone would be good for a lark!

Imperial: Only those with sufficient chops are allowed in this area, sir. If you wish to go higher, you'll need sandals. Sandalwood chops, that is.

Tightened Security

[Ahead of the party, two Imperials approach a Judge to give a report.]

Imperial: The complices of the Senate have been quelled, Your Honor. Our forces sustained but light casualties.

Judge: You have leave to withdraw. One detachment will remain here to guard Draklor.

Imperial: My lord.

[As the Imperials leave, we see Basch, Balthier, and Vaan tucked out of sight in a corner.]

Vaan: Do you think they're on to us?

Basch: It would seem not, though this will make our task more difficult still.

Archadian Gentry/Quiet Woman: I do wish these soldiers would leave the running about to the children. All that clanging of metal — what a cacophony!

Archadian Gentry/Imperious Man: Quiet a view from up here, wouldn't you say? Yes, there's nothing quite so satisfying as looking *down* on other people, is there.

Archadian Gentry/Curious Boy: Did you see that Judge just now? I think I heard him say something about the Senate... It sounded as if something was afoot!

Docent: I'm terribly sorry, but there's been an emergency. No one is allowed to enter Central at this time. Please, come again.

Imperial: No entry to Central at this time. And refrain from suspicious behavior until things settle down. You know what I mean.

Brokered in True Archades Fashion

[As they walk back toward the cab stop...]

Balthier: Certainly took your time getting here, didn't you. Off seeing the sights, perhaps?

Vaan: Not likely. Do you know how long it took to get the chops to get up here?

Balthier: What's that? But I gave Jules some chops...

Vaan: Jules!

[Just then, the man in question appears again.]

Jules: Tsk, tsk. A squad of Judges has been sent to Draklor. You'll find the service entrance rather a difficult proposition, I'm afraid.

Balthier: Your doing, no doubt. You knew how the Ministry of Law would move, so you had Vaan out collecting chops until the Judges could reinforce Draklor. Of course... Tell me, how much did the Ministry pay for word of the prodigal son?

Jules: The Ministry? Oh, Judges make poor customers, my friend. Too many rules, too many laws. Perhaps you didn't know, Master Balthier, that Draklor is a toy box these days, filled with your lord father's conceits... All developed without the Senate's knowledge, of course. Why, not even the Emperor knew the full extent of Dr. Cid's operations. Now, here's the catch: since Vayne had himself declared dictator, nary a peep has come out of that laboratory. I know people who would sell their own mum for the merest scrap of information about the goings-on inside Draklor.

Balthier: People like... Rozarrian sympathizers worried about the Empire's weapons programs, and anyone else who might be opposed to House Solidor hegemony. So, we create a disturbance, and you get your windfall of dirt on Draklor.

Jules: And in exchange for your service, I've spoken to a cabbie. When he asks where you want to go, tell him: "You know where to go." Simple, no?

Balthier: Ah, a deal, brokered in true Archades fashion. Why, it's just like old times, Jules. Brings a tear to my eye.

[Balthier walks off in a huff.]

Jules: Good to be back, eh? My regards to your lord father, Master Ffamran... er, rather, Master "Balthier." Anon, anon.

Cab Guide: Welcome to Tsenoble! And be proud you've made it this far. Chops of pine, chops of sandal, they're worth more than life itself here. Don't let yours go lightly. Now, anyone for Nilbasse?

- Take me to Nilbasse.
- You know where to go.

You want to go *there*, eh? You sure?

- Let's go.

All right. All aboard.

[You board the cab. A bit of conversation, as you see the cab fly away through the city...]

Vaan: So, this Jules... is he some old friend of yours, Balthier? You two seemed... close.

Balthier: Close enough for fisticuffs... Driver! Faster, if you please. I would be loath to expend any of the violence of my present mood on my companions.

Cabbie: S-Sir? Yes, sir!

- Decline.
- Decline.

The Laboratory



Draklor Laboratory. Click image for video.

[High up in a tower, the cab lands. Balthier and Vaan are the first out, closely followed by the others.]

Vaan: Where to?

Balthier: This way!

[They take off running.]

Draklor Laboratory

66th Floor

Lucky?

[As they enter, the corridors are empty.]

Basch: It's too quiet.

Balthier: Passing strange. There are supposed to be guards here.

Vaan: Maybe we're just lucky.

Balthier: Maybe you're just optimistic.

Basch: Something may be afoot. We proceed with caution.

Balthier: No time for caution. Step to it! Cid's chambers are on the top level.

Security Gate: **Ashe:** Our task here is not yet complete. We must find the stolen nethicite.

[The bodies of Imperial soldiers are strewn through the halls. Your party gapes in shock.]

Ashe: Look at this...

Direct Lift: This lift appears to go up to the top floor, but it does not stop here.

Imperial: Y-You... are with him...!?

Imperial: Help... help me...

North Lift Terminal: Select destination: 66, 67, 68F

67th Floor

Imperial: D-Dont think you'll get away with this...

Imperial: S-Stay away from Doctor Cid...

CDB

Visitors

[They enter the room to find a ransacked office.]

Fran: He's had visitors. Ones lacking manners, by the looks of it.

Vaan: Someone after the nethicite?

[Balthier approaches the desk and looks down at the paperwork ponderously.]

Balthier: The Jagd Difohr, was it? Six years, and ever since you got back, this... What madness found you there?

[He hears a sound. The voices of Imperials outside...]

Imperial: Up! Above us! Drop bulkheads five and eight! Be to it!

Vaan: They found us!

Fran: His earlier visitors, more like. We should lie low for now.

Balthier: *[appearing beside her with a card in hand]* **No. We'll use their confusion. We need to find Cid. Now.**

[You obtain a Lab Access Card!]

[You obtain a map of Draklor Laboratories!]

[Your location map for this area is complete.]

CDB: The door is securely locked.

Rm 6704 East

Researcher/Senior Researcher: What's going on? There were soldiers in the laboratory... Has there been an intruder? The bulkheads are functioning... were safe. The bulkheads, red and blue, are activated

alternately. When one opens, the other locks. No one who wasn't intimately familiar with the workings of the laboratory could get through. The guards will find them soon enough. So then, who might you be?

Rm 6703 East

Bulkhead Controls: This device controls the lab security bulkheads. The [blue/red] bulkheads are currently closed.

- Open the [blue/red] bulkheads.

The [blue/red] bulkheads have opened, and the [opposite] bulkheads have closed.

- Do nothing.

[Rm 6307 West, and on the 68th Floor, Rm 6803 East, Rm 6804 West, Rm 6811 West, and Rm 6801 East all have Bulkhead Controls with the same dialogue prompt.]

Rm 6711 East

Researcher/Nethicite Researcher: Quite a commotion outside... It's hard to concentrate with such a racket. I've all the latest manufactured nethicite data, yet Doctor Cid is unreachable. Perhaps he's pondering the mysteries of the universe on **70**...

68th Floor

South Lift Terminal: Selection destination: **68F or 70F (Current locations: 68F)**

70th Floor

The Earlier Visitor

[When they emerge from the lift, Basch looks to his left just in time to see a man running at him with twin blades. He dodges at the last second, then blocks a potential blow. They lock eyes, growling. The mysterious man seems to have a realization.]

???: Ah. My apologies. You bear not the stench of Cid's lackies.

Basch: And you are... our earlier visitor.

[They draw away from each other as they hear a voice from up the stairs beside them.]

???: Yes, a valuable man, one I'd sooner not lose. Yet he knows too much.

[The mysterious earlier visitor runs up the stairs in pursuit.]

Energy Transitarium

Dr. Cid

[The earlier visitor, with swords still drawn, faces Dr. Cid, who is standing above him.]

???: Cid. You know deifacted nethicite brought down the *Leviathan*! How can you persist in this folly?

Cid: And you've come here to stop me? I'd fain see you try.

Balthier: Consider your bones, old man. You're outmatched.

[Cid looks up in surprise as Balthier and the others enter.]

Cid: Pirate scum of the skies. What brings you here?

Balthier: Treasure. What else would a pirate want? We'll take the Dusk Shard.

Cid: You've come all this way for that trinket? I thought you above this. *[he turns to the side, as if hearing from someone next to him]* Hm? What's that?

[His eyes come to rest squarely on Ashe.]

Cid: The Princess of Dalmasca come to visit? *[he continues to act as though conversing with someone invisible]* She's not entirely without merit. A test of sorts for our princess?

Ashe: You're a babbling fool.

Cid: *[grandiosely, with his arms up]* A trial for Ashelia B'nargin Dalmasca! *[to Ashe]* You lust for the Stone's power, do you not?

[Ashe hesitates.]

???: Lend him not your ears, m'lady. He means to use you.

[Mist seethes from his body; he floats rather than jumps down to the floor. Floating machine rooks circle around him; long-barreled guns of some sort appear in his hands.]

Fran: Manufacted nethicite! Like Bergan.

Balthier: How could you do this? How could you fall this far?

[During the fight, when you take down one of Cid's rooks...]

Balthier: Always hiding behind your toys. Pity if anything were to happen to them.

[After defeating Dr. Cid...]

[The visitor makes one last mad dash at Cid as he stumbles and drops his weapons, but he is thrown back by some force.]

Cid: *[as he stands upright]* Venat, you shouldn't have.

[Beside him the apparition of some strange, ghostly presence with glowing eyes appears.]

Balthier: This creature... So this is your Venat?

["Venat" disappears.]

Cid: Ashelia B'nargin Dalmasca! Just how far will you go for power? Does your lust for nethicite consume you? Am I right? I am, aren't I. A worthy daughter of the Dynast-King! You would do well to go to Giruvegan. Who knows? You may receive a new Stone for your trouble.

[An Air Cutter flies in. Ashe yells after him as he approaches it.]

Ashe: Your words mean nothing to me!

Cid: The reins of History back in the hands of man. I too make for Giruvegan. Give chase, if you dare it!

[He gets in the Air Cutter, and it flies off again.]

Balthier: I hate it when he does that.

???: Mayhaps you think me remiss! The Lady Ashe of Dalmasca?

[The mysterious visitor sheathes his swords at his back and walks toward Ashe.]

???: The sky pirate Reddas, at your employ.

Memoirs of Mqs. Halim Ondore IV - Chapter 17: Through Midnight to Dawn

The Imperial Senate, powerless to resist House Solidor's brutal Purge, was dissolved.

Wayne Solidor reigned supreme over the Empire.

Though this Upheaval shook the Imperial Bastion to its Foundation, these developments were, to say the least, welcomed by her Military.

The authoritarian Rule of the Judges, in tandem with the impending Threat of Rozarrian Invasion, served to foster Camaraderie among its Ranks.

For our part, the Resistance mustered Strength in the Border-Skies, making ready for the Task ahead.

A War to decide the Doom of Ivalice would soon be upon us.

Chapter 17 through Midnight to Dawn

The Garland



The Resistance army fleet amassing in the skies, with Garland just left of center. Click image for video.

[In blue skies over mountainous landscape, we see a great fleet of airships. The largest comes into closer view, with a great statue of a woman at its front like a siren on a ship's prow, and smaller craft flying out from it. The text in the bottom right reads: The Resistance Army Fleet -- Flagship Garland]

Preparations, and the Holy Land

[On the bridge of the Garland, Ondore and his attendant preside.]

Pilot: Squads Flametongue and Ogrenix are away! All ships are reporting in. They're breaking to begin ship-to-ship maneuvers against us. All hands, full ahead flank!

Attendant: We shall make ready to repel their attacks. Counter-air, track them as though they were the enemy.

Pilot: Counter-air, to your stations! A dispatch from Naldoa command, Excellency. The sky pirate has left Archadian airspace. He makes for Balfonheim with the Lady Ashe and her party.

Ondore: It is good to know the lady still lives, but what of our bid for the Stone?

Attendant: With the stone or without, our Resistance should prove an even match for the Imperial army. These weeks of training have honed our edge.

Ondore: I pray 'tis sharp enough.

[Scene fades out, and then back in on Ashe overlooking the blue ocean, from within a large, open-air room. Reddas stands nearby]

Ashe: They choose to supply the Resistance, yet raise not a sword in aid. What city could do this?

Reddas: A city of men without countries. Pirates of the sea and of the sky. Few are they who would fain lay down their lives for a friend, let alone a king.

Ashe: The Marquis — he is set on war?

[We see the rest of the party is also in the room, a mix between a study and a game room. The text in the bottom right reads: Southeastern Archades -- Balfonheim Port -- The Reddas Manse]

Reddas: The time approaches when he must make his position vis-a-vis the Empire clear. When he helped you off the *Leviathan*, he spited the Judges full sore. He cannot sit in idleness and expect to avoid a reckoning. The Marquis shares my distaste for war... yet if it comes to it, he will show no quarter.

[Flashback to Reddas and Ondore conversing in the exact same room, Reddas leaning against the desk the same way.]

Ondore: For the time being, we will continue to train the Resistance army. Enough power on our side... and even Vayne may see the appeal of the treaty table.

[Reddas picks up a bottle from beside him.]

Reddas: Yet Vayne holds the nethicite. What makes you think he would treat when he holds such lower? Power enough to sink the *Leviathan*.

[He takes a drink as Ondore continues.]

Ondore: All the more reason for me to support your infiltration of the capital. You said it yourself: the nethicite is a powerful weapon. I would have you acquire it for me.

[Reddas slams his bottle down and points an accusatory finger at Ondore.]

Reddas: I have not said I would give you the Midlight Shard.

Ondore: If there is no Stone, I would have to look elsewhere for aid.

Reddas: Then you would ally with Rozarria.

Ondore: As I must. Failure is not an option.

[Back to the present.]

Basch: It's just what Vayne wants. He lures the Rozarrians and the Resistance to the field, then crushes both with the nethicite!

Balthier: I think not. Cid has the Stone. We grab it, and smash it to pieces with the Sword of Kings. Vayne will be left holding nary a thing. Time is short. We follow Cid. He's heading towards Giruvegan.

Ashe: Giruvegan.

Fran: It is told of in a song of my people. "On the farthest shores of the river of time... shrouded deep in the roiling Mist... the holy land sleeps: Giruvegan. Who knows the paths? The way to its doors?"

Reddas: Then you seek the Jagd Difohr. Deep within the jungle of Golmore, there is a corner of the Feywood where a Mist-storm surges and seethes.

Vaan: Then that's it. Let's go!

Penelo: Right.

[Vaan grabs Penelo by the hand. She gasps in surprise as he runs off with her. Basch and Fran follow immediately.]

Balthier: Not coming, Reddas? Forget your precious nethicite already?

Reddas: Cid's words rang hollow to me. I will follow another course.

Balthier: Ah, another lead, then, is it? You're well informed.

Reddas: I could well say the same to you, pirate.

[Vaan appears in the door again.]

Vaan: Hurry it up, or we'll leave without you.

Reddas: Ah, Vaan! I've had some of my men check on this Feywood. Best ask what they've found.

Vaan: Ok! Thanks for the help, Reddas.

Reddas: *[with a laugh]* Fly first, ask questions later. Your apprentice is more pirate than you.

Balthier: I don't have an apprentice.

[He leaves, annoyed. Ashe makes to follow.]

Reddas: Princess Ashe! I would hear your heart. If Doctor Cid has spoken the truth, you may well be rewarded with more nethicite in Giruvegan. Tell me: do you still desire the Stone?

Ashe: I desire its power. I want... yet I also fear. I must protect Dalmasca. I can't afford to fear anything.

Reddas: Do not forget Nabudis. That is my only counsel for you.

[She considers his words, then leaves.]

[Go to the previous chapter \(Chapter 8: Journey to the Imperial City\)](#) | [Go to the next chapter \(Chapter 10: The Occuria's Chosen and the Treaty-Blade\)](#)

[Go to Clan Primer](#) | [Go to Side Quests](#) | [Go to Intro & Key](#)