

*To Empress Adélaïde de Val-d'Oise de Lesdiguières,*

*I, JR, 19th of their Name, reply to your letter as a means of giving rest to your fears of our nation. We are agreed that the Herald's machinations are unknowable, fiendish though they undoubtedly are, and cannot speak as to why they were so recalcitrant regarding our people.*

*You are correct that the Age of Chaos has been a cage, and we are wary to exit such a familiar, if chafing structure. Please forgive our own caution as to our lack of embassies, trading caravans or similar overtures. We are relieved to hear such a straightforward request for information, coupled with information of your own rather than attempts at all this cloak and dagger business.*

*Your people seem honorable and well able to have withstood the onslaught of the horrors of the Age of Chaos. As you say, they were not easy times.*

*Our own people had been primarily traders, by vocation, and we consist of a wide variety of the peoples who once lived upon this world. The vast majority of us, do, indeed walk upon two legs. I imagine our biology will be quite familiar to you, should your own biology remain consistent with the standard biology common in the Before Times.*

*Our enigmatic nature was indeed born of the Age of Chaos, but not how you may imagine it. A nation of traders, we settled in the least contested areas of the continent, areas not well suited towards producing that which is required for subsistence. In the Before Times, we had become reliant on the trade goods that flowed through our region and were caught quite unprepared by the solitude of the Age of Chaos, the lack of incoming resources. Those of us unable to adapt to*

*the way things were did not fare well. As a result, the Age of Chaos has forged us into an isolated, lonely people, but one well capable of comfort in our barren land.*

*I am quite hopeful that with the bars of our cage finally undone I might coax my people towards resuming our previous role of assisting the flow of trade on the continent once more, though this has not yet caught the imagination of the masses. We are too well suited to our lonely life, and I fear that too many generations have taught us of the dangers of free sociability. My own reign has been marked with attempts to bolster the courage of my people, and to overcome my natural aloofness in order to better secure social bonds.*

*Towards that end, though I wish not to be an unsolicited rumor-monger, I fear I must mention that not all of our neighbors have been as friendly or as war-fearing as you. The bars of our cages have not been open a fortnight and yet there are already roars at our borders, over what we can only hope is an easily smoothed over cultural misunderstanding.*

*Please, do continue to write us, that I may soothe the fears of my people. Perhaps with enough knowledge of the Outer Lands they may yet see the potential that lies there.*

*May the Heralds Leave Us Be.*

*- JR, Leader of the Quotidans.*