

To Empress Adélaïde de Val-d'Oise de Lesdiguières, First Of Your Name, from JR, 19th of Mine Name, Leader of the Quotidian Quorum. Mine sincerest apologies for writing in Jaimie's stead, but the touch needed to respond to your intricately designed letter is yet beyond poor Jaimie. We graciously accept your own apologies in being remiss in your discours, and offer our humble reassurance that while your letters are rare, they are a wealth of diplomatic relations. We feel closer to you already, with each new word you write. For your request of aid, we can offer twofold assistance. First and of the utmost foremost, we may offer assistance in the form of information, which may yet shine light into the precipice of the unknown. Secondly, we have been assisting The Rahastan Assembly of Tribes, our closest ally, in preventing The Keitan League from enslaving those self-same refugees.

I must implore you to enter into a Trade Agreement with mine nation. In such an agreement, we would give you information you so desperately need, in exchange for what knowledge you have and any favorable trade of goods or culture you deem acceptable. You would not be the first nation to ally with us as such, and it is my sincere belief that you would stand to gain the most of all nations with what we might tell you.

As a matter of some relevance, we know the source of the plague which ails you, and the degree to which it is not contained within your own borders. We know which nations have techniques to resist its ills, and some may yet prove feasible for your own people, natives and refugee alike. Regardless of your decisions regarding Trade Agreements, my people are already taking action to ensure this foul Shaking Plague does not wipe all that is good and just from our world.

*The protection of that which is good and just, that which allows higher life and knowledge is our highest calling. As such, any and all shellfolk refugees have nothing to fear from our people. We wish only to learn, and in turn, spread knowledge that it may not be wiped out in one fell swoop, as the shellfolk so tragically nearly were. We know, too, of their ultimate fate, why they became monstrous and violent, and what risk a similar fate brings to other nations. We could tell you, if we were but connected through the sacred pact of the Trade Agreement.*

*To your second answer, we shall respect your desire for internal politics to remain unsaid. Our curiosity is vast, and young Jaimie has not yet learned to curb this Virtue. It has been our observations, as well, that the Scientific Arts have withered much under the assailment of the Age of Chaos. It is our hope that we may yet restore that which has been lost.*

*As for your potential Exploration of the Ultralands, my people have small knowledge of this as well. It is a dangerous place, one not suited for justice nor wisdom. We could tell you what we know of it, were we trading partners. We have, if memory serves, sent you out a small sample of that which was found within it. Take that as extraordinary proof of our extraordinary claims of knowledge of many things.*

*I suspect you are correct, that your minds protect themselves against the knowledge of the sheer tragedy the shellfolk have encountered. The world is a cruel place, and justice exists in the minds of those capable of providing it. It is up to all of us to make the world a better place. Our own records indicate our numbers have reduced 19-fold since the Before Times, and what we have seen of*

*the wider world is similar. Unfathomable suffering and death have occurred due to the Age of Chaos, and it has not yet deigned fit to stop. Our hope is to yet find a way to prevent future tragedies of scale.*

*Should you wish to find concrete information on the child, as a trading partner with my nation, we would work our utmost to provide. Your point that the depth of experiences, memories and stories in each life is irreplaceably precious has moved me. If only such losses need never occur again.*

*I urge now, one final time, for us to become trading partners, for you to have access to information which can help your people to the best of our ability. Our aid needs must come in the form of knowledge, but neither can we freely give it in so open a format as these letters. We do not ask for anything so burdensome in exchange, merely continuing letters, the odd scrap of information in kind, and any resources your people may offer with no burden intended. As one final imploration, I do offer that becoming our trading partner need not be forever. The relationship may yet be severed at any time, with no additional burden or ill will, should you decide it not to your liking. Were there another way I could assist you, I do so swear I would offer it.*

*May Justice and Wisdom Prevail*

*-JR*