



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

*I understand that you show a great interest in the vineyards of our great nation, and that you wish for us to improve their harvest. While I am not surprised by this interest (it is oft said your father showed a similar fascination with wine, and that your mother oft sampled the delicacy even while carrying you), now is simply not the time for such activity. Wine is the pastime of peace, after all, and peace is the promise of good rule (was it not Saint Anselot who said that there can never be true peace unless honor is observed by the state's rulers?)*

*Given this, then, you understand why it is not a season of the vine (if you have not heard the term, it is one we proper gentry use to refer to the season in which the grapes produce the most lovely vintages).*

*No, this is a season of blood, and the proper action in a season of blood is to strengthen bonds. (As Saint Marcelea says, blood is thicker than wine, no?) To this end, I have begun to encourage our strange neighbors, the Rahastan Assembly of Tribes, to increase their trade with us.*

*Us of the Republic of Verlan, that is. I have heard that some traders have begun to reach you across King's Gate, but I assure you, they bring nothing compared to the gains I have secured by working with their northerly cousins. Their ships have come across the Gravesea, bearing spices, fish, and the parts of strange creatures they claim their tribesmen slew. Though the creature parts are obviously the result of some savage un-godly tradition, I have included with this letter a pair of what they called 'mother's eyes.' Their yellow sickly hue reminds me of you, in some ways.*

*The fish and spices were more to my interest, and I have begun to draft a trading agreement with the northern tribes.*

*I have also made advances to our other northerly neighbors, the Confederacy of Fleets, but they do not seem to have much of a trading arm, alas. They have also begun to send several heathen preachers into our lands, speaking of the "Rove," some strange religion based around travel and movement. Their ships have also begun moving along our coasts, though in numbers low enough they may simply be for scouting the lands.*

*Though our people's Faith In The Saints remains strong, I trust you will be doing something about this plague of heathens soon? It is your duty as protector of the nation's honour after all, and even I did not expect you to fail in your duties so soon.*

*Yours ever in service,*

*Patrice-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert de Boncompagni*

*High Regent of the Verlan Republic*