



To JR. Information Broker

We appreciate your recent reports. We are confused by many of them, particularly the purpose of your opposite facts. We do not see why you waste our time and yours with these trivialities when there are many more profound things to be doing. However, some of our children found your words amusing. We thank you.

Your reports on more serious matters have been helpful. Are we to understand that the plague was the creation of Al Daric as a weapon against Grovel, deliberately released by the Rahastas? These are grave accusations and we will respond appropriately.

As you may know, our initial willingness to entertain communications with you once more was due to the promise of compensation by Sootscale. He has failed to provide this compensation and we name him Oathbreaker for his lies. We are still bound to friendly relations with you due to the terms of our compact. However we believe the compact we signed with you does not preclude a suitable retaliation against Sootscale for this oathbreaking. We request you stay out of it.

As to your opinion of FRIEND, you are entitled to it. We will not waste words on the misguided.

In exchange for your recent reports, please find attached information about the nation of Grovel, as you seem to be interested in them. We await your next reports.





May the hungering of your mind be reflected in the blackest patches of the firmament.



From his majesty Mansa Sino'otollo, the Shark-Binder, Voice of the Navigators, High King of the Four Fleets, Ruler of the Six Seas, Mansa of the Six Peoples, Lord of the Nine Islands, Viceroy of the Wreckage, Friend of the Cnidarians, the Starblessed, Binder of Men, Sitter of the Coral Throne, Warden of Ayambe, Plaguecleanser, Walker of the Elder Path, Cleaner of Latrines, Good Buddy, Keeper of the Ironscale Pact, First Sword of the Surf, Brine-bound and Iron Willed.

Grovel appears to be an absolute monarchy, with one ruler, the glorious and rotund Rat King Sir Nibbles, he of the leftward curling tail, master of soups, denier of sauces, and voted "most". Sir Nibbles seems to be a wise and cunning leader, though with little time for affairs of state which are likely beneath him.

Much of the military forces of Grovel are concentrated in Throngmadock, a mighty fortress once belonging to the dwarves. Much of Grovels infrastructure and cities appear to have once belonged to the Dwarves or a range of lesser tunnelling races: Hinkipunks, Boggarts, Kobolds and Fenrigs. However, these all appear to have gone extinct, likely due to prolonged isolation within the vicinity of the ratmen. A primitive shrine to the process of Extinction is located in the halls beneath Throngmadock, where the ratmen celebrate the extinction of their enemies and gnaw upon the ancient bones of the dead or, once these bones are unavailable, suitable replacements taken from amongst each other. Recently, piles of crow bones have been added to the shrine, alongside bizarre homunculi of flesh known as Crats. Throngmadock has a wonderous system of underground aqueducts, however they have fallen into disrepair and now are largely clogged





with refuse. In the deep tunnels beneath the city, those loyal to us often disappeared, taken by gigantic blind beasts that move beneath the earth. Whisperers and our contact Old Bones name these Deep Maulers, and we are deeply intrigued at the military applications they represent.

Hunting expeditions are occasionally launched against these Deep Maulers, for if one is slain their corpse may feed thousands for a few days. A hunt alleviates the hunger and starvation that is common place in Grovel in three ways: first, the beast itself is of prodigious size and may feed thousands. Second, any of the thousands that die trying to hunt one no longer need to be fed. Third, these casualties themselves may be feasted upon.

Outside of Throngmadock, our information is more limited. A chain of sunken fortress cells exist all along the Horn Mountains, and recently the rats have begun extending this into the Eschaton Spike, bringing large segments of Tauhan under their control without revealing their presence to the knights above. Along the costline, these sunken cells - known as Depthburgs - connect to underwater ports, in which bizarre ships of metal and rotting wood are launched to transport the ratmen to their island holdings. Most ratmen however prefer to swim, not trusting or not able to afford the wooden transporation. Notable Depthburgs include Pillarblight, Snivelcrawl, and Hatethyself.

Pillarblight in particular is wonderous, full of luminous green crystals and rumored to have tunnels leading into the Ultralands, despite its vast distance from that place. Presumably, some magical distortion has occurred that facilitates this. Alternatively, Pillarblight conceals a cache of Ultrinium that is somehow isolated from the Ultralands, and the rumours originate from the mining of these more local deposits.





Trade goods from Grovel are intriguing, often consisting of cunningly woven baskets, nuggets of Ultrinium and intricately made metal devices of questionable use (but excellent when melted down and reforged into blades).

Observations of the Grovel military arm are scant, but suggest they operate large squads of 60 or more members known as Warrens. Naturally cowardly, Warrens prefer to construct cover and other fortifications as they fight, moving from one fortified area to another and deploying large numbers of crossbows and pikes in preference to close quarters weaponry. Each warren is led by a claw leaders, believed to be their equivalent our chiefs and chiefs men. A crippling weakness of their military is that it appears almost incapable of effective offensive action against creatures of sufficient ferocity or lethality. Each individual is unwilling to sacrifice itself for its fellows, and thus retreats to the safety of fortifications. Overbearing offense is thus the superior defence against these military formations.

