

To his majesty Mansa Sino'otollo, the Shark-Binder, Voice of the Navigators, High King of the Three Fleets, Ruler of the Four Seas, Lord of the Eight Islands, Friend of the Cnidarians, the Starblessed, Binder of Men, Cleaner of Latrines, First Sword of the Surf, Brine-bound and Iron Willed.

From Navigator Captain Bri'otollo, Salt Chief of the Tauhan, ratsbane, knife of the waves, the coral blade. May the dark between the stars consume the words I speak.

As the Shaking Plague consumes the rest of the country, killing off our trade partners, it has left our shining islands alone. I can only assume that this is because the Gods know we are already cursed with you as our leader, and know we need no more troubles in these times.

Speaking of the Shaking Plague, it has put a dent in our trade income to an unfortunate extent, due to the mass die offs around the country. Why it has left our ships alone I do not know, but thank the Gods for every day.

The Shark Fleet has done as you commanded, and surged through the Scar to take the Northern Tauhan lands. Though they are much colder than the seas and islands we are used to, the Rattlings of Grovel have provided us with proper warm wear and several tips on surviving the cold. This, plus the ministrations and supplies of the Coven of the Bloodless Rose, have allowed us to carve out the wreckages of some of the Tauhan land-cities as forward bases. We have brought along the Pathway makers of Al'Daric, and they have begun the construction of one of their great gates.

The monsters here have proven... troublesome. No two of them are alike, though there are common themes between them: Tentacles, teeth, claws, and eyes. Some of our sailors have remarked that some seem not unlike the great paintings of our most Glorious Gods. So far, only one of our binders (Navigator Okin'Tollo, leader of our Mage Corp) has managed to successfully bind one of the great beasts. The others found themselves shaken aside, describing the process as being similar to attempting to bind an unwilling Navigator. A few of our Navigators froze in place after the performing of the spell, before attempting to climb into one of the beasts' maws. According to the examinations of the other Navigators, the beasts themselves turned around the bindings on them! Most troubling.

We have resorted to crude violence to take down the beasts, then, clearing the seas of any we find with our own great beasts and hunters. With the aid of our Rahastan and Ratling allies, we managed to establish a forward base, close enough that we can now raid into the heartlands of Dun Sancerre, should we choose. For now, though, our bases are tenuous little things, clinging to the shoreline, little more than supply depots.

As you commanded, we have begun the process of binding the various survivors of the clans to our will, through magic or through offerings. There were many more survivors than we first assumed, and our shoreside bases were soon swamped with refugees. We gave the same offer to each: Join us, or suffer at our hands. Though many joined willingly, several of the wandering tribes refused our offers. We began our raids on them, striking through the snow-swept jungles with the joy of battle coursing through our veins. After our first few raids, however, we found the Tauhans assisted by the very same Coven of the Bloodless Rose that had previously aided us! They demanded we cease our raids upon the 'refugees,' and declared them under their protection. A few skirmishes were had between us and the Rahastans after that, our blades against their magic. A fortnight after the first skirmish, however, every raid chief who had led a battle against the Rahastans but one disappeared from their tent without a trace. A single sigil was found burned into my cabin, above my bed: 'Cease Raids.' I suspect Quotidian involvement, and ordered the cessation of raids until we have a proper means to counteract their predators.

This was confirmed by the only surviving raid chief, Zami'okollo. She spoke of a posse of raiders descending on her in the night who attempted to kill her in her sleep. They shifted forms as they fought, taunting her with dark magics and attempted distractions, before he killed one and drove the others away. For her bravery, and based on her previous records, I have decided to promote her as our new Raid Captain.

Yours in blood and guts,
Salt Chief Bri'otollo