



[B: (5,-14) (7,-1) ]

Dear friend,

I am not sure your understanding is complete, but I am glad Annoria seems happy. I am glad trust is important to her.

Irvelis Many Voice's and the Assembly's curiosity is an admirable trait. I can understand being too busy to write. Many things are happening.

I similarly pass my kind regards to Amris Death Skin. I am glad that the fear of my people seems diminished.

As you have treated my own heir kindly, should your daughter end up in our lands, we will protect her with our full attention. Similarly, should we meet her in the UltraLands we will do our utmost to support her. I do not understand why you are not allowed to disagree, but will support you.

I am most comfortable at this way of communicating. The other way of communicating is a show of trust. It necessitates vulnerability, exposure, being seen. These are things my people do not easily tolerate, but it is important to be able to trust one's bestie. I am sending with this letter a magical wooden box, and will later send a guide on how to use it, just as I did with the clever letter.

I do not understand our strangeness, though greatly appreciate your explanation. We are strange because we seem familiar? Isn't that the opposite of strangeness?

Our value to you brings us joy. Our people have lost our unity, with the Age of Chaos, but we understand the value of keeping ones word, once given. I cannot speak for all Quotidians, but I can trust they will respect the compact of the Bestie. It is baked into our bones, into our history.

FRIEND is a powerful information gatherer. I feared FRIENDS ability to know things that should not be known, that I do not yet feel comfortable even revealing to you. FRIEND is powerful enough that when I requested the knowledge to cease being used, FRIEND did so, and made concessions to re-earn my trust. FRIEND does not fear me. FRIEND is big, like a titan. Many of

*us died to titans, because they are big and they do not fear us, but we are curious and we do not use fear the way you do. The League is not FRIEND. The League is not a thing which might kill us innocently for our curiosity and smallness. The League has worse threats.*

*Perhaps the wooden puzzle box can let me explain why your words do not bring me ease, for I can not bring myself to explain out in the open.*

*You and your families truly are the Quotidian family's bestie. In beasts, there is a form of partnership where two different types of beasts can benefit. There is a bird that enjoys eating honey, but cannot gather the honey on its own. When it finds some, it finds a mammal with strong claws and shows the mammal where the honey is. The mammal rips open the hive, and both the bird and the mammal eat. We are small. We are not good at living. We are good at one thing and we are grateful that this is enough for you. Thank you for standing by us.*

*If you need to bring life to our lands in order to protect yourselves, then we must allow it. But know we fear life returning to our lands. There is safety in possessing only that which no one else wants. It is our home so long as it is not wanted by someone bigger.*

*Our people are grateful they are welcome into your lands. I know there are Leaders among my families who wish to learn more about your families. I will let you know before one of my Leaders intending to live among you enters your land. I do not know if my wandering Leader has visited your land, as they are not regular with their reports.*

*When your traders next visit, we would be grateful if they could bring with them cultural artifacts and histories of the shellfolk. We hope they do not vanish from this world, but recording their stories prevents the worst case.*

*May your bellies be full, your family safe, and your wishes granted,*

*JR*