1 The House of Guilds

The House of Guilds is a conglomeration of all of the Guilds in the Realm -- the alchemists, the doxies, the smiths, the jewelers, and so forth. They are all joined together under the authority of the Guild Master, a position filled by election of one of their own, so that the business of economy and commerce in the Realm can occur in an organized fashion. United, the Guilds are an influential political force. Currently, the Guild Master is Havilah Jacob, of the Alchemist's Guild. Jacob's been doing a fine job for a while, but recently things have begun to get away from him a bit.

There have been a number of attacks on the members of the guilds by the Thieve's Guild. This is a new phenomenon. In the past, forays by the Thieve's Guild have been held to a minimum by the Guildmaster; although the precise details of the arrangement remain secret, it is commonly assumed that a payoff arrangement is responsible, and it's worked quite well for years. Sure, there are those who have argued that it's wrong to traffic with thieves, but the House of Guilds is a business, out to make a profit, and the truth is that it's infinitely cheaper to come to an agreement with the Thieve's Guild than to battle them to the death ... or at least it has been, until recently.

It seems that the Shadowlord has decided to renege on his word (not surprising; who can trust thieves?), and your shops and business have been subject to random and exceedingly violent attacks. In addition to that, there have been another series of robberies, less violent but potentially more dangerous to your survival perpetrated by someone calling himself the Sword of Justice.

It seems unlikely that this Sword of Justice is the same one who was arrested several months ago for robbing the House of Guilds, since *that* Sword is working in a Realm-sponsored penal workhouse in the outland regions. The first Sword of Justice's capture nearly resulted in Jacob's expulsion from the Office of Guildmaster when it was revealed that the Sword was really Jacob's brother Yossi, but he and his supporters managed to argue convincingly enough that Jacob was not responsible. Now, the new rash of thefts is inciting more rumours and not-very-subtle mutterings. One of the tasks of the Guildmaster is supposed to be protection of the Realm's merchants from this sort of harrassment; what are you all paying your dues for, anyway?

The Alchemist's Guild has been perhaps hardest hit by an increased traffic in black market drugs, both by the Thieve's Guild and, according to the grapevine, by some kind of independant agency. There have also been reports of distribution of addictive narcotics and euphorics throughout the underworld community, an event that might lead to a Realm-wide drop in the purchase of recreational narcotics, Guild sponsored and black market both. This *has* to be stopped.

D'odani Yitzhok, Master Smith, has convened a special meeting upon the Castle to discuss and decide upon "matters of great importance to the continued functioning of the House of Guilds." A bit vague, but probably important. There are a number of important issues coming up that the Guild will have to deal with; not only is the underworld getting to be a nuisance, but certain political trends appear to be propping up that could prove dangerous for the Guilds as a whole. Prohibition of drugs, to name one thing that is being voted on this week by the Table of Peers, could seriously weaken the House's income if passed; allowing non-Guild merchants to practice in the Realm could easily destroy it altogether! Your living depends largely on the fact that only licensed merchants are allowed to engage in the craft.

Of course, most of you are here for more personal reasons; after all, this is a convocation of the rich and powerful, and is the perfect place to sell your wares. There are a number of Eastern merchants here, as well, but it's hard to tell whether the House's jurisdiction and monopoly extends to the Castle. Kalerege is a Realm Citizen, though, and this *is* his Castle, and if you can convince him to rule that the House of Guild's monopoly on most commercial transactions applies here, as well, you won't have to worry about competition from the Easterners.

One of the concessions the House has made to the peace summit is a ban on the sale of all bladed weapons on the Castle for the duration of the Summit; only blunt and padded weapons such as lipips and truncheons are being used.

In any case, despite the individual competition that is necessary for thriving commerce, you should all try to remember that the Guilds do also need to work together on occassion, and this may well be one of those occassions.

Table of Contents

1 The House of Guilds **1**