1 The Ptaavs

In every generation you are born, considered handicapped, crippled by the society you are surrounded by. In every generation you live as farmers, as peasants, as slaves, as servants, as menial laborers of every stripe. You are sometimes pitied, sometimes reviled, always looked down upon. You are less than human, people say, less even than Easterners. You are ptaavs, a word that has become an insult in common usage.

Ptaavs are born without the capacity to manipulate magic, and in the Realm that single lack does more to prevent their advance than any other handicap. The blind, the deaf, the lame, the retarded--all of these have found a niche in society, but your fellows are the lowest rung, and you have all been taught to believe that that is the way things are and should be.

But some of you are coming to realize that you have been lied to.

You are the Ptaavs, a small but powerful association of ptaavs, who have banded together to regain a corner of your Realm from the mages that run it. Your task is not one of destruction, but of reemphasis...to alter the Realm's dependance on magic. Currently, Realm politics, economics, transportation, communication, manufacture, martial strategy -- **everything** depends on magic, on the exploiting the energies of other worlds. Unblinded by the delirium of the power such manipulation provides, you realize how unstable a system that is. Since no one else is prepared to take steps to fix it, that has become your task, one that shall provide you with some immediate benefits.

The task is not simple, and so you have each approached it in accordance with your specific talents and training. Each of you is a master of particular skills and knowledge, obtained despite the obstacle of ptaavhood. If anyone can accomplish your task, it will be the four of you:

- **D'odani Yitzhok**: Starting life as a menial laborer in a smithery, he has advanced to the position of Master Smith of the House of Guilds, thereby amassing considerable economic and political influence.
- **Arrani Moses**: A paradox come to life; Moses is currently being sponsored as an apprentice to the Wizard's Conclave but is nevertheless a ptaav. By learning the ways of the enemy, Moses has provided the organization with a powerful weapon, knowledge. Further, he is a renowned biologist whose research may yet provide you all with a more tangible weapon.
- **lle-Victory Sorsha**: After gaining her freedom by competing in the Arena and winning, Sorsha too became a biologist, discovering that non-magical tools are sometimes the most useful ones to study non-magical phenomena with.
- **Shellar Rebecca**: A Guard of the Realm who has pushed for representation of your little-heard voice in government and law enforcement. Here on the Castle, her ties to the war and to law enforcement should prove invaluable.

Indeed, the work the four of you have done has already resulted in some potential victories.

You have discovered that the Table of Peers is considering a legislative bill that would commercialize magic by declaring it a licensed profession. Should that succeed, a Wizards Guild would be established under the jurisdiction of the Guildmaster, who would have final say over the status of apprentices. On the one hand, this would undoubtably increase the use of magic in economic contexts...unless, of course, the Guildmaster were one of your own. If that could be arranged, the situation would be infinitely further in your favor.

On a different front, it has been known for some time that the Clanlands use little or no magic in their day-to-day life. You are all human beings with lives in the Realm, so moving to the East is not a solution--but increased trade and immigration with the East would probably have the result of decreasing the Realm's dependance on magic. This week's peace summit may serve to make those trade relations possible.

Of course, not all of you are politically minded, and there are certainly effective short-range solutions to your problems. If you could obtain the Orb of Nairaphi from the Wizard's Conclave, for example, you could certainly bargain with them from a position of strength...or destroy it utterly, thereby forcing the Realm to become less dependant on magic (unfortunately, an act that rash would be likely to doom the Realm to defeat unless the war with the Clans is ended first). And Moses has been engaged in biological research that, he has claimed, may make your tasks a great deal easier.

Your task is multi-faceted, your tools many, your cause just, and your determination unstoppable. Never forget that those who build their lives on magic will act to stop you, no matter the eventual good of your actions; with hard work, cleverness and caution, you may yet achieve the dream you all share, of a society where ptaavs are treated as equals.

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