

Conversations
Wednesday – 11.23.62

THE MAGICAL “STUDY SESSION” HAD GROWN. BUT MOSTLY we were just a support group for mages who felt ostracized by the Sanctified Devils. Of course we swapped tips for magic use and philosophized on magical theory, which was still excessively primitive, but for the most part we couldn’t easily help each other out with specific spells.

On the other hand, this made my desire to find a solution to my problem much easier. We had all complained about one thing or another that the guild were doing, so the question was, did people think they had a case against the non-compete clause in their contracts?

Turns out that the prevailing opinion was “what’s the point.”

“The point is that we could call out the guild for being an asshole and then find a place that’s more inclusive,” I said, a little shocked.

“I’m not sure that’s enough. We’ll still be among a group that’s largely martial based. And the differences between martial and magical jobs are significant. More than between combat and non-combat jobs,” was Zak’s reply. He had become something like a co-leader for this group with me. The “magic Zak,” if you knew the officer of the same name who took my group into the dungeon for the first time. I didn’t think Zak liked being called magic Zak.

"What you're saying is that we would need to make a mages' guild?" someone put in.

"People have tried before," Zak countered.

"But did they have the ability to hire themselves out to round out all martial parties?" I asked carefully.

There was a long pause as people tried to remember.

"I don't know," Zak summed everyone's thoughts up.

"I was hired independently to help someone boost up their job faster. I could see guilds with limited magical support turning to a mages' guild to cover the weakness," Sandy put in.

"Exactly. And we could offer assistance to level 1 mages," I said carefully. "At first, while building up our client base we might have to sacrifice the time of our higher-level members to do the same kind of escort missions. But we should be able to get to the point where other level 1 groups could hire our level 1 mages in sufficient numbers to get the job done. Largely done."

Everyone looked around at each other. "So I guess the question is, do we have enough people who can legitimately declare the non-compete clause broken? Or are close enough to the end not to care. And, more importantly, do we know what's needed to actually run a guild?"

"Well the main thing we'll need is contacts with other guilds. Possibly in the form of mages who would prefer to work with their own kind but still have good ties to their guild."

The conversation began from there, with different groups talking about different things. I moved to a group talking about the grievances and whether or not we had a case. And to my great joy, I was able to provide a rough checklist, and no one was shocked about this. Or asked any questions.

I would say it was the perfect plan. Except I didn't want to start a guild. I mean, why would I want to be tied down to running a freakin' guild? There was a lot of paperwork, plus a lot of responsibility. Really, I didn't mind helping people out and kind of enjoyed it, but being a "founding member" of a guild meant I'd probably be saddled with this annoying thing called "responsibility."

Despite my reservations, people were still looking at me for answers about certain things. Mostly the legal stuff around breaking the non-compete clause. If we made our own guild, there would be the complication of "poaching."

But of course I didn't actually know much about that! And I'd tried to let people know but they kept turning to me about this! I was sure they understood, it was just that we wanted this kind of information and I was the only one who had any amount of knowledge in this area.

I wasn't sure if we should have expected this, but we ended up with a lot of people who had decent, based on my checklist, chances to break from the guild. This seemed troubling if you asked any of us. Nothing seemed enough for criminal charges, but with so many people having issues one had to wonder. Of course, none of us were very sympathetic toward the guild, so it wasn't that surprising that we'd come up with negative responses.

Honestly, I figured it was at the point where we were likely to be able to run a group lawsuit. Didn't know what the "class action" rules were, but if all of us worked together, possibly just all filed similar lawsuits at the same time, it would likely be enough to get the job done. At least broadly. There was just enough evidence on the whole.

Most people were worried about the ability to create a pure mages' guild. I wouldn't mind being a part of such a thing, but it was starting to feel like I was going to end up being a leader whether I wanted to or not.

As for the guild, I figured a mages' guild would be able to function these days. There are now a lot more guilds and a lot more jobs inside dungeons. All together it should be quite possible to maintain a mages' guild, conventional wisdom or not. It turned out a lot of people believed in us.

Which was why Zak was looking around at all of us with a slightly overwhelmed, but largely pleased, expression on his face. "So, are we all in agreement? And everyone knows what we're going to do?"

I chuckled out loud. "Still don't know why everyone insisted on my figuring out the legal part of this. But yeah, I'm game and good."

Several other people called off, and the eleven of us who were currently here seemed uncertain about what to do at all. Which left me grinning like an idiot. "Come on, people. If you're interested in seeing this work out, pick a god or goddess who's even vaguely related to this field and send up a prayer and sacrifice. It certainly can't hurt and might help a lot."

That got everyone to roll their eyes, so I continued, well aware that most people were dismissive. "I'm already planning out a significant sacrifice to Zilena seeking guidance and help. I figure she'll be more than willing to help something who can boost the productivity of those who stand against the flood of monsters that emerges from dungeons."

"Well, I guess we do know that at least some of the gods and goddesses exist, they give blessings and the like, so we know they can help. It's not a bad idea from that point of view," Zak said slowly.

"If you're not comfortable, don't do it. I personally don't care if you don't like the idea of sacrificing to the gods," I clarified with a shrug. "But if you're not, you can take advantage of those blessings anyways."

It was Adam who asked the smart question. "Good point, but I imagine those who would want to use said blessing would do so even without you saying anything. So why did you do it?"

"I've learned that it's possible for blessings to spread beyond those who asked for it. And I figured I'd share a general warning in case someone scores a blessing that affects the entire group." I then informed them of the party-wide poison-resistance buff I'd picked up before.

In the end I think we had a fruitful conversation. But it did get out of control, and I should probably inform Mr. Witt about what happened.