

MY PROVOST,

Please find enclosed a Letter for the perusal of Medea Ruth Marshwatch: may I prevail upon you to have it conveyed for me via the Net? The great task she has been set by the Assembly of Ambition may lead to a breakthrough in a subject upon which I have worked for this dozen years past.

Aloysius SUNSPIRE,
Reader in Antiquities,
Faculty of the Realms of Adversity,
HALLS OF KNOWLEDGE

For the eyes of MEDEA RUTH late of MARSHWATCH Spire
By the hand of the Provost of the HALLS OF KNOWLEDGE
This autumn equinox of the THREE HUNDRED EIGHTIETH year of the Empire

SODALE ·

for companion upon the Way I name you, if your path is set upon an
Ambitious surpassing of the failures of the past ·

My name is Aloysius of SUNSPIRE; I am a member of the faculty of the
HALLS OF KNOWLEDGE, with the assistance of whose head I bring
this letter before you; I have studied the magics of life and of death all of
my adult life, with the singular goal of bringing back into the world
some things which have been gone from it for lo these many centuries:
my early work with a past Archmage of Spring dealt with plants lost to
the Nation but attested in ancient records, however the organism that
consumes my attention is so thoroughly distinct in essential nature from
that which was my principal endeavour that this work became eventually
nothing but a distraction. In recent years, my studies have worked in
precisely and only a single direction: you may imagine my surprise when
that direction was suddenly and without warning brought into the public
eye by the Synod!

I speak, of course, of the great-hearted companions of the Cataphracts of
the Patricians, that became in latter years the stately reminders of the
continuity of humanity since the Revelation, lost in foolishness and
unvigilance, whose death was a body-blow to the Way: the HORSES.

I read that you have made my goal your goal, and in the same breath I read that you have found what may be the key to my work! For what I have discovered - what I have found - where I have always and forever failed, as has every single person who has ever done this before me - is that I am missing the very part which it seems that the Net has brought you!

The LAW OF ESSENTIAL NATURE forbids true creation by magic. One may summon, of course - one may twist and deform - one may plant seeds, and allow to evolve - one may carve, from what already exists - but one may not create ex nihilo something that does not exist. And there is no HORSE that we have been able to find word of in any known realm.

To forestall the questions I am always asked when I say that: The unicorns of Summer are more akin to the war-beasts of the Thule than to the creatures that led the charge of the Highborn, will not maintain their presence in the material realm for long, and are regardless impossible to tame even as they are said to be ridden by the KNIGHTS of GLORY; meanwhile in the case of the one group known to have mutilated a gryphon of Summer, that act led DIRECTLY to the destruction of that group, everyone who so much as slightly resembled them, the near-total erasure of their scholarship and the exile of their leader in total disgrace. Hardly an example to follow!

I should add that before the recent work with her, nobody had approached the GREEN MOTHER and published their findings for some decades, so I have no idea whether her fount of creation includes the willingness to return this creature to the world - only that I can scarcely think of a being further from Virtue than what I hear of her, and cannot think such a creation would be other than disastrous. And the other realms contain nothing comparable - I hear rumours from the recent work of the Lyceum, but Night is not my field, so I do not understand them.

Our routes around the LIMIT OF ESSENTIAL NATURE are instead those taken by the ushabti-builders for generations. It is our theory that a builder of ushabti grants unto their creations the semblance of life and movement by making it sensitive to the WILL applied in its creation. To make an ushabti in the shape of a horse - a frame upon which our creation could hang, effectively a moving statue - this we could do, and we could even make this of bone. To use this, then, as a skeleton for the remainder of our creation - this we could do.

To source flesh and hide, to reshape it into the semblance of that which we strive for with artifice and the Arete of a physick - this, unless I mistake, you could do. The flesh could be preserved against corruption either by the magic of Spring, to maintain itself as life does, or of Winter, to mummify it - the former would be closer to our goal, but the latter could be done by a ritual of Imperial Lore (to wit, the MARK of the FLESH INCORRUPTIBLE).

But an ushabti is sensitive to WILL, as I say - and there is no WILL within our putative creation, to make this other than an animate facsimile attendant merely upon the whim of the nearest human. It is an automaton, a facsimile of a horse, and not a horse indeed. And we are cognizant of tales of the past, in which an automaton saturated with magic but possessed of no inherently VIRTUOUS WILL became infested with a volition that sprung from the magic used, and a danger to those around it.

If only an Ambitious individual were to have recently obtained a suitable source of APPROPRIATE WILL.

I am a member of the Order of the Unfettered Mind, a Pilgrim of Ambition of the nation of Urizen. Should you believe as I do that our paths run parallel - should you have the command over the Net which will allow this endeavour to succeed - then a simple declaration of Concord before Conclave or a judgement of the National Assembly will be sufficient to convince my department that I am neither working alone nor upon a doomed and quixotic endeavour. If you cannot secure such, then at the very least have someone send me a winged messenger.

I should then make preparations to meet with you at Midwinter - in terms of practicality, for workings of Winter we would require only the funding for what I imagine would be four or five castings of the MARK (which ritual is FOURTH magnitude: I shall undertake to master it), whereas for a working of Spring you would need to source your own coven and a substantial one at that.

In terms of securing an arcane projection for the latter approach, if there is not an interdicted one mouldering on the shelves from the last time something like this was tried, then a new one could in all likelihood be attempted by my Provost. (I would not consider this letter to carry much weight with him: he likely barely knows of the existence of my faculty, let alone my name.) If I were you, I would ask the one submitting the projection to refer to tales of the fancifully named 'Delev Horror' as they create it.

IN AMBITION,

Aloysius SUNSPIRE

Reader in Antiquities,

Faculty of the Realms of Adversity,

HALLS OF KNOWLEDGE