

Pragmati

SOLO

ΔΓΓΛ&Φ



Just Business

Severino, you ask too much. If I were to kill the Erewan Prince it would create a power vacuum that could tear the country apart. Every principality would turn on the elves to seize more power for themselves. This nation would be in a civil war all because you wanted control of one more barony. I know what you're thinking, but more money won't change my mind. There is no money to be made in chaos, a nation tearing itself apart would cost me more business than you could ever offer me in return. So I decline your offer. Before you go off on one of your famous rants let me save you the time, because I'm a busy man and you don't have much time left. That's right Severino, you're dying. I knew what your offer was so I took steps beforehand long before you set up this meeting. You'll find your magical ring that protected you against so many poisons is just a very non-magical copy, replaced this morning by one of your household long on our payroll. Of course once you're dead, I will just replace the ring with the actual one, so it will look like you've have a massive heart attack. I've already paid off the witnesses and provided them their stories so there will be no investigation. Not that Innocenti is going to investigate that hard. So goodbye Severino, it was a pleasure knowing you. I just want you to remember one thing before you meet the Immortals, it was just business.

Dark Origins

The Pragmati were founded in 879AC in the Glantrian principality of Caurenze as the premier assassin's guild in that Magocracy. Originally calling themselves the Negotiator's Guild, they prided themselves on their ability to take out any target, no matter how well protected. At first they only targeted victims paid for by

the Malapietra family, but after the Glantrian Parliament threatened to hunt down the assassins unless they opened up to all clients, the guild moved their operational base to Glantri City. The guild was allowed to operate with few restrictions, first and foremost was princes could not be targeted at all. Second, if the attempt on a target fails, the contract is considered closed. As Glantri outlaws clerics, targets tended to stay dead. The guild flourished as the Glantri nobility was more than happy to pay large sums to kill each other off by the score.

This golden era of the Negotiator's Guild ended with Severino Malapietra, the Prince of Caurenze. He was never happy about losing control of the guild, and he was



in dire need of assassins to remove Princess Carlolina of Erewan. Carlolina was set to win a vote taking a barony away from a Caurenze supporter and giving to an Erewan noble. This was too much for the elder Malapietra, and he wanted the elven princess dead. This violated the first law of the guild and they refused. Then guild

members started turning up dead. To appease the prince, a half hearted attempt on Carlolina was attempted that failed, though the assassin got away cleanly. Severino correctly assumed that the guild tipped off the elves and the assassination attempt was staged to pacify the Caurenze prince. This allowed the guild to invoke the second law against repeated attempts. He again demanded the guild kill Carlolina, despite the fact this would throw the nation into another civil war.

The Negotiator's Guild officially disbanded in 980 AC when Severino Malapietra died from an apparent heart attack at his chateau. Everyone knew his death was not from natural causes, but everyone hated the old misanthrope and no one mourned him. Still the guild realized the dangers of taking any contract, as they had

averted a bloody war by refusing to kill a single elf. A better assassin's guild was needed, one that understood that murder for profit should only be done if it affects future profits. The Negotiator Guild was dead, the Pragmati was born.

The Pragmati decided to expand all over the continent to avoid any potential backlash from the Glantrian government. Because of their diverse backgrounds the Pragmati were able to easily establish a presence in multiple nations. Soon the Pragmati were set up in Darokin, Alheim, Thyatis, Karameikos, Ethengar, Ierendi and Minrothad. Within a year and with the help of some well placed bribes there wasn't a nation in the known world that didn't have a chapter of the Pragmati.

The guild was set up differently than other assassin's guilds. All jobs had to be approved by the guild. Freelancing was strictly forbidden, but subcontracting is extremely common. In fact one of the Pragmati's greatest advantages is the fact they will recruit just about anyone to finish a mission, no matter their race, status or profession. Living up to their extremely pragmatic nature, the assassins prefer to use the best possible method to accomplish their goals.

Organization

There is no official headquarters to the Pragmati, they make it a point to never stay in one area for more than a few years, five at the most. As per their tradition they also never return to the same city twice, and never return to Glantri. The organization has been headquartered in towns as large as Thyatis City, as small as Verge and even as exotic as the Golden Court of Ethengar. The Pragmati pose as merchants, adventurers or even simple innkeepers, never letting on they are the most powerful assassin's guild in

Mystara.

The leadership of the Pragmati consists of a council of five leaders, each chosen from their highest ranks, called the *Raggrinzito*, director serves a five year term before returning to the ranks of the *Raggrinzito* for at least another five years. The council dictates where the Pragmati will choose to relocate to, as well as give guidance to the organization and makes all the most important decisions. The council has the final say in whether to take a contract, and can overrule the lower ranks in whether a target is assassinated. Only they can authorize the assassination of a head of state, which is done only extremely rarely.

The most influential rank in the Pragmati are the *Raggrinzito*, or the wizened. They are assigned five to a region, and handle the most decisions in the Pragmati.

Contracts on landed nobility or the equivalent are decided on by the *Raggrinzito*. Every one of them has risen through the ranks, it's not uncommon for one to handle a particularly difficult assassination. They also are in charge of reaching out to other organizations to handle more difficult contracts.

Below the *Raggrinzito* are the *Precettore*, or the tutors. The senior assassins of the Pragmati, *Precettore* are the recruiters and trainers of new assassins. Appointed by unanimous vote by the *Raggrinzito*, *Precettore* are still found in the field taking contracts, being high level assassins all. Each *Precettore* has a dozen students at any given time, training them to be full members of the Pragmati.

Fiducia handle the day to day operations of the Pragmati, deciding who gets what assignment and how to handle the contracts. They decide who and how many will be assigned to a mission, or even if a contract will be accepted. If a *Fiducia* declines a contract, he can be



overuled by a majority of the *Raggrinzito* in his region. *Fiducia* are appointed by the *Raggrinzito* when a need for one is created, but they don't need to be assassins themselves. Many *Fiducia* aren't assassins, but instead are specialists hired to best match the assassin with the job. A *Fiducia* can ruin a young assassin by assigning him to a contract too difficult for him, or even not assigning him to one at all. While the council runs the Pragmati, the *Fiducia* impact it the most.

The *Mano* do the bulk of the Pragmati's work. They are the assassins experienced enough to have a team working for them. Not everyone under a *Mano* is an assassin, many have a team of informants, alchemists and spies. A *Mano* earns his rank when a *Fiducia* first assigns him a contract without any assistance. The *Mano* are considered the core of the Pragmati, handling the bulk of the missions. *Mano* who show even more promise are given a chance to show their managerial skills and are promoted to *Fiducia*.

The lowest rank in the Pragmati is the *Smusseto*. These are typically assassins in training, but can be agents used often enough to be formally recognized in the Pragmati. Spies, informants or deal brokers are often given the protection of membership in the Pragmati. *Smusseto*, while not of a high rank, are not considered expendable either. The Pragmati values all of its members, as membership is not offered lightly. *Smusseto* are expected to become highly trained assassins or agents of the Pragmati, this trust that is placed in them is not lost on even the lowest ranking *Smusseto*.

Business

The infrastructure of the Pragmati differs from common assassin guilds because of their selective and highly secretive nature. The Pragmati do not advertise their services, They instead have agents that look for

people in need of an assassin or troubleshooter. The agent, either a *Fiducia* or a *Smusseto* will mention to the person in need of a "friend" that could help them. If interest is shown, the agent will go and talk to their 'friend'. This results in the agent sending the contract for approval. For a *Smusseto* this requires the approval of his *Fiducia*. A *Fiducia* has an easier time, because of their senior nature their contracts are automatically assumed to be approved. A *Fiducia* just has to file the contract with a *Raggrinzito* and wait a week to see if the contract is rejected. If no word is returned, it is assumed the contract is approved. Clients that know who they are dealing with can request immediate approval, which does increase the cost significantly.



The Pragmati however are called the practical ones for a reason. They value stability in regional and global politics above all else. They abhor chaos, as chaos in the long run is very bad for business. Assassinating a public figure that creates a power struggle while good for business in the short run, tends to cause damage to the surrounding areas and depress long term business. A warlord that oppresses his people might also be the only power strong enough in his region to hold back the orc hordes. The Pragmati care little for good or evil, only if result would destabilize business in the future.

Among all the various assassin's guild, the Pragmati are unique in their use of outside agents, and the fact they often rely on means other than murder to accomplish their goals. Murders tend to lead to investigations, where as sabotage or bribery can get the same result with less questions. The Pragmati can employ a number of tactics when removing a target. One of their most common and effective methods is blackmail, or if the target is someone they actually respect they will see the target rewarded and promoted or transferred to a better location. The Pragmati have a tendency to charge more for contracts against likable targets.

Methods

Despite being an assassin's guild, the Pragmati employ more than just stealth and murder to complete their missions. They will employ the best method for each job, no matter how unusual. They choose their methods after seeing what the effect on future business would be. If removing the target would create bigger problems at a later date, the contract is refused. But if just killing the target would create problems, then the Pragmati are forced to get creative.

The Pragmati will go to almost any length to fulfill a contract, though they make it explicitly clear that they consider the contract filled if the target is no longer a threat or an obstacle to the client, even if the target isn't killed. They will blackmail a politician into retiring if killing him would spark a bloody power struggle to replace him. If the target can be eliminated with little to no disruption in future stability, then they will employ every means of eliminating their target.

What the Pragmati will not tolerate is slaughter. If they are hired to kill an individual, then they will use the minimum amount of bloodshed possible. Slaughtering a family to kill a single individual is strictly forbidden. The Pragmati understand that killing guards and bystanders is sometimes unavoidable, but they expect their agents to use discretion.

The greatest strength of the Pragmati is the sheer variety of people they employ. While the largest number of Pragmati are rogues and assassins, they also have a good number of fighters, wizards and even a few clerics or rangers. Even a few paladins are kept on the payroll to

deal with specialty targets like necromancers. Because of the variety of their personnel, there is almost no job they are capable of handling.

One tactic the Pragmati use almost exclusive to other similar guilds is that the Pragmati subcontract to other agencies. If they feel that there is a greater chance of success they will often alert a local authority in the case of a criminal being targeted, or a local adventuring group

it's a humanoid or intelligent monster. The Pragmati have leaked information to the Order of the Griffon, the Golden Dragons of Ethengar, the Storm Soldiers of Thyatis, or Krondar of the Shires to let them police their own. The Pragmati maintain strict anonymity when dealing without side agencies, no one is going to want to do the work of assassins for them. But the Pragmati's agents maintain friendly relations with as many contacts as possible, both to offer work and to make it easier to gain access to potential allies.

To protect their infrastructure the Pragmati move their base of

operations frequently, and cycle their leadership every few years. This method of leadership extends down through the organization, so if one branch is exposed it can go to ground and another will immediately pick up the slack. Each leader picks their successor when they are promoted, and can change it only at certain times so assassinating one doesn't change their successor. To keep the Pragmati from stagnating they change out their leadership at regular intervals. Leaders cannot serve successive terms, so there is no temptation for one of them to try to hold on to power, especially since they have to share power. It's a structure that has worked for years.

