

## INTRODUCTION

What follows is a brief summary of what your character knows about the world around them. Most of this material has been taken from “HårnPlayer: A Player’s Guide to HårnWorld” by Columbia Games. Do not share this material with other players. While most of this material is common knowledge, part of it is specific knowledge of your character and others may have a different point of view.

## FEUDAL NOBILITY

The distinction between gentle (noble) and simple (common) birth is the most significant in Hårnic society. The exclusive rights and privileges of the gentry include the right to bear arms, ride warhorses, organize military forces, hold fortifications, and dispense justice at feudal courts. Any simpleman who trespasses on these rights can expect harsh punishment.

## MANORIAL TENANTS

### SERFS & SERFDOM

More properly called *unfree* tenants, serfs possess few legal rights, but are not slaves. While they are bound to the land and the lord, and may not marry without the lord’s permission, serfs can not be deprived of their land or liberty without just cause, and are entitled to the lord’s protection and justice.

The reeve is the chief serf on a fief, elected annually by his peers at village moots, although most competent men in this job hold it for many years. The reeve decides what crops to plant, and when, supervises the formation of plough teams, organizes the harvest, ensures there is sufficient fodder stored for winter, sees that the lord’s livestock are penned and his fences mended, arbitrates the disputes of fellow tenants, and generally makes sure the fief runs smoothly. The reeve of Hesby village is Kerihran of Arulaan.

### FREEHOLDERS

Freeholders are simply individuals who hold land on which no *unfree* obligations are due, a distinction that is often a matter of legal debate. Freeholders rarely own the land they work, paying rent or crop shares for its use, a legal process known as farming. Freeholders may come and go as they please, grow whatever crops they like, and appeal their lord’s justice to the king’s law.

### YEOMEN

On most manors, one or two special freeholders called Yeomen exist. Yeomen assist with policing and defense of the fief, and perform others duties the lord and they agree upon.

The Beadle is the “village policeman”, an office commonly held by a Yeoman as part of his feudal service or by a trusted villain appointed by the lord. The beadle is responsible for the granaries, and especially for the preservation of seed – a particularly stressful task in years of famine. Other duties include impounding livestock that stray into cropland, keeping the punfold, and collecting all fines levied by the manorial court. The Beadle is rarely a popular man with the other tenants. The beadle of Hesby village is a yeoman named Chryned of Qunelen.

### PEASANT COTTAGES

Most rural peasants live in a timber-frame, daub and wattle cottage with a thatched roof. The interior is divided into two or three rooms, one of which will be a stable for livestock and storage for a variety of agricultural tools; with a loft for storing a

variety of grains in wicker baskets. Living space, heated by a fire in a stone hearth, is sparsely furnished with dirt-packed floor.

## HÅRNIC COINS

Coins are struck at official government mints, or freemaster jewelers are awarded a license to strike coins for a fixed period. The penalty for making coins without such a license is death.

There are no bronze or copper coins minted on Hårn. The Khuzdul (dwarves) of Azadmere mint a gold coin called the Khuzan Crown, but most people have never seen one. The coinage system in use throughout Hårn is based on a single coin, the silver penny.

The farthing (f) is a silver penny divided (literally) into four quarters. The shilling (12d) and the pound (240d) are not coins, merely quantities of silver pennies. Coins contain about 75% of metal value, the difference due to the cost of minting and the addition of 10% tin for strength.

\* \* \*

Buryn has sworn allegiance to Sir Dalfougo Odasart, lord of Hesby manor and was gifted with the use of ten acres. In return, he is expected to provide seventy days a year in service. Any additional days of service will be paid for at the rate of 1d per day. He is currently under the command of Lady Amyleryn Odasart who has been provided with 3d per day for his living expenses.

## BEARING ARMS

### THE RIGHT

In the strictest sense, only those explicitly granted the right or those who can trace their right to a grant of arms from the sovereign, through his vassals, have the right to bear arms. The practice, however, is more liberal. Like knighthood, the right to bear arms may be delegated by anyone who possesses it, so that a gentleman can arm his retainers, as long as they are in his employ

Towns charged with their own defense are usually given charter rights to organize militia and / or hire mercenaries. To assure themselves of legality, however, they nearly always hire knights to take charge.

### DEFINING WEAPONS

One of the main difficulties is in defining weapons and armor. What constitutes a weapon and what a tool? Which is clothing and which armor? There are two two subclasses of weapon, chivalric weapons which may only be used by gentlefolk and common weapons which can be used by everyone else.

### THE UNFREE

The unfree have no right to bear arms or wear armor, except as granted by their liege-lord and gentlefolk are extremely hesitant to grant this right. The unfree have certain rights in exchange for their servitude. The most important of these is the right to the protection of their lords. A lord who conscripted his unfree tenants for onerous military service would probably be violating the contract between his family and theirs.

### SIMPLE FREEMEN

The gray areas has always been for simple freemen. Most gentlefolk acknowledge that it is appropriate for simple freemen

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to bear common (not chivalric) weapons. A modestly armed freeman will rarely be challenged. Many freemen make a point of carrying some visible symbol of their right to bear arms, a shortsword for example, on the theory that asserting a right is the best way to retain it.

## THE GENTRY

The right to bear arms is most easily defined for the nobility. They can bear whatever weapons and armor they please. The social elite do, however, have social restraints. Nobles prefer to express their class, in part, with the weapons they bear, namely chivalric weapons, and woe betide any simple man who bears such weapons.

Gentlefolk consider certain weapons to be dishonorable. No gentleman would, for example, carry a bow; they are cowardly weapons that kill at long range and a true gentleman fights only hand to hand, close enough to his opponent to introduce himself.

Although gentlefolk consider bows beneath their own dignity, the less conservative are willing to accept the presence of a properly-disciplined contingent of longbowmen. These at least require some skill to use. Even so, most knights deem it inappropriate for archers to shoot at knights – this sets a poor precedent, simplefolk killing gentlefolk.

Crossbows are loathed by nearly all gentlefolk and even by most common soldiers. A crossbow is a coward's weapon, used by thieves and murderers from ambush, or occasionally by a hunter with warped sportsmanship, but never by a gentleman and rarely by a simple soldier of "good virtue". Bearing a crossbow is likely to be met with a violent challenge by any noble.

## VENDETTA LAW

Although the vendetta system is fading from Hrn, it is the seed from which many of western Lythia's legal Institutions have grown. The foundation of the system is the belief that most crimes are private matters between families. If a man is killed or injured, it is the duty of his kindred, both the paternal and maternal clans, to take vengeance or exact "weregild" (man-price) compensation. The power of the clan, the fear of its retribution, is the principal force for the maintenance of social order.

## THE WEREGILD

The weregild varies according to the status of the victim and the degree of his injury. Although negotiable, this is never less than the value of his labour for a year, more often three, six, or ten times this amount. The entire family of the accused are liable unless they disassociate themselves by casting him/her out. This is the origin of the terms "outlaw" and "inlaw".

## CRIMES & PUNISHMENTS

The following is a guide to what are considered appropriate penalties for various crimes on Harn. It should be noted that "aiding and abetting" (accessory to a crime or lending succor to a criminal) will generally bring the same penalty as the actual crime.

## STATE CRIMES

State crimes, or felonies, concern actions against the sovereign. They are generally deemed the most serious of all crimes and are usually the only laws that are enforced against nobles. These are all felonies.

- Treason (citizens only): "action detrimental to the crown, sabotage of crown property, membership in a treasonable or seditious organization", banishment, death by various means.
- Sedition: "encouraging others to commit treason, disputing the authority of the crown", banishment, death by various means.
- Espionage: "sabotage of crown property, spying", death by various means.
- Rebellion: "taking up arms against a lawful liege or denying his rights or privileges", loss of title, banishment, death by various means.
- Regicide: "killing, or attempting to kill, a member of the royal family", death after torture.
- Assassination: "murder, or attempted murder, of a noble or lawfully appointed official", restitution and/or death.

## PRIVILEGE CRIMES

Privilege crimes concern the abuse or usurpation of some kind of privilege, obligation or right, an offense against the social order. Many of these are considered felonies; those that are not, require an accusation to be brought by the offended party.

- Breach of the privilege of rank: "bearing chivalric arms without lawful right thereto, impersonation of a noble, usurpation of the customary or lawful rights of a noble, lack of proper respect for a person of noble birth or rank or lawfully appointed official, laying hands on such a person in a disrespectful manner or without permission", flogging, branding, imprisonment, death by flogging.
- Abuse of trust: "abuse of office or position, including graft, embezzlement, accepting bribes, failure to properly execute customary or legal obligation, dereliction of duty", loss of office, title, property and privilege, imprisonment, banishment, death by various means.
- Oathbreaking: "perjury – lying under oath – or oathbreaking, breach of contract", fine, restitution, confiscation of property, loss of privilege, title, and office, banishment, severing of the tongue, scolding, death by stoning.
- Obstruction of justice: "hindering an officer/noble in the performance of his duty", fine imprisonment, pillory, hanging.

## TEMPLE CRIMES

Temple crimes are tried under temple law in religious courts. Only crimes against legally recognized churches are dealt with under temple law and only after the accused has been bound over by the secular authorities (likely after the appeal options have been exhausted). Temple courts must obtain secular consent to any death penalties. Temple courts often use trial by ordeal. The penalties handed out by temple courts will vary from one temple to another; the church of Peoni, for example, never causes any permanent harm to offenders. None of these are considered felonies; accusations must be made by the injured party.

- Breach of temple privilege: “impersonation of a priest/cleric, usurpury of temple rights”, scolding, flogging, banishment, burning at the stake, impalement.
- Desecration of church property: “disrespect for, or theft of, the property of a lawfully recognized church or the relics/artifacts of a lawful deity”, flogging, branding, mutilation, burning, impalement.
- Blasphemy: “lack of respect for a lawfully recognized deity”, scolding, removal of the tongue.
- Heresy: “denial of a lawful church’s status as arbiter of its deity’s will, denial of the authority of a temple or cleric, disputing church doctrine”, scolding, removal of the tongue, mutilation, burning, impalement.
- Witchcraft: “conjuring or consorting with demons, disposing of souls, casting inimical spells for the purpose of unlawful personal gain” impalement, burning, drowning, hanging.
- Unlawful religious practice: “catch-all to stamp out dubious religious practice not dealt with other temple law”, scolding, removal of the tongue, drowning, burning.
- Breach of guild privilege: “usurpury of the customary or lawful rights of a guild or guildsman, impersonating a guildsman, violation of guild monopoly”, confiscation of property, fine, restitution, banishment.
- Petty larceny: “minor theft of 12d or less”, penalties: pillory, restitution, fine, flogging.
- Grand larceny: “major theft of more than 12d”, pillory, restitution, fine, flogging, mutilation, hanging.
- Horse theft: “theft of a warhorse”, death by hanging.
- Poaching: restitution, fine, flogging, severing of the hand, banishment, death.
- Hoarding: “hoarding food in time of famine, violation of any rationing laws that may be in effect”, flogging, death by starvation.
- Tax evasion: “avoiding payment of any lawful toll or tax”, restitution, fine, pillory, flogging.
- Forgery/fraud: “counterfeiting coins or forging documents, possession of same, obtaining benefits by misrepresentation”, fine, restitution, pillory, loss of property, privilege and office, severing of hand, imprisonment.
- Smuggling: “engaging in transportation, selling, or in possession of any proscribed or contraband goods”, fine, imprisonment, pillory, hanging.
- Piracy/highway robbery: fine, pillory, imprisonment hanging.

## SOCIAL CRIMES

Social crimes are generally crimes of violence against commoners. As a rule, only common folk will suffer the more severe penalties given below; a noble’s liability is unusually limited to restitution in cash or kind, if that. Some are felonies, others require action by the injured party.

- Battery: “attacking a person causing injury”, restitution, pillory, flogging.
- Rape: “sexual assault of a maiden”, flogging, restitution, imprisonment, castration, death by stoning.
- Murder: “killing, or attempting to kill, a commoner without due cause or provocation”, death by hanging, restitution, fine, slavery to family of the deceased.
- Manslaughter: “accidental slaying of a commoner”, restitution, fine, imprisonment.
- Cannibalism: “eating or skinning human bodies”, death by starvation or being thrown to wild dogs, burning at the stake.
- Abduction: “detention of a person against his will, without good or lawful cause”, restitution, fine, imprisonment, mutilation.
- Obscene practice: “engaging in some proscribed and immoral act such as prostitution, indecent exposure”, fine, pillory, imprisonment, death by stoning.
- Libel/slander: “false accusation, malicious gossip”, scolding, removal of the tongue, restitution, flogging.

## ECONOMIC CRIMES

Economic crimes are secular crimes that cause only economic harm. With some exceptions, action must be initiated by the injured party. Most are not deemed felonies.

## RELIGION

The majority of Hârnians believe explicitly in the existence of Gods. With inevitable variations and prejudice due to culture and location, most of the religious movements of western Lythia share a common of metaphysical beliefs, although all modify them to suit their ways.

### THE GODS OF HÂRN

The inhabitants of Hârn (and most of Lythia) are pantheistic; they believe in the existence of ten major (and hundreds of minor) deities, but most worship only one of these. The ten major deities are named below:

**Agrik (AG-rik):** *Lord of the Four Horsemen*

**Halea (ha-LEE-uh):** *Mistress of Hearts and Loins*

**Ilvir (il-VEER):** *Prince of the Fatherless Multitude*

**Larani (la-RAH-nee):** *The Lady of Paladins*

**Morgath (MOR-gath):** *Lord of Chaos*

**Naveh (NAH-vay):** *Lord of the Pitch Shadows*

**Peoni (pee-OH-nee):** *Lady of Truth and White Virtue*

**Sarajin (sah-rah-YEEN):** *King of the Icy Wind*

**Save K’nor (SAH-vay-kuh-NOR):** *Keeper of the Var-Hyvrak*

**Siem (see-EMM):** *Lord of the Blessed Realm*

### THE CHURCH OF PEONI

*The Bringer of Life Renewed*

*Maker of Balms*

*Lady of Truth*

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*Everliving Daughter of White Virtue*  
*Guardian of the Meek*  
*Lady of Industrious Labors and the Ripe Harvest*  
*Confidant of Lovers*

Peoni is the kindest and most gentle of the gods. She will accept into her fold any with an honest heart. She demands that her followers be gentle and kind, but is forgiving of those who transgress. Peoni is most often represented as a young girl with hands worn red from her labors and is symbolized by spring flowers or by the fruits of agriculture.

## THEOLOGICAL MISSION

The Church of Peoni is concerned with life on Kethira. The afterlife is only a product of what people make of the lives they are given. By providing the guidance people need to lead good lives on Kethira, the church ensures a good life in Valon.

## SOCIAL MISSION

Neither Peoni nor her followers press their religion by warlike means. Their weapons are persuasion and example, and they seek to convert the defenseless, who are often ignored by other religions. The Church of Peoni stresses the virtue of being satisfied with one's station in life knowing it helps to prevent civil unrest. It strives to ease the hardships of life by offering assistance to the poor and starving.

## TYPICAL CLERGY

Peonian clergy have a strong sense of obligation to help others. Paternal discipline and maternal nurturing are found to varying degrees in clergy of both genders. They are often the last to stop work, the last to eat and the first to awaken.

## SYMBOLS & REGALIA

The clerics of Peoni change their garb with the season, wearing white in winter, green in spring, beige in summer and yellow in autumn. The regalia of the Peonian church is simple and functional and this is seen as a symbol of humility.

Priests assigned to special offices are given pendants to wear as identification. Orderial badges are modest in size and made of cheap cloth, as are most priestly garments; the church has better uses for its wealth.

## CALENDAR

The most important days of the Peonian year are the *Restoration Festival* on the fourth day of Peonu, and the *Harvest Home* on the fourth of Azura. The origins of these festivals are ancient. The Restoration Festival symbolizes the renewal of life after the cold of winter and the Harvest Home is a celebration to bless the harvest. The Harvest Home involves four days of prayer, meditation and fasting, concluding with as lavish a feast of newly harvested crops as possible.

## ATTITUDES OF THE OTHER GODS

**Agrik** and his followers are filled with bitter, terrible rage. Like wounded animals, they are dangerous, and must be treated with respect. It is difficult to stay calm in their presence, but we must try. Only Peoni's love can heal their torment and bring them salvation.

**Halea** beguiles her followers with wealth, beauty, and physical excess. We are all tempted by such lures, particularly in our crowded and unchaste cities. Haleans are confused, not wicked. We must strive to remind them that their reckless pursuit of pleasure and gold brings pain to others and thence to themselves.

**Ilvir** is a neglectful master. He provides little guidance or sustenance for his followers, who deserve better. We should always be ready to help Ilvirians for they are good folk who know and heed the rhythms of the earth.

**Larani** and her followers strive to do good. Their mission to protect the weak and uphold the social order is noble. Just as Laranians protect our bodies from the physical dangers of this world, so must we ensure that their pride, strength, and warlike rigor do not lead them into moral danger. Ours is a special partnership, but we must never be afraid to provide moral leadership.

**Morgath** and his minions are insane, made so by the malign influence of Bukrai. They can only be met with a resolute commitment to the principles of peace on which the Concordat is based. Never forget that Morgathians are victims of their god's madness. The opportunity to heal a lost soul is an opportunity to be taken whenever possible.

**Naveh** and his followers practice their evil and malice in unpredictable ways. The will and reason behind their violence is as much a mystery as the thoughts of a Navek blizzard. There is little to be done about the Thief of Night, except to help one another to recover from his foul attentions.

**Sarajin's** followers are loyal and true to their own kith and kin, but bloodthirsty barbarians to all others. They are to be feared, for they have the violence of the wolf or the lion. But they kill from ignorance. We must teach them peace, honor, and love whenever possible.

**Save K'nor** preserves the Concordat upon which the existence of Kelestia depends. To him and his priests, we owe gratitude and respect. It is said that they so often neglect the rhythms of the earth, and the warmth of family. We need to gently remind them of this loss to their good comfort.

**Siem** and the Elder Peoples are good and gentle folk who love nature and its rhythms as no others do. Sadly, their love of untamed nature is too strong. They prefer the clay to the pot, the tree to the wood barrel, the forest glade to the grain field. These are the misguided ways of a dying race and we must help them understand.

## ASTROLOGY

### SKORUS: THE MIXER

**Ilvir 3<sup>RD</sup>** – **Navek 2<sup>ND</sup>**

The Mixer symbolizes the blending of things to make new things. It lies at the transition of air and water and can represent condensation or precipitation, the kinds of transformation that can be brought about by love and learning, the result of thoughtful contrived harmony.

Skoruns often possess strong, motivated intellects. They are governed by emotion, but are aware of this. Their lives are often filled with sadness which they are able to absorb and learn from. They make good friends and delight in bringing people together although the results are not always what they expected. They have the capacity to enjoy life and to bring pleasure to others. They enjoy experiment and exploration, but are just as fond of home and family.

## WRITING SAMPLE

Buryn remembered nothing of Jarin, except through tales his father told. Da spun his tales with the same verve he put into

spinning pastry dough or twirling his knife before laying into a pile of carrots for a soup. He and Mam come from Jarin, Pa said, to find a better life, and they'd found one, too. Pa was a freeman here, and could wear a sword, and he owed nothing to no man, except his honorable oath. He had two fine sons and a daughter, was Cook in the manor house of Hesby, and in his spare time, he made sure his son could hunt and use a proper bow. Mam made clothes for him and his siblings, and sang in the evenings of the land she had once called home.

Buryn was only 10 when they died.

Illness swept through the shire that year and killed many folk. Buryn was sick, too, and emerged from the illness as frail as a baby bird. He couldn't keep many foods down, and violently repelled eggs, even ones cooked into breads and custards. The manor lord's own physician said it was a problem with sulphur, and he cared for Buryn after his parents died. In time Buryn's appetite returned, and he put on some muscle, but he'd always be wee, the physicker had told him, and he'd always have to watch out for eggs.

His younger brother, Kalaint, was only five when he caught the sickness. He lived, but would always be prone to "breathing troubles" after that, and had to stay quiet. That was fine, 'cause Kal seemed to like indoor tasks, whittling and drawing and even reading. Their little sister was just a baby, and the sickness took her as it did their parents.

Lord Mersogor took Kal and Buryn into his home as foster sons, but Buryn actually preferred the woods and the skills he learned at the feet of Woodward Genonna of Glarytt, lessons started by his Da. He was a good hunter, the best of the shire, some said. He had Da's sword, too, and learned to use it well.

While Buryn sneaked off to the woods, Kalaint became a real son of the manor, and some even thought he'd be named heir. At least until Lord Mersogor and his lady wife had their own first child.

Buryn hated to see Kalaint shunted to the side in favor of the new child, and even got into a fight with one of the kitchen lads over the issue.

Blades were drawn, and blood, and Buryn's face was scarred such that his left cheek was disfigured, and his lip was permanently curled in half a smile. Kal, of course, hated the idea that Buryn had fought for him with anything but quill or words, so to spare his brother the reminder, Buryn spent even more time alone, or in the woods with Genonna, dreaming of Jarin, a place he'd never known.