

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.

Gentlefolk receive better treatment before the law, which protects the privilege of rank. In a dispute between a noble and a simple person, there is rarely doubt as to the outcome.

A person whose parents are gentle has gentle status. Few commoners are admitted to this exclusive group, but it is possible by adoption or marriage, generally only when one parent is gentle, or by grant of knighthood, the most likely advancement. Gentle birth has somewhat more status than obtaining gentility by marriage or knighthood, although the grantor lends some of their own status to the grant – a man knighted by the king has more status than one knighted by an impoverished knight-bachelor.

VASSALAGE, HOMAGE AND FEALTY

Everyone but the king is someone’s vassal. Everyone who has a lord has taken an oath of loyalty, a ritual composed of homage and fealty pledging two people to an unbreakable, permanent bond of loyalty.

Homage is an act of submission. The first part of the ceremony, homage, is a personal oath of an underling to his lord. The vassal kneels before his lord and raises his clasped hands to his lord, who encloses them in his own. The vassal gives a brief oath promising aid and counsel. Aid means military assistance, while counsel means support of the lord in his business and the granting of advice. Then the lord gives a similar promise of leadership, and of support expressed as a beneficium, or a gift. The beneficium is usually a land grant, or fief. After swearing, the vassal rises, and both men kiss once to seal the oath. This finishes the act of homage.

Fealty is an oath of faithfulness. It is a solemn oath, often upon saints’ relics. Fealty’s most common clause includes a promise never to attack the lord. Unlike homage, which can be sworn only once, a fealty oath, is sometimes resworn to remind someone of his place, or whenever otherwise felt by the lord to be necessary.

After both of these oaths the vassal is the “man of another man”. He is also sometimes called “a man of hands and mouth”.

The liege lord ensures the loyalty of his followers by giving them land, the single most valuable and permanent commodity in the realm. To receive gold is a slightly dubious honor, since even peasants can be bribed with gold. But a transfer of land is sacred.

Two types of land transfer are common; a *gift* is given for the duration of the recipient’s life but upon death reverts to the lord. A *grant* is given for the life of the recipient and the life of his heirs. A vassal does not own the land, but he does own all the granted benefits collected from the land. The vassal receives his grant in return for loyalty and services.

As long as the obligations are satisfied, then the benefits are legally his and cannot be justly taken away. The lord owes his vassal protection, sustenance and livelihood. The vassal owes loyalty, advice and military service. Obligations may be changed only if both parties agree. Usually they are only changed when one person has done something significant for the other.

FEUDAL TITLES

Earls and Barons have heritable titles. These remain with the family unless formally stripped by higher authority. Loss of a heritable title is an extreme punishment reserved for grave crimes against the crown, such as treason or sedition, and is generally accompanied by a death sentence or at least banishment.

EARLS

Earl is the highest feudal noble (on Hårn). An earl’s seat will usually be a castle, sometimes a keep, and he will (typically) owe the king military services of 60-120 knights depending on the size of his holding. Roughly 80% of the earldom will be subinfeudated to vassal barons and knights. The rest will be held directly by the Earl, managed by appointed constables or bailiffs.

The Earls of Kaldor are Earl Curo of Gardiren, Earl Dariune of Kiban, Earl Caldeth of Minarsas, Earl Meleken of Qualdris and King Elendsa, who is also the Earl of Olokand.

BARONS

The word *baron* is a generic term on Hårn for any major land-holding noble with less status than an earl. A barony usually contains a keep and anywhere from 10-30 manors. Regardless of the size of a barony, a few manors will be held directly by the baron, managed by his bailiffs, but most will be held by vassal knights. Some barons are vassals of an earl; some are tenants-in-chief, holding directly from the king.

The only Baron in the Olokand area is Baron Ethasiel of Setrew.

KNIGHTHOOD

Knighthood is not a feudal title. All barons and earls, and even the king, are knights. Anyone may theoretically be knighted, most often for exemplary military service to the crown, but most knights are born to the station.

The training for knighthood (apprentice knights are called squires) is undertaken when the young son of a knight is invited to foster at the household of another knight. Boys begin training at twelve, learning the “knightly virtues”, skill at arms, heraldry, and horsemanship. If all goes well, the squire can expect to be knighted around the age of twenty-one.

Knighthood is an honor conferred on a person for his life only, and is not heritable. The son of a knight is gentle, but the status will lapse in the next generation, unless another knighthood is conferred. There are some female knights, but not many.

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CHIVALRY

The knight is expected to adhere to certain standards of behavior and morality and these standards are called *chivalry*. The chivalric virtues are prowess, generosity, courtesy, loyalty to one's lord and one's clan, and service to church and society. Because knights are human, it is accepted that most will fall short of the ideal. Sometimes the virtues conflict with each other or with the nature of society; loyalty to clan, lord, and church may blur in the political games played in most states. In some regions, chivalry has been replaced by religious and political imperatives, but everywhere, lip service is paid to the ideal.

COURTLY LOVE

The practice of Courtly Love is far from uniform on Hârn. Ideally, it is a pure form of sexless love between a man and a woman of gentle birth; the chaste respect given by a vassal to the wife of his lord is one example. In practice, Courtly Love often leads to illicit intimacies, but is acknowledged as the virtue from which all others flow, the true source of nobility and morality.

Poetry and music are the language of Courtly Love. There are elaborate schemes of meter and rhyme for each mood and season. Courtly Love is an art form beloved of bards and minstrels; their songs describe virtue and harmony, conflict and tragedy.

KNIGHTS BACHELOR

The number of knights on Hârn far exceeds the number that can be granted fiefs. While some knights will inherit or marry into land, most are landless *Knights Bachelor*. Some realize their burning ambition of obtaining a fief, but most spend their lives as the retainers of great nobles, or (gods forbid) by adventuring.

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.

HÂRNIC 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 Hârn. 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 Hârn 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.

* * *

Amyleryn has sworn allegiance to her great uncle Fugys Odasart. He gifted her with the use of fourteen acres adjacent to her father's fief. In return, she is expected to provide seventy days a year in military service. Any additional days of service will be paid for at the rate of 1d per day. When traveling, she has a letter of credit from which she can draw 15d per day (up to 10 days in advance) for living expenses for her, her maid, Zedeon of Jaheraka, Terias of Forniad and Buryn of Tevanan. (This can only be done at a mercantyle found in the major cities. The letter of credit is good for one month from the last time she visited her great uncle to report her activities.)

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 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 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.

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- 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.

SOCIAL CRIMES

Social crimes are generally crimes of violence against commoners. As a rule, only common folk will suffer the more sever 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 he 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.

- Breach of guild privilege: “usrrpury 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 forgoing documents, possession of same, obtaining benefits by misrepresentation”, fine, restitution, pillory, loss of property, brivilege 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.

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 SAVE K'NOR

Sage of the Gods

Lord of Puzzles, Conundrums and Mazes

Lord of Jesters

Mixer of Potions

Knower of Many Things

Keeper of the Var-Hyvrak

The Lost Guide

Save-K'nor is most commonly depicted as the Lost Guide, an aged sage bearing Uhla, the lantern that gives no light. He is symbolic of the interminable nature of the quest for knowledge and the futility of the search for absolute truth. His other aspects include Redira the whimsical and sometimes musical jester, and Omono, the beggar who seeks enlightenment, but receives only common alms.

THEOLOGICAL MISSION

The clergy of the Church of Save-K'nor gather knowledge, be it empirical, experimental, conjectural, practical, or theoretical. Only by examining the intricacies of the workings of the universe can enlightenment be gained, and only those capable of such understanding are worthy to aid Save-K'nor in the administration of the Concordat. But knowledge is dangerous, and there are those who would abuse it. The church bears the heavy burden of ensuring that knowledge is not disseminated too freely, and sees to it that only those with the proper determination, discipline, and self-control gain access to higher learnings.

SOCIAL MISSION

The Church of Save-K'nor has three clerical orders, each with a distinct social objective:

Order of Hyn-Aelori members are frequently consulted as experts and as tutors on a wide variety of subjects. Their specialized talents command high prices.

Order of Rydequelyn monitors current affairs and brings subtle social pressures to bear against dangerous ideas and trends. Their occupations as jugglers, minstrels, and actors, camouflage this mission. In a largely illiterate society, entertainers shape the attitudes of the populace through parable and song.

Order of the Shea-al-Aecor serves as the guiding hand, making informed decisions based on information and knowledge

gathered by the Hyn Aelori and the Rydequelyn. Their mission is to the church first, then to secular governments.

SYMBOLS & REGALIA

The numbers four, five and especially six have significance for K'norians. The practice of tattooing priests with a hexagon is one manifestation of the church's attraction to this mystical number. Uhla the black lantern is a prominent symbol; a replica is borne by all priests who hold church office. Complex spiral designs sometimes figure in the regalia of all three orders. Officers of the Hyn-Aelori may carry a short rod carved in the shape of a furled scroll.

ABLUTION

Adherents begin each day with a ritual ablution designed to "wipe clean the slate for the day to write new mysteries". The common ablution consists of anointing with blessed water six points of the body, the forehead, each eyelid, the mouth, throat, and heart. The holy water is allowed to dry as the supplicant meditates. In the temple, the Seven preaches a "lesson", some philosophical observations on mathematics, ethics, metaphysics, or some parable or story designed to aid the congregation in daily life.

K'norins own personal ablution bowls. These are used to carry water to the priests for blessing, and to convey the water after it is blessed. The most common designs are the cube and the hexagon, but this is mostly a matter of personal taste and wealth. All ablution bowls can be sealed. Boys of K'norian families are presented with personal bowls on their eleventh birthdays. The church blesses each bowl made and collects a tax called "pure pence" whenever one is sold.

SEREN RITUALS

Rituals of worship in the church of the Sage of Heaven are succinct and infrequent. The low ceremony is called the Seren, led by a committee appointed by the Serinti (Keeper of the Holy Lore). The Seren committee consists of one Loremaster, two priests, and three acolytes. Seren rituals are open to anyone.

THE VELERE

Monthly low mass, held by the Seren on the 6th of each month, and open to any adherent. The mass is used to sing the praises of the deity and to invite his guidance and aid. The ceremony lasts about an hour, and is held half an hour after dusk.

THE KESERENE

Annual lay mass, held on the sixth of Savor. This is a special celebration of the acts of the saints. Pious K'norians fast for at least two days before the ritual, and arrive at the temple at noon to begin six hours of silent meditation. Following the silence, the Serinti recites the metaphysical background of the church and the history of the deity and his semi-divine servants, followed by the acts of the mortal founders of the church. The congregation punctuates the tale with hymns. The ceremony lasts past midnight.

THE HASERN

These activities are more like study sessions than religious ceremonies. The congregation gathers in the hall of ritual of the temple for a lecture by one of the Rowanti. The lecture is preceded by a prayer and followed by a seminar. The object is a broadening of knowledge. About half the Hasern sessions are

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open to the laity; it depends on the subject. Most Hasern are held in the evenings and last 2-4 hours.

ATTITUDES OF THE OTHER GODS

Agrik possesses strength, but is a tiny-minded brute. He has violated the Concordat and may yet, one day, cast it aside. Our ever patient Sage seeks to enlighten Agrik and his minions, but fears the task hopeless, and so he works also to counter their threat to peace.

Halea is selfish and shallow, and cares only for herself and her pleasures. She and her followers are happy to acquire knowledge that will be of use to them personally, but they care not for humanity. Short-sighted, they never consider the ramifications of their actions or how pleasures in the present may lead to misfortunes in the future.

Ilvir is a puzzle. He pursues his strange arts with the good intention of seeking knowledge but then releases his monstrous children into the world without concern for their fate. His followers are equally strange for they care more for Ilvir's creations than Ilvir does.

Larani the Shieldmaiden is a worthy ally. Like our Lord, she seeks to protect Kelestia against those who seek its destruction. Her methods are not ours, for Larani and her followers lack wisdom and foresight, but she and her followers become wiser with our counsel.

Morgath is the herald of our fate if we are not zealous in our work. He is far more dangerous than Agrik, for he seeks not simple domination, but the negation of all. He is mad for this would include his own obliteration as well. This troubles him naught because he has already been destroyed by Bukrai.

Naveh is convinced that the Concordat will one day break down and that Kelestia will be destroyed. He is cunning, disciplined, ruthless, unpredictable, and cruel, caring for nothing save himself and a handful of paranoid servants. He is an unpredictable foe who listens only to the reason of the sword.

Peoni is our surest ally. It was she who first proposed the Concordat. Loving, nurturing, she cares for all, and expends her strength to preserve all from the forces of chaos. Her way is not the way of the mind, but of the heart. This way is not sufficient to protect mankind.

Sarajin lacks wisdom though he possesses a noble heart. He and his followers are overly fond of violence for they believe a Great Struggle for the future of Kelestia will take place and only their warlike ways will save the world from the forces of destruction. Reason has always been sharper than the sword.

Siem is the oldest and wisest of gods. It was he who was first asked to keep the Var-Hyvra. Siem deferred to the greater wisdom of our Lord, and then withdrew from the affairs of gods and mortals altogether. One should be respectful of Siem and his followers for they value knowledge and existence. That they take little interest in this world is cause for sadness, but not for scorn.

ASTROLOGY

HIRIN: THE EAGLE

Azura 6th – Halane 4th

Hirin has much in common with Nadai. The active spirit is free in skies that may not even be apparent to others. The eagle

cannot be constrained, his soaring thoughts will find solutions to the greatest problems and will swoop suddenly to the kill.

The Hirinan is more precise than the Nadaian. His efforts are less diffuse and his solutions follow rapid flurries of intense actions. But he may crash, and failure can be particularly damaging. Persons born under the eagle tend to resent authority, but may not oppose it openly. They chafe and flutter against restraint or confinement, but their thoughts are of escape rather than vengeance. They are often intelligent and detached and can be merciless, watching things happen as if from on high, only now and then swooping down to take action that is almost always painful to someone.

PSIONICS

NOTE: Psionic talents at ML20 or less are dormant. A character with a dormant talent is unaware of its existence and cannot take advantage of them.

DISEMBODIMENT (F2)

15-SI MINS

The ability to detach the ethereal spirit from the body, which is left in a state of metabolic suspension. The disembodied spirit is referred to as an astral entity.

It is difficult to remain in a disembodied state for long. The talent lasts for ML x 30 seconds, after which the astral entity instantly returns to its body (even if it does not want to return). If the body is vacant when the astral entity returns, it reunites with its body and a Shock Roll is then made. If the body has been occupied by another ethereal while the astral entity was away, Mental Conflict occurs.

Disembodiment is achieved by making one's body very relaxed (somewhat similar to how one falls asleep). The time needed to invoke the talent is (15-SI) minutes.

Psionic Episodes: Sleepwalking, dreams of floating through space, various "altered mental states," *Jamais vu*, lightheadedness, peculiar shivers, dizziness, or a feeling of being watched.

Misfire (CF): Extreme weakness, dizziness, disorientation, and loss of balance. Sometimes the invoker simply falls asleep.

PRESCIENCE (F2)

15-SI HOURS

The ability to determine the "fate" of a group, person, or item. Subject to passive triggering. There are two active forms:

[1] **Prescient Vision:** The invoker specifies the subject of inquiry and makes a success roll. With any success, the invoker enters a trance for (13-SI) hours, during which a prescient vision occurs concerning the subject. EML is reduced if the subject is hidden by magic, etc. Normally, the invoker lacks control over the vision, but with CS it is possible to direct the inquiry somewhat. Prescience can only reveal *likely* future events; the future may be altered.

[2] **Sense of Danger:** An attempt to assess danger in a specific location. The invoker enters a trance for about a minute. MS gives a vague feeling of danger if there are traps or lurking dangers within ML feet. CS improves detail and/or range.

GM Note: Prescient visions can be symbolic in nature. Folklore may be used to interpret the vision. Some clerics and diviners specialize in interpretation of prescient visions.

Psionic Episodes: A kind of passive triggering of the sense of danger. Violent dreams and/or nightmares about loved ones dying or having severe difficulties are also common.

Misfire (CF): False or random information is given to the invoker.

TRANSFERENCE (F4) 25-SI SECS

The ability to detect and employ *Barasi Points** to transfer the invoker from one world to another. Objects or living entities within Aura inches of the invoker's skin may also be transferred. Less skilled users often lose things on the way.

The talent is fairly common among the older bloodlines of the .Sindarin, but otherwise rare. The invoker does not necessarily know where the destination will be, although it is always a similar environment.

Psionic Episodes: Headaches and dizziness, and rare bouts of semi-transparency, especially near *Burasi Points*.

Misfire (CF): Invoker may arrive at an unexpected destination, most often on Yashain.

* *Barasi Points* are natural portals between worlds. Dozens exist throughout Kethira, although the Sava Forest on Harn has a particularly high concentration. The environment at each of a Barasi Point is always similar. Unskilled users may not realize for some time they have changed locations, and may never discover they have actually changed worlds.

SHEK-PVAR

Lyahvi (Lee-AH-vee) Convocation

Hue: red, Element: air, Principles: light / illusion / etherealness

Lyahvi is the magic of air, of the insubstantial, the invisible, the ethereal, and the .illusory. Lyahvi mages manipulate reflection, refraction, light, and confusion. Their effects are swift and ambiguous.

Since trapping the true element within opaque containers has the wrong kind of meaning, surrogate materials are chosen for their relationship with the Lyahvi element. Transparent or translucent materials such as gems and glass, and substances able to manipulate light such as mirrors, prisms, or lenses are favored. Red is the hue of choice, so rubies and other red gems are desirable, preferably cut and polished to a sparkling, multi-faceted finish.

Th Lyanvi nemesis is earth, represented by the convocation of Fyvria. The essence of Lyahvi is bright, sterile and unliving. No organic material should be included in a Lyahvian focus.

LAWS OF THE SHEK-PVAR

- I. Bring not the scorn of the Kvikir [ordinary folk] upon thy brothers, nor make with thine art a place for thyself above them.
- II. Spread not thy lore, even among thy brothers, without sanction of thy peers.
- III. Keep sacred and free from harm, thy house of lore.
- IV. Succor not a renegade of the art, but strike him down with thy power, else summon brothers to thine aid.
- V. Make tithe to thy house [chantry] a portion of thine arcane treasure to thy brothers' benefit.

ORGANIZATION AND RANKS: SATIA-MAVARI (SENIOR APPRENTICE)

One of the few universal rules of apprenticeship is that when an apprentice reaches a certain level of competence, he must leave his master and/or chantry and go out into the world as a *Satia-Mavari*, a rank between apprentice and journeyman. It is hoped that the Satia-Mavari will test and refine his art. He is also expected to gather some treasures for the chantry, items of value to aid in its upkeep, or items of esoteric interest to aid its members studies.

The custom is for the Satia-Mavari to submit three items, and three "original" spells, but the decision to promote or not promote a Satia-Mavari is made by men and, therefore, is not uniform from one master or chantry to another.

If the Satia Mavari fails to return, so be it. The custom is intended to weed out the weak and incompetent. F the Satia Mavari survives in the outside world for a year and a day, and fulfils his duty to enrich his chantry, he may call himself Shenava.

ENRICHED MAGIC

Unless otherwise specified by the caster (with associated modifiers), each spell casting has the following elements: Cant in normal speech, gestures using hand / arm / head movements, no modelling, and no focus.

TOME OF THE ANCIENT AND ESOTERIC MYSTERIES OF THE PHANTASMS OF LYAHVI AERIC'S SILKEN VOICE (II)

A spell that temporarily enhances the quality of a caster's voice. The spell improves the EML of all voice-based skills, determined by the success achieved and the specific skill.

Skill	MS	CS
Acting	+10	+20
Animalcraft	+10	+20
Lovecraft	+10	+20
Oratory	+10	+20
Rhetoric	+10	+20
Ritual	+20	+20
Singing	+20	+20

Misfire (CF) Table

Roll 1d20

- 01-15 Subject loses his voice completely (cannot speak) for 1d20 hours.
- 16-19 Subject loses his voice completely (cannot speak) for 1d10 days.
- 20 As above, plus subject permanently loses 1 point from his Voice attribute.

Bonus Effect

CML 56+ The enchantment may be laid on someone other than the caster.

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Time: 15-CSI seconds

Range: Touch

Duration: MS: CSI x2 minutes, CS: CSI x5 minutes

AERIC'S WHISPER (I)

A spell which allows the caster to speak a message which a remote, single, caster-designated individual can/will hear. The message will sound as if someone were whispering in the recipient's ear.

Communication is unidirectional (one-way). The message may be as long as the caster can manage in Duration. The recipient must be in Range.

With the basic spell, the caster must speak the message out loud (although softly).

Bonus Effect

CML 70+ Caster need not speak the message out loud (thinking it suffices).

CML 80+ Range is CSI miles.

CML 90+ Up to CSI recipients may be designated; all receive the same message.

Time: 15-CSI seconds

Range: Line of Sight/CSI miles at CML80+

Duration: CSI rounds

BEACON OF ISALA

Turns an everyday object into a soft, cool light source capable of illuminating a sphere up to ML feet in radius. The spell enchants an elemental object, and the caster requires a spark or other light source as a seed.

Bonus Effect

ML51+ Caster can terminate effect at any time (but cannot turn the light back on again without recasting).

ML71+ Light may be dimmed or brightened, or turned on/off at the caster's command during *Duration*.

ML76+ Spark/Light source no longer required.

ML91+ Touch no longer required. Range to the illuminating object = ML feet.

Time: 20-CSI seconds

Range: Touch (ML91+ see above)

Duration: MS: ML mins., CS: MLx3 mins.

BEAM OF NOLAR (IV)

A spell to cause a beam of blinding, burning light to issue from the caster's hand at a specific target within CSI hexes. The beam acts as a high velocity (Dodge 50%) missile weapon with Fire impact of:

MS: CSI +1d6

CS: CSI +3d6

The beam will be refracted / reflected as would ordinary light, and may be weakened or eliminated by darkness spells, etc. Armor and clothing reduce fire impact as normal.

Bonus Effect

ML60+ Beam may originate from a Lyahvi elemental object within CSI hexes, line of sight.

Time: 15-CSI seconds

Range: CSI hexes

Duration: None.

CRIMSON RUNE

Enchants an elemental object to glow softly where touched by the caster (the caster can paint in light with his hands). Crimson Rune may be used to leave messages. The glow is faint, normally visible for about ten feet. The caster is able to write for about ML seconds (MS) and ML x 3 seconds (CS). The enchantment (writing) remains in place for Duration. A spark or other light source is needed as a seed.

Bonus Effect

ML51+ The glow may be invisible to all but Lyahvi mages, or to those who know this spell.

ML61+ The glow may be made invisible except in certain caster-designated lighting conditions (e.g. moonlight). GM discretion will determine what specifications are reasonable.

ML81+ No spark/seed is required.

ML91+ The glow may be made invisible to all but caster-designated person(s).

Time: 15-CSI seconds

Range: Touch

Duration: MS: ML days, CS: Indefinite.

DISPELL (I)

A spell to remove an enchantment. *Dispell* cannot counter a spell currently being cast, only existing magic/effects.

With the basic spell, the caster must be able to cast the target enchantment (or something very similar), and only *Temporary* enchantments can be dispelled.

The success roll is modified by ten (10) times the complexity of the target spell, ward, etc. This is in addition to the normal five (5) point penalty for a first level spell. For example, to remove a third level enchantment, eml is -30 for the target spell and -5 for *Dispell* for a total of -35.

Bonus Effect

CML 60+ Unknown enchantments may be dispelled.

CML 80+ Indefinite enchantments may be dispelled.

Note 1: Critical Failure when casting *Dispell* might make the target enchantment misfire.

Note 2: A permanent enchantment can never be dispelled.

Time: 25-CSI seconds

Range: CSI hexes to target enchantment

Duration: n/a

FOCUS (III)

An enchantment to create a focus artifact of a chosen convocation. The caster must be attuned to that convocation. The character is instinctively aware of the direction to a focus if separated from it.

Focus installs a major or minor power in an artifact. If installed as a major power, Focus occupies three (3) points of Ego/Will. If installed as a minor power it cannot be combined with any other enchantment. Duration is *Permanent* if the power is installed when the artifact is made/grown; otherwise, it is *Indefinite*.

The value of a focus depends on casting success and the CSI of the chosen convocation:

$$\text{MS} = \text{CSI} \quad \text{CS} = \text{CSI} \times 2$$

Example: *a mage with Neutral CML 50 has a focus EML of 50-15=35. The 15 point penalty is for the complexity level of Focus. The mage wishes to create a Jmorvi focus. With MS, and a Jmorvi CSI 6, a Jmorvi Focus +6 is created.*

To use a Focus, the caster must be in direct skin contact. A focus adds its value to spell EMLs of the same convocation. That is, a *Jmorvi Focus +6* provides a bonus +6 to all Jmorvi spells.

Mages can re-enchant their foci of Indefinite Duration, raising them to a higher value with a CS casting or when CSI improves. Foci of Permanent Duration cannot be re-enchanted. CF dispels the original enchantment.

Bonus Effect

CML 80+ A caster attuned to all convocations has the option to create a Rainbow Focus. This artifact enhances all magic equally. Focus value is MS=CSI/2 or CS=CSI (50% normal).

Time: 15-CSI hours

Range: Touch

Duration: Indefinite Permanent (see above)

HLANDOR'S FLASH (II)

A spell which causes a blinding flash to radiate from a Lyahvi elemental object held by the caster. All persons (looking at the flash source) within CSI hexes are blinded, and those within CSI x 5 hexes are half-blinded.

Note: in a purely random situation, each person has a 10% chance of looking at the flash source at the critical instant. This chance can be modified at GM discretion according to the situation.

Blindness lasts 10 seconds (MS) or 30 seconds (CS), and then turns into half-blindness, which lasts for a similar period. Blinded individuals suffer a Special Penalty of 20 for all skills (GM discretion). Individuals half-blinded suffer a Special Penalty of 10 for all skills (GM discretion).

The effects described assume the spell is cast in dim/dark lighting conditions (e.g. underground or at night); halve the above effects if the flash occurs in bright light/full daylight. The spell is (at GM discretion) twice as effective against nocturnal creatures.

Bonus Effect

CML 80+ Flash may be made to emanate from a Lyahvi elemental object in good line of sight within CSI hexes.

CML 90+ Caster may exclude up to CSI designated individuals from the effect.

Time: 15-CSI seconds

Range: CSI hexes (blind); CSI x5 hexes (half-blind)

Duration: Blindness lasts 10 seconds

SIGHT OF CASTRANEL

An enchantment to enable the caster to view distant objects as if they were close by (telescope spell). The basic spell works only with a good line of sight, and can be blocked or greatly hindered by cloud or dust, but this improves with mastery. The spell allows the caster to see any object within MLx3 yards (MS) or MLx10 yards (CS) as if it were within a few inches of his eyes. With MS, visions of objects more than half the *Range* away, may wobble or blur; with CS they are clear. The spell provides no illumination.

Bonus Effect

ML76+ The enchantment may be laid on a subject other than the caster.

ML96+ Visions may be projected around corners, but not through opaque objects.

Time: 23-CSI seconds

Range: Touch (to cast)

Duration: MS: CSI x3 secs., CS: ML secs.

VISIONS OF SHERIDYN (V)

A spell to create powerful, vivid, invisible (subliminal) illusions. This is an extremely subtle spell used to help the caster's Rhetoric.

The spell may be cast immediately prior to, or in the course of a conversation. Thereafter, the the Duration the caster may give the single person he is talking to extremely brief illusion-flashes which tend to act directly on the subconscious.

If properly used the subliminal effect can be profound. An experienced caster can convince almost anyone of anything. But in the hands of a novice, the spell is generally quite ineffective. If used to enhance the caster's Rhetoric Skill, the effect is to add 10-100% to the caster's EML. If a plausible argument is made, victims can sometimes be persuaded to act against their interests.

Bonus Effect

ML46+ The spell may be used to inject effects into conversations in which the caster is not participating (eg. To

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help friend persuade someone). Eye contact no longer required.
Range = CSI yards.

ML86+ The spell can be cast on an audience (broadcast) instead of a single person. This enhances Oratory skill instead of Rhetoric. The range is increased to ML yards.

Time: (15-CSI) x2 seconds

Range: Eye Contact/see above

Duration: MS: SI minutes, CS: CSI x3 minutes.

WRITING SAMPLE

Amyleryn of Odasart walked across the courtyard of her father's manor house, a mace in her right hand swinging back and forth in response to her stride. She had been working out at the pell, and the padding of her armor was soaked in perspiration. A bath was going to feel wonderful. She paused at the bottom of the steps to the entryway, and turned at the sound of a horse coming into the courtyard.

After a moment's inspection, she recognized the rider as one of her great uncle Fugys' retainers, Coban of Gybevin.

"Mistress Odasart, well met!" he said, and gave her a big smile as he reigned to a stop next to her. Dismounting, he continued: "I have a message for you from your great uncle."

Digging around in a saddlebag, he produced two scrolls and a purse. "Actually, this scroll is for you," he said as he handed her a scroll with a wax seal, "and your great uncle said to give you this other scroll and this purse for you to deliver." which he then handed over as well.

The second scroll was tied with just a ribbon. The particular signet that had been pressed into the wax sealing her scroll was a secret code between Amyleryn and her great uncle, and told her that the contents were more than an inquiry as to the state of her health, and that the scroll should be destroyed after she had read it.

"I see that you have more scrolls in your bag." Amyleryn said. "Any communications for my father?"

"Yes, Ma'm."

"Well, at this hour you should find him in the cellars with the steward and the butler checking the wine inventory."

At that moment, another horse and rider came clattering into the courtyard and reigned-in next to Amyleryn and Coban. The rider wore a tabard with the arms of Meselyneshire.

Speaking from the saddle, the rider said: "Do either of you know where I might find one Burynd of Tevanan? I bear a summons for him to attend a Shire court."

Quickly responding before Amyleryn could say anything, Coban said: "I'm sure LADY Odasart here can see that he gets it."

"Lady...?" the rider stammered, and then hastily dismounted while Amyleryn and Coban briefly grinned at each other.

"Milady, I didn't realize..."

"No offence taken. Standing here in my amour with sweat pouring off me, I hardly present a Lady-like appearance. And you are?"

"Ercyack of Seraland, Milady."

Amyleryn waited for a few moments, then held out her hand and said: "The summons?"

"Oh...yes!" and he turned to the bags tied behind his saddle, dug out a scroll, and handed it to her. It was tied with a ribbon.

"Before the two of you leave, be sure you stop in the kitchen for a bite to eat and a quick ale."

"Thank you, Ma'm!" the two men said in unison, each giving her a brief bow.

Amyleryn turned and entered the manor house, the two couriers following her a few moments later, Coban heading for the cellars and Ercyack in search of the kitchens.

Climbing the stairs to the second story, Amyleryn squirmed in her kurbul amour. Body lice. The work she did as her great uncle's spymaster, put her into the company of commoners more often than most nobles, and somewhere along the way, she had picked up the lice. The discomfort was bad enough, but it annoyed her that she had them at all. She was reasonably fastidious, but no matter how frequently she bathed, she could never quite get rid of them completely.

Entering her rooms, she went over to the small table underneath the window...an arrow slit really...where sunlight was streaming in, and untied the ribbon on Burynd's scroll.

Unrolling it, Amyleryn read the summons. A couple of months back, Burynd had been involved in the capture of a poacher, and was now being summoned to the Royal Assize at the next Shire Moot to give his testimony in the trial. Rolling the summons back up and re-tying it, she set it down on a stool along with the purse and Zedeon's scroll. She broke the seal on the scroll, unrolled it and laid it out on the table, pinning the corners down with candleholders.

Undoing the straps holding on her amour, Amyleryn began to read her great uncle's precise handwriting.

Just then Felada of Yaandy, the servant who attended to Amyleryn's needs, came into the room. "Oh, Ma'm, done with your weapon practice already?"

"Yes. Prepare a bath for me please."

"Right away, Ma'm."

As Felada set to work, Amyleryn resumed reading. The first part of the scroll said to go to Olokand and meet with Lussie of Harabor at the Standing Bear Inn. An extended mission was in the offing.

Lussie! The Lady Harabor was Amyleryn's best friend, as well as her mentor in the spy business. A smile spread across her face at the thought of seeing Lussie again.

The second part of the scroll instructed her to present the other scroll and the purse to Zedeon of Jaheraka, son of the manor's weaponcrafter, and a weaponcrafter himself. The scroll was an offer of employment as a bodyguard to Amyleryn, and the purse was his first months pay. If the mission lasted longer than a month, Amyleryn was to contact her great uncle for additional payment. Strictly speaking, Zedeon was free to refuse this employment, but a weaponcrafter who refused an offer of employment from the Royal Weaponcrafter would need to seriously consider a change of careers.

Crossing the room to a brazier in which coals were always kept burning, Amyleryn carefully destroyed her scroll.

Recrossing the room, she moved the purse and Zedeon's scroll from the stool to the table.

After completely disrobing, she had just finished laying out clean clothes, when Felada came back in and said:

"Your bath is ready, Ma'm."

"Thank you. Send someone to fetch Zedeon of Jaheraka.

I'll talk to him through the door to the bathing room. Also, send someone to find Buryn of Tevanan and have him come see me. Have someone take the padding and garments I wear under my amour and thoroughly rinse them out and then hang them up right away so they'll be dry by tomorrow morning.

Finally, pack my traveling things and yours as well. I'm leaving for Olokand right after breakfast tomorrow."

"Yes, Ma'm!"

Amyleryn and Felada smiled at each other. Adventure!

Excitement! Travel! In the year since Amyleryn had returned from Melderyn, Felada, accompanying her Mistress, had already seen more of the kingdom than all of the rest of the commoners in the manor put together would in their lifetimes.

Amyleryn went into the bathing room, closed the door, and lowered herself into the hot water. She sighed in pleasure as the aches and pains of her physical exertions began immediately to subside. She could hear the outer door open and close, and in a little while do so again, as Felada attended to sending for the two men.

Soon, Amyleryn heard Felada begin to sing to herself as she went about packing their traveling things. A smile played across Amyleryn's face. Felada's singing summed up the great changes that had occurred in Amyleryn during the several years she had been absent from the manor to study in Nurisel.

She closed her eyes and pictured the horrid creature she had been as a young girl...spoiled, petty, vindictive, full of herself as a nobleman's daughter...a perfect brat. Could that really have been her?

Amyleryn had always been able to make things happen just by thinking about them, so she assumed that that had given her father the idea of having her tested for her suitability to become a Shek-Pvar. Whether her father hoped the rigors of study would make improvements in her behavior, or was just desperate to get her off the manor for a while, she didn't know. The results were favorable, so off she went to Nurisel, to study with a Lyahvi Master.

Soon after she arrived, her behavior had earned her a severe beating. It was an eye-opening shock. It wasn't the physical pain, but the humiliation that she...she!...could be so treated, and that there was absolutely nothing she could do about it. As time went on, Amyleryn came to realize that her lessons included manners as well as arcane lore. Her master took pains to expose her to all manner of people, of every social level, and she came to understand the responsibilities that accompanied her status as a noblewoman.

She would remember, all her life, the parting words from her master when it came time to return home: "When your father sent you to me, he said that I should not spare the rod if I

thought it needful. I'm gratified to say that once was enough. I'm confident that you have become a credit to your kingdom, your clan, your family, and yourself. Safe journey home, and may the Gods smooth your path."

A knocking at the outer door interrupted Amyleryn's reverie. She heard Felada open the door, and the heavier tread of a man approach the bathing room door.

"Milady Amyleryn? It's Zedeon of Jaheraka. You sent for me?"

"Yes, I did. Can you read?"

"No, Ma'm."

"Very well. There's a scroll on the table by the window. It's for you from my great uncle. Find my father's steward, have him read it to you, and give me your answer."

She could hear his steps as he crossed the room to the table, then to the door of her rooms, and the door opening and closing. After a short while, she again heard the knock on the door, the sound of Felada opening and closing the door, and the now familiar tread of Zedeon returning to the other side of the door to the bathing room.

"I accept. My thanks to your great uncle."

"Good and you're welcome. The purse on the table is your first months pay. Go pack what you'll need for an extended journey. We're leaving for Olokand right after breakfast tomorrow."

"I'll see you in the morning then and thank you again."

She heard a brief mumbled exchange between Zedeon and Felada as he left, and then the door closing.

As Amyleryn got down to the business of getting clean, her thoughts returned to the time right after her return home a year ago. Her family's welcome had been genuine enough, but the staff could almost be seen cringing.

She chuckled to herself as she remembered the almost palpable relief of the staff as they came to realize the complete change in her personality.

Within a month of her return, her great uncle arraigned for her and Lussie of Harabor to meet. The two of them had hit it off immediately. Amyleryn had overheard her great uncle say, smiling, to her father: "Those two are going to be dangerous. Thank the Gods they're working for us!" and the two men chuckled.

After toweling herself dry, Amyleryn dressed and went in search of her father. She intercepted him crossing the great hall.

"Father, uncle Fugys is sending me to Olokand."

"Off again?"

"Yes. I'm to meet with Lussie."

Her father arched one eyebrow and said: "I'd tell you to stay out of trouble, but with the two of you, I expect trouble is the purpose of the trip."

Amyleryn laughed and said: "Most likely. I'm leaving tomorrow after breakfast. Uncle Fugys has hired young Zedeon of Jaheraka to be a bodyguard for me and Felada."

"Good timing on your great uncle's part. Zedeon has just been made journeyman and will need to start his travels."

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Pausing in thought for a moment, he continued: "I think I'll ask young Terias of Forniad to accompany you for extra protection."

"Isn't he that Laranian cleric?" Amyleryn asked.

"That's right. He doesn't seem to have much to do around here. Seems like a nice enough lad. Being involved in whatever you and Lussie have got cooked up this time, should give him an opportunity to distinguish himself in the eyes of the church hierarchy, and advance his standing." He embraced her and said: "Be as careful as you can, baby."

"I will father. I've been meaning to thank you for the rod."

As her father caught her meaning, he stammered a little "I...uh..."

She laughed again, saying: "I meant it. Because of it, my life is better than I ever could have imagined it would be."

Changing the subject, she added: "Zedeon is going to need an Odasart tabard to wear. Also, Burynd of Tevanan has been summoned to the next Shire Moot to give testimony at a trial. He'll be away from the manor lands, so maybe we should add him to my retinue. That being the case, he should have a tabard also."

"Hm. I hate to lose the services of such a good hunter, even if it's only temporary, but the law's the law and he'll have to go. I'll see that they each get one. Now be off with you. I have more work to do."

As her father exited the great hall, Amyleryn turned at a hail.

"Milady, you sent for me?"

As Burynd walked over to her, Amyleryn was again struck by the scar on his face. She'd heard that it was acquired in a knife fight in the kitchens here some years ago. All-in-all, she thought it gave him a certain rugged look appropriate for someone who spent most of his time in the forest.

"I have a scroll that summons you to the next Shire Moot to give testimony at a trial. The scroll is in my quarters. Have Felada give it to you, and keep it with you as proof that you are out and about on official business. I have to go to Olokand myself, so we'll attach you to my retinue. Father will give you an Odasart tabard to wear so that you may go armed.

We're leaving tomorrow right after breakfast, so pack what you'll need and be ready to go at that time."

"Yes, Ma'm." and giving her a short bow, turned and left in the direction of her quarters.

* * *

Fugys Odasart sat at a desk, pouring over what seemed like an endless stream of reports and requests. His steward came in with more scrolls under his arm. Fugys groaned inwardly.

After depositing the new scrolls on the desk, the steward started to leave, and then paused.

"The scrolls you sent to your grandniece should have arrived by now."

"Good. Thank you." Fugys said without looking up.

After the steward left, Fugys leaned back in his chair.

The thought of Amyleryn brought a smile to his lips. What a turnaround! As a child, she was insufferable. On one memorable

visit by her family to his mansion in Tashal, he had taken his nephew aside.

"Amyleryn is out of control. If this keeps up, she'll be a disgrace to the clan. You've got to do something about it."

"Well, Shilal dotes on her so..."

"I can understand your desire for domestic bliss with your wife" Fugys interrupted him, "but you're going to have to think of something. She's your daughter. Get it done."

Dalfougo's solution was a stroke of genius. The rigor and discipline of Shek-Pvar instruction would make her or break her. What it did, was to temper her like a fine blade. Fugys had made regular donations to her chantry to help with her upkeep and receive regular updates on her progress.

She had turned out so well, that Fugys was trying to find a method of testing all of the children of the clan with an eye toward sending more off for training in the various convocations. Many people feared the Shek-Pvar, including many in his clan, so he would have to be very circumspect.

By the time Amyleryn had returned home, he knew she would play an important part in the clan's role in the intrigue swirling around the impending succession crisis.

Hoping she might become his spymaster, he contrived to introduce her to Lussie of Harabor. The result turned out better than he could have possibly imagined. The two of them were fast becoming the most formidable team of women in the kingdom. If things went well, they would help him put Lussie's father on the throne.

Thinking 'Good fortune to you Amy,' he turned his attention back to the endless reports.