

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 Ovendel village is Onyl of Jarat (rumored to have many offspring – some by is wife).

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 Ovendel village is a half-villein named Sevoilath of Clinejan. He frequently takes trips at the request of his liege.

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.

Military Wages

Military wages are traditionally paid quarterly. Considering the danger, wages are low, but there are some perks such as booty. Traditionally, a soldier may keep 2/3 of booty collected, giving 1/3 to the next highest rank, who gives 1/3 to the next highest rank, and so on. The commander of a large army can acquire quite a tidy sum in this way.

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 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

ORIENTATION 2

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 area 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.

RELIGION

The majority of Hâmians 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 Hâm (and most of Lythia) are pantheistic; they believe in the existence of ten major (and hundreds of minor) duties, 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*

Ivir (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

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 gentlest 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.

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.

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.

ASTROLOGY

ARALIUS: The Wands

Peonu 4th – Kelen 2nd

The second and central sign of spring and earth. The wands are portrayed with leaves sprouting from their severed lengths; this is symbolic of the quiet tenacity of life. The symbolism is more pure than that of Ulandus, more the essence of growth than its effect and corollaries. Aralius secret is the hidden life within; the potential of all things to nourish in life and in death.

Aralians generally display a vibrant zest for life, but recognize that death is a part of it. This may not be apparent to outsiders. They too have an affinity with nature, of which they are a harmonious part. Aralians often center their lives on the family striving for future generations. They may perceive their children to be manifestations of self, a key to personal identity and immortality, windows on eternity.

HERBAL

[183] AGRİK'S EYE (HENBANE)

Very large, thick, soft, grayish-green, wooly leaves, lying on the ground among which arise up thick, two to three feet stalks with lesser leaves. Many deadish-yellow, hollow flowers ending in five points. The whole plant has a very heavy, ill, offensive smell. It grows by roadsides and under hedges and flowers in Peonu, Kelen and Nulus. [Common]

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE

The leaves cool inflammations of the eyes and are good for swellings of the testicles or women's breasts when they are boiled in wine and applied directly. It relieves the pain of the gout, other pains in the joints that arise from the cold, and headaches when applied with vinegar. The oil of the seed is good for deafness, noise and worms in the ears, being dropped in the ear. A decoction of the herb or seed, kills lice in man or beast.

EFFECTS

This herb must never be taken inwardly, it is altogether an outward medicine.

ANTIDOTES

Goat's milk, honey water and mustard seed are amongst the best antidotes when Agrik's Eye has been taken inwardly.

[48] ALL-HEAL (VALARIAN)

Broad, deep-gashed, blackish-green leaves; square, branched stalk about two feet high; blue and white spikes of flowers. Grows in wastes and ruins. Flowers in the month of Nulus. [VERY COMMON]

EFFECTS

It kills and expels worms in the belly, strengthens as well as corrects the diseases of the stomach, liver and spleen. It heals all wounds, both inward and outward, stays bleeding and, used with honey, heals old ulcers. Used with lard, it helps the swellings and pains in the secret parts.

[46] BETONY

Broad leaves, round at end and roundly dented around the edges. Red or Purple flowers, spotted with white. Grows in forests in shaded areas. Flowers in Peonu and Kelen. [COMMON]

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE

Preserveth the body from witchcraft. Placing the herb, root, or flowers in broth, drink or on meat, helps those with weak stomachs and difficulty digesting meat. Drying the leaves or root, pounding them into a powder, then adding to honey helps with coughs, colds, wheezing and shortness of breath. The decoction added to wine kills worms in the belly. The decoction added to wine and gargled in the mouth easeth the toothache. A dram of the powder of betony, taken with a little honey in some vinegar, doth wonderfully refresh those that are over wearied by travel. The green herb bruised, or the juice, applied to any hurt, will heal quickly, close it up and stop bleeding.

[227] CALENDULA (MARIGOLD)

Calendula is a hardy annual of the daisy family and will flower throughout the growing season if you pick the dying flowers regularly. Thick and juicy of a pale yellow-green color, broader at the end than at the part next the stalk, somewhat clammy in handling. The flowers grow singly at the end of the stalks, consisting of a border of gold yellow petal, set about the middle thrum, of a dark reddish fistular flosculi. Grows in gardens and flowers in summer. [Common]

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE

To make calendula ointment, mix two parts calendula extract (from calendula flowers) with seven parts lanolin (a cholesterol extracted from the fleece of sheep). Store in a brown glass jar in a cool place and it should last up to a year.

A simple poultice can be made by thoroughly bruising a marigold flower in a mortar and pestle and dressing a wound with it.

An infusion is made the same as a strong tea. Take 4 small handfuls of marigold flowers to a small, three-cup teapot. Add boiling water and let it steep until it is cool. The infusion can be used to clean a wound, reduce swelling, or as a bath for feet or eyes. To lift the spirits, calendula infusion can be drunk as a tea.

EFFECTS

Calendula is *the* household antiseptic and is thorough and strong in its antiseptic action. It will ease any swelling, cool down the heat of inflammation and relieve the pain of a wound. It will heal a wound from the deepest levels through to the surface damaged skin tissue, and it prevents scars from forming. Calendula is also a mild styptic, which means it will stop the bleeding if the bleeding is not profuse.

[177] HEMLOCK

A green stalk grows four or five feet high that is sometimes full of red spots. At the joints are very large sad-green, winged leaves, one set against the other and dented about the edges. The white flowers grow in clusters and have a strong, heady, ill-flavored scent. [COMMON]

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE

Bruising the leaves and laid on the forehead is good for red or swollen eyes.

EFFECTS

Hemlock is very dangerous if taken internally. It may be safely applied to inflammations, burns and swellings of any part of the body.

ANTIDOTES

Pure wine is the best antidote.

[265] PENNYROYAL

Smooth, roundish stalks with two small, round, pointed leaves at each joint. Small, pale, purple flowers. The whole plant has a strong smell and a hot aromatic taste. Flowers in Larane. [Common]

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE

If boiled and drank, causes women's courses and expels the dead child and afterbirth. If taken in water and vinegar, stays the disposition to vomit. If applied to the nostrils with vinegar, revives those who faint and swoon. The green herb bruised and put into vinegar, cleanses foul ulcers and takes away the marks of bruises and blows about the eyes and burns to the face. Boiled in wine with honey and salt, it helps the toothache. Boiled in milk and drank, it is effectual for coughs and for ulcers and sores in the mouth.