

The Crime of the Century??

Interview with Baroness Akasha de'Noir	page 1
The Voyage to King's Land: The Long and Short of it	page 3
Starfire's Privateers	page 4
Archwizard Shadowfeather's Brain Teasers	page 4
Order of Knighthood	page 5
Nathan the Criminal	page 6
Question of the Month : How do you protect yourself against Consorting Charges?	page 6
Archwizard Shadowfeather's Talk ...	page 7
A Poem	page 11
Shinnan's Grapevine	page 11
A Tale	page 12

Interview with Baroness Akasha de'Noir

By Talmus Lightreaver

I was fortunate to have the opportunity recently to send several questions off to the good Baroness, who took some time to answer them. Below are those questions and answers, in no particular order.

1) Darkenwald is not exactly a place that draws a lot of interest from the Southlands, how did you find it and what motivates you to keep in contact?

Oh, I do have ravens that keep me up to date on more than a few places, while there are no other areas I correspond with learning about other cultures is something of a hobby of mine. It keeps me amused, it's good to have a hobby once you're dead. But as to why I write here.. well, when I first took up the quill the Hinterlands was a much more liberated place than it is now. An element of diversity was not only tolerated but encouraged, I remember my first message was directed towards Hydra who was considering become undead (Openly! On the Dyrad Tree! Can you imagine?) The citizens struck as me as wonderful, most of them still do, although I think the quality of missives has fallen off a bit in more recent times given that Virtue Followers seem quite persistent on drilling in an aura of extreme conformity to mundane morality. Nevertheless, I think that the Hinterlands remains one of the most provocative, fascinating, and dramatic areas in Tyrra - while most other realms have their moral stance figured out, Darkenwald is still in something of a fuzzy state wherein the citizens (at least individually, and possibly not in public) are willing to question their values.

2) Any plans to visit in person? If so, are you worried for your safety?

It's always a plan of mine, but I tend to put off doing so for two reasons. 1) I hate the notion of leaving my Barony - I have gruesome notions that Virtue Followers in my own area would notice some chink in the defenses and decide to try to slaughter

my court. Who could probably take care of themselves, but I like to flatter myself into believing that they need me. And 2) Yes, of course I fear for my safety. Your land, like many lands, is populated with insane zealots. And I hate the idea of dying while I'm on vacation. That's so tacky.

3) What do you think of the people you speak with here? Anybody you find particularly interesting, or more worth speaking to then the others? Is there anybody who is a waste of ink?

I tend to like anyone who writes eloquently. I'm fairly indifferent to whether or not they insult me providing they do it well - Magius, of course, dislikes me with a passion, but I still find his messages well worded enough to make me look forward to reading them. Other than that, well, I'm shamelessly inclined towards anyone who compliments me, especially given the dangerous nature of doing so at the present time. And then, of course, there are those idiotic Virtue Followers who feel that my existence took a serious downturn as soon as I became undead. I believe their existence took a serious downturn as soon as they left their mother's womb. As such, I don't usually spend a great deal of ink on them.

4) Does it bother you that people may be charged for speaking with you?

I think it's a rather pitiful commentary on morality if the ideals of the nobles are so weak they can't even stand in opposition to my own. Asides from that, I'm actually a little excited by it. You see, it's utterly ineffective - I don't think there's anything that could have made people MORE eager to converse with me. Nobles clearly have no idea how excited young people become when they have a rule to break. My raven's roosts have been bombarded ever since the restriction was enacted, I've never seen so many queries on Vampiric culture (namely, why is Vampiric culture so bad that we can't hear about it on the board?) So, in a way, I'm beginning to enjoy my status as a renegade.

5) Some people have accused you of trying to goad new adventurers who don't know the law in a deliberate attempt to

cause trouble. Any reaction to that?

Silly me. I always assume that when you enter a territory, the first thing you'd do would be to read the rules of the land. Or perhaps look at the tree, given that about one out of every ten branches seems to be titled "No consorting with the undead." Obviously, that's a ludicrous assumption. But honestly, I address just as many messages to people who have lived in the Hinterlands for years as I do to young'uns. I'm never as interested in "causing trouble" as I am in having a diverting conversation.

6) Recently you made some remarks about adventurers sneaking into Count Xerenel's tower to "play with his stuff and flee". Do you have similar problems with adventurers in your own area?

Not quite. I don't have the good Count's sense of sang-froid about those things, I would have something of a panic attack if Virtue Followers ever invaded my tower, whereas he's able to take those incidents in stride. As such, I have it extremely - ridiculously - well guarded. Not, I imagine, that Virtue Followers in my area wouldn't like to, fate knows I have marvelous toys to play with, but due to my neurotic nature they wouldn't be able to get away with it as easily as they can in the Hinterlands.

7) Ever worry that the Nobles here who threaten you are going to carry through with their threats one day?

Oh certainly. I also worry that pigs might sprout wings, equip themselves with catapults, and bombard my tower. I view the two possibilities as being on about the same level.

8) I'm curious about the challenges of running a Barony in a form that causes you to never go outside during the day. How do you guard against invaders, deal with other beings, and so on? Do you even have any mortals living inside the Barony?

I do occasionally go outside, I'm not entirely reclusive, though it can be such a

bother surrounding yourself with a pack of death knights to make sure that mortals don't attempt to fling themselves onto you that I find it's prudent not to leave my tower when I don't have to. I do, however, get lured out on occasion to visit neighboring Vampires, or to attend a danse macabre, but milling around outside with no destination seems to be a bad plan. I'm very opposed to permanent death, you see.

In relation to the rest, I have a formidable staff, though I'll admit, I could probably use more guards. Oh, I have quite a few, and they're very good (I feel a need to stress that for any virtue followers reading) but they're largely outnumbered by a flock of handmaids, cooks, butlers, valets, and so on. I've always run an aesthetically pleasing court.

I've found that if you run a court that's pleasant enough, most people come to you. Which rather negates the need to go outside.

Do I have mortals? Indeed I do. I'm currently hosting two philosophers and one bard. My chefs have recently become very good at making mortal food (though I don't know how you eat it, most of it looks truly awful.) Most of the mortals move on after about a month, but one of the philosophers has been with us for nearly a year... in large part I think due to the fact that he's fallen in love with one of my handmaids, so he'll probably be joining the breed soon... but that's another story entirely.

I so like clever mortals. They do broaden one's mind.

9) On a more personal note, do you miss seeing a sunrise in the morning?

Of course I miss sunrises. But I view certain sacrifices as worthwhile when they vastly improve the quality of the rest of my existence. And I do have some rather good paintings to refresh my memory as to what "daylight" looks like.

10) At the moment, the consorting laws here appear to be very poorly enforced. Do you have any advice for the Hinterlands Nobility on how to

actually enforce such a law?

Oh, you can't. I do have a few ideas on the subject, but you can't honestly think I'd be silly enough to tell the nobility all about them. Besides. If I did, and they listened, they'd be put to death for consorting. And we wouldn't want that for such a sensible ruling class.

11) I've read some of your earlier musings on the Dryads Tree, and noticed some discussions you had at one point about co-existence. Have you ever tried to create a peaceful relationship with a town of mortals, and if so how did it work out?

No, regrettably I haven't. There a few of my breed that aren't opposed to the idea, and would be more than willing to support it, but I'm yet to find any group of mortals who you could convince. Which is probably quite understandable. Even if they to trust me, they wouldn't trust another group of Vampires.

I suppose the Hinterlands is as close as I ever get to it. Though you can't say that's entirely peaceful, now can you? Although I do think with mortal vocalizing the bewildering nature of consorting laws openly we could move in that direction.

12) I also noticed that you made an offer to give a person here in Darkenwald a title in your court. What prompted you to do that? There must be lots of Vampires who would be upset that you are giving titles to mortals over them.

No, of course I didn't expect him to accept. I believe I offered it because the nobility was getting a bit too big for its britches. I mean, the things he was accused of doing were so patently absurd, and he was handling the whole name-calling for visiting me so well (how does one cup of coffee suddenly make a man's "Vampiric lover?") that he really did deserve a title. I figured I could pen a lengthy post explaining why you can't strip a man of his knighthood for petty things, or I could offer him one myself, which really serves as a more spectacular "up yours" to Hinterland nobility.

So in this case, Vampiric reaction wasn't really an issue. However, in other circumstances, I think most of my breed would be fairly amused by it. They see me as kind of an eccentric mortal-loving old widow - which I don't mind, that works well for me - so I believe the general reaction would be something along the lines of "look at what that kooky Akasha's gone and done now." Besides, don't you think it would take a very short time for a mortal to get tired of being a mortal in a Vampiric court? Once you get over the social stigma attached, and the mortal in question realized that we mostly drink blood that's been bottled centuries ago (with notable exceptions) I think he'd be running to become undead at the first sign of aging.

13) Given the almost assuredly violent reaction that anybody here accepting such a position would face, did you expect him to accept it? Were you disappointed that he didn't? (of course if he did accept it secretly, this question is invalid)

Sorry, I jumped ahead and answered that in the previous one. Not that I wouldn't have been thrilled if he did accept. I mean, that would have been kind of kicky, wouldn't it?

14) Is there anything else you would like to add?

I can't think of a thing. Excellent questions.

~~~~~

I would like to thank the Baroness for taking the time to answer my questions.



## The Voyage to King's Land: The Long and Short of it

### By Master Isaac

This here is the events of the crew of the Starfire Rose after the gathering at which we saved Tazzleworm, and decided to make a short trip to Shorebreeze to check on our residences before heading to King's Land.

While we were traveling by horseback on the way to Shorebreeze, we spotted some travelers coming the other way down the road. Thinking nothing of it, we continued past the troops, only to suddenly be surrounded by these "brigands".

"Who goes?" yelled the Cap'n as he drew his blade, "And why might you be blocking our path?"

"None of your business!" the apparent leader of this mottling crew of brigands called back, "and you better be getting your coin out for us to have, because there be a fee to pass on these lands."

"Hahaha," I laughed off as I conjured some aura, "And the toll be your life!"

Quinn spurred his horse into the group of brigands, with many falling to the business end of his rapier. The Cap'n, see his opportunity of some stealth while Quinn distracted them, used the blunt end of his dagger to cause a large welt to form on the back of the leader's neck, while I summoned force to Shatter and Destroy the blades of the remaining brigands.

"Well, it would appear that the you did pay with your lives," Jack whispered as ran his blade through the leader.

After that, the rest of the trip was uneventful.

When we finally reached Shorebreeze, we were granted a grand vision that made all of us do a double take: we saw the Starfire Rose, and it was only docked a half-mile from the shore. When we looked for a way to get out to the ship, we only saw one: The Dear Isabelle, the private ship of none

other than Magistrate Connors, scourge of the seas himself. So naturally, we decided it was worth the chance of angering Ol' Connors to try to get our boat back, as we know he'd understand our dilemma. So, I ran to grab my brother, William the Bloody and the crew, while Jack and Quinn ran down to secure the release of the boat. By the time William and I came back with the rest of the crew, Jack and Quinn had spoken with the guards protecting the ship into borrowing it for the time being.

So we headed out to sea after the Starfire Rose, but they must have seen us, as for as soon as we left the dock, the Starfire Rose started to sail off into the sea. We realized after we had followed them for half an hour that they were probably running because of the fact that we were navigating Connor's ship after them.

First, before we explain what happened next, we must explain about the Starfire Rose. Now the Starfire Rose was and still is the fastest boat on the sea. She was crafted by the Sessuar, and confiscated for a higher purpose, and then given to us by the our Liege, so that we could vanquish Pirates.

So, as was stated earlier, we were following the Starfire Rose, but because of superior craftsmanship, plus the modifications that Isaac had made upon it, we weren't catching up at all. So, at about the Highlands above the Arm, we finally lost sight of the Rose, and were forced to figure out what to do next. The Cap'n pointed out that we were supposed to be going to King's Land anyway, and we might as well go by sea now that we were all the way to the Highlands, and with this Schooner under our command. So, we continued to go around the Arm so that we could just sail into King's Land harbor and dock for the drinking... I mean feast.

We thought we had enough time to go see the Illustrious Squire William Crisp, the Pantless Wonder Extraordinaire, but while we were on our way, we noticed a ship was following us. On closer expectation, Quinn noticed that they had the Jolly Roger raised, so we decided to teach them a lesson: we got our crew to lie in way in the hold of the ship, and we rose the White

Flag of Surrender.

So when finally fired their cannons in warning shots over our bow, we dropped the anchor so that they could board us. When they finally did board us, they were surprised to find that we did a counter boarding, thereby gaining control of their ship. We then aimed the cannons at our old ship, and told them to surrender or else we'd sink the boat with all of them aboard it.

After they surrendered, we made them walk the plank for the crimes they had committed, and confiscated their boat so we could get to King's Land faster.

Next day, as we passed round the Horn of the Arm, we saw a magnificent beast, the fearsome creature of much deserved ill repute: the Kraken. Unfortunately for us, Master Bolt did not have enough time to properly assemble suitable defense for use against Krakens, mainly the Krakenbane: a weapon of mass destruction, the Krakenbane can take down a Kraken in one hit.

But enough of that, and back to the story: myself, the Cap'n, and Quinn jumped aboard our old ship, the blessed Magistrate Connor's personal vessel, and rammed her sorry excuse for a hull into the head of the Kraken.

After the defeat of the mighty Kraken, the crew settled down for a victory drink for the defeat of the Kraken. Then the Cap'n suggested a drink for the health of the crew, then Quinn...

When I finally woke up the next day, we awoke to an empty ship, barren of rum. As the Cap'n eloquently put, "Where's the rum?" and **that** right there answered our question.

After all the crew sobered up (well, as good as a crew can), the Cap'n regained our bearings, and found that we had drifted into Myanthean Waters. We quickly turned around, and headed back for King's Land.

Upon the morn of the 6<sup>th</sup> day, a thick fog had quickly rolled into the Bay, reducing the visibility to that of 200 yards. Much

to our surprised elation, we spotted the Starfire Rose just barely visible behind us, closing for some unknown destination in the Bay proper. The ship quickly passed us, not noticing us as we had exchanged ships since last we met. We took pursuit of the Rose and closed to within 20 yards, signaling that of a injured Merchant ship, but the Cap'n in all grace and glory, decided this was the time to yell at them, "Give me back my ship!" as the ignited the fuse of our lone cannon, aimed at the Captain of the other ship. Unfortunately, the Cap'n's aim wasn't the greatest, but was able to blast the Tricorn right off the head o' their Cap'n. They on the other hand, had the cannons specially modified by Master Bolt, and were able to overcome our assault, but with great difficulty.

Long story short, we ended that night on shore with our weapons, each other, and the last barrel of rum.

Once we reached land, we sent William and Bolt to head back to Shorebreeze to grab us another boat.

It's all a blur, because we started on that last faithful barrel, and somehow we reached King's Land, but I do remember something about a Hobbling's Feet and the Cap'n's Crow's Nest of a hat...



## Starfire's Pirateers

### By Anonymous

Oh the year was 602, How I wish I was in Shorebreeze now.

A Letter of Marque was signed by the King,  
For the shadiest man I'd ever seen.

Chorus:

*And Void cursed them all,  
Is what we were told but,  
Our Transforms would only make us bold,  
We rob and loot, Drink & Sing  
Now I'm a drunken man on a Kraggor Lok Pier,  
The last of Starfire's Pirateers.*

Well Cap'n Jack Starfire cried to the town,  
How I wish I was in Shorebreeze now.  
For <cough> brave men all murderers who  
Would make for him the Rose's crew.

~ Chorus ~

Well the Rose, She was a glorious sight,  
How I wish I was in Shorebreeze now.  
With Rum in her bow, starboard, stern and port,  
Filled with more kegs than what we could sort!

~ Chorus ~

After refilling our booze we went to sea,  
How I wish I was in Shorebreeze now.  
We had ships to rob, pillage, loot and burn,  
And refill the rum stores in our stern!

~ Chorus ~

After emptying our gold we sailed again,  
How I wish I was in Shorebreeze now.  
When a bloody great Galley hove in sight,  
Our drunken crew prepared to fight!

~ Chorus ~

The Pirates stood sober on their deck,  
How I wish I was in Shorebreeze now.  
While the crew pitched and swayed with the waves,  
The Pirates charged a swingin' their Slays!

~ Chorus ~

Our drunken crew put up a bloody fight,  
How I wish I was in Shorebreeze now.  
With Death spells cast and men waylaid,  
Our numbers fell like a Death Knight's Blade!

~ Chorus ~

The Rose was stolen from Captain Jack  
How I wish I was in Shorebreeze now.  
The crew was smashed like a bowl of eggs,  
And their Captain withered off both me legs!

~ Chorus ~

Now here we stand in the 604<sup>th</sup> year,  
How I wish I was in Shorebreeze now.  
It's been 20 long months since they sailed away,  
And we just saw the Starfire yesterday!

---

## Archwizard Shadowfeather's Brain Teasers

### By Archwizard Shadowfeather

It's been a long time since the last Enquirer, and with the sudden influx of new adventurers, I thought I'd see how the adventurers would stack up against the problem solvers of old, like Goodman NOX and I. Don't forget, a sharp mind is the sharpest weapon in any man's inventory, and can cut deeper than any blade. Anyway, on with the riddles:

~~~~~  
RIDDLE 1:

It can be said:
To be gold is to be good;
To be stone is to be nothing;
To be glass is to be fragile;
To be cold is to be cruel.
Unmetaphored, what am I?

~~~~~

RIDDLE 2:

Each morning I appear  
To lie at your feet,  
All day I follow  
No matter how fast you run,  
Yet I nearly perish  
In the midday sun.



RIDDLE 3:

One where none should be,  
Or maybe where two should be,  
Seeking out purity,  
In the King's trees.  
What am I?



RIDDLE 4:

I stand, and look across the sea,  
With its waves, crests, troughs, and  
valleys.  
I stride, across this water, my horse  
following after,  
And while it laps against his withers,  
And brushes against my thighs,  
I fill the emptiness with laughter.  
And he - with his sighs.  
Whether do we go?  
Or do we go at all?  
Or are we simply out here wading,  
To the next port of call.  
Where the sea ends,  
Where the loam lays firm beneath my  
feet,  
And I can mount my steed again,  
And continue til next we meet.  
What is really being talked about?



RIDDLE 5:

It was asked of me what I could be  
made,  
And so people were fed from me.  
It was asked of me what I could be  
made,  
And so houses were built.  
It was asked of me what I could be  
made,  
And so things were written.  
It was asked of me what I could be

made,  
And so I fertilized the ground.  
But when asked more of what I could  
be made,  
There was nothing to be found.



*Answers:*

- 1) Heart
- 2) A Shadow
- 3) A Unicorn
- 4) The Open Plains
- 5) A Tree



Order of Knighthood

**By Baron Ser Gustav, KPLK**

Many of you may know that my Order of Knighthood is preceeded only by the Order of the Knights-of-the-Hart. My Order has a long and illustrious history. We have fought in numerous wars and counless battles. The story I am about tell has been told by many knight and more than likely by more than a few squires. It is an old story, one I have told many a time. For those of you that have heard my tlae bear with me, for those of you that have not enjoy.

Many, many years ago three Brother-Knights of my Order stood around a camp fire on the eve before battle to enjoy comradery and fine dwarven ale. As they drank and told stories of battles long since past the knights began to debate the true meaning of courage. Finalally the first knight said, "Enough debate, I will show you the true meaning of courage!" He called for his squire.

"Squire! Dawn your armor and finest hunting lance and go fourth into the wilderness. Before we engage the enemy at dawn I want you to slay a bear and throw its head at my feat." The squire being obident to his lord, did as he said, and before dawn he returned fro the hunt with a severed bear's head and presented it to his lord.

"Good," said the second knight, "But, I will show you the true meaning of courage."

The knight yelled, "Squire, go out into the wilderness and fetch me a bear's head." The knight instructed his squire to gout out and slay the bear with nothing but his bare hands and to wear to armour and to slay a bear before the faced the enemy in the morning.

If I might interdictt for a moment, I don't know when the kight's began their debate nor the time of year (There a r emore hours of daylight in the summer, June 21st in particalr, than in winter, e.g. December 21st) In either case the first squire slew a bear, before dawn (Summer or Winter) no small task but the second squire must before an even greater task and ina shorter time. The first squire task burnt up nightlight and the now the second has even less, no small task wouldn't you think?

Before dawn the squire returned, bloody and worn. He threw the bears head at his knight's feet, bitten off by the squire himself.

The third knight, Sir Gustav Karlsen, replied to the other two, " I will show you the true meaning on courage." Sir Gustav rose from his chair around the camp fire and yelled to his squire, " Squire!!! Fetch me a beer!!"

Sir Gustav's squire yelled back, "Get it your own self lardass and while your there get me one too!" Now that is the true meaning of courage.



Nathan the Criminal

## By The Jester

### Hinterland's Worst Criminal: Not who you might expect it to be...

Everyone has always been griping about how Luthian Longbow has broken many charges; breaking this law and that law, but he is not the worst criminal to plague these lands; for it is the local Baron of Icewurm, Baron Nathan Bloodmoon.

With charges of Consorting with Undead at least twice (which include arranging for the Wench Akasha to have safe travels under his protection), these are just the other laws he broke arranging said safe travel: Conspiracy, Negligence, Contempt (of the law), Necromancy, and of course to top it all off, Treason. And this is just for that one said offence which can be proven by messages on the Tree: if someone were to go back and check the Tree,, they would more than likely be able to find more examples of this corruption, and these are just things that can be proven.

But my time grows short of it appears that I have other pressing matters to deal with, with rumors that Naj'itelle is starting to make surface raids again, and we can't have that happening, can we?

*The Jester*

*Don't talk too loudly, for the walls have ears.*

*Defender of Insani... I mean Justice*

P.S. I'd also like to point out that before I finish the letter, that the following people have multiple acts of Pretending to a Noble Title, as the Laws of the Hinterlands clearly state this, "If a Noble is appointed without having been presented to the Duke or Duchess, they shall be found guilty of Pretending to a Noble Title, and their liege shall be found to be in contempt of this law," and I have it on good authority that Squire Crisp, Kurahn, Logan, and the ex-Squire Kendrick were not brought before their respective Dukes before their namings as Squires. Oh, and I guess that

means that the Good Baron has another charge against him: Contempt.

-----  
Question of the Month : How do you protect yourself against Consorting Charges?

## By Talmus Lightreaver

I had hoped to write an informative piece on the Nobility in this space, so we could all see just what they do with their time. Unfortunately this month the Enquirer has become all crime, all the time.

This is not entirely our fault, the Dryads Tree itself was taken over for months by the question of Consorting with Undead. Now people aren't talking about anything, so that leaves us Consorting.

I expect that by now almost all of our readers know the definition of Consorting, so I won't repeat it here. Most of the law is reasonable anyway, except for one phrase. "Speaking with undead" is all encompassing and amazingly broad. Here are some examples of things that are illegal under this law (there are numerous more of course):

~~~~~  
1. Plotting with an Undead to assassinate Nobles and overthrow the King – nobody would question that this should be a crime

2. Plotting with an Undead to steal Troll stew from the Inn – well, theft is a crime

3. Plotting with an Undead to bake and sell blueberry muffins – maybe?

4. Telling an Undead that you plan to bake and sell blueberry muffins – I suppose they are worried that the Undead will try and poison them, in which case telling an Alchemist in Darkenwald should probably be a crime too

5. Conducting an Interview with a certain Vampire – this reporter is expecting to be charged the day after the Enquirer is released

6. Yelling "die you undead scum!" at a Vampire before killing it – yes ladies and gentlemen, this is a crime!

7. Stalling for time until help arrives by talking to an Undead – good strategy, but sadly the law will consider you a criminal

With that in mind, I present the Darkenwald Enquirer's guide to not getting charged with consorting!

1. Don't taunt the Undead.

Taunting them is an act of speaking to them, which is illegal. So don't even think about saying "die you undead scum!" before dispatching them. Whatever you do, don't taunt the Death Knight to try and lure him into an ambush you have laid, your attempt to destroy the undead is an act of Consorting.

2. Don't negotiate with Undead.

The local Knight got taken hostage by a Vampire and will be going to a circle to resurrect if you don't give the Vampire a safe path to escape? Negotiating for the release of the Knight is Consorting. Causing the death of a Noble is illegal too, but technically it's the Vampire that killed him and not you. You were simply negligent in that you didn't try to save him.

3. In fact, don't talk to Undead at all.

It doesn't matter that the Undead may be giving you a clue to foil the plans of another Undead and in the process save numerous lives, this kind of activity is blatantly illegal.

4. Don't run away from an Undead either.

Running away is also a crime, "not attempting to destroy an undead". Suppose that Knight is held hostage again. If the Vampire drops him and starts backing into the forest, you are legally obligated to ignore the health of the Knight and go attack the Undead. Checking the health of your fellow mortals instead of chasing a Vampire around is clearly a disgusting act, and anybody doing so should be charged! (unless you happen to be the one about to die of course, then you may want some help)

5. Don't talk to anybody unless you first confirm they are mortal.

Talking to an Undead is a crime. What if you are talking to somebody and don't know they are undead. They could be a really pale Human you say. Sorry, that's still a crime. The solution is to check and make sure everybody is in fact not undead before you talk to them. Anybody who refuses to be checked is clearly hiding something, and you should avoid talking to them. In fact since they might be Undead hiding the fact, you should kill them so you don't get charged for not attacking an Undead.

6. To be safe, don't talk to anybody.

Killing people indiscriminately as outlined in #5 will get you in trouble as soon as you kill someone who isn't Undead. The only safe answer is to not talk to anybody at all. You are still risking being charged with not attacking an Undead, but if nobody else is attacking the person either you are probably safe. After all, they can't sentence everybody to death.

If you follow these simple guidelines, you should be able to avoid being charged with Consorting. This will have the unfortunate side effect of destroying any sense of cooperation that exists in Darkenwald amongst the Adventurers, but that is a small price to pay to make sure that Undead aren't being spoken to.

Have any suggestions on how to avoid being charged, or other comments about this article? Write me at trl@nero.nb.ca!



Archwizard Shadowfeather's Talk

By Archwizard Shadowfeather

This edition, with all the ignorant breaking of Hinterland Laws I have seen recently, I am going to have the Noble edict written here so no one can even *try* to plead ignorance. Well, here we go:

The purpose of this article is to serve as a reminder to all citizens and travelers in The Hinterlands of our Laws. It is your responsibility as citizens and visitors to be cognizant of our laws. Failure on your part to learn the laws is not a valid defense in trial.

Who is Subject Under the Laws:

Those who are established citizens of The Hinterlands are protected under the laws of the land and subject to these laws. Said laws also bind travelers from other realms, unless specific exception has been made by treaty with the traveler's homeland. In addition, all travelers are protected under the laws of The Hinterlands unless specifically given exception by decree of His or Her Majesty, or their Graces. The Hinterlands shall tolerate the customs of foreign travelers, which may not be in agreement with ours so long as those customs do not violate ours laws.

These laws do not protect invaders of this land. You may not be arrested for committing the following against a monster, an invader or their property. These are (but not inclusive to): Arson, Assault, Theft, or Murder. There are certain laws, which may never be violated, regardless of the victim. These are: Kidnapping, Slavery, and Necromancy.

Similarly anyone looting the defenders of our towns while the town is in threat will be considered guilty of Conspiracy to the crimes of that threat. This is likely to add Conspiracy to Treason as a minimum, and will have severe results.

The Nobles, Magistrate or appointed Sheriff will make the final decision of who is or is not covered under the law.

Noble Titles:

His and Her Majesty hold all of The Hinterlands jointly. Titles and lands are awarded by their Graces, to those who have given of themselves for the Duchies. Nobles hold no hereditary right to title or land. Nobles may not name an heir to either land or title, though recommendations shall be afforded due consideration.

All those persons that are under consideration for assuming Noble Title within The Hinterlands (Squire, Lady/Lord, Dame/Knight, Baroness/Baron, Viscountess/Viscount, or Countess/Count) must be presented by their liege-to-be to the Duke or Duchess for introduction and examination prior to their appointment. If a Noble is appointed without having been presented to the Duke or Duchess, they shall be found guilty of Pretending to a Noble Title, and their liege shall be found to be in contempt of this law.

All those holding Noble Title within The Hinterlands must attend at least one half of the Gatherings in the any of the major cities of The Hinterlands in order to retain their title. Extenuating circumstances will, of course be taken into account, but only if communicated well ahead of time. However if a Noble is absent from more than one half of the Gatherings without excuse, their title shall be removed.

Jurisdiction of the Law:

The Duke, Duchess, and their households have the authority to dispense justice throughout all of their Duchies. Barons and their households may dispense justice within their Barony. Each noble has the right to name a Sheriff and a Magistrate for their lands, although encouraged; they are not required to do so.

A Sheriff may enforce the laws and arrest citizens suspected of committing a crime. A Magistrate may sit in judgment of citizens accused of a crime. Both a Sheriff and a Magistrate may preside over an honor combat between two citizens.

Citizens may apprehend any other citizen that they witness committing a crime or who is known to be a wanted criminal. Citizens do not have the right to dispense justice; the suspect must be turned over

to the Sheriff or a Noble at once. If unreasonable force is used or the arrest was without merit, the apprehender may be charged with applicable crimes.

Each Noble shall be allowed to set forth additional laws within their own lands so long as those laws do not conflict with the laws of their liege.

Nobles outside of their own lands do not have the right to dispense justice for commoners. However, all Nobility shall be accorded the honor and respect befitting their rank whether on their own lands or not. Nobles must always be properly addressed and treated accordingly.

Honor Combat:

It has long been a tradition of our society that disputes can be settled by the use of arms and magic. The parties in conflict must name and agree upon the terms and conditions of the duel. This agreement covers whether or not magic or magical devices can be used, how far the combat should proceed, what penalty the loser will incur, and other important factors. It is traditional for the combatants to fight with the weapons style with which they are most proficient and with no magical aid.

The most important single factor is that a trial by combat must be scrupulously honest and honorable. It is considered dishonorable for a citizen to challenge a Noble or for a Noble to challenge a Noble of a different rank. The penalty for cheating by a Noble in a trial by combat is to be declared the loser, executed, and, stripped of all lands and titles.

A Noble, a Sheriff, or a Magistrate must bear witness a duel between citizens. Citizens who cheats in a duel will be declared the loser, forfeit all goods, and receive 50 lashes.

Either party may select a champion, provided the champion agrees. It is considered unchivalrous for a Knight to select a champion unless they are prohibited by health or position from entering combat.

Also according to Hinterland Law, common folk may not engage in "Honor Combat"

without the sponsorship of a Noble. Any common folk engaging in "Honor Combat" without a Noble sponsor present will be charged with Contempt, as well as any crimes committed (such as assault or murder.) If anyone is harmed other than the two parties engaging in the "Honor Combat" the person who caused the harm will be charged with the appropriate crime for each count.

The Laws

High Crimes are punishable by at least a Death and are tried only by the Nobility of the Hinterlands. Low Crimes are not generally punishable by Death and are tried by the Local Sheriff or Local Magistrate in representation of the Nobility of the Hinterlands. Within the cities of Kraggor Lok, Cragg Keep, Thunder's Spire, Dewshine's Crest, or Fort Icewurm the local Lord Magistrate handles all matters of commoner law.

While all laws have suggested punishments, it is the privilege of the Sheriff, Magistrate or Noble sitting in judgment to punish each criminal as harshly or as leniently as he or she sees fit, depending upon the circumstances surrounding the crime. The liege of the Noble in question shall handle any matters of Noble Law should they arise.

There are proper channels available to challenge the decision made in a criminal trial. If any citizen of The Hinterlands is in need of information regarding the appeal of such decisions, you may ask of any Noble of these lands.

Low Crimes:

Low Crimes usually consist of damage or theft of property or assault, and are therefore punishable by fining or incarceration. Multiple or repeat offenses may be punishable by confiscation of the individual's possessions, or by death.

Accomplice

One who willingly operates, aids, or assists in the commission of a crime by either action or inaction. Those fully aware of their participation in the unlawful act shall bear the criminal responsibility as if they were the sole participants of said crime and could be also subject to the crime of

Conspiracy.

Punishment: Fine of 5 gold, 5 hours of Community Service

Aggravated Assault

Commission of Assault with the intent of committing other crimes.

Punishment: Fine of 20 gold, 10 hours of community service.

Arson

The willful destruction or damage by fire to any property of another or of the Kingdom or the destruction of one's own property by fire if it is done for some later benefit.

Punishment: Fine of 30 gold, 15 hours of community service and compensation to injured party.

Assault

Placing someone in fear of harm, seriously threatening another person, or causing harm, constraint or mischief to a person or their property. These threats may be physical or magical threats by nature.

Punishment: Fine of 10 gold, 5 hours of community service.

Attempted Murder

An unlawful attempt or declaration (written or unwritten) on the part of one or several to cause the death of any sentient being (except where sanctioned by the legal authorities of the Hinterlands or an official act of war by the Crown).

Punishment: Fine of 20 gold, 5 hours of community service.

Battery

The unlawful use of force or violence, constraint or mischief upon the person of another without premeditation

Punishment: Fine of 15 gold, Death for second and subsequent offenses.

Burglary

Burglary is unlawfully entering or remaining in a building with the intent to commit any crime, not just theft. The crime is burglary even if it was never committed.

Punishment: Fine 10 gold, 15 Gold for second and subsequent offenses.

Blackmail/Coercion/Extortion

Something of value obtained by threats of public exposure, violence or criminal prosecution; forcing another to act against their will

Punishment: Fine of 15 gold, 5 hours of community service.

Bribery

Bribery is attempting to sway the judgment of a person of authority by any means.

Punishment:

First offense: 10 gold and amount of bribe.

Second offense: 20 gold and amount of bribe.

Third offense and beyond: Death

Conspiracy

Planning to commit a crime, aiding a criminal,(a person in the commission of a crime.) obstructing the investigation of a crime, or obstructing the course of dictated punishment of a criminal (i.e. setting a criminal free from incarceration, delivering a life spell to one sentenced to a death, etc.) is conspiracy. In matters involving nobility, this will be added with Treason. In matters involving Undead, the charge will be added to Necromancy.

Punishment: Fine of 25 gold, 15 hours of Community Service

Grave Robbing

Disturbing and taking property from a grave.

Punishment:

First offense: 5 gold, items returned, apology to corpse/grave

Second offense: 10 gold, items returned, apology to corpse/grave

Third offense and beyond: 15 gold, items returned, apology to corpse/grave

Misappropriation of Town Funds/Goods or Funds/Goods from a Town Adventure

Self-Explanatory

Punishment:

First offense: 5 gold, confiscation of funds/goods and no treasure cut

Second offense: 10 gold, confiscation of funds/goods and no treasure cut

Third offense and beyond: 50 gold, confiscation of funds/goods and no treasure cut

NOTE: a charge of treason could also be assigned with any offense

Public Disorder

Anyone found to be acting in an abnormal or irrational manner. (i.e. Babbling nonsense, walking about unclothed, speaking or acting in a manner unlike themselves, etc.) must be brought to the Mage's Guild immediately for identification, and if necessary detained there until the madness has passed.

Punishment: If no external cause can be found for the disorderly behavior, a fine of no less than one gold shall be extracted, and paid to the Mage's Guild by the afflicted person, whether in cash, material goods, or guard duty for 1 hour.

Negligence (within one 24-hour period)

Negligence is an action that places one's self or others in a compromising, potentially harmful or dangerous position due to ignorance, stupidity or lack of forethought.

Punishment:

First offense: 20 gold

Second offense: 50 gold

Third offense and beyond: Death

Theft

Stealing or destruction of another's goods by any means. As well as the possession and distribution of stolen goods. Tax evasion is also theft.

Punishment:

First offense: Fine of 10 gold, items returned or gp equivalency, 5 hours of community service and compensation to injured party.

Second offense: 50 gold, items returned or gp equivalency, 5 hours of community service and compensation to injured party.

Third offense: Death and Spirit Marked as a Thief

High Crimes:

High Crimes are punishable by confiscation of all worldly goods and by death. Obliteration and banishment may be ordered for multiple or repeat offenses.

The following is a legal definition of Obliteration:

Obliteration shall mean that the offender shall suffer the equivalent of three deaths. This does not necessarily mean an Obliterate Ritual. It means that the criminal will suffer a successful Obliterate Ritual, or three deaths, at the discretion of the Noble presiding as judge. Failure of an Obliteration shall NEVER be considered to be caused by the innocence of the condemned. Failure of a ritual is caused by a failure of the magicks themselves, or by an error in the casting.

Aiding and Abetting a Fugitive

Aiding and abetting a fugitive means willfully or negligently assisting or attempting to assist the fugitive to avoid capture, Penalties or judgment by someone of authority when they have been found guilty, charged with or suspected of a crime. Intent to Aid and Abet falls under this category as well.

Punishment:

First offense: 15gp

Second and beyond: 30gp and Denial of Lawful Citizenship

Contempt

The willful disrespect of a Noble or public official, or the willful disobedience of a lawful order given by them for the benefit of the people and support of the Law or the Land. Please know that Her Majesty Eleona Whitecrest passed a law requiring that all Nobles be addressed by their proper titles from all stations of Nobility.

Punishment: Every offense: 1 Death and/or Denial of Lawful Citizenship

Consorting with Undead

Consorting with undead is the willful or negligent agreement with undead, whether direct or implied, in word or action. Example: Not attempting to destroy an undead, speaking with an undead, making promises to an undead (whether with the

intent to honor them or not), creation of undead, controlling undead, willfully allowing one's self to be controlled by undead, not reporting the existence of an undead in the area to the authorities, etc. This could include but is not limited to Treason, Conspiracy, Contempt, Accomplice.

Punishment:

First offense: 1 Death and/or Denial of Lawful Citizenship
 Second offense: 1 Death and Denial of Lawful Citizenship
 Third offense and beyond: Obliteration and Spirit Marked as an Outlaw

If one is forced to consort with undead under extenuating circumstances, this consorting, and the circumstances must be reported to the Duke or Duchess immediately for any future plea of leniency to be considered.

Counterfeiting

Falsely making of any currency of the Hinterlands with the intent to defraud. (Monies from the lands of Evendar are accepted within the Hinterlands)

Punishment: 1 Death, 200 gold, and Spirit Marked as a Counterfeiter

Desertion

Desertion is a willful or negligent absence of duty, as assigned by a Noble or person in authority (in the charge of a Noble). All persons who have agreed to a term of service, whether through verbal, written, direct or implied agreement are held accountable for this provision of the law.

Punishment:

First offense: Loss of rank and forfeiture of pay during period of desertion
 Second offense and beyond - Death

Flight from Prosecution or Resisting Arrest

The willful unlawful flight to avoid capture, a trial or punishment for a crime, or of one who has been suspected of a crime.

Punishment: Doubling of the Original Maximum Sentence and possibly Death

Forgery

Falsely making or materially altering by hand or otherwise, with intent to defraud, any document or symbol which if the genuine would be legal efficacy or foundation of a legal claim.

Punishment: 1 Death, 100 gold and Spirit Marked as a Forger

Kidnapping

Taking or constraining a person with unlawful force. Also considered and addition to Slavery by most judges.

Punishment: 1 Death

Manslaughter

Killing of another individual impulsively and without premeditation, even if a life spell is administered. Unless proven to be in self defense.

Punishment: 1 Death

Mockery of a Noble Title

Derision for the purpose of insulting, degrading or otherwise showing disrespect to one of noble title.

Punishment: Death

Murder with Intent

The unlawful and premeditated killing of another sentient being, even if a life spell is administered. Unless proven to be in self defense.

Punishment: 1 Death, Fine of 30 Gold, Third offense Death is changed to Obliteration.

Necromancy

The use of any spell, ability, or item that causes creation or release of undead as well as the use of any spell, ability or item that transforms a living being into undead. This also includes any ability, item or casting of any "Chaos" effect. This law also paired with Consorting with undead, which could include but is not limited to Treason, Conspiracy, Contempt, Accomplice.

Punishment:

First offense: 1 Death, Fine of 30 gold
 Second Offense: Obliteration
 Third+ Offense: Obliteration and Denial of Lawful Citizenship

If one is forced to consort with undead under extenuating circumstances, this consorting, and the circumstances must be reported to the Duke or Duchess immediately for any future plea of leniency to be considered.

Possession and/or distribution of Illegal substances

The manufacture of or the possession and distribution of substances including, but not limited to the following; Alchemical substances consisting of elixirs, gasses, and contact compounds: Euphoria, Death, Instant Death, Love #9, Love, Enslavement, Dominate. Potions: Cause critical wounds, Cause disease, Cause light wounds, Cause mortal wounds, Cause serious wounds, Cause wounds, Taint blood, Wither limb. – Many of these items are Necromantic in Nature and the charge of Necromancy applies.

Punishment:

First Offense: 1 Death
 Second and subsequent Offenses: Obliteration, Denial of Lawful Citizenship

Pretending to a Noble title

To knowingly present oneself by document, mannerisms or statement to be of Noble station. A commoner who seeks to convince another that he or she has a noble title is guilty of this crime. It is unlawful to present oneself as a "former noble". Nor may you represent yourself to the Goblins as a noble.

Punishment: Obliteration

Slavery

Forced servitude, the buying or selling of another to enforce servitude. This can be through the use of charm, dominate, enslavement, euphoria, Love poisons, as well as by physical or implied threats. No one may own slaves in the Hinterlands, monster or not. The possession and use of the elixir commonly known as "euphoria" is always illegal. Exception to this is indentured servitude to the Crown, or the visiting of recognized nobility from lands where it is legal. (See Below).

Punishment:

First Offense: 1 Death, fine of 30 gold,
Denial of Lawful Citizenship
Second Offense: Obliteration

Tax Evasion

Tax Evasion is the willful avoidance of taxation by those required to pay them.

Punishment:

First offense: Double assessment of Tax
Second offense and beyond: Triple assessment of Tax and Death

Treason

The communication, transmission, or delivery (or attempts to communicate, transmit or deliver) of any document or information relating to the Kingdom's defense to any foreign government or faction that threatens the rule of the Crown. Attempting to overthrow the lawful government of the land by means of force or trickery. Also any willful intent to cause harm, the causing of harm, or the planning to cause any ill intent against any Noble of the Hinterlands.

Punishment: Death, Loss of all worldly possessions, Denial of Lawful Citizenship

High Treason

Includes the attempt to overthrow the Duchy, Principality or Monarchy, or the murder of any Hinterlands Noble.

Punishment: Obliteration is mandated, and may be to the final death. Banishment after obliteration is an option.

Over the course of the next editions of the Darkenwald Enquirer, I shall go over a few of each of the Laws so that you can better understand each Law, and how they apply to you.



A Poem

By Amil

We left for the road, my fellowship and me to seek out the glory of war. The nobles had planned, the pieces were placed, and the battles of now were before. Given the route we travelled to our own prestige, the front of our beautiful fray. There was no shame in dying and our acts of valour were the very heart of our kingdom. Our enthusiasm was at peak and stories had already grown, of the great and the bold and the knights of war. We would dispense justice for our liege!

There was glory in dying for our kingdom!

My sword became envious of the stories after the long trudge through the ired. We marched asleep through the pain. The drunken path felt like an inveterate destiny. We walked long and tall without shame. Our dry mouths yearned for the ecstasy of battle. Many of us believed that our death would be a symbol. Our ashes would be the mark of a sacrosanct land that was our kingdom.

There was glory in dying for our kingdom.

Then those skulking rats came like nuruhuine to take us in that sleeping mountain. I remember the obstreperous silence. The slip of that sibilance sound was the erratic trigger. I recall the cry for rags; rags soaked in piss to stop the poison. Oh the ignorance and stubborn nature that is man. To watch my kin choke, drown and boil in that cloud of salvation. Our limp bodies could not be summoned to save ourselves, nor did many wish to use them any further. This was simply the inception of the battle, a first phase for a desperate glory. I remember seeing the eyes of the young boy in the think yellowish-green brume. His eyes were blue, yet bubbling with puss and oil. His hair drenched and his mouth gasping with frothing blood, his tainted lungs squeezed of his entity. Then they descended with their immunities to their own filth. Rats of scum and disease pulled forth daggers to save us.

Was there glory in dying for our kingdom?

I was not initially saved?. They mercifully slit the first's throat. To others, they gouged out the eyes; there was an enjoyment of the wailing, the chatter of their stained yellow teeth, the red eyes of delight. They decapitated their trophies. My breast began to accelerate in anticipation and I forgotten the appetite of my blade. A staggering arm grabbed me and tugged my lost body away. I had missed the feast. I was given no turn. I was one of two who left the mountain and returned to the nobles. My companion was given his proper dishonourable hangings for the opinions on the defeat. I hear young children go to war.

There is no glory in dying for our kingdom?

Shinnan's Grapevine.

Seems the gossip around here is almost as frozen as everything else. But the Enquirer is never the same without rumours, so our staff bundled up and braved the weather to seek out the biggest gossip in Darkenwald. The one woman who knows every rumour in the Hinterlands no matter what.

We arrived at her house to find her sweeping snow off her doorstep, (a truly fruitless endeavour with the weather windy as it is) and after some short introductions we were ushered inside her home. Inside we were bombarded with the heavy sent of potpourri and surrounded by oh so many doilies.

After being feed Tea from what seemed to be a bottomless Pot, we were forced to listen to her greatly embellished life story, while she showed us portrait after portrait of her family members (past and present) we *finally* got down to business. We would not be disappointed.

~~~~~

Shiver me timbers! The Hinterlands are busting at the seams with Salty Sea Dogs! Just where are all these Pirates coming from? The ocean is miles from here. Are they somehow magically navigating their ships up our rocky, shallow rivers? If so these must be some ships! Residents

claim they have some strange power over the water to help them along. Others say their ship was blown here by an angry Air Elemental. Even more far fetched is the rumour about how they bartered with a Fae to enchant their ship to fly. Air Pirates!? How scary! Will we ever know the truth?

~~~~~

Has anyone seen or heard a peep from our Crown Princess? Seems strange that such a vocal girl would keep quiet for so long. Has she run away from the Castle again and is hiding out in the woods? Or has she fallen victim to yet another royal kidnapping? Castle staff refuse to speak to Enquirer reporters, is something sinister being kept secret? Or do they just not like us?

~~~~~

Rumour has it that one of the Nobles of the Hinterlands, \*name withheld to protect the innocent (namely, us)\* had dinner plans with that Lady of the Dark Akasha not so long ago. Did said Noble ever take her up on it? If so, what sort of feast did they eat? Blood pudding and Blood wine are just a few of this reporters guesses. What did they talk about? Oh, to have been a fly on the wall at that Dinner party.

~~~~~

Strange things are happening on the Overseers Tree. Frequent visitors to the tree have come down with some strange affliction that causes their accents to come out in their writing, causing confusion and despair to all other readers. Effects do not seem permanent thankfully. Is it something in the tree's bark? Or is the Overseer playing more games and releasing some Toxicant into the air?

A Tale

By Squire Crisp

I thought that I would drop a line, as this time of the year in the islands is not the most exciting. I was going to tell the tales

of past adventures, I realized that quite a few do not know anything about the lands I hale from.

I would begin by stating that I come from and isle called The Arm. It is one of many islands off the eastern coast. The area is greatly unexplored. We presently have found and explored fourteen of the islands and have found no cultured settlements except for one. We were not allowed to make landfall on that isle as the elves that make their home there are reclusive and not the friendliest of folk. I am in the process of mapping the coastline and the islands we have traveled near. There are many sea-faring trade routes along the coast and of course there are the pirates. I have spent much of the last few years traveling with merchant ships and with Captain Booty, a well-known slayer of pirates.

The Arm is a small island four days sail for the coast, NNE. The local inhabitants are of every known race as the area has docks and is slowly developing into a town. I live there with my lady Moon and three children. Moon owns a small four-room inn called Moon's Shyne. If you happen by, the inn is located inland from the docks, three miles east. We would always welcome any travelers and always looking for trade goods.

Years ago I was one of the very few who made my home here, although that has changed a great deal. The area is prone to great blowing storms that can level ancient forest. Pirate and bandit attacks are common as well. There is a wild barbarian tribe who make their home on The Arm and they don't speak much of the common tongue. In the waters surrounding the island are all manner of fish, which will most likely be the main export of the area. As far as I can tell, the current population is around one hundred and twenty spirits.

If you wish to travel here from Rosa's Inn you would head east for five days afoot. Once at the coast you would have to signal a ship, if you haven't already made arrangements for someone to pick you up.

I will try to get a new map of the areas finished during this winter.



O.O.G Thank You Section

The Newsletter staff would like to mention the following people for their submissions for this edition of the Nero Newsletter. And while Shalamarr and Takysa may hang for this issue, your help was greatly appreciated. May you spend the gobbies you get from this well.

Thank you:

Chris Eaton
Timothy Ferguson
Tony Kennedy
Jeff Pevril
and Ian Petley

I would like to also thank Liz G. For all her hard work. It was her idea to get this issue out there and I'm glad she had it. Again, Thank you Liz for all your hard work!

-Bronwen