

## The Law in Sunndi

At the height of power of the Great Kingdom, that nation was renowned for its fair, honest and efficient justice system, which was designed by the great arch-mage Schandor. During the long corruption and eventual downfall of the Great Kingdom this system did not avoid the fate of the empire that used it: the Ivids and their devilish allies perverted it beyond recognition. As part of the Great Kingdom Schandor's laws were used in Sunndi for a long time. Even though Sunndi broke away from everything that has to do with the Great Kingdom traces of this justice system can still be found within the current laws. Most rules of this system though are either unpractical (for example a judge was not allowed to hail from and/or possess ground within 300 miles of his district) or simply do not work in a society like Sunndi.

Sunndi is a NG/CG society, but that does not mean there are no laws. Unlike in more lawful societies though, the laws are more open for interpretation and the judges have got a big leeway in interpreting the laws and determining the punishments. In Sunndi there are basically two sets of law, which are known as the King's Laws and the Noble's Laws. Hazendel and the Congress of Lords have created the King's Laws, which function as a basic set of laws that are equal all over Sunndi. They also define the rights and duties of each citizen of Sunndi. Crimes against the King's Laws in general are the more serious crimes and as a consequence the punishment is more severe. The Noble's Laws can be different per county since the Count and the Council of the County determine these laws. Even for these laws many crimes and punishments tend to be the same. The Noble's Laws describes the punishments for lesser crimes such as pouching, pick pocketing and public disturbances.

The responsibility for upholding the laws and punishing criminals is primarily in the hands of the local nobility in the form of the baron in most counties. They are in charge of the police force within their barony and they judge any civil conflicts. The barons are not allowed to judge any criminal cases. Judges appointed by the local count hold the lowest court. The law does not allow these judges to possess ground within their district (the barony) or come from that region. This court deals with the Noble's Laws and they are not allowed to judge over any crimes against the King's Laws. These courts are known as the Commoners Court. The count can also judge these cases. The Congress of Lords appoints judges with the right to judge crimes against the King's Laws and crimes against the Noble's Laws that could not be solved satisfactorily in Commoners Court. As with the judges of the Lower Court, these judges are not allowed to possess ground or come from the county in which they work. This court is known as the High Court. The highest court is a group of three judges appointed by the Congress of Lords who deal with appeals from both lower courts or especially sensitive cases (as determined by the judges in the lower courts). This council of three is known as the Royal Court. In extreme cases somebody can demand to be judged by king Hazendel himself, but this is only allowed in extreme cases and it is highly discouraged.

As has been said before, judges have got considerable freedom in interpreting the laws and determining the punishment. This does not automatically mean that friends of high-ranking individuals have an easier time than total strangers. Power abuse is greatly feared and frowned upon by Sunndi society. When a higher ranking court has reasons to believe somebody got away with a real crime because he just happens to

be friends with the judge, the judge runs the risk of being judged as an accomplice to the crime. For this reason many judges who are asked to judge over a case in which they are personally involved refuse and then forward the case to a neighbouring district. The freedom does mean that a judge tends to be influenced greatly by the circumstances. Somebody stealing bread because they are hungry tends to be punished much lighter than a person who steals for the rush. Any of the parties with a case can appeal at a higher court, but they should realize that in general this is a bad idea. The courts have got more than enough to do without wasting their time with cases that could have been resolved at a lower level. So to discourage this behaviour the court tends to be more strict and harsher.

On paper the law protects ANY sentient being within Sunndi, with the exception of fiends, undead and bullywugs. Fiends, undead and bullywugs are considered dangerous monsters and killing them is as legal as killing a fly. An ogre has exactly the same rights as a treant or human. In theory somebody who kills an ogre, can be accused of murder and under the right circumstances convicted. In practice of course, few authorities will lift an eyebrow when they hear a group of adventures killed a group of ogres even if there was no apparent reason for killing the ogres. When those ogres had been friends with the locals though, their friends can press charges and in that case the adventurers do run the risk of being convicted for murder. The laws do give people the right to use lethal force when defending themselves. The authorities do value adventurers and the work they do.

A remnant from Schandor' s system is the fact that fines tend to be paid to the victim or the victim' s relatives with a small deduction to cover the courts expenses. Hard labor for lesser crimes tends to be done for either the victim or more likely on a location thought of as educating for the perpetrator.

## **The King's Laws**

- Arson (1, 5-7, 9)
- Assault, grievous (6-8, 11-13)
- Banned Religious Worship (1, 2, 4, 9):
  - Beltar
  - Erythnul
  - Incabulos
  - Iuz
  - Nerull
  - Tharizdun
  - Vecna
  - Wastri
- Blackmail (1-2, 4-8, 11-12)
- Genocide (1)
- Impersonation of governmental official (7-8, 11-13)
- The use of forbidden magic (1, 2, 9):
  - Summoning of and consorting with fiends
  - Creation of and consorting with undead
  - Magical interference with the integrity of the person
- Mass Murder (1)
- Murder (1, 4)

- Perjury (6-8, 11-12)
- Slavery (2, 4-7, 9)
- Careless Use of Mass Destruction Magic (10, 14)
- Robbery (7-8, 11-13)
- Torture (6-8, 11-13)
- Treason (1)

## **The Noble's Laws**

This is general indication. Certain counties may have a harsher or more relaxed attitude towards the law. (I.e.: in Eyedrinna a thief may be publicly flogged, or in extreme cases loose his hand).

- Assault, minor (9-10, 14)
- Bribery (13-14)
- Burglary (8-10, 13-14)
- Disturbance of the Peace (10, 14)
- Fraud/Forgery (8-10, 13-14)
- Manslaughter (2, 5-8)
- Pouching (9-10, 14)
- Slander/libel (9-10, 14)
- Smuggling (8-10, 13-14)
- Theft (8-10, 13-14 in addition to returning stolen goods)
- Trespass/Violation of Privacy (10, 14)
- Vandalism (10, 14 in addition to paying for necessary repairs)

## **Sentences for Crimes**

1. Death
2. Permanent Exile and Banishment
3. Mutilation
4. Hard labor For Life
5. Hard labor, 1d10+10 years
6. Hard labor, 1d6+6 years
7. Hard labor, 1d4+4 years
8. Hard labor, 1d4 years
9. Hard labor, 1d6 months
10. Hard labor, 1d6 weeks
11. Enormous fine (90-95% victim' s true worth)
12. Heavy fine (60-80% victim' s true worth)
13. Standard fine (25-40% victim' s true worth)
14. Low fine (1-20% victim' s true worth, maximum 1000 gp)

## **The Hollow Highlands**

The Hollow Highlands are an exception in many regards to how things go in Sunndi and the laws is one of those. First of all, they do not have a count in the traditional sense of the word. The clans and tribes that inhabit the Hollow Highlands elect their representative to the Congress of Lords. He has no real authority within the Hollow Highlands except those gained through the respect of the local clan and tribe leaders. Each tribe and clan deals with crimes in their own way, though they do pay lip services to the King' s Laws. Their justice tends to be quick and harsh. A fine is the most common punishment for lesser crimes, while banishment and death tends to be the favourite punishment for real serious crimes. In case of a major conflict they tend to contact the representative at the Congress, who also functions as a mediator between the different clans and tribes.

## **Game Mechanics**

What are the consequences of these laws for the PCs? When a PC commits a crime during a regional or meta-region that takes place in Sunndi, the DM should try to resolve it on the table using the above list for suggestions. When the crime involves the King' s Laws the player can make an appeal to the Triad. Both the player and the DM should give their version on what happened on paper. Appealing the triad is like stepping to the next court level and the player should realize that in general we support the decisions the DMs make. There is a considerable risk that the punishment might be more severe. Sometimes the Triad, when reading through game reports or listening to stories on the official mailing list or through an official mail to a Triad member, might decide to overrule a decision of the DM, when they have reason to believe that the DM was too lenient. In this case the NPCs would go to a higher court. The triad will never react when they think punishment was too severe without an appeal by the players though. NPCs rarely go to the next level when those they wish punished get punished according to their wishes.