

Tales from the Cotting House Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

16.3 The Kings Laws

The King's Laws are followed throughout the Houselands, and in every Houselands city around the world. Misinterpreting the laws is difficult, but becomes easier as you get into the details. The farther you enter the wilderness, the harder it is for agents of the King to establish order, the more often the laws break down.

Cottington is under the direct control of none of the Houselands, but they still follow the laws. The woodlanders appreciate their pseudo-independence, and should try and seek an end to any legal issues without asking for outside help. Attracting too much attention in this way might result in the High King or the King of Clubs seeking to take a more active role in Cottington's affairs. (Right now, the woodlanders do not pay taxes...)

Listing the complete Kings laws and their clauses would fill a library. Here are a few of the major laws, and some thoughts behind them.

1. Do Not Cause Harm to Come to Others.

You should not assault others, directly or indirectly.

If someone assaults you in someone else's name, either for pay or not, the penalty is the same for both the attacker and the originator.

2. Do Not Stand Idle and Allow Harm to Come to Others.

A clause to the first law, this is harder to enforce. For instance, you are exempt from this law if trying to aid another would put you in direct harm. You are also exempt from this law if you THINK aiding them would put you in direct harm. Then there's the definition of direct, to consider.

Very strict law abiding folks attempt to follow this law, but it is almost never enforced.

3. Do Not Compel Others to Act Against Their Will.

Taking Away another person's freedom of choice is an option only for those with authority, and that authority must come from the High King (directly or down the chain of command). Certain effects and items that have those effects (love potions, for instance), are illegal.

There is some question as to what is the legal age of consent, wherein a parent is no longer able to make decisions for their child. Typically this is judged on a case by case basis, and either is fairly cut and dry, or take so long that the child grows up, and the case is no longer an issue.

4. Do Not Take That Which Belongs To Others.

This law is the easiest to understand. Don't steal. Ownership claims may cloud the issue. After a period, the dead lose the right to claim ownership of their belongings, and those belongings should fall to any rightful heir. Ancient robber baron tombs and caches, however, muddy the issue further. While information found in those places should go to the church, the church has no need for the items of treasure that may be found within.

5. Do Not Act Against The Good Of The Houselands.

You should not harbor enemies of the Houselands. You should immediately alert any figure of authority if such an enemy is discovered. You should not act in any way as to endanger the nation, to steal from it, or to abuse it.

The King of Faraway is an Extension of the Houselands.

This includes the royalty of the four houselands and their families. Acting against them is treason, and in direct violation of the Fifth Law. The Second Law is strongly enforced where the high families are concerned.

Again, these are loose interpretations of the Laws and some issues surrounding them. Most woodlanders seek to avoid breaking them, and when that does happen, they try and sort things out for themselves. That said, they cannot lawfully ignore the laws, and they know that doing so would bring down a large ration of trouble on them.