The King's Reeves

A faction primer for the world of Duality

The King's Reeves are wandering lawbringers who patrol the lands of Kitaland and beyond searching to bring justice, however they interpret it. Backed by the invested authority of the former king, they are a force of order amongst the chaos and confusion of the collapsed kingdom.

The Reeves are a multifaced faction with many options for players. They are innately tied to the politics of Kitaland, both at the large scale of Archbarons and wars, and at the local scale of knights and peasants. They can be both corrupt enforcers of the feudal hierarchy or champions of justice in a world descending into barbarism, or more commonly both at the same time.

Reeve Characters

The structure of the Reeves runs parallel to the feudal order of Kitaland. Reeves need not be noble, though the requirement that they purchase their own equipment prevents almost all of the peasantry from applying. Most recruits are drawn from either the somewhat small middle class (which consists largely of mercenaries along with a few academics or doctors) or the non-inheriting children of knights and minor counts. Although the Reeves are integrally linked to Kitaland, its members may have originated elsewhere before swearing allegiance to the Crown; there are also a not insignificant number of Reeves who served in Ostport before its independence.

As with any character, one of the most important parts of a Reeve is where they come from and who their family are. Are they attempting to climb the social ladder through promotion, or are they a noble made to relinquish their claims to join the ranks? Is their home noteworthy in any way? Crucially, there is a question at the heart of a Reeve character: did they join out of a sense of justice, or for personal gain? Moreover, are their motivations still the same?

The King's Writ

Before King Gustavus II left to ride into the mists at the end of the Time of Horrors, he left authorisation that in his abscence, a set of sheriffs could enforce the royal justice in his stead. As the years went on, this original force grew into the organisation known today as the King's Reeves. Until the recent declaration of the King's official death, they were legally the highest authority in the land. However, this authority has never been absolute: the King's justice has always been reserved for exceptional cases or as an appeal. As such, the Reeves have mainly occupied themselves with hunting down outlaws and enemies of the realm and have left most things to the local lords. In the wake of the Proclamation of Royal Mortality, the Reeves are desparate to hold on to the rights given them by the crown. Whatever the outcome of the ongoing power struggle, their first priority is always to maintain their prerogative.

For a Reeve character, your relationships to the concepts of justice and feudal authority are incredibly important. What does your character consider to be just? The laws of Kitaland are byzantine and leave a lot of room for interpretation: whose favour do you bend them towards in any situation? What do you do in the likely circumstance that your personal morals come into conflict with the law? In terms of royal authority, how does your vestigial influence manifest in your interactions with various members of the social order? It is worth noting that nobles are not always happy to allow the Reeves to act as they please, and you may face consequences from within or without the organisation for upsetting them.

Hierarchy and Operations

Like everything else in Kitaland, the hierarchy of the Reeves is needlessly complicated, comprising many layers of authority with overlapping and contradicting powers. Every Reeve, from the lowliest serjeant or constable-sheriff to the First Marshal Supreme Magistrate-Commander (the title of the ultimate leader of the Reeves, who resides in the tower above the Royal Dungeons in Tourn), has the power to perform arrests on and hold trials for yeofolk, but higher ranks may be needed to accuse those higher on the feudal ladder. There are also other branches of the Reeves: the career judges who forgo field work altogether, and the special divisions who perform dubiously legal missions for the good of the realm (or at least the good of The King's Reeves).

Most Reeve characters will be field agents, though you may play a magistrate or a special operative if you wish (it is recommended to consult with the ref before choosing the latter). As such, you will be able to arrest criminals, and to hold trials provided you can produce an appropriate jury. As you rank up, you may wish to give yourself more impressive ranks and titles to reflect your influence in the organisation. Whether or not you have the authority to try any particular noble is up to the ref, and may vary depending on the circumstances.

Corruption

It is no secret that the Reeves are somewhat corrupt. Buying promotions, taking bribes, and skimming money off fines are so common that many even forget that they are illegal. However, they do still try and maintain a (somewhat dodgy) sense of respectibility and fair play. A duke's stupid daughter may get a speedy promotion, but won't get put in charge of anything particularly important. A serjeant may accept a couple of ducats to let some poachers get away, but anyone trying to cover something up on a grand scale will likely be led to the gallows (and quite possibly

have their possessions seized anyway).

As a Reeve, you will almost certainly be aware of the corruption in your organisation. It's up to you how you respond, whether it be with opposition, acceptance, or participation. While you can play into the archetypes of either the unerring, by-the-book officer, or the unscrupulous, crooked knave, most Reeves realistically will fit somewhere between these two extremes. Although a willingness to bend the law may sound bad, never forget that you can choose which direction to bend it, and sometimes a little dishonesty can be the best for everyone.

A Faction Fractured

Since the legal death of the King, the Reeves have at last been dragged down into taking sides in the Kitaland civil war. Since their authority is derived from the monarch, the majority of Reeves have come to the realisation that they have to decide who exactly that is. Most are sworn to one of the three "Archbarons", the major claimants to the throne who control vast swathes of the kingdom. The young Archbaron Winter was thought to be a poor echo of his infamous uncle, but he has shown an almost miraculous penchant for carrying on the cold, calculated, and effective politics of his predecessor. Archbaron Fitzsabre has been the butt of jokes ever since losing Ostport, but his silver tongue and control over Biblyiat mean that he should not be underestimated. Archbaron von Blud may lack the resources of her competitors, but she is a skilled military commander and has favour in the congregation following her marriage to a priestess of Ashen.

However, there are equally as many if not more Reeves who still maintain neutrality, including the leaders of the organisation, the High Marshals in Tourn. They seek to sustain the position they have held for the last hundred years as mediators and peacekeepers above the constant warfare. The most radical among them wonder if they themselves are not the most legitimate inheritors of royal power, and whether perhaps the kingdom would be better ruled by professional civil servants rather than a bunch of arrogant inbred buffoons.

If you are playing a Reeve, then you will have to pick some sort of a side in the succession dispute, even if that side is no side at all. You may be deeply invested in your chosen side, or only have made the decision out of a sense of obligation. How do you consider Reeves with other allegiances? Do you view them as comrades unfortunately separated by circumstance, or bitter enemies? Although most Reeves are sworn to the Archbarons, there are scores of smaller claimants to the throne; if you follow one of them then you are likely sorely in need of allies. In practical terms, Reeves with different loyalties could be treated like members of different factions: as time goes on, the divisions are already beginning to evolve in separate directions. However, the fundamental beliefs and aims of the Reeves are still unchanged, and it is still very possible that these rifts may be healed, whether it be through diplomacy or domination.

The King's Reeves in play

There are plenty of reasons for other characters to detest the King's Reeves, especially their political rivals in Lupanum and the lawless brigands of the Lords of the Sea. Anyone raised in Kitaland likely has a complicated relationship with the Reeves, with their opinion ultimately coming down to personal experience. Many non-Kit characters may be more neutral, viewing them as simply a foreign oddity, or even try and appease them in hopes of favourable treatment or political influence. The Reeves are a nuanced part of an intricate situation, and so will be reactions to them. As with any circumstance involving intra-party tension, it is best to try and tread the line between conflict and cooperation at first before seeing how the dynamic evolves: remember that constant argument can quickly become tedious for everyone playing.

Due to their role as information-gatherers, Reeves can be very useful during adventures to exposit plot information, detailing on upcoming NPCs, locations, or events. Although they are mainly found in Kitaland, they can also be found elsewhere seeking out particular targets. If the players have either angered the Reeves or seriously transgressed the laws of Kitaland (perhaps through having too much Notoriety), then they may well be hunted down by the Reeves and put on trial. In capturing a suspect, the Reeves may utilise almost any weapons or magic, though they make particular use of the *Snare* call. Punishments that the Reeves may hand out include fines, putting people in stocks or pillories, branding, or in extreme cases execution. Criminals with special noteworthiness or diplomatic concerns, such as many player characters, may be imprisoned in the Royal Dungeons for further interrogation.

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