Who's in Charge Here?

By Vaidenon of Hustan, Warden of the Inkhorn Fellowship

A one-page card for travellers in Melderyn, from Whose Land Is This?

> "Two questions open every door in Melderyn: whose land is this, and which hundred are we in?"
>
> — Vaidenon of Hustan, Warden of the Inkhorn Fellowship

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Two ladders on the same ground

The land: who holds it	The law: who keeps it
The king	The king
An earl, a baron, or the Lady of Paladins	The sheriff of the shire
A knight, holding a manor	The Bailiff of the Hundred
or a bailiff, holding it in trust	The hundred moot and its jurors
The villagers	The lord's manor court; the reeve

Three questions in any village

- **Whose manor is this?** That lord judges his serfs and calls up the men.
- **Which hundred are we in?** Its moot hears freemen's cases and felonies, monthly.
- **Where is the market?** Usually the hundred's largest place; not always the moot.

Who to go to

If…	Go to
you are robbed or attacked	the Bailiff of the Hundred, at the moot
you are accused, and free	buy a royal writ (6–12d) and ask for jurors
a serf wrongs you on a manor	the reeve, then the lord
you want land or a post	a lord, who can grant only what he holds
you want a hanging stopped	the sheriff, not the earl
you killed a deer	nobody, quickly: is this a royal forest?
you are in Thay or Cherafir	an alderman
you shout "Thief!"	everyone: that is the hue and cry

Three bailiffs

- **A manor's bailiff** runs a manor for its lord, usually his kinsman. Not a royal officer.
- **The Bailiff of the Hundred** is the sheriff's man: he keeps the moot and the king's peace.
- **A royal manor's bailiff** runs one of the king's own manors, under the sheriff.

Words you will hear

- **Liege, vassal:** the lord a man holds of; the man who holds of him.
- **Fief:** land or office held for service. **In fee:** his family's, to inherit. **In trust:** kept for another.
- **Manor:** one village and its fields. **Demesne:** what a lord keeps in his own hand.
- **Villein, serf:** bound to the land and to the lord's court. **Freeholder:** may leave, and may appeal.
- **Yeoman:** a freeholder who serves as a man-at-arms. **Reeve:** the villein who runs the fields.
- **Moot:** a court and meeting. **Writ:** a bought order that a case be heard.
- **Sheriff:** the king's officer in a shire; not hereditary, and very powerful.

Courts, lowest to highest

- The lord's manor court (final, for serfs) → the hundred moot, monthly → the shire moot, quarterly → the Chancery court → the king.

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Melderyn at a Glance

Six shires and a march: Biren (sheriff at Racyn), Cherfin (Shenap), Dath (Jetust), Elorin (Cosyuh), Iko (Chyrefal), Lened (Cupeth); Dyriamarch under a warden.

Fifty-six hundreds, each with a moot and a market.

Four earls: Biren (Gythrun), Elorin (Harden), Karveth, Nurisel; a dozen barons; the Lady of Paladins at Cundras and Fosumo.

Two cities: Cherafir, the king's; Thay, a freetown with its own Lord Mayor.

A manor is held in fee by a knightly clan, in trust by a bailiff, by the Church, or by the crown.

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