

## **Meadal Courtier Primer**

### **1: Social Rank**

The society of Meadal is divided on three levels.

#### *Birth:*

Some people are born of higher rank than others. These are nobles. Nobles are largely divided into the following ranks:

1. Royal: Very rare, generally only the leaders of a Race or a Very large tract of land.
2. Ducal: Very rare, almost on the same level as Royal, large tracts of lands, with other nobles answering to them.
3. Counts & Earls
4. Baron
5. Landless Noble (generally called a Lord)
6. Knight (a knight is a person who has been granted the title of knight by a land owning noble. The class Knight does not confer the title, it is a mechanical effect).

The siblings and children of a noble title holder, if they do not hold a title in their own right, generally count as a Lord (a landless noble).

The principle of nobility is one born on birthright. It is seen as the "Natural Order". Nobles are mostly land owners, except in Horgus where (before the rise of the Second Kingdom), land often changed hands in skirmishes and war.

Of course, Nobles also control land and therefore men and thus have the ability to have your ass kicked, so the course of wisdom is to give them respect.

*Wealth:* Especially in the City of Heavensgate, there are Merchant Princes. These wealthy families own no land and hold no title, but they are so wealthy that they can purchase virtually anything they like. It is fairly common for poor nobles to engage in wedding contracts with such families, trading titles and wealth between the two families. Such wealthy individuals and family are ranked lower than knights in the social structure, but are often treated as much more than their social rank would indicate due to their vast wealth

*Ability:* Some people stand out due to their personal abilities and gain standing via this, for instance, Trake, the First Sword of Heavensgate or Master Elementalist Rob or Master Alchemist Scara da'Lua. Such individuals are ranked as less than knights, but more than peasants. They often have the ability to make your life hell, so again, the course of wisdom is to afford them some respect, since they wouldn't have the title they do without being really good at what they do.

### **2: Social Etiquette**

In courtly society, equals should be treated politely, but not overly so, unless of course you are trying to win their favor. To be addressed as an equal by someone who is in fact your superior is a high honor - and even then, you should continue to address him in a respectful manner, at least in public. Even if your lord or superior officer is also your best buddy, treating him as an

equal in front of others will cause him to lose face, and yourself to be branded an ill-mannered lout.

Of course, someone might be your social inferior but have connections with someone who is your social superior. Every courtier builds up a web of connections and favours and you do not wish to offend someone whose title is less than yours, but whose connections are greater. The Falcon family and Tabitha of Heavensgate (apparently a servant of the Merchant Prince family controlled by Kruppe Spyre) spring to mind as individuals who hold lesser social titles but should not be offended due to their wide spread nets of influence.

This same principle applies to the members of the royal court who directly advise the King. While their titles grant no land and depend on the whim of the King, as long as they hold those titles, they have the ear of the King and should be treated with care.

If someone holds two titles, address them by the correct naming convention for the superior title, unless of course you want to insult them by addressing them by the inferior title, implying that they should not have the superior title. Exceptions to this rule do apply, but generally only when the inferior title has more bearing on a specific occasion or matter under discussion.

Bowing is the standard gesture of greeting and farewell; the inferior bows deeper and longer than the superior does. The most formal form of greeting is to kneel on one knee and bow the head. This is generally only used to greet royalty or dukes and only if they are your lord (for instance, the Falcons would kneel when greeting Rolande after a long absence, but they would never kneel before one of the dukes of Meadal or the King of the Elves).

If you do kneel, it is appropriate to remain on one knee until the person you are kneeling to tells you to rise.

It is appropriate to bow to your social superiors (a western bow extends one leg before the other, keeps that leg straight, bend the back leg and bow from the waist). If you're a girl wearing a dress, a curtsy is appropriate, place one leg before the other, bend both legs, bow the head.

When entering a room, greet the people of highest social standing first. Greeting someone of lesser social standing before greeting someone of higher social standing implies that you regard the person of lesser social standing as more important and is an insult to the person of higher social standing.

When having an audience with an important person, there will be guards present; this doesn't necessarily indicate a lack of trust, simply normal caution and the preservation of face

When you are in a city or country controlled by someone else, it is always polite to treat them as at least your equal. This is also the course of wisdom as they control the guards and resources of the city.

When you are the host of someone else (they are guests in your city), you are responsible for their safety. If they are injured or killed, you lose face. Remember, from a political perspective, the noble who owns the land, *is* the land and is responsible for everyone and everything in it.

To some extent this applies even to events, however, if your guests go out hunting monsters or are there to help you deal with a dangerous problem, they are obviously in charge of their own safety, since they came here knowing the risks. If they get assassinated, especially by your own people, on the other hand, that would be a lose of face. Probably a fairly minor one though since events are generally not held in major towns and almost no one is expected to keep their countryside completely safe, given Meadal's propensity towards monsters and criminals.

### **3. Correct forms of Address**

1. Royalty: Your Majesty, Sire, my Liege, Highness, King <insert name>
2. Duke: your Grace, Duke <insert name>, my Lord.
3. Earl, Count, Baron, Lord: <Title> <Name>, my Lord
4. Knight: Sir or Dame <insert name>.
5. Wealth: Master or Mistress <insert name>
6. Personal Ability: this is a very shady area. Generally, it would either be Master <area of mastery> <name> (e.g. Master Alchemist) or nothing.

You can also, if you don't know someone's name or wish to be very formal, address them with their pre-fix and title as in:

Knight: Sir Knight

Noble: My Lord Earl, My Lord Baron, My Lord Duke etc  
(There is no equivalent for doing this to Royalty).

In the case of some families, the name is a formal form of address, for instance the Ducal family of Corvinus (Corvac), the Duke of Corvinus gives up his actual name on claiming the Ducal throne and becomes The Raven. Raven is therefore a formal form of address and it is correct to address the Duke as Raven, Duke Raven, Duke Corvinus or Duke Corvac.

In the company of nobles who own land, you may also address others informally by simply the name of the lands they control. For instance, in an informal setting where you were discussing land, it would be appropriate to refer to Duke Barad of Veneficii as simply Veneficii.

### **4. Ranking Families & People in Meadal**

1. Royals & Dukes:
  - King Rolande "Whitemane" Okucho of the Second Kingdom
  - The Elven King
  - The Dwarven Thane
  - Duke Raven of Corvinus
  - Duke & Duchess Astholat of Veneficii
  - Duke Ronarc T. Wister of the Gloom Cliffs
  - Justice Scara of Talo da'Lua (The Justice and a Duke is merely superficial from a courtier's Point of View).
2. Counts & Earls:
  - Count Angus Bruce of the Gloom Cliffs
  - Earl Kaiden Spyre of Heavensgate

- Count Kavis von Rindenbane II of Bleakmire
  - The Skaven council fit into this strata, unless of course you are in Skaven, in which case they fit into the strata above. The Skaven Council are:  
Lord Administrator Funbare Nebamun of Hope City  
Lord Marshall Echo of Hell  
Master Jaxon of Haven  
Mistress Amber of Haven
  - The council of the Horse Lords of Connovar also fit in here, therefore includes Horse Lord Laven Siannodel
  - While not strictly noble, the Master of the Caravans, Dastyn Thowyn, fits in here as well
3. Barons:
- Baron Angus Victor of the Gloom Cliffs
  - Baron Falcon (the Falcons are a bit odd, they are generally simply called Lord or Lady Falcon, but their hereditary title from the old Kingdom and again bestowed on them by Rolande in the Second Kingdom, is that of Baron).
  - Baron Osric Mallory & his wife Lady Luvyna
4. Lords:
- Lord Kavis von Rindenbane III of Bleakmire
  - Lord Firlin von Rindenbane of Bleakmire
  - Lord Leopold von Rindenbane of Bleakmire
  - Lady Athena Silveryn. Of course, she is engaged to the Raven, so most treat her as in the same social sphere as her future husband
  - Lady Elena Corvac
  - General Bree gro-Khash
  - Anyone with the surname Falcon
  - Renata, adopted daughter of one of the Horse-Lord council
  - The Royal Court:
    - Admiral Ference da'Lua
    - Lord Justicar Osric Mallory
    - General of the Armies Angus Bruce
    - Lord Marshal Ronarc T. Wister
    - Loremaster Neville Prongsforth
    - Chancellor of the Exchequer Silas Benjamin
    - Falcon
    - Captain of the King's Guard, Sir Mordarus
  - Lord Kruppe of Heavensgate (brother of Earl Kaiden Spyre)
5. Knights:
- Dame Siygrah of Corvinus
  - Sir Osric Mallory of Volkandria
  - Sir Mor-Darus of the Kingdom
  - Sir Reeve of Veneficii
  - Sir Eden Whitethorn
6. Wealth:
- Tabitha of the House of Manifold Splendor
  - Thistle of Skaven

7. Personal Ability:

- Trake, First Sword of Heavensgate
- Master Elementalist Rob
- Master Alchemist Sen Silvermoon
- Master Jeweler Ference da'Lua
- Master Alchemist Scara da'Lua
- Master Smith Hayes du Sid

## **5. Taking Insult and Issuing a challenge**

If you take insult, you may issue a formal challenge to duel if you have social standing. If the person that you are challenging is of greater social standing than you, he may refuse the challenge on the principle that his standing exceeds yours and therefore, you need to simply swallow his insults.

Someone who does this often enough (refuses challenges after insulting lessers) might soon gain a reputation for cowardice however.

If the challenge is not specific, the person who is challenged typically names the time, place, weapons and outcome of the duel.

A duel may be to the death or to some other agreed upon result. A duel will often have an official witness agreed to by both parties to ensure the agreed upon result is fairly held to.

If one of the combatants is unable to compete due to the weapons named, a champion may be appointed. If the champion loses, the combatant is considered to have lost the duel.

It is common for dukes & royalty to have champions to fight in their stead as their death represents more than a simple personal matter.

If the duel is lost by the person who took insult, the insult stands. If the duel is lost by the person who gave insult, the insult is seen as the yapping of a barking dog and the person who gave insult loses great standing.

## **6. Hosting Noble Guests & Banners**

It is customary to display the banners of the House of your guest as well as the banner of residents of the castle on your castle or palace wall.

If the banner is silver edged, it means the person in residence is a ranking member of the House whose banner it is.

If the banner is gold edged, it means the person in residence is the leader of the House whose banner it is.

When you are in a city or country controlled by someone else, it is always polite to treat them as at least your equal. This is also the course of wisdom as they control the guards and resources

of the city.

When you are the host of someone else (they are guests in your city), you are responsible for their safety. If they are injured or killed, you lose face. Remember, from a political perspective, the noble who owns the land, *is* the land and is responsible for everyone and everything in it.

If you are travelling to another's home, it is polite to send advance notification and to stop at border posts \ patrols so that your host can properly prepare for receiving you. If your host is not properly prepared, then it is an insult to you.

If you neglected to give your host notification of your arrival, then the fault lies with you.

To cross another land's borders with a significant armed presence, without advance notification and agreement, is seen as an aggressive act.

## **7. Fashion**

Fashion is established by the highest ranking noble in any given court. Therefore, should Duchess Veneficii suddenly start wearing purple stoles, purple stoles would be in fashion in Veneficii. The same applies to male fashions.