

## The Baronial Retinue: A Guide to Duties

So you've been asked to join the Baronial retinue. What will be expected of you as a member of the court?

At the most basic level, the task of the retinue is to help the B&B do their job as smoothly as possible. This applies mostly during events, but also at other times when help may occasionally be required. The secondary role of the retinue is that, simply by looking good and being attentive, they add to the glamour of the B&B and of the occasion.

At events, the B&B's duties are public and ceremonial – they have to hold court, sit in state at tournaments, be present at the high table during feasts, and maintain gracious poise while dealing with all kinds of officials and supplicants. These tasks are time-consuming. Their retinue should take the brunt of everyday chores, leaving the B&B free to concentrate on creating pomp and ceremony.

### Specific Job Descriptions

**Ladies/Lords-in-Waiting** look after the general needs of the B&B. They maintain subtle attendance throughout an event, making sure someone is always available if needed. During the event, they keep track of the B&B's belongings, take notes of anything to be remembered for later, replenish food and drink, set up for court and hold items ready for use during court, fetch and carry, and otherwise assist. They may be seconded to assist visiting royals or B&Bs.

**Guards** provide chivalrous martial tone. They provide personal protection and escort to the B&B, and serve as an example of chivalry and courtesy by helping up people who have been kneeling, finding chairs for those who need to sit down, etc. They may hold banners or other large display items during court. They are also often asked to help with heavy lifting jobs, such as packing and unpacking cars or trailers, and setting up tents and thrones.

**Champions** encourage their art among the populace. They may need to organise an event to choose their replacement, make regalia for the next champion, run competitions or offer advice to the B&B on matters concerning their area of expertise. They are also required to answer any challenges made to the Barony or B&B.

**Heralds** are the voice of the B&B. They make announcements and add pomp to courts by speaking on the B&B's behalf. They also keep track of court business.

Other court positions may be appointed at the whim of the B&B, whether for short-term purposes or as permanent additions.

All court positions are envisaged to last about a year, subject to circumstance.

### General Duties

The Baronial Retinue are not expected to be available at all times, but it's important to make sure the B&B know in plenty of time whether or not you'll be around to help. Not all attendants are needed for every event, but each event needs *some*. If the B&B need something done at an event and you can't handle it yourself, find someone else to do it. Remember that a key part of your role is to add to the presentation of the B&B, and make sure you are neat and clean when you attend them, especially in

court. If there is regalia for your position, wear or carry it. As a member of the Baronial Retinue, you may be present for conversations about sensitive topics; make sure you keep anything you overhear private and confidential. Other ways you can help include:

#### Before Court:

- Set up the thrones, with a small table behind them. Make sure there is room behind the thrones for people to move around, and the scene looks good from the front
- Make sure you're prepared to stand for the whole length of the court – wear comfortable shoes and visit the privy in advance
- Have all tokens, documents, gifts, etc organised and ready on the table behind the B&B, along with a jug of cool water
- Untangle any token cords

#### During Court:

- Know which token is which, and hand over the correct one
- Take charge of any items the B&B have finished with
- Offer occasional drinks to the B&B and their herald
- Be quick to help up people who have been needing
- Make sure someone keeps notes on which awards were given, who presented what, etc

#### At a Feast:

- Find out or help organise the seating plan for the high table
- Set up feasting gear for the B&B and their guests in plenty of time before the feast
- Keep one attendant nearby throughout the feast
- Wash and return the B&B's dishes. It's nice to do this for everyone on the high table
- Make sure all the B&B's things are packed up and nothing is left behind

#### In general:

- Check before events to see if the B&B need any help to prepare
- Keep a list of things to be done, items given or received, and anything else which should be remembered later
- Keep their gear together, and make sure they know where important items are
- Protect them from wind, sun, rain and cold
- Help them dress if required
- Set up your own chairs behind them, keeping out of the way but within easy reach
- Unload baggage on arrival
- Set up tents, move thrones
- Make sure food and drink have been brought to the B&B
- Help pack up at the end of the event
- Keep an eye out for people to recommend for an award or a place in the Baronial retinue
- Be available to take messages or deliver things between the B&B and members of the populace
- Lead by example if you are among the populace during court – some people may be unsure how to 'play the game'

Do your best, and remember to have fun as well!