

Harlequin — Woven Trust

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How a society can order itself by reputation, and not by force

There is an old idea behind all of this, and it is simple: almost everything we do depends, one way or another, on the State. Permission, money, the judge, the registry, identity. To live is to ask permission. Harlequin is born of turning that around — not by tearing anything down, but by building, alongside, a place where you need ask no one's permission.

You do not fight power with its own weapon. Force is the State's ground; there it always wins. You fight it by taking away what it feeds on: dependence. Every person who learns to stand on their own takes a link off the chain. That is the whole ambition of the project, and also its patience: it is built slowly, in layers, with care. Something great is not raised in one blow.

The name and the face of the project is the Harlequin. In the old theatres he was the lowest on the stage: a servant in a patched suit, in the service of masters who believed they owned him. And yet, behind the mask, he was the freest of them all — he served with his body, but with his soul he served no one. There is the whole idea. Harlequin is born against no one, but in favour of something: of the freedom that is not begged for but kindled within, and of the name each person earns by their deeds. And with it comes its weight: whoever obeys no master also has no one to blame, and answers for all they do. To be one's own master is the prize, and also the burden.

What it is

Harlequin is a society that lives on the internet, on its own blockchain. It is not a company, not a coin to speculate with, not a social network. It is a voluntary order of cooperation: people who join, wear a mask, and take part in a community with its own rules, its own justice, and its own economy. No one knows who you are behind the mask — and yet you answer for what you do.

What changes everything: money does not give power

Almost everywhere, whoever has the most rules the most. Here, not so. Weight comes from reputation: what you contribute, how you behave, the trust you earn through your acts. Money is for trading and for saving, but it buys neither power nor voice. This is the first rule, and the most important. If some mechanism ever let money turn into authority, it would be violating the society's constitution.

This solves a deep problem. In any community an authority eventually rises — someone who decides for the others, and whom, sooner or later, you must obey. Harlequin sets no authority: it sets reputation. And it judges neither your ideas nor your beliefs — the society professes no

official morality —; it measures only the trust you earn through your acts: whether you keep your word, whether you contribute, how you treat others. It is a transparent measure, one anyone can recompute for themselves, that cannot be bought or inherited. There is no official server that holds the truth. The truth is the chain, and the nodes hold it up.

The mask: anonymous, yet accountable

You join through an initiation rite and receive a mask. From then on you are anonymous: not your name, your face, or your trail leaks. But the mask carries your reputation — the good and the bad you do stays bound to it. So something hard is achieved: anonymity with accountability. And a hard rule protects it: justice judges what the mask did, and never tries to uncover who is behind it. Unmasking someone, even in the name of justice, is treated as an act of aggression.

Reputation is measured across four suits, as in a deck of cards, because each is a different way of being worth something:

- the diamond, ambition — commerce, the drive to build and prosper;
- the club, liberty — building the tools that set people free;
- the spade, the fight — defending the society and judging wrongs;
- the heart, love — caring for the community and the bonds that hold it together.

You can be strong in one and weak in another. But to weigh on the whole — to have a voice in what affects everyone — you must be trustworthy in all four. You do not buy the authority of war with ambition. To be of weight means being sound across several hands, not a genius in one and a zero in the rest.

Power is lived, not inherited

And not even what you earn stays still. Reputation fades if you stop playing: its half-life is twenty-four months — in one full turn, your name falls by half. The number is not round by chance. Twenty-four is two and four: the two faces of the Harlequin's mask, and the four suits in which the name is won. Either you keep playing all four hands, or you fade. It is no punishment: it is a rhythm. No one sits on their throne forever — not even the founders, who if they fall silent drop below the average citizen in little more than one turn.

And there is something else, stronger still: the first-comer's advantage dilutes on its own as the community grows. The more people enter and earn their name, the less the earlier ones weigh — the weight is shared out, not piled into a few hands. No authority is perpetual; it is written into the constitution, and the network itself enforces it.

That is why the founders start at zero. Zero reputation and zero coin: no starting with an edge. They are five masks that sow the first trust, one for each suit and the Harlequin who unites them, and who step aside as people come in. They earn their place by validating, like anyone. The masks leave the stage when the people enter.

The two coins

Harlequin has two coins, and neither is printed at will. Both have a hard cap that is never exceeded — no endless inflation, no central bank, no one who gets to make money out of nothing.

The Sovereign (SOV) is the store of value: scarce, slow, to hold for the long term. Its name comes from the gold sovereign, the coin of the free — the reserve is your sovereignty. Its cap is fifty-four million, the figure of the whole deck: fifty-two cards and the two jokers, the two harlequins. The hard coin carries the mark of the house in its number.

The Purse (HLQ) is the coin of work: quick, liquid, for everyday use — to pay, to earn, to move value. Its cap is five hundred and forty million, the same deck multiplied by ten: everyday money needs more units than a reserve, but it is the same house, at another scale.

Both enter circulation little by little, along a public curve that issues less and less as it nears its cap, and are shared out among those who give real service to the network — not among those who hold the most, not among those who speculate. The curve is deliberately flat: whoever arrives late earns much like whoever came first, so that no one captures the network for having been there earlier. And there is a counterweight: part of every fee is burned, so that what comes in on one side goes out on another. The coin only rises along the curve toward a finite cap, and only falls by fire.

The nodes that hold the network up are paid for their service — for being awake and taking their turn —, not for being rich nor for holding much reputation. A poor and honest node earns the same as a rich and honest one. There is a per-node ceiling, and a limit so that no single entity concentrates too much, precisely so the network does not become the game of the strongest.

How it is governed: written rules, short-leashed power

Harlequin has a constitution — its manifesto —: twelve principles that define what may and may not be done. Two ideas hold it up. First: no office holds more power than what is written down; you cannot stretch “the common good” to grab more. Second: the commons is a closed list — only what the constitution says is shared is shared; the rest is yours. Your life, your property, and your dealings are yours alone. When in doubt, the individual wins.

Justice exists, but it acts on the mask and the deed, by clear rules, and never pierces anonymity.

How you join

You perform the initiation rite and receive your mask and your wallet — a single key, in your own keeping. You enter the society’s panel: you see the live network, your reputation, the market, the encrypted chat. And you take part: you contribute, you give service, you earn your name. Holding the network up by running a node is simple — it fits even in a phone — and goes through the same rite: your node binds to your mask by a signature, without copying any secret.

This is not a utopia: it has happened before

It sounds like a dream, but it is not. For centuries, people with no law but their word sustained trade, credit and justice without any State to enforce it. The merchants of the medieval Mediterranean trusted one another across a thousand miles, with no contract to bring before any judge, because whoever cheated one was marked before all and never traded again. Craft guilds governed themselves, with ranks earned through proven work, and answered for their own. Medieval Iceland had no king for three hundred years. The punishment was neither prison nor the sword: it was to stop existing for your own people, to lose the name that cost so much to earn — and that threat was enough, because it struck at the only thing that truly mattered.

All those worlds shared a strength and a crack. The strength: it was earned trust, not money or arms, that carried weight. The crack: someone — a private judge, a guild master — had to keep the ledger of who could be trusted, and that person could be corrupted or could vanish. Iceland fell exactly there: once power could be bought and inherited, a few accumulated it and war came.

Harlequin takes the strength and closes the crack. The ledger of trust is not kept by a judge who can be bought: it is kept by the chain, which does not lie and which anyone can read. And power cannot pile up unchecked, because it fades if it is not played and it spreads as the community grows. We did not invent trust without a State — we inherited it from a thousand years of free people, and we finish it with the tools they never had.

Why it is different

It is not just another cryptocurrency. It is an attempt to build a small and just society: truly anonymous, where merit weighs more than money, with written rules that keep power on a short leash, and an economy that rewards sustaining the community rather than speculating on it. And it is tested against real adversaries before it is given value, because a promise of freedom that breaks at the first push frees no one.

It is free and open source. You can read the manifesto, read the paper, run a node, or simply look. Little by little, with no master.