

WARHAMMER®

FANTASY ROLEPLAY™



TOME OF BLESSINGS
A Guide to Priests & Religion

TOME OF BLESSINGS

A GUIDE TO PRIESTS & RELIGION FOR WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

The *Tome of Blessings* provides a brief history of religion in the Empire, and describes the major faiths practised in the setting. This book provides additional game rules and mechanics for invoking divine blessings, as well as useful information for players who want to play a priest or religious character.

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**FANTASY
FLIGHT
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Fantasy Flight Games
1975 West County
Road B2
Roseville, MN 55113
USA

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ISBN: 978-1-58994-696-5 Product Code: WHF01 Print ID: 648AUG09 Printed in China

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CHAPTER ONE

FAITH IN THE OLD WORLD

"When Sigmar wishes to punish us, He answers our prayers"

– Erich Keller, Warrior Priest of Sigmar

The Old World is a dark and cruel place. Disease and deprivation fall on the good and the wicked alike. Evil spirits and powerful daemons prey upon the people's very souls. In the face of this, the inhabitants of the Empire turn to faith and superstition to protect them. The gods offer a sliver of hope in a violent and dangerous world, but that sliver is enough to make men cling to their faith with desperate strength. Only a fool ignores the gods, and only a madman insult them.

The Empire is steeped in religion and superstition. From birth to death, the gods watch over all aspects of life. From dawn to dusk, a man will pray to many gods many times as he goes about his daily life. The gods are everywhere, always watching and judging their flock. Every part of the world comes under the domain of a god and sometimes the domain of smaller, local spirits as well. Then there are the dark gods, their temples hidden, their worship banned, but their force still felt and feared by all.

The gods of the Old World are capricious and whimsical, and few see rhyme or reason in their interactions with mortal life. All hope and pray for miracles and blessings, but know the gods may just as

soon send them burdens instead. The gods may even strike a man down in any instant, and as such they are feared as much as they are praised. This is right and proper, for the gods are mighty, and men are small and insignificant by comparison.

There are ten prominent gods citizens of the Empire worship. They are all recognised and treated with respect. Some people may choose one god over the others to be the focus of their worship. A rarer few still will join the cult of one god and become a priest. The priests of each god maintain the countless temples and shrines to their deity that are scattered across the Empire, and guide the common folk in worship.

Those who rise to the high positions of these Imperial Cults tend to the rituals of the faithful, and guide the entire Empire in its worship. No matter their position, priests from the Imperial Cults show respect to all the other gods, however, and expect their followers to do likewise.

The practices and rituals of worship vary greatly across the Empire. In the Reikland, where the faiths are strongly influenced by centralised organisations, there is general uniformity, but in the distant provinces the practices may be very different, possibly changing from village to village. Depictions and stories of the gods themselves may differ.

THE IMPERIAL PANTHEON

Manann. God of Sailors, Sailing, and the Seas

Morr. God of Dreams and the Dead

Myrmidia. Goddess of Honourable Combat, Martial Virtues, and Soldiers

Ranald. God of Rogues, Tricksters, and Fortune

Rhya. Goddess of Fertility, Farming, and Love

Shallya. Goddess of Healing, Mercy, and Childbearing

Sigmar. God of the Empire and its People, Hammer against its Foes

Ulric. God of Battle, Winter, and Wolves

Verena. Goddess of Knowledge, Learning, and Justice

Yet most citizens of the Empire recognise that they all worship the same gods, however they may be worshipped. It is often this united faith in a shared pantheon that binds the Empire together as one people. They may know of foreign gods and faiths beyond the limits of the Empire, but these are simply signs of the ignorance or heathen nature of such unenlightened folk. Some also know of the dark gods and those who worship them, and look to the priests and witch hunters to guard them against such foes.

All the gods are great, but there is one that is loved above all by the people of the Empire – Sigmar. He walked as a man among them, and founded their great Empire. The citizens of the Empire, his chosen people and He watches over them with a greater care than the other, more distant deities.

The worship of Sigmar takes place throughout the Empire, and often his faith is inseparable from the life of the Empire. All of the gods have a degree of worldly power and secular influence, but Sigmar stands for the Empire, and it is not uncommon for his faith and followers to permeate Imperial politics and life. While each god may have warrior priests and devoted knight templars, the wars of the Empire are Sigmar's personal battles. It may be the Emperor and the nobles that declare war, but it is faith in Sigmar that drives the common man to take to the battlefield, and it is the words of Sigmar's pious warrior priests that give him the courage to face the enemy.

FOLK WORSHIP

"These humans – they cling to their faith like drowning men to a floating barrel."

– Suriel Lianllach, High Elf Envoy

The faithful of the Empire generally fall into two groups: common citizens, for whom worship is an almost casual activity, and members of the various Cults, for whom faith defines their entire lives.

For the common folk, worship is mostly informal, but religion is ingrained in their lives in countless ways. Every child is told of the gods from birth, and reverence and study of the gods is a sign of good upbringing or scholarship. Following their strictures and rituals is a sign of good manners and civic duty.

Neglect or disregard for the gods might be seen as carelessness or disrespectful. What's more, it can be dangerous: a sailor who forgets to say a prayer to Manann as his ship moves out from the harbour is inviting catastrophe, as is a soldier marching to battle who does not ask Sigmar for strength or Ulric for courage. In both cases, his companions may remind him of his laxity, not wanting to be standing near someone who is so eager to tempt the gods to punish him.

The line between faith and superstition is blurred for most common folk. Some rituals and observances are so old or ingrained that the people who practise them may have forgotten their religious meaning, performing them more out of habit or to avoid bad luck than any faithful devotion. Others offer sacrifices or donations more for social reasons than religious ones – it is good for business for a merchant to be seen donating wealth to the Temple of Shallya or other worthy causes, and every commander knows his men fight better when they hear Sigmar is with them.

The gods are invoked as they are needed. A sailor or fisherman may call to Manann every day but another man might only invoke Manann's name should he have to take a journey by boat. A farmer or trapper might make offerings to Taal and Rhya throughout the year, whereas a city-dweller may only entreat Taal when travelling through the forest by coach. The gods are not simply called to in emergencies or for deliverance from danger, however. Religion is the heartbeat of the Empire, and influences nearly every part of life. The boat-traveller may thank Manann for the beauty of the waters that morning, and the city-dweller might ask Taal to keep the road smooth and dry so as to speed him to his destination.

Reverence of the gods is clear in many Empire names, which often mean things such as "beloved of Ulric" or "from Verena." Many coats of arms or insignias feature religious imagery, and the symbols of the gods are carved into the stone and wood of houses and buildings. People wear small charms, tokens, or other signs of their religion, to identify their faith to others and of course to the watching gods themselves. References to the gods abound in songs and rhymes, in the names of the days and months and times of year, and in many figures of speech.

Common folk practise formal rituals as well. There are many holy days and festivals marked throughout the year and over a lifetime. Most people regularly attend local temples or shrines, where they pray together or perform rituals as a community of faith, lead by the local priest. Temples are often the centre of events at local festivals. In such bleak times, the citizens of the Empire relish these festivals.

IMPERIAL CULTS, TEMPLES & SHRINES

*"I never enters the woods without throwin' a copper in the shrine, y'ken.
An' I always come back out safe again."*

– Old Hob, Middenland Peasant

For those who enter the religious orders, life may be very different compared to the typical citizen. While the exact details vary from faith to faith, followers often share some common experiences. Many initiates in the priesthood leave their families at a young age to be raised by the Cult, within a local temple. Here they will learn the full history of their god, the dogma and rituals of their faith and the care and maintenance of the temple.

Care of the temple is an important duty of initiates and priests alike, both in terms of preserving the physical building from the ravages of time and the violence of the godless, and in preserving the temple's place in the community. Many priests of the Empire have little need to recruit for their faith, but do work to ensure that proper respect is always paid to their god and his domains, and that the faithful perform the correct rituals at the correct times.

The workings of the Imperial Cults and the style of their temples vary enormously between the faiths. Even within the same faith, temples, shrines and holy places can look quite distinct. A local temple may be as ornate and immense as a palace, or little more than a hut, depending on the level of religious, economic and political influence of the order in that town or city.

In the Reikland, where all faiths leverage these three influences, grand temples can be found, lavishly decorated with fine art and great statues. Gold, jewels, and gilded relics adorn the walls, and holy artefacts fill the vaults. These temples are guarded vigilantly by heavily-armed templars to deter thieves.

Such majestic temples lie beyond the reach of most commoners. Instead, they erect and visit shrines. These are often temples in miniature, tiny free-standing structures with small altars to their chosen god within. Here the common folk can offer a quick prayer of thanks or supplication to the god, and perhaps make a small donation to its upkeep. In the case of smaller shrines, often keeping the shrine clean and tidy is the only donation needed.

Shrines can be found everywhere in the Empire, in virtually every village, at crossroads, and dotted through the forests and mountains. Some people may even have a small shrine next to their house or place of business. Shrines are also common near notable landmarks, bridges, or borders, where travellers can show respect to the gods, local spirits, or ask for protection as they journey onward.

HOLY WARRIORS

"Three things make the Empire great – guns, faith, and steel!"

– Attributed to Emperor Magnus the Pious

Most of the Imperial Cults have warriors amongst their orders. All the faiths – even the healers of Shallya – need protection from their enemies. There are temples to guard, sacred sites to watch over, and priests to escort safely on pilgrimage. For those who worship Myr-

*I says a prayer to Old Man Morr
That me father's restin' fine
In his repose, while 'bove him grows
The field that now are mine*

*I says a prayer to Mother Rhya
That me oats will grow up well
So come Sonnestill we'll have our fill
And plenty more to sell*

*I says a prayer so bearded Taal
Keeps them beastmen in their lair
As oats are towed in wagon-load
Down to the market square*

*I says a prayer that Shallya's hands
Will hold me young lad fast
As plague and war took me other four
And this one be me last*

*I says a prayer to Verena
As the market deals are turnin'
That all declare me prices fair
And I makes a tidy earnin'*

*I says a prayer that Manann's grace
Has sent ships in from'out sea
And captains come with tidy sums
For each delivery*

*At last I pray to sly Ranald
For the tricks he has supplied
So farming men, who know of them,
Can make a little on the side*

– Reiklander Folk Song

media, Sigmar, and Ulric, battle is a holy duty. These orders often call their worshippers to arms or lead crusades against enemies of the faith.

The majority of knightly or templar orders in the Empire are secular institutions. They may mark themselves as serving a specific god, but owe allegiance to their state or count, and follow the orders of their commanders. War remains a primarily political matter in the Empire, although faith is still a potent and visible weapon.

Every soldier, from the lowliest peasant to the mightiest knight will say a prayer before taking the field. Chapterhouses and barracks throughout the Empire have shrines to various gods.

The enemies of the Empire are also the enemies of Sigmar, so his formidable warrior priests are well versed in warfare. This is most true in the Reikland, where military institutions prominently feature a shrine to Sigmar, and many battle units have detachments of Sigmarrite priests. These warrior priests accompany armies on campaigns and into battle. They inspire their fellow soldiers to acts of phenomenal courage, call down the favour of their god and act as counsel and guides to the generals and counts who lead them. The armies of the Reikland are fuelled by a passionate faith in Sigmar.

WANDERING PRIESTS

"Ulric is in the wild places, in the wind, in the storm, in the snow, in the howl of the wolf. You cannot find him in your cities or your temples of stone."

– Heikki Russ, *Wanderer of Ulric*

Not all priests of the Empire are bound to a temple or fighting unit. The Imperial Cults have mendicant orders, and many other orders encourage their priests to explore the length and breadth of the Old World. For young initiates, it is a good way to experience the world and test their faith before they commit to a life-long vocation. For veteran priests, it is a good way to share their faith and wisdom and spread the word of their god.

Travel is fairly common between temples. Few temples have an opening for every aspiring novice who wishes to join, or the resources to train them, so many are sent away to train, and then elsewhere to serve. A single priest may serve a handful of communities in his short life. Priests may visit temples of other orders and even other faiths to learn more of their ways and to better understand their own god. Some travel in search of great knowledge or the libraries that hold it, others because they have a gift for preaching and feel inspired to use their gifts.

Finally, pilgrimages to holy sites and great churches are common. This applies to a large number of lay people, as well, to curry favour with the gods. For priests it is even more frequent, at times even expected for those keen to reach the higher ranks of their order. It is not uncommon for a priest to see more of the Empire than a common soldier or merchant.

PRAYERS AND BLESSINGS

"I never did find out what he prayed for, but after we left the shrine, the captain was never afraid of nothin' again. The next day, we broke the beastmen war party, and the captain took twenty skulls as prizes. So I don't ask me if Sigmar is with us – I know he is."

– Sergeant Valdred Hoch, *Altdorfer Irregulars*

The gods are distant and inscrutable figures whose ways cannot be understood by most mortals. However, they make their presence felt in subtle and occasionally even overt ways. Those who offer up great sacrifices or who send prayers in the direst of situations may find themselves blessed from above. Of course, different prayers appeal to different gods. A prayer to Taal offered in a deep forest grove is more likely to be heard than one offered in a library. A prayer for help to protect that grove from despoilers is more likely to be answered than a request for help in resolving a political matter.

The level of sacrifice seems to be a factor, as well. A pauper giving his last brass to the temple may move Shallya more than a noble giving a gold statue. The gods seem to prefer sacrifices that match their nature. Manann prefers great catches of fish to a slain stag; Verena prefers a donation towards a great library than to a hospice or orphanage.

In lieu of sacrifices, supplicants may also offer up oaths, pledges, or great deeds. A Shallyan may swear to live in poverty for the rest of her life, or may have already done so as a show of her great devotion. A Sigmarrite who has spent years building a temple with his own hands may earn much favour. Deeds need not be so life-consuming, however. A devout Verenean might bring a notorious criminal to justice, an Ulrican might hunt a wolf through the snow without sword or bow, a follower of Ranald may steal a great prize. All of these show devotion to the principles of their respective faiths, and may earn divine aid.

The nature of blessings given tends to reflect the nature of the god providing them, as well. Taal may respond to a cry for help with a sudden rainstorm that slows the opponents' march, while Morr may send the fear of death into a priest's enemies. The blessings might be more personal. Taal may grant his faithful servant the strength of the oak in his weapon arm. Morr may send prophetic dreams offering deadly advice the night before a battle.

Some blessings are quite subtle, the kind of things that could be explained by coincidence or happenstance. Personal blessings often can not be seen by others, only felt in the heart of the faithful; a warm glow or a certain conviction, a breeze only they can feel or a whisper only they can hear.

Very, rarely, a god may manifest in a more overt fashion. The land shakes, the skies open, and heavenly horns sound as the force of the divine is made evident. Sigmar might give a man incredible strength, Shallya may heal a dying man, Morr may shatter an army of skeletons. There are even legends of the gods taking human form or imbuing a chosen one with their spirit to carry out their will. Such things are hard to prove, of course, but these are questions of faith, not proof.

Between these two extremes lie the powers of the priests. All those who enter the priesthood eventually learn to harness the power of their faith to perform miracles or invoke blessings. These demonstrations of piety and faith aid priests in completing the divine tasks their gods have set for them.

ON THE QUESTION OF MAGIC AND FAITH IN THE GODS

What follows is an excerpt from the Grey Wizard Gavius Klugge's controversial book, *Twenty Three Postulates on Magical Thought*. This excerpt comprises most of postulate eighteen, reflecting Gavius's views on the connection between magic and religion.

It is, at the very least, a controversial work.

On the question regarding magic and the faith in the gods: certainly it is a question worth much study. We are students of the secret forces that underlie the world; it is of grave interest to us if those others with power are also these forces, or if they have tapped some other power unknown to us, or indeed, if they do truck with daemons of Chaos.

Yet it is a question that resists study even more than the other mysteries of the Aethyric realm. Our brethren - and I call them that, for I feel in truth we share more than we might ever admit - who serve the gods are not fond of our studies and would object to any such means applied to their sacred practices.

I have, in my many years, had a chance to observe many priests summoning the power of their gods, enacting strange miracles upon the earth. In the Aethyric realm, I felt no surge of the Winds, no shimmer of the Aethyr upon them... and yet I did not feel nothing. The Aethyr felt disturbed, but not in any way I recognised, and indeed, it took me several years before I even detected the disturbance at all. So if the priests do manipulate the Aethyr they do it in a way that as yet remains beyond the ken of the Colleges, and any lore I have found or read of in all my nights in the library.

I can speculate, however, if my students will permit an old man's mind to such flights of fancy, a century ago, a most learned master of the Gold Order, Gotthilg Puchta, penned his Modest Treatise on the Nature of Magic. Therein, he ponders the nature of the Aethyr not as a physical place but as a place constructed from our thoughts and ideas. He likens the Aethyr to a kind of grand library where every thought and idea of the Mortal Realm is stored or into which they eventually seep, like water from a riddle. If this be the case, then one might further conclude that the mortal ideas which attract the most fervent belief might have the greatest volume or pre-eminence in this "library" of the Aethyr.

We have established elsewhere (see Postulates X, XI and XIV) that the Aethyr can act as a kind of humour reagent; that it is shaped not only by our conception of the spell form we are creating and our perception of the Wind to which we are aligned, but in extreme situations may also be shaped by strong emotion or memory. Hence the collusion of Dhar around sites of death and suffering. We can imagine that the idea of this suffering "draining" into the Aethyr, filling the "library" until it shapes that realm itself. So it is that mundane thought and mundane deed can shape magic without the mortals in question possessing any magical ability.

Such a theory could explain the nature of religious power. True faith in Sigmar is at the heart of our great Empire, and it has a power that has nothing to do with magic, as we understand it. Could it be then, that this faith is strong enough to shape the Aethyr around those who serve it and the centres of their belief? Could the prayers of the faithful reach into the Aethyr and channel this power into the answer to their prayers?

This theory has terrifying corollaries. It suggests that the Winds of Magic can be channelled by anyone with sufficient conviction. What is more, it suggests that the understanding of that channelling is coloured entirely by one's belief about the experience. To suggest to a priest that he is but a wizard in borrowed robes would be high heresy, and to suggest that us wizards are nought but priests playing at understanding that which has shaped itself into what we wished it to be is a thought my colleagues would dismiss as lunacy (assuming they have not already done so regarding my notes in Chapter VII and VIII).

Yet who is the master... us or the Aethyr? I am not sure which frightens me more. If the Aethyr shapes itself to suit our needs, are we perhaps puppets, being shaped by a force we can never understand nor master? But if it is us who defines the nature of the Aethyr, does that mean our base desires taint the power, turning it to Chaos? Could our mortal nature be the root of Chaos, poisoning the pure Aethyr from the moment it enters our minds and souls, like a rotting corpse in a mountain spring sickening all who drink downstream?

Whichever the case, I fear that our religious brethren have not understood their fears. It is they who are most likely to truck with daemons, daemons that wear the masks of gods and men, shaped to perfection over millennia of belief, until none can hide amongst lies, and there are no lies stronger than the liars.

- Gavins

It should be noted that the Cult of Sigmar officially denounces the validity of this article, and witch hunters consider possession or recitation of this information highly suspect, if not heretical.



CHAPTER TWO

THE IMPERIAL CULTS

In the time before Sigmar, it is said all the Gods were known, but they were not equally worshipped. Each of the primitive tribes chose one God as their champion. The Teutogens held Ulric as their chief patron, the Taleutens had Taal, some say the Ostagoths chose Morr, and so forth.

Legend has it that when Sigmar united the tribes, he decreed that his Empire would be united in worshipping all the Gods. But so that no God would be forgotten, Sigmar charged each tribal chief to appoint a Priest for each God. These Priests would be ruled in spiritual matters not by their chief but by their superior in faith, appointed by Sigmar himself. Sigmar chose from his warriors those men he knew were the most devout and showed the greatest duty to their preferred God, and made each man the High Priest of his faith. So it was that the great Cults of the Empire began.

When Sigmar ascended to join the Gods, those left behind joined together, forming a cult to venerate this heroic, legendary figure. The leader of the cult was known as the Grand Theogonist. And so it has been forever since, and so may it be until Sigmar returns once more.

*– Bertram Lehrer,
from The Condensed History of the Empire,
A Work Being for Students, Travellers and
Those of The Heathen Lands*

CULT STRUCTURE AND HIERARCHY

“You can always tell which priests are holiest by how tall their hats are. Maybe the taller the hat, the closer their heads are to the Heavens?”

– Jakob Klein, Philosophical Ratcatcher

From their beginnings, all the Cults have had more or less a roughly similar structure. At the bottom of the Cults are the Initiates. These are usually those newest to the Cult, though in some cases they may remain Initiates for a very long time. Initiates are rarely considered to be true members of the Cult. Their training is a process of evaluation, where the Cult determines if they truly have the dedication and scholarship to enter the faith. Many fail and are cast back into general society.

If the Initiates prove sufficiently pious and dutiful, they will become full members of the Cult, although they will not yet be permitted to call themselves Priests. They are normally called Brothers or Sisters, or identified by their Cult: eg., a Sigmarite or a Myrmidian. Only after proving themselves at this rank will they earn the title of Priest. Priests are permitted to conduct services and are usually put in charge of temples of their own. Priests tend

to travel less than Brethren and Initiates, but for those who miss the outdoors, there are other options. Priests often go on to become warrior priests, taking up arms either spiritually or literally against the enemies of the faith. The nature of these priests varies, from the righteous battle hungry warrior priests of Sigmar to the hospitaliers of Shallya who tend to the wounded on the bloody battlefields of the Empire.

Those who do not seek a martial life will probably remain Priests, but a few select individuals who show extreme piety may rise to become Lectors. These superior Priests minister to whole cities or several temples in a region. From their number come the Arch-Lectors, and chosen from this small group of supreme priests is the High Priest who rules the entire Cult. The method of choosing the High Priest is different in each Cult, and can vary from year to year: the Verenans choose anew each year after spirited debate, whereas the Ulrican High Priest must prove himself in the art of combat and rules until death. Among the more martial faiths, Arch-Lectors and High Priests will often come from the ranks of Warrior Priests. In the case of Sigmar and Ulric, the High Priest is expected not just to lead the Cult, but to lead it into battle.

THE ROLE OF THE CULTS

"I'm glad the Gods are watching over my tavern, but I'd prefer their servants stay away. Folks don't drink nearly as much when they think a priest is keeping count."

— Klara Vogel, Barkeep and Cutpurse

Faith is the drumbeat of the Empire, but it must be kept in proper time. The purpose of the Priests is to guide the common folk through their worship and duties. The purpose of the Cults is to instruct those Priests in their task, and to guide the whole Empire through its worship and duties. The pursuit of the former defines much of religious life; the pursuit of the latter has defined much of Empire history.

The primary role of a Cult is to demonstrate to its members the nature of the faith and how it should be observed. Some of the Cults, like those of Manann, Morr, and Ranald, have little organisation and little prescriptive dogma, leaving most of the details of practising the faith to each temple or individual. Others, like the Cults of Sigmar, Myrmidia, and Ulric are extremely centralised and demand a much stricter orthodoxy. Of course, the more strictly a faith is dictated, the more readily deviations and splinter groups arise, each claiming they profess the true version of the faith. Combating such deviation requires evangelical Priests and social, political, and military pressure, and the Cult of Sigmar has all of these.

Since the origins of the Empire, the High Priest of Sigmar's Cult has been an Elector, one of those with the responsibility of choosing the new Emperor. Over time, two Arch-Lectors of Sigmar have also become Electors, as well as the High Priest of Ulric. This gives them enormous power in determining the course of Empire politics. They use this power to drive the Emperor to act against the forces of Chaos and other heresies. Witch Hunters are officers of the Empire, but they exist because the Cult of Sigmar demands it. The political influence of the Sigmarites is another reason why so many of its number feel the need to create splinter groups, "freed" from such worldly concerns. The Ulricans concern themselves more with the practice of war than everyday life, so their political influence is less widely felt.



Other faiths have less influence because of their smaller numbers or their minor domains. Shallyans may help heal the warriors of the Empire, but their pacifist ways prevent them from possessing much temporal power. They have strict teachings for their Priests, but they cannot hope to spread these to the world. Similarly, the gentler Cult of Rhya has been all-but subsumed into the more bellicose Cult of her husband Taal, and while Manann's Cult keeps the Empire's trade ships afloat, it has little influence further inland.

The prominent Cults determine not just politics and law, but culture as well. In the Reikland, where Sigmar's Cult is the primary force, Sigmar is worshipped universally. His temples are always the largest, his rituals always the most observed, and his name the most often invoked for intercession. Other Cults rule elsewhere. The Cult of Taal is centred in Talabecland, so the politics and faith of that province are driven by the edicts of the forest god. Ulric is the chief faith of the Middenlanders, Morr's Cult is prominent in Ostermark due to its proximity to Sylvania, and the people of Marienburg cry to Manann for deliverance. The impact of a Cult also varies in different social circles: Verena, for example, has much influence in the areas of education and justice but little impact on matters of war. Magistrates and burgomeisters know her faith well, but most soldiers do not.

LIFE IN A CULT

"Human children, locked away behind cold stone walls for years? Such a strange people. Loec, how do they distinguish their temples from their prisons?"

— Mellerion, Wood Elf Hunter

Life in any of the Cults follows much the same pattern. Young people are selected for their piety, are foundlings raised by the Cult, or volunteer themselves for the life of an Initiate. From that point on, the Cult attends to their food, shelter, and education for the rest of their lives. Many outsiders see it as an escape from the toil of real life, but the life of an Initiate is very hard, and only the truly hard-working and studious progress. The education of a Priest never stops, either, for all but the High Priest himself have something to learn about their god and faith. Those who seek to be a Warrior

Priest of the faith face a much more physical form of study: Cult warriors are trained to be masters of battle, in the literal and the abstract, lest the enemies of the faith be victorious.

Whichever path a Priest chooses, the Cult provides all the resources for his study and training. There are many within each Cult who are ambitious or driven by private convictions, but for others, the Priesthood removes the need to decide the course of their own fate. The sheltering nature of the Cults is why so many Priests are ordered to wander the world at some point in their vocation.

As well as education and a livelihood, the Cults provide sanctuary and support to members of the Empire's faiths. Of course, few temples have wealth or men to spare. A wandering Priest can count on bread, broth, and a bed for the night, but little else, even in the largest temples. However, if evidence was produced of a great and terrible threat against the gods and their teachings, even a small temple could raise an armed force and send word to other temples or knightly templars for more assistance. A particularly persuasive Priest may get the same response from a village or group of townsfolk, if he convinces them their very souls are in peril, and their local Priest agrees. The common folk of the Empire will trust a holy man more than anyone else, but a stranger is still a stranger.

There are many advantages to the life of the Priest. The common folk defer to Priests, nobles grant them many liberties, and criminals are often afraid to prey upon them. Even so, most common folk pity Priests. Although the Priests may gain some protection from their gods, they face far stricter scrutiny of their behaviour in return. Few are pure enough to withstand such personal attention. The protection of the gods also demands obedience to their will, and the gods are rarely small in their demands. Even if the Priest is not sent on dangerous pilgrimages or into terrible battles, he must still live apart from his friends and family, and suffer through the rigours of a lengthy education.

Priests of higher rank enjoy more control over their lives, but such positions also incur more work and responsibility. The High Priest holds the fate of his entire Cult and all the faithful in his hands, and must act as the primary conduit to his god. Most High Priests die

soon after taking the post, worn away by the stress of playing politics or the exhaustion of living so piously. The more powerful the Priest, the less he can be seen to falter by his flock, and the more his god will punish him for pride or hubris. So while there will always be some who seek the priesthood solely for personal gain or selfish pride, there are easier and safer ways to ascend through society, and which do not risk damnation of one's soul.



THE CULT OF MANANN

"I don't hold with no boats nor barges, no sir. I killed me a seagull when I was a lad, and I know Manann still holds a grudge."

– Oswald Schimmerman, Landbound Ratcatcher

The sea is a terrible thing. It smashes strong ships to splinters and swallows strong men whole. And Manann laughs.

Of all the gods of the Empire, Manann is the most capricious, and even seems to take some pleasure in his cruelty. Like his father Taal, he embodies the untameable forces of nature, teaching men that they are small compared to the might of the gods, but unlike his father, he refuses to be stony-faced about it. His followers are similar: pragmatic people who know that their God demands appeasement and that no appeasement can ever be enough to guarantee his mercy. Yet to deny him is far worse, so no one in the Empire steps aboard a boat without a prayer to the God of Seas and Rivers.

Every dock in the Reikland has a shrine to Manann, and every captain gives him some remembrance before he casts off. For captains of larger vessels, this offering is usually made by engaging a member of the Cult of Manann among their crew. Through their faith, the Cult's priests are expert navigators who also ensure that proper respect is shown throughout the journey. Travelling without a member of Manann is so risky that the Cult has become the gatekeeper of almost all sea trade. This has made the Cult very wealthy, and gives them enormous power over the finances of the Empire, doubly so in the huge mercantile port of Marienberg.

Marienberg is the centre of their Cult and the seat of the High Priest. The Manannites have almost no Lectors or Arch-Lectors, with the High Priest preferring to let each temple govern itself. Most of Manannites are ex-seamen or marines, so are used to being self-sufficient.

The symbols of Manann are his five-pointed crown and his trident. Other signs include the Albatross or wave patterns of blue and white. His Cultists wear little adornment over their robes of turquoise or blue-grey. The sign of their God is a single arm upraised with one finger extended, reading the winds of the sea both literally and spiritually. Cultists of Manann need to be near water to hear their God and dislike being far from it for long. Thus, the Cult is most popular on the northern coasts and along the lower Reik as it stretches from the Reikland to the sea, but fishermen and boatmen

SAMPLE STRICTURES OF MANANN

Apart from tithing before and after a journey and opposing Stromfels, the strictures of Manann are extremely variable. They are drawn from the enormous body of sailor superstition, and which ones are considered the most important depend on the individual Priest. Some of the more common ones are:

- + Obey your captain
- + Never look back to port when departing
- + Never kill an albatross
- + No whistling on deck
- + Do not embark on a voyage on the thirteenth day
- + The first fish of a catch or the first coin of payment must be thrown into the sea

far up river still pay their tithes. Priests with Manann's favour may request a safe journey, and may also be able to breathe underwater or walk across the waves or, at high levels, summon squalls or fill an enemy's lungs with water.

Manann warrior priests usually join one of the mighty Imperial fleets guarding the coasts of the Empire or step aboard the river patrols which keep the life blood of the Empire flowing through its provinces. They advise the Emperor's admirals and barge captains in matters of navigating the treacherous shoals and shores as well as gaining the weather gauge against enemy fleets. During battle they call upon their god to bring the power of the seas to bear against their foes or to save souls from the terrors of the deep.

They are dedicated to the destruction of pirates, wreckers, and the worshippers of Stromfels. Sailors know Manann's dark mirror as Stromfels, the God of Storms, Sharks, and Dangers of the Seas. He takes true pleasure in killing seamen, and his blood-soaked rites are favoured by pirates. Worship of Stromfels is a crime punishable by death, yet his followers do not diminish. Those who suffer the cruelty of the sea soon see little difference between Stromfel's bloodthirstiness and Manann's indifference. Those who look closer see a different deity altogether...



THE CULT OF MORR

"Now, being that I have a Hochland long rifle aimed at your head, you have a very simple choice to make. You can tell your story to me, or you can tell it to Old Man Morr."

– Lars Hammett, Bounty Hunter

Morr has his Priests, his Temples, and his holy days, but nobody prays to him. Only the dead need his protection, and the dead do not pray.

The folk of the Empire believe that after death, a person's spirit is in great danger. It may be captured by the Dark Gods, be controlled by necromancers, or be unable to depart the mortal realm. The god who guards against this is Morr. He is not the god of death but of the Dead, ruler of the underworld, and it is the duty of his followers to perform the sacred rites that ensure spirits enter his realm swiftly and safely. His Priests have little concern for the living, and most rarely leave their gardens. Everyone needs their services soon enough.

Morr's temples are his Gardens. They are surrounded by high walls and iron gates and, in the cities, are guarded by the many different knightly orders of Morr's silent, obsidian-armoured templars. This protection mimics that offered by Morr and prevents necroman-

cers from gaining access to the dead. Not even families of the deceased are allowed inside the gates: they must worship from outside. The ways of Morr are kept apart from society, and his Priests are likewise very private people. As a result, they are rarely liked and often feared – and sometimes even accused of being necromancers themselves.

Sleep is when we are closest to death, and Morr's other domain is dreams. Morr sends visions and portents to his faithful in dreams, revealing dangers to the Cult or to the Empire itself. Those Priests who most often have visions and are dedicated to their interpretation are known as the Doomsayers, and come from an order of Morr called the Augurs. Those who tend to the dead are a separate order known as the Shroud, but the two groups co-exist without conflict, each caring for its own demesne.

Since the rites and duties of Morr are unchanging, the Cult needs little organisation. A Priest from each temple makes regular attendances at the conclaves held every ten years, but in the case of remote temples, some priests may only make the journey once a lifetime.

The symbols of Morr are the raven and the black roses which grow in his Gardens. His Priests dress in severe black robes with no indication of rank or other ornamentation. Morrites greet each other by moving their hand down their face, palm out, to mimic their God's shrouded face. Only Morrites make the signs of their God, for common folk who do so may attract his undue attention.

Rarely does a Morrite travel, spending a lifetime tending his Garden, instead. When they do travel it is often to visit another Garden or during the festival of Morr. This festival occurs once a year, and the gates of the Gardens of Morr are opened for all to enter and grieve. The priests wander the streets during this time demanding to be fed. It is considered bad luck to fail in this duty.

The Doomsayers are the most travelled of Morrites, seeming to randomly follow their dreams. They visit places where people are about to die – whether from battle, plague, or natural disaster. They preach the doom they have foreseen, and administer funeral rites where no one else will. They also dedicate their lives to uncovering and destroying necromancers and the undead. Many of Morr's prayers focus on these efforts: providing aid against the undead and quieting restless spirits, as well as speaking to the dead and seeing glimpses of the future to garner information.

SAMPLE STRUCTURES OF MORR

- + Observe all rites of funeral and wake
- + Be respectful of the dead, the dying and those who mourn
- + Oppose the undead and necromancers at every turn
- + Pay heed to your dreams

Morrites seem to carry death with them and are rarely welcomed, but if this bothers them, they never let it show through their dour demeanours. They also see it as their duty to care for the bereaved as well as the dead, so there are those who view the black-robed Priests with gratitude rather than fear.



THE CULT OF MYRMIDIA

"They say she walked with them, taught them to use a spear, showed them great art, learning, truth, honour – she sounds like an elf to me."

– Suriel Lianllach, High Elf Envoy

Myrmidia is the goddess of war and protector of soldiers. She is the daughter of Verena and Morr. Myrmidia stands for bravery and cunning, courage, honour, and martial virtue. She is the natural protector deity who guards the weak against the cruel and capricious.

While growing in popularity in the Empire, Myrmidia boasts a large number of followers in the southern lands of Tilea and Estalia, where worship of the warrior goddess is said to originate. Her foreign origins are not forgotten, but her faith has been accepted by the Empire as one of its own.

Worship of Myrmidia came to the Empire from the Knights of the Blazing Sun, who encountered Myrmidia in the Crusades against Araby. Since its establishment, the order has spread throughout the Empire to become one of the most prominent knightly orders.

SAMPLE STRICTURES OF MYRMIDIA

- ✦ Act with honour and dignity at all times, even towards your enemy.
- ✦ Observe all treaties and surrenders, and treat prisoners with respect.
- ✦ Show no mercy to the enemies of humanity.
- ✦ Honour your commander and follow his orders, unless obedience would contradict another stricture.

In the Empire, of course, Sigmar and Ulric are the masters of war, and they roar for death and glory. Most soldiers mock Myrmidia as an "officer's god," with ideals too lofty for the common fighting man, and most generals prefer to shift their bias to Sigmar and Ulric. Myrmidia is also a foreign goddess and considered strange by many Empire folk. Thus her cult is small and relatively powerless. It survives in the Empire because of the distinction and courage with which her devotees fight. The saying goes that Sigmar takes you to war, but Myrmidia brings you back; her followers are renowned for their tactical acumen which have won the Empire many victories.

In the Empire, every worshipper of Myrmidia is a warrior. To be a priest of Myrmidia is to be knowledgeable and schooled in the arts of war. Indeed, the Knights of the Blazing Sun train Myrmidia's priests, while the Order of the Eagle contains the cult's lectors who govern and manage the strictures and articles of its faith.

Eagles are sacred to Myrmidia and a common symbol of her cult. Initiates and priests of Myrmidia greet each other with crossed hands in the shape of an eagle. The goddess's other symbol consists of a spear and shield, Myrmidia's favoured armament.

Myrmidian colours are white or yellow; in the Empire, this is often combined with blue hoods with red edging. Expertise in a weapon is mandatory for Myrmidia's followers, and many carry their weapons at all times. Some also always wear armour. No Myrmidian meets the day without being ready for war, in however small a fashion.

Myrmidian temples reflect the cult's southern origins, borrowing architectural designs that in turn came from elven styles, whose ancient ruins dot the Tilean landscape. Marble columns illuminate circular rooms with domed roofs and spired towers; most have weapon halls and training rooms as well as pulpits.

Many temples are also chapter houses which serve as temporary bases for the Knights of the Blazing Sun and training grounds for the order of the Eagle. Arms and armour are in full supply, as are men and women skilled in their use. The clang of steel on steel sounds throughout the day, and when not testing their skill with the blade, Myrmidians may be found studying strategy, tactics and historical battles in their temple's libraries.

Myrmidians may be few, but they are well known because their priests often wander the world as trainers and advisors to the Empire's military forces. They seek out worthy battles to fight or honourable causes to uphold. The Myrmidian concept of honour is sometimes perceived as naiveté or cowardice, with critics asserting her followers would prefer to read about combat than to fight.

Myrmidians rarely rise to such provocations, for such mockery is beneath them. Their goddess teaches her warriors to be as proud as the falcon, and grants them the wisdom of the owl and the vision of the eagle. Her favour also provides her followers with the courage, strength, and speed they need to fight any enemy.



THE CULT OF RANALD

"Ranald's kept my neck in one piece, and kept my pockets full of brass and silver. Ain't none of the other gods can say that."

– Anonymous tavern patron after several pints of ale

Ranald is an official God of the Empire, but his Cult is unlike all the others, and to many it barely seems like a Cult at all. That is the nature of Ranald – to never be what he seems.

Some know Ranald as the god of Fate and Fortune, and pray to him whenever they take a chance or make a bet. Others know him as the Night Prowler, the patron of all thieves and rogues. Conmen worship him as Ranald the Deceiver, the personification of not just trickery and illusion but the irony of all existence, where the weak rise and the good suffer. Yet he is also sometimes Ranald the Protector, he who undercuts tyrants and undermines oppression. For the law is just another shackle, and it was meant to be broken. Ranald demands it.

Most of his Priests are lawbreakers in some way. Many are actual thieves, others iconoclasts, and some just "honest" businessmen who tell their customers what they want to hear and keep plenty hidden away from the bailiff. Not all thieves follow Ranald, of course. Most street thugs find his strictures far too binding: Ranald prefers his followers to eschew violence in favour of stealth, use finesse over brute strength, and give some of their take to charity. The perfect crime is not the one with the biggest pay-off, but the one where the prize seems impossible to reach and the crime goes completely unnoticed.

Ranald's Priests are aided in such business with favours such as increased darkness to hide a leaping burglar, or a moment of confusion overcoming an enemy. Powerful Ranaldians may be granted the ability to manipulate the black market or completely change their identity. However, it is considered bad form to petition Ranald for aid unless the situation is dire. Ranald helps those who help themselves, and will never save a poor thief from his own incompetence!

Many in authority would like to see the Cult dissipated, but it survives because of its enduring popularity with the common folk and because of its disorganised structure. His temples are hidden in backrooms or cellars, or arranged at a moment's notice. His Priests wear no robes and keep their holy symbols hidden. Ranald is also the champion of freedom, and His servants are all individualists. Every Priest keeps the faith in his own way, and a Cult that has no form cannot be found.

Ranald does have a few universal symbols, however. Followers can show allegiance by crossing their fingers, or by marking an X on their clothes, equipment, or skin. Authorities are aware of this use of the symbol but so many X pendants are sold at every street market (they bring good luck) that the sign is ubiquitous. Ranald is also depicted as a black cat, and Ranaldans consider these creatures extremely lucky.

Ranaldan Priests do gather for worship, or to plan a particularly spectacular crime, but then just as soon go their separate ways. They do not have any central authority, and anyone foolish enough to declare himself the High Priest would only be mocked for it. Each Priest recruits and trains Initiates on his own, usually by spotting a likely candidate and challenging him to perform some great theft or scam. If he shows sufficient skill, he will be admitted.

Should the Initiate later prove unworthy, his recruiter will be expected to pull his student into line or remove him from the faith. If this isn't done, Ranald will renounce his usual distaste for violence rather than be dishonoured. The Cult's warrior priests are typically master thieves, nimble rascals and military agents acting on behalf of the Emperor. It is even rumoured that Felix Mann, the master thief who stole the Carstein Ring off the finger of the sleeping Vampire Vlad in 2051, was a Ranaldan priest and agent of the Empire.

The rejection of violence and petty crime also earns the Cult many allies. The Shallyans respect Ranaldians for their pacifist ways and their devotion to charity, and most watchmen would prefer a dozen Ranaldans on his beat than a drunken thug or a murderous gangster. Ranald teaches what most already understand: a little bit of crime is always going to happen. So it might as well be his kind of crimes.

SAMPLE STRICTURES OF RANALD

- + One coin in ten belongs to Ranald
- + Live by your wits, not your sword
- + It is better to live free than suffer oppression
- + There is no honour among thieves, but trust your brothers and sisters in Ranald
- + Laws are meant to be broken
- + Don't get caught





THE CULT OF SHALLYA

"You think mercy is for the weak? 'Twas Shallya's mercy healed my broken arm so I could lead the vanguard against the beastmen in our last campaign. You saying that makes me weak? Think carefully before you answer, lad..."

– Sergeant Marcus Orton to a green recruit

The Old World is thick with pain, death, and suffering. In such a dark world, perhaps only a fool would believe in a Goddess of mercy. The Shallyans are used to such cynicism, but they still believe. For even in the darkest of places, mercy can be found.

It is said that everyone loves Shallya, but nobody trusts her. Certainly everyone owes the Maiden of Mercy something: there is almost no one in the Empire whose birth was not attended by a Shallyan, who has never lain in the Cult's temple hospices, or who has never had an ailment cured after offering prayers to the Goddess. Yet there is also almost no-one in the Empire who has not had a loved one taken from them by war or illness. Shallya is the daughter of Morr and Verena, and although she weeps for all who suffer, she is beholden to her parents. Shallya asks that justice and death be tempered by mercy, but yields to her parents' demands.

Her followers have learned to be practical people. Her Priests focus on the here and now, fixing the immediate problems as best they can. Their temples are hospices where they tend to the sick, the wounded, and the insane and gather food for the poor. They eschew any kind of politics so that they can always reach those in need. Of course, they often save the lives of wealthy people and are granted gifts in return, but the Cult uses these gifts to aid the poor, not to live in luxury. The Cult's temples are functional and unadorned, and her Priests strive for an ascetic lifestyle.

They wear plain robes of hard-wearing cloth, usually of white or yellow. The symbols of Shallya – the dove, the heart, the tear, or the drop of blood – are often embroidered on the chest, but otherwise they wear no ornamentation. Nor do they have much subdivision or hierarchy. They are, however, strictly organised in a feudal structure, with every local temple owing tribute to a larger temple above, all the way up to the Matriarch in Couronne in Bretonnia. All Shallyans can heal, but those with a lesser talent for it dedicate themselves to organising the faith and they do so with a military-like efficiency. This ensures every temple has plenty of bandages and mandrake, but the difference between a beautiful young nurse and a terrifying Shallyan matron can be startling to a visitor.

Almost all Shallyans are female, but there is nothing that prevents males from entering the faith. Most Shallyans are orphans raised by the Cult; few who are not raised within the faith can demonstrate the life-long servitude required by the Goddess, and most male orphans are passed on to one of the more militaristic Cults.

Shallyan warrior priests are known as hospitaliers. In times of war, the hospitaliers tend to the sick and wounded on the battlefield. Though they abhor violence, as a last resort they will fiercely defend the army's wounded, hospices, and healing tents. Shallyans have wandering orders too, who bring healing to all they encounter. Since Shallyans often place themselves in dangerous places to tend to those in greatest need, neither vocation is a safe one, and it is not made easier by Shallya's disdain for violence.

Shallya has no such compunctions when it comes to the abominations of her fiercest enemy, Nurgle, the Fly Lord. This Dark God is the master of disease and decay, and his followers spread sickness wherever they go. Shallyan favours are almost entirely focussed on healing wounds and sickness, but the Goddess will also lend her faithful strength and courage for destroying agents of the Fly Lord or any of her enemies. And because she heals all, her allies are legion. So though many think the Shallyans are fools, only a fool would ever attack them.

SAMPLE STRUCTURES OF SHALLYA

- + Violence is the last resort
- + Ease the suffering of all in need
- + Never halt a soul when Morr calls for it to depart
- + Go through life unfettered by material needs
- + Abhor the Fly Lord in all his forms
- + Do not waste energy on your own pleasure



THE CULT OF SIGMAR

"Sigmar is the hammer, and I am his holy anvil. Woe to any caught between us!"

– Juergen Dunkel, zealot

Sigmar is the Empire, and the Empire is Sigmar. He founded the Empire and was its first ruler. After his death, he became a legendary, heroic forebearer of his people, and became worshipped as a warrior god. Everything the Empire possesses is because of Sigmar. This is why the folk of the Empire are known as Sigmar's People – the Sons of Sigmar – and the Emperor is the Heir of Sigmar regardless of his ancestry.

The followers of Sigmar are dedicated to proving themselves worthy of their god's legacy and protect his holy Empire. Defence is the watchword of all Sigmarites: defence of the Empire, defence of its peoples, and defence of their minds, hearts, and souls. So watchful are they that they often seem paranoid or superstitious, always wary of Sigmar's disapproval or looking for any sign of the handiwork of the Empire's enemies. Chaos never sleeps, they say, so the Sigmarites never rest in their vigil.

To properly guard the Empire, Sigmarites must play a role in every level of society. The high priest of the Holy Temple of Sigmar, known as the Grand Theogonist, is an Imperial Elector and a private counsellor to the Emperor himself. Beneath him are two Arch Lectors and a great assemblage of lectors, warrior priests, preachers, monks, flagellants, and pilgrims. Sigmar's cult is by far the largest one in the Empire and has a monumentally complicated hierarchical structure. It is divided into many orders, each with their own duties.

The cult has many warrior priests; Sigmarites are inseparable from war and are part of the Imperial army as well as the priesthood. Almost every Imperial army marches out accompanied by warrior priests of Sigmar to bolster the courage and faith of its soldiers.

Sigmar's cult is ingrained in every level of society. Most citizens of the Empire, from nobles to dung collectors, visit a temple of Sigmar at least once a week. In these grand, austere buildings, priests deliver the word of Sigmar in readings and sermons. Sigmarite priests are guardians of their communities, looked to for insight into proper behaviour and holy law. Sigmarites keep secular law as well, for that too comes from the edicts of their god when he founded the nation. This is right and proper, for only by controlling the laws can the cult protect the Empire's citizens from themselves.

The cult takes initiates who have been touched by Sigmar in some way, a tiny proportion of his power manifesting itself in them. These initiates come from all walks of life and the Cult asks for

SAMPLE STRICTURES OF SIGMAR

- + Obey your orders, for your superiors know better the will of Sigmar
- + Aid the dwarf folk, in honour of Sigmar's alliance with them
- + Root out and destroy all enemies of the Empire: the greenskins, the undead, daemons, the servants of Chaos, and those who use dark magic
- + Bear true allegiance to the Emperor
- + Work to protect the unity and continuing strength of the Empire, even at the cost of your own life and liberty

little beyond unquestioning obedience, so even in the mainstream cult no two priests are ever the same. Even their robes may vary in colour, style, and insignia. All bear some symbol of their god, however, be it the warhammer sigil or the twin-tailed comet that foretold Sigmar's birth or the griffon which symbolises the strength of his Empire. Most priests can also be recognised by their shaved or tonsured heads, a practise performed on new priests, male and female alike, by almost all Sigmarite temples.

The favour of Sigmar allows his servants to better combat his enemies, calling down holy fire against greenskins, scourging the undead, and bring his wrath against Chaos. He also grants hope and healing to his warriors, and this is Sigmar's true gift to his people. He united them in the belief that they could be something more, in the hope that they could stand against the greenskin armies, and every day he gives hope anew to his followers, so that they can stand against the Empire's legion of enemies. These foes are many, and the task of guarding Sigmar's legacy is enormous, but his priests' hopes spring eternal through their defiance and hatred of evil.



THE CULT OF TAAL

"The cities can have their grand temples, their golden idols and burning incense. All the hustle and bustle of men, praising the great gods. Taal needs none of that. Look around you – these trees are his temple. The birds are his choir. Out here, those gods are small and far away. But Taal is everywhere."

– Rickard Strauss, Woodsman

RHYA, TAAL'S WIFE

Rhya is often associated with the gentle, providential, and giving side of nature. Hers is the heartbeat which quickens in a mother's belly, the first birdsong of spring, and the bleat of newborn lambs. She taught humans how to plant and harvest, and it is she who makes the grain grow each season and makes the fruit ripen on the branch.

Rhya cools Taal's rage and ameliorates his stubbornness, but as a good wife, she is also beholden to his will, so oftentimes frost kills the lambs or floods take the crops.

More, hence, ask for Taal's mercy than Rhya's blessing, and apart from country matters, her worship is limited. Some say that once the two gods were two aspects of the same god, but the wild warriors of Taal dismiss such foolishness.

Taal is the oldest of all the gods of the Empire. Some say he is the king of the gods; others call him the All-Father. From him came the lands and the rivers, the forests and the mountains, and all the beasts that live among them. He has little concern for humans, for his domain is the remote wilderness, the primal fury of the beast, and the relentless strength of nature.

SAMPLE STRUCTURES OF TAAL

- ✦ Taal's children give themselves to you for food and sacrifice. Honour that gift as well as the abundance of the forest and the soil
- ✦ Make a sacrifice of flesh or grain once a month at the dark of the moon
- ✦ Spend eight days a year in isolation in the wild, living only on what you can hunt or gather
- ✦ Do not clad yourself in metal, only hides and leathers, and arm yourself only with wood
- ✦ Take pride in natural strength and skill, and the natural ways. Shun firearms and other works of engineering and science

Taal is a god of action rather than contemplation, and his cult shuns the trappings of civilisation, considering them unnatural and emasculating. His followers champion self-reliance, and initiation into the cult begins with an ordeal of surviving alone in the forest. Priests of Taal are often loners, visiting the most remote villages and patrolling the darkest woods.

They do, however, value community – the deer and stags are safest when they herd together. As the oldest and most pervasive of all the cults in the Empire, the community of Taal is mighty indeed. He is the chief god of Talabecland and the eastern provinces, and patron of the great city of Talabheim.

Despite its priests' affinity for the wild, the cult is surprisingly structured. The cult has two high priests, known as a Hierarchs. Theoretically, the Hierarchy of Rhya rules in spring and autumn and the Hierarchy of Taal rules during summer and winter. Although supposedly equal, with the waning of Rhya, it is the Hierarchy of Taal who has the greater authority all year round. Beneath the Hierarchs are the arch lectors who act as guardians over important communities, wild lands, or sacred sites. Lesser priests deal with smaller areas, maintaining shrines and ministering to farmers, hunters, and travellers.

Taal's warrior priests are known as longshanks. They are experts with the yew bow and forest lore, who guard against the needless destruction of nature such as excessive deforestation, and protect the land against the taint of Chaos. Their aid is invaluable in campaigns waged within the wilds and forests of the Empire.

Taal's temples are wild spaces, perhaps marked only by a ring of trees or standing stones. His shrines are similar, usually carved from a rock or tree, and are found throughout the great forests of the Empire, so that all those that wander may request Taal's protection. Although the cult is well-ordered, its priests seldom meet and their temples are rarely occupied.

Similarly, the cult exerts little political pressure despite its large numbers, as it is too busy tending to its duties to play the games of civilised men. They need no holy books or calendars, for their rituals are the ways of nature and their sacred days are determined by the seasons.

Taalist priests wear only natural hides and skins. Even the longshanks shun metal armour and swords for leather, wooden bows, and staves. Taalists thump their thighs, chest, and arms – “roots, trunk, and branches” – as a greeting and an invocation to their god. Taal grants his devotees with favours to control wild beasts and forest trees. He also grants them the strength and fervour of the wild, so his priests are always passionate in whatever they do. Fear the quiet Taalist, goes the saying, lest the mountain wakes.



THE CULT OF ULRIC

*Old White Wolf will sniff you out, Old White Wolf with braided hair,
Old White Wolf will hunt you down, Old White Wolf will rip and tear!*

— Middenheimer children's rhyme

Before the coming of Sigmar, the men of the Old World looked to a different god in times of war: Ulric the mighty, Ulric the proud, Ulric the wolf as white as snow. Now his cult is overshadowed by that of Sigmar, but his devotees know that there is only one true warrior among the heavens.

According to legend, the great city of Middenheim was founded by Ulric himself. Ulric's brother, the god Taal, gifted the towering mountain to the Wolf God, striking the mountain top flat with his mighty fist. This is why the mountain is sometimes called Fauschlag, from the ancient word "fist-strike." It is here that Ulric established a home for his followers.

The northern lands of the Empire remain a stronghold of Ulric, but elsewhere the cult's influence has declined. Sigmar and Myrmidia share the domain of war, and Sigmar's cult has taken over most of Ulric's political presence. Ar-Ulric, the cult's high priest, remains an Elector, however, and the power of the faith in the north cannot be denied.

SAMPLE STRICTURES OF ULRIC

- ✦ Obey your betters
- ✦ Defend your honour
- ✦ Never back down, unless ordered by a superior
- ✦ Stand honest and true. Deception and trickery are not Ulric's ways
- ✦ Never wear a wolfskin unless you killed the wolf yourself, with your own blade
- ✦ Shun helmets. Let the enemy see your wolf mane
- ✦ Black-powder weapons and crossbows are the weapons of cowards
- ✦ Keep the sacred flames of Ulric always burning in his holy places



More than once, posturing between the two cults has thrown the Empire into civil war, and under a weaker Emperor than Karl Franz, it may yet do so again. Even today many Ultricans regard Sigmarites as arrogant upstarts, while Sigmarites reciprocate with the view that Ultricans are boorish barbarians.

The situation isn't helped by the fact that Ultricans love to fight. Ulric teaches his warriors never to back down when challenged, and even brothers-in-arms will frequently fall into brawls. Yet these fights rarely cause division: Ulric's devotees know that they are strongest together, like a pack of wolves. However, Ulric also demands that his followers should be strong alone, and initiates must prove themselves worthy by surviving an ordeal alone in the wilderness, preferably during the icy winter.

The followers of Ulric are fearsome fighters, and the cult's warrior priests are admired across the Empire for their legendary battle prowess and courage under fire, as are the Knights of the White Wolf, a templar order dedicated to Ulric. Military training is mandatory for all priests, and few of Ulric's clerics have never seen battle.

Ultrican temples are square-walled buildings protecting a fortified inner sanctum and are designed to quarter great companies of warriors and hold off a siege, and inside there is as much training for war as there is prayer. When not fighting, priests of Ulric loudly preach their god's name to their congregations and admonish those who refuse to fight against Ulric's enemies.

As well as their distaste for Sigmarites, Ultricans are suspicious of Ranaldans, as Ulric detests lies and trickery in any form. They also look down upon Myrmidian battle tactics, dismissing convoluted strategies as un-heroic. The clash of blades is music to Ulric's ears, and the blood of his enemies splashing the ground makes him

smile. However, although followers of Ulric fight with the ferocity of wolves, they recognise the need for discipline, and the cult operates under a strict command structure.

Every Ulrican, from arch lecturers to the lowest initiate, knows his place and would lay down his life if his superior gave such an order. In return for his followers' obedience, Ulric grants them courage, endurance, and terrible battle fury.

When not in armour, Ulricans wear simple black robes and wolf skins. Many Ulrican males sport thick beards, and both men and women tend towards braided hair. The symbol of Ulric is a fist with the index and smallest fingers raised, symbolising the wolf's head. Some Ulricans show displeasure by snarling like a wolf.

Southern folk often mock devotees of the White Wolf for their bestial nature, but followers of Ulric know that the world is harsh, and when the icy storms of winter grip the land, wolves survive whereas lambs do not.



THE CULT OF VERENA

"There is truth in words. For me and my brothers, our truth is the spoken word. To my Verenean comrades, they find the truth in the written word. And in words left unspeaken."

– Erich Keller, Warrior Priest of Sigmar

SAMPLE STRICTURES OF VERENA

- ✦ Preserve knowledge and justice, for they are the foundation of civilisation
- ✦ All knowledge is equally important
- ✦ Arbitrate disputes wherever you can
- ✦ Make your judgements based on facts and knowledge, without fear or favour
- ✦ Never allow yourself to be a tool of injustice or ignorance
- ✦ Violence destroys knowledge, but do not be afraid to take up Verena's sword if the need is great

The Empire is a benighted land. Although its armies keep the enemies of civilisation at bay, ignorance, superstition, and fear still rule within its borders. The only thing that lights the darkness is the twin beacon of learning and justice: the domains of Verena.

Some speculate that Verena taught humans how to read and write and guided them in creating the first laws, since such things are held in such high regard by the goddess and her followers. She charges her priests to be active in her name, spreading knowledge and justice wherever they are lacking. The cult believes in preserving all knowledge. Few are willing to risk death or torture on this point, but Vereneans are passionate.

Many a Verenean would run into a burning building to retrieve scrolls, or travel to the ends of the Empire to seek lost knowledge. Verena teaches that learning is sacred – but still acknowledges that some topics are too dangerous to pursue, such as necromancy or Chaos. All Vereneans are scholars. Initiates are sought in the scriptoria and universities of the Empire and must undergo further education before becoming a priest. Once inducted, they are sent back to administer such institutions: most universities and libraries in the Empire are run partly or wholly by Vereneans. In smaller towns, Vereneans will act as notaries or archivists, preserving the history and knowledge of their community.

Verena values justice along with learning, so her priests also act as mediators and aides to the fearsome Imperial judges. However, the cult teaches that a tyrannical abuse of power offers no justice, and Vereneans are quick to support the Empire against such tyrannical forces. Many nobles recognise the value of Verenean learning and pay heed to the counsel of the goddess's priests. Thus, the cult has much influence throughout the Empire. In large cities, priests often have official positions as advisors in the courts of elector counts.

The cult has little formal hierarchy. Each temple manages its affairs independently. Individual priests devote themselves to different aspects of Verenean lore. There are various schools of philosophical thought within the cult. The two most important are the Scalebearers and Lorekeepers – the former focus on Verena as divine arbiter, the latter worship her as the guardian of all knowledge.

Among the various sects within the cult are the Order of Mysteries, devoted to scouring the world for forgotten lore, and the Order of the Sword and Scale, which is composed of Verena's warrior priests who wield their swords to protect the cult and offer advice to battlefield councils of war and knowledge and information on the enemy during invasions.

The sword of justice is an important symbol of the goddess, indicating that justice without action is impotent and that unguarded learning will be lost. Verena grants her priests favours not only to pursue truth and justice, but to discover lies and obfuscation and to bring down terrible retribution against those who would pervert truth and justice for their own ends. Though they prefer only to wield it as a last resort, Vereneans wear a sword to remind themselves that they must sometimes be warriors as well as scholars.

The other symbols of Verena are the owl, representing wisdom, and the scales of justice. Tomes of lore and learning are ubiquitous among her devotees. The goddess is often depicted blindfolded, showing that her justice is blind to wealth or station, and her most devout followers often wear a blindfold when passing judgement. Vereneans invoke their goddess with one hand turned down and one up, to represent the great scales of life, and pray to her to keep them fair and balanced in their outlook.



CHAPTER THREE OTHER FAITHS

"A wise man makes faith his fortress, yea, but he does not turn his eyes away from events beyond his battlements."

— from the Book of Myrmidia

The people of the Empire are united in their shared faith of a common pantheon, but they are not blind to the faiths that exist beyond their borders. Dwarfs, elves, and foreigners bring their gods with them when they come into the Empire.

Travellers speak of the different cults in faraway lands. Scholars know of old gods now forgotten or half-remembered by only a tiny few. Such things are not to be trusted, but do not threaten the faith of the average citizen of the Empire.

Only the most fanatical have any objection to the gods of elves or dwarfs, for clearly humans need to have human gods. Some do consider such gods as lesser deities, but such types find everything of the other races to be inferior. For the most part, the people of the Empire remember the bond between Sigmar and the dwarfs, and show great respect to all aspects of dwarf culture as a result.

Elven gods are less well known, not least because the elves keep their faith private and they are a rare sight in many places. Those few Empire folk who know something of elven religion, however, show respect for what few temples the elves build.

Not everyone is so accepting, however. Empire citizens fervently believe that Sigmar is the greatest of gods. While many may show respect for the gods of foreigners, it is not always easy to accept how others could deny Sigmar's divinity. Sigmar is the enemy of Chaos. Particularly zealous (or mentally unstable) followers see a denial of Sigmar as embracing darkness and the forces of Chaos.

Or at the very least, such a denier is fertile breeding ground for heresy. It is somewhat ironic that some of the most devout Sigmarites can be found in the Reikland, where a large number of foreigners, elves, and dwarfs live. Although the Cult of Sigmar avoids publicly denouncing foreign faiths, religious prejudice and violence is not uncommon.

In more remote areas of the Empire, foreign gods are rare. Religious variation comes instead in the form of minor gods raised to greater prominence or ancient gods still remembered. Across the thousands of miles of the Empire, and over its millennia of history,





the people have worshipped hundreds of different gods, spirits, or supernatural forces. Most of these faiths are extremely small, dedicated to a local spirit.

Many followers of these faiths worship spirits representing some aspect of nature, or revere a specific local place, or venerate a specific person, event, or legend. Such beliefs are highly localised, and the venerated object may be unknown to anyone more than several leagues away. Other minor spirits or lesser deities are simply variations or subsets of the major faiths, or arise from twisted representations of one of the more common gods.

Of course, some variation and nuance is common and expected to a certain degree, but witch hunters and common folk alike grow wary when a belief twists into something too exotic. The more bizarre or unusual the practices, the greater the suspicions of being in league with Chaos.

THE DWARF GODS

"Prayers are for those who wish to live."

– Gurni Thorgrimson, Troll Slayer

The gods of the dwarfs are not otherworldly beings. They are the dwarfs' ancient ancestors, who founded the great dwarf empire and established the great clans. Today they look down on their descendants, charging them to prove themselves worthy of their ancestors' legacy. The most revered ancestors are known as the Ancestor Gods, but the word does not mean the same thing to dwarfs as it does to humans.

Dwarfs do not celebrate their faith publicly, but every clanhold and dwarf house has a space set aside to honour their particular ancestors, as well as the great Ancestor Gods. In the cities of the Empire, expatriate dwarfs have built temples to their ancestor gods to allow them to worship as they would back home. These temples are often filled with solemn Dwarfs and many kegs of beer.

Dwarf Lorekeepers fulfil a role somewhat akin to priests, maintaining the shrines and records of the Ancestor Gods. However, since all dwarfs study and revere their ancestors, dwarf priests do not share the same sort of social role as their human counterparts. Dwarfs value deeds above words, and those whose deeds bring the most honour their ancestors are those most favoured. Dwarf priests are mediators and law keepers, however, for it is they who preside over judgements of clan traditions and rites.

TABLE 3-1: THE DWARF ANCESTOR GODS

ANCESTOR GOD	DOMAIN OF INFLUENCE
Gazul *	Death and the Underearth
Grimnir	Battle and Warriors
Grungni	Mining and Stonework
Morgrim*	Engineering
Smednir*	Smithing
Thungni*	Runes and Runemagic
Valaya	Home and Healing

* Lesser Dwarf God

Of all the Ancestor Gods, there are three that are of supreme importance. Grungni is the god of mining, stoneworking, and craftsmanship. He first taught the dwarfs to hew stone, mine ore, and smith metal, and his example is what drives dwarfs to take pride in their work. His symbol is the pick.

His brother, Grimnir the Fearless, is the god of warriors and battle. He taught the first dwarfs the art of war, and he is remembered for his deadly axe. When Chaos fell upon the world, he shaved off most of his hair and departed to slay the daemons single-handedly. Today, Troll Slayers follow his example.

Valaya is goddess of home and healing. Valaya invented dwarf script, and brewed the first dwarf beer. Valaya was also the defender of her stronghold while Grimnir fought and Grungni dug, so her symbol is the shield. Dwarf women typically follow her example in their own holds or houses.

THE ELVEN GODS

"Asking an elf about his gods is like asking a fish about water."

– Bertram Lehrer, Empire Scholar

Elves rarely, if ever, speak of their gods to outsiders, and even when they do, the nature of their faith is difficult for any human to understand. Their gods are not apart from them, and they need no priests to speak to them or interpret their will. Their lives are bound in mysticism, and there is perhaps no time when they are not in conversation with their gods or enacting a ritual of worship.

Since they have no formalised religion, it is easy for elves to keep their faith private when among humans. However, elves are also artisans, and do make shrines and sculptures of their gods, and paint holy symbols on their possessions, so those humans who take care to look are not entirely ignorant of the elven pantheon.

Meanwhile, elves are naturally curious, so know much of human religion. The parallels between some of the gods are obvious, and most elves consider the human gods poor reflections of their own. Religious scholars of the Empire have often come to the opposite conclusion.

Unlike humans, however, elves do not see their gods as cruel or capricious. The gifts of the elven gods are clearly visible, and their hand in events is easy to see. The gods are part of every elf and every action he takes. When an elf hunts, he is with Kurnous, when he kills he is with Khaine, and when he casts a spell, he is with Hoeth.

TABLE 3-2: THE ELVEN GODS

GOD	REALM OF MASTERY
Asuryan	Leadership and Courage
Hoeth	Knowledge and Wisdom
Isha	Fertility and Motherhood
Khaine	War and Murder
Kurnous	Hunting and Fatherhood
Lileath	Dreams and Fortune
Loec	Revelry and Jest
Mathlann	Travel and Exploration
Morai-heg	Fate and Death
Vaul	Smithing and Construction

The ten elven gods and their realms are listed above. All of them are respected, but the most important gods among the high elves are Asuryan, Hoeth, and Khaine, as kingship, knowledge, and battle are their chief concerns. Among the wood elves, the primary gods are Kurnous and his wife Isha. This is because the wood elf king and queen, Orion and Ariel, are said to be living avatars of these gods.

HOLY DAYS, FESTIVALS, AND RITUALS

"Can't get to the privies, today, m'lord. It's a feast day for Ranald see. One of them real holy ones."

– Oswald Schimmerman, *Recalcitrant Ratcatcher*

Most Empire holy days revolve around the turn of the seasons and the phases of the moon rather than religious events. The nights of the Old World are lit by two moons: Mannslieb, which turns every 33 days, and Morrslieb, a darker orb with a seemingly erratic motion. On two days of every year, both moons are full. In midwinter it is known as Witching Night (or Hexensnacht) and marks the turning of the new year.

This night is considered inauspicious, a time when daemons roam, witches draw great power and the dead stir in their graves. On this night, the people of the Empire stay in their homes and pray to their gods for protection. In late summer, the day of twin moons is

known as the Day of Mystery (or Geheimnistag). Although still a day of dark shadows and grim foretellings, it is considered a safer time than Hexensnacht.

Soon after Hexensnacht is Year's Blessing, when Verena is beseeched to grant wisdom for the new year. At the start of spring, feasts mark the fading of the time of Ulric's snows and Taal's green-fingered return. Also in springtime is Ranald's Day of Folly, where trickery and deception are the heart of the revelry.

The first day of summer is given over to praising Sigmar. It is said that on this day he ascended to the heavens as a god, and the Empire celebrates their patron with great excess and ribald decoration. When autumn comes again, Ulric's return is marked by sacrificing some of the harvest upon great bonfires. These holidays are of course only the major holy days of the year, and there are countless smaller occasions and local festivals.

Shallya has no time of the year as her own. She is offered sacrifices whenever a child is born or a sickness passes, and indeed, her priests and priestesses are usually present to help with the birth or the cure. Anniversaries of both events are typically marked with subsequent gifts to Shallya, in continued thanks. While there are no widely observed holy days of Morr, Hexensnacht is sacred to his followers. The people of the Empire believe that the spirits of the dead waste away to nothing unless they are properly remembered by their descendants and their body cared for by the priests of Morr.

For a few pennies, the priests will lay a corpse within the walled cemetery grounds known as a Garden of Morr. Here the remains will be protected from necromancers and other disturbances, and the Morrite priests can perform rites that will guide the dead spirit to Morr's realm. Despite the general tenets restricting families from entering the Gardens to visit the deceased, once a year, people are allowed inside to feast and sacrifice to the dead.





Which of the gods do I believe in? Why, all of 'em, of course! By Verena's all-seeing owls, I figure if I believe in enough of them gods, a few of 'em are bound to believe in me!

– Rodrick Steiner, Frederheim Bailiff



STRANGE FESTIVALS AND RITUALS OF THE REIKLAND

The people of the Empire are devout and fervent servants of the gods. This devotion is expressed in a variety of strange and novel ways. Here are some of the more unusual traditions found in some parts of the Reikland.

THE DOOMING

Some children in the Reikland, should they live to be ten years old, are given their Dooming. Meat, milk, and sometimes human blood are thrown on a brazier to take the place of the child in Morr's realm, in hope of granting the child a long life. During the ceremony, many people also receive foretellings of the manner of their death.

MOURNLIMB

Another ritual dedicated to Morr is Mournlimb, where soldiers and sailors gather outside a Garden of Morr to drink and toast the memory of the parts of their bodies which have gone ahead of them into death.

THE WEDDING JUG

Marriage in the Empire is mostly secular and – for common folk – a simple affair. A priest presides over the marriage, and in some areas of the Reikland the short ceremony is completed by the couple jumping over a jug or bowl. It is bad luck to break the wedding jug thereafter, so this item usually has pride of place in the house.

Because courtship and conception belong to Taal and Rhya, it is their priests who are most often invited to preside over weddings. However, any priest will do and priests of all faiths are common officiants—except for priests of Morr, who many feel are out-of-place at a joyous celebration.

FIRST QUAFF

The dwarfs of Karak Azgaraz celebrate the new year with a tradition known as First Quaff, where the kegs of beer made the year before are tapped and tasted for the first time. Valaya is praised for keeping the hold healthy through the winter, and the dwarfs boast to each other of all the heroic deeds they will perform in the coming year.

THE SPIRIT WALK

Practised in small villages and towns, far from the likes of Altdorf, is the tradition known as the Spirit Walk. Elders of a community will pack one skin of water, one skin of wine, and one loaf of bread, and then walk off into the forest, or along a stream or other trail, until the bread and water are nearly gone. They then pour the wine out as an offering to the local spirits they believe protect their community, before returning home. However, in some of the more remote villages, it is said the Elders do not return from their Spirit Walk, making themselves a final offering to their patron spirits.

Two moons stare down upon the Old World from the night sky, Mannslieb and Morrslieb. Both are the subject of many myths and stories. Mannslieb is light grey, and much brighter and larger than the darkish green lump of Morrslieb. Mannslieb's name means "beloved of Manann" and the sea god's worshippers believe the moon affects the tides and oceans. Morrslieb is called the Dark Moon, and named after Morr, the god of death and dreams. Empire folks are a superstitious lot, and many folk see ill omens at work when misfortune befalls them under the pale green light of Morrslieb.



SUPERSTITIONS & FOLK CUSTOMS

In a world full of wizards casting spells, Daemons of Chaos tempting the faithful, and bizarre mutants roaming the wild lands, the inhabitants of the Old World are, by intent or in defence, incredibly superstitious. There is rarely a moment that goes by when the average person doesn't take into account some superstitious ritual, such as muttering a prayer after crossing the shadow of a plague victim, or tossing a bit of spilt salt over one's shoulder. Superstitions run the gamut, from the fate of a person, curses, and even the occasional boon.

Most of the superstitions in the Empire are ancient beyond compare, and few people can remember exactly what the reasoning for it may have been. Still, traditions in the Empire die hard, and regardless of whether these superstitions continue to have any power or purpose is meaningless to the majority of its inhabitants.

The hard, harsh life of most citizens of the Empire makes them view almost every event with a superstitious eye—most of it with a cynical, paranoid bent. Regardless of a person's learning or status, superstitions manage to creep into the daily routine.

A person believing they are under the effects of a curse caused by a superstition can usually be "cured" through some sort of superstitious act. Entire industries exist of charlatans and self-proclaimed mystics offering advice and ingredients to reverse the effects of a superstition gone wrong. Naturally, none of these efforts actually work, and word of people proclaiming such things may reach the ear of a witch hunter.

MAGIC, RELIGION & SUPERSTITION

There is a fine line between what is considered actual magic, divine intervention and what is nothing more than pure superstition. Scholars, priests, and wizards all debate the nature of superstition as it applies to religion and magic. They often ask themselves: does magic work because of the superstitious nature of people, or are people superstitious because of the works of magic? Do people believe in the gods because they have seen signs that strengthen their faith, or vice versa? Can one believe in both divinity and magic? These questions are difficult to answer, as the answer varies based on who is asked.

Although many wizards tend to look down on the backwards practises of the masses, most recognise the fact that such behaviour exists for a reason. More than a few beliefs have sprung up simply thanks to the idle words spoken by a wizard who then see the Winds of Magic twist and bend due to the reactions of others reacting to their comments. Priests have also seen benedictions and prayers misinterpreted, or signs of faith proclaimed where no such evidence exists.

The typical citizen of the Empire sees little difference between superstition, magic, and religion. This is particularly problematic for those who practise magic for a living, as religion is far more accepted than arcane studies throughout most of the Empire. For most people, the world is a dangerous and mysterious place, with



the evil powers kept at bay only because of the mutterings of certain phrases or performing certain acts, regardless of whether they make sense or not.

VARIATIONS IN FOLK CUSTOMS

Just as the Empire is really a collection of semi-unified peoples under the banner of a single Emperor, so are the beliefs of its inhabitants. Customs of worship vary from place to place. Old Worlders are notoriously insular by nature, and most rarely venture more than a few miles from their homes. As a result, beliefs and religious customs have slight variations even among settlements relatively close to one another. Those people that travel more extensively usually accept this fact for what it is, as long as the customs they encounter do not come across as blasphemous or too far from what is considered acceptable.

Most of the variations in worship are minor. For example, a town celebrating the coming of spring may require revellers to wear flowers in their hair, while those in the village down the road wear wreaths of flowers about their necks. However, there are times in which these variations can be jarring for a foreigner travelling to a different region.

Depending on their beliefs, and how rigid their mindset is, some of these variations may even come across as heretical or blasphemous. Witch hunters, always on the prowl for heresy, begrudgingly accept the fact that the Empire is large, and unified practise of a cult's customs is impossible. Still, if an isolated community takes these differences too far, the gossip and shock generated is sure to pique a witch hunter's interest.



CHAPTER FOUR

CORRUPTION & HERESY

Of all the threats facing the Empire – and there are many – perhaps the most sinister are the threats posed by corruption, heresy, and the mortal's lust for power. For these threats are subtle, and may go unnoticed, growing unchecked, until the threat boils over, spilling forth its foul influence. If the Empire were only besieged by the likes of beastmen and orcs, enemies one can see and face on the field of battle, terrible though they may be, then its long history would have quite a different tale to tell.

CORRUPTION & CULTS

"Citizens who bow to the dark gods are worse than the ignorant heathen of the north. They are children of Sigmar who have turned against their brothers and sisters. Like weeds in a wheatfield, these traitors must be rooted out and destroyed so that the healthy crops can grow."

– Erich Keller, Warrior Priest of Sigmar

The four dark gods of Chaos: Khorne, Nurgle, Slaanesh, and Tzeentch, are embodiments of slaughter, suffering, madness, and mutation. So why do some degenerates stoop to worship these Ruinous Powers?

TEMPTATIONS OF THE DARK GODS

High elves, wood elves, and dwarfs despise Chaos and are resistant to its lure. Most Empire folk revile the dark gods too, but a dangerous minority revere them. Many of these belong to Chaos from birth – mutants, despised and persecuted by society, turn to the Ruinous Powers which marked them. Likewise, those born with the gift of magic will likely be consumed by Chaos unless they conform to the strictures of the Colleges of Magic.

However, there are some deviants who offer their souls to Chaos of their own accord. The dark gods whisper temptations in dreams, and the weak of will answer their summons. A jaded aristocrat is teased with illicit thrills, a merchant is offered riches, or a scholar is shown forbidden lore. A soldier is granted fortitude, an artist is beguiled by fame, or a peasant is promised a bountiful harvest. The weak are given power; the meek, courage; the wronged, vengeance. Those who submit to the Ruinous Powers become pawns in their plans to destroy the Empire, often compelled to commit sabotage and murder.

The dark gods favour loyal worshippers with the "gift" of mutation. Some deformities are subtle – a welt raised to resemble the star of Chaos, for example. Others are blatant – an extra arm ending in a bony scythe. As their mutations become more visible, followers

of Chaos must hide themselves, or must escape to the forests to join the mutant bands which lurk there. Insanity takes its inevitable toll as Chaos twists its minions' bodies into increasingly unnatural forms.

Devotees of the dark gods await the final apocalypse when Chaos hordes storm the Empire, heralding a reign of blood and madness among civilisation's ruins. These followers dream of immortality as a daemon prince – the ultimate reward for faithful service. In reality, these wretches are nothing but chaff to their unholy masters, who will discard them once their usefulness is over.

CHAOS CULTS

Chaos worshippers congregate into cults which secretly gather to praise the dark gods. There is no such thing as a typical cult – practises and organisation vary wildly. However, it is worth mentioning some that have achieved recent notoriety, such as the Brotherhood of Untold Aeons. The organisation was rumoured to be composed of two dozen high-ranking Nulners, including Baron von Rundsted, the respected physician Dr. Ungern Stroessner, and eminent scholars from Nuln University.

They were led by a man they knew only as Arch-heretic Veneficus. The cultists never saw him without his ritual mask. New recruits were recommended by existing members of the Brotherhood and were vetted by the Arch-heretic. Initiates had to drink wine laced with wyrdstone powder. This drink mutated them, marking them as children of Tzeentch, the focus of the cult's devotions.

Each equinox, the cult met in the underground dome of an abandoned ice house on the grounds of von Rundsted's mansion. Attendees were robed in multi-hued vestments and wore masks depicting eight eyes arranged to form the star of Chaos. Veneficus would intone the thousand names of Tzeentch and sacrifice victims in his name.

These victims had been procured by cult member Ranulf Gastgeber, innkeeper of The Lucky Man in Nuln's Westen district. He preyed on guests who would not be missed. At the climax of the ritual, a pig representing the Emperor, dressed in purple robes with a crude crown on its head, would be set upon and devoured alive by the frenzied congregation.

On Hexentag, 2522, the cult convened for the last time. The number of victims destined to die that night were nine, a number sacred to Tzeentch. Their blood would summon a terrible daemon, a Changer of Ways, which the cultists hoped would devastate Nuln, winning them Tzeentch's favour. But the brotherhood's secrecy had been compromised. Gastgeber had been careless selecting his victims. His activities had alerted the Witch Hunter Markus Reiner, who followed clues to von Rundsted's mansion. The Witch Hunter's men stormed the ice house, interrupting the ritual. Veneficus vanished in a cloud of brimstone, but his minions were arrested and executed. Reiner continues to hunt for their escaped master.

The Eldritch Order of the Unblinking Eye is another cult that caused a scandal relatively recently. Active in Altdorf perhaps early as 2470, the Eldritch Eye is one of the most long-lived Chaos cults on record. Although never very large, the cult recruited from amongst the intelligentsia and taste-makers of Altdorf. Famed artists, scholars, and even, if the darker rumours are to be believed, a College-trained wizard were amongst its members.



The Eldritch Eye was organized rather like an exclusive gentleman's dinner club or salon. Indeed, to outsiders that is exactly what it appeared to be. Members would drop by for a round of stimulating intellectual debate, a fine meal, and a spot of ritual mutilation or vivisection of a still-living human. Cult members would use the social connections afforded them by the Eldritch Order of the Unblinking Eye to further their careers in purely mundane ways, without even needing to invoke prayers to the Chaos powers to get ahead.

When the cult was infiltrated by witch hunters the extent of its insidious corruption was brought to light. Although its membership was small, the cult had spread heretical thinking in the guise of purely academic discussion. Agitators on street corners were found preaching revolutionary propaganda that had originated with the Eldritch Eye. Entire art galleries were condemned as heretical and burned. The "gentleman's club" was found to conceal a temple to the ruinous powers and the corpses of many missing persons, not to mention profane artefacts and books from every corner of the world.

Fortunately, the cult was exposed before its greatest evil could come to light (and what precisely that nefarious plot was remains unknown to the general public). The majority of its members were burned by the order of Magistrate Heissman von Bruner sometime around 2510. Some few may have escaped, but the Eldritch Eye is no more.

Most Chaos cultists are largely ignorant as to the true nature of the gods they worship. Although cults devoted to a particular god do exist, the majority of Chaos worshippers lack the knowledge to discriminate and favour one god over the others. Even relatively sophisticated cults such as the Eldritch Order of the Unblinking Eye may not cleave to a single patron.

SIGMARITE DOGMA

The priests of the Empire perceive life as a constant struggle between those who follow the path of righteousness espoused by the Imperial faiths, and those who take the cursed road of Chaos. The Cult of Sigmar, in particular, is eager to take the battle to the enemy. Just as the mortal Sigmar defended the tribes of mankind, as a god he defends the souls of his people.

Sigmar's priests fortify their flock with holy liturgies and, when necessary, defend them with their warhammers. His priests wander the provinces, purging cultist, mutant, witch, and sorcerer with equal fervour.

A few zealous Sigmarites hold to the antiquated view that all wizards are dabblers in Chaos, and this sometimes creates a rift between the Cult of Sigmar and the Colleges of Magic. Generally, though, most priests of Sigmar accept that sanctioned wizards are a necessary evil, fighting Chaotic hellfire with hellfire.

NECROMANCY

Necromancers are wizards who have devoted themselves to using their magic to cheat death. Each strives to make himself as immortal as Nagash, the undying sorcerer who created the art of Necromancy so many millennia ago.

Not all necromancers begin their quest for purely evil reasons. Some may begin their dabblings in the magic of unlife in order to resurrect a loved one recently deceased, or perhaps even with the noble (if utterly insane) goal of ending the cycle of death forever for all mankind. However, repeated use of necromancy corrupts the mind and body of even practitioners with the purest of intentions.

Necromancers lead solitary existences, their bodies slowly decaying around them until the line between alive and dead is completely blurred. They reanimate corpses as servants and soldiers, and may extend their influence over other undead creatures such as ghouls and wights. Necromancers are all aware that their studies will cause them to be burned at the stake, and they will balk at nothing to continue their research.

THE RUINOUS POWERS

The four Ruinous Powers are Khorne, Nurgle, Slaanesh, and Tzeentch. No sane man utters these names. It is unlucky even to speak of them as the Chaos gods. If they must be mentioned, folk refer to them as the dark gods, and then quickly make the sign of Sigmar's hammer.

KHORNE

When Chaos marauders sweep south, killing all in their path, many chant a chilling war cry: "Blood for the Blood God!"

These marauders are devotees of Khorne, god of slaughter. The battlefield is his temple, where his followers massacre armies in his honour.

Resplendent in bronze armour, his dog head snarling, Khorne is said to sit on a brass throne atop a mountain of skulls reaped by his champions. His followers seek his favour with outrageous acts of violence, drenching themselves in the gore of their enemies. In the absence of a foe, they will kill their allies. Because they eschew magic as a dishonourable art, there are no sorcerers among them. The clash of arms is their sole religious duty.

Although veneration of Khorne is common among the wild tribes of the northern wastes, in the Empire it is usually only bands of outlaws who openly revere him, killing their victims ruthlessly. Rarely, an individual might run amok through a town's streets, screaming the Blood God's name and butchering everyone in his path before he is stopped. Organised cults dedicated to Khorne do not exist – he has nothing but contempt for secrets and politics.

However, there do exist illegal cults dedicated to Khaine, who some theorise is an aspect of Khorne. Khaine is extolled with stealthy murder and sanguinous rituals, his acolytes gathering in cellars or caves to wallow in the blood of human sacrifices. A series of unsolved murders in Altdorf has been rumoured to be the work of a hunters' club of aristocratic followers of Khaine, who select prey from among the populace. Individuals might pay homage to their god with random killings, ever more grotesque, while assassins and cut-throats glorify him with each furtive deathblow. Authorities aware of the cult of Khaine fear that its adherents are waiting until the time is right for them to throw aside their secrecy and redden the streets with slaughter in the name of the Blood God, whom they truly serve.

NURGLE

Disease is dreaded by nobles and commoners alike. The efforts of physicians, barber surgeons, and leech-doctors to cure the afflicted are all in vain, for sickness is the gift of Nurgle, Lord of Decay.

Nurgle's followers envision their god as a corpulent monstrosity, his pallid skin slick with fever sweat and oozing pus from a thousand sores. Entrails spill from suppurated wounds gashing his belly. Nurglings, the Plague-lord's daemonic imps, nestle between his rolls of fat, giggling like



mad children. Nurgle's smile is a horror of rotten fangs, his tongue a plump, purple worm. Maggots wriggle from his flesh, and a cloud of flies drones about his head.

The Plaguelord is worshipped wherever sickness reigns. The diseased sometimes turn to him in desperation, when their prayers to Shallya, goddess of healing, go unanswered and when even Morr ignores their pleas for a quick death. They offer secret sacrifices to Nurgle for alleviation from their suffering. As they sink deeper into adoring him, they become immune to their pain, though their diseases multiply. They grow to cherish their decay, and seek to spread Nurgle's plagues throughout the Empire. Nurgle is also sometimes prayed to by ignorant countryfolk whose lands are stricken by famine. In nature, life feeds off decay; fungus thrives on a rotting log, and maggots writhe inside a corpse. Witch hunters have exterminated entire villages of peasants who fertilised their crops with the blood of human sacrifices to this vile god.

In towns, cultists of the Plaguelord might meet in stinking sewers. Nobles, burghers, and beggars gather as equals – plague does not discriminate between wealth and privilege. The cultists enact sordid rituals amongst the filth. They have been known to brew potions using ingredients squeezed from weeping buboes and to taint wells and watering holes in the hope of infecting the populace with the incurable Nurgle's Rot. Such degenerates perceive beauty in physical corruption and hear sweet music in the moans of the sick.

SLAANESH

The man who leers lustfully at a woman who is not his wife, the gourmand who fills his fat belly with delicacies, and the beauty who preens too long at the mirror, transfixed by her own allure, might think that their private indiscretions remain guilty secrets. But Slaanesh, Dark Prince of Chaos and Lord of Pleasure, is watching them and waiting. The priests of Sigmar preach abstinence and frugality for good reason: those addicted to the pleasures of life may find their obsessions have devolved into perversity. It is then that the Dark Prince ensnares them, feeding them excess in return for adoration.

Slaanesh is depicted as a towering hermaphrodite of aching beauty, male on the left side, female on the right. Soporific musk emanating from the god's flowing, perfumed hair overwhelms the senses, and his laughter trills like a thousand crystal bells. When a mortal gazes into Slaanesh's dazzling eyes, he becomes a slave to desire.

The Dark Prince has many acolytes in the Empire. He is sought by decadent aristocrats, who have tasted all things but demand more. Artists and musicians may bequeath their souls to him in return for the gift of genius. Politicians might worship him to gain charisma and majesty. The avaricious, the lustful, and the vain all adore him. Yet all are damned – their lives are not their own, but belong to Slaanesh to amuse himself as he chooses. Beneath the apparent charm and beauty of his devotees, mutations squirm and madness clouds their minds.



Cultists of Slaanesh glorify their master with secret orgies of drink, drugs, and other indulgences. While they cavort in the shadows, intoxicating their senses and writhing in ecstasy, they abandon their duties to their Emperor. As the minions of the Lord of Pleasure increase in number, the moral fabric of the Empire disintegrates.

TZEENTCH

The very embodiment of Chaos, Tzeentch is the Changer of the Ways. He is master of intrigue and manipulation, of destiny and deviation, of mutation and magic. The eye of Tzeentch sees all, and his convoluted stratagems take aeons to unfold.

Tzeentch has a thousand names and a thousand forms. He can appear as a scintillating cloud of rainbow light that bewilders and confuses, or can incarnate as a giant whose skin ripples with uncountable faces that laugh or cry or rage or mock, their mouths repeating the god's words with subtle innuendos – a thousand barely heard whispers. The winds of magic howl around him, weaving incomprehensible patterns in the surrounding aethyr. His eyes are mirrors into infinity, melting the mind of any mortal who stares into them.

No one chooses to follow Tzeentch. He chooses them. A man might wake from a fevered dream to find a new limb sprouting from his chest or a third eye staring from his forehead. Sometimes it amuses





the god to win devotion in more subtle ways. He will tap and tap at a man's resolve, tempting him with power, fame, or wealth – whatever his victim's secret desires are. Few mortals can resist his wiles, and they become a playing piece in his eternal game.

Tzeentch is also the Great Sorcerer. He has mastery over all magic. Even the High Elf mages and wizards of the Imperial Colleges of Magic court danger whenever they cast a spell, for a single lapse of concentration could allow Tzeentch to use them as a conduit to pervert reality.

The cults of Tzeentch are subtle, cunning, and almost impossible to root out. They riddle the towns and cities of the Empire, hatching plots to hasten its downfall. The more convoluted a scheme is, the more favourable the cultists hope it will be to their unfathomable master. Cultists of Tzeentch delight in infiltrating positions of power and manipulating events for their own ends.

They weave an intricate web of lies to trick unwitting stooges into implementing their plans. In the countryside, covens of witches and warlocks gather on hills or in grottos to sacrifice human victims to Tzeentch, praying that he will grant them arcane knowledge. Tzeentch uses his acolytes to pick at the ragged edges of the Emperor's realm, so that when Chaos invades southwards again, the Empire will unravel at the seams.

HERESY & RENEGADES

"Brought in another raving cultist today. The cells are getting full of them. Had to cut out her tongue to stop her spitting blasphemy. I'm looking forward to throwing her on the pyre after Witch Hunter Friedhof has got his confession. Nothing quite like the screams of a heretic to lift the soul, praise Sigmar!"

– Johan Strauss, Human Watchman

Heresy rots the Empire to its core. Unchecked, the minions of Chaos will subvert and destroy the Empire's will to resist the Ruinous Powers. Thus, the Emperor's agents must maintain vigilance day and night.

THE DANGERS OF HERESY

According to Imperial authorities, heretics are those who choose to follow the Ruinous Powers, turning their backs on the gods of their ancestors and spurning Sigmar, the divine protector of the nation. Imperial law punishes such treachery with violent retribution.

Heresy takes many forms. Those cursed with mutation are Chaos incarnate and must be purged on sight. Their flesh rebels against the divine order of nature. Chaos cultists pose a greater danger, for they hide in towns and cities. They infiltrate politics, using their influence to undermine society. They plot to assassinate the nobility, sow discord among the masses, or sabotage the forges and granaries which supply the Empire's armies. They foment rebellion between the Empire and its allies, and stoke the embers of civil war between the provinces.

Until two centuries ago, Imperial edicts persecuted all practitioners of magic, decreeing them to be servants of Chaos. Today, the Colleges of Magic scour the Empire for those born with innate arcane power in order to assimilate them as apprentice wizards and control their powers – or destroy them before they pose a more serious risk. Witches and sorcerers – those who practise magic without legal sanction – are extremely dangerous, for their wild spellcraft can open rifts to daemonic realms.

They easily succumb to corruption, raising hellish storms that blight crops or sink the Emperor's ships. An even graver threat is posed by sanctioned wizards who experiment with forbidden lores. Their mastery of magic makes them potent foes. Chaos eats at the minds of all who deviate from the strictures of the Colleges of Magic, and the authorities exterminate renegades without mercy.

WITCH HUNTERS

The Imperial authorities legislate heavily against heresy, and employ witch hunters to sniff out the worshippers of the dark gods. Sanctioned witch hunters are members of the Holy Order of the Templars of Sigmar, a militant arm of the Cult of Sigmar, but are controlled by both the Grand Theogonist and the Emperor.

Not even the priesthood or the state is above suspicion of heresy, and this arrangement ensures that neither can prejudice the witch hunters' investigations. Members of the Templars of Sigmar seek out secret Chaos cults, hidden mutants, and unsanctioned sorcerers and have the authority to detain suspects at will. Some work alone, while others recruit warriors, priests, and wizards to help them.

The enemy is cunning and deadly, so witch hunters use any means necessary to get at the truth. Torture is a common method of interrogation, not only to secure a confession but also to force a prisoner to implicate collaborators – cultists and witches rarely operate on their own.

Once a heretic has confessed, he and any accomplices are brought to trial, presided over by the witch hunter himself. It is testimony to the witch hunters' efficiency that very few heretics escape justice. The guilty are sentenced to be drowned, impaled, hung by the neck, nailed to a tree, or burned on a pyre. Repentance is never an option.

Many Empire folk fear witch hunters. Perhaps rightly so, for some witch hunters have been known to condemn entire villages to flame on account of a single transgression of the heresy laws. However, witch hunters execute their duties to protect the Empire. If a few innocents must die for the greater good, then so be it. Multitudes would perish should a Chaos cult summon a rampaging daemon, or should a witch wither fertile cornfields.

BLOOD, FAITH & FIRE

The Holy Order of the Templars of Sigmar is the organisation that enjoys the gruesome and terrifying reputation of being the Witch Hunters. The broad brimmed hat, brace of pistols and propensity towards mass burnings that are the hallmark of Witch Hunters in the minds of the common people are all associated with this zealous group. Long supported and funded by the Cult of Sigmar, these Witch Hunters are granted their powers by the cult and the Empire.

A Witch Hunter's holy duty is to protect the Empire and its citizens from the Infernal Powers, their allies and those who would serve them. This includes Daemons, servants of Daemons, Chaos cultists, worshippers of the dark Gods, Chaos sorcerers, Necromancers, Mutants, Beastmen and undead creatures. They are dedicated to the eradication of Witches: including Hedge Wizards, Warlocks, petty sorcerers, fortune tellers, unsanctioned users of magic, deviants, blasphemers, or sinners in general. Indeed, there are few who escape the suspicions of these Witch Hunters with the possible exception of other Templars of Sigmar.

Many Witch Hunters specialize in a particular field of investigation, and spend years, or even decades, travelling the Empire to track all the members of a certain cult, or on the trail of a particular priest of a dark God.

AGENTS OF THE EMPEROR

The origins of the Witch Hunters lie in the Order of the Silver Hammer. The order is reputed to have been created by Sigmar himself as a secret order to safeguard terrible items of great power and mystery. It is said that Sigmar initiated the first head of the order, Wolfgart Krieger, after he aided Sigmar in his duel against Nagash. In 1682 the Grand Theogonist Siebold II officially recognised the order, and tasked it with the defence of the Empire. Despite this recognition, the order still operated in almost complete and utter secrecy.

After the Great War Against Chaos the new Emperor, Magnus the Pious, decreed that the Empire would be better protected by the citizens of the Empire being openly aware of the existence of the order. To this effect he changed the order's name to Holy Order of the Templars of Sigmar, and officially sanctioned it. The newly re-named order zealously embraced its new status, resulting in the infamous purges of 2306 which ended in the deaths of nearly six hundred heretics, several notable burgomeisters and even an arch-lector.

So was born the unnerving reputation of the zealous Witch Hunters, and the general population learned to fear and respect them. The reforms Emperor Magnus brought in were an attempt to have the Witch Hunters established as an institution woven into the fabric of the Empire, thereby becoming a visible extension of both the state and the Cult of Sigmar – under direction and command of both the Emperor and the Grand Theogonist.

And when he put his gaze on me, with those burning eyes hidden underneath the brim of that hat, I swore he knew every bad thing I ever did in my life. Every little lie I ever told and every biscuit I ever stole. He made me feel like a little worm and I did not care for that one bit!

But when old Cobb turned out to have a mouth growing off his shoulder, let me tell you, we were all pretty glad to have that man here with us. Poor old Cobb. It was a terrible way to die.

– Gerhard Schreiber, Farmer

JUDGE, JURY & EXECUTIONER

The changes were political though and the order's task is the same as it has been for hundreds of years. The Witch Hunters still serve as judge, jury and executioner. They have the power to arrest any imperial citizen they believe is guilty of Witchery or Daemon-worship, and can call for that person to be tried at once – a request very few nobles or burgomeisters refuse. In theory, the accused has the right to a trial, although it is up to the individual witch hunter to determine if the offences are grievous enough to bypass a trial and end in summary judgement. As one can imagine given the Witch Hunters' fearsome reputations, very few such accusations end in trial.

On those exceedingly rare occasions when a trial does occur – often a political concession for an accused person of some social standing – the Witch Hunter serves as chief litigator for the accused, as well as chief prosecutor. Since there are so few laws on evidentiary matters, the prosecutors use oratory, implication, suspicion, and even veiled threats to persuade a lord, judge, or magistrate of the accused's guilt. If found guilty (and most people accused and brought to trial by a witch hunter are found guilty), the usual sentence for the accused is death by burning – thought to be the only way to destroy the body and purge its foul spirit at the same time.

While some Witch Hunters endeavour to condemn only the guilty to the pyre, others are less scrupulous. In fact, many believe that everyone is guilty of something. As a consequence, Witch Hunters are feared throughout the Empire. Still, it's widely agreed that the only thing more frightening than a Witch Hunter is the threat of Chaos unchecked by their endeavours!



The increasing influence and wealth of the middle class, coupled with increased access to the printed word, have combined to make people in the Reikland slightly more literate now than they were before. For the first time, some laypersons are reading holy books and asking difficult questions about inconsistencies found therein, real and imagined – sometimes, these are not even related to their reading abilities. Priests who for generations have preached to a flock incapable of reading their holy texts find themselves subject to impertinent questions about details of theology from the most unexpected quarters. It seems that if the trend continues even the ratcatchers may learn how to read!

The new technology and the revolutionary fervour it engenders have proved fertile ground for heretical thought. Agitators routinely question both secular and religious authority. Some have gone so far as to suggest that the individual, rather than the Cult, should determine the relevance and meaning of the holy texts.

Each Cult and indeed each priest has responded to the new breed of heresy in its own way. Most Shallyans attempt to channel the often-good intentions of the agitators towards charity and help for the poor. Vereneans often seem almost delighted to engage in spirited theological debate. The Cults of Ulric and Sigmar have, for the most part, not handled the transition as gracefully. These Cults put a great deal of emphasis on obeying authority rather than questioning it.

For their part, the new breed of heretics, revolutionaries, or agitators – whatever name they are called by – view the authority of the High Priests and their Cults as questionable at best and immoral at worst. Asserting individual authority to decide matters of religion ties directly into the new populist vision they have of the world. It takes a foolish revolutionary indeed, however, to press his heretical pamphlet on a Witch Hunter of the Order of the Templars of Sigmar...

HERESY & LITERACY

The recent development of the printing press is putting a host of new pressures on every Cult in the Empire, particularly in cosmopolitan cities such as Altdorf and Nuln. The principle holy texts of the major Cults were some of the first pieces to be reproduced via printing press, of course, but pamphlets full of revolutionary and arguably heretical thought followed soon after.

Every major faith has its holy books, even the Cult of Taal. Whether it's the Book of Sigmar or the Teutognengeschichte, holy texts are taught to every Cult initiate as part of their basic training. In the thousands of years of history each of the Cults possesses, however, there are some texts that may once have been considered holy that are now anything but. Some are merely apocryphal, such as the Fate of Sigmar by Stefan Schneider, whereas others, such as the tawdry, ostensibly Shallyan text Passion of Mercy, are considered deeply heretical and routinely burned. Unscrupulous bookbinders will gladly print either type, so long as they think the book will sell...





CHAPTER FIVE

DIVINE RULES

DIVINE PRAYERS & INVOKING BLESSINGS

Religion and the power of prayer are undeniably present in the Old World. Those who have curried the favour of their chosen gods can perform great deeds in their names. Calling upon one's patron deity is not without its own risks, however. Should a faithful servant beseech his god at the wrong time, or without due case, he may lose what favour he has gained, and suffer strain, injury, or worse!

Divine prayers and blessings in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* are fuelled by favour. Divine characters invoke their god for aid, asking to be blessed, then pray to generate the favour necessary to fulfil their request. The more significant the blessing, the more favour required before being fulfilled.

INVOCATION

Before generating favour, a divine character must ask his deity for a specific blessing. This is called invocation, or invoking a blessing. If the deity responds to the request and deems the character worthy, the character then prays to curry favour and fulfil the blessing.

To invoke a blessing, the character selects the appropriate action card from his collection. The character must be able to fulfil all the requirements listed on the card. Most blessings require the character to attempt an Invocation check, which is based on his Fellowship. The blessing results are listed on the action card, based

INVOKING BLESSINGS

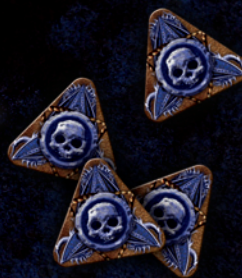
There are two steps a priest character must perform in order to successfully invoke a blessing.

First, the priest chooses which blessing he wishes to invoke, and performs the appropriate action associated with that blessing. Usually, this is an Invocation check.

Next, after successfully invoking the blessing, the character must provide enough favour to fuel the blessing's effect.

Once the blessing has been invoked and sufficient favour generated, the blessing resolves.

INVOKING A BLESSING



To invoke a blessing, the divine character chooses a *Blessing* action card and refers to the side based on his current stance. He must meet the requirements before he can attempt to invoke the blessing. In this example, an Initiate of Sigmar wishes to invoke **Divine Perseverance**, one of his *Sigmar Blessing* action cards. Since he's in a conservative stance, he refers to the conservative side of the blessing card.

Divine Perseverance requires an Invocation check, based on the Sigmarite's Fellowship. He assembles and rolls his dice pool as with a normal action check. If his Invocation check generates enough successes, the **Divine Perseverance** blessing is successfully invoked. It immediately draws in as much favour as it can, trying to meet the favour requirement to activate the blessing's effects. Since the Sigmarite had 4 favour available, all 4 favour is consumed, and the blessing's effects are triggered.

If the Initiate of Sigmar had only 3 favour available, all 3 favour would be placed on the **Divine Perseverance** card to show it was in the process of being invoked. As soon as a 4th favour was available, it would be claimed by **Divine Perseverance** and the blessing would resolve.

If the Invocation check fails, the blessing is not invoked, and only one favour is consumed.

on the outcome of the Invocation check. Some blessings use other abilities, or are automatic. Refer to the individual blessing cards for details.

Invoking divine blessings is inherently safer than casting arcane spells. Since the specific blessing is selected first, it is far less likely for a divine character to "overchannel" in the same way an arcane caster might – a blessing resolves as soon as it has accumulated the required amount of favour.

If the Invocation check fails, the blessing is not successfully invoked. The character loses one favour, regardless of the listed favour required for the blessing. The character may try again on another turn.

Once a blessing is successfully invoked, it automatically draws favour from the character in an attempt to fulfil the requirements. If the character has enough favour to fuel the blessing, the favour is immediately consumed and the blessing's effect goes off. If the character does not have enough favour to immediately activate the blessing, all of the character's favour is drawn out and placed on the blessing card to indicate how much favour has already been accumulated.

On the character's next turn, during his Beginning of Turn phase, a previously invoked blessing that still requires additional favour will automatically draw any new favour generated until it has satisfied the blessing's requirement, or until there is no more favour to draw. If the requirement has been fulfilled, the blessing's effect goes off during that character's turn – otherwise, the blessing continues to slowly accumulate favour until the requirement has been met, or the character chooses to abort the blessing.

ABORTING A BLESSING

If a character aborts a blessing that is currently holding favour, all favour is lost and returned to the supply. If the amount of favour lost is equal to or less than the character's Willpower, he suffers one stress. If the amount of favour lost is greater than the character's Willpower, he suffers one stress and one fatigue.

GAINING FAVOUR

Invoking a blessing is just one part of the process to create miraculous effects. Once the character succeeds at invoking a blessing, he must gain enough favour with his deity to fuel the effect.

An individual divine character can be viewed as a rechargeable favour battery, of sorts. A divine character slowly earns favour with his god over time, by remaining faithful to his god's tenets and teachings. The divine character's willpower rating indicates his favour equilibrium. When a divine character is currently holding favour equal to his Willpower rating, he is at equilibrium.

When his favour level is below his Willpower rating, his favour slowly recharges, until it eventually reaches his Willpower rating. When his favour level is higher than his Willpower rating, he slowly loses favour unless the character can show his god that he deserves the extra favour coursing through his body and soul. If the amount of favour currently held by a divine character is far more than his willpower, he risks angering his god by showing too much pride and arrogance, and the excess favour will be violently purged from his body. This purge can potentially cause fatigue or inflict wounds to the character.

To generate favour, the divine character selects the **Curry Favour** action. The **Curry Favour** action is resolved by making a Piety check, which is based on the character's Willpower. The action card details how much favour is generated based on the results of the Piety check

Divine characters can safely hold favour up to twice their Willpower, though they still need to expend a small amount of energy to keep from purging favour as it tries to reach equilibrium based on their Willpower. To reflect this, a divine character must spend a manoeuvre on his turn to control this extra favour. If the character cannot or chooses not to spend a manoeuvre to control the extra favour, he loses one favour.

EXCESS FAVOUR

Divine characters can attempt to hold even more favour, but at greater risks. When a character's current favour is more than twice his Willpower, he risks angering his god. The character must spend a manoeuvre, as well as suffer one stress to maintain this much extra favour.

If he cannot or chooses not to spend the manoeuvre and suffer one stress, all the excess favour is immediately purged, returning to the divine character's point of equilibrium. The character immediately suffers one fatigue for each point of favour vented. In addition, the character must roll one ■ misfortune die for each favour vented above his safety threshold. For every ✕ challenge symbol generated, the caster suffers one wound. For every ☠ bane generated, the caster suffers one stress.

LOSING FAVOUR

Some effects can force a character to lose favour apart from the favour used to fuel divine blessings. Also, the bane or Chaos Star effects of some blessings may force a character to lose favour in addition to any favour consumed by the invocation of the blessing.

When a character is forced to lose favour, that favour is immediately removed from his current supply. If the character does not have enough favour in his supply to satisfy the required losses, he is reduced to zero favour and immediately suffers one stress.

CURRY FAVOUR

RECHARGE

ACTION TYPE Basic, Divine, Rally
PIETY (WP)

DIFFICULTY MODIFIER Basic, Divine, Rally
PIETY (WP)

CHECK

You have successfully invoked a blessing, but have less favour than the blessing requires. If you are engaged with an enemy, add ☐ to your dice pool

EFFECTS

- You pray to your god. Gain 2 favour
- As above, but gain 4 favour
- As above, but gain 6 favour
- Gain 1 favour
- Suffer 1 stress. If, after completing this action, you have more favour than twice your Willpower score, suffer 1 additional stress.
- If, after completing this action, you have more favour than twice your Willpower score, you incur the wrath of the gods! You are Staggered for 2 rounds.

REQUIREMENTS

Invoking this action requires spending twice as many dice as the blessing requires. If you have less than twice as much favour as your Willpower rating, you cannot invoke this action.

The **Curry Favour** card is an action that priests will rely on frequently over the course of their careers. They should become familiar with the different effects based on whether they are currying favour in a conservative or reckless stance.

The complete breakdown of action cards and their anatomy can be found on page 49 of the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay Rulebook*.

NO FAVOUR TO LOSE...

If a character is already at zero favour when an effect forces him to lose favour, the situation grows more dire. The character must immediately attempt a Discipline check, with a number of challenge dice equal to the amount of favour he is unable to lose.

If the Discipline check succeeds, the character suffers 1 stress with no further effects. If the Discipline check fails, the character suffers 1 stress and immediately gains a temporary insanity with the *Enigma* or *Trauma* trait. The player then places a number of tracking tokens on the insanity card equal to the difficulty of the check.

And lo, before me, a raven of blackest night flew, circling above the marketstrasse. As if in a dream, I followed the bird, heeding this harbinger of my lord, Morr. The raven took me past merchants and stalls, where men hawked their wares. Then, with a loud caw, the bird landed on the cart of a barrel maker.

The barrel maker looked up at me, uncertainty on his face. The raven was gone. But drifting down from above was a single, black feather. The feather landed on the barrel maker's hand, and he trembled.

"I am so very sorry," I told the man, then began the rites and preparations.

IN GREAT NEED

Normally, a character can only perform the action listed on one action card on his turn. However, divine characters can attempt to both invoke a blessing and generate favour on the same turn, if they are willing to accept more risk. To generate favour during the same turn his character invokes a blessing, the player adds an extra ♦ challenge die to his **Curry Favour** check.

STANCES & DIVINE BLESSINGS

Managing stances is one of the critical decisions a player makes when establishing how his character interacts with others and solves problems. This is no less true for initiates and disciples. A reckless Sigmarite has little choice but to act aggressively when a challenge arises. A conservative Shallyan is far more diplomatic but less prepared when negotiations fail and matters devolve into violence.

THE CONSERVATIVE STANCE — CAUTION AND DIPLOMACY

Invoking blessings while in a conservative stance is as close to reliable that the unpredictable whims of dealing with the gods gets. Alas, it can also be unbelievably slow and potentially less effective in combat. Divine favour accrues steadily but slowly as the priest patiently and carefully beseeches his god for aid.

Playing a priest in a conservative stance means being contemplative about action. Blessings invoked while in a conservative stance are often prayers of defence and recovery, of information and negotia-

tion. The priest does not rush headlong into unknown situations, and is not overly eager for a fight. Often, the priest is trying to save life, protect others, and minimise violence.

THE RECKLESS STANCE — FURY OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The reckless stance is often seen as the purview of the zealous and fanatic. Tactics and strategies are very direct: to crush the unbelievers headlong. Divine favour accrues more quickly, and critical effects (both good and bad) are frequent and often intense.

Playing a reckless priest means throwing caution to the wind and putting yourself into the hands of fate and your deity. If it is the priest's time to meet his maker, so be it. These fanatic servants of the gods are certain that a place of honour is prepared at their god's side. Reckless priests can invoke powerful and dramatic blessings that can turn the tide of battle. They want to show the unbelievers the unleashed fury of their patron deity.

OMENS AND PORTENTS

The fact that some priests perform miraculous feats and blessings is evidence enough for most that the gods of the Old World exist and take an active hand in events. However, to the truly faithful, this is not the only way that the gods make their presence felt.

The people of the Old World are a superstitious lot and they see omens and portents in everything. A raven flying overhead may mean a family member will soon die (usually true enough – the Old World is a dangerous place!), a broken mirror is seen as bad luck, and fortunes can change often as the day's events unfold. The truly faithful, however, may find themselves presented with a far more immediate and potent form of communication from the gods.





A priest of Morr might smell the stench of rotting flesh in the presence of a secret necromancer, or see flowers in a garden turn into black roses outside the house of a man about to die. A priestess of Shallya might see a radiant dove landing at the feet of a woman who is sick and needs healing. A Sigmarite may be woken from his sleep by a vision of a twin-tailed comet, just in time to hear intruders creeping into his home. These sorts of things happen constantly throughout the Old World, if the stories are to be believed.

Unlike a wizard's magical sight, a priest's ability to see these omens and receive these visions is entirely in the hands of the gods. Your character may live his entire life and never receive a single vision, or he may be plagued by constant dreams and a cavalcade of phantasms only he can see. GMs are encouraged to make liberal use of omens and portents in their stories to help make the Old World come alive for his players.

The omens and portents that appear to a priest are likely to vary depending on his patron deity.

OMENS OF MORR

As Morr is the god of dreams, he often chooses to communicate with his priests in dreams or dreamlike visions. These visions are often highly symbolic, with the iconography of death being prevalent. Ravens, skulls and skeletons, graveyards, and black roses are common in both dreams and waking visions.

In addition to his role as god of the dead, Morr is also the god of prophecy. While many of his omens are exactly what one might expect – a raven circling a house where someone is about to die, for instance – he may also grant more far-ranging visions of the future to his priests.

OMENS OF SHALLYA

Shallya is unrelentingly merciful and sympathetic. As her priests and priestesses are devoted to easing the pain and suffering of others, her omens and portents usually serve to highlight that suffering.

Sometimes the suffering Shallya's omens concern is not obvious. There's no need to bring a priest's attention to a man with a broken leg, after all – both the injury and the treatment are clear. However, a woman whose broken heart may soon drive her to murder might be a more subtle injury, more difficult to treat, but in Shallya's eyes her suffering is no less worthy of care.

Radiant doves, tears, and blood drops are some of the symbols that Shallya favors.

OMENS OF SIGMAR

Sigmar is not especially renowned as a god of prophecy or omen. On the other hand, his mortal birth over 2500 years ago was heralded by the passage of a twin-tailed comet through the heavens.

The real problem with omens of Sigmar is not that Sigmar does not send omens, but that the common people of the Empire are inclined to see them everywhere. In the absence of anything as obvious as a twin-tailed comet in the sky, Sigmar's faithful must set their sights rather lower. The superstitious common folk will find Sigmar's favour or displeasure virtually anywhere. Some see an overcast sky or a nagging injury as a sure sign of his displeasure, while others see his hand in the sound of a hammer striking an anvil, or other commonplace events.



CHAPTER SIX

PLAYING A PRIEST

Heed now my words, my brethren, for I am Erich Keller, humble servant of the hammer. Fortunate are we, above all others. In the Reikland and throughout the Empire, only a fool does not honour the gods. Small offerings at shrines are commonplace, and even the greatest of lords bows in respect when entering a temple as common courtesy.

Everyone knows that the gods are real and omnipresent; to even suggest otherwise is a sign of madness, folly, and heresy. Still, for most, the gods are distant. Morr does not manifest and walk the Old World. Shallya does not deign to reveal herself to the common clay. Blessed Sigmar speaks only to his chosen. Most must endure a life of darkness and silence. Pity them, my brothers, for they will never hear the gods speak. Not so for us. We have heard the voice of the divine and thus are we chosen. Rejoice! Rejoice! For the Hammer speaks.

– Erich Keller, Warrior Priest of Sigmar

It is no small thing to be counted amongst the chosen. A soldier may fight for a thousand causes. A rogue may swindle for the best of reasons or the worst. A wizard may employ his art for good or ill. But priests take the oaths of their sect for only one reason – they were called. To stand in the presence of the divine is a life changing moment, and it is a moment that every priest shares.

Some priests serve in rigid hierarchies, slavishly attending to the wishes of those more blessed. Some experience the call to wander. These are the adventuring priests – heroes of the first order. The Old World is full of danger and injustice, and often the threatened and oppressed have no champions other than these vagabond servants of the gods.

The lives of these wandering priests are rarely easy or uneventful. The gods never speak to mortals without reason; the revelations and prophecies they bestow always serve a purpose, although their designs may be ineffable and impenetrable to the mortal mind. The priest is an instrument of the divine plan who has given up his own life to serve a higher cause. What could be more noble? What could be more dangerous?

INITIATION & TRAINING AMONG THE FAITHFUL

Petitioning to be a priest is not a complicated affair in the Empire. The would-be initiate simply seeks out a temple and asks to join. Some of the larger and more prestigious temples (for example the Holy Temple of Sigmar in Altdorf) may only allow petitions a few times a year, but smaller temples are often less formal. The highest-ranking priest (or, in the larger temples, one of his subordinates)

decides whether the petitioner is worthy. If deemed unworthy, then the priest blesses the petitioner, informs him of how he may serve the god (elsewhere), and sends the rejected devotee on his way. The petitioner must seek his fortune along some other road. But if worthy, then the petitioner is initiated into the faith, takes an oath of devotion to the god, and embarks on the arduous road to becoming a new priest.

SIGNS OF THE WORTHY

How do priests decide if a petitioner is worthy? A thousand young men eager to join the prestigious Sigmarite cult in Altdorf want to know the answer to this question. Truth told, the answer varies from temple to temple and priest to priest. Perhaps the petitioner has already exhibited a hint of his vocation by performing a minor miracle. Perhaps the petitioner's coming was foretold by a dream. Perhaps he arrives at an auspicious hour on a blessed day. Or maybe the temple is just short-handed and glad for any strong young volunteer eager and willing to serve.

Many Imperial cults require a test for petitioners. Some Shallyan priests famously test their applicants by presenting a wounded peasant lying on the side of the road beside the temple, while the petitioner is called inside by an impatient priest. If the petitioner ignores the wounded person and rushes into the temple, they are sent away. The Cult of Morr has an infamous test where a petitioner must spend a night in one of the "Gardens of Morr." A full night in a cemetery where the dead sometimes whisper has sent more than one prospective initiate fleeing in utter terror. Succeeding at the test may not be enough – priests have a very intuitive sense of who is worthy, and few take the duty of selecting initiates lightly.

OATHS OF THE FAITHFUL

Joining an Imperial cult means taking solemn and binding oaths of service and devotion. The exact content of the oaths vary amongst the sects, but they accomplish much the same goal. The religious order is now the priest's first loyalty. The oaths serve to sever ties with other institutions that once bound the initiate. Family, lord, and land must all be put aside to serve the divine. The only exception is the Cult of Sigmar, which places equal value on loyalty to the cult and to the Empire.

Once the oaths are taken, the petitioner is now an initiate and training begins. This training may be a formal period where the initiate must pass through circles of education and testing at a seminary, or it may be as informal as simply being the apprentice of the elder priest who initiated you. Every cult has different expectations of its priests, and so has different methods of training.

LIFE IN THE TEMPLE

When an initiate is chosen to join an Imperial cult, the priest who deemed him worthy is often assigned to be his mentor. Mentors may be patient and kind, or they might turn out to be cruel taskmasters. They may be seemingly flawless exemplars of their faith, or may be less than perfect, not above using their influence with the cult for their own ends. Whatever the case, it is the mentor's duty to impart the values and philosophy of the cult to the young initiate.

One experience is shared by all initiates – everyone starts at the bottom of the ladder. The initiates are given all the routine drudgery that is essential for keeping a temple in working order. Whether picking vegetables in the temple gardens or feeding the Lector's prized horse, the life of an initiate often resembles that of a servant. Religious cults are no respecters of station, and even the count's



son who joined the Sigmarite cult because he had no chance of inheriting property will have to clean the blood and gore from the weapons of the warrior priests after battle.

In the temples of Shallya, initiates are immediately put to work as assistants to the healers: changing bandages, fetching water, and tending to the sick. Initiates of Sigmar are expected to keep their temples clean and well-tended between one battle drill after another. They carry water, empty chamber pots, and cook meals for their elders who no doubt have weightier issues to attend to. Morr's initiates must clean and prepare the dead for their passage into the next life. Every corpse, regardless of condition or cause of death, must be cleansed, purified, and prepared for the great journey. Regardless of the cult, these duties are rarely pleasant but usually simple. They serve to teach the initiates the values of the cult and ensure that they understand their place.



Faith is the backbone of our great Empire. Faith gives us strength. Faith provides direction and constancy. Faith keeps the embers of hope burning when the world outside is dark and cold and full of terrors. Without faith, the Empire would have fallen centuries ago.

– Tome of Ascendance, Volume XI





ROLEPLAYING A SERVANT OF THE DIVINE

Initiates are unique among the starting careers because they begin the game with a built-in motivation – to serve their deity and their cult. A soldier may be committed to the Empire or he may be completely mercenary, but initiates do not have that choice. If they turn their backs on their deity, they are snubbing their greatest source of power.

With this in mind, an initiate must try to understand what his god's purpose is for him. An initiate's quest to discover the intentions of his god is rich with potential for roleplaying of the first order. Remember this – the adventuring initiate is on a mission. His god has given him a great errand. He may or may not know what the god intends, but his faith means that he must accept the quest regardless.

DIVINE MISSIONS

It is a mystery why the gods, so great and powerful, need mortals to do their work in the Old World. Is it that they cannot alone defeat the evil that threatens their followers? Or do they simply choose not to? Could it be that these evils are only an elaborate test of their followers' faith? Or do these tasks really affect a great game played both in the heavens and on the mortal plane? These are questions for philosophers and scholars; to the adventuring priest, the answer matters little. What matters is that he has been chosen to undertake a quest on behalf of his patron deity, has been called to perform a divine mission.

A priest will have been made aware of the mission in any number of ways. He may have been alone in some secluded place when he received a vision. Portents and omens may have directed him. He may have received a dream that told him of some dire need, or

perhaps the god's favoured bird alighted nearby and sang to him to come forth. However the call was given, it cannot be ignored. Anyone who turns his back on the gods shall soon find the gods turning away from him.

The details of the mission are rarely fully revealed to the priest at its onset. A vision to recover a holy artefact stolen from a desecrated shrine may be the entirety of the errand or simply a means of revealing a deeper threat to the priest. The methods of the gods are mysterious. They may even seem cruel and capricious. But the faithful must abide and remain devout. It is not the role of the follower to judge his god. Instead, the priest must ceaselessly work to understand his god's will.

SOCIETY & THE ADVENTURING PRIEST

Such a divine mission is a personal thing. What is a clear sign to the chosen may seem like obsessive madness to outsiders. Priests on divine missions are respected in many quarters (after all who wants to interfere with the gods?), but they are sometimes held in suspicion.

To commoners, adventuring priests may be their greatest heroes – an answer to their prayers. Devout individuals may offer food or shelter to a priest and give him information that they would normally refuse to impart to outsiders. However, some folk may regard him as a terrifying zealot whose motivations seem mad and incomprehensible. They will do all they can to encourage the priest to go on his way before he decides to call down the wrath of the gods on them for some obscure dereliction of religious duty. The mission's road can be a lonely path.

Still, commoners are usually more tolerant of adventuring priests than the provincial nobility, who often regard them as dangerous fanatics who upset the peace and rile up the common folk. Most

nobles have skeletons in the cupboard, and the idea that a priest may be having visions revealing hidden truths can be unsettling. If an adventuring priest can deal with local problems like monsters and Chaos cults, that is fine – perhaps even worthy of reward. But when the work is done, the aristocracy often makes it very clear to the priests that it is time for him to move on.

Even a priest's own cult can be an obstacle. Adventuring priests often act outside of well-established hierarchies. The fact that a lowly priest claims to have been visited directly by his god may be seen by higher-ranking priests as a challenge to their authority. Resistance from other priests may also occur if the mission involves investigating corruption within the cult.

A CRISIS OF FAITH

A crisis of faith can be an interesting turning point in the career of any priest. Even the most sincere of devotees sometimes suffer doubts at some point in his life. Perhaps he feels his god has deceived him. Maybe his holy mission is not a worthy quest at all. Why does it seem that he has sacrificed so much for so little gain?

Heretics whisper that the gods are akin to the Ruinous Powers and that every miracle flows from the same font as the dark and forbidden arts. Could these blasphemies be true? Are priests the pawns of dark powers lurking in the Aethyr? These doubts must be faced lest they fester.

A crisis can be brought on by a defeat or a setback. A mentor is slain. A temple is desecrated and burned. A holy relic is stolen. How could the deity allow this to happen? Injustice or an apparent evil done in a god's name can be unsettling. An innocent man is hanged and no one is punished. A wicked noble blasphemes the gods, keeps his titles, and prospers while the righteous starve in his fields. A Chaos cult escapes destruction. Why would the gods allow these wrongs to occur? A crisis of faith is at hand.

A priest must resolve any crisis or risk losing his position in the cult. This resolution can be a divine mission in itself – undoing injustice, cleansing a desecration, or recovering what has been stolen. A crisis of faith can also be resolved from within – realising the benevolence of a god, learning a great truth, or accepting that the gods are beyond the understanding of mere mortals. Faith is restored, but sometimes this is not enough. Sometimes a priest who has doubted must seek atonement.

ACTS OF CONTRITION

"It is sometimes easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission..."

– Sigmarite saying

Sometimes a priest falls short of his devotion and breaks the tenets of his cult. A Sigmarite may have failed to purge an enemy of the Empire. A Shallyan may have turned away the sick simply for her own convenience. A priest of Morr may have slept while guarding a cemetery, allowing the violation of a grave. Often such offences are not so grave that the priest faces immediate expulsion from his cult. However, his superiors will likely demand that he must be taught a lesson and undergo penance. Even an adventuring priest far away from any hierarchy must sometimes perform acts of contrition. The best sort of repentance is that sought voluntarily.

The nobles and the wealthy live untroubled lives behind their high walls, their tables groaning under the weight of their fancy feasts. The poor struggle and die. The Empire is corrupt. Who do the Witch Hunters burn? Not the guilty. You ask why I turned my back on Sigmar? Ask why Sigmar has turned his back on us.

– A Former Sigmarite Priest

Fasting is an act commonly favoured by many cults. A week or even a month of nothing but bread and water can teach a lost devotee the error of his ways. Isolation or confinement is another path to forgiveness. Being locked in a cell with nothing but a prayer book and plenty of time to consider his failure is another common punishment for a miscreant priest. The duration of the penance depends on the severity of the offence.

Self-flagellation is a persistent practice amongst zealots, who beat their bodies with barbed flails and wicked scourges. "The Twin Tailed Stripes" is a punishment inflicted upon errant priests of Sigmar. The priest is tied to a post and given 22 lashes with a twin-tailed scourge in a temple square while his peers pray for his soul with hymns. This humiliation is usually reserved for insubordinate priests who have flaunted the orders of their superiors.





Sometimes an act of contrition requires the priest to right whatever wrong has resulted from his failure. If a sleeping Morrite allowed a mausoleum to be desecrated by a necromancer, then perhaps he must find the desecrator, bring him to justice, and destroy any dead that have been raised. If a Sigmarite ignored a plea to aid a dwarf in need and now that dwarf is a prisoner of the greenskins, the Sigmarite must organise the captive's rescue in atonement. If a Shallyan did nothing as plague threatened a village, he or she must now find the source of the pestilence and root it out.

SHARING THE FAITH

The priest is not a lone hero. Without companions, he is diminished. By himself, the priest is not the greatest of warriors and his prayers are less damaging than the brilliant spells of the Imperial wizards. He is a natural leader of men, but what does that matter if he is alone? The priest's divine mission provides him with a natural adventure hook. A central challenge of playing a priest is convincing the other adventurers that the priest's quest is also theirs.

Done well, a divine mission unifies a party like nothing else. The priest becomes a source of not only magical healing and support, but inspiration and wisdom. He clarifies the mission and provides moral certainty. He assures his fellows that they are not just raiding tombs for personal gain – they are chosen by the gods to do so. These heroes are destined for great things. Inspiration, as much as any miracle, is a priest's greatest strength.

It is also his greatest weakness. When prayers fail, when things go wrong, when a priest's wisdom proves disastrous – the faith of his followers is tested. If they lose faith, it is almost impossible to restore it. A priest's companions may abandon the quest and declare it impossible or unprofitable.

Certainly, a priest should not be so foolish as to believe that his companions are likely to share his zeal. A few minor missions can be a beneficial distraction and provide a chance to regroup after a defeat. But how long can the priest ignore his calling? Soon, unless

he can bring them back in line, the priest will face a difficult decision – leave his companions to go his own way or abandon his quest. Either way is rife with pitfalls.

When a priest shares his faith and his divine mission, he draws the party together. He gives them a reason to endure friction and occasional infighting. He serves as the lynchpin that can transform a band of vagabonds and rascals into a brotherhood of heroes.

PATH OF THE FAITHFUL

The Initiate career is a versatile one. Each of the different Imperial Cults has its own flavour and its own focus. A priest can be a divine warrior, a negotiator, a healer, an orator, or a scholar. A priest can be a staunch defender of the social order, or a visionary revolutionary who sees within his cult's teachings the liberation of an oppressed peasantry. An initiate can be a pious crusader or doubt-ridden coward fleeing from his duties. In the end, the Initiate career has room enough for all these concepts and countless more.

When an individual chooses the path of the divine, he sets himself on a long road. The priest has few options in terms of careers. He must either turn his back on his faith or tread a well-worn but dangerous road to the heights of his chosen cult. From initiate he proceeds to become a disciple. His magic becomes far more practical and broadly useful. He is more accepted in his order and is given more leeway to pursue his divine mission.

For his third career, a follower of gods is recognised as a priest. Ordained at last, he may now conduct services and perhaps even be asked to assist in training fledgling initiates. As a trusted member of the faith, he gains the full support of his cult. He will need it, for the challenges offered by the Old World are great indeed.

When the Priest career is at last completed, the priest has a choice – he can become a lector, a minister to the faithful, or can follow the path of the warrior priest. Whether fighting on behalf of Morr, Sigmar or Shallya, the life of a warrior priest is one of constant preparation and training. For many, it is an endless war against the enemies of his cult. It is also an unspeakably dangerous pursuit. Very few ever leave this career. Their divine mission becomes a crusade.

If a priest serves faithfully and long enough as a lector or distinguishes himself in battle as a warrior priest, he may rise another tier to the hallowed ranks of the arch-lector. At this rank, the priest has full access to all the blessings and mysteries of his order. His faith is mighty, as is his influence within the cult. The arch-lector is a true leader of men and a worker of miracles.

There is one step beyond arch-lector. Every cult has one leader: the Sigmarites have their Grand Theogonist, Morrites their Shrouded Patriarch, and Shallyans their Most Holy Matriarch. Ultimately, someone is in charge. Ascending to the rank of high priest is never simply a matter of pursuing careers – a high priest must be elected by his fellow arch-lectors. Achieving such a rank is the ultimate culmination of a lifetime of devotion; many seek, but very few travel this far along the path of the faithful.

PRIESTS OF MORR

Morrite priests wear plain black hooded robes with little adornment. Symbols of any kind are sparse within the order, but when present they are always simple and direct icons of death – the raven, the black rose, or a skull. What is never in evidence is any sign of

rank. From the most exalted arch-lector to the lowliest novice, priests of Morr can be difficult for a commoner to tell apart. The servants of the Lord of Death and Dreams are far too busy fulfilling his edicts to be concerned with the nervousness and misunderstandings of the local peasantry.

This uniformity has benefits and drawbacks. Since outsiders cannot tell a novice from a full priest, they just as often assume that any Morrite is a well placed high-ranking member of the order. Outsiders often assume that what one Morrite knows, they all know. Since followers of Morr seldom leave their Gardens, this confusion can be beneficial to a young clergyman who finds himself travelling on a rare occasion, and is well-treated by a local lord who simply does not recognise his youth and inexperience. It can also be intensely dangerous if that same priest gets entrusted with a mission far above his capacity.

SERVING THE LORD OF DEATH AND DREAMS

Being a priest of the Death Lord is not an easy road. Often feared and rarely understood, priests of the Cult of Morr are reputed to be morbidly obsessed by death. However, while the priests are often solemn and silent while carrying out their duties, reverence of the Lord of Death and Dreams is not an abandonment of life. Death is part of life, the Morrite argues, and to deny it or fear it is folly. "Rejoice and revel in life while you can," preaches the Morrite, "and praise the Lord of the Dead for having chosen to pass you by. Further, be comforted that death is not the end, but simply another journey."

Two prominent orders have risen within the Cult of Morr – the Order of the Shroud and the Augurs. The Order of the Shroud are the guardians of the dead. Within the Gardens of Morr, they officiate at funerals and see that all the rites for entrance into the underworld are properly observed. As part of ancient tithes and duties, many stand sentinel in the cemeteries and ensure that the dead are left to their rest. And where there is evidence of necromancy or the undead, the Order of the Shroud is swift to strike.

The Augurs are an order seeking wisdom. The order is served by the Doomsayers and are often found in noble courts as well as Morr's temples and gardens. They interpret dreams and portents, and preach the doom and danger they have foreseen. Their divinatory prowess makes them much sought after by all levels of society, despite their morbid ranting. Alas, telling the future is an uncertain business; the signs are often subtle and cryptic. The Doomsayers travel across the Empire, following their dreams in fulfilment of their god's designs, visiting places where death is imminent, or hunting the undead.

THE BLASPHEMY OF NECROMANCY

The undead are an unforgivable affront to Morr and his followers. Every act of necromancy is a raid upon the underworld, stealing the possessions of the Lord of Death and Dreams. Thus, while priests of Morr, with their grim demeanour and black robes, seem to ape the manner of necromancers, they are in fact their dire enemies.



PRIEST OF MORR CHARACTERS

Play a Priest of Morr if you want to...

- + Pay heed to your dreams
- + Use blessings to gain visions, wisdom, and a variety of mysterious effects
- + Fight undead and necromancers
- + Protect the souls of the departed and help them reach the afterlife

A common task given to the adventuring priests in Morr's service is the destruction of undead and the execution of those who raised them. For a priest of Morr to have any friendly dealings with a necromancer is a mortal sin – an act that results in immediate banishment from the order, if not death.

Defeating an enemy often requires understanding an enemy. Thus Morrite priests have been known to collect and study tomes of blasphemous necromantic lore. They study the undead so that they might have knowledge of how to defeat them. They inspect suspicious corpses looking for signs of vampirism and ghoulish cannibalism, and their templars, prowl the Gardens of Morr at night, keeping them secure against body snatchers and tomb robbers.

SPEAKERS FOR THE DEAD

The Morrites respect and protect those who dwell in Morr's domain. When the dead speak, the Morrites listen. If a place is haunted, Morrites try to release the spirit so it can make its journey to the realms of Morr. If the spirit is violent, then they exorcise it, using their divinely inspired powers to destroy it. If the spirit is relatively peaceful and is trapped on this plane because of a legitimate injustice, sometimes a priest of Morr will become a Speaker for the Dead and try to avenge this wrong.

Usually the providence of the Order of the Shroud, a Speaker for the Dead is a very rare and unusual role. Tracking down the causes of a haunting can take a priest anywhere and introduce him to segments of society that he might otherwise never meet.



PRIEST OF SHALLYA CHARACTERS

Play a Priest of Shallya if you want to...

- ✦ Heal the sick and the suffering
- ✦ Use diplomacy instead of violence to solve problems
- ✦ Oppose Nurgle the Fly Lord and all his foul minions
- ✦ Provide valuable healing and beneficial blessings to your party

Understanding the nature of an injustice can be difficult, as ghosts often possess only a fragment of their memories, so getting the whole story can be a matter of intense investigation and inquiry. The active investigation or travels of a Speaker for the Dead is quite unusual for a follower of Morr. Most priests only leave their gardens on the rarest of occasions, for the most pressing concerns of the Cult and for the Festival of Morr.

SAMPLE DIVINE MISSIONS OF MORR

- ✦ Retake a Garden of Morr overrun by the risen dead.
- ✦ A branch of Morrites have gazed too long into the abyss and have become heretical necromancers. Destroy this heresy and cleanse the cult.
- ✦ A dream reveals the death of an important noble and the chaos that will follow. Track down the lost heir and restore him to power to avert internecine conflict.
- ✦ An ancient scroll from the distant Land of the Dead contains spells both for creating and destroying the undead. Recover it for the cult and make sure it does not fall into the wrong hands.
- ✦ Signs point to a great wizard who will soon dabble and be corrupted by blasphemous necromancy. Find the wizard and confront him before it is too late.

- ✦ The son of a powerful noble went adventuring and has been killed in the wilderness. The noble will reward the Cult of Morr in gratitude should you recover the body.
- ✦ A ghost haunts a nearby manor, mourning for its son. The son was executed unjustly for the murder of his father. Find the true culprit and see him punished, in order to release this suffering spirit.
- ✦ An Elector Count is troubled by strange and horrific dreams and calls for a priest of Morr to interpret them for him. His dreams speak of a doom heralded by a flock of ravens.

PRIESTS OF SHALLYA

The priests of the Maiden of Mercy are predominantly female, but amongst her wandering devotees there is more parity of gender. Their adornment is simple, usually little more than a hooded white robe. When the priest is working, the robes are often plain practical affairs sometimes adorned only by the blood of their charges. For more formal occasions, the robes are often slightly more ornate with a heart of embroidered gold covering the left breast. Most of the devotees of Shallya are ascetics, scorning the material excesses of the Old World, to pursue the Daughter of Mercy's calling.

However, in larger cities, the Temples of Shallya can become powerful centres of influence commanding large amounts of money intended to aid the teeming poor. The temptation to show their high station has caused more than one High Priestess to adorn herself in fine robes of white silk festooned with golden brocade and intricate decoration. More dedicated members of the Order are shocked by these displays and wonder, perhaps privately, how many orphans could have been fed with the cost of one of these robes.

The common conception of priestesses of Shallya is overwhelming positive and even protective. The more honourable gangs of thieves specifically prohibit robbing Shallyans. Male priests do not enjoy quite this level of protection (some less educated folk do not think Shallya allows men in her order) but are still respected. Throughout the Reikland, a disciple of Shallya will never want for food or shelter. Of course, it is easy enough to abuse these privileges and damage the reputation of this beloved order.

SERVING THE MAIDEN OF MERCY

The Maiden of Mercy expects much from her faithful. She demands that they go amongst the wounded and the downtrodden, the stricken and the suffering. She expects her chosen to offer aid and solace whenever they can.

However, hers is a practical order. For example, her priests realise that healing a thug dedicated to the Chaos god Khorne will only allow him to kill again. In such a case, all but the most fanatical would put the wounded Chaos worshipper out of his misery as painlessly as possible. This benevolent order does what it can to bring peace to this violent age of ceaseless war.

When one of Shallya's priests is called to the adventuring life, it is often because a great calamity has befallen the Old World or soon will. Somewhere there is great suffering and thus Shallya sends one of her priests to bring comfort to the stricken.

THE WAY OF THE PEACEMAKER

Violence and war are commonplace in most corners of the Old World. It would seem an impossible errand to bring peace to such a savage and war-torn age, but this is the mission of blessed Shallya and her chosen ones. She commands her priests to bring peace when peace is possible. When peace is impossible, she demands that they protect those who suffer needless violence from indiscriminate warmongers.

The Cult of Shallya maintains a small force of warrior priests, known as the Hospitaliers. These priests are trained to protect and defend the weak in battle and to help the wounded reach the attention they need. The Hospitaliers are also dispatched to protect battlefield healers and hospices.

However, most of Shallya's priests serve the Emperor's armies in a more peaceful way, by healing sick and wounded soldiers. In this way, Shallyans support the Empire in its struggles against the enemies who bring carnage and suffering to the realm. It is rare to find an Imperial army which marches to war without at least one priest of this peace-loving cult accompanying the baggage train.

ENEMY OF THE ROT

Though the precepts of all of the Ruinous Powers are anathema to the Cult of Shallya, one of them earns her most dire enmity. Nurgle the Fly Lord is Shallya's greatest foe. His wanton spreading of disease is an unforgivable sin. Anyone who has any dealings with these loathsome servants of Chaos is unlikely to find forgiveness. When Shallya calls her priests to leave the temple and wander the lands, as often as not, it is because the servants of the Fly Lord are on the march.

As merciful as the Cult of Shallya is to the sick, its priests are resolute against Nurgle and his minions. Those who bow to the Fly Lord deserve no quarter, and the goddess commands her faithful to destroy them, to burn them out! Shallyans oppose their schemes, destroy their followers, and purge their temples and shrines with cleansing flame. The Goddess of Mercy has none for these blasphemers.

SAMPLE DIVINE MISSIONS OF SHALLYA

- ✦ A mysterious plague troubles the slums of Nuln. Find its source and root out the causes.
- ✦ A great champion of Nurgle has arisen in the north. Gather a force to destroy this blasphemer before he can marshal the hordes of the Fly Lord.
- ✦ A strange ailment afflicts an Elector Count. Find a magical cure for this affliction so that his suffering will cease, ensuring that he will be in the debt of the Cult of Shallya.
- ✦ An army of the Empire marches to war. Do what you can to ease the suffering of its soldiers and to help it accomplish its objectives.
- ✦ An ancient tome tells of a magical staff reputedly given to the world by Shallya in ages past. This lost artefact has great power to heal the sick and cleanse the world of a terrible sickness. Find the staff and see it put to good use.

- ✦ Two nobles senselessly quarrel because of an ancient feud. The commoners suffer and the squabble has cost many lives. Find out what must be done to make a lasting peace.
- ✦ A Chaos cult of Nurgle has taken root in Altdorf. Stamp it out before the rot spreads.
- ✦ A child has been born in a remote temple of Shallya under an auspicious sign and bearing a birth mark that reveals her as one of the Maiden of Mercy's chosen. Deliver her safely to the temple in Altdorf. Alas, the innocent is being hunted by servants of the Fly Lord.

PRIESTS OF SIGMAR

Priests of Sigmar are united in common purpose to serve and protect the Empire. Even so, Sigmar's followers are a diverse lot, and their dress often reflects this – ranging from the simple habits of unproven initiates to the intricate and ornate armour of its most veteran Warrior Priests. Priests of Sigmar usually shave their heads, but exceptions are not rare.

A few small orders even cut their hair into symbols of the order. Common across the orders is the unmistakable iconography of Divine Sigmar – the hammer, the comet, the skulls of enemies, holy seals, and prayer parchments. Every recorded word of Sigmar is venerated, and his sayings often decorate clothes, shrines, and relics sacred to his cult.



PRIEST OF SIGMAR CHARACTERS

Play a Priest of Sigmar if you want to...

- ✦ Defend the Empire from its many enemies
- ✦ Aid and ally with dwarfs
- ✦ Root out Chaos and its cults wherever they may hide
- ✦ Fight orcs, goblins, and other foul abominations of humanity



What unifies the Order is not dress or icons. To be a Sigmarite is to follow in the footsteps of Divine Sigmar, the god once amongst us, and to follow a proud tradition of service to the Empire. To devote one's life to Sigmar is to train and prepare both the mind and body for the trials ahead.

Above all, the life of a priest of Sigmar is a life of war – an endless war waged against the Empire's many foes. What the devout crave more than all else is to find within themselves some tiny shred of Sigmar's great strength and wisdom. Only then will his priests truly find their calling.

ALLEGIANCE TO THE EMPIRE

First and foremost, the faithful of Sigmar have one goal – to serve the Empire. The Empire is Sigmar's gift to humanity, and its might has allowed its people to live as free men. At the same time that the faithful swear an oath to the Cult to become a priest, they also swear an oath to the Emperor and the Empire. Betrayal is unthinkable and unforgivable – the greatest of blasphemies.

The Cult of Sigmar is led by the Grand Theogonist, one of the most influential and powerful men in the Empire. He alone may wear the jade griffon – an unmistakable mark of his authority. His commands guide the cult and are reverently obeyed. It falls to the Grand Theogonist to ensure that the followers of the Cult of Sigmar adhere to the tenets and strictures of the order, each priest doing all he can to preserve the Empire.

The Emperor ignores the counsel of the Grand Theogonist only at his great peril. In addition to their other duties, the Grand Theogonist and his two arch-lectors are themselves Electors, providing the Cult of Sigmar with a great deal of political clout.

FRIEND OF THE DWARFS

The dwarfs have been allies of the Empire since its foundation. During his youth, Sigmar rescued the dwarf king Kurgan Ironbeard from the hated greenskins. The king rewarded him with the mighty warhammer Skullsplitter, known as Ghal Maraz in Khazalid, the ancient dwarf tongue.

In life, Kurgan Ironbeard fought beside Sigmar, and now the hammer stands as a symbol of that ancient alliance. For a priest of Sigmar to betray the dwarfs or in any way damage that alliance is a grievous sin which must be atoned for. The dwarfs have much influence with the Cult of Sigmar, and the cult does all it can to preserve the alliance between the Empire and the dwarf nation.

ENEMIES WITHOUT, ENEMIES WITHIN

During his mortal life, Sigmar faced a vast array of enemies. His was a life filled with conflict and battle. He fought against orcs and goblins, battled the vile hordes of Chaos, and faced beastmen, undead, and those human tribes who refused to join his new empire.

Alas, even now this has not changed. The faithful of Sigmar still must fight to keep their homeland safe. When Sigmar abdicated the crown and passed into the east, he charged his chieftains to defend the Empire. And so, even unto this day, the Cult of Sigmar deems the defence of the Empire, its people, and its ideals, to be a most sacred duty.

It is no easy task. The Old World is full of threats. Whenever external foes gather into great hosts and threaten invasion, the faithful of Sigmar can be found in strength accompanying the Imperial armies. Even when the enemy is more treacherous and subtle, the

Sigmarites are there. Forever vigilant against the scourge of the Ruinous Powers, the Empire counts the priests of Sigmar among its greatest defenders.

SAMPLE DIVINE MISSIONS OF SIGMAR

- ✦ Defend the Empire from the machinations of a Chaos cult dedicated to Tzeentch that seeks to spread civil war.
- ✦ The dwarfs of Karak Azgaraz are besieged by orcs. Come to their aid in the name of the divine Sigmar.
- ✦ Beastmen commanded by a Champion of Chaos stalk the Reikwald Forest. Burn them out!
- ✦ Rumour has it that a local lord is harbouring heretics who preach against the divinity of Sigmar. Find out the truth and punish the guilty.
- ✦ A great wizard, once favoured within the Colleges of Magic, has fallen to heresy and embraced the Ruinous Powers. He has fled Altdorf, no doubt heading north towards the lairs of his dark masters. Catch him and show him the mercy of the hammer.
- ✦ A temple of Sigmar has been desecrated by bandits, its golden warhammer stolen. Retrieve the relic and make the blasphemers pay.
- ✦ Two nobles squabble needlessly and threaten the peace and integrity of the Empire. If possible convince them to reconcile. Otherwise, forge peace between them with your warhammer.
- ✦ A fearsome mutant is said to stalk the streets of Altdorf at night. Find and smite the abomination for the glory of Sigmar.

Worshippers of Sigmar are prone to a special kind of heresy, and it is their Warrior Priests and some of the Witch Hunters that seem most susceptible. Since Sigmar was once a mortal man who ascended to godhood, it is easier for his followers to understand him. Unlike Taal or Rhya, Sigmar was born to a human woman and had a human childhood – although of course it bore little resemblance to the childhood of any man or woman living today.

Perhaps it is this combined with the undeniable power and skill of Sigmar's faithful that makes some of them develop the mad belief that they, themselves, will transcend to godhood, presumably to sit at Sigmar's right hand. Indeed, given the reckless abandon with which they hurl themselves into battle or other perilous situations, sometimes it appears they already believe themselves to be gods.

– Ingrid Holdtstaeder, Priest of Verena



THE PRIEST SPECIALTY CARD

At one point, every priest spent time as an initiate. The initiate career has several special features which make it quite different from other careers.

One of the more noticeable differences is that the initiate career sheet has a special type of socket called a **Faith** socket, where one of the normal talent sockets would appear on a normal career. During character creation, an initiate must choose which one of the eight gods of the Empire he has devoted his life to. Over the course of his priestly careers, the character can only acquire and invoke blessings from his chosen deity.

After making his selection, the player finds the corresponding Faith card and attaches it to his character's career sheet, as he would a talent. In addition to indicating the initiate's chosen Faith, this card also confers a special benefit to the priest, as shown on the card. Finally, each Faith card indicates the default stance meter for a priest of that particular deity.



Also, a player with a priest character will want to keep a supply of tracking tokens nearby to represent his character's current favour. Place the tokens next to the Faith card to see how much favour is at the priest's disposal. A second colour of tracking token can be used to represent favour in excess of the priest's Willpower rating, as a visual reminder that the priest risks angering his god for excessive pride.




For Loyal Service to Emperor Karl Franz, to the Grand Theogonist, to the Cult of Sigmar, and to the very Empire itself, it is hereby decreed that the bearer of this letter has earned all rites and privileges as he is to an Initiate of the Cult of Sigmar.

Henceforth, said Initiate shall bear himself in a manner and comportment to uphold the strictures and tenets of the faith. To uphold the ancient alliances the Cult of Sigmar shares with Dwarfs and their kind. To protect the Empire from the threats of Chaos, Greenskins, and other foes. To serve at the behest of the Emperor and the Grand Theogonist.

In all these things, the Initiate shall strive to bring Unity and Peace to the Empire, and offer all due homage to Sigmar, patron of the Empire, and his most holy and stalwart followers.

And so is the initiate bound. The first step into the priesthood has been taken. May the twin-tailed comet bring portents and omens of good fortune.



BECOME A GOD!

WARHAMMER CHAOS IN THE OLD WORLD

In the *Warhammer* world, four Gods of Chaos battle for supremacy. Khorne, the Blood God, lusts for death and battle. Nurgle, the Plaguelord, luxuriates in filth and disease. Tzeentch, the Changer of Ways, plots the fate of the universe. Slaanesh, the Prince of Pleasure and Pain, lures even the most steadfast to his deadly seductions.

In the *Chaos in the Old World* board game, each player becomes one of the four Lords of Chaos. Each god's distinctive powers and legion of followers give the controlling player unique strengths and abilities with which to corrupt and enslave the Old World. As the powers of Chaos seek domination by corruption and conquest, they must struggle against one another and the desperate inhabitants of the Old World who fight to banish the gods back to the Realm of Chaos... for now.



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