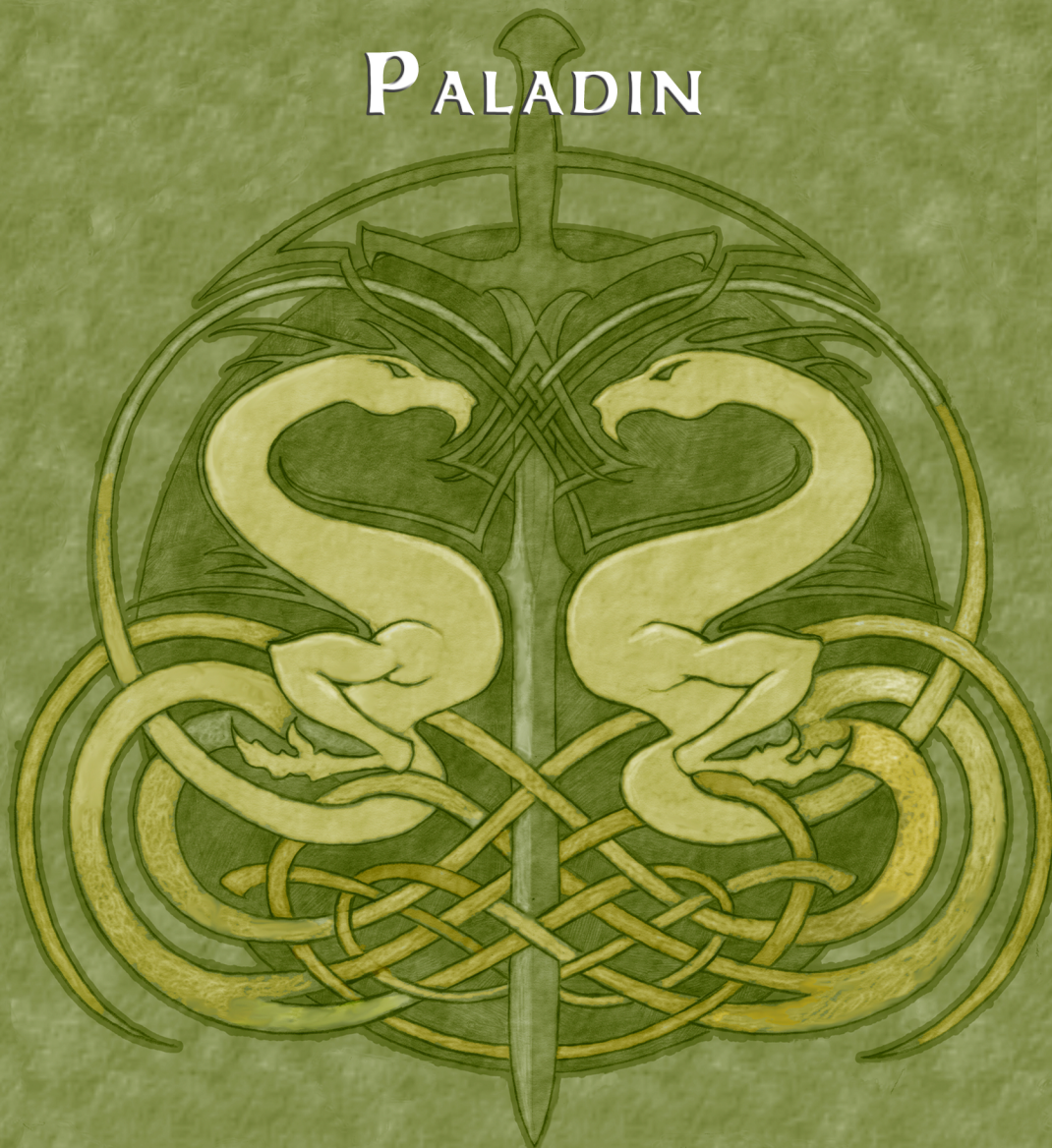


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THE TOMB OF THE FORGOTTEN

PALADIN



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THE TOMB OF THE FORGOTTEN PALADIN

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THE TOMB OF THE FORGOTTEN PALADIN

THE STORY SO FAR...

In ages past, the kingdoms of man warred with one another, as men are wont to do. The reasons were as varied as the men who died, with each believing they were justified in the slaughter of the other. One of the kingdoms sought to end the wars by summoning a powerful demon to fight for them. In their foolishness, they pitied the fiend, allowing it to escape their bindings. Breaking free, it murdered its summoners and walked free upon the earth. It left nothing but misery and pain in its wake.

Eventually the demon came to the small mining town of Silver Bluff. Standing outside the city stood a man in shining plate mail and wielding a great sword. His name has been lost, but a Paladin he was, strong and true. He alone stood against the demon.

The battle between the two was horrific. The demon, in his hubris, toyed with the Paladin at first, enjoying the pain he inflicted. In short order, the Paladin struck back, ending the arrogance of the fiend and showing it true fear for the first time in its life. With the power of the gods at his back, the Paladin fought valiantly and cowed the demon. As it succumbed to death, the demon cursed the Paladin, whispering, "You shall never be free of me," as its mortal body fell and its spirit returned to the lower planes.

The wounds inflicted upon the Paladin never healed. Priests from the town could not remove the pain as the wounds bled and eventually festered. Rot began to set in and the Paladin eventually succumbed to the wounds. After weeks of agony, the valiant knight was laid to rest in a tomb built by the townsfolk. It was, at first, a holy site and garnered a fair amount of attention from the church and pilgrims. Alas, the silver mines petered out and Silver Bluff gave way to time. The town exists no more except in tales and the mouths of the dead.

A century and a year have passed since the forgotten Paladin slew the demon. All this time, unknown to all, the demon festered in the soul of the hero. Each day, the demon edged closer and closer into the heart of the Paladin, his dying curse slowly coming to fore. The tomb, forgotten by all but time, has reopened. The demon is awaiting guests...

For whatever reason deemed appropriate by the CK, the party has found its way to the old town of Silver Bluff. Perhaps in their journeys from here to there, they just happened upon the ruins by chance. Or, perhaps chance plays little part in this meeting. Regardless of how, the party should have no knowledge of the town or the tomb below. It should all be quite a surprise.

The old town is nothing but ruins now. The silver mines were never the boon the founders hoped it would be and the town of Silver Bluff never rose to prominence. The buildings were mostly wooden structures, hastily built and easy for the ravages of time to tear down. The road through town has been overgrown and little still stands to show a town once stood. A ranger or druid, or perhaps one knowledgeable in all things nature, should be

able to tell that a town once occupied this area. Perhaps some of the old wooden buildings left behind tell-tale signs. The town itself is unimportant, save to hint that something once stood and that something still exists from the place.

Less than a mile to the north, near the hills where the mines once stood, the party can find an opening into the earth. Sealed by a priest just over a century ago, the stone has fallen and the path into the side of the hill is clear. The tomb of the forgotten paladin is once again open.

The tomb is small, housing one body. The CK is encouraged to change the details to fit the god(s) of his realm. As time passed and the demon grew in strength, the symbols and signs of the paladin's god have been wiped away or desecrated. Anyone knowledgeable in religious symbology should be able to easily tell something is amiss.

1. Foyer: The short tunnel gives way to a room carved into the earth. At first, one may think this is part of a mine, but signs seem to point to something else. In the center of the room is an old fountain, dried out ages ago. If examined, one can see faint traces of a carving in the marble of the fountain. It has been removed, however, as if something has wiped away at the stone repeatedly for years. Any dwarf examining the marble should make a *Stonecraft* check (CL-3). Success reveals that the stone here seems to have suffered centuries worth of wear while the stone itself is but a single century old. In other words, the wear on the fountain is older than the fountain and the stone itself. Quite the oddity. The carving in the fountain was once the holy symbol of the paladin's god, but the demon's spirit has spent the last century wearing away at the symbol. A cleric, or other holy character, can make an *intelligence* check (CL-7) to garner enough knowledge to ascertain what the symbol once was. The beams holding back the hills have crumbled and part of the room has collapsed. A hallway travels further north, into the darkness.

2. Ante-chamber: The floor of the small room once was a beautiful relief showing the holy symbol of the paladin's god. The townsfolk carried stone into the chamber, laying it carefully and lovingly for their savior. A stone smith was hired to level the floor and to carve the symbol once the floor was complete. Anyone with sufficient knowledge of stonework can tell the floor once held a symbol of some kind. Here, the demon was not content to wear away at the symbol slowly. Mustering the power of his hatred, he crushed the floor and sundered the stone. When the party enters, they find a stone floor that is cracked as if stricken by a heavy object. As before in the fountain, a cleric or holy character can make an *intelligence* check (CL-5) to discover the symbol, now cracked and splintered, that once dominated the floor. It should be noted that no object of any size, much less of a size needed to shatter the stone, can be found in the room. A door leads further north.

3. The Tomb: Upon entry, all characters should make a *wisdom* check (CL-3). Holy characters of good alignment get a +3 to the check. Success reveals a darkness in this room, an omnipresent evil that seems to take the breath away. A single sarcophagus sets in the center of the room. The lid shows signs of scratches

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and desecration. Where the holy symbol once laid in the stone, another symbol has been carved over it. The old symbol, that of the paladin's god, can no longer be seen. The new symbol, however, is quite visible. Any cleric or paladin can immediately tell the new symbol is unholy and vile (others should make an intelligence check (CL-3)).

Inside the sarcophagus lies the twisted and desecrated body of the paladin. The demon has successfully fulfilled his curse, the paladin is no longer what he used to be. Listening to the vile curses and whispers of the demon for a century has turned the spirit of the paladin to a dark mirror of his former self. A few rounds after the party enters the tomb, the body will rise from the sarcophagus, in the form of a Death Knight.



DEATH KNIGHT (This undead creature's vital stats are HD 9d10, HP 57, AC 20. Its primary attributes are mental and physical. It attacks with a +2 two-handed sword (2d6+5).)

The Death Knight will first cast *Mass Harm*, reducing his adversaries to 4 hit points and inflicting a wasting disease. The disease imparts a -X to hit where X is equal to the number of rounds afflicted. For example, on the third round after being inflicted, the victim suffers a -3 to hit. The disease only lasts 1d4 hours and will at most impart a -5 to hit. While the hit point loss cannot be avoided, anyone that suffers the Death Knight's *Mass Harm* spell is granted a constitution save to avoid the disease.

Once defeated, the party will find a single coin of an unknown land in the sarcophagus. It is The Sampo (see below). The death knight itself wields a +2 two-handed sword and wears plate mail +2.

The Sampo: A relic of Finnish mythology, the Sampo was said to be created by Ilmarinen, the Eternal Hammerer. Ilmarinen was one of the Finnish gods and said to be creator of a great many relics. The Sampo appears as a non-descript coin of an unknown land. After carrying the Sampo for a week, the lucky carrier gains the following benefits:

Will always know true north

Can accurately predict the weather for the next twenty-four hours

Will always have just enough coin to pay for a good room and a fine meal

Gains a +1 on all rolls

Gains a further +2 on all charisma checks (though not saves)

It is said that the one does not find the Sampo, the Sampo chooses its next owner. If the Sampo is ever stolen, it becomes inert and will never function for the thief.

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