

# THUNDERSCAPE™

## THE WORLD OF ADEN



THUNDERSCAPE WORLD

01

# The Radiant Order

## Defenders of the North

**PATHEFINDER**

ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE





THE WORLD OF ADEN ORIGINALLY CREATED BY SHANE LACY HENSLEY

## Thunderscape World 1:

# THE RADIANT ORDER DEFENDERS OF THE NORTH

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Written by Rich Wulf & Shawn Carman



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# THUNDERSCAPE

## THE WORLD OF ADEN

### Thunderscape World 1: The Radiant Order, Defenders of the North

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# THE RADIANT ORDER

## DEFENDERS OF THE NORTH



There are few images in the Known Lands of Aden that are more iconic than that of a paladin of the Radiant Order, a warrior devoted to justice and mercy, standing over those who cannot defend themselves. While there are those who roll their eyes at such imagery, there are far more who see the Knights of the Radiant Order as the ultimate force for good in Aden, and who desperately hope that the Order and its allies will find some way to defeat the Darkfall once and for all. As always, however, the truth is far less black and white than the common perception.

Although unquestionable an altruistic organization, the Radiant Order is not without its fair share of detractors, both within and outside of Arasteen. The tasks that the Order has set for itself are enormous, some might go so far as to say impossible, but the brave souls who comprise its membership do not shirk from their duties, even if from time to time they must make very difficult choices in order to do so.

## HISTORY

Although there are many secrets of the Radiant Order, most notably in the rituals and activities of the Templars, the order's history is quite well-known and extensively documented. Not only this, but the order makes its own historical records available to any scholar who petitions for access, allowing even some of the most private matters of its membership to be viewed by outsiders. It was the belief of the Order's founder, King Tirrian, and many of his successors (although not all) that secrets could only be detrimental to the Order's work.

Tirrian Krigsvol, later known simply as Tirrian and appearing in historical records frequently as King Tirrian the Radiant, was an early monarch of Arasteen who ruled a little more than a century following the Peace of the Rose. Tirrian was beloved by the people and worked tirelessly to improve the lot of the common folk, which he regarded as his duty as monarch. When the city of Sea Reach was assaulted by an invasion force from the Grey Isles, Tirrian was nearby and rallied a large number of men, many of them simple farmers and fishermen, to take the city back. The fighting was terrible, with great loss of life, but ultimately Tirrian and his men defeated and ejected the Gray Masters from Arasteen. In the wake of his costly victory, Tirrian mourned those who died and resolved that his people would be protected from all such threats by brave men and women such as those who had stood beside him during the Battle for Sea Reach. Thus was born the Radiant Order and, in subsequent years, the Radiant Path.

Under Tirrian's guidance, the Radiant Order developed slowly into a large and very altruistic organization. He knew that he must be careful in the men and women he selected to join it to ensure that it would

remain uncorrupted after his inevitable death, and he chose his initial Templars very carefully. These men and women aided him in developing the Code that the order follows to this day, and very little has been changed. On the day that he selected his Paladin, Tirrian threw his family blade into the sea, ending the line of his monarchy once and for all and allowing the throne to be taken only by merit and service to the Radiant Order.

Although Tirrian established the Radiant Path, it was very much secondary to the order until he stepped down many years later and his successor and chosen Paladin, Knutson the Wise took his place. Knutson had been a young fisherman who stood beside his lord when the Gray Masters were turned away from Sea Reach, and a remarkably introspective and philosophical man despite his years. As monarch, Knutson more closely tied the Order and the Path together, with particular emphasis given to the role the clergy and the knights played in the education of the populace, both in terms of schooling and in martial interests. Under his guidance, the settlements of Arasteen became more self-sufficient and productive places, with proud and intelligent people who could take up arms to follow knights into battle when the need to defend themselves arose.


The history of the Radiant Order is not without its blemishes, however. In the year 732, both the King and Paladin were killed by a virulent plague that ravaged Sea Reach before it could be successfully contained. The council of Templars convened to determine who would take the throne, and Oldarus, politically very well connected and simultaneously the arch-bishop of the Radiant Path, managed to leverage enough influence to be selected. Oldarus had been believed a pious man, but he quickly proved to be a zealot beyond anyone's expectations. He passed laws prohibiting even simple things that he felt led to the path of temptation and sin, becoming more and more draconian in his rule as years passed. Oldarus became known as Oldarus the Blue, ostensibly for the royal blue rainments he wore at all times, but more likely because of the sorrow inflicted upon the people or Arasteen before his death in an extremely convenient "hunting accident" some years later.

Although Oldarus the Blue was by far the most egregious example of the Radiant Order's failings, he is by no means the only one. There have been enough human failings among the order's leadership to ensure that they have many detractors, even within Arasteen itself, where their good works are most evident. Many within Arasteen do not embrace the Radiant Path, although the majority clearly do, and those who do not have often complained that the pious nature and governance of the Radiant Order is unnecessary for effective rule. Likewise, aggressive or misguided missionaries of the Radiant Path, some of whom were affiliated with the order, have caused difficulties with other nations,

### Other Sources of Information

As one of the most well-known organizations in the Known Lands, a great deal of knowledge is available on the Radiant Order, although there is just as much misinformation and misunderstanding. In addition to the information presented in this work, interested parties can find more information on the Radiant Order in the pages of *Thunderscape: the World of Aden* and in *The Lost Lexicon, Part 2: Radiant Demise*.





most specifically the Rhanate and Vanora, in the latter case threatening an otherwise long and friendly relationship between the two nations and their monarchs. The previous king, known as Ailrich the Hidden, was a great knight and Templar but found himself ill-suited to the role of monarch, and spent much of his time in seclusion. The council of Templars had difficulty with the order's declining popularity among the populace until Ailrich's retirement, which resulted in a new king and, more importantly, the elevation of the beloved hero Corben Tylar to the rank of Paladin in the year 1095. Corben's cheerful nature and popularity with the common people did a great deal to repair the relationship between the Radiant Order and the rest of Arasteen. When his predecessor Ulven the Just was crippled in a sparring accident one year before the Darkfall, Corben's elevation to the position of King was met with great celebration throughout the land.

The years since the Darkfall have been a terrible trial for the Radiant Order. Just over one fourth of the Templar council, twenty-six brave men and women, were lost on that day, and although King Corben would dearly love to replenish his numbers, an alteration to the order's code of conduct of such nature would require a three-fourths majority vote by the Templars, which is impossible given the current situation. Corben, called by some King Corben the Youthful or, more often, the Boy King due to his incredibly youthful appearance, believes strongly that tradition is the glue that holds the order and Arasteen together, and he is loathe to cast it aside even for such a dire reason as the current lack of Templars.

The Radiant Order has worked tirelessly since the Darkfall in an attempt to save as many lives as possible, primarily within Arasteen but also anywhere in the Known Lands that they feel their efforts can have the most impact. Unfortunately, the rise of Urbana in the place of Columbey has caused enormous diplomatic difficulties for Arasteen, as the Radiant Order views the policies and actions of the Iron Tyrant as unforgivable, but a war at this juncture would likely cripple both nations and leave the only victor as the Darkfall.

## ROLE IN GOVERNMENT



In a very real way, the Radiant Order is the government of Arasteen, at least so much as the King is always elevated to the throne from within its ranks, and the council of Templars is the only group that can overrule an edict from the king. The bishops of the Radiant Path are the only other group that can claim the same level of involvement in the highest ranks of the government, and even then, the close relationship between the King and the Templars, for he was once among their number, tends to skew toward the Order rather than the Path.

Obviously, the king (or queen, as has been the case several times in Arasteen's history) and the Paladin are the two most powerful people in Arasteen, with virtually unlimited authority in matters of governance. Of the seventy four Templars, roughly two thirds have duties involving the governing of Arasteen that ensure they rarely if ever leave the nation's borders. Several oversee subsections of the country, such as the governors Veronus and Drummel of Sylfanus and Top of the World, respectively, both of whom are Templars. The Templar Davin, theoretically the captain of the Queen's Guard, oversees the safety and security of all of Sea Reach, due in large part to the fact that Queen Moriana is herself a Templar and requires very little in the way of protection from others. Templar Karita is also stationed in Sea Reach, and oversees the assignments of more than four dozens knights, constantly monitoring and updating their status in the field, many of her agents active outside the boundaries of Arasteen at any given time.

Beneath the rank of Templar, the knights of the Radiant Order still serve a tremendous role in the governance of Arasteen, perhaps even greater simply because of their sheer numbers. There are few settle-

ments that do not have at least one knight stationed as an agent of law enforcement and civil defense, and those few villages that do not are simply too small to warrant such allocation of resources, so off the map as to be unaware that they can petition Sea Reach for defenders, or waiting for a replacement for their previous defenders. Other knights travel the width of the Empire, investigating any matter that arises that may be a threat to Arasteen, small or large. They are not the only force of law enforcement that exists, but they are regarded by most citizens as the finest enforcers of order that the nation has to offer.

In addition to the law enforcement duties of the order's knights, they are of course also the leaders and organizers of the nation's military. The rank of knight is essentially equivalent to the rank of captain within the hierarchy of the Arastinian military, although it is possible for a knight to be promoted far above that rank depending upon their performance and activities during times of war.

## THE RADIANT PATH



The religious belief system based upon tents of the Radiant Code is described in some detail in Chapter 5 of the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*. The Radiant Path is, naturally, based in Arasteen and thus warrants some discussion here.

To join the clergy of the Radiant Path, all one needs to do is pass a test proving one's knowledge of the Code and take the proper vows in the presence of a Radiant priest. While this can be done in any backwoods chapel, priests who study at major centers of the faith, such as the Temple of Radiance in Sea Reach, are more likely to be promoted to prestigious positions. The Radiant clergy does not discriminate by race or by gender; all who are willing to embrace the Path are welcome.

One major benefit of joining the clergy is education. Major temples of the Radiant Path all maintain large libraries, open to all members of the faith. Even humble clergy are frequently invited to study at major temples and even copy the valuable texts therein, so that they may spread the fires of learning to the common folk. In many of Arasteen's smaller settlements, the local priest and village schoolteacher are one in the same. The Radiant Path also protects Arasteen's most extensive magical libraries, so those looking to study arcane or divine magic have ample opportunity to do so in the priesthood.

While priests technically retain their prior social standing, they are expected to put aside all of their previous responsibilities. Most are peasants or the idle younger sons and daughters of noble families, but priests can come from all walks of life. As the Radiant Order does not restrict its clergy from marriage, priesthood is a tradition for some families. Relatively few priests of the Radiant Path join the Radiant Order, though they frequently live and work beside its members. For instance, Radiant Priests often serve as chaplains or medics within the Arastinian military. Given their high standards of education, priests also serve as advisors or diplomatic envoys for the Order.

The Radiant Path is led by a Circle of Bishops, consisting of twelve bishops and a Lord Bishop. Each bishop has authority over a different district of Arasteen. The Lord Bishop has official domain over the capital city of Sea Reach and the Temple of Radiance, but also presides over the other bishops. Members of the Circle of Bishops are appointed through popular vote by the clergy, and hold their positions for life.

Though the Radiant Path has a reputation for vigorously proselytizing its faith through the use of missionaries, it does not require its worshippers to forsake other religions. As long as those other religions are compatible with the Path, there are no restrictions forbidding other forms of belief. Unfortunately, a number of violent misunderstandings have broken out over the centuries (instigated by arrogant missionaries and intolerant heathens in equal number) that have given Radiant missionaries a bad name, particularly in the Rhanate and Vanora.



# THE RADIANT CODE

At its core, the Radiant Path might seem simple as it can be boiled down to two virtues - compassion and judgment. In practice, things are much more complex. King Tirrian first created the Radiant Code, the treatise by which all members of the Order are expected to live. This extensive volume is part system of laws, part code of moral behavior, and is intended to govern all aspects of life. For members of the Radiant Order, adherence to the Code is mandatory. Any violation of the Code will result in commensurate punishment.

Ordinary citizens are not expected to adhere to the Code, though there is a great deal of overlap between the Code's edicts and Arastinian law. Devout followers of the Radiant Path might choose to adhere to the Code, even going so far as to seek penance from the priesthood if they violate its tenets. While such individuals may face social stigma for their sins, only true members of the Order risk legal penalties for violations of the Code.

There are traditionally three specific crimes that merit expulsion from the Radiant Order in addition to their legal repercussions. These are collectively called the Obscenities. They include rape, murder, and treason against Arasteen. In recent years a fourth Obscenity has been added - to knowingly consort with the Darkfall. In addition to imprisonment, individuals who commit an Obscenity are branded on the right cheek with a symbol of crossed swords, indicating that the blades of the Radiant Path are forever turned against them. Significant among the legal systems of Aden, Arasteen does not practice capital punishment (outside of duels), so such individuals are consigned to a lifetime of imprisonment, forced labor, or exile depending on their crimes.

In the extremely rare case that a Templar commits an obscenity, he is subjected to a secret ritual called Repudiation. This ritual forever burns out his ability to sense other Templars (though they can still sense him and know him for his crimes) and causes his once shimmering blue eyes to burn a scarlet red. This punishment has only been enacted four times in Arasteen's history; the most recent was three years before the Darkfall.

## Duels among Radiant Order Members

Among the knighthood, dueling is a common method of settling disputes. When a member of the Radiant Order has been wronged, he is within his rights to challenge his enemy to a formal duel. If the offense is trivial or baseless, the challenged party may refuse. If the offended party has accused his enemy of violating the Radiant Code, the challenge may not be refused without dishonor. In the case of a challenged squire or knight (who are legally required to adhere to the Code), refusal of such a legitimate challenge compounds their crime. Those who do not adhere to the Code or Path can refuse challenges without any real penalty, though they are still subject to normal punishments if they are challenged for breaking the law in Arasteen (and of course they will be viewed as a coward by any true knight).

Once a duel has been accepted, both parties must agree upon a mediator (typically a member of the Radiant clergy) and a time and place for the duel to occur (typically neutral ground no more than three days after the challenge is delivered). Each party is also within their rights to name a second, an individual who agrees to fight in their place. Most duels are conducted using swords, lances (on horseback), or pistols, though if both parties agree magic is also an acceptable weapon. Both parties must agree to terms of victory. Typical duels are to the first strike, first blood, or until one opponent is unhorsed (in the case of jousts, though these can also continue on foot with swords). Duels to the death are technically legal, though most Arastinians consider them barbaric except in the case of Obscenities (and even then, many Arastinians see such duels as the actions of a violent throwback).



## Following a Code

Players who wish to portray a Radiant knight or priest will naturally wish to know exactly what the Code requires of them. The following are a few of the more prominent edicts of the Radiant Code. In particular, paladins of the Radiant Path will probably wish to incorporate the following into their code (see *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*, Chapter 2).

- 1) Be forthright and respectful in your dealings with others.
- 2) Demonstrate wisdom in thought and deed.
- 3) Protect the innocent, the weak, and the helpless.
- 4) Always offer mercy to a defeated foe, and accept an honorable surrender.
- 5) Always deliver justice to the wicked, in accordance with the law.
- 6) Never refuse a challenge from a worthy opponent.
- 7) Faithfully fulfill one's charter as decreed by the Templar Council and King.
- 8) Spread the wisdom of the Radiant Path to those who will hear and protect its clergy.
- 9) Obey those in authority.
- 10) Defend the honor of one's fellow knights.
- 11) Be a beacon of honor, hope, and faith.
- 12) Always show courage and valor in the field of battle.

Radiant paladins who commit an Obscenity lose their paladin abilities and could potentially become antipaladins, particularly those who consort with the Darkfall (see the *Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide*).

## The Radiant Order and the Seers

Arasteen was once home to many members of the Seer Order. Though members of their organization could be found in every land, the central leadership of the Seers constructed their main headquarters - the Rose Monastery - in the town of Rose. The Seers made no secret of their belief that the knights of the Radiant Order would play an important part in Aden's destiny. Though the Seers adamantly refused any appointment to the Radiant Order, many Seers followed the Radiant Path and knights and seers frequently worked together as close allies. Until the modern day, every King of Arasteen employed at least one member of the Seers as an official advisor.

With the destruction of the Order, the surviving seers are no longer certain who their friends and enemies are anymore. When the Darkfall came, the Rose Monastery was utterly destroyed despite the Radiant Order's protection. While few seers would accuse the knights of being complicit in their destruction, most feel that the Order can no longer protect them and they can only rely upon themselves. Though Knights of Purification actively seek out surviving seers, only a few have accepted such aid. Even this small handful of seers has refused to return to their previous public positions, insisting on maintaining their anonymity until the truth behind their order's downfall can be determined.





The duel must be conducted with the mediator as witness. An official duel is considered to be the same as a trial in Arasteen - if the challenged party loses, they are now legally guilty of whatever deed they were accused of and must report to an Arastinian court for punishment. If the challenged party wins, they are now legally innocent and cannot be tried or challenged a second time for that offense. If the duel was to the death, the challenger has the right to show mercy, but the challenged party is still considered guilty of their crime.

The winner of a duel often wears a ribbon on his belt, shield, or hilt of his weapon to indicate his victory. The color indicates the type of duel - white for first strike, red for first blood, blue for jousts, and black for duels to the death. Some knights specialize in serving as seconds in duels, and proudly wear their collection of ribbons for the world to see.

## LIFE AMONG THE ORDER

### Joining the Radiant Order

In theory, any citizen of Arasteen who decides that they wish to serve the Radiant Order is free to do so. The process of application is relatively simple, requiring only literacy. No one is turned away, not even the obviously physically infirm, although such individuals are counseled carefully that their attempts to join will almost certainly end in failure if they are unable to fulfill the demanding physical duties expected of them. Nevertheless, the Order rarely if ever lacks for applicants, and each new season brings a fresh crop of would-be hospitalers eager to serve their king, their nation, and the Radiant Order.

#### Sam the Farmer: A Tale of Social Mobility

Arasteen's unique mixture of feudal system and meritocracy might seem, on the surface, like a curious match. Why would anyone willingly spend their life laboring in the fields as a peasant when they could become a hospitaler, a knight, or even a *King*? While it is true that Arasteen's political system provides more opportunities than a traditional monarchy, it isn't that simple. As an example, let's take Sam - a hypothetical Arastinian farmer. What's to stop young Sam from setting down his scythe, abandoning his father's barley farm and setting off to pursue the bold life of a knight? Several things.

Arasteen takes care of its people. Until the Darkfall, poverty and famine were nearly unheard of. A peasant's life is, more often than not, long and happy. Why would Sam give up his comfortable and familiar life? As a hospitaler, he might be teamed with a missionary party bound deep into the jungles of Kyan. He might be sent to battle the Darkfall on the Urbanan border. He might be sent to oversee an understaffed farm... only to end up doing the same work he was doing before with the added headache of being responsible for everything and everyone involved.

Additionally, most Arastinians follow the Radiant Path, which encourages a strong sense of love for one's family and neighbors. If he becomes a hospitaler, Sam risks never seeing any of those people again.

Finally, remember that hospitalers must adhere to the Radiant Code, a much stricter version of the Radiant Path. Their morality is not just a guideline, it is *legally enforced*. Some people prefer a life where a night of drinking and mischief won't result in a jail sentence or being stripped of their ranks to join the Sullen.

This isn't to say that the Sams of the world never take a chance and join the Order. It happens every day. It just isn't the guarantee of success and freedom that it may appear to be.

### Becoming a Hospitaler

All those who aspire to a life of government service - even those who have no intention or desire to become knights - may become hospitalers, also called squires. This is the largest and most diverse rank of the Radiant Order. As long as they obey the Radiant Code, any Arastinian citizen over the age of fifteen (or twenty, prior to the Darkfall) can become a hospitaler merely by filling out the proper paperwork and swearing an oath of loyalty to Arasteen and the Order in the presence of a knight.

Once this paperwork is processed and approved by the Order's bureaucracy (which is mostly composed of other hospitalers), the new squire is given his assignment. There isn't much ceremony to the process; a new hospitaler merely receives a charter and must begin service by a certain date. If travel is required, the new squire is provided sufficient funds to travel to his new home, as well as adequate lodging upon his arrival.

### Duties of a Hospitaler

The nature of a hospitaler's service can vary wildly. Squires might function as a knight's servant, a game warden overseeing a preserve, or even an official advisor to the King, depending upon their particular skills and experience. The only unifying factor among hospitalers is that their positions require no combat training. A powerful and influential hospitaler (such as a noble lord) might even have knights under his command. Ultimately, the only true distinctions between hospitalers and knights are that knights require military training and only knights may become Templars. Hospitalers follow a more relaxed version of the Radiant Code, though many of them choose to obey the same edicts as their knight brethren purely from a sense of brotherhood and duty (see The Radiant Code).

All hospitalers are entitled to use the formal rank "Esquire" after their name. If a particular hospitaler held a more prestigious rank before joining the Order, he may choose to be referred to by that rank instead. Many modern members of the order dislike this tradition, as it creates an obvious distinction between former nobles and former peasants within the hospitalers. This frequently creates awkward situations for former peasants in important positions (particularly bureaucrats and clerks), who are expected to show polite deference to the same nobles that are legally bound to obey their authority.

### Becoming a Knight

All knights are promoted from among the hospitalers. Promotion to knighthood does not necessarily incur any increase in power or influence - it merely indicates that an individual is part of the military and worthy to potentially become a Templar. As the required tests are extremely grueling, not all hospitalers desire to become knights. Many are quite content with their existing station. To become a knight, a hospitaler must find an existing knight (or Templar) willing to sponsor his promotion. Though there is no age limit, it is rare for a knight to be promoted before the age of eighteen (or twenty-five, before the Darkfall).

An individual who intends to become a knight is advised to find an existing knight to sponsor him. This allows the squire to receive all his necessary training while simultaneously allowing the knight to determine whether his student is ready for promotion. It is the squire who chooses when to petition for knighthood, though it is considered impolite to do so before one's mentor acknowledges that they are ready. A knight is within his rights to cease mentoring a squire who refuses to seek promotion when the knight believes they are ready. It is not illegal for a hospitaler to simply find a different knight to sponsor him, but such an action is a grave insult to one's mentor (and grounds for a duel to the blood).

If the hospitaler's petition is accepted, he gains the title "Supplicant" until he is promoted to knight. At some future point, no less than three days and no more than a year from the acceptance of his petition, the supplicant will be brought before a tribunal of a dozen knights and



given three tests - the Test of Body, the Test of Mind, and the Test of Faith. The supplicant is not told when these tests will happen. He must be prepared at all times. The knight's ability to deal with the stress of these impending tests is, of course, part of the test.

The Test of Body includes a grueling battery of physical tests over the course of a week. The supplicant must demonstrate proficiency with at least three types of weapons (magic and unarmed combat are both acceptable choices) as well as pass tests of strength and stamina. The exact nature of these tests varies by tribunal.

The Test of Mind requires the supplicant to answer a total of five hundred questions on a variety of subjects including tactics, history, law, arcane lore, and the Code itself. These questions are determined by the tribunal. In recent years, Darkfall lore has begun to figure prominently into the Test of Mind.

The Test of Faith is embarked upon only after the supplicant has succeeded at both other tests. The supplicant must spend twenty-four hours in fasting, solitude, and contemplation in a location chosen by the tribunal. This is typically an area of some significance to the Radiant Path's faith. Though this test is largely ceremonial, some knights report witnessing incredible visions during this time, portents of their destiny and of Arasteen's future. Knights blessed with such visions often become Templars, or even kings. In the past, such blessed knights would report to the Seers for aid in comprehending their visions. Since the destruction of the Seer order, these knights have been forced to find their own way.

If the supplicant fails one of these tests, the tests must begin again at a later date. If the supplicant fails three times, his supplicant title is revoked and he may not request promotion to knighthood again for three years. To sponsor a failure brings shame upon a knight, so most knights are reluctant to sponsor squires who have failed in the past.

If the supplicant succeeds at the Test of Faith, he is promoted to knighthood the following morning. This is often a lavish ceremony, attended by the knight's family and friends as well as members of the local community. In the presence of the tribunal, the knight receives his sword, swears undying fealty to the King and people of Arasteen, and dedicates his life to the Radiant virtues of Justice and Compassion.

At this point, the squire is officially awarded the title "knight-disciple." Though officially a knight, he remains bound to his sponsor for a period of three years. During this time, the knight-disciple is expected to follow his sponsor's commands. In turn, the sponsor is

## A Knight's Sword

Upon becoming a knight, a squire is rewarded with a sword. In most cases, this sword is supplied by the squire's sponsor. Depending on the resources available, this could be a fine magical blade or a simple, unadorned weapon fresh from the smithy. A knight's sword is usually a longsword, though if the particular knight is skilled with a specific type of weapon it could be nearly any melee weapon. Some knights choose to treasure their sword and use it exclusively. Others may simply consider it a ceremonial symbol of their promotion and leave it at home.

Some knights choose to have their sword enchanted, if they have the means to do so. Although it is not required, when such a thing is done, it is common among the ranks of the Order to give one's weapon a name. Some weapons are famous (or infamous) in their own right, such as Evanor, the blade of the current Paladin, Grimlak, or Sydereal, the sword of the controversial knight Alastrina Olaffsdottir.

responsible for his disciple's actions, and is expected to punish his disciple for violations of the code. For this reason, most knights keep their disciples close at hand so that they can monitor their activities.

At the end of three years, the knight-disciple becomes a full knight and receives his first chartered assignment from the Order. Under extraordinary circumstances (including the death of one's mentor), the Templar council might promote a knight-disciple to full knighthood in less than three years. Since the Darkfall, such circumstances arise with greater frequency than ever before.

## Duties of a Knight

As the protectors of Arasteen, most knights are assigned to military or law enforcement positions. All officers in the Arastinian army and navy are knights, as are all city watch commanders. Though the vast majority of knights are assigned to such positions, a knight might find himself assigned to any role that requires a well-educated warrior. Such knights might become bodyguards, diplomatic envoys, or missionaries. All knights are entitled to use the formal "Sir" or "Lady" title before their name.





Knights are required to adhere to an even stricter version of the Code than squires. While they must follow the same behavioral restrictions as a hospitaler, they are also expected to actively serve as a living example of the Code. If a knight's arrogance, cruelty, or stupidity draws the attention of the Templar Council, he will be punished accordingly (see The Radiant Code).

Some knights - especially newly christened knights - are commanded to serve as a knight-errant. Such knights are given a small stipend of gold and a period of time in which they are expected to travel the world, fighting evil where they find it and otherwise serving as an example of justice and compassion for the world to see. At the end of this time, such knights are expected to return to Arasteen and give an honest recounting of their noble deeds. As humility is seen as a treasured virtue, many knights-errant travel in groups or, at the very least, bring a squire along to serve as accurate witnesses to their exploits.

Traditionally, errantry is the most desirable of all assignments. It is a chance to see the world, earn one's name, and have no end of grand adventures. In recent years, the Darkfall has made errantry incredibly dangerous. One out of three knights-errant simply never returns. Rather than shy away from such danger, the Radiant Order sees this as an indication that the world needs knights-errant now more than ever. Almost all newly christened knights are assigned erranhoods. These brave young soldiers are highly encouraged to travel in groups, or at least find bands of mercenaries or adventurers to travel beside.

## Becoming a Templar

Templars are the highest ranking members of the Radiant Order short of the King. Whereas any Arastinian can aspire to become a hospitaler or knight, the only way to join the ranks of the Templar council is to be invited. There are only one hundred members of the council at any time. A new Templar can only be appointed only if an existing Templar dies or retires, and a prospective candidate can only be chosen by the King. A candidate is allowed to make a case for his promotion before the assembled Templar Council, at which time the council members hold a secret vote. At least two-thirds of the council must approve of the candidate's promotion.

### Former Templars

By the strict edicts of the Radiant Code, a Templar cannot be replaced unless he retires or is confirmed dead. The retirement of a former Templar does not remove that individual's bond to other Templars. He can still sense and track his brethren in the same manner as any other Templar. This even counts for the King, meaning that if the King of Arasteen were ever kidnapped, his loyal Templars would swiftly find him.

Occasionally, Templars go missing or die far from home on important missions, potentially complicating their replacement. In the past, this was never an issue - due to the magical bond between all Templars, the rest of the Council could easily confirm a missing Templar's death.

The Darkfall has changed things. On the first night of the Darkfall, twenty-six members of the council vanished without a trace. Most of them had last been seen in the company of members of the Seer order, who had also been targeted by the Darkfall. These missing Templars have vanished completely. No one has been able to find them, whether by Templar bond or through divination magic.

With one fourth of his advising council missing, King Corben is eager to refill the ranks. Unfortunately, until the missing Templars are accounted for he is bound by the Code not to replace them. Amending the code is also not an option, as three-fourths of the Templar Council are required to approve such amendments. Corben is loath to break Arasteen's traditions in such a tumultuous time, but he may have little choice.

Once the council approves of the candidate, the Ritual of Initiation begins. This ritual is extremely secretive, can only be witnessed by the King, Paladin, and Lord-Bishop of the Radiant Path. The ceremony is usually conducted in the Temple of Radiance in Sea Reach. At the end of the ritual, the candidate officially emerges from the Temple of Radiance as a Templar.

The Templar Ritual of Initiation is extremely secretive, can only be witnessed by the King, Paladin, and Lord-Bishop of the Radiant Path. The ceremony is conducted in the Temple of Radiance in the capital city of Sea Reach. At the end of the ritual, the candidate emerges from the Temple of Radiance as a Templar. The Ritual of Initiation is not merely ceremonial. Very powerful divine magic is involved, magic that changes a Templar forever. The ritual creates a permanent bond between a Templar and fellow members of the council (including the Paladin and King). Templars can always sense one another when in close proximity. Because of this sensory ability, any true Templar can always recognize a fellow Templar, regardless of any disguise he wears, and masquerading as a Templar is virtually impossible in the presence of other council members. Further, two Templars working together in close proximity can combine their senses to find a third, so long as they know his name, regardless of distance. This same bond immediately allows the Templars to determine if one of their number has been killed.

## Duties of a Templar

The Templar Council is second in power only to the King of Arasteen. The Council drafts and approves Arastinian law. They also approve all amendments to the Radiant Code. This is relatively rare, as at least three-fourths of the council must agree to any such amendments. The Council can also vote to remove the King from power, though this requires a unanimous decision by all members of the Council and has only happened once in Arasteen's history.

The Templars also serve as councilors (officially called rectors) to the king. Dozens of specific positions exist within the Council, such as Rector of Finance, Rector of War, and Rector of Magic. The King can create or eliminate these positions as he desires, though it rarely happens. King Corben has only created one Templar title during his reign - Rector of Purification. This individual (currently a faerkin wizard named Belana Dextree) is charged with advising the king on all matters regarding the Darkfall as well as finding any survivors of the Seer Order. A knight or squire who directly serves a rector is referred to by that rector's area of expertise - Knight of War, Squire of Law, Knight of Purification, and so forth.

The Paladin - the King's successor - is always chosen by the King from among the Templar Council. The Paladin acts as a moderator during all Council meetings and has the power to break ties when the Council is deadlocked. The Paladin also frequently serves as leader of the King's army and the King's most trusted advisor. Though the King is technically the leader of the Radiant Order, the duties of monarchy often cause much of its administration duties to fall to the Paladin.

Though the King may choose to call upon the expertise of specific Templars in certain situations, all members of the Council are otherwise considered equal. There is, technically, a complex hierarchy of seniority among them, but this only applies in the unusual event that the King and Paladin perish simultaneously. In this case, the senior Templar acts as King until the Council can vote to determine a new King from among their number.

## Becoming King

Compared to the trials required to attain other ranks within the Radiant Order, becoming King is relatively simple. Upon the death or abdication of the existing King, the King's Paladin becomes the new King. While this is generally a matter of great pomp and ceremony, as most coronations are, there is no mystical significance to the ritual as there is when one becomes a Templar - though the King does inherit several powerful Arastinian artifacts with his position, including Tirrian's Searing Blade and Tirrian's Sapphire Crown.



Note that while the term “King” is used universally through this section, the leader of Arasteen is not always male. Arasteen has had nearly as many Queens as it has had Kings during its history. Only the chosen ruler of Arasteen is called Queen or King. Their spouse is officially referred to as the Royal Consort. Nonetheless, the Consort is often called “Queen” or “King” for the sake of simplicity, especially when dealing with foreigners who might not comprehend Arasteen’s peculiar system of monarchy.

### Duties of the King

The King leads the Radiant Order and rules over Arasteen. The King of Arasteen does not hold absolute power, as in many other nations. He shares power with the Templar Council, and in some cases can have his edicts vetoed by them. The King does, however, hold many unique powers. Only the King can appoint a new Paladin. The King can declare war, temporarily overrule existing laws, and grant criminal pardons. The King can bestow or strip noble titles. The King can grant Arastinian citizenship to foreigners. Finally, only the King can propose amendments to the Radiant Code (though these must then be approved by three quarters of the Templar Council).

### Player Characters and the Order

You may be wondering how exactly to apply all of the above to player characters who might want to join the Order. That’s simple enough. If the player character was born, or became, a citizen of Arasteen and is willing to make the necessary oaths, he is eligible to join the Order. That’s it.

As for the character’s rank - work with your players to determine what is best for the campaign. Neither knights nor hospitalers start out with a level of influence that would be inappropriate for a player character. While a knight’s presence is easier to explain in an adventuring party, the player may prefer to start out as a hospitaler so that he can roleplay his character’s transition to knighthood.

The only rank that is inappropriate for most player characters is Templar. Members of the Templar Council merely have too many responsibilities at home to permit the life of a wandering adventurer (at least in most campaigns).

The only thing to keep in mind with such characters is that all members of the Radiant Order have a purpose and charter. All of them have been given a mission to serve the people of Arasteen in some capacity. So what about campaigns (like this one) that roam far beyond the Radiant North?

If the character is a hospitaler, perhaps he’s been assigned to act as a missionary promoting the Radiant Path. He could be a diplomatic envoy, given free reign to wander in an effort to bolster Arasteen’s relationship with foreign lands. Perhaps he’s even a scholar, sent out into the world to learn about the Darkfall firsthand.

If the character is a knight, the answer is much easier. Knights-errant are frequently sent out into the world to do good deeds and learn about the outside world. So long as they return at the end of their errand (usually a period of several years) they are free to do as they see fit, leading many knights to fall in with parties of adventurers.

As for whether there are any mechanical requirements to become a knight - that’s really up to you. While knights are required to pass grueling physical and mental tests, the exact nature and difficulty of these tests is determined by individual tribunals. A strict tribunal may impose harsh requirements, such as a high Strength and Constitution and ranks in a variety of Knowledge skills. Other tribunals may be more lenient, perhaps requiring nothing more than that the character was competent enough to join a player character class. As a result, it is conceivable that even a first level character could pass the tests - if he’s clever and determined enough.





# PERSONS OF NOTE WITHIN THE RADIANT ORDER

## King Corben

[Male human Fighter 10 / Paladin 6]

The story of the King of Arasteen is one well known to many throughout the Known Lands, but especially in his homeland. Indeed, there are few among even the most remote provinces of Arasteen who do not know the tales of their lord's exploits, even if many of them believe that they might be exaggerations (when, surprisingly often, they are not). The boy who would one day become king of Arasteen was born the son of immigrants from Kyan who settled in Sea Reach after a conflict between Corben's father and the parents of his mother caused them to leave their native land. The people of Arasteen were generally accepting of outsiders, but the oddities of Kyan's culture were strange even for them, and Corben's family had few true friends. When he was still a child, a conflict between Corben's father and another man, a lifetime resident of Sea Reach, cast great suspicion on their entire family. They were considering fleeing the country when a member of the Radiant Order intervened and determined that Corben's father was being unjustly persecuted by a man who was both a liar and a thief. The judgment of the paladin was accepted unconditionally by the other citizens of Sea Reach, and at last Corben and his parents were fully accepted, based solely on the knight's word. Young Corben was completely awed by the paladin, and vowed that he would one day join the ranks of the Radiant Order himself.

As soon as he came of age and joined the hospitalers, Corben excelled in both the practice of healing as well as in strength of arms. The knights and templars to whom he found himself attached during his years as an initiate spoke very highly of his worth, and it came as no surprise that he was elevated to the rank of knight as soon as he reached the eligible age. Only a few years into his service as a Knight of the Radiant Order, Corben was already being named as a potential candidate for elevation to the rank of Templar when his entire patrol was ambushed and wiped out by the forces of a ruthless bandit lord preying upon the people of Arasteen. Corben was the only survivor and, gravely wounded, he was taken prisoner by the bandit lord in hopes of securing a ransom for the well known young knight.

Even as word reached the order at their headquarters in Sea Reach, Corben was taking matters into his own hands. Unable to escape from his cell into the bandits' fortress, he instead managed to remove some of the bars from his window, granting him access to the nearly sheer wall outside, which led to a lethal drop onto jagged rocks far below. Instead, Corben scaled the wall and broke into the personal chambers of his captor, overpowering him despite his injuries, taking his sword, and making his way out of the fortress. The young knight and his prisoner encountered the astounded team of knights being sent to rescue him just as they were leaving Sea Reach. One year later, Corben became the youngest Templar in the Radiant Order's history. His elevation to the position of Paladin only a few years later was even more historic, but hardly surprising by that point.

Corben the Young genuinely believes that Arasteen should serve as a beacon to the other nations of Aden, showing them that they too can prosper and overcome the Darkfall if they but embrace the tenets of Justice and Compassion. The stress of the burdens he has placed upon himself shows in subtle ways; his eyes hint at enormous weariness and there is gray hair at his temples that prove his boyish countenance is a lie. But when he smiles, he resembles nothing so much as a young man filled with the joy of purpose and contentment with his life.

## Queen Moriana

[Female half-elf Fighter 8 / Rogue 6]

Moriana was already a member of the Templar council when Corben joined, and she was immediately struck not only by how ridiculously young he was, but by his incredible focus and determination. Even more intriguing, neither of these qualities imperiled his good nature or sense of humor. Moriana was fascinated, but she filed such things away, for it was uncommon before the Darkfall for Templars to have relationships with one another. When Corben ascended to the position of Paladin (again at a shockingly young age), he surprised Moriana when he selected her as one of his advisors. She served in his entourage for some time, confused as to her exact purpose, when it occurred to him that for all his charisma and charm, Corben simply did not know how to talk to a woman. Fortunately, this was a problem she was more than happy to fix.

One of Corben's first acts upon taking the throne was to ask Moriana to be his queen, and she happily agreed. Although she does not regret being with Corben for a single moment, as theirs is a union of love rather than politics, she does occasionally lament the state of boredom in which she occasionally finds herself. Her duties as queen overrule her duties as a Templar, and as such she rarely has occasion to take to the battlefield, much though she might prefer to the contrary. Moriana's chief failing has always been impulsiveness, however, and as a result, her boredom has led to activities that would cause her husband and others great distress if they knew about them.

Moriana's closest friends is Syrian, the elven warrior who aids her husband in his duties as Governor of Syflanus. The two women get together often to enjoy one another's company, although few suspect what this really means. In truth, the two disguise themselves with masks and take to the countryside to fight against bandits, nocturnals, and anything else nefarious that gets in their way. It is exceptionally dangerous, but the two women, who are known as the folk heroes called "the Damsels," do not care. They consider it their duty to Arasteen, and have no intentions of putting a stop to their clandestine activities.

## Paladin Grimlak

[Male human Paladin 15]

The third man to hold the position of Paladin since the Darkfall, Grimlak is regarded by many as a hero of stature equal to King Corben himself, and counts the King among his closest friends. Unlike many who have held the position, Grimlak is not the least reluctant to leave Arasteen on missions of great importance; indeed, it is only at Corben's urging that he remains within his homeland as much as he does, instead preferring to spend his time abroad battling evils that may one day threaten his beloved people. It took a great deal of convincing, a shameless appeal to his patriotism, and a stern urging by his beloved monarch to get Grimlak to accept the position of Paladin in the first place.

Grimlak hails from humble origins. He was a stable boy in the village of Hammlish, where he caught the eye of a traveling knight that took the time to tutor him whenever he passed through the village, which was often enough that he was impressed by Grimlak's devotion and passion for learning. Grimlak became a hospitaler as soon as he was old enough, and advanced to knighthood in a very short period of time. He sat on the Templar council for many years and was close friends with both Corben and Moriana prior to their ascending to the throne. He has lost more friends than still live, and has fought against more evils than he can remember. He is aging, and very weary, but he cannot allow himself to rest when there are those who need his aid. For all his experience, Grimlak has still not realized that to others he is a beacon of hope in a world that desperately needs such symbols. He is beloved by all of Arasteen just as he is despised by Urbana; he sits atop the list of individuals whose capture is most desired by the Inquisitors of the Eye.

One of Grimlak's many blessings is the enchanted blade Evanor. He has carried it since childhood, when he found it rusted and battered



in the mud of a riverbank. He carefully restored it and has carried it without fail since that time, with more and more enchantments being bestowed upon it over the years. The blade absorbs sunlight and converts it to magical energy which can augment Grimlak's strength, fuel his spells, or a myriad of other effects such as generating light or sensing directions.

## **Knight Alastrina Olaffsdottir**

**[Female human Paladin 8]**

There are few members of the Radiant Order who are more controversial than the young knight Alastrina, known as Allie to her friends, of whom she has virtually none. Alastrina was fifteen when the Darkfall occurred, and joined the ranks of the hospitalers less than a year later. Everyone she loved perished within a day or two of the Darkfall, and with nothing left, she was looking desperately for something to fill the void. Fortunately, the Radiant Order has given her that. Unfortunately, it is not quite enough.

Alastrina is extremely competent when on a mission, and has a tremendous success rate when compared to her peers. Unfortunately, in the time between assignments, she suffers from nightmares and memories too terrible to speak of, resulting in a tendency to drink and engage in violence with minimal provocation. The horrors she witnessed during the Darkfall have damaged her ability to trust others almost beyond repair, and the only friend she truly has is a jurak thaumaturge named Gudrun who often accompanies her on her assignments. Between the two of them they have very rarely met a foe they could not defeat, but as Gudrun has often pointed out, Alastrina is far and away her own worst enemy.

Alastrina's great-grandfather was a member of the Order. Although his children and grandchildren did not choose to follow in his footsteps, he knew that eventually one of his descendants would do exactly that, and he left them a gift. Alastrina carries the blade Syderear, an enchanted longsword that her great-grandfather put to great use in service to the Radiant Order, and she hopes to one day be worthy of its legacy.





# ENEMIES OF THE RADIANT ORDER

As self-appointed champions of good, there are a great many groups and individuals that the council of Templars has identified as significant threats that all knights and operatives of the order should be on the watch for at all times.

## Agents of the Darkfall

The single greatest threat that history has ever known is the Darkfall. On this, the Radiant Order and many of its rivals and opponents are in complete agreement. Toward this end, the order has decreed that any willing agents of the Darkfall, beings intelligent enough to serve of their own free will are both the most dangerous and the most valuable. Knights are encouraged to capture and interrogate such individuals if at all possible but, if circumstances prevent such things, they are to be killed to prevent their evil from bringing more suffering. The order's headquarters in Sea Reach meticulously debriefs all knights who have had encounters with such individuals, and maintains a ledger of their descriptions, agendas, and where at all possible, their identities.

## Agents of Lord Urbane

Only slightly less dangerous than the Darkfall itself, in the eyes of the Radiant Order, are the ruthless and cruel policies of the Iron Tyrant. While even the Order must grudgingly admit that Lord Urbane's Thunder Trains have been a tremendous boon to all of Aden, they adamantly oppose his philosophy, which essentially espouses that to defeat the Darkfall, one must be as cold and merciless as the enemy. This is an incredibly dangerous notion that could lead to the downfall of Aden even when the Darkfall is defeated, at least in the eyes of the Order, and as such they work against Urbane's agenda whenever it is possible to do so without endangering those who depend upon the Iron Tyrant for their continued prosperity.

The animosity towards Urbane is reciprocated with great fervor. Before his ascension to the position of Paladin, Grimlak often lead covert missions inside the boundaries of Urbane, and to this day remains one of the Eye's most wanted 'criminals' for his actions. The recent rumors of an alliance between Urbane and Ionara are even more troubling than the activity on the part of the Eye, for to the Order it heralds an embracing of Urbane's dangerous philosophy on the part of other nations, something that was already a concern given the Grand Kazan of the High Steppes' admiration of Urbane and the allegedly growing friendship between Urbane and the Emperor of Vanora.

## Overzealous Arbiters of Carraway

There has never been any particular love lost between the nations of Arasteen and Carraway, due in large part to their conflicting ideologies. While the two faiths are not necessarily incompatible, the distance between the two lands and the zealous nature of many adherents on both sides have ensured that relations have never been better than lukewarm at best. The Radiants firmly believe that the Church of All Saints has no trace of compassion, and since the Darkfall, the more draconian measures they have enacted to protect their people from corruption, which has included the execution of numerous innocent magic-users suspected of being in league with the Darkfall, has gone too far.

## The Gray Masters

Long before the Darkfall occurred, the Gray Masters were already a threat that was of great concern to the Radiant Order. In fact, the Gray Masters predate the order and were responsible for its creation when a sorcerer affiliated with that necromantic cabal attacked Sea Reach and was defeated by King Tirrian. This particular group is believed to have come into being during the Great War, and as such its history and purpose is unknown, perhaps even to its own members. Regardless of their origins, however, the Gray Masters have proven themselves a persistent, significant threat, and one that has led to the characteristic stance the order has taken against necromancy in general. Over the centuries, attempts have been made to oust the Masters from their home in the Gray Isles, but without success. Even an attempt by the ironclad annihilator ships of the Urbanan army was unsuccessful, which the Templar council viewed with bitter satisfaction.

## Salicious the Infernal

Predating the Darkfall by a handful of years, the self-styled pyromancer known as Salicious the Infernal is a wizard of significant power who, as one might guess, specializes in fire magic. Salicious apparently has an obsessive interest in relics of Aden's prehistory, with a particular emphasis on the fomori society of giants who once dwelled within the lands now occupied by Arasteen. Although it cannot be verified, there is strong reason to believe that Salicious has become corrupted. Prior to the Darkfall, he was a skilled arcanist and a frustratingly evasive foe, but the level of power he has displayed in the past ten years seems to indicate that something has changed significantly. He has crossed swords with several Templars and, while he has never truly bested them, neither has he ever been captured. He was believed dead once by Grimlak, prior to the latter's ascension to Paladin, but the pyromancer apparently survived the encounter and has since returned to plague the people of Arasteen again.

## The Lord of the Pale

Like the Gray Masters, with whom this enigmatic entity is seemingly linked, the Lord of the Pale is an ancient threat that has arisen periodically to threaten the people of the Known Lands. Its origin, its purpose, even its actual name are unknown. Cults that revere the entity occasionally arise, and if they are not curtailed swiftly, their worship can cause the creature to manifest, something that inevitably leads to the deaths of hundreds or even thousands due to a variety of virulent, fatal diseases. Legends of the creature's appearance throughout the ages are many, but the one thing that is agreed upon is that during one of its last recorded appearances, the creature was defeated and bound by King Tirrian himself, and it has been dormant for most of history since that time. In the years since the Darkfall, however, it has escaped its bonds and appears periodically, causing death in its wake each time. The council of Templars is eager to know more about the Lord of the Pale, and what relation, if any, it may have to the Darkfall as well as the Gray Masters.

## The Mad Kazan

The High Steppes are quite distant from Arasteen, being accessible only by a long sea journey that skirts the notoriously unwelcoming waters of Le'Ciel, or an even longer overland trek through the ridiculously inhospitable northern reaches of the Sundered Desert in the Rhanate. Despite this, the interventionist nature of the Radiant Order has caused its leaders to pay very close attention to the Grand Kazan of the Steppes, the man called Tovar. The cunning and strategic manner in which Tovar defeated an opponent who was, by all accounts, a vastly superior combatant in order to attain his position gained the interest of



the order, but the erratic manner in which he has ruled since his ascension has made him a much more serious threat, and one that the order has been much more aggressive with their observation of his actions in hopes of preventing what could be a full-scale invasion of Carraway.

## NEW MECHANICS

### New Archetypes

The following archetypes are inspired by the Radiant Order and appropriate for characters that are members of or of similar backgrounds - those trained by a large organization with an emphasis on faith, justice, and education.

#### Radiant Crusader (Paladin Archetype)

Though all paladins who call upon the blessings of the Radiant Path are warriors, a few are exceptionally zealous in their pursuit of justice. These bold champions dedicate themselves exclusively to eradicating all enemies of Arasteen. While they can frequently be shortsighted and intolerant of opposing viewpoints, none can question their battlefield prowess.

**Crusader's Vows:** The radiant crusader must take a vow of loyalty (to Arasteen and the Radiant Order) and a vow of courage as per the rules for paladins in Aden (see Chapter 2, Thunderscape Campaign Setting). This is in addition to the normal vows a paladin must take (in campaigns beyond Aden, he must adopt a vow of courage and a vow of loyalty to some nation of organization in addition to his alignment restrictions - violating these vows has the same effect as violating his paladin code of conduct).

**Holy Zeal (Ex):** A radiant crusader can enter a state of holy zeal for a number of rounds per day equal to 4 + his Charisma modifier. At each level after 1st, he can enter this state for an additional round. Entering holy zeal is a free action. The total number of rounds of holy zeal per day is renewed after resting for 8 hours.

While in holy zeal, a radiant crusader gains a +4 bonus to his Strength and Charisma. This bonus increases to +6 to Strength and Charisma at 11th level.

A radiant crusader can leave holy zeal as a free action, but must spend at least five minutes in quiet prayer and introspection to regain his focus before he can enter the state once more. If a radiant crusader becomes unconscious, holy zeal immediately ends.

This class ability counts as rage for the purposes of qualifying for feats, and the maximum number of rounds of zeal per day is affected by any effects that grant additional rounds of rage. The effects overlap with, but do not stack with, rage. (A character with both abilities could benefit from the Charisma and Constitution bonus of both, but does not double the Strength bonus.)

This ability replaces smite evil and aura of justice.

**Endless Crusade (Ex):** At 5th level, the radiant crusader can draw upon his own divine magic to increase his zealous fervor. Any time he casts a paladin spell, he immediately enters holy zeal for a number of rounds equal to the spell's level. If he was already in a state of holy zeal, these rounds do not count against his total rounds of holy zeal for the day. He enters holy zeal even if he currently cannot do so (if he has used all of his rounds of holy zeal for the day or has left the state and not yet regained his focus).

If the radiant crusader's paladin spell was cast upon one or more allies, the radiant crusader can allow one target of the spell to enter holy zeal (as per his class ability) for a number of rounds equal to the spell's level instead. The radiant crusader does not gain rounds of holy zeal when he does this.

This ability replaces divine bond.

#### Radiant Emissary (Rogue Archetype)

There are those who serve the Radiant Order that choose to serve their brethren from the shadows. While Arasteen holds itself to a higher standard than many nations, the fact remains that sometimes it requires information that cannot be obtained through a priest's wisdom or a knight's strength. Though the Templar Council would never be so coarse as to admit to the use of spies, they do employ agents they refer to simply as emissaries.

Radiant emissaries are trained in their arts by fellow members of the faith, and possess a unique balance of faith and subtlety. While as dedicated to the virtues of Justice and Compassion as any knight, radiant emissaries remain morally flexible enough to adapt their approach in complex situations.

Though some radiant emissaries are official knights of the Order, most prefer to maintain a lower profile and serve as hospitalers. Very few emissaries have ever been promoted to the Templar Council - though those rare few who make it that far rank among the most cunning and formidable individuals in Arasteen.

**Moral Code:** All radiant emissaries must adopt holy vows, as per the rules for paladins in Aden (see Chapter 2, Thunderscape Campaign Setting). They must take a vow of loyalty to Arasteen and the Radiant Order, as well as one other vow of their choice. A radiant emissary suffers no stigma for violating any of his vows, so long as he does so while completing a mission on behalf of the Radiant Order. While some emissaries will gladly rationalize any misdeed on behalf of the Order, others feel tremendous guilt and will only do so when there is no other choice - and will retire to contemplate the morality of their actions as soon as the mission is complete.

**Superior Education:** Emissaries are highly-skilled individuals, trained in the legendary libraries of Arasteen. A radiant emissary may add his Intelligence modifier to any Bluff, Disguise, Diplomacy, and Intimidate skill checks instead of his Charisma modifier.

This ability replaces trapfinding. The radiant emissary may gain the rogue's standard trapfinding class ability at a later time in place of any rogue talent.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** A radiant emissary's sneak attack increases more slowly than a normal rogue. Though he gains 1d6 sneak attack damage at 1st level, this damage increases every three levels rather than every two levels. (2d6 at 4th level, 3d6 at 7th level, 4d6 at 10th level, 5d6 at 13th level, 6d6 at 16th level, and 7d6 at 19th level.)

#### Beyond Aden - Radiant Emissaries

Adapting the radiant emissary for a non-Thunderscape campaign only requires a few considerations. First, the emissary should owe his training some sort of religious organization, preferably one that places a large emphasis on education, subterfuge, or both. Secondly, if your campaign setting uses the standard alignment rules for clerics and paladins, a divine emissary's alignment should be within one step of his deity's.

If a radiant emissary's alignment deviates too far from his deity's or he grossly violates his vows, he loses access to *smite evil*, *divine cunning*, and any spell-like abilities granted by divine potential until he redeems himself. Any actions taken under orders from the radiant emissary's superiors in the church will not alter his alignment or count as violations (though some radiant emissaries will feel tremendous guilt for making such moral sacrifices).

Evil divine emissaries gain an antipaladin's smite good ability in place of smite evil, though they still use Intelligence bonus rather than their Charisma bonus (see the *Advanced Player's Guide* for details regarding antipaladins). Neutral paladins can choose smite good or smite evil when they first gain the ability, but once chosen the choice is permanent.



**Smite Evil (Ex):** A radiant emissary can smite evil once per day, adding his Intelligence bonus to his attack rolls and his rogue level to all damage rolls against the target of his smite. This ability is otherwise identical to the paladin's smite evil class ability. A divine emissary cannot apply sneak attack damage against the target of his smite. He gains an additional use of smite per every three levels after 1st level (at 4th, 7th, 10th, 13th, 16th, and 19th level).

This ability replaces the rogue's trap sense class ability.

**Divine Potential (Sp):** When selecting the *minor magic* or *major magic* rogue talents, the radiant emissary selects his spells from the cleric spell list rather than the sorcerer/wizard spell list.

The following rogue talent is available only to divine emissaries:

**Divine Cunning (Su):** Once per day as a full round action, you gain a bonus equal to your Intelligence modifier on one saving throw of your choice. This bonus persists until you apply it to a different saving throw.

## Radiant Path Cleric (Cleric Archetype)

The clergy of the Radiant Path have a simple but important duty - spread the Twin Virtues of Justice and Compassion. Some priests interpret this as a personal duty to vigorously proselytize on behalf of their religion. Others merely believe it is their duty to serve as an example - if one fights for justice and spreads compassion to those who need it, the truth of the Twin Virtues will be obvious to all good souls.

Though their end goals are very different, priests of both stripes often become adventurers so that they might better spread their message in a dangerous world. While the standard cleric class can adequately represent many of these individuals, this archetype captures the flavor of a cleric truly dedicated to Justice and Compassion.

**Domains:** A Radiant Path cleric's domains must represent the twin virtues. He must choose one domain that represents Justice and one that represents Compassion. These domains are as follows (subdomains of these domains are also acceptable):

**Justice Domains:** Glory, Law, Liberation, War

**Compassion Domains:** Community, Good, Healing, Protection

**Virtuous Resonance:** When a Radiant Path cleric prepares spells for the day, he gains special benefits if he selects all of the day's domain spells from a single domain. If he selects all of his domain spells from his Justice domain, he gains the *spirit of justice* ability. If he selects all of his domain spells from his Compassion domain, he gains the *spirit of compassion* ability.

**Spirit of Justice:** Any time the Radiant Path cleric reduces an enemy to 0 hp or less, all allies within 30 feet are filled with a burst of divine righteousness. They gain a +2 divine bonus to a single attack roll, skill roll, or saving throw of their choice. This bonus must be used before the start of your next turn or it is lost.

**Spirit of Compassion:** Any time the Radiant Path cleric heals another creature with a spell or with his channel energy class ability, he may willingly sacrifice a number of hit points up to his level + his Wisdom modifier. One target healed by the spell or channel gains additional healing equal to double this amount.

## Radiant Scholar (Wizard Archetype)

Magic can take many forms in Aden. Divine casters channel energy through faith or righteous zeal. Arcane scholars direct their power through applied intellect or force of personality. In the libraries of the Radiant Order, Arastinian scholars have accumulated the most extensive collection of magical lore since the destruction of the Celestial College. These scholars have recognized one simple truth - regardless of how it is applied, magic is still magic. As a result, these individuals can blur the line between arcane and divine lore in exceptional ways.

**Divine Arcana:** Though an arcane caster, a radiant scholar has learned to wield effects normally considered the exclusive province of the divine.

A radiant scholar chooses a single cleric domain at 1st level. While he does not gain any of the domain abilities, he adds the spell's domain spells to his spell list. He also gains a bonus spell slot on each level that he can cast. These bonus spell slots can only be used to cast domain spells.

Any domain spells not normally on the sorcerer/wizard spell list can only be prepared using bonus spell slots gained from this ability. The wizard may prepare any of his domain spells without the use of his spellbook (and they are, in fact, not scribed in his spellbook).

At 8th level, the radiant scholar selects a single spell he has gained as a bonus domain spell. He can now cast this spell spontaneously, using any of his wizard spell slots of equal or higher level to power the spell (including domain spell slots). Once selected, the choice of a spontaneous spell is permanent.

This ability replaces arcane school and arcane bond.

**Bonus Domains:** At 5th, 10th, and 15th level the radiant scholar may choose an additional cleric domain in place of one of the bonus feat granted by his class. This does not grant him any domain abilities or additional spell slots. It merely adds the domain's bonus spells to his spell list, as per the rules for *divine arcana*. If he does not desire additional domain spells, he may take the bonus feat as per the normal rules for a wizard.

## New Spell

### Radiant Redemption

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** cleric/oracle 2, inquisitor 2, paladin 2

**Casting Time** 1 hour

**Components** V, S, DF

**Range** touch

**Target** one creature

**Duration** special

**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

This spell may only be cast in an area sacred to the caster's faith and involves a long, soul-searching exchange between the caster and subject.

At the end of the casting the subject must willingly take at least three vows, as per the rules for paladins in Aden (see Chapter 2, Thunderscape Campaign Setting), to benefit from this spell. So long as the subject adheres to these vows, he gains a +1 competence bonus that may be applied once per round to any attack roll, skill check, or saving throw. This benefit lasts for one week, but may be renewed by additional castings of the spell. If the subject refuses to take any vows, the spell has no effect.

If the subject knowingly and purposefully breaks any of his vows, the caster who most recently cast this spell on the subject is immediately aware, regardless of distance. Though the caster does not know the details, he knows which vow the subject has broken.

A creature that breaks a vow taken while under the effects of radiant redemption cannot benefit from the spell again until he atones for his misdeeds.

### Radiant Redemption

Though this spell was originally created with the intent of enforcing the vows of Radiant knights, its effectiveness in that regard is somewhat dubious. Any moderately skilled cleric and even some paladins can cast the spell and only the most recent caster can sense a vow has been broken. Amoral knights quickly learned that if they wished to shirk their duties, all they needed was an agreeable priest.

Instead, this spell is often used as a ritual reaffirmation of one's vows. It is also used in some small settlements as a means of enforcing community service. Minor criminals undergo the ritual in return for a reduced sentence, and vow to avoid future misdeeds under the watchful eye of a local priest.



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# **The Radiant Order**

## **Defenders of the North**

The Radiant Order is an altruistic organization devoted to the protection and prosperity of the nation of Arasteen, but their interest does not stop there. All of Aden is at risk from the Darkfall, and the noble warriors of the Radiant Order are determined to save lives at any cost.

The world of Aden is vast and diverse, with many different races, cultures, and creeds occupying its width and breadth. Each installment of the Thunderscape World Books examines a different aspect of Aden in much greater depth, allowing players and GMs to add detail to their gaming experience.

The Radiant Order includes the following:

- ✧ The Radiant Crusader, an archetype for the paladin class
- ✧ The Radiant Emissary, an archetype for the rogue class
- ✧ The Radiant Path Cleric, an archetype for the cleric class
- ✧ The Radiant Scholar, an archetype for the wizard class
- ✧ And more!



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