



Lands in Shadow for Shadow of the Demon Lord

As the Empire crumbles, cultists emerge from the shadows to work their wickedness in plain view, the undead armies in the Desolation gather strength and numbers, and signs of the coming doom become more widespread. In these troubled times, all eyes look to the Holy Kingdom for salvation.

This holy land has been the spiritual heart of the Empire for centuries, shining like a beacon through the gathering darkness. Surely, of all places in Rûl, the Holy Kingdom should be the best hope for the future against the apocalyptic times being foretold by the troubles besetting the land. Surely, the Holy Kingdom will rise to the challenge and gather to its banners the other provinces to crush the orc uprising and restore order to the land. Or will it?

Kingdom of God reveals the details of one of the Empire's most important provinces, offering a look at its history, lands, and people. In addition, this entry in the Lands in Shadow series offers a selection of new paths for characters, whether in service to the New God or in opposition to the cult.

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From the Sacred Annals

The Holy Kingdom's foundations were laid over a thousand years ago when Edene conquerors made landfall on Rûl's eastern shores to claim this new land for themselves. Led by the rapacious God-Queen, Umessa, the Edene armies pushed the First People to the fringes, using their bronze swords and swift chariots to slaughter the natives. After defeating and enslaving the First People, Edene claimed all the lands from what would become the Freeholds of Nar west to Deepings Gorge and as far south as what is now the Low Country. With their boundaries secure, the Edene began cultivating the land and building cities and roads, all to create the greatest kingdom these lands had ever seen.

Umessa divided up the outlying lands she had conquered between her lovers and companions, creating ten duchies, each of which owed fealty to the new and mighty kingdom of Edene. The most verdant and beautiful of these duchies went to a young woman named Tarra, a gifted warrior who served the queen as her lover and shield maiden. Although bound by oaths of fealty to her queen, Tarra was free to govern her holdings as she saw fit. She showed herself to be good and just, a regent committed to forging peace with the conquered people and making them into subjects loyal to her and all her descendants. From the first duchess the Duchy of Tarra took its name.

A Kingdom Crumbles

In time, it became clear to Umessa that carving out portions of the kingdom into duchies had an effect opposite to what she intended. Rather than cooperating to support the crown, the duchies began competing against one another. Disputes over trade, borders, and other issues led to skirmishes that blossomed into full-blown wars. One by one, the duchies broke off to form independent nations, until the only territory left to the nation of Edene was that which the God-Queen had kept for herself. At first the queen sought to bring these recalcitrant vassals to heel, but so many breakaways meant fighting wars on many fronts, which would leave the royal holdings vulnerable to counterattack and possible annihilation. In the end, Edene abandoned its claims to the newly independent countries and focused on keeping the territory it still held.

The Duchy of Tarra was the last to break away. Throughout the splintering of the kingdom, Tarra remained the crown's staunchest ally, lending troops and materiel to the war effort. Edene's inability to bring the rebellious duchies under control eventually strained the relationship between Edene and Tarra; critics among the Tarrans claimed that Edene had

squandered the lives of Tarran soldiers with poor planning and inept leadership. After the Tarran citizens started refusing to support Edene's war effort, the kingdom sent in troops to take by force what before had been freely given. Tarra's people resisted and rebelled.

In the wake of this uprising, Tarra's longtime loyalty to the Edene crown won the duchy few allies among the newly independent provinces, and thus Tarra was left to struggle against the kingdom on its own. Edene flooded the duchy with armies to crush the insurrection. Outnumbered and outmatched, the resistance went underground, while the duke of Tarra and his family fled the duchy to live in exile. Resistance fighters, acting as bandits and guerillas, resorted to acts of terror to drive out the occupying forces. Despite a concerted effort by the rebels, Edene would not give up its claims on its last duchy, for its ruler could not bear the shame of the total loss of the once-mighty kingdom. Thus, Tarra bled for a century, suffering under the yoke of oppression, with little chance of escaping from under the monarchs' boots, until an unexpected savior appeared on the horizon.

The Dark Times

The Edene occupation of Tarra ended when the Men of Gog, also known as the Magog, spilled into the heartland of the continent from the Desolation to conquer Rûl. Caught by surprise, Edene could not mount an effective defense against the invaders or their demonic and undead legions. Edene's disorganized armies fell before the corrupted host, and soon the nation surrendered to the Witch-King's armies. Without Edene to prop up the occupying force in Tarra, the rebels, aided by the invaders, shattered their Edene overlords, but their victory simply allowed the Witch-King's commanders to roll over Tarra as they pushed deeper into the continent.

The Witch-King, Ashrakal, surprised everyone when he restored the ruling family to power in Tarra and allowed it some degree of autonomy, largely because the new duchess, who descended from the exiled duke, had become enamored with the Witch-King and counted herself among his most ardent supporters. Legend holds that Ashrakal eventually chose her to become one of his brides and later transformed her into a gorgon to keep her under his power. Whether such tales are true or not, Tarra remained relatively unchanged during these dark times, and, aside from the presence of otherworldly soldiers stationed there to keep the peace, daily life was much the same as under the Edene occupation.

A Light in the Dark

The Kalasan victory over Gog restored freedom and self-determination to Tarra for the first time in almost

two hundred years. After purging the ruling family of its Witch-King sympathizers, the Kalasans gave the crown to Erema, a distant cousin in the Tarran royal family. Erema had distanced herself from her corrupted relatives and fought in the resistance against Edene and, later, Gog. Upon becoming queen, she pledged fealty to the Alabaster Throne of the newly formed Empire of Caecras, making Tarra a province thereof, and then set out to rebuild her nation.

With imperial aid, Erema led the effort to purge her lands of enemy elements and put hundreds of culprits to the executioner's axe. Of equal importance to her was the restoration of her family's name, to free it from the legacy of darkness it had gained while serving the Witch-King. As a show of devotion to the gods, she assembled a Council of Faith, inviting the high priests of the Old Faith as well as a prelate from the Order of Light, a new religion brought to Rûl by the Kalasans. With Erema's blessing, temples sprang up all across Tarra, and priests of nearly all faiths were welcomed to the land.

Roland and Astrid

A century later, a new king named Roland claimed the throne. The second son of Erema's grandson, Reginald IV, Roland was originally given to the Order of Light to serve as a priest. But before he could be ordained, his elder brother the king succumbed to the Shuddering Pox. The crown passed to Roland who, with great reluctance, accepted it and swore oaths to the Old Gods and the Order of Light. A deeply pious king, he deferred to the Council of Faith in almost all matters, which by itself would have made him an unexceptional, if inoffensive, regent. His life would change, however, when he met Astrid.

Astrid, the so-called Prophet of the New God, was a young acolyte who had belonged to the Order of Light until she received a revelation—a glimpse into the infinite that would become the New God. Although she did keep many of the essential tenets of the Order of Light in her new teachings, she now focused her sermons on the proper order of things, how mortals lived many lives, and how it was important for people to live in the light and avoid the stain of corruption that comes from wicked deeds. She also preached against the institutions of religion, blaming the Order of Light for being blinded to the evils in the world because of its obsession with power and influence. She gathered a following wherever she went, but she accumulated an equal number of enemies. With assassins sent by the Order of Light hounding her wherever she went, Astrid was forced to stay on the move, enabling her message to spread farther than it otherwise would have if she had been left alone.

Eventually, Astrid came to Tarra and began a ministry in Tarra City. Roland, intrigued by the controversy that surrounded her, attended a sermon and saw in the woman the gods—or, more precisely, a new god—that had heretofore been unknown. Even as Astrid's words affected Roland, they roused the order against her, and soon thereafter riots erupted in the square where she did her preaching. In response to her peril, Roland dispatched his personal guard to escort Astrid from the square and bring her to the royal palace, where she would be safe. Thus began a friendship that would change the world.

The Founding of a Faith

Roland became one of Astrid's most ardent supporters, and he used his power to protect the Prophet from her enemies. His defense of the heretic brought him into direct conflict with the Order of Light and those provinces friendly to the religion. Some believe that a romance blossomed between the two, while others claim their relationship was purely spiritual. Regardless, whatever bond they shared was not strong enough to keep the Prophet in Tarra. She



knew her destiny lay elsewhere, and the longer she stayed in Tarra, the worse it would be for Roland. So she left the kingdom and was soon thereafter waylaid and murdered—which freed her soul to ascend and take its place at the side of the New God.

Though Roland was stricken with grief over what he and many others believed to be Astrid's demise, he became even more devoted to her teachings. Through his efforts, the various cults that had formed after hearing her words came together at an event called the First Accord to establish a formal doctrine of faith that would guide the new religion going forward.

As the Cult of the New God took shape, Roland banned the Order of Light from the kingdom, driving out the priests and reconsecrating their temples to the New God. He spent the rest of his reign helping the Cult of the New God grow and prosper; he oversaw the writing of the *Codex of Truth*, the cult's most holy book, and the construction of the Seven Spires around the royal palace so that the faithful would ever after know that the faith stood under the protection of Tarra. By the time Roland died, Tarra City had been renamed Seven Spires, and the Kingdom of Tarra had become known as the Holy Kingdom.

The Shuddering Pox

The Shuddering Pox had troubled the Empire of Caecras ever since its founding in year 1, and by the year 356, the disease had become so widespread and the death toll so high that many believed the world was ending. The plague emptied towns, and smoke rose from the dead burning on pyres to stain the sky. Containing the plague proved almost impossible, since no one knew how the disease spread. Cities sealed their gates to refugees, only to find the disease had already taken root within their districts. Neighborhoods were burned to eradicate the disease, but the flames spread, consuming neighboring districts even as the insidious affliction worked its way into different areas. It seemed that Father Death had come to cleanse the world of all people.

The Cult of the New God worked to stem the disease, but the religious leaders realized they could not handle the task alone and thus established the House of Healing in Goodhope, the Kingdom's second largest city. Although it was funded by the cult, the House of Healing invited healers of all faiths and backgrounds to join the effort, and thus witches, initiates of the Old Faith, and members of other, stranger religions all joined forces with the cult to save the Empire from the plague. Through their cooperation, they managed to rid the city of the blight by 361 and then eradicate the disease from the rest of the Kingdom a few months later. Over the next five years, other Houses of Healing were founded in most major cities, and the distinctive red cloaks worn by their members could be seen in almost every land.

A Fading Monarchy

In the time following the plague years, the Holy Kingdom emerged as the Empire's spiritual center, a land devoted to the tenets of the New God's cult. As the cult's congregation swelled, so did its influence throughout the Empire. In 483, the emperor declared the cult to be the official religion of the land, and soon afterward the cult's representatives assumed advisory positions in the courts of the kings, queens, and other provincial leaders.

In Tarra, a series of increasingly ambitious Matriarchs used their power and popular support to issue decrees that took authority from the crown and invested it in the cult. Secular magistrates were replaced with people chosen by the cult, law enforcement was taken over by religious leaders, and taxation was transformed into tithing. By the end of the seventh century, Tarra's ruler had become little more than a figurehead, with the true authority resting in the Matriarch and the cardinals who supported her.

The Purging and the Crusades

With the monarchy all but stripped of its power, the cult began transforming Tarra into a truly holy kingdom. The opportunity for what would become known as the Purging arose when reports trickled into the Kingdom from the untamed lands to the north. For years, people had been pushing northward to claim the lands of the Northern Reach, lured by the prospect of cheap land and abundant resources. Although the area was not an imperial province yet, imperials lived in these lands, so when the undead started spilling out from the Desolation, the Empire moved to secure the northern lands as a province so it could mobilize forces to prevent the undead from reaching deeper into imperial lands. When the Empire acted too slowly to contain the threat, the Cult of the New God stepped up to contribute to the effort.

The Matriarch sent an army north to aid the beleaguered defenders, and their combined efforts threw back the undead. As a result, when imperial forces finally arrived on the scene, the cult had already established a foothold in the land. Furthermore, the relocation to the north of several thousand citizens, many of whom belonged to militias and watches, left the people frightened and open to wild accusations by witch hunters that enemies hid within their midst—enemies who happened to include Old Faith followers, witches, magicians, and, of course, devotees of the dark arts. These people became targets; some were driven out, others executed by angry mobs. People disappeared into the cult's dungeons, where inquisitors tortured them to extract confessions of trafficking with devils and worshipping

demons. The damned were consigned to the purifying flames of the pyres, and those who never confessed often died in their cells. People of differing religious views fled the Kingdom, seeking refuge in the more tolerant Confederacy of Nine Cities. Those who stayed behind were forced to convert, becoming, even if in name only, believers in the New God.

The Cult's Machinations

By the year 751, when Horus of Tear came calling for aid in his struggle against the beastmen and monsters that infested the borderlands, the Cult of the New God had secured its hold on the Holy Kingdom and was looking to expand its influence into other lands. What Horus never learned was that the Holy Kingdom had pressured the Grand Duchy of the West into withholding aid to Tear, thus forcing Tear to seek aid from the cult, thereby making Tear indebted to the Holy Kingdom. Tear bowed to the cult's demands, accepting the Kingdom's aid and the debt that such aid incurred. (For more information, see *Borderlands of Tear*.)

Emboldened by its successes in Tear and the Grand Duchy, the cult turned its attention to other areas where it could increase its influence and continue toward its ultimate goal—to transform the great nation into a holy empire, in much the same way that the cult had earlier come to dominate Tarra. To this end, Seven Spires sent envoys to the provincial courts, where they pressured leaders to maintain good standing in the faith by accepting their counsel. Missionaries pushed south, beyond the Low Country and into the Patchwork Lands and the frozen wastes, in the hope of bringing the light of the New God to the benighted peoples there. Although many of these efforts resulted in catastrophe, with missionaries tortured, imprisoned, and murdered, the cult did manage to tighten its grip around the provincial leaders, and the cult's representatives gained considerable influence in the Northern Reach, the Low Country, Balgrendia, and elsewhere.

In Caecras, though, the cult's plotting had disastrous consequences. The Matriarch believed that the Empire's orcs would be better suited to serving the cult's needs, through which they could undo the dark magic that led to their creation and convert them into devout soldiers of the New God. The young emperor who had recently gained the throne was foolish, given to tantrums, and easily manipulated by the bishop who advised him from behind the Alabaster Throne. The cult sought to drive a wedge between the emperor and Drudge, the king of the orcs. By doing so, the cult would ingratiate itself with the orcs, offering new freedoms and securities to gain their loyalty. Although Drudge warmed to the bishop somewhat, especially in light of the temperamental behavior of

the emperor, he was unwilling to align his people with what he believed was yet another false god.

The bishop, frustrated by the stubborn king, revealed, in an unwise moment, what happened to those orcs who were retired when they reached their thirty-third year—they became food for other orcs. This revelation caused Drudge to shake off the oaths he had sworn to the Alabaster Throne and to confront the young emperor. When the boy didn't deny the allegations, Drudge strode up the steps and choked the life from the emperor. When he was done, he cut the head from the body of the bishop who had revealed the terrible secret and declared himself emperor to the shock of the world.

The Holy Kingdom denounced the emperor's murder and months later broke from the Empire, declaring itself an independent state, since the Matriarch refused to kneel to an orc. Other provinces have begun considering or moving toward such declarations of autonomy. Whether or not the Matriarch knows of her agent's culpability in the disastrous turn of events is unclear, though she has received reports of orcs slaughtering the New God's representatives in spectacular and alarming ways. The Matriarch is eager to contain this new threat and has been pushing other provinces to join forces with her. She has one nagging problem, however: Moira, the Queen of Tarra, who has been a troubling annoyance ever since she claimed her father's throne.

A Holy Land

The Holy Kingdom occupies a central region of the continent to the north of the imperial capital. It is a land of old, green mountains, rolling hills, and shadowed valleys, with ample farmland and pastures for sheep and cattle. Tear stands to the west, Old Edene to the north, and Caecras to the south, and the lands held by the Confederacy of Nine Cities stretch to the east and south.

Although it is landlocked, the Holy Kingdom profits from rich soil and arable farmland, perfect for growing crops and raising livestock. People have cleared timber from the lowlands, but pine forests still blanket the western mountains, giving them their deep green color. The Kingdom boasts two large cities and numerous smaller towns and villages, connected by a web of dirt paths and paved roads.

Weathered Mountains

Though the Weathered Mountains are neither as tall nor as majestic as the Shield Mountains, which are visible within the Kingdom as a dark smudge all across the northern horizon, the smaller range remains impressive all the same. The mountains serve as a natural barrier to the west and provide the



province with iron, copper, and silver. In olden times, before Horus tamed the borderlands, the mountains proved invaluable for keeping out rampaging bands of beastmen, and they now keep the orcs in Caecras from boiling up out of the capital and flanking the Kingdom's defenders on the southern border.

Trappers, hunters, and miners are the most common among people living in the mountains these days, but evidence of other long-gone societies remains. Old monoliths erected by the First People stand crookedly here and there, their surfaces scrawled with faint whorls and runic patterns. Strange archways, presumably left by the faeries, sometimes shine with strange lights on certain nights of the year, while feral goblins, the occasional troll, and strange monsters haunt the heights.

Baldren's Fist: In recent years, people of ancestries other than human have found the Kingdom less welcoming and tolerant than it was in the past. As a result, many fauns, halflings, and other nonhumans have picked up and moved on, headed for the Confederacy or following the crusaders to the Northern Reach. One group that has resisted pressure from the cult is a small band of dwarfs who have a stronghold at the center of the Weathertop Mountains known as Baldren's Fist.

The dwarfs settled the lands of Tarra long before the Edene disembarked from their ships and waged war against the First People. In fact, the dwarfs even lent aid to some human tribes against the invaders, but when the First People capitulated, the dwarfs withdrew to their mountain homes. The Weathertop

Mountains held several smaller dwarfen holdfasts throughout the range, but, one by one, the dwarfs abandoned them, as their mines played out and the dangers of the depths became too great to fight. Now, only Baldren's Fist remains, and the stout leader, Braxen, son of Baldren, refuses to go anywhere.

The cult has made no direct move against the dwarfs, but mishaps, sabotage, and other maladies have beset the dwarfs in recent years. These events, combined with the humans' general aggression toward nonhumans, have prompted the dwarfs to level accusations at Seven Spires and make demands to be compensated for the loss of lives and materials. As a reply from the cult, the dwarfs have received only silence, and now the dwarfs of Baldren's Fist have begun preparations for war, knowing full well that they stand little chance of defeating the powerful Kingdom.

A great stone door in the side of a low, forest-covered mountain, flanked by two huge statues of dwarfen warriors, marks the entrance to Baldren's Fist. Few people test the dwarfs' patience by approaching this place. Beyond the door spreads a labyrinth of corridors and chambers, running through and between a dozen levels, each of which is connected to others by steep staircases. In the depths, the mines of the Fist branch out into the bowels of the earth, and workers toil day and night to extract metals and gemstones from the rock. The dwarfs prohibit humans from entering their demesne, and use force if necessary to keep them out.

Green Hills

A range of high, rolling, grassy hills starts about halfway across the Kingdom and climbs west to the Weathertops. Herders graze sheep and cattle on these hills, and shepherds can be seen leaning against the old stone monoliths that jut up from the hillsides. Most people attribute these structures to the First People who once lived in these lands, though some speculate that they belonged to the faeries. If the stones had magic, such power left them long ago, and now they stand as mute reminders of a people long gone.

Grinning Stone: Shepherds avoid the Grinning Stone and prevent their herds from grazing on what they believe to be a cursed hill. For this reason, the hill has a shaggy appearance, covered by tall grass. The stone responsible for the general aversion resembles most of the other stones adorning the Green Hills, except that this one has a wide, childish face on one side, bearing a sinister, leering grin. Some claim that the eyes in the face swivel to follow people who come too close, and others have blamed the stone for the disappearance of sheep and cattle. A few years ago, an overzealous witch hunter sought to remove the stone, but he and his crew returned from the hill gibbering and drooling, driven mad by what they had seen.

Misty Vale: In response to the Purging that saw people of other faiths persecuted and driven from the Holy Kingdom, a group of faithful came together to resist the Cult of the New God's tyranny in the Misty Vale, a narrow cleft in the Green Hills named for the thick fog that rolls down its sides and pools in its depths. The resistance is led by Nithren, a druid of considerable power, whose adherents are few compared to the number of enemies throughout the land. The resistance has not yet moved openly against the cult, but plans are in motion to strike back against the most abhorrent members of that faith.

Lowlands

The lands east of the Green Hills consist of rolling plains punctuated by patches of woodland, small lakes, and silvery rivers fed by snowmelt from the Weathertops. Little wilderness remains here, after farmers have spent centuries taming the landscape and raising livestock. Fifty or so villages sprout from the landscape, most of which are no more than a few dozen buildings that cling to the sides of the rutted dirt tracks that farmers use to bring their goods to market. Nearly all the villages are similar in construction: stone buildings painted white, with red shingles on the roofs and narrow iron stovepipes rising on the sides.

Ascendance: The largest community in the lowlands, Ascendance is one of many places where



The Prophet's Shawl

A bloodstained white vestment believed to have belonged to Astrid herself, the relic known as the *Prophet's Shawl* has become an important symbol for the cultists of the New God. People from all over the Empire have come to look upon it and, perhaps, receive the Prophet's blessings.

Holy Implement If you make the *Prophet's Shawl* your implement, you make attack rolls using Theurgy spells with 1 boon, and creatures make challenge rolls to resist your Theurgy spells with 1 bane.

Blood of the Martyr When a creature within short range gets a failure on an attack roll or a challenge roll, you can use a triggered action to turn the failure into a success. Each time you use this property, you take a penalty to your Health equal to 1 + your group level. The penalty gained from using this property drops by 1 each time you complete a rest until it disappears when it reaches 0.

Shield of the Martyr When you would become incapacitated from taking damage, you can use a triggered action to call upon the relic's protective powers. You reduce the damage to 0 and then teleport to an open space of the GM's choice within extreme range.



people believe Astrid ascended to Paradise, and so the town profits from the steady stream of pilgrims who come here from all over the Empire. Most of the roughly one thousand people who live here toil in the fields and tend to their herds. The others cater to visiting pilgrims. The town has several inns, the Prophet's Rest being the largest and most opulent, as well as restaurants, shops, and shrines. The Temple of the Sainted Mother is the main attraction, because the Temple holds an important relic: the *Prophet's Shawl*, a bloodstained garment that the locals believe Astrid wore at the time of her death.

Pyres: If not for the thirty cultists who were rooted out from this little town and burned alive on stakes set in a ring around the community three years ago, Pyres would be a quaint, if unexceptional place. People consider the place cursed and thus avoid it at all costs, even though the Inquisition gave assurances that the corruption had been purged. Half the original population picked up what they could carry and left. The remaining townsfolk struggle to make ends meet after the loss of so many people. They regard outsiders with suspicion, if not downright hostility, keeping their distance lest they invite more attention. The truth these people keep secret is that those accused of being cultists were in fact devotees of Revel, one of the old gods and the longtime patron of Pyres. The Inquisition came, selected thirty people at random, and burned them alive as a means of lighting the way to salvation. The survivors continue to worship Revel, but do so in secret.

Mercy Lake

The largest body of water in the Holy Kingdom, Mercy Lake stands at the confluence of two rivers and four streams, all of which drain to the east to form the Savage Cataracts that flow into Crescent Bay. The lake takes its name from an ancient battle fought during the Edene conquest, when Umessa, the God-Queen, allowed the war leader of the Tithtani tribe, Odrek, to surrender his head to her in exchange for the queen's allowing his people to live. Umessa lopped off the man's head and did spare the Tithtani, but made slaves of them, and their culture was, in time, fully absorbed by the Edene. Their descendants are now among those who serve the Cult of the New God.

Mercy Lake is deep and clear, its marshy shores choked with cattails and cypress trees. Several villages stand on its banks, and the people subsist on fishing. In olden times, all of Edene's papyrus came from these lands. Even though the Cult of the New God keeps an eye on all the territory it holds and the people living there, the remoteness of this area has enabled the Bleak Ones (see *Uncertain Faith*), a heretical faction of the faith, to take root here and thrive. The leader of the sect is a gnarled old man named Allyn. He travels from village to village, delivering fiery sermons. The unhinged individuals who follow him keep the locals firmly under his thumb by beating anyone who disagrees with them or displays the appearance of not being a true believer.

Seven Spires

The Holy Kingdom's capital, Seven Spires, commands the eastern slope of a solitary mountain rising on the eastern edge of the Green Hills. Once called Tarra City or the Holy City of Tarra, the metropolis assumed its new name after the construction of the seven holy towers that now surround the Royal Palace, which rises from the mountaintop. The city clings to the slope below the Seven Spires, facing east to catch the rising sun each day. The wealthy live nearest to the peak, while the lower slopes are given over to the poor and unclean trades. High walls encircle the towers and the palace, and run down the flanks of the eastern slope to enclose the city. Square turrets punctuate the walls and provide accommodations for the Tarran soldiers charged with protecting the holy city.

The Royal Palace

Once one of the finest palaces in all of Rûl, the ancestral seat of the Tarran monarchy now stands in the shadows cast by the seven towers that surround it. Three concentric high walls and extensive gardens all but obscure the palace from view at ground level, but it remains a place of great beauty despite the deep shadows that pool in and around it. Throughout the

palace are displayed paintings and sculptures, mostly of religious figures and scenes, created by some of the greatest artists ever to have lived in the Empire, such as Radi of Set, Myrcula the Sculptor, and Somnobl, who painted the dome of the great cathedral of Caecras. These works decorate the hundred or so rooms that make up the palace. The greatest among them is *The Passion of Astrid*, a stone statue that stands behind the royal throne and depicts the Prophet impaled on a dozen swords and knives, her hands raised as if to beseech the heavens. It was crafted by Erononym, a blind and deaf stonecarver who lived on the streets of Tarra City before he and his talents were discovered and put to use in making this wondrous and lifelike icon.

In addition to being the queen's residence, the Royal Palace is also home to the Matriarch's apartments, which occupy the old royal chapel. The Matriarch holds court here, and she has as many attendants and servants as Moira does. Since the cult's leader began living in the palace, each Matriarch in turn has claimed more and more of the central building, and now some whisper that the current Matriarch intends to oust the queen entirely and move her to a country estate.

The Seven Spires

Seven identical towers surround the royal palace. Each stands 177 feet tall and is capped by a dome supported by seven columns. At dawn and dusk, young boys climb the stairs to sing prayers of thanks to the divine, their voices forming a beautiful chorus that is audible to everyone in the city below. Identical enormous angelic figures hang on the towers' outer walls, each offering a bowl as a symbolic acceptance of alms and a tribute to the bounty of the New God's blessings.

Each tower belongs to one of the seven orders that make up the Cult of the New God. The towers have accommodations for the religious leaders who live and work here, with space enough for itinerant priests who come to speak with their superiors or receive blessings from the Matriarch. As well, each tower houses novices, who are sorted into the various orders based on their aptitudes when they are accepted into the priesthood.

Spire of Lore: The Keepers of Lore claim the Spire of Lore. Much of its space is set aside for the safekeeping of holy and important texts, chambers where copyists work, and warded vaults to contain relics important to the faith as well as others deemed too dangerous to let loose in the world.

Spire of Faith: The Spire of Faith belongs to the Bearers of the Faith, an order founded to spread the Prophet's teachings to all corners of the world. As one might expect, few of the adherents live in the tower,



since their order requires them to go on missions across the continent and beyond. The most distinctive aspect of this tower is the World Room, whose floor depicts an accurate map of Rûl. Acolytes work continually to update the details of the map, moving tokens as directed by their betters to keep track of the locations of the agents working to spread the faith.

Spire of the Sword: The order called the Swords of Astrid, also known as the Inquisition, works from this tower. The order dispatches agents to uncover corruption in the land, then to return with the worst of the heretics and demon thralls for interrogation and execution. The upper floors of the Spire of the Sword house the inquisitors and their servants, while dungeons occupy the lower tiers, a dark place full of screaming and the reek of the suffering.

Spire of Protectors: The Knights of the Temple, also known as templars, operate from this tower and use it for two main purposes. First, the order's leaders administer the institution from here, sending members out to protect the various temples established in the Empire and beyond. Second, the tower holds a garrison of templars charged with protecting Seven Spires. These guardians, called the Black Templars, are the best of the best, utterly devoted to whomever holds the title of Matriarch.

Spire of Justice: The order known as the Hammers of Justice was founded to fight against the enemies of the faith. The Spire of Justice houses some five hundred Hammers, ready to join the city's defenses

against any attackers. The tower once housed three times this number, but many Hammers traveled north to fight in the crusades against the undead in the north. Most of the tower's floors are given over to barracks, with a few serving as training rooms, mess halls, and kitchens.

Spire of Humility: The Poor Brethren, to whom this tower belongs, eschew material comforts and instead seek solace in their faith by serving as itinerant preachers. Each has sworn a vow of poverty to better apprehend the nature of the divine, free of distractions brought by wealth and excess. Roaming the land and living off charity, the Brethren have spread throughout the Empire. They are seen in almost every realm, from the edges of the Northern Reach to the cruel dens of iniquity that border the frozen wastes. Unlike the Bearers, the Brethren do not try to convert, but rather tend to the flocks of the faithful and inspire them by their example.

All Brethren begin their training at the Spire of Humility, but they never linger, always setting out into the world once they are ordained. For this reason, the Spire of Humility is a place of cobwebbed and dusty corridors, empty rooms, and the sparse quarters of the masters of the order, who oversee the training of acolytes and represent the order's interests in dealings with the Matriarch.

Spire of Peace: Little remains of the secular nobles who founded the order of the Peaceful Sisters to extend their faith's charitable reach across the Empire. Once the Sisters were the wealthiest of orders, but over time the expense of their good works has drained their coffers, which get little replenishment in these trying times. Despite this difficulty, the Spire of Peace remains an active place, its halls crowded with novices and the dour priestesses who oversee their instruction. Those who are inducted into the order are sent out to convents scattered across the Empire, from where they practice their charity.

Tarra, The Holy City

The Holy City of Tarra spills down the eastern side of the mountain crowned by the Seven Spires. The place is a cascade of red-roofed white houses clustered into tiny neighborhoods through which narrow streets twist and turn, climbing up to the summit and descending down to the foot, where a high wall surrounds the entire mountain. Seven Spires spares no effort to remind visitors of its holiness, and one can find icons of various saints, shrines, and temples dedicated to the New God throughout the city. Members of the various orders move singly or in small groups down the crowded streets, pausing long enough to give blessings or to question the faith of

outsiders. Of the city before the cult's ascendance, not much remains, and nothing of any rival religions can be found within Seven Spires' walls.

Nearly one hundred thousand people make their home in the Holy City. Half claim to be descended from the original Tarrans who lived in these lands, and the rest come from all across the Empire, drawn here by their belief in the tenets of the New God's cult. Almost everyone who resides in the city works in a trade related to the cult or to the service of pilgrims who come to the city throughout the year.

Unlike many other cities in the Empire, much of the Holy City is quite tidy, with spotless streets and a clean atmosphere, free from the smoke and odors that make many other urban centers unpleasant. The cult employs a legion of street sweepers and cleaners to maintain the city, while enforcing laws against littering, spitting, and any other act that would sully the city with draconian punishments that include flogging, imprisonment, and, sometimes, death.

Seven Spires' orderly and sanitized appearance does not extend to the maze of buildings thrown up outside the city's wall over the last year. Refugees from Caecras and elsewhere found the city closed to them. Rather than moving on, the people built a second city outside the capital's gates—a stinking mess of shacks, tents, and hovels occupied by castoffs and exiles from other lands. This second city has become an embarrassment to the cult, and though efforts to tend to this flock continue, hardliners have been pressing to round up the people, place them in camps, and clear away the eyesore with fire.

Eleven sizable villages encircle the mountain and keep the city supplied with food, clothing, and raw materials needed to maintain the various religious industries for which the city is known. The villages stand at the center of miles and miles of grain fields and pastures. During harvests, farmers haul their goods to the villages for transport to the city. In return, each village receives a garrison of cult soldiers for protection.

Goodhope

The second largest city in the Holy Kingdom, Goodhope exploded in growth during the darkest days of the Shuddering Pox, for it was here that the first House of Healing appeared. The miracles worked by the Red Cloaks drew people from all across the province at first, and later from neighboring provinces and beyond. It took the founding of other Houses of Healing to slow the flood of sick and injured who poured into what was at the time a small town, but for several years many who had received boons from the House opted to remain, settling down here in case some other vile plague struck. So it was that Goodhope grew to rival Seven Spires, at least in

population; nearly seventy thousand people now call the city home.

Goodhope originally had neither the resources nor the housing to accommodate the influx of people, and thus a second community sprang up across the Bright River on which Goodhope stands. This new community was wretched and foul, producing nothing but corpses and problems for the people of the town across the river. Goodhope provided for the people as best it could, but lacking the funds or materials, the shantytown was transformed into a haphazard collection of tenement housing with businesses starting in smaller buildings that seemed to spring up like fungi after a spring rain. Even today, a couple of centuries later, the east side appears shabby compared to the great Cathedral of the New God, the multistoried House of Healing, and the forest of towers and spires that rise above the tangled streets below. Contrasted with the neat and orderly community across the river, Eastside has a reputation for being a place for the poor and desperate, and Westsiders are still reluctant to deal with their neighbors across the waters.

The current mayor of Goodhope, Robiny Hart, has held the post for five years. He has deep ties to the Cult of the New God, specifically to the Swords of Astrid. Spies throughout the city gather information for him about suspicious individuals, whether neighbors or visitors, and afterward such people tend to disappear. A gang of toughs known as the Righteous Few polices the streets of the Eastside and has made it clear that neither the Inquisition nor its agents are welcome in its neighborhoods.

Holy Sites

In recent years, so many places in the kingdom have been consecrated by the cult that odds are just about any old statue standing in an empty field could mark sacred ground, even at a place that was once sacred to people of differing beliefs. Locals joke about how every stick and stone has some supposed religious significance. Although the large number of pilgrimage sites means that newcomers tramp through fields and drift through towns on a regular basis, these visitations do bring an influx of gold. Pilgrims come and go all the time, trekking here and there to lay eyes on some bit of architecture that might or might not have religious import, or to dip their toes in waters from which Astrid herself once drank—or so says their guide. Over the years, the Holy Kingdom has come to depend on these pious tourists to prop up its economy and keep its people flush with coin, so no matter how annoying the pilgrims can be, Tarrans show great deference to them and are quick to point the way to the next wonder to be seen.

Use the following tables to generate holy sites that might be of interest to pilgrims or to characters traveling through the Holy Kingdom. The Holy Site table describes a location, while the Holy Person table identifies the individual who performed or witnessed a miracle at that site, as determined by the Miracle table.

Holy Site

d20	Site is (a/an) . . .
1	statue of Astrid's passion standing in a forest
2	shrine dedicated to the New God in an open field
3	stone plaque resting on the ground, the writing on it lost to wind and rain
4	stone tomb covered in vines
5	enormous oak tree
6	small cemetery surrounded by an iron fence
7	deathbed in an abandoned house
8	stone stairs climbing a hillside
9	bones of an enormous monster
10	field of wildflowers
11	sculpture of a sword, a shield, and a woman's face
12	obelisk on which has been chiseled a serpent eating its tail
13	burned ruins of an old temple dedicated to a forgotten god
14	field littered with charred wooden stakes
15	mound covering a mass grave
16	footprints left in a stone slab
17	stone arch
18	path made from river stones
19	large garden
20	tall tower of white stone

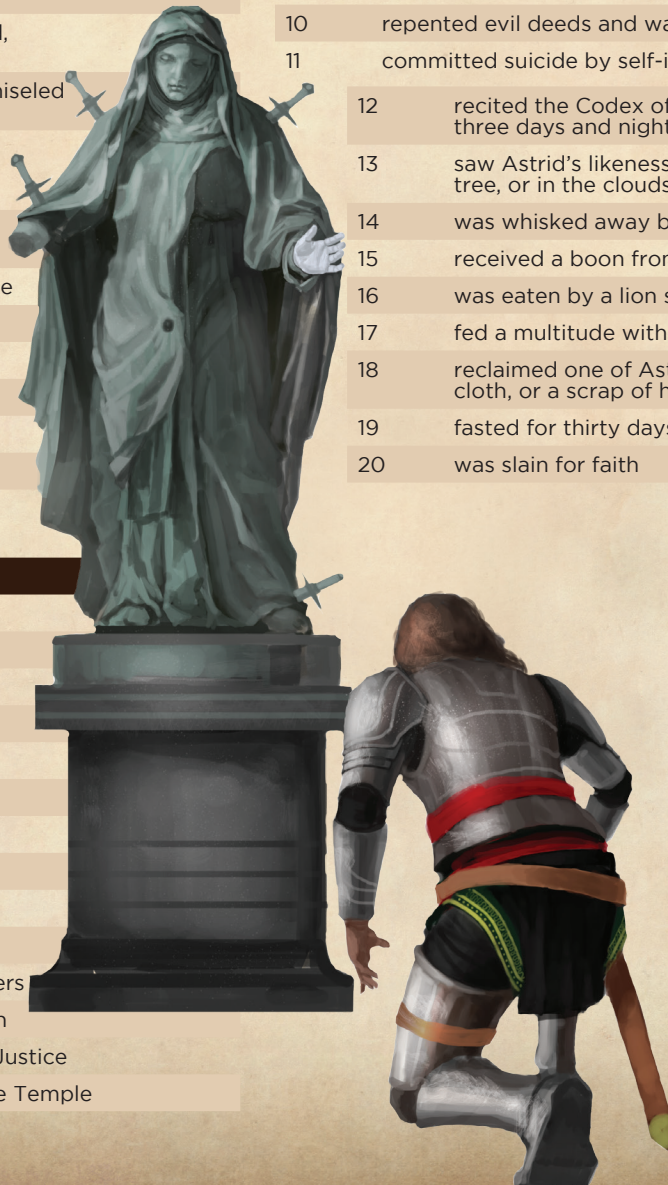
Holy Person

d20	Person is (a/an) . . .
1	King Roland
2	enemy of the Faith
3	nonbeliever
4	worker of miracles
5	defender of the faith
6	wise hermit
7	penitent cultist
8	misunderstood priest
9	ordinary person
10	faithful champion
11	member of the Peaceful Sisters
12	member of the Poor Brethren
13	member of the Hammers of Justice
14	member of the Knights of the Temple

15	member of the Swords of Astrid
16	member of the Bearers of the Faith
17	member of the Keepers of Lore
18	soldier dedicated to the faith
19	former Matriarch
20	Astrid

Miracle

d20	The holy person . . .
1	was struck down by lightning
2	cured sixty-six people
3	saw a vision of Astrid ascending to Paradise
4	was visited by an angel
5	was stabbed to death by cultists
6	executed thirteen servants of darkness on pyres
7	preached before a multitude
8	cast out or destroyed a demon
9	resisted temptation by a wicked faerie
10	repented evil deeds and was forgiven
11	committed suicide by self-immolation
12	recited the Codex of Truth by memory for three days and nights
13	saw Astrid's likeness in a piece of toast, a tree, or in the clouds
14	was whisked away by a wheel of fire
15	received a boon from the New God
16	was eaten by a lion sent by the New God
17	fed a multitude with scraps
18	reclaimed one of Astrid's bones, a bit of cloth, or a scrap of her writings
19	fasted for thirty days and nights
20	was slain for faith



Garrans

The first Tarrans were humans of Edene extraction. They had olive complexions, dark brown to auburn hair, and brown eyes, as did most people living in these parts of Rûl. Although these traits can still be found in many native-born folk, the influx of believers since the founding of the New God's cult has brought people from all over the Empire to worship in the new way and receive the blessings of their new god. As a result, humanity in the Holy Kingdom has become much more varied, almost as cosmopolitan as in Caecras, and representatives of many ethnicities and cultures now live in the shadow of Seven Spires.

Humans dominate the population of the Holy Kingdom. Faeries are so rare as to be considered mythical, and locals believe fauns, changelings, and others of their ilk to be devils sent from Hell to lead mortals astray. Clockworks, elementals, and those of other “inhuman” ancestries are similarly absent from the Holy Kingdom, as the cult makes it clear that strangeness in form has no place in the lands blessed by the New God.

So intolerant has the Holy Kingdom become that mortals of other races rarely bother coming to these lands, and when they do, it is usually only to pass through. A few halfling enclaves still stand near the Edene border, and the occasional dwarf craftsman works from a shop in a city, but such folk are quite rare. In the past, the Holy Kingdom kept some orc soldiers, but these have all disappeared, and some suspect the cult destroyed them before they could join their comrades in rising up against the human majority.

The Devoted

It falls to the common folk to toil in the dirt to support the province and the great cult whose power reaches beyond the Kingdom's borders. Since everyone who claims citizenship works to support the province's secular and religious governments, distinctions in class and standing have largely faded away—farmers are the equal of merchants, who are the equal of the barristers and bureaucrats who ensure that the wheels of government keep turning. Essentially, anyone who does not carry a noble title, have standing



within the cult, or serve in the Holy Legion falls in with all other people: valued for their efforts, but having little freedom to pursue interests beyond their labors and their faith.

Most common people live simply. They avoid life's complications and any considerations of the future. The now is all that matters, and what needs to be done must be done, for the betterment of all. Common folk fall over themselves to prove their devotion to the tenets of the New God, never criticizing their religious leaders and averting their eyes to avoid witnessing abuses of power or excesses of authority. In a land where being accused of consorting with dark powers is as good as proof of same, no one looks to invite the Inquisition's dreaded attention.

The people tend to be reserved, serious, and task-focused. They take pains to help pilgrims, offering shelter, food, and anything else they need, even if doing so would be to their own detriment. All Tarrans believe they live in a land chosen by the divine, a place as close to Paradise as one can come on Urth. It is the duty of every person to tend to the needs of the faithful and represent the cult's virtues in all things.

The Pious

The cult has grown from a modest religion under the crown's protection into the province's governing body, with the Matriarch holding more power than the queen. The old secular courts have been shuttered in favor of religious ones. The provincial army, now called the Holy Legion, answers to the Matriarch and the cardinals. Even the nobility stands in the shadow of the great cathedrals, many having had their estates seized by the cult and used for agriculture and grazing. As a result, ordained members of the cult wield considerable power in the province, so much so that they move freely through the lands.

Although some cult officials live as the nobles once did, surrounding themselves in finery and excess, not all cult members are so quick to exploit their religion's sway.

In particular, the Poor Brethren and the Peaceful Sisters live modestly as they always have, offering counsel and comfort to those in need and living off the charity of others. But those two orders are the exception to what some people outside the province have begun to view as corruption within the cult, a sign that the faith has lost its way. Such

criticisms never gain purchase inside the province, for the cult's authority there has become nearly absolute, and the inquisitors consider any criticism of the faith to be blasphemy.

In addition to the ordained, the cult has many lay members who serve the larger organization. These individuals are the clerks and the bureaucrats, the scribes and the servants, who help keep the wheels of Astrid's religion turning. The cult is the largest employer in the province, and most families have at least one member in the cult's workforce.

The Holy Legion

The undead incursion into the Northern Reach, which ultimately led to the formation of the Crusader States and the annexation of the region by the Empire, gave the Cult of the New God grounds for seizing control of the Holy Kingdom's military. As word trickled out from the north about the horrors loosed from the Desolation, the crown made no move to lend aid. Finding the king reluctant to commit forces to a war in another land and eager to shore up the province's own northern border, the Matriarch appealed directly to the people, calling for a great crusade against the undead. The cult poured blood and treasure into the effort, amassing an enormous force within the Holy Kingdom's boundaries. Members of the Tarran military, fearing reprisals from the cult, joined what was called the Holy Legion, and the force marched north to drive back the undead and stabilize the region.

The Legion has since returned, but instead of standing down, it remains to guard the holy land from outside aggressors, a threat that seems more and more likely with the orcs mustering in the ruins of Caecras. Since the formation of the Legion, the Tarran military has largely collapsed, becoming nothing more than an honor guard for protecting the crown.

Fading Nobility

The Cult of the New God has, for many years, pressed its case that all mortals are equal in the eyes of the divine and that no individual stands above any other when it comes to matters of the immortal soul. Earthly distinctions of wealth and status are illusory; all people live and die and live again. In the end, the richest noble is no better than the lowliest dung-sweeper. The Poor Brethren, in particular, espouse this message and by their efforts have led a crusade of sorts against members of the nobility in the Holy Kingdom and beyond.

Within the province, the cult has stripped away the powers and protections that once benefited the highest classes. The cult has seized nobles' lands and turned them into communal farms, dissolved the parliament (made up of nobles who advised the crown), and pressured—through extortion when necessary—noble houses into making generous donations that have all but emptied their coffers. When they sensed the tide of opinion turning against them, many nobles took themselves and what remained of their wealth to Edene and Caecras. Those nobles who are loyal to the cult and remained in the Kingdom now live little better than the common people over whom they once held sway.

Refugees

As Caecras burns and the orcs extend their dominion over the Empire's capital province, people have been fleeing for safety in neighboring regions.

The Holy Kingdom has absorbed most of these refugees, who see the cult as a force for good and order. Most of them left their homelands with nothing more than they could carry and thus live in abject poverty,

dependent on the cult's charitable efforts. Tent cities and shantytowns have sprung up outside most towns and both major cities, and these places grow larger as Caecras continues to burn.

The cult provides for the refugees by feeding, clothing, and sheltering them as best it can, but a few cardinals have become concerned about the influx of refugees, seeing it as a drain on the province's resources and as a way for dark forces to infiltrate the holy land. Inquisitors move among the newcomers to identify any who might bear the stain of corruption and who would undermine the cult's authority. As a result, accusations of witchcraft, devil worship, and worse are on the rise among the refugees, leading to more public executions and fear among the newcomers. Although the refugees dread these practices, having nowhere else to turn makes them powerless to resist.



A Nation Divided

The Cult of the New God's seemingly insatiable appetite for control over every aspect of life within the Holy Kingdom has reduced the secular authorities of the province to nothing more than figureheads. Tarra is now a kingdom in name only, and operates as a theocracy. Although many of the common people support the sweeping changes enacted by the cult, not everyone was so pleased to see the history of the nation swept aside in service to religion. Now, a tide of discontent has begun to rise in the holy land with new factions forming to fight back against the terror spread by the inquisitors.

Before the fall of Caecras, concerns over the Holy Kingdom had spread to neighboring provinces. The Kingdom had already strong-armed Tear into acceding to its demands in order to gain its aid. The Kingdom also used the Crusade to spread its influence into the Northern Reach, a land up until then largely beholden to the Old Faith. In addition, tensions have been on the rise with Edene, as the Holy Kingdom is trying to reclaim the wealth carried into the neighboring land by fleeing nobles and has stepped up efforts to inhibit the movements of other would-be expatriates, even going so far as to arrest them. Rumor has it that the emperor had grown cool toward the cult and was pushing back against its influence before he was murdered by Drudge, and thus people have begun to whisper that maybe the cult had a hand in orchestrating the Empire's collapse.

Now that Caecras has fallen, people from all over the Empire have begun to look to the Holy Kingdom for guidance through these uncertain days, which has, in turn, elevated the holy land to an even higher standing in Rûl's political arena. What the Matriarch intends to do now, however, remains an open question, though the massing of troops on the border with Caecras and the building of fortifications there hint at imminent war. All this, however, could be unraveled by the fractious elements within the province, and thus many wonder if stability can be achieved in time before the orcs invade.

Queen Moira

Moira ascended to the throne five years ago, succeeding her father, Piter, who was known as the Silent King because of his complicity in the dismantling of his regency. A student of history, Moira spent her childhood poring over the annals of her family and her nation, and how it came to its present state. Moira became appalled by the powers that the royalty had ceded to the cult and knew that when she took the throne she would work to restore her family's rightful place and authority—a goal that puts her at odds with the Matriarch and could prove to be her and her family's ultimate undoing.



Queen Moira lives as little better than a prisoner in her fabulous palace. The Matriarch restricts her movements outside the palace, arguing that it's unwise in these difficult times for such a cherished figure to be exposed to undue danger. As a result, Moira makes few appearances before the people, and when she does, it is in the company of cult officials and templars, supposedly to ensure that no harm befalls her—though in fact the cult cares only that Moira does nothing to weaken its standing in the eyes of the people. Hedged in on all sides, Moira works through her agents, a small but talented team of royalists who feed her information and keep open the channels of communication to expatriate nobles living in Edene and elsewhere. Moira hopes to raise an army in neighboring lands to march on the Holy Kingdom and break the cult's hold over its people.

Moira is twenty-five years old, of short and rounded stature. While she is no great beauty (a fact that bothers her not at all), when she appears in public, she does so dressed in all the finery of her office, cutting a striking figure. In the manner of the kings and queens before her, she paints white on her face and darkest blue on her lips, under her eyes, and in three small dots arranged to form an inverted pyramid in the center of her brow. A net of silver holds her long hair in an elaborate coif, and from it hang tiny silver bells that chime when she moves.

The Matriarch

In the view of the cult, the Matriarch is Astrid reborn in the flesh, the patron of the faith restored to physical form. In order for an individual to ascend to the heady heights of power this position brings with it, she must sever all ties to the life she led before, abandoning her name, connections to family and their holdings, and even severing ties of love and friendship. The Matriarch must rise above worldly concerns and be the true representative of the faith in all things. The current Matriarch, Erestra, left behind her life of privilege and power as the cardinal presiding over the Swords of Astrid when she was chosen to lead the faithful some twenty years ago.

The cult's choice of an inquisitor to become Matriarch was a decision that did not come easily. Although the Swords of Astrid have long been a powerful faction, the inquisitors are not without their opponents within the cult. The Poor Brethren and the Bearers of the Faith, for instance, have long opposed the Swords' tactics and excesses. Erestra, however, had supporters of her candidacy inside the other orders, and these allies moved to discredit her rivals and, in some cases, implicate them in dreadful crimes and conspiracies. It became clear that to oppose Erestra would carry a terrible cost and so, one by one, the other candidates withdrew and cleared the path for her ascent to power.

The Matriarch has had a difficult decade. At first, she pressed the Alabaster Throne to increase the cult's influence over the emperor, only to find those years of subtle pressure unraveled by the orc uprising. The cult has recently enjoyed greater popularity than ever before in the Grand Duchy, Tear, and the March Lands, but the Old Faith has seen a resurgence in Old Edene, Balgrendia, and the Low Country.

The cult has all but transformed the Holy Kingdom into a theocracy and would complete the transition of power if not for Moira and her supporters, who clutch the last shreds of secular authority in a death grip and continue to consider the crown as vital to the province's future—as vital as is the Matriarch herself. As frustrating as the cult's setbacks and disappointments have become, the Matriarch remains convinced of the righteousness of her cause, and she will not stop until all of Rûl kneels before the New God's cult.

Where the queen dresses in paint and silks, the Matriarch always eschews ostentation. A simple robe of brown and a mask made in Astrid's likeness suffice when she addresses the people. Although few people outside the cardinals have seen her without her mask, it's believed the Matriarch is a great beauty.

Cardinals

A cardinal heads each of the seven orders of the New God's cult, and together the cardinals constitute a council of advisors to the Matriarch. In public, all the cardinals support their leader, but each one holds private views and pursues a personal agenda in regard to the Matriarch and the larger cult. The Matriarch's ambition and the cult's present troubles, many of which certain cardinals might lay at her feet, have led to the formation of factions inside this august body—factions that, if not brought to heel, could tear the religion apart.

Cardinal Abernathy: A weedy man with thinning gray hair and a permanent frown on his face, Abernathy leads the Keepers of Lore. He finds his duties as cardinal to be tedious and frustrating. He aligns himself with no factions, believing himself to be above petty politics. He secretly fears Rosecrans, so he's likely to defer to the inquisitor.

Cardinal Michael: As leader of the Bearers of the Faith, Michael argues that the cult should be doing more to spread the faith to all corners, a position also held by the inquisitors and the Matriarch. Michael likes neither of them, but both serve his agenda, and thus he allies with them when their efforts speak to his interests. He's a middle-aged man with bright red hair and a heavyset build.

Cardinal Titus: A devoted if uncreative man, Titus heads the Knights of the Temple and personally oversees the Black Templars who protect Seven



Spires. Titus has held his title for over twenty years. He supports the Matriarch as his oaths demand, so he accedes to any decision she makes.

Cardinal Rosecrans: The leader of the Swords of Astrid, Rosecrans earned his notorious reputation through tenacity and innovative torture techniques. He put Erestra forward as a candidate for Matriarch and played a part in destroying her rivals. Now aged, toothless, and hobbling, Rosecrans spends most of his time in Seven Spires, either whispering in the Matriarch's ear or extracting confessions from the unlucky souls who find themselves in his clutches. Rosecrans counts on support from Michael, Titus, and the Matriarch.

Cardinal Cazada: The troubles in the Empire have become a call to battle as far as Cazada is concerned. She pushes, along with all the Hammers of Justice, to take the fight to the orcs and reclaim the Alabaster Throne for one of their own. Cazada assumed her post twelve years ago and has been a firebrand ever since. She and her followers press for war.

Cardinal Criswell: The cardinal who leads the Poor Brethren hardly looks or acts the part of one. A short, hairy man of curious odors, he spends little time in the capital, preferring to be out spreading the faith. The recent troubles have drawn him back, however, and he finds the Matriarch's ambitions troubling. Criswell and his followers oppose war and support those who would restore the cult to its more peaceful ways.

Cardinal Susanna: Heading the Peaceful Sisters is a girl of eighteen years named Susanna. She had a vision when she was thirteen years old, in which she saw Astrid and received her blessing, which enabled Susanna to heal the sick and injured with her spells. The miracles she performed caused her to be recruited by the Sisters, and with her keen mind and pure soul she quickly rose to lead the order. She sides with Criswell and his followers.

Divine Customs

Most customs and celebrations in the Holy Kingdom focus on religious ceremonies. The calendar is filled with dates that honor the Matriarchs, martyrs of the cult, and, of course, Astrid and the major events in her life. People continue to work and carry out their usual business on these days, but most leave small offerings at the various shrines or attend services at temples on a day when a sainted figure of import to their family is honored.

In addition to these so-called low holy days, the Holy Kingdom recognizes four high holy days: Revelations (spring equinox), Succor (fall equinox), Ascension (winter solstice), and Return (summer solstice). Revelations celebrates the day when Astrid received her first visions from the New God. Succor

is a remembrance of when she found refuge in Tarra from her enemies. Ascension marks the day of her entry into paradise, and Return represents the day set aside for Astrid's eventual return to Urth to show the way to the New God's glory. Celebrations on each of these days are grand affairs, involving temple services, parades, passion plays, and much more.

Selling Religion

All the industries required to sustain a province economically can be found in the Holy Kingdom. The most lucrative industries of all, however, focus on faith. Most manufacturers cater to the cult's needs, making candles, vestments, paper for holy books, and other accoutrements of the faith, but there are also a large number of business ventures focused on the faithful among the common folk. At holy sites and in holy cities, pilgrims find themselves beset on all sides by relic-sellers who claim that the scraps of cloth and bits of bone they offer for sale once belonged to any number of holy men and women. The sellers all swear that something of the spirit of holiness remains in these bits of rubbish—holiness that can be had for a tidy sum. In addition, common folk can find symbols of the faith—holy books, personal accounts, candles, beads, incense, and more—for sale in almost all communities.

Perhaps unique to the Kingdom are the operators known as pardoners, who sell indulgences to those burdened by guilt over their past misdeeds. For a few coins of silver, a pardoner provides a small scrap of parchment that absolves the penitent of all wickedness, lifting the stain of corruption from one's soul. These indulgences have no real power, of course, but the purchase of one makes everyone involved feel better.

Suffer No Evil

The laws of Tarra remain intact throughout the province in the present day, and the Holy Kingdom continues to punish the crimes of theft, murder, arson, and similar acts with swift and terrible justice. What has changed is who enforces the law and who dispenses the justice. As with all things in Tarra, the cult has taken over writing and enforcing laws and maintaining order throughout the Kingdom.

Most communities of a few hundred inhabitants have one cult-funded guard per one hundred people, led by a priest of the New God, typically an inquisitor. Members of the watch wear black cloaks emblazoned with a crimson circle in the center, large floppy black hats, and carry cudgels. The watch members enforce the law in all the expected ways, patrolling their community and cracking down on lawbreakers.

Each community of at least five hundred people has a magistrate who dispenses justice. Criminals

in smaller communities are escorted to the nearest magistrate, which can sometimes be miles distant, and there spend time in a cold, dank cell until one's case comes up. Each magistrate is a priest drawn from one of the orders, although members of the Swords of Astrid are the most likely to serve in this capacity. While all citizens of the Holy Kingdom are promised fair trials, the magistrates are always harsh in their dealings with those who do not display appropriate devotion to the New God.

For acts of heresy, consorting with dark powers, or practicing dark magic, accusation is as good as conviction in the Holy Kingdom. The Swords of Astrid are responsible for finding and destroying corruption everywhere, though their numbers are too few to cover the entire province, let alone the rest of the Empire. For this reason, the cult employs professional witch hunters. Armed with writs that grant them the authority of the cult, witch hunters are free to arrest anyone they suspect of trafficking with dark forces and bring the culprits to the magistrates to face justice.

Army of God

The Holy Kingdom shifted its focus to military development when the crusade marched into the Northern Reach to fight the undead invaders. Since that time, the nation has quietly built up its defenses and armies in preparation for war. These mobilization efforts have enabled the Holy Kingdom to lend materiel and other aid to Tear, helping to destroy the beastmen and stabilize that land.

Until recently, the Holy Kingdom had been concerned mainly with Old Edene, which was amassing what appeared to be an invasion force to halt the flow of treasure from the east to the province. Now, because of Caecras's instability and hostility from the orcs, the Matriarch has ordered half of her armies south to protect the holy land from the corrupted invaders. At the same time, though the Matriarch has no interest in fighting a war on two fronts, the relationship with Old Edene has deteriorated to the point that open conflict to the north now seems inevitable.

Adventures in the Holy Kingdom

The threat of war with Caecras, troubles with Old Edene, the rift between Matriarch and the crown, subversive elements fighting back against the Cult of the New God's tyranny, as well as strange monsters tumbling out from the wilderness, demonic intruders, and more make the Holy Kingdom an exciting place to set adventures. You can use the following ideas to inspire you when creating your own stories set in these conflicted lands.

- Villagers have accused a young woman who has displayed some magical talent of consorting with devils and have summoned a witch hunter to deal with her.
- A corrupt inquisitor uses his position and authority to satisfy his appetite for young lovers.
- Common people loyal to the crown lead an uprising against the Cult of the New God in a remote village that culminates in the execution of a well-known priest.
- A cabal of devil-worshippers has infiltrated one of the seven orders and works behind the scenes to sway the Matriarch to their dark cause.
- Queen Moira has disappeared, and no one knows where she went. Some people whisper she was murdered, her body hidden, while others claim she has fled the Kingdom. Finding her, or her remains, could shake the province to its foundations.
- Someone claims to have found the intact skeleton of Astrid and has been using the bones to perform miracles for a time. Now, that person's body has begun to show signs of terrible corruption as it warps and transforms into something unspeakable.
- One of the cardinals dies, and several candidates put their names forward. As the election campaign gets under way, one by one the cardinals start turning up dead. Who is killing them, and why?

Common Characters

Groups that travel to or through the Holy Kingdom might encounter any of the following characters in addition to those described in *Shadow of the Demon Lord*.

Bearer of the Faith

The cult's missionaries, the Bearers of the Faith can be found in almost all lands. They dress in simple black robes with white strips of cloth tied around their arms to signify their peaceful purpose.

BEARER OF THE FAITH

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 human

Perception 12 (+2)
Defense 10; **Health** 19
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff (melee) +1 (1d6 + 1)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Uplifting Sermon The Bearer can use an action to begin preaching the tenets of the New God and can continue preaching for as long as she concentrates, up to 1 hour. During that time, each creature within medium range of the Bearer that can hear her speak makes challenge rolls to resist attacks with 1 boon.

Prayer When a creature within short range makes an attack roll or a challenge roll, the Bearer can use a triggered action to grant the triggering creature 1 boon on the roll.

MAGIC

Power 1

Life *minor healing* (2), *fount of life* (1)

Theurgy *denounce* (2), *censure* (1)

Hammer of Justice

The foot soldiers of the New God's cult are the Hammers of Justice. They march to war against demons, the corrupted, the faeries, and heretics, hewing through their enemies with their great mauls.

HAMMER OF JUSTICE

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 human

Perception 10 (+0)

Defense 15 (mail); **Health** 24

Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 12 (+2)

Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Maul (melee) +4 (3d6)

MAGIC

Power 1

Life *life sense* (2), *light healing* (1)

Keeper of Lore

The Keepers of Lore preserve knowledge important to the Cult of the New God. Most Keepers are scholarly types, dress in simple clothes, and haul around portable writing desks loaded with papers, inks, and pens.

KEEPER OF LORE

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1 human

Perception 13 (+3)

Defense 10; **Health** 15

Strength 9 (-1), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff (melee) +0 (1d6 + 1)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Bestow Knowledge When a creature within short range would make a challenge roll, the Keeper can use a triggered action to grant the triggering creature 1d3 boons on the roll. If the triggering creature gets a failure, the Keeper becomes stunned for 1 round.

MAGIC

Power 1

Celestial *light* (2), *persistent light* (1)

Theurgy *denounce* (2), *hallowed ground* (1)



Knight of the Temple

All across the Empire stand holy sites and temples dedicated to the Cult of the New God. It falls to the Knights of the Temple, called templars, to protect these sites from the enemies of the faith. Most knights carry out their duties alone, watching over a sacred shrine or a village temple, but at larger and more important sites, several templars might lead a small security team.

KNIGHT OF THE TEMPLE

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 human

Perception 11 (+1)
Defense 17 (mail, large shield); **Health** 23
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 8

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 + 2)
Large Shield (range) +3 with 1 boon (1d3 plus 1d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Oath of Warding The templar uses an action, or a triggered action on his turn, to designate one creature within short range as his ward. The target remains his ward until the templar uses this action again, the templar becomes incapacitated, or the ward becomes incapacitated. While the ward is within short range of the templar, the templar imposes 1 bane on attack rolls made against the creature, and the templar grants the creature 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist attacks.

Black Templar

Devout soldiers charged with protecting Seven Spires, the Black Templars are a force of religious warriors chosen from the ranks of the Knights of the Temple. They wear black plate armor and carry swords and white shields emblazoned with seven black towers surrounded by a golden serpent eating its tail. There are never less than one hundred Black Templars, and each of them is said to be worth at least ten ordinary fighters.

BLACK TEMPLAR

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human

Perception 11 (+1)
Defense 20 (plate and large shield); **Health** 54
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 8
Immune frightened

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +5 with 2 boons (2d6 + 2)
Large Shield (range) +5 with 2 boons (1d3 plus 1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Black Templar attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Defend the Temple The Black Templar uses an action to designate a cube of space, up to 5 yards on each side, originating from a point he can reach, as a temple. The area remains a temple until the Black Templar uses this action again or until the templar becomes incapacitated. Until this effect ends, the Black Templar makes attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 boon while in the temple, and when a creature enters the temple, the templar can use a triggered action to move up to his Speed toward that creature.

Peaceful Sister

The solemn Peaceful Sisters have chosen to nurture the people living in the world, offering healing and comfort to those in need. The Sisters wear black and white habits and live in convents from which they venture out into the world to offer peace and comfort to those in need.

PEACEFUL SISTER

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1 human

Perception 12 (+2)

Defense 10; **Health** 10

Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed 10

Nonviolent If a Sister deals damage, she becomes stunned for 1 minute and then gains 1d6 Insanity.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed strike (melee) +0 (1)

MAGIC

Power 1

Life *minor healing* (2), *cure* (1)

Theurgy *denounce* (2), *hallowed ground* (1)

Poor Brother

The Poor Brethren live off the charity of others, having rejected the comforts of civilization in favor of living in the world as it was created. They are wanderers, street preachers, and beggars, holy men who believe their faith is enough to sustain them.

POOR BROTHER

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 human

Perception 10 (+0)

Defense 11; **Health** 12

Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)

Speed 10

Afflicted A Brother suffers from a physical or mental malady, and thus makes challenge rolls with 1 bane.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff (melee) +2 (1d6 + 1)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Righteous Rebuke If a Brother is injured, he can use an action to attack with a weapon with 1 boon on his attack roll. If the total of the attack roll is 20 or higher and beats the target number by 5 or more, the target is also dazed for 1 minute or until it takes damage.

Sword of Astrid

The dreaded inquisitors of the New God's cult are feared throughout the Empire for their tenacity in ferreting out the truth of what lives in the hearts of men and women. The Swords wear the black robes that typically denote members of their faith, and they conceal their faces beneath skull masks when they are working. An inquisitor usually travels in the company of three to five henchmen (as veterans), who are either mercenaries or lay members of the cult.

SWORD OF ASTRID

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 human

Perception 14 (+4)

Defense 10; **Health** 36

Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 13 (+3)

Speed 10

Immune frightened

Ear for Truth A Sword of Astrid always knows when a creature knowingly speaks an untruth.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +1 (1d6 + 2)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Piercing Gaze A Sword of Astrid can use an action to choose a creature he can see within short range and designate that creature as the object of his scrutiny. The creature retains this designation until the Sword uses piercing gaze again, the Sword becomes incapacitated or dies, or the creature becomes incapacitated or dies. A Sword of Astrid makes attack rolls with 1 boon against a creature he designated in this way, and his attacks deal 1d6 extra damage.

MAGIC

Power 1

Theurgy *denounce* (3), *censure* (2)



Witch Hunter

The Holy Kingdom employs hundreds of witch hunters to help fight against the darkness gnawing at the Empire's innards and empowers them with the authority to act on the cult's behalf. Although witch hunters are forbidden from executing the accused and are required to bring them back to stand trial, many witch hunters act as they deem best, sometimes not making a distinction between accusation and guilt.

WITCH HUNTER

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human

Perception 13 (+3)

Defense 15 (mail); **Health** 47

Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 12 (+2)

Speed 10

Resist Magic Creatures that attack a witch hunter with a dark magic spell make the attack roll with 1 bane. The witch hunter makes challenge rolls to resist dark magic spells with 1 boon.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +3 with 2 boons (2d6 + 2)

Torch (melee or short range) +3 with 2 boons (1d3 plus 1d6 from fire plus Catch Fire on attack roll 20+)

Pistol (short range) +1 with 2 boons (3d6)

Catch Fire A flammable target catches fire (see *Shadow*, page 201)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The witch hunter attacks twice.

Interrupt Casting When a creature within the witch hunter's reach would cast a spell, the witch hunter can use a triggered action to attack the creature with a weapon. On a success, the creature must get a success on a Will challenge roll, or the spell fails and the casting is wasted.

Holy Characters

Players can create characters who hail from the Holy Kingdom using the normal rules found in *Shadow of the Demon Lord*.

Ancestries: The province's general unfriendliness toward nonhumans means that most characters from the Holy Kingdom are human. Characters of different ancestries are assumed to have left the province after facing hostility, persecution, or accusations of consorting with dark powers. Ancestries other than those in the main rulebook are unknown in the Kingdom, and such characters face grave danger from the cult's witch hunters if they spend too much time in the province.

Languages and Professions: The Common Tongue is spoken throughout the Holy Kingdom. In addition, a player should roll a d20 if creating a human from the province. On a roll of 20, the character also speaks Old Edene (see *Only Human*).

A human character can swap out one profession to gain any one of the following professions: acolyte of the New God, farmer, laborer, pilgrim, scholar of religion, soldier, or temple ward.

Holy Background: Characters from the province can use the following table in place of the background table provided for their ancestry.

Holy Kingdom Background

d20 Background

- 1 Your family lost everything to the Cult of the New God, and the few relatives who remain fled to Old Edene to make new lives for themselves.
- 2 A witch hunter captured you after someone accused you of performing witchcraft. You escaped, but you're always looking over your shoulder.
- 3 A family member marched off to fight the undead in the Northern Reach. You never found out what happened to your loved one.
- 4 You toiled on a farm and grew to resent the bureaucrats who claimed the cult's part of your labors. You are sympathetic to the rebels, but you fear to join them. Add farmer to your list of professions.
- 5 Your ancestors followed the tenets of the Old Faith, but converted to the New God a generation ago. You count yourself among the faithful, but you often think about your ancestors and their beliefs.
- 6 Until recently, you stood guard on the Holy Kingdom's southern border, watching for the orc invasion everyone knows is coming. You left when your time of service was up. Add militiaman to your list of professions and start the game with a spear.
- 7 You climbed the Weathertops and there spotted a beautiful man or woman dancing in the clouds.
- 8 You traveled extensively and only recently returned to the Holy Kingdom. Add a language to the list of languages you can speak.
- 9 You are a fervent follower of the New God, and your religion consumes you. Start the game with a wooden symbol of the New God and add devotee to your list of professions.
- 10 You earned a living working in your profession. Nothing significant happened to you.
- 11 You grew up in Seven Spires. Roll a d6. On an odd number, you have grown to resent the cult, and you wish the queen would do something to improve the lot of the ordinary people. On an even number, you believe in the cult's purpose, and you wish the queen would abdicate to make your land truly holy.
- 12 You received an education. You can read and write the Common Tongue.
- 13 You worked in one of the great scriptoriums as a copyist. Add scribe to your list of professions.
- 14 A foul devil haunts you, tempting you to commit evil acts. At any one time when you would make an attack roll or a challenge roll, you can accept the devil's gift and make the roll with 1d3 boons. If you do so, you gain 1 Corruption.
- 15 You belonged to a heretical sect of the New God, one in which the leader claimed the New God was the Devil. Start the game with 1 Corruption.
- 16 You spent a few years in service to a priest of the New God of an order you choose. Roll a d6. On an odd number, you parted as enemies. On an even number, you parted as friends.
- 17 You fled the horrors of Caecras and recently came to the Holy Kingdom in search of protection. You start the game with 1d3 Insanity and add refugee to your list of professions.
- 18 The Matriarch healed you when you were a child. You are utterly loyal to the Cult of the New God.
- 19 Astrid visited you in your dreams to deliver a dire warning. Unfortunately, you cannot remember what she told you.
- 20 You found a finger bone or a scrap of cloth belonging to a sainted figure. The GM assigns the item a random enchanted property.



Joining a Sacred Order

Membership in one of the seven sacred orders is not required to be a priest of the New God. Many priests claim no allegiance to an order and instead count themselves as belonging to the larger cult; they report to the nearest bishop who oversees their region. Membership in an order confers many benefits, though, and for characters who seek to climb higher in the cult's ranks, entering an order is the surest route.

To join an order, a character must gain sponsorship from another priest of the order and together journey to Seven Spires to petition a priest of higher ranking, which is usually one of the cardinal's advisors. The sponsor describes the petitioner's virtues, deeds of service to the cult, and quality of faith. The priest then interviews the candidate to determine worthiness, using a mix of general religious questions and queries related to the order's purpose. Then, the priest retires to pray on the matter and returns one or more days later to either welcome the petitioner into the order or turn the applicant away.

Admittance is followed by a period of instruction, during which the novice lives in the order's spire, studies, trains, and undergoes secret rites of initiation. The instruction period can last a year or ten. Novices rise above their lowly station only when their superiors are satisfied they have learned all they need. In some orders, such as the Swords, few novices ever earn their titles and ultimately abandon their efforts after suffering terribly during their instruction. Most orders, though, especially the Brethren and the Sisters, nurture their novices and help them to complete their training.

Order Requirements

A player character must be a follower of the New God to join any of the cult's orders. In addition, a character must either have a religious profession or be a scholar of religion. Such characters can, however, come from any path. Membership in an order lasts for life, though any order can and does visit swift and terrible punishment on those who violate the order's tenets or work against the cult's objectives.

Order Features

Characters gain one or more minor benefits and restrictions based on the order each one joins. In addition, a member in good standing within an order always receives food and shelter from the order at no cost.

Bearer of Faith

Missionary In social situations, you make attack rolls to persuade other creatures with 1 boon.

Traveled Add two languages to the list of languages you can speak.

Hammers of Justice

Spill No Blood You gain 1 Corruption each time you deal damage with an edged or pointed weapon.

Holy Warrior When you make an attack roll using a weapon, you can add your Will modifier as a bonus to the attack roll. Once you have done so, you must wait 1 minute before you can do so again.

Keepers of Lore

Education Add two academic professions to your list of professions. Also, you can read and write any language you can speak.

Knights of the Temple

Armor Training You ignore the Strength requirements for wearing medium or light armor. At level 7, you ignore the Strength requirement for wearing heavy armor.

Peaceful Sisters

Trained Healer Add healer or surgeon to your list of professions.

Healing Touch When you expend a use from a healer's kit, you can gain an automatic success if you choose. If you roll anyway and get a success, the target heals 1d3 damage instead of 1 damage.

Poor Brethren

Limited Possessions You cannot own more items than you can carry.

Vow of Poverty You cannot possess more than 1 gc at any time. You must give away any excess wealth to the poor and needy.

Survivor You make challenge rolls to resist the effects of exposure or deprivation with 1 boon.

Swords of Astrid

Intimidating In social situations, you make attack rolls to intimidate other creatures with 1 boon.

Torturer You make attack rolls when using torturer's tools with 1 boon.

New Paths

The following paths describe avenues that characters associated with the New God might take as their devotion strengthens and their standing within the organization improves. Although these paths have roots in the Holy Kingdom and its dominant religion, you can easily adapt them for different settings; the descriptions discuss how these paths might appeal to other characters.

Agent

Expert Path

Whether by eavesdropping on a conversation or by infiltrating a secure location to make off with crucial information, agents specialize in gathering intelligence without anyone becoming the wiser. Many agents work as freelancers, hiring out their talents to whoever can afford their high price. Secular organizations, such as the Vault and the Tower Arcane, employ agents to monitor their enemies and rivals, or to track those who have crossed them, while religious institutions sometimes use agents to sniff out heretics and other enemies of the faith. Governments are the most likely to employ agents full-time, because the information these assets can gather might help avert defeats and bring enemy nations to their knees.

Agent Story Development

d3	Story Development
1	You worked as an informant for a crime lord, a priest, or a noble, passing on information as it came to you.
2	You developed your talents while trying to gather proof of wrongdoing by a government official, a noble, or someone else in a position of power.
3	A criminal past laid the foundation for the talents you use now.

Level 3 Agent

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add burglar or spy to your list of professions.

Gather Rumors If you spend at least 1 hour exploring a populated area in an urban environment, you can make a Perception challenge roll. On a success, you learn 1d3 rumors, of which at least one is true.

Quick Reflexes You can use a triggered action on your turn to hide or retreat.

Quick Search You can use an action to search a cube of space, up to 5 yards on each side, extending from a point you can reach. Make a Perception challenge roll with 1 bane. On a success, you find any clues or hidden objects in the area, if such things are present.

Sneaky You make challenge rolls to hide and sneak with 1 boon.

Level 6 Agent

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3

Size Up You can use an action to size up one creature you can see within short range. Make a Perception attack roll against the target's Intellect. On a success, for 1 minute you impose 1 bane on the target's attack rolls against you, and you make challenge rolls to resist the target's attacks with 1 boon.

Contacts You have three contacts. Work with your GM to determine the identities of these contacts and the kinds of information they can provide to you. You can leave one or more of them undefined so you can develop new contacts when you visit an urban environment. You gain an additional contact when your group level reaches 8 and another at level 10.

When you interact with a contact, you can choose to use up the contact instead of just gaining information. When you use up a contact, you can gain material aid (up to 1d6 gc worth) or have the contact perform a task for you, though the task cannot be anything that would imperil the contact's life, loved ones, or property. The contact does what you request to the best of his or her ability. Once you use up a contact, that contact cannot be replaced until your group level increases, at which time you can add contacts to replace any you used up.

Level 9 Master Agent

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3

Slip Away Whenever a creature you can see gets a failure on an attack roll against you, you can use a triggered action to move up to half your Speed. This movement does not trigger free attacks.

Insightful Strike When you attack the target of your Size Up talent, your attack deals 1d6 extra damage.

Flagellant

Expert Path

The spectrum of devotion to the gods ranges from skepticism to fanaticism, with the outlook of most people falling between those extremes. Flagellants go beyond even the norm for fanatics, having become convinced that their bodies and perceptions occlude the truth of existence and that the temptations of the flesh distract them from their true calling. To gain greater clarity, flagellants mortify their flesh with whips and scourges. The pain from the open, weeping wounds they cause helps them rise above lust, hunger, and thirst, enabling them to serve their deity as they believe they were meant to.

Though all religions have some extremists who engage in such behavior, the practice of flagellation is most common among those followers of the New God who see the physical body as being a temporary shelter for their immortal souls. The cult cracks down on these fanatics occasionally, at times deeming them heretics, but every generation of devotees seems to produce more of these unhinged faithful. Most flagellants of the New God are natives of rural communities across the Empire.

Flagellant Story Development

d3	Story Development
1	You were a slave to your lust before self-mortification helped you achieve clarity of purpose.
2	After going mad, you developed an unrelenting appetite for pain. You use your religious views to justify the harm you do to your body.
3	You fell in with a group of flagellants, such as the Bleak Ones, hearing the ring of truth in their words and understanding the reasons behind their extreme actions.

Level 3 Flagellant

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +6

Languages and Professions Add devotee to your list of professions.

Divine Protection When you are wearing no armor, you have a bonus to your Defense equal to 1 + your Will modifier (minimum 1).

Flagellate When you are wearing no armor, you can use an action, or a triggered action on your turn, to lash your body with a whip, a scourge, a flail, or a similar weapon. Each time you do so, you take a -1d6 penalty to Health that lasts until you heal any damage. While you have this penalty, you make attack rolls with 1 boon, and you can add your Will modifier as a bonus to your weapon damage rolls.

Level 6 Flagellant

Characteristics Health +6

Clarity from Pain When you have a penalty to Health from the use of your Flagellate talent, you cannot be charmed, compelled, or frightened, and you have a +2 bonus to Speed.

Level 9 Master Flagellant

Characteristics Defense +1, Health +6

Crazed Charge When you have a penalty to Health from the use of your Flagellate talent, you can use an action to move up to your Speed and make an attack with a weapon at any point during your movement. You impose 1 bane on attack rolls made because of free attacks triggered by your movement.

Red Cloak

Expert Path

The House of Healing has brought hope to places suffering under the weight of sickness and violence. The Red Cloaks, healers of extraordinary ability, travel the land, bringing comfort to those in need and with no expectation of remuneration. Due to their efforts, the Shuddering Pox—the plague that precipitated the founding of the House—has largely disappeared from the land. Now the Red Cloaks continue their good works in other ways.

You studied at one of the Houses of Healing to learn the advanced healing arts. Before you could learn these techniques, you swore an oath to do no harm, to injure no creature, even at risk of your own life. In return for your vow, you were taught how to combat the various ills blighting the world until you became a healer with almost supernatural abilities.

As a Red Cloak, you are never seen without the crimson cape that identifies members of the House of Healing. Also, you have a tattoo of an open red hand somewhere on your face. Your membership in the organization gives you great mobility and freedom, since almost all people recognize and generally support your efforts to do good in the world.

Red Cloak Story Development

d3 Story Development

- 1 You lost someone close to you to disease and joined the House of Healing to save others from a similar fate.
- 2 Violence sickens you. You joined the House of Healing to combat it.
- 3 A Red Cloak saved your life once, and so you decided to give back.



Level 3 Red Cloak

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +4

Languages and Professions You speak another language and add scholar of medicine to your list of professions.

Field Hospital You can set up a field hospital in a cube of space, up to 5 yards on a side, originating from a point you can reach. Doing so takes 1 hour of work, during which time you build a fire, boil water, and expend two uses from your healer's kit. The hospital remains for 8 hours or until you set up another one. If you tend to the field hospital for the duration, which counts as strenuous activity, any creature that completes a rest in the area heals extra damage equal to its healing rate and makes challenge rolls to resist disease with 2 boons.

Healing Kit Expertise You make Intellect challenge rolls to use a healer's kit with 3 boons.

Treat Disease You can use an action to expend a use from your healer's kit to grant a creature 2 boons on the next challenge roll it makes to resist disease before it completes a rest.

Vow of Nonviolence You make attack rolls with 1 bane. If an attack you make causes a creature to become injured, you gain 1 Insanity. If an attack you make causes a creature to die, you gain 1 Corruption.

Level 6 Red Cloak

Characteristics Health +4

Healing Hands You can use an action to tend to the injuries of one creature you can reach. Make an Intellect challenge roll. On a success, the target heals damage equal to half its healing rate. You can use this talent a number of times equal to 1 + half your group level. You regain expended uses when you complete a rest.

Healing Kit Expertise You can use a healer's kit to greater than usual effect to aid one creature you can reach. You can expend a use from your healer's kit to allow the target to heal damage equal to its healing rate.

Level 9 Master Red Cloak

Characteristics Health +4

Restore Life You can use an action to restore life to a creature that has been dead for 1 minute or less. Expend a use of Healing Hands and the entire contents of a full healer's kit (6 uses) and make an Intellect challenge roll with 3 banes. On a success, the target returns to life and heals 1 damage. Until the target completes a rest, it is fatigued.

Anchorite

Master Path

Some of the devout believe that they cannot truly understand the nature of the divine unless they withdraw from the world to get away from distractions and temptations. In seclusion, they pray and meditate, fixing their minds on the infinite to better appreciate their place in the world and how best to serve their patron deity. Many anchorites utterly abandon civilization, spending the rest of their days in isolation, but a few return from the wilderness to bring to bear what they have learned to help fight the forces of darkness.

Level 7 Anchorite

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Magic You discover one tradition or learn one spell.

Divine Withdrawal You can use an action to withdraw from the world for as long as you concentrate, up to 1 minute. While withdrawn, you rise 1 yard into the air and remain there for the duration, emitting light in a

5-yard radius. Until the effect ends, you are immune to damage, spells, and any other effect. Each time you use an action to concentrate on remaining withdrawn, you gain an epiphany that remains until you expend it, until 1 hour elapses, or until you use this talent again. When you make an attack roll or a challenge roll, you can expend an epiphany gained from this talent to make the roll with 2 boons.

You can use this talent a number of times equal to your Power score. You regain expended uses when you complete a rest.

Level 10 Anchorite

Characteristics Health +2

Magic You learn one spell.

Insightful Spell When you cast a spell, you can spend epiphanies gained from your Divine Withdrawal talent in lieu of expending a casting. The number of epiphanies you must spend to cast the spell equals the spell's rank (minimum 1).

Sin-Eater

Master Path

The failures of the mortal soul manifest as corruption, stains that weigh down the soul after death to send it tumbling into Hell. The Cult of the New God demands that its faithful live good and noble lives, ever walking in the light lest shadow consume them.

To those known as sin-eaters, these admonitions do not go far enough. Rather than allowing souls to suffer, the sin-eaters have devised a method to draw corruption from the living and take it into themselves. Purifying souls in this manner runs counter to the cult's teachings, and thus other adherents of the New God consider sin-eaters dangerous and heretical.

Level 7 Sin-Eater

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +4, Power +1

Magic You discover one tradition or learn one spell.

Sense Corruption You can use an action to sense the presence of corruption around you. You know if there are any creatures within short range that have 1 Corruption or more.

Eat Sin You can use an action to remove Corruption from a creature you can reach. The target must have at least 1 Corruption. If the target is unwilling, the target must be defenseless, unconscious, grabbed, or immobilized, and you must get a success on a Strength or Agility attack roll against the target's Agility. Upon touching the target, you and the target become stunned for 1 minute. At the end of this time, you and the target must each make a Will challenge roll with a number of banes equal to its Corruption score. If you get a success, you reduce the target's Corruption score by 1 (minimum 0), and you increase your Corruption score by 1. If the target gets a failure, it takes damage equal to half its Health.

Power from Sin When you gain Corruption from your Eat Sin talent, you become imbued with dark power that lasts for 1 hour. Until the effect ends, you have a +5 bonus to Health and you make attack rolls with 1 boon.

Level 10 Sin-Eater

Characteristics Health +4

Magic You learn one spell.

Corruption's Foe You make attack rolls with 1 boon against demons, devils, spirits, undead, and creatures that have 1 Corruption or more. In addition, when you use your Eat Sin talent, you make your Will challenge roll with a number of boons equal to half your Power (minimum 1).