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Angels of Iron

Founding Date 841

Type Religious, Holy Order

Alternative Names Children of the Prophet (Former)

Demonym Angels

Leaders Manoa Douglas (Deceased), Sibilla Gryemonti (Deceased), Seren Douglas (Deceased),
Current Unknown

Leader Title Divine Chosen

Permeated Organizations Prathia

Divines The Seraph

Mythology & Lore

When the universe was still in chaos, The Mother created the other Deities: The Pilgrim, The Champion, The Healer, The Scholar, and The Betrayer. Together they worked to create the planes as we know them. They crafted tirelessly, pouring heart and soul into their work. They created creatures. They sculpted mountains and carved out seas. They painted the planes with their beauty, each one an individual masterpiece. The Mother crafted gates between each plane so that their inhabitants might travel and see the beauty that was created.

When the work was complete, the gods stepped back to watch their creation flourish. Civilizations rose. Cities were built. Incredible magical and technological marvels were crafted in honour of the gods.

The Betrayer watched all that transpired with disdain, for he wished to rule alone. While The Mother was not watching, The Betrayer went to the Nine Hells and walked among the people that lived there. Over generations his words and his presence tainted the peoples thoughts towards the beings living in other planes. Slowly this bitterness grew until it began to warp the very lands of the Nine Hells until it became a fiery pit of hate and anger. Having grown his strength on the suffering of others, The Betrayer then moved on to other planes. He worked faster, now that he knew he was stronger. The next plane he visited was what is now called The Abyss. He pushed his corruption so violently into the plane that it cracked and drove all who lived there into a deep madness. At this time The Mother took notice of what was happening and rushed to stop him but it was too late. The planes were divided, and wars raged across them.

The gods tried what they could to stem the tide but the corruption of the Betrayer had spread too deep. The gods took one last stand against the Betrayer and managed to finally bring him down, but at great cost. The planes were shattered and the destruction too great. With the last of her power The Mother sealed The Betrayer in a cage at the bottom of the Nine Hells. She then sent the other gods to their own realm, to watch creation from a distance, only helping in small ways. In her final act, she used her body to heal the material plane, the center of the planes and the most

damage.

Now the gods watch as The Mother gives life to those that live on her world. And in the deepest pits of the Nine Hells The Betrayer waits patiently for the day when he can escape.

In the year 843 the world and the gods rebelled against the one true god, The Seraph. They stripped her of her divine light and cast her to earth unjustly, for they were jealous of her power. Glo Terberis, the Betrayer, schemed with the Prophet to remove her from power. Though the Seraph is no more and her power dwindled she was able to give the last remnant of that power to the Divine Chosen and their followers who now lead the people of The Angels of Iron in the teachings of the true faith.

Divine Origins

When the gods sealed themselves away from mortals, they left behind a Scroll. Supposedly the Scroll was hidden in a deep cavern filled with traps and monsters. The Angels of Iron claim the volcano on The Silver Islands is home to this cavern and make a pilgrimage there once a year to pay tribute.

The only person to survive the cavern and make it to the Scroll was a man who is now only known as The Prophet. No one knows where he came from or why he delved into the cavern after the Scroll, but when he reached it he was given divine powers and granted a place among the gods. He spread the word of The Mother and her children to the first Angels of Iron (who then called themselves the Children of the Prophet) before declaring The Silver Islands a sacred place and warning that anyone who wished to follow in his footsteps and go after the Scroll should be allowed to do so. But he warned of the perilous journey that lay within the volcano. He warned that merely stepping foot on the central island was a death sentence to all but those with the gods blessing. The Children of the Prophet heeded his warnings and prohibited travel to the island.

Many years later a being appeared before the leaders of The Children of the Prophet. She claimed to have followed in the footsteps of The Prophet and taken divine power for herself. She called herself The Seraph, and granted The Children of the Prophet new wisdom from the Scroll. They changed their name and the Angels of Iron became the religious leadership of Ovenica.

Tenets of Faith

We are the Angels of Iron.

We are the mouthpiece of The Prophet and hand of The Seraph.

We strive for the perfection of the self.

*We uphold the law of the gods *The Seraph*.*

We honour the faith.

The Angels of Iron have many rules. Most are not required to be followed by the masses and are only for devotees. The following are basic tenets to be followed and believed:

- ~~It is forbidden to speak in a temple of The Prophet.~~ [The Prophet is no longer recognized as a deity within the Angels of Iron.]
- Sins can be forgiven, if forgiveness is asked.
- *Rejection of The Seraph's teachings is the fastest way to the grave.*
- Perseverance and devout worship is rewarded with eternal life.
- The ~~gods alone are~~ Seraph is the only being to be trusted with your future.

Words placed within asterisks are additions to the text after the year 843. Words struck through were removed from the text but left in here to remember the original, with square brackets containing an explanation.

Worship

People are encouraged to come to one of the many temples to ~~The Prophet~~ and The Seraph throughout the hold. There they will find shrines to ~~all the gods~~ her. They can engage in group activities, sit and listen to services, and even bring offerings. It is also highly encouraged for people to find a quiet spot to sit and pray, or even speak with a Priest about their troubles.

Worship outside of temples is also encouraged. The church can even provide shrines, talismans, and small statuettes in order to better help your connection to the gods.

Priesthood

There are only three appointments within the Angels of Iron: Priests, High Priests, and the Archbishop.

Priests of the Angels of Iron are either born into the role or start very young. It is considered an honour to have your child chosen to be a Priest, and an even greater honour to offer your child to the Priesthood.

A child who enters the Priesthood learns to read and write from the holy texts. They usually spend their first ten years living in a monastery away from the city (though they are allowed frequent visits to see their family.) Once they are determined to be mature enough (usually between ten and thirteen years old) they are taken back to their home city to live with their family and apprentice a trade while also shadowing a Priest. Some trade skills are required for appointment as a Priest because it is considered a holy order to perfect ones self.

Once a child finishes their apprenticeship (around 18-20 years old) they are anointed with The Words of The Prophet and The Blood of The Seraph and are then granted a year to spend with their family and ply their trade before they are given their appointment in one of the holds. Often they remain in their home town.

High Priests are elected by their peers, though they believe that each elected High Priest is only elected because The Prophet allows it. There is only ever one High Priest per hold.

Priests of the Angels of Iron wear a single article of clothing: a thick dark coloured robe with a hood and light coloured stitching. An eye is stitched on the front of the hood to represent The Prophet and wings are stitched on the cuffs of the robe to represent The Seraph.

High Priests wear a similar article of clothing though it is white with dark stitching and the eye is surrounded by a five pointed star to represent the gods.

When it is time for an Archbishop to be chosen, the High Priests come together (with a selection of lucky Priests) and spend a month within one of their more reclusive monasteries. At the end of the month, one of them is declared Archbishop Successor by the current Archbishop. When the current Archbishop dies, the Archbishop Successor takes over all their responsibilities until their own death. The Archbishop wears a red and white robe with gold stitching.

In addition to these, the Angels of Iron began to employ (around the year 903) other hands to aid in keeping the faith. These are as follows:

Iron Advocates: Iron Advocates represent the vast majority of the forces of The Angels of Iron. A religious militia, essentially, who spend most of their time throwing their weight around to get things they want, and the rest of the time taking orders from Iron Priests.

Iron Acolytes: With the loss of magical support from The Seraph, the Angels of Iron have had to turn to other means to keep up with the world. While as a whole the Angels abhor magic, they recognize that without it they would be at a serious disadvantage. Their answer: Iron Acolytes. The Acolytes walk a path of 'unholiness' in order to better the Angels cause. They are disallowed from speaking to any but their direct superiors and live lives of solitude. Their studies, however, allow them to wield power to aid in seeking out heretics using magic in their lands and leading the Iron Priests right to them.

Lesser Iron Priests: Iron Advocates who do exceptionally well and perform above and beyond their regular duties can be promoted to Lesser Iron Priests. Though they are not truly granted priesthood, they are given a status above regular adherents. Lesser Iron Priests often take leadership positions within smaller towns in an attempt to keep the Advocates in order.

Iron Judges: The Judges of the Angels of Iron carry as much weight as a High Priest within the clergy, some say more. Judges are given the full writ of the law to carry with them at all times so that they may perform all manner of ceremonies. They also carry with them the orders to smite any who they may deem heretical, and Prathia has seen whole towns burn at the word of a Judge who deemed the souls within unworthy.

Political Influence & Intrigue

Though the Angels of Iron hold no official place in Ovenican politics, many of the lords and leaders of various towns look to the Priests for guidance and counsel. Because of this trust, nearly every hold has at least one Priest with the ear of the ruling family.

Though it used to be the case that the Angels of Iron were only counsel to the various lords and ladies of Prathia, the country has become a true Theocracy and the Divine Chosen leads the people

with the direct hand of the Angels guiding their every move.

Children of Divinity

Founding Date 857

Type Religious, Organised Religion

Deities The Betrayed, The Champion, The Healer, The Mother, The Pilgrim, The Scholar, The Lover

Haven of peace.

Culture

In an effort to avoid the pitfalls of the Angels of Iron's power structure, the Children of Divinity have multiple pontiffs functioning as heads of clergy. These pontiffs regularly meet to discuss goings on. The gods still share their divine wisdom and gifts among the population which helps to bring many into their fold.

Public Agenda

The Children of Divinity work tirelessly towards several goals, but due to the spread of power, not one has been properly realized. Their main focus is curtailing the spread of the Angels of Iron as best they can without sparking war.

Mythology & Lore

When the universe was still in chaos, The Mother created the other Deities: The Pilgrim, The Champion, The Healer, The Scholar, and The Betrayed. Together they worked to create the planes as we know them. They crafted tirelessly, pouring heart and soul into their work. They created creatures. They sculpted mountains and carved out seas. They painted the planes with their beauty, each one an individual masterpiece. The Mother crafted gates between each plane so that their inhabitants might travel and see the beauty that was created.

When the work was complete, the gods stepped back to watch their creation flourish. Civilizations rose. Cities were built. Incredible magical and technological marvels were built in honour of the gods.

During this time of peace two individuals were not satisfied. Lumir and Gomir (now known as the Prophet and The Seraph) wished to have divine power for themselves. So one day they went to Glo Terberis (The Betrayed) when he was alone. They spoke sweet words to him, speaking of his great works and deeds. But they also sowed lies. They told him how the other gods despised him. They told him that the other gods were planning his downfall. Glo Terberis believed their silver tongues and began to plot against the other gods. While The Mother was not watching, The Betrayed went to what is now Misery and walked among the people that lived there. Over generations his words and his presence tainted the peoples thoughts towards the beings living in other planes. Slowly this

bitterness grew until it began to warp the very lands of Misery until it became a fiery pit of hate and anger. Having grown his strength on the suffering of others, The Betrayed then moved on to other planes. He worked faster, now that he knew he was stronger. He went to the other side of Misery. He pushed his corruption so violently into the place that it cracked and drove all who lived there into a deep madness. At this time The Mother took notice of what was happening and rushed to stop him but it was too late. The planes were divided, and wars raged across them.

The gods tried what they could to stem the tide, but the corruption of the Betrayed had spread too deep. The gods took one last stand against the Betrayed and managed to finally bring him down, but at great cost. The planes were shattered and the destruction too great. With the help of her Lover, the Mother used the last of her power to take her physical form and tie it to Ovus, to hold it together. She then sent the other gods to their own realm, to watch creation from a distance, only helping in small ways. Before she could finish however, Gomir and Lumir swooped in and trapped her in her own creation. They stole pieces of her essence to ascend to godhood and then shackled the Betrayed to her cage so that none would ever reach her again.

However, there is now hope. The Shield of Basin braved the dangers of The Silver Islands to learn the truth. They released the Betrayed from his prison, and returned the pieces of essence to the mother that were stolen from her. Lumir and Gomir now live among mortals, no more danger to anyone, and the gods once again speak freely.

Mother's Shepherds

Founding Date 890

Type Religious, Druidic Circle

Demonym Shepherd

One with nature.

With magic no longer falling apart, the world began healing. The land became saturated with magic and nature took over. Instead of fighting against the growing mass of trees, grasses, and other plants, the people of Ovenica worked with them. Druids became a heavily sought after resource to help with creating houses, buildings, and even whole cities out of living plant-life.

A new faction known as Mother's Shepherds, has been created from this need for druids. The Shepherds make their headquarters within the many Trees of Sanctuary that have grown around Ovenica. They bend and twist the trunks, using the trees' own magic, to create living skyscrapers. The druids use these trees as conduits to travel from place to place in conjunction with the new teleportation technology. Shepherds are fundamental in keeping society running smoothly, yet very often their work can go unnoticed. Most of the druids don't mind however, and many within Ovenica make great strides to thank them for their service. Every year, on the summer solstice, parades are held in most cities to honour the druids' work.

Structure

Shepherds are largely self governing. Individuals are not expected to take orders from any others. Occasionally Shepherds will come together under one leader or another to accomplish larger tasks but this is almost always a case by case basis.

Culture

Shepherds living side by side in Trees of Sanctuary either find ways to work together or simply do their best to stay out of each others way. Mutual respect is not hard to come by within the Shepherds and even the title of Shepherd is mostly given out freely to anyone who wishes to consider themselves one. That being said, word travels fast between the Trees and the people who live in them. A Shepherd who proves problematic will quickly find themselves shunned by person and Tree alike.

Public Agenda

Mother's Shepherds strive to uphold the new infrastructure of Ovenica. Together they weave the ever growing plants into sensational pieces of architecture, or gently guide them out of the way of planned structures. For a time, much of the world was severely dependant on the Shepherds, but in

more recent years their talents have been on maintenance instead of construction.

Sect of the Black Sign

Founding Date 903

Type Religious, Cult

From two now as one.

The silence of Lumir the Prophet was deafening to some, but did not stop his most devout from worshipping him. It is said that those who kept his faith see a special arcane rune if he deems you worthy. The rune is not shared and is simply known as The Black Sign.

The followers of the Black Sign are often seen wielding immense power, but have yet to use it in any largely aggressive way. In the few rare cases where a branch has tragically turned bloodthirsty another branch has always stepped in to put them down.

Structure

Each holy person is an autonomous leader of their own branch of the sect, yet the fact that it has not devolved into bloody infighting leads scholars to believe that something does in fact connect the isolated groups. The recent integration of Calastii warriors has bolstered the group and aided in it's cohesion.

The Church of Light

Founding Date 907

Type Religious, Monastic Order

Demonym Illuminated

Live long and die free.

Organized religion has left generations of trauma among many in Ovenica. Whether that be from the decade long war between Prathia and Cuswar, or in refugees fleeing the persecution of the Angels of Iron, many have turned to the Church of Light, or the Illuminated as they call themselves.

The Illuminated adhere to the concept of self perfection. They do not worship any gods but instead provide people fleeing religion a place to maintain a similar lifestyle without the oppression of true leadership.

Divine Origins

During the decade long war between Prathia and Cuswar a small group of people in Kurleigh Castle decided that they were fed up with the gods and the church and decided to turn their minds towards themselves. The movement quickly caught on. Many people enjoyed the thought of no longer being beholden to deities or church leaders.

For some the organization was nothing more than a reminder to focus on themselves instead of feeling the need to worship a higher power. For others, however, it became a religion of its own. Those who do consider themselves practicing Illuminated spend their time exercising, and eating healthily. Some very devout Illuminated live very ascetically in small monasteries that have been built throughout Ovenica. There are some rumours that members of the now collapsed Order of the Silver Mind began the movement, but they have remained largely unsubstantiated.

Order of the Silver Mind

200 BGW - 904

Type Religious, Monastic Order

Location Stonehill

Notable Members Kanamahl Calder, Malok Calder

Structure

The monks of the Silver Mind followed a tier system determined by skill, age, and experience. Generally it was older more experienced monks who taught the rest and were in charge, however in rare circumstances young monks could climb the ladder fairly quickly.

Culture

The Order of the Silver Mind believed that the world is shaped by a person's own actions. For the monks, and those who follow their teachings, a person's actions are more important than promises and speeches. This often means that gaining the trust of the Order (and it's followers) was usually a simple task, but keeping that trust required constant effort to show that one was a committed and trustworthy person.

Public Agenda

The monks intended to keep their province free from (the perceived) oppressive presence of the Angels of Iron. Though they took no issue with individuals and small groups practising the religion, dedicated temples were not tolerated within the province.

Assets

The Order's greatest asset was their monastery; a large domed building in the center of Stonehill Keep. There they trained their acolytes, and housed their collection of artifacts. No one but a monk (or acolyte) was allowed within the dome and it was rumoured to be full of priceless items.

With the collapse of the Order the secret to entering the Dome was lost, and nothing remains but an empty shell now used as a city hall.

History

The Order was created by a Goliath man named Augrein Silvermind Calder. According to the monks histories, Augrein was on top of a mountain when had a vision of a giant who taught him the fighting styles the monks practiced as well as their beliefs of personal freedom. Since then, the monks strove to emulate his teachings and pass on his wisdom.

The Calder family lived up to Augrein's legacy and were one of the most personally powerful families in Ovenica at one time, however due to their beliefs they took very little interest in the things that happened outside of their hold.

Disbandment

With the loss of their copy of The Accords of Manoa, the Order began to tear at the seams. Malok Calder was already vying for control of the Order, and this loss was the final straw. Kanamahl Calder was ousted as leader and fled the city in shame. Malok began a reportedly aggressive era of leadership for the order before the War for Stonehill. When Kurleigh swept in to aid Stonehill, Malok intended to rebuff them and even fight them if necessary.

Seeing his flawed leadership, the other members of the order exiled him and joined the war effort against the Angels of Iron. When the war was finished, few members of the Order remained. Instead of trying to rebuild, those few decided the last several decades were enough of a sign that their way wasn't working, and they dissolved the Order.

Though their order is no more, there are still those who follow the teachings of Augrein Silvermind Calder, but they often keep to themselves and not since the War has more than two or three followers of the Silvermind broke bread together.