

FACTIONS

A multitude of factions exist in the Freelands with their own motivations and goals. These can oftentimes align with the characters' or even come at odds. The Knights of Udonia are a religious organization that the characters may come across in their adventures.

THE KNIGHTS OF UDONIA

The Knights of Udonia are a religious order of warriors and clergyfolk who have pledged their lives in service to the lesser deity known as Udonia — the daughter of the goddess Kylon, and a demigoddess herself of wealth, pride, and beauty. In more direct terms, they are a church, faith, mercenary and adventuring company all in one. The most prominent members of the order are those who see combat, and their display of wealth borders on ostentatious: their armor is trimmed with gold, their weapons are silvered, and their long blue cloaks of fine silk are perfumed with lavender.

The goals of the Knights of Udonia are simple. Firstly, gather and display treasure and wealth in service to Udonia, for wealth and treasure are beautiful, and beauty is a Udonian ideal. Second, welcome any interested adherents into the faith. These two primary goals lead naturally to travel and adventuring, and so despite having a headquarters within the city, the Knights of Udonia might be encountered anywhere across the continent or even the world. The Knights are generally consistent in upholding chivalric values despite some criticizing them as haughty or patronizing, and while they are eagerly receptive of any who wish to learn about their faith, missions or forceful conversions are not in their interest. In addition to adventuring and monster hunting, the Knights of Udonia have been known to accept mercenary contracts to fight in wars. The order sees these contracts as good opportunities to build their reputation and make new contacts.

HISTORY

Nearly five decades ago, a paladin named Rollan Crowgard found an illuminated manuscript in the bowels of a burned-out church far in the foothills. The manuscript had looked untouched for



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hundreds of years, and it told the story of the great knight Pius Sutremont, a noble champion and descendant of Udonia, who travelled across the continent and beat back the forces of evil in the name of his goddess. The manuscript detailed the virtues of wealth, of pride, of beauty, and of honor through Sutremont's story. Enraptured, Crowgard read each page of the manuscript, then began again when he was finished. Days later, the image of Udonia came to him in a dream to deliver him a divine quest — rediscovering Sir Sutremont's hidden treasure that the knight had buried centuries earlier in service to Udonia. After a perilous quest and a narrow success, Rollan Crowgard found the treasure, becoming fabulously wealthy and cementing his faith in his new goddess. Crowgard knows not why he was chosen by Udonia, but he knows that he must do what he can to serve her interests and advance her cause.

Rollan Crowgard has been retired from adventuring for many years now. In the decades since his fantastic discovery and return to the city, he founded the Knights of Udonia using the illuminated manuscript and the story of his divine intervention to grow the fledgling faith. The Knights of Udonia make their headquarters at an impressive castle within the city. Its interior is elaborately decorated and filled with the

treasures that Knights have collected throughout their adventures, and includes a radiant chapel with high ceilings and kaleidoscopic stained glass windows. Now in his eighties, Crowgard still acts as leader of the faith and of the order itself, though he has delegated leadership of any combat operations or adventuring opportunities to a paladin named Arnalda Stedrav.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Knights of Udonia is not limited by race or gender. Any who pledge themselves to Udonia and demonstrate continued faith are welcome to associate with the order. Many of the order are not warriors themselves; there are priests, acolytes, and support staff who exist adjacent to those who fight as mercenaries or adventurers. Adventures or encounters involving the Knights of Udonia may include any NPCs from the Knights of Udonia Members table.

KNIGHTS OF UDONIA MEMBERS

NPC	CR
Guard	1/8
Cultist	1/8
Noble	1/8
Acolyte	1/4
Priest	2
Veteran	3
Gladiator	5

PLOT HOOKS

You can use the following plot hooks as seeds to craft your own adventures that introduce the characters to the order:

1. Someone has stolen from the order's trove within their castle. They need the party's help investigating members of their own organization, about whom they have their suspicions.
2. A sale of a rare and valuable painting has occurred within the city. The Knights of Udonia know that the painting sold was a forgery, for they possess the original. The Knights suspect that a skilled forger either works within their ranks or closely alongside one of their members, and need help rooting them out.

3. A criminal syndicate within the city is targeting the Knights of Udonia headquarters for a heist. They're looking to recruit the party to help them break into the castle and provide armed backup if necessary.
4. A local church is suspicious of the Udonian faith and accuses the order of hoarding wealth. They want the party to help investigate the order by posing as interested adherents to gain as much insider information about the faith as they can.
5. While in a tavern, the party comes across a group of drunks beginning to harass a Udonian knight for his displays of wealth. If the party does not intervene, the altercation escalate to violence.
6. A knight from the order is looking to procure help exploring the underground ruins of an ancient temple. Normally the order would explore it themselves, but other skilled members are currently occupied by a small border war.



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