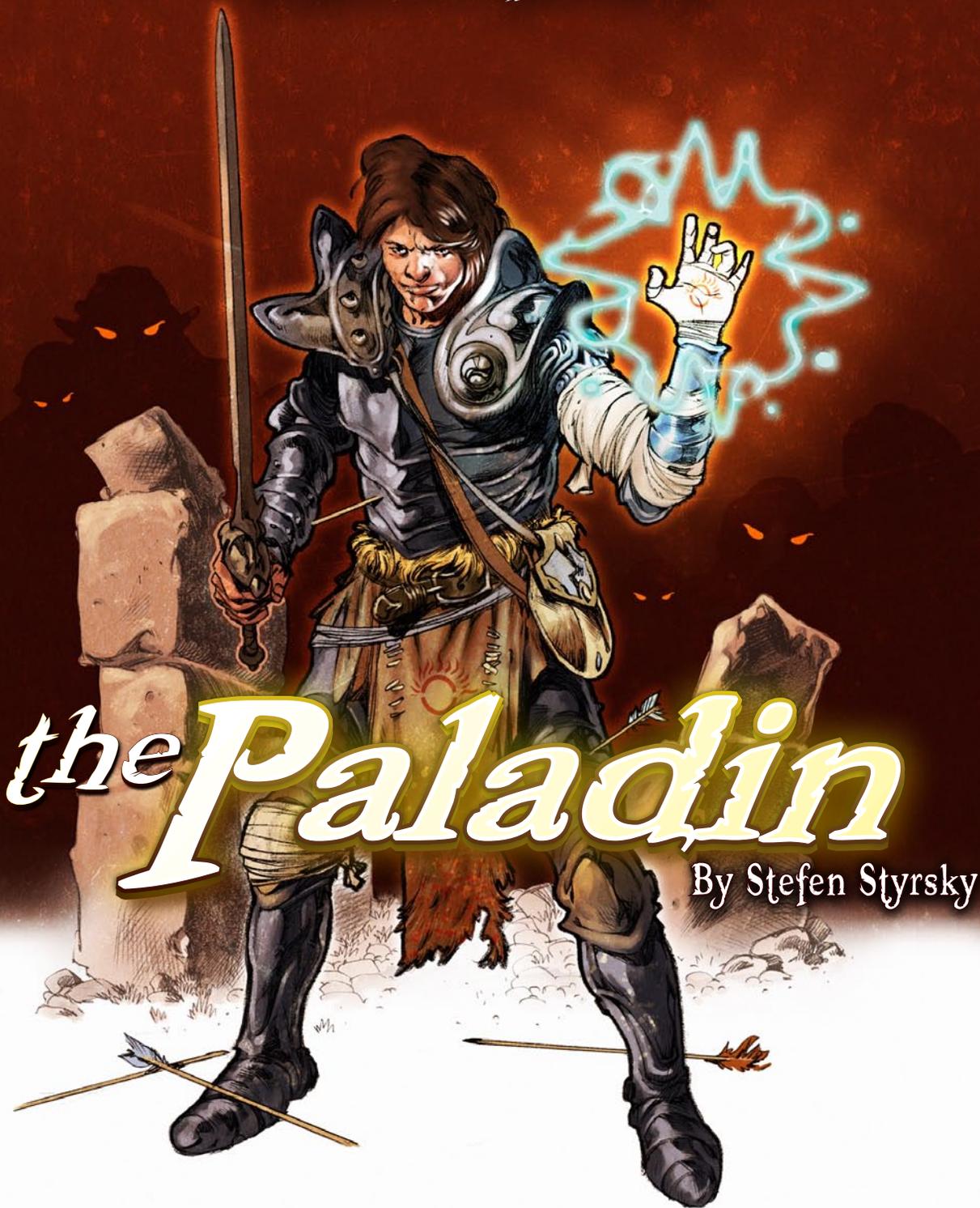


|| DIVINE FAVOR™ ||



the *Paladin*

By Stefen Styrsky

OPEN DESIGN™

PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

the Paladin

Credits

Designer: Stefen Styrsky

Developers: Sigfried Trent, Wolfgang Baur

Cover Artist: Christophe Swal

Graphic Design: Timothy K. Wickham

Editor: Michael Kenway

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The feats and abilities in the “New Paladin Feats” and “Alternate Class Abilities” sections are open content. All other material — including commentary, descriptions, proper names, characters, story elements, designer’s notes, setting material, flavor text, and society information — is product identity.

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Introduction

The *Divine Favor* series expands the options available to sacred PCs. Each entry will present alternate class abilities for the core divine classes: cleric, druid, paladin, inquisitor and oracle. A player can use them to customize a PC beyond what is presented in the rules. Each PDF will also discuss how best to utilize a class's strengths and tactics.

Examining the paladin, a fighter blessed with the divine radiance of good, presents a conundrum. The class relies on several ability scores to create an optimal PC. She must have adequate scores in Strength and Constitution for melee combat and a high Charisma to optimize her smite evil ability, saves and spells. Depending on the other roles the paladin must fulfill within a party—diplomat or investigator—high Intelligence and Wisdom are also crucial. Intelligence is needed for skill ranks in Diplomacy, Perception and Sense Motive, and high Wisdom is required for an observant eye.

Since most characters usually start with only two really good scores, a player of a paladin might be tempted to place them in Strength and Constitution, when the best choice is probably Strength and Charisma. While a lower Constitution might mean fewer hp and lower Fortitude bonuses, this is offset by the paladin's divine grace, divine health, and mercy class abilities, making him virtually immune to all afflictions that require a Fortitude save.

SMITE EVIL

While smite evil can be powerful, it is an extremely limited resource, especially at lower levels. It is essential a paladin use *detect evil* before naming the target of his smite. One benefit to a successful smite is the deflection bonus it grants. A paladin with an active smite

can charge his opponent without fearing a reduction in AC.

LAY ON HANDS

While this ability heals damage, a player shouldn't overlook its combat potential. Lay on hands can keep a paladin in a fight for a long time, weathering not only hp damage, but the effects of special attacks. As an offensive tool, lay on hands can seriously damage undead creatures, especially when combined with smite evil. The bonus on damage the paladin might give up by not using his primary weapon is offset by the lower touch AC of most creatures.

SPELLS

A paladin should choose spells that buff him before combat or increase the damage he deals to targets of smite evil. *Eagle's splendor* works well in combination with smite evil. *Grace* allows a paladin to charge his smite evil target without worrying about attacks of opportunity from other opponents. A paladin should never prepare *cure* spells. The hp regained are not worth wasting a spell slot which is better used for a spell that increases the paladin's combat ability or AC. If he must fill the healer role, the paladin should use a wand.

DIVINE BOND

The type of divine bond a paladin takes determines his feat selection. A weapon divine bond means the paladin should take the Weapon Focus, Power Attack, Cleave progression, but a mount divine bond necessitates Mounted Combat, Spirited Charge, etc. A smite evil mounted charge against an evil dragon is what a paladin is all about. A paladin with a divine mount should treat the being as more than a warhorse. The mount's Intelligence score of 6 allows it to participate in complex strategy with the paladin, understand speech, etc.