

INTRIGUING ORGANIZATIONS

# HOUSE OF THE RECLAIMED SOUL



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## SOMETIMES THE LIVING END

Sup in Hell. Sometimes that's no fault of their own but over the course of history many misguided souls have made dangerous, desperate bargains for power and suffered the consequences. The House of the Reclaimed Soul is a haven amidst the barren wastelands of the first infernal level, a place of redemption for those who truly regret the choices that brought them there. It is home to a small order of penitents, many of whom were formerly warlocks, clerics, or other servants of devils, now dedicated to purging the

evil from their souls through ascetic practices and acts of penance that they might one day escape the plane. Saving other poor souls trapped in Hell is their mission yet it puts them in a precarious position as their existence depends on escaping the notice of infernal creatures, and one misstep or gesture of misplaced trust could ruin them—and no one in the House of the Reclaimed Soul would risk their own skin for someone else.

## HISTORY

Time passes strangely in Hell, but the House of the Reclaimed soul claim their story began a millennium ago. Celestial legions stormed the realm infernal and at their side rode brave mortals pledged in service to the higher planes—yet even the strongest mortal soul is not immune to temptation. The paladin Lyrannis of the White Cliffs was one, lured from her master's side by a succubus that whispered sweet hints of power and eternal life instead of a grim death in a futile crusade. Her heart turned traitorous and the celestial forces were crushed in the next battle they fought. Fiendish pacts are never quite what mortals think they will be however, and while the fiend had implied many things nothing was promised. Lyrannis' only boon was to be spared death and left to wander on a battlefield piled high with her companions' remains.

She couldn't go home so the fallen paladin dug down into the hot, red, rock of Hell, crafting fortifications with the bones of angels and the pure of heart. As Lyrannis engaged in this tortuous physical labor it occurred to her that perhaps she might be redeemed after all, that through toil, hardship, and penitence she might once again be worthy of the upper planes—or at least of returning to the Material Plane. What she built became the House of the Reclaimed Soul and even with the few blessings upon it, its survival under the eyes of legions of devils (some with very personal interests in the occupants) is quite an achievement.

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## THE HEAVENLY BONES

The battlefield beneath which Lyrannis built her fort is a beacon of celestial purity in the first level's hellscape and because of that most devils avoid it. It is distasteful and ugly to them, ignored as much as possible. Thus the House of the Reclaimed Soul has, so far, escaped the notice of many devils. The bones are decaying however, and their inherent goodness and detestable light are growing weak. At some point the fiendish powers will turn their eyes to the former battlefield and as soon as they do, this place of penitence is surely doomed.

## THE INFERNAL STREAM

When mixed with just a little dust from holy bones before consumption, water from the **River Styx** washes clean the stains of the penitents' souls. Otherwise it is a lethal poison that causes nausea and vomiting with only a sip (DC 16 Constitution saving throw; 2d6 poison damage on a failure), or with a whole cup turns the drinker's lips and eyes black while their throat swells until they can't breathe (DC 18 Constitution saving throw; 50 points of poison damage, or half as much on a successful save).

## ACTIVITIES

Lyrannis began her path to redemption with the only gesture she could think of: saving other poor souls lost in Hell. With a battlefield survivor here and a misguided warlock there, over the centuries the fallen paladin found those in need or they found her. People moved on from the House of the Reclaimed Soul to Hell's great cities, seeking to assist anyone they could—and more importantly, those they could trust.

A thousand years is a long time though and fear gradually encroached on both the hearts of Lyrannis and her followers. They are now more preoccupied with maintaining secrecy and safety than reaching out to others but yearn all the harder for home as their attempts at penance become ever stranger and more painful the further they sink

into despair. Agents of the House of the Reclaimed Soul still send people in need back there with the pass-phrase known by them all ('White Cliffs'). However, if they give Lyrannis and the others any reason to mistrust them they are likely to be permanently destroyed before they have a chance at betrayal.

## MOTIVATIONS

The occupants of the House of the Reclaimed Soul wish to leave Hell but have no way of doing so on their own, persisting and hoping that eventually some greater power will take notice and stretch out a helping hand. Some do not believe that they can be free and that the stain on their soul will draw them inevitably back to the realm infernal, or act as a beacon for fiends to reclaim them. Adventurers might very well be these benevolent saviors—or at least convince Lyrannis and her followers that they are.

Ondreth and Vale would leave if they truly believed they'd be safe, and while Asco dearly wants to be free he won't consider it as long as their erinyes master is still alive. Lyrannis and the others, truly penitent, stay while there is still work to do. The need to leave turns more urgent as time passes, the atmosphere of Hell leeching the power out of the celestial bones that obscure the House of the Reclaimed Soul. Hiding becomes more difficult every year and the members are aware that they either need to relocate or find some other way to avoid detection.

### NOTE

High level magic is required to return any of these people to their home planes—a simple *banishment* does not work as they have dwelled here so long, well past mortal lifetimes. So much of their blood has been turned infernal from the food they eat and water they drink that they count as natives of Hell for the purposes of this spell.

## MODUS OPERANDI

The House of the Reclaimed Soul has two major focuses: saving others and treading a path to redemption so that they can leave Hell.

### RECRUITMENT

Agents are almost exclusively occupied with finding more members (see Khorian, below) for their path to redemption. They lead a precarious existence in infernal cities and legions, passing as devils themselves while actively seeking mortals who might be in need of their help. They can supply information on power structures and offer advice to those pursuing goals in Hell, although under no circumstances do they risk themselves or their cover, finding discreet ways to pass messages—such as *sending*, *message*, or anonymous notes. They will only give out directions to the House of the Reclaimed Soul and the pass-phrase to enter once they fully trust someone, and only then if they are in dire need.

### REDEMPTION

New arrivals are rare and those who dwell within the fortifications have a lot of time to reflect on their situation—and come up with ever more bizarre ways to purge themselves of their perceived sins and debts. They are paranoid, fearful, and under endless, unmitigated stress. Asco (see Membership) makes the situation worse, stirring up their fears and making sure they are mostly useless. Vale is the leading source of new penances, but old favorites include:

- Exposure to the hot, arid, atmosphere of Hell while rejecting food and water until they are on the brink of wasting away.
- Drinking unfiltered water from the River Styx in tiny sips.
- Bloodletting, flagellation, or self-inflicted harm using celestial bones.

All of these practices leave the occupants physically and mentally fragile, contributing to the atmosphere of feverish fear that pervades the House of the Reclaimed Soul.

## MEMBERSHIP

At any given time there are 6-10 residents of the House of the Reclaimed Soul. With the exception of those detailed below, they are all **penitents**. In addition, there are a dozen agents (most using the statistics of an **assassin** or **mage**) in various locations throughout all of Hell.

### LYRANNIS

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This dark skinned, dark eyed, human woman holds herself tall and wears the piecemeal remains of shining platemail. She looks weary though, like the desire to simply...stop...is always close at hand.

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**Traits:** Lyrannis always looks tired but never lets herself stop and relax. She rarely smiles.

**Ideal:** To atone for her sins.

**Bond:** Lyrannis cannot bring herself to consider leaving the House of the Reclaimed Soul and the remains of her fallen former comrades.

**Flaw:** Lyrannis has not left the fortifications for many years and is profoundly agoraphobic.

**Statistics:** Lyrannis is a lawful good human **knight** with the maximum possible hit points (80).

**Possessions:** Lyrannis has a *mace of disruption*.

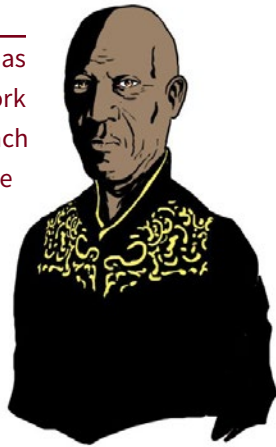
**Background:** Lyrannis is the founder of the House of the Reclaimed Soul, as detailed above.

**Roleplay:** Lyrannis is lost—she carries on with her routine out of habit and faith, but her mind wanders and she frequently defers to Vale.



## Vale

This short, slight, human man has round, watery eyes and a network of old scars covering every inch of what little flesh you can see beneath his heavy gray robes. He leans heavily on a staff of dull, gray wood.



**Traits:** Vale talks to himself, keeping up a running commentary of criticism of whatever is happening around him. He rarely blinks.

**Ideal:** To cleanse the souls of himself and his companions by punishing their flesh.

**Bond:** Vale is highly protective of Lyrannis.

**Flaw:** Vale's first solution to any problem is always the most painful and damaging.

**Statistics:** Vale is a neutral human **mage** that adds *eldritch blast*, *vampiric touch*, and *blight* to his spell list.

**Possessions:** Vale carries a *staff of withering*.

**Background:** A warlock brought to the realm infernal by his patron, Vale escaped with Lyrannis' help. He sees himself as a failure and believes he can only be redeemed through suffering—he has over time come to believe the same is true of his companions.

**Roleplay:** Vale believes himself to be in charge since Lyrannis is no longer the leader she was. He makes most decisions and assumes anyone who opposes him is an agent of devils—he is extremely paranoid about the House of Reclaimed Souls being infiltrated.

## Asco

This round-faced halfling has a shock of sandy hair and a smattering of freckles, and although he laughs easily his smiles and chuckling never seem to reach his eyes.

**Traits:** Asco bites his nails and nibbles at the skin around them. He moves quietly and is known for sneaking up on people.

**Ideal:** To please his fiendish master Antithea by bringing down the House of the Reclaimed Soul from within. The longer he spends in the fortifications the more he considers switching sides, giving Lyrannis and the others his true loyalty.

**Bond:** Asco serves his infernal master with wavering loyalty.

**Flaw:** Asco finds the sight of blood repellent and avoids hurting people as much as possible.

**Statistics:** Asco is a Small neutral evil halfling **veteran** with Speed 25 ft., Lucky (when Asco rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll), and Halfling Nimbleness (Asco can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than Small).

**Possessions:** Asco has a ring that summons his erinyes master to his location when the command word ('Antithea') is spoken. The ring can be used once per day.

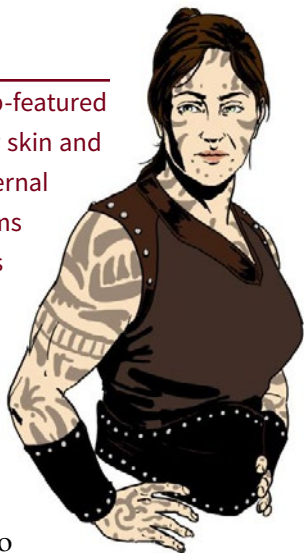
**Background:** Asco is a former adventurer taken captive by the erinyes Antithea. His loyalty is borne of fear and when approached by an agent of the House of the Reclaimed Soul he immediately informed his master, who sent him to infiltrate and eventually destroy the organization from within.

**Roleplay:** Asco is exceptionally good at manipulating Vale and has been fostering the old man's paranoia, leading him towards more dangerous and destructive practices. He also encourages Lyrannis to let Vale, "*do the hard work.*" He is observant, frequently lurking to overhear conversations that do not involve him, and is often assumed to be creepy

but harmless. If Asco thought he could safely escape Antitheia, he would serve the House of the Reclaimed Soul loyally and undo a lot of the harm he has done, allowing it to return to its noble purpose.

## ONDRETH

This elven woman is sharp-featured and imperious, with coppery skin and reddish hair. Tattoos of infernal script wind around her arms and neck, and one encircles her left eye.



**Traits:** Ondreth does not speak.

**Ideal:** To forget her past.

**Bond:** Ondreth would do anything she believed would protect the House of the Reclaimed Soul.

**Flaw:** Ondreth judges others harshly, and judges herself even harder.

**Statistics:** Ondreth is a lawful neutral elf **penitent**, with the darkvision 60 ft., Fey Ancestry (she has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep), and the Trance elf racial trait.

**Background:** Once a priestess for a god of death and destruction, Ondreth sacrificed her entire congregation in exchange for greater power but when the deed was done she couldn't live with herself. She journeyed into Hell to try and restore their souls—to no avail. She was eventually found and directed to the House of the Reclaimed Soul by Khorian.

**Roleplay:** Ondreth has taken a vow of silence as part of her penitence—talking is a distraction from contemplating what she has done. Her face and gestures are highly expressive and she seems to disapprove of almost everything said around her.

## AGENT KHORIAN

A sleek, androgynous tiefling stands before you, with ash-colored skin under their loose, black, clothing and eyes that smolder the deep red of banked coals. They look warily over their shoulder before turning a wry, humorless grin on you.

**Traits:** Khorian hides their feelings under a layer of humor and constantly looks over their shoulder.

**Ideal:** They believes that anything and anyone can be redeemed—even fiends.

**Bond:** Despite everything Khorian still craves the respect of their fiendish ancestor.

**Flaw:** Khorian will turn tail and run when the going gets tough—they'd rather live to fight another day than play the hero.

**Statistics:** Khorian is a chaotic good tiefling **assassin** with darkvision 60 ft., resistance to fire damage, and the Infernal Legacy tiefling racial trait.

**Possessions:** Khorian has a *potion of mind reading* and a *feather of teleportation* (which functions as a *helm of teleportation*).

**Background:** Khorian was a foundling who became a career criminal. With no other family the idea of a powerful, fiendish, parental figure was always seductive. They came to Hell to learn their heritage only to realize that if they ever did find their ancestor it would have no interest in them that they'd want.

**Roleplay:** Khorian is eternally optimistic—Hell exists but so do the heavens, and there must be a way to go from one to another. They firmly believe anyone can be saved and while they won't do anything that puts themself or the House of the Reclaimed Soul in harm's way, they passionately care about helping those they believe will benefit from it. Khorian is a breath of fresh air in the sulfurous pits of Hell: they laugh easily and sincerely, and are good at putting on a brave face in adversity.

## PENITENT

MEDIUM HUMANOID (ANY RACE),  
ANY NON-EVIL ALIGNMENT

**Armor Class** 13 (pain tolerance)

**Hit Points** 91 (14d8+28)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Wis +4

**Skills** Medicine +4

**Condition** Immunities charmed, frightened

**Languages** Common and one other language

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Do No Harm.** Penitents cannot be magically compelled to cause harm to another creature.

**Pain Tolerance.** Penitents are used to deprivation and pain. As a result, glancing blows don't trouble them. While it is wearing no armor, the penitent's AC equals 10 + their Dexterity modifier + their Constitution modifier.

**Spellcasting.** The penitent is a 4th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The penitent has the following spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *guidance, resistance, spare the dying*

**1st level (4 slots):** *protection from evil and good, sanctuary, shield of faith*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *calm emotions, silence*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The penitent makes two quarterstaff attacks.

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage or 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands.

**Shared Pain (3/Long Rest).** Penitents can share their pain with others. As a reaction when it is damaged by a creature, the penitent projects the pain of their most recent injury back onto the attacker. The target makes a DC 12 Constitution save or takes an amount of damage equal to the triggering attack, effect, or spell. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage.

Many penitents are former spellcasters (usually clerics or warlocks) who committed regrettable acts in the service of evil powers. They retain a measure of magical ability but turn it towards strength and resistance, complementing it with minds and bodies made resilient through ascetic practices. 🐾

