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## Niyl

Goddess of panic, destruction, slaughter and senseless mayhem and also lust and debauchery, jealousy and revenge. She is the daughter of the Empress, but became ensnared by the wiles of the Old Man, and now serves him fully. Their daughter is Vese, the Dark Lady of Hurt.

Niyl is a tall, beautiful, raven-haired woman whose eyes are bruised and bloodshot, filled with both despair and mad hatred.

Niyl has no churches or permanent shrines. Her followers are nomadic and secretive, until their numbers reach a certain level when they can be whipped up by a charismatic leader and act as destructive plagues. Niylists cause destruction and engage in purposeless slaughter wherever they go. They do not normally plunder or steal like bandits, but merely ride into a village and kill everything that moves, burn everything that does not, and move on. Thankfully such large-scale activity is rare, and usually of short duration (before the cultists are caught and destroyed), but there are many individuals who follow the creed.

## Nobility

All titles and honours stem from the crown. That is, the King (or Queen regnant) has the right to institute new noble titles and bestow them upon whomever they wish, as well as lands or a money fief to support the new noble. Thus in the last year King Vandrad has bestowed the title of Earl of Requer upon Alrik of Valliore, and given him broad estates in the valleys below the Voorland hills. Once given, however, not even the king can take away the title from the noble or from his family, save in cases of Crimes Grievous. Even in this case the King is loath to do so, unless the noble is guilty beyond all doubt and the crime grievous indeed. Only in cases of treason against the crown, the noble's sworn sovereign, can the title or estates be taken from the entire family, in an act of attainder. In other cases, such as murder or brigandage, the title can only be taken from the noble himself, and then bestowed upon his or her heir, if there is one. In all cases of attainder the estates are forfeited to the crown and the noble title becomes vacant, able to be awarded to another.

Should the heir of a noble be under the age of majority when he accedes to the title, the crown gains the rights of guardianship over him. This honour, too, can be given to another by the King. Guardians have total control over the estates and wealth of their wards, and can have a heavy influence over such matters as their betrothals. Guardianship is an effective way of gaining wealth and influence.

## Nobility, Obligations of

A noble is expected to serve his liege lord the king in any and all ways the latter requires, but mainly by providing swords for his army, counsel for his ears and gold for his treasury. He is expected to provide good lordship for his peasants, protect them from harm and help them increase the wealth and bounty of the realm. He is not to use his wealth and position merely for his own benefit. He is not allowed to build strongholds without permission, or to raise excessive force except to stave off attack from within or without the kingdom.

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