

# Factions and Guilds in Cresthaven

written by A J | May 21, 2024

The Cataclysm shattered the world of Cresthaven, leaving behind a tapestry of factions vying for survival and power in the harsh wastelands. From the devout Guardians of the Light who shield the village from encroaching darkness, to the cunning Shadow Guild operating in the labyrinthine underbelly, each faction offers opportunities for your players to forge alliances, navigate political intrigue, or clash with those whose goals oppose their own. These factions are not monolithic, and internal conflicts or hidden agendas can provide your campaign with rich layers of complexity and player agency. By strategically weaving these factions into your campaign, you can create a world brimming with diverse motivations, potential allies, and thrilling challenges for your players. The good news is these factions already exist in the Village of Cresthaven text.

## The Guardians of the Light



Founded by the village's first priest, the Guardians arose from a need to defend Cresthaven from the encroaching darkness that followed the Cataclysm. Clad in simple brown and green robes, they are a constant vigil, their eyes ever watchful against monstrous incursions and those who would corrupt the village's innocence.

**Structure:** The Guardians operate under a strict hierarchy. Novices train for years in martial arts, religious studies, and the history of the Cataclysm. Initiates take vows of poverty, obedience, and the protection of Cresthaven. Veteran Guardians, known as Wardens, lead patrols, train new members, and serve as advisors to the village elder on matters of faith and defense.

**Beliefs:** The Guardians adhere to a strict interpretation of the faith, believing the Cataclysm was a punishment for humanity's sins. They see themselves as instruments of redemption, protecting Cresthaven from the

shadows and guiding its people back to the light.

**Relationship with Outsiders:** The Guardians are wary of outsiders, fearing they may bring corruption or malicious intent. However, they are willing to work with those who prove themselves worthy and share their goal of safeguarding Cresthaven.

## The Shadow Guild



The Cataclysm's chaos created opportunity for the cunning and desperate. The Shadow Guild emerged from a loose network of scavengers who found refuge and profit in Cresthaven's forgotten underbelly – a labyrinthine network of tunnels known as "The Pit." Membership is exclusive, earned through displays of exceptional agility, lockpicking skills, and silent movement.

**Structure:** The Guild operates under a Guildmaster, a cunning individual who oversees operations and commands the respect of all members. "Fingers" are skilled pickpockets and scouts who infiltrate aboveground locations. "Wraiths" are masters of stealth who specialize in acquiring high-value items. "Shadowbrokers" manage the Guild's network of informants and fences, ensuring stolen goods find their way to willing buyers.

**Activities:** The Guild engages in a variety of illicit activities, from pilfering from unsuspecting travelers to stealing from corrupt officials. They operate with a strict code of conduct, forbidding violence within Cresthaven's walls and respecting the sanctity of homes. Their true power lies in their network of informants and the secrets they have accumulated over generations.

**Relationship with Outsiders:** The Shadow Guild maintains a neutral stance with outsiders. They offer their services to those willing to pay the price, but can be ruthless in eliminating anyone who threatens their secrecy or livelihood.

## The Iron Guard



The Iron Guard's origins lie in the desperate days following the Cataclysm, when Cresthaven faced relentless assaults from mutated creatures. Heroes who rose to defend the village eventually formed the Guard, seeking to share their knowledge and skills with others who possessed the courage to venture into the Wildlands.

**Membership:** Entry to the Iron Guard is a coveted honor. Only seasoned adventurers who have proven their valor and strategic prowess within the Adventurer's Guild can be considered. Rigorous trials test their combat skills, wilderness survival, and teamwork before they are accepted.

**Structure:** The Iron Guard operates with a council of veteran commanders. They assign missions to their members, ranging from clearing bandit lairs and securing vital trade routes to venturing into ancient ruins to retrieve lost knowledge or artifacts. Their headquarters within Cresthaven serves as a training ground and meeting place, adorned with trophies and mementos of their past victories.

**Relationship with Outsiders:** The Iron Guard respects those who share their dedication to protecting Cresthaven. They offer training and support to promising newcomers within the Adventurer's Guild and hold regular events where veterans share their experiences and knowledge with aspiring heroes.

## The Hermetic Order of the Magi



The Cataclysm fractured the fabric of reality, leaving magic unpredictable and dangerous. Fearing the misuse of this power, a group of mages formed the Hermetic Order. They sought to gather, understand, and control the remnants of magical lore scattered across the wastelands.

**Structure:** The Order is shrouded in secrecy. Initiates undergo rigorous

training in magical theory, control, and the history of the Cataclysm's impact on magic. Adepts specialize in specific schools of magic, while Masters lead research expeditions and guide the Order's overall direction. A council of Archmages governs the Order, ensuring responsible use of magic and maintaining neutrality in worldly conflicts.

**Activities:** The Hermetic Order prioritizes the study and preservation of magic. They maintain a vast library of arcane texts and artifacts salvaged from ruins. Additionally, they conduct research expeditions to rediscover lost magical techniques and understand the Cataclysm's lingering effects on the world's magical energies.

**Relationship with Outsiders:** The Order is cautious of outsiders, especially those who lack magical training. They may offer aid or knowledge to worthy individuals seeking to understand magic, but their primary focus remains safeguarding this power for those who respect its intricacies.

## The Silent Ones



The origins of the Silent Ones are shrouded in mystery. Whispers speak of a secluded clan who delved deep into forbidden knowledge, mastering the creation of toxins and the manipulation of mutations. Their assassins became feared throughout the wastelands for their lethality and undetectable methods.

**Structure:** The Silent Ones operate in autonomous cells, each led by a Grandmaster – a master assassin with unmatched skill and knowledge of poisons and mutations. New members undergo rigorous training in the creation and use of poisons, stealth techniques, and exotic martial arts. Only the most disciplined and ruthless survive the trials and become full-fledged assassins.

**Activities:** The Silent Ones operate as a mercenary guild, accepting high-paying contracts from those who seek the elimination of rivals or enemies. Their methods are swift and silent, often utilizing poisoned blades or specially crafted toxins to eliminate their targets.

**Relationship with Outsiders:** The Silent Ones maintain a cold neutrality. They are not driven by ideals or allegiances, only by coin and the thrill of the hunt. Those who possess the wealth to hire them can expect their services to be carried out with ruthless efficiency, but any who betray their trust face a swift and agonizing demise.