

A Monument to Our Sins

Deep in the jungles of Newman's Dale lies a massive slab of metal and concrete, with a few crumbling ruins dotted on and around it. These are the remains of the Bright Way's "corporate headquarters" during the Age of Decadence. It was originally a massive skyscraper extending upward to become a space elevator. The High Perch, the symbolic seat of the authority of the High Hearthkeeper, was also originally located here before being moved to The Eternal Hearth in the City of Eternal Noon on Hearthside after the War of Dissolution.

It was here that Greenleaf the steadtree hermit made his denouncement of the High Hearthkeeper after the scandal of Firefly's apostacy.

The structure's razing is generally considered to mark the end of both the War of Dissolution and the Age of Decadence. The final battle of the war actually had three sides. The Preservationists were on their last legs and the writing was on the wall, but they nevertheless fought tooth and claw to the bitter end.

The Pious Dissolutionists were attempting to oust their coreligionists from the structure and occupy it for themselves. It had tremendous symbolic value both as holy ground, being as it was standing on the very soil where the Kindling and the Theophany took place, but also as the center of the Bright Way's ecclesiastical government. Iris the Hearthsider had been set up as an informal anti-High Hearthkeeper, and the Pious Dissolutionists wanted to see her take the High Perch for herself and officially purge the faith of its mercantile interests and put an end to the hierarchy's acedia once and for all.

The third group was a group of Secular Dissolutionists, mostly members of Firefly's Partisans, who wanted to see the structure toppled in their effort to expunge all traces of the Bright Way from Focus. The Secularists ended up winning the day, slabbing the structure and glassing the surrounding area from orbit, but not before the Pious Dissolutionists were able to capture both the reigning High Hearthkeeper and other holy relics, including the High Perch itself.

The High Hearthkeeper initially resisted capture, and refused to recognize Iris as her successor. The Pious Dissolutionists pointed out that it was either spend her remaining centuries in quiet retirement in a monastery on Hearthside, or be brutally tortured and killed by the Partisans. She reluctantly abdicated, making Iris the undisputed leader of the Bright Way.

There were subsequent battles between the various radical and moderate secularist factions for control of Yih, but the moderates repelled the militants, securing the Bright Way's future as a purely religious and philocynoidic institution. These moderate factions would eventually coalesce into a stable government for Yih, which would later go on to form the core of the Allied Worlds.

A modest monastery now stands in the middle of the massive foundation, housing an order of penitents. Wayfarers make pilgrimages here to weep before the ruins in reparation for thirty three

millennia squandered in the name of greed.

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