



PALADIN

ORDER OF THE GOLDEN SCALES

Aranthaen Sub-Class

PALADIN – ORDER OF THE GOLDEN SCALES SUBCLASS

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Paladin Subclass: Order of the Golden Scales

Subclass Overview

The Paladins of the Order of the Golden Scales exist to **enforce balance**. Their oath binds them to the Mother's will as it is measured and declared, leaving little room for personal judgement or conscience.

Within Aranthaes, the Golden Scales represent the **final authority** of Lady Bune's faith. Where Aranthaen clerics stabilise and Mother's Shadow warlocks bear burden, these paladins enforce outcome. They don't seek to understand every circumstance, or to weigh every argument. That work has already been done - by the Mother herself.

Their oath binds them to obedience rather than interpretation. When the scales tip too far - when unrest hardens into threat, when opposition becomes defiance, when mercy would invite collapse - the Golden Scales are called.

*Their presence alone is often enough to restore order. When it is not, **judgment follows**.*

The power they wield is not subtle. It is draconic in origin, radiant in form, and absolute in intent. Yet it is also restrained. The Golden Scales don't act lightly - each act of enforcement carries weight - spiritual, political, and personal.

The paladin is expected to endure that weight without question.

To allies, a Golden Scales paladin is reassuring but unsettling: a reminder that the Mother's protection is inseparable from her authority.

To enemies, they are terrifying not for their wrath, but for their certainty. There is no negotiation with a verdict already passed.

For players, this subclass offers a paladin defined by **submission to judgment** rather than moral debate. You serve as the vessel through which the Mother's will is delivered. When you act, it is because the decision has already been made — and the scales must be balanced.

Lore & Origins

The Order of the Golden Scales was founded during a period when the Church of the Mother faced a problem doctrine alone could not solve.

Aranthaes had grown prosperous under Lady Bune's faith. Charity flowed, order held, and belief was widespread. Yet prosperity brought complexity. Disputes arose that could not be resolved through scripture or distribution alone. Rival factions claimed legitimacy. Enemies learned to exploit mercy. Threats emerged that remained *technically* lawful while undermining stability.

The Defenders of the Mother could contain unrest and preserve continuity, but they were never intended to resolve final matters of judgment. Their mandate was management, not conclusion.

The Golden Scales were created to fill that gap.

According to Church records, their formation followed a rare divine concordance: a series of visions experienced independently by senior clergy, all describing a set of scales wrought in gold, suspended in flame. The message was consistent. Balance was not merely to be maintained. When imbalance persisted, it was to be corrected decisively.

From this emerged the doctrine of **Measured Judgment**.

The paladins of the Golden Scales were sworn not to interpret the Mother's will, but to submit to it. Their training emphasised obedience, restraint, and the relinquishing of personal moral authority. Unlike other paladin orders, they were discouraged from independent crusades or personal quests. Their role was singular: to act only when called, and to act completely.

Central to their oath is the belief that **Lady Bune herself** determines who stands in opposition to her will.

The paladin serves as a conduit through which judgment is delivered once the scales have been weighed elsewhere - by the Church, by the Mother, or by forces beyond mortal understanding.

This structure allows the Order to exist without internal schism. A Golden Scales paladin who acts does so without claiming moral superiority. Responsibility rests with the authority that issued the judgment.

The paladin bears the consequence, but not the decision.

Over time, the Order has come to be regarded with a mixture of reverence and unease. They are rarely numerous, seldom visible, and never deployed lightly.

Their appearance signals that all lesser remedies have failed.

Role in Aranthaes

The Order of the Golden Scales occupies a unique and carefully constrained position within Aranthaes. They are neither administrators nor caretakers, nor do they operate continuously within the city's daily life.

Where the Defenders of the Mother are visible and familiar, the Golden Scales are **rare by design**. Many citizens will live their entire lives without seeing one - but all know their name.

This scarcity is intentional. Judgment, when overused, loses legitimacy.

When a Golden Scales paladin is deployed, it is understood that deliberation has already ended. At the height of their calling, such a paladin may serve as a conduit for **Mother's Fire** - a direct manifestation of draconic authority that does not originate from the paladin themselves.

In this moment, the paladin does not choose targets, weigh mercy, or exercise discretion. The scales have already been weighed elsewhere, and the verdict has been rendered.

By the time a Golden Scales paladin is capable of serving as a conduit for the Mother's Fire, Lady Bune is no longer an abstract figure of worship. Such paladins have **stood in her presence**, received her instruction directly, and in some cases continue to speak with her in person. Their certainty does not arise from dogma, but from experience.

It is this proximity that defines their restraint. Having witnessed the Mother's true nature, the paladin understands that judgment is not theirs to interpret or temper. When they act, it is because they have been permitted to act - and never because they desire to.

Mother's Fire burns those who stand in opposition to the Mother's will, while steadying and sustaining those who stand within it. The paladin neither commands nor directs this power; they present themselves as the vessel through which it passes.

Golden Scales paladins are called only when other measures have failed or proven insufficient. They are deployed in cases of sustained defiance, existential threat, or imbalance that cannot be corrected through charity, doctrine, or containment.

Their arrival signals that the Church has concluded its internal processes and that the matter has passed beyond negotiation. Their presence carries an implicit understanding that the situation is already resolved, even if its outcome has not yet manifested.

They do not argue, justify, or explain.

Within the Church, the Order is respected but deliberately kept at a distance. Clerics understand that once the Golden Scales are invoked, control has been relinquished.

Decisions are no longer provisional and outcomes will be enforced.



The Weighing and the Mark

For most of their lives, a paladin of the Golden Scales serves much like any other sworn knight of the Church: disciplined, capable, and bound by oath. Their authority derives from doctrine and reputation. Their power is earned through service.

That changes at the moment known within the Order as **the Weighing**.

When a Golden Scales paladin reaches an important point of their calling, they are summoned - not by clergy, but by the **Holy Mother** herself. This summons is neither symbolic nor metaphorical. The paladin stands before **Lady Bune** in person, and the balance of their service is assessed without words. Failures are not condemned. Successes are not praised. The scales are simply read.

Those found wanting do not fall. They return to service unchanged, and the matter is never spoken of again.

Those found sufficient are marked.

Lady Bune lays her hands upon the paladin and entrusts them with a physical token of her authority: a **Golden Amulet**, wrought in the likeness of the scales themselves. From that moment, the paladin's oath ceases to be aspirational. It becomes *operational*.

The Amulet is not a symbol of rank, but a conduit - and is forged from Aranthaen gold mixed with a drop of the paladin's blood, binding judgment to both vessel and will.

Through it, the Mother may observe when judgment is required. The paladin does not feel her presence constantly, nor do they receive instruction on demand. Instead, there are moments of alignment - a tightening of certainty, a narrowing of possibility - when the paladin understands that the scales are tipping.

In such moments, the paladin does not decide who is enemy and who is ally. That distinction no longer belongs to them. They present themselves, open to the Mother's will, and act only when permitted to act. When judgment is delivered, it is delivered *through* them, not *by* them.

Among the Order, bearing the amulet is regarded as the highest honour that can be bestowed. It is also the greatest burden. A paladin so marked can no longer claim ignorance, nor can they retreat into personal interpretation.

From this point onward, a Golden Scales paladin is no longer merely sworn to Lady Bune - they are inseparably joined with her.

A Scales paladin swears the following tenets in an audience with Holy Mother:

The Scales Are Not Mine

I will not claim authority that is not mine to wield. Judgment belongs to the Mother alone. When I act, it is because the scales have already been weighed.

I Will Be Available

I will make myself present when imbalance arises. I will not hide behind delay, delegation, or doubt. When called, I will answer.

I Will Not Temper the Verdict

I will not soften judgment for comfort, nor sharpen it for satisfaction. Mercy and severity are not mine to choose. I will enact what is given without addition or omission.

I Will Bear the Consequence

I accept that the weight of judgment passes through me. I will endure its cost - physical, spiritual, and mortal - without complaint or excuse.

I Will Remain Silent

I will not explain the Mother's will to those not bound to hear it. The verdict speaks for itself. Where silence preserves balance, I will keep it.

Breaking the Oath

A Golden Scales paladin does not fall for cruelty, anger, or zeal. They fall only when they substitute their own judgment for the Mother's.

Such a failure does not invite punishment or wrath. The amulet simply goes cold - and the conduit closes. The paladin lives a life of spiritual emptiness from that point forward, their heart an empty void - which for many is a fate worse than death.

Subclass Features - Order of the Golden Scales

3rd Level - Oath of the Golden Scales

When you take this oath, you swear obedience to measured judgment rather than personal conviction. You gain the Channel Divinity options listed below.

Channel Divinity: Mark the Imbalance

As a bonus action, you present your holy symbol and designate one creature you can see within 30 feet.

For 1 minute, you gain advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks against the creature, and you always know its direction relative to you while on the same plane. In addition, the first time each turn that creature deals damage, you may reduce that damage by an amount equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1).

This does not declare guilt but acknowledges **attention**.

Channel Divinity: Stay the Scales

As a reaction when a creature within 30 feet would be reduced to 0 hit points, you may instead cause it to drop to 1 hit point.

Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

The verdict has not yet been rendered.

7th Level - Presence of Finality

Your proximity carries weight.

While you are conscious, hostile creatures within 10 feet of you have disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened, and friendly creatures in the same area have advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Creatures instinctively understand that retreat is no longer a negotiation.

15th Level - The Weighing

You are no longer operating on faith alone.

At this level, you are summoned to stand before **Holy Mother** and are assessed according to the balance of your service. This judgment is personal, immediate, and final. If you are found sufficient, the Mother entrusts you with a **Golden Amulet of the Scales**.

The amulet is forged specifically for you from **Aranthaen gold** and sealed at the moment of its creation with a drop of your blood. It is unique to you and cannot be attuned to by any other creature. You become attuned to the amulet immediately.

While attuned to the Golden Amulet of the Scales:

- You cannot be surprised while you are conscious.
- You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.
- You gain a **+1 bonus to all saving throws**.
- Once per long rest, when you would fail a saving throw, you may choose to succeed instead.

The amulet is not a badge of rank or authority. It is a conduit, binding you directly to the Mother's awareness and will. Through it, judgment may pass when required.

If you willingly violate your oath, the amulet becomes **dormant permanently**. While dormant, it confers no benefits and cannot be reawakened by mortal means.



18th Level - Mother's Fire

You become a true conduit for **the Mother's final judgment**.

As an action, while attuned to the Golden Amulet, you may invoke **Mother's Fire**.

Radiant flame erupts from you in a controlled manifestation of draconic authority, projecting outward in a **15-foot cone**. The fire may issue from your outstretched hands or the tip of a weapon you are holding; this choice has no mechanical effect.

When Mother's Fire is invoked:

- **Hostile creatures** in the area must make a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, each creature within the cone takes **10d8 radiant damage**. On a successful save, they take **half as much damage**.
- **Friendly creatures** in the area instead regain **6d8 + your Charisma modifier** hit points.
- Creatures that are neither hostile nor friendly to you are unaffected.

You do not designate targets or determine outcomes - Only creatures the Mother deems to stand in opposition are harmed.

For the purposes of this feature, the DM determines which creatures are considered hostile, friendly, or neither.

Once you use this feature, you cannot do so again until you finish a long rest. In addition, you gain **one level of exhaustion** as the weight of judgment passes fully through you. Until the end of your next turn, you cannot use Divine Smite, and your Aura of Protection is suppressed.

Player Hooks

If you choose to play a paladin who will one day swear the Oath of the Golden Scales, consider the following when developing your character:

What first drew you toward the Order of the Golden Scales?

Were you inspired by their reputation, their restraint, their authority, or their rarity? Did you admire the idea of final judgment - or fear it, and feel compelled to understand it?

How do you currently view justice and balance?

Do you believe mercy should always temper judgment, or that order must sometimes be enforced without compromise? At this stage of your life, do you trust institutions, individuals, or principles most?

Why do you believe you might be worthy of the Weighing one day?

Is it discipline, obedience, loyalty, calm under pressure - or something less virtuous, such as ambition or a desire for certainty? Are you confident you would be found sufficient, or do you quietly doubt it?

What do you imagine it would be like to stand before the Mother herself?

Do you expect clarity, reassurance, fear, or judgment? Have you ever considered what she might see in you that others do not?

How do you feel about surrendering moral authority in the future?

Could you accept a day when judgment is no longer yours to question or soften? Does the idea comfort you - or unsettle you?

What would make you hesitate, even if called?

Are there lines you hope will never be crossed, people you fear being ordered to oppose, or outcomes you pray never to be asked to enforce?

Who are you now, before recognition?

You are still learning, still choosing, still capable of doubt. How might proximity to divine authority change you - and what parts of yourself do you hope to preserve?

Why DMs Should Allow This Subclass

The Order of the Golden Scales gives a paladin access to exceptional narrative authority without granting exceptional player control.

Its defining power, Mother's Fire, is deliberately rare, costly, and externally adjudicated, ensuring it functions as a story-shaping moment rather than a routine combat option.

This subclass is especially well suited to campaigns where gods are present, faith has consequences, and high-level play involves moral or cosmic tension. Because judgment is attributed to **Lady Bune** rather than the paladin, the subclass avoids common problems associated with paladin overreach, alignment disputes, or “smite-first” behavior.

Mechanically, the Golden Scales paladin remains balanced with other oaths. Its strongest feature is limited to once per long rest, imposes exhaustion, and briefly suppresses core paladin abilities. Outside of these moments, the character plays much like a disciplined, restrained paladin focused on presence rather than burst damage.

Narratively, the subclass provides the DM with a reliable instrument of finality. It allows difficult situations to be resolved decisively without removing player agency elsewhere, and it integrates cleanly into endgame stories involving divine fracture, shifting loyalties, or the cost of obedience.

In short, this subclass offers:

- high narrative impact with low mechanical disruption
- built-in restraint and consequences
- clear DM authority over edge cases
- and a paladin whose power reinforces story rather than overshadowing it

