

Helm

Helm, the Ever-Watchful, is the god of vigilance, guardianship, duty, and ordered justice. He is lawful above all else, with a stern and limited goodness expressed through protection, discipline, and the preservation of rightful order.

Helm does not promise that the world will be kind. He promises that those who stand beneath his shield will not stand alone. His faithful are expected to defend the innocent, punish the guilty, honour their oaths, and remain at their posts when fear, doubt, or exhaustion would drive them away.

To Helm, goodness is not measured by the softness of one's heart, but by what one is willing to endure for those placed under one's protection.

"Life is fleeting; duty is eternal." -Saint Ilyra of the Last Watch, 239

The Nature of Helm

Helm is stern, patient, and difficult to deceive. He has little patience for excuses, sentimentality, or those who mistake indecision for wisdom. A person who knows their duty and performs it is worthy of respect, even if their motives are imperfect. A person who abandons their duty while claiming noble intentions is viewed with far greater suspicion.

Helm is not cruel for cruelty's sake. He does not delight in suffering, nor does he demand punishment merely to satisfy anger. Yet he believes that mercy shown to the guilty may become a betrayal of the innocent. Justice must be reliable, or it becomes merely another name for favour.

"Be not merciful where guilt is involved." -High Judge Odran Vey, 350

Among most Helmites, this teaching means that guilt must not be excused, concealed, or softened because the guilty are loved. Judgment should remain lawful and proportionate, but it must occur.

Helm's goodness is therefore difficult to distinguish from severity. He protects the weak, but believes they are best protected by strong institutions. He values peace, but distrusts compromises that reward betrayal. He offers forgiveness, but only after wrongdoing has been acknowledged and its consequences accepted.

The Teachings of The Vigil

Helm's holy scriptures are collectively known as **The Vigil**. They consist of commandments, battlefield prayers, legal judgments, parables, and sayings attributed to Helm's saints. The faithful are taught that no passage should be understood in isolation. A command to destroy corruption must also be read beside the warning to guard one's own soul against it.

The most commonly recited verses include quote from the following (some of which may or may not have been directly inspired by the voice of Helm himself):

Saint Ilyra of the Last Watch:

Saint Ilyra (212-247) was a Human soldier who held a mountain pass for three days after the rest of her company had fallen. She represents endurance, sacrifice, and the conviction that a duty does not become meaningless simply because its fulfilment is difficult.

"Life is fleeting; duty is eternal." "Doubt not thy strength whilst faith prevails." "Duty demands sacrifice." "Endure the present, so those who follow may continue your endeavours." "Life is measured not in years, but by the deeds of the faithful." "Only in death does duty end." "Rejoice in thy service."

Mother Vael, Priestess of the Guarded Soul:

Mother Vael (468-567) was a Dwarf who served as a priest, confessor, and teacher in Helm's temples for more than fifty years. She represents spiritual vigilance: the need to guard one's mind from fear and disorder while remaining alert to the corruption that may hide behind righteous intentions.

"Abhorrence is a gift; use it well." "An open mind is like a fortress with its gates unbarred and unguarded." "Foolish are those who fear nothing, yet claim to know everything." "Honour thy oaths, honour thy God." "The shield of faith is your best protection."

Captain Ser Caldus, the Unbroken Shield:

Captain Ser Caldus (468-510) was a Human who commanded the rearguard during the Defence of Veyr's Crossing, refusing to retreat until every civilian had escaped. He represents martial courage, obedience under pressure, and the willingness to confront betrayal without hesitation.

"A coward's only reward is to live in fear another day." "Be steadfast in defence." "Be thou the scourge of traitors." "Heed not the whispers of the faithless." "Honour thy weapon." "It is an honour to bleed for Justice." "Keep the faith, kill the foe." "Only the coward seeks compromise." "Timidity begets indecision; indecision begets treachery." "To spare the traitor is to invite

corruption.”

Archivist-Marshal Teren of the Seven Locks:

Archivist-Marshal Teren (812-1137) was an Elf responsible for the protection of Helm’s most sensitive records, including treaties, oaths, military plans, and judgments. He represents the preservation of knowledge, the sanctity of promises, and the belief that honour must be made visible through deeds.

“Speak not the names of traitors.” “The difference between heresy and treachery is ignorance.” “Thou shalt be remembered by thy deeds.” “Your honour is your life. Let none dispute it.”

High Judge Odran Vey:

High Judge Odran Vey (337-379) was a Human who served Helm as a magistrate during a time when noble houses routinely escaped punishment through wealth and influence. He represents impartial judgment, the rejection of excuses, and the belief that law must be strong enough to restrain the powerful.

“Be not merciful where guilt is involved.” “By your scars and deeds shall you be judged.” “Complaining of thy lot is the first step on the Road to Damnation.” “There are no walls strong enough to protect the Injust.” “There is purity of purpose in the faith of the just.” “To withdraw in disgust is not apathy.” “Welcome the judgement of thy God.”

The Five Duties

Helm’s teachings are often organised around five duties.

Vigilance

The faithful must remain alert to danger, corruption, and disorder. Suspicion is not proof, but it is a warning, and warnings must be investigated.

“A suspicious mind is a healthy mind.” -Mother Vael, Priestess of the Guarded Soul, 514

Helm teaches that the mind should be open to evidence but never left undefended. Trust is a virtue when earned; blind trust is negligence.

Defence

The strong are obligated to protect those who cannot protect themselves. A defender does not abandon their post because the enemy is stronger or victory appears unlikely.

“Do not shy the hopeless fight, for endeavour is its own reward.” -Saint Ilyra of the Last Watch, 247

A lost battle may still buy time. A doomed guard may still save a village. An action need not succeed completely to be worthy.

Duty

Every person possesses obligations determined by their oaths, station, ability, and circumstance. Duty may demand hardship, loneliness, public disgrace, or death.

“Honour your duty.” -Archivist-Marshal Teren of the Seven Locks, 1026 Helm does not accept excuses based on misfortune, resentment, or personal inconvenience. To complain of one’s lot is not itself a sin, but using hardship to justify betrayal is.

Judgment

Helm teaches that guilt must be acknowledged and judged. The guilty must not be protected by wealth, rank, sentiment, or clever manipulation of the law.

“Justice allows no doubt.” -High Judge Odran Vey, 368 This is generally understood to mean that justice must not be paralysed by endless hesitation. It does not mean that evidence, testimony, or proper procedure are unnecessary. A judge must be decisive, but must also be certain they are judging the right person.

Obedience

Obedience is the foundation of trust between people. Soldiers obey commanders, guards obey their watch captains, officials obey the law, and rulers obey the duties of rulership.

“Honour, duty and obedience.” -Archivist-Marshal Teren of the Seven Locks, 918

Helm does not teach that every command is righteous merely because it comes from a superior. An unlawful order violates the chain of duty rather than fulfilling it. A servant of Helm must know both whom they obey and what limits bind the one giving the order.

Corruption and Faith

Helm teaches that corruption rarely arrives openly. It enters through small exceptions, hidden resentments, unexamined compromises, and the belief that one's own motives are too noble to require scrutiny.

"Beware the corruption of men's souls." -Mother Vael, Priestess of the Guarded Soul, 489

This warning applies to rulers, soldiers, priests, judges, and reformers alike. No office makes a person incorruptible. No oath eliminates temptation. No cause is so righteous that its servants are beyond judgment.

The faithful are therefore expected to examine themselves as carefully as they examine others. They must confess resentment, ambition, envy, and hatred before those emotions become disguised as duty.

"Guard thy soul against disorder." -Mother Vael, Priestess of the Guarded Soul, 521

Likewise, the command to destroy corruption includes corruption within oneself. A Watcher who uses the verse only against enemies has misunderstood it.

One disputed passage reads:

"Facts are chains that bind perception and fetter truth." -High Judge Odran Vey, 342

The verse originated in a judgment concerning a guilty man who escaped punishment through legal technicalities. Its traditional meaning is that justice must not become so narrow that clever manipulation allows obvious wrongdoing to pass unpunished. It is not permission to ignore evidence, abandon procedure, or declare guilt according to instinct.

The Church of Helm

Helm's temples are commonly built as fortified watchhouses. They favour thick walls, clear sightlines, sturdy doors, narrow windows, and elevated positions. Even temples in peaceful areas maintain signal fires, weapons, food stores, and emergency plans.

The clergy are called **Watchers**, with senior priests known as **Wardens** or **Keepers**. Their vestments are practical and often reinforced with leather or metal. Helm's holy symbol is usually an eye set within a shield, though some traditions depict an upright gauntlet or an unclosed helm visor.

Helmitic temples frequently contain:

- A public shrine for travellers and those seeking protection.
- A watchtower or observation platform.
- A hall for oaths, trials, and testimony.
- A library of laws, treaties, judgments, and local records.
- Barracks for the temple guard.
- A secure chamber for dangerous relics and prisoners.
- A quiet room where the Still Watch is maintained.

Helm's clergy are expected to keep accurate records. Names, times, witnesses, orders, injuries, disappearances, and unresolved threats are all treated as sacred information.

"Knowledge is power, guard it well." -Archivist-Marshal Teren of the Seven Locks, 899

The Ever Watch

The Ever Watch is a rotating vigil kept within many of Helm's temples. One or more Watchers sit in silence before Helm's shrine, remaining awake while the rest of the temple sleeps.

The vigil cultivates patience and self-command. The Watcher must endure boredom, fear, intrusive thoughts, and the temptation to abandon the duty simply because no immediate danger is visible.

The Ever Watch is also a reminder that guardianship is often thankless. Nothing may happen. No one may notice. The watch is still necessary.

Worship and Observance

At dawn, the faithful inspect their equipment, surroundings, and obligations before beginning the day. At dusk, they consider what they failed to notice, what promises remain unfinished, and whether their actions preserved or endangered rightful order.

The most important observances include:

- **The First Watch**, a seasonal inspection of roads, walls, wells, bridges, weapons, and emergency stores.
- **The Night of Open Eyes**, during which the faithful remain awake from sunset until dawn in honour of those who died protecting others.
- **The Renewal of Oaths**, when officials, soldiers, couples, and others publicly reaffirm their promises.
- **The Closing of the Gate**, held after a Helmite's death. One temple gate remains closed for a day while the dead person's duties are read aloud and another person accepts responsibility for them.

Helm's faithful commonly adopt personal watchwords such as:

"I will not leave my post."

"No oath is small." -Archivist-Marshal Teren of the Seven Locks, 833

"The innocent sleep because someone remains awake." -Archivist-Marshal Teren of the Seven Locks, 1029

"My eyes remain open, and my duty remains."

The Ideal of Helm

Helm's ideal is not a world without fear, conflict, or wrongdoing. His ideal is a world in which danger is met by people who are prepared, accountable, and unwilling to abandon their obligations.

Civilisation survives because someone remains awake after the songs have ended. Someone checks the lock. Someone records the name. Someone refuses the unlawful order. Someone stands between the helpless and the hand raised against them.

"The price of duty is high, but the rewards are eternal." -Saint Ilyra of the Last Watch, 232

"Without fear or falter, do thy duty." --Saint Ilyra of the Last Watch, 246

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