

# Salem

## Mercurian Archangel of Civics

*The world is built from all of us. Build it anew each day.*

She is the newest Archangel; and from her point of view, her apotheosis comes none too soon. For too long Heaven has permitted human governments and politics to develop and evolve without specific, Superior-level oversight. This is not a criticism of the Host, of course: there is a War going on, and when one's back is to the wall one is well-advised to emphasize utility over elegance. Still, the matter required rectifying, and Salem is the avatar of that rectification. There will be changes made, wrongs redressed -- and not a few of the Enemy are about to suddenly discover that their control of human society is perhaps not so secure as they may have thought.

These are indeed interesting times.

## Dissonance

Salem has a load of work ahead of her in combating entrenched generations of suspicion, apathy and cynicism, and has no tolerance for anyone making her job more difficult. Accordingly, it is dissonant for her Servitors to cause a human to give up trying to make things better in society. It is also dissonant for them to violently attack any governmental or societal institution not controlled by Hell: armed revolution should always be the last resort, not the first.

## Organization

Salem is, of course, still building her organization. Unlike some of her peers, she is fortunate in having several groups to draw from. The first is her own companions from Stone: like all good Servitors of David, the Archangel of Civics had developed an extensive network of like-minded individuals when she was 'merely' the Angel of Cities, and her former Superior gave them full leave to follow her path. David was also more -- 'flexible' is probably the best word -- when it came to allowing his regular Servitors to follow suit: many mavericks (at least by Stone's standards) took the opportunity with mutual relief all around. There was also the usual discreet poaching of other organizations, which is not all that unusual or unwelcome a thing to have happen when

a new Archangel comes on the scene. If it had ended there, Salem's ascendancy would have been fairly unremarkable.

However, the *third* group was the unusual one, and one that makes Salem's organization unique. The Archangel of Civics already has the largest contingent of blessed souls in formal service of any Superior, not excluding Laurence. Indeed, it was largely the machinations of certain blessed souls that made her ascension suddenly go from a intriguing possibility to a *fait accompli*: it was as if the entire political structure of the Seraphim Council had been gently, painlessly and irresistibly yanked in one swift stroke, revealing a perfectly-shaped, Salem-sized hole in it. This should have not been surprising, as even politicians and kingmakers sometimes go to Heaven, but even angels can underestimate humanity at times.

At any rate, there are now a lot of blessed souls who consider the Archangel of Civics to be profoundly *theirs* in a way seldom seen in angel-mortal relationships, and they express it with a fierce loyalty and dedication to the concepts she embodies. This regard is fully reciprocated; Salem makes no distinction between angel and blessed soul in her organization. Mortals hold positions of every rank, responsibility and honor in Civics, up to and including her War Cabinet. The only exception is, of course, among the Word-Bound -- but even there they do not have quite the same primacy of place as in other organizations.

The whole thing may look fairly bizarre to angelic eyes, but it works.

## Choir Attunements

Salem has developed standard Choir Attunements, but with an additional refinement. Choir Attunements marked with an \* have a variant available to Blessed Souls and Soldiers: these Attunements do not require an angelic Force to operate, but cost 10 points to purchase (if the mortal **does** have an angelic Force, the cost remains 5 points). The Archangel of Civics is very, very, very slightly more likely to give a mortal an angelic Force, but it's barely statistically noticeable. There is also a special Human Attunement (listed below; cost is 5 points for a mortal, and 10 points for a celestial).

### **Seraphim (Restricted) (Judgement)**

A Seraph of Civics in an urban setting has an automatic Role/1 as either judges, or police officers. They may add the level of that Role (or any similar Role) to their

resonance rolls, and substitute Ethereal Forces for Corporeal on any roll to avoid disturbance via that Role.

### **Cherubim (Protection) (Restricted)**

A Cherub of Civics may add the CD of a successful Area Knowledge roll to their resonance rolls, and vice versa.

### **Ofanim\* (Industry)**

Ofanim of Civics, while on a city's business, do not reduce their speed from mundane obstructions; everything simply gets out of the way just long enough for the angel to pass. This attunement may be substituted for the Malakite Attunement at character creation, should the angel so choose.

### **Elohim (Governance)**

Elohim serving Salem automatically know what laws and regulations apply to any given situation in any given city; they can use this knowledge to either tie a business or person up in red tape, or else cut it completely.

### **Malakim\* (Justice)**

A Malakite of Civics in pursuit of a malefactor becomes effectively invisible to any law enforcement officials, provided that no innocents have been hurt in said pursuit. This attunement may be substituted for the Ofanite Attunement at character creation, should the angel so choose.

### **Bright Lilim**

Salem would very much like to get some Gifters working for her.

### **Kyriotates (Diversity) (Restricted)**

The angel automatically knows what prejudices its host holds, why he or she holds them, and what is most likely to cause him or her to rethink those prejudices.

### **Mercurians\* (Communications)**

With a successful Perception roll the Mercurian may cause two people in disagreement to reconsider their reactions to each other. Each one rolls a standard reaction, ignoring negative modifiers and including a positive modifier equal to the angel's lowest Charisma modifier. A good reaction will not overwrite free will, but it will negate conflicts stemming from honest misunderstandings and just about everything imposed by a Servitor of Factions.

## **Human**

Humans serving Salem have a literal nose for shady dealings; they will always know whether an individual engaged in political corruption is within five yards. Salem has not yet come up with a variant that will allow them to infallibly triangulate, but the millennium is young.

## **Servitor Attunements**

### **Dirty Money**

Those who hold this attunement will be able to tell if a particular amount of cash or goods was gathered honestly. No details will be forthcoming, and this Attunement has difficulty with things like money laundering, but it's an excellent way to identify minor criminals.

### **Friendly Neighborhood Angel of the Lord**

The angel can climb anything normally climbable at full speed (and without a roll), and can indeed climb anything that a certain arachnid-themed superhero can with a successful Climbing roll. Salem had not intended to give out such a boon, but just about **everybody** working for her asked for a version of it.

### **Geomancer**

Servants of Civics with this Attunement have an instinctive notion on how to harmonize their essential responsibilities (as noted above); with a successful Perception roll all disturbance generated while engaged in such duties is half. For example, a Mercurian could reduce the disturbance that she generated while fostering Communication. No one knows what Bright Lilim will be tasked with when Salem actually gets some, and humans simply reduce *all* the disturbance that they generate.

### **Geomancy**

Functionally equivalent to the Servitor of Stone Attunement of the same name found on Page 8 of *Superiors 1: War and Honor*.

## **Guidebook**

This grants an effective Area Knowledge/0 (everywhere) skill - thus eliminating default penalties and permitting a roll against straight Intelligence.

## **Hawkwood's Memorial**

Named after Civics' first martyr, this Attunement gives an angel a psychic signature identical to the surrounding urban locale. This gives a +2 to Move Silently rolls, and *does* affect Cherubim/Djinn resonance rolls (gives a -1 penalty) if the angel so chooses.

## **Distinctions**

There are two ways to acquire a Distinction in Salem's service: as a reward for service, or by the consensus of your peers. One half of Civics' Distinctions are elected positions (for a half century term). Everyone's quite keen to see if this works out, really. The first half of the title indicates an appointed position, while the second half indicates an elected one. Note that blessed souls are just as likely to receive Distinctions as angels, and that elections are open to all but Word-Bound.

## **Vassal/Delegate of Cities**

The angel automatically knows the language (TN 11) and major customs of the nearest urban area.

## **Friend/Representative of Cultures**

The angel adds her Total Forces to any Medicine rolls made on her while in an urban area. For one Essence, she may transfer this benefit to another patient (duration one day).

## **Master/Senator of Civilizations**

There are precisely 10000 of these individuals, and their one universal ability is strictly mundane; with a 2/3rds vote they may override a decision of the House of Word-Bound. It is rumored that the original Constitution would have given them power over decisions made by Salem herself, but that this was forbidden by a closed session of the Seraphim Council. The rumor is quite true, in both particulars.

Each Master/Senator also receives a specific +3 Essence rite.

### **Fireman**

This is a half-step Distinction; it indicates that Salem trusts you sufficiently to answer her Invocation calls (see below).

## **Relations**

When it comes right down to it, Salem hasn't had the chance yet to gather opponents. The circumstances of her ascension meant that she enjoys the open support of both Stone and Trade (admittedly, to each other's bemusement), which means that she's got pre-made decent connections with most of the other Archangels. This is not entirely beneficial, of course -- trying to *keep* on decent terms with, say, Dominic and Michael when they're feuding with other is an interesting application with applied diplomacy -- but it's been noted in assorted lower ranks that the involvement of Civics is turning out to be an unparalleled excuse for having to play nice with *those people*. Politics is politics; business is business.

As for Salem herself: she has better things to do than antagonize her peers needlessly. There's, like, a *War*, you understand?

Allied: David, Marc, Yves (These are allied with her, as well)

Associated: Laurence (Laurence, Michael and Novalis consider themselves associated with her)

Neutral: Everybody else (Ditto, although if anyone will be hostile it'll be Jordi)

Hostile: Nobody

Blandine: "We will see if she Dreams better than her sponsors. And what kind of Dreams she encourages in others." *"We dream. When we do not work."*

David: "If there were any legitimate doubts about Salem, this conversation would not be taking place." *"He poured the foundation; it is now for us to build the Temple."*

Dominic: "Her extensive use of blessed souls is interesting; after all, they cannot Fall. I look forward to seeing the results." *"Implacable and intolerant of evil; but I dislike looks of fear in Heaven. Particularly when they are on the face of one of mine."*

Eli: "Salem? Cool." *"I am glad that he is pleased. Now, how about he comes back up here and tell me in person? Not to mention that he actually go back to his real job?"*

Gabriel: (No response) *"I think... I think that she sees something else besides my face when she looks upon me. What it is, I do not know - and I don't know if I should really **want** to. Assuming that she hasn't just completely fallen into irrevocable madness, of course."*

Janus: "I foresee a lot of anthills getting kicked over from this." *"Well. He's, ahh, very **enthusiastic** about things."*

Jean: "A useful expansion of our oversight and an fascinating sociological experiment. Salem has agreed to let my researchers have access to data as it comes in, which is commendable. I await the results with some interest." *"Actually, a good amount of commonality of interest, there; he disapproves of random property damage as much as I do. Take him seriously, and he'll reciprocate."*

Jordi: "She has not yet done anything to personally insult us. Yet." *"There's an enmity there just waiting to happen. Not my choice, but there'll come a day when Jordi will have the choice between either instigating a feud with me or admitting that it was wrong about something. And Jordi has never admitted to ever being wrong."*

Laurence: "I dislike conflicts between my subordinates. Salem is a dutiful subordinate herself who is helping to defuse one of the most annoying subordinate conflicts standing. Of course I am making sure that her transition goes smoothly." *"God is God: I am the loyal servant of God; Laurence was chosen by God to lead us in war. Should I even **have** a personal opinion?"*

Marc: "Nice not to end up staring incomprehensibly at David anymore when we needed something from each other. In fact, now that Salem's in place we don't directly interact nearly as much with each other as before. I think that he's probably as fine with that as I am." *"Marc is a good ally -- and now that we are equals, he is turning into a good friend as well. Which makes his nonsensical little feud with David all the more annoying, but we'll worry about that later."*

Michael: "You know, every time we get a new Archangel Hell comes sniffing around looking to get some cheap shots in -- and every time I'm right there to hit them. Hard. You'd think that they'd learn better. Great that they don't, though." *"I get the feeling that*

*Michael's good reaction to me is mostly due to the increased opportunities for applied mayhem. Not to my particular taste, but as long as he's having fun."*

Novalis: "Oh, good; we were having a bit of trouble with covering the cities properly." *"If I didn't know better, I would swear that Novalis had been, well, sarcastic towards David and Marc in her speech of welcome. But no doubt I'm reading too much into her comments."*

Yves: "Salem builds -- and we will need a builder in the future. Especially one used to making bricks without straw." *"I was hoping to understand him better now, but I find that I have simply upgraded my incomprehension. Too bad, but he's still very sweet."*

## Role in the War

Right now, it's payback. The *Angel* of Cities had been given a lot of grief over the last few decades, and a surprising number of the demons responsible for that were insufficiently quick to realize that Things Were Different Now. The ones that survived are lying low; some are even adequately hidden. Excising them is proving to be excellent practice for Salem's servants.

Pleasant chores like this aside, the Archangel of Civics will be busy for a while. She is effectively in charge of ensuring that human civilizations and institutions develop properly, which is a **big** job. It's so big, in fact, that right now Salem's in the middle of a manpower shortage; as long as the core responsibilities of Tether maintenance and the elimination of the worst of the Uncivil are being covered, her Servitors are encouraged to make the most of their target-rich environment. She's also not shy about giving certain of her peers the ability to (non-abusive) engage in a bit of plausible deniability.

Interesting days ahead. Very interesting days.

### Rites

- : Attend a civic festival that attracts more than 10,000 people.
- : Spend an hour teaching someone about civics or government.

### **Additional Rites**

- : Organize a demonstration or parade of more than 100 people.
- : Stop a crime in progress.
- : Travel mass transit or the subway of a city for at least two hours.

## **Chance for Invocation: 2**

That is, of course, to summon Salem herself. If lesser help would be fine, well:

Master/Senator: 3

Friend/Representative: 4

Vassal/Delegate: 5

Regular Servitor: 6

All Servitors Invoked will be only available for at most a minute or two, and there's no guarantee that they'll have the skill set you're looking for (the only thing that they have in common is that they all possess the Fireman Distinction). Still, at the least you can be reasonably be sure that the next angel will know what killed you.

### **Invocation Modifiers**

- +1 A civic event with at least 1,000 people attending
- +2 A world-famous civic monument
- +3 The working notes for a country's constitution
- +4 A peaceful parade or demonstration with at least 20,000 people
- +5 The height of rush hour commuter's traffic at NYC's Penn Station
- +6 The original copy of a country's constitution

## **Personality**

Salem is both Mercurian and Stone, and she at least sees no contradiction between the two. Strength and Love are two sides of the same coin: it is the bond of person to person that makes them able to do what two unconnected people could not, and the effects become more synergistic as more people are added. A people who are united in

love for each other, from the abstract to the concrete -- such folk can do **anything**. This is why Heaven will win, in the end; an angel can turn his back on another angel without that back being greeted with a dagger. In Hell, there's always just the faintest hesitation, because even enlightened self-interest is a damned poor substitute for Love.

Salem's belief that strength is a facet of love is the primary reason why she unhesitatingly chose to include human beings as full partners in her organization -- a move that still has half of the Seraphim Council blinking. In Salem's opinion, it is not enough to **say** that the War is about humanity; actions must be backed with words. Lucifer rebelled because, in his pride, he could not accept God's decree that a mortal man could be his equal. If Lucifer is wrong -- and if he *wasn't* wrong, why is there a War? -- then mortals both can and must shoulder the burden of putting him and the rest of Hell down.

In other words, Salem has decided to take the radical step of taking Heavenly beliefs to their logical conclusion. Obviously, when it comes to certain tasks celestials do better than humans would -- but it does not follow that celestials are better than humans. No human can betray his or her nature as an angel can: no angel is quite as at home with ambiguities as humans are; and it is for certain that the belief of humanity is a veritable font of power in the corporeal world. They *deserve* an equal place, and they *deserve* not to be treated as children.

## Cathedral: Capitol

Salem's Capitol is built into a convenient hill overlooking the Heavenly City: its construction is classical Roman, with just a hint of Art Deco and a certain echo of Mogul. Lots of white marble, edifying statuary and allegorical dioramas; tastefully done, of course, but **big**. The spire at the top of the dome is topped with statues of a man, woman and angel helping to hold a torch to the sky; beneath them a demon writhes impotently, their feet on his broken back (Belial has sworn to see Salem burn for her choice of features on that demon's anguished face).

Inside is the Tricameron. There are three major divisions to Salem's organization, and all three operate in an interesting dance to each other. The Assembly represents her regular Servitors, up to the rank of Friend/Delegate: they are organized by earthly responsibility, geographic oversight and major task. The broad decisions from the Senate and the House of Word-Bound are fleshed out here; policy is expected to reflect

both the letter and the spirit of the decrees made by the two other Houses, and this is Heaven, so the expectation is actually reasonable. Insoluble problems are simply sent back for clarification. The Assembly also proposes the budget, which is approved by the Senate.

The second branch is the House of Word-bound. This is the smallest group, but it steadily grows; they are expected to determine what policy Salem chooses not to handle herself, subject of course to her guidelines and with the understanding that she is always available for questions, no matter how simple. The House also currently acts as a judiciary for Salem's organization, which at this stage of development mostly means not giving the Inquisition any extra work. No Word-Bound may simultaneously serve in the Assembly, although they often have Distinctions; Word-Bound *may* become Senators.

The final branch is the Senate; as noted above, they have a veto over House decrees and ultimate control of the purse strings. They also are the only branch with political parties, which tends to dilute at least the first half of their power. It is looking at the Senate that one truly begins to realize that Salem and her servants are hardcore political science enthusiasts: it's in this branch where all the theoretical debates on the nature of the Good Society are thrashed out, and consensus here is quickly mirrored in the Assembly and defended by the House to sometimes nervous outsiders.

Needless to say, Salem is still the absolute monarch of this interesting little government -- although 'philosopher-queen' would be a better term, and never mind what the Seraphim Council says. Her office is at the top of the dome, and is easily the largest and nicest one (her servants would universally consider it an offense to their own dignity if it wasn't). Her War Cabinet -- the twelve smartest and sneakiest entities available to her, whether human or angel -- is readily available, day or night. Quite a few of them don't see why they should ever, ever leave the premises.

*This material is not official and is not endorsed by Steve Jackson Games. [In Nomine](#) is a registered trademark of Steve Jackson Games. All rights are reserved by SJ Games. This material is used here in accordance with the SJ Games [online policy](#).*

- Moe Lane

- <http://www.moelane.com>