

Chapter One: Core Rules

Despite its size, *this is not a complete game*. In order to use **Exalted: Demake Edition (EXD)**, you'll need access to at least one version of the **Exalted** core rulebook, be it First, Second, or Third Edition. You should *probably* also have one of the 20th Anniversary Edition **World of Darkness** core rulebooks: **Vampire: The Masquerade 20th Anniversary Edition**, **Werewolf: The Apocalypse 20th Anniversary Edition**, **Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition**, **Wraith: The Oblivion 20th Anniversary Edition**, **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition**, or **Vampire: The Dark Ages 20th Anniversary Edition**, but it's not *technically* required.

Exalted: Demake Edition uses a heavily customized variant of the Storyteller System, intended to facilitate playing **Exalted** in a faster, simpler, rules-medium format that stylistically feels congruent with the 20th Anniversary **World of Darkness** engine but doesn't duplicate it. The goal is to capture the intuitive, bounded design and tight math of the original Storyteller engine (don't laugh: a lot of the work laid on top of it over the years was sloppy, certainly, but the underlying bell curve and built-in levers to manipulate it are very well-constructed), but to get rid of its many archaic and cumbersome elements which have since become outdated relics of 1990s game design standards.

Traits and Ratings

Characters have a number of traits that describe their capabilities. These are generally rated from 0 to 5, like the rating of a film or game. A 1 demonstrates that the character is bad at something, while a rating of 5 means they are world-class at whatever the trait measures.

Dice Pools

Exalted: Demake Edition uses pools of ten-sided dice. These are formed by combining an appropriate Attribute with an appropriate Ability, looking at the rating of each of them, and rolling that many dice.

Reading the Dice

All rolls are made against a *difficulty*, a number ranging from 3 to 9. When you roll a dice pool, compare each die to the roll's difficulty. If the number on the die is equal to or higher than the difficulty, the die generates a *success*.

However, dice are also subject to *the rule of 1s*: Any die showing a 1 negates one success.

If, after subtracting 1s, any successes remain, then the action has been successful.

If the roll generates no successes, or has all of its successes removed by 1s, then the action has failed.

Caste Traits

Most Exalted have *Caste Abilities*, special traits through which their divine blessings flow. **Rolls utilizing a Caste Ability are immune to the rule of 1s.**

A few Exalted instead have *Caste Attributes*. Rolls using Caste Attributes are also immune to the rule of 1s.

Actions vs Rolls

An **action**, generally speaking, is an Attribute + Ability roll — something a character has *done*. Rules sometimes specify that they modify or trigger off of characters taking an action. This is what they mean. The system occasionally contains other rolls, such as Willpower rolls, Essence rolls, and damage rolls. These are dice rolls, but are not considered actions unless otherwise specified.

Setting Difficulty

A roll's difficulty determines how hard it is to accomplish. A low-difficulty action is something that would be easy even for an untrained and uncertain individual. A high-difficulty action is something that would challenge even a renowned professional. *Difficulty can never be lower than 3 or higher than 9, regardless of any modifiers in play.* If the rules would seem to suggest that a roll's difficulty should be lower than 3, the roll is instead difficulty 3. If they suggest that it should be higher than 9, it is instead 9. There are no exceptions to this rule anywhere in **EXD**.

If no other guidance is given, assume that the default difficulty for a roll is 6.

Generally, unless something says otherwise, the Storyteller determines an action's difficulty. Use the following chart to do so:

Difficulty	Description
3	Very easy, but failure is possible (following an ill-maintained road in a storm)
4	Easy (following a game trail through rough country)
5	Straightforward (puzzling out a map with an ink stain across part of it)
6	Standard (most actions a hero might undertake; navigating across a forest without a map)
7	Challenging (undertaking a standard action in a hurry or with complications; navigating the same forest at night)
8	Difficult (actions that even an expert would find daunting; smashing through a strongly reinforced door)
9	Extremely difficult (actions at which even a hero will probably fail; devising a riddle that stumps a trickster god)

Degrees of Success

The more successes rolled, the better the result. For most actions, this has no prescribed hard-and-fast result, and is a narrative convention. Certain special actions will use this framework to tell you exactly how different levels of success differ from one another. Your basic guideline, however, is this: "One success is good, more successes is always better."

Successes	Result
1	Basic: The action succeeds, but crudely. There may be consequences or problems.
2	Successful: The action does what it was supposed to do.
3	Elegant: The character succeeds, and only the ungracious would complain about the outcome.

4 Exceptional: The character not only succeeds, but does so impressively, possibly gaining some additional benefits.

5+ Superb: The character's success is perfect, granting better results than anyone might have anticipated.

Stunts

In system parlance, a stunt is any action a character takes which the player bothers to describe in detail, particularly if the action is dramatic, flashy, or otherwise cool. Speaking out a character's dialogue rather than simply declaring "I go and convince him to help us" is a stunt. Saying "I roll out of cover and send an arrow toward his knee" rather than simply going "I shoot him" is also a stunt.

Consistently performing stunts earns a group additional experience points at the end of each session.

Styling

When an Exalt or other heroic character performs a stunt, doing so in a ridiculous or flashy way never inflicts a penalty or increases the difficulty of her action. "I kick this guy in the stomach" has exactly the same difficulty as "I swing around a lamppost and kick this guy in the face with both feet, sending him crashing into an applecart." If a character has the option to simply walk down the stairs, she can instead opt to ride down the banister or simply jump dramatically down over the railing with no issues. Styling with a stunt further means that characters always have time to dramatically shout out their philosophical convictions before dodging an arrow rushing toward their face.

Styling with a stunt also provides a degree of narrative insurance, making dangerous actions (like leaping from one collapsing tower through the window of another) less suicidal than they appear. When a character performs a reckless stunt in a cool way, they are guaranteed to have some opportunity to mitigate the consequences of failure if the action doesn't work out. In the above example, if the leap fails, the Exalt should then have the chance to grab hold of a protruding bit of masonry rather than simply falling immediately to her death. It is the nature of the cosmos in the Second Age of Man to be forgiving with those that entertain it.

Spending Willpower to Re-Roll

Once per scene, after making a roll, a protagonist's player may decide to spend a point of Willpower to make the roll again. Willpower re-rolls may be used on *any* single dice pool, and the re-roll continues to benefit or suffer from any enhancements, bonuses, or other modifiers which acted upon the roll originally. The player may keep the result of their choice.

For Those We've Left Behind

A few traditional standbys of **Exalted** may be conspicuous by their absence here. If you're wondering what the rules are for specialties, there aren't any. They've been tossed as offering more in the way of dice roller fiddling than meaningful character distinction. Either they applied 100% of the time (Melee: Swords) or they made you constantly stop and ask the Storyteller if they were applicable (Awareness: Keen Hearing). Fuck it. Gone.

Next plot in the graveyard: grappling rules. No independent rules for grappling! Attacking a character already stops them from moving that round as a basic system function, so you don't need a special complicated roll to make someone sit still. If you want to choke someone out with a headlock, that's just a regular ass Brawl attack with a stunt now.

Also gone: Flurries. No basic multi-actions. Slow things down too much. Exalts can be plenty strong without everyone falling asleep while you roll out six attacks. Bashing and lethal damage have been done away with as separately tracked categories, obsoleted by this edition's new damage and wounding systems, although Aggravated damage is still in play.

Further included among the fallen: botches. High difficulties are fairly common in **EXD**, and high difficulties produce lots of botches. Combat is not, generally, intended to degenerate into slapstick. As a result, botches have just been removed. Adjudicating a botch every now and then is fun and flavorful. Having them fire off all the time is either tedious or pushes the story into farce.

Finally, spending Willpower now lets you do a re-roll once per scene, rather than giving you a bonus success. Deterministic success and failure is sort of boring, but bad-luck insurance is handy to have.

Complications

The above rules describe a basic dice roll. The system contains a few slight permutations on this formula, which are all built out of the essential building-blocks described above.

Extended Actions

Sometimes an action takes the form of an extended labor whose duration or outcome may both be uncertain. These are *extended actions*. They take the form of a normal roll, or rather a series of normal rolls, with two additional qualities: a *goal* and an *interval*.

An extended action's goal is the total number of successes the character must acquire to complete the action successfully.

An extended action's interval describes how much time she must spend applying herself to the action before she is allowed to make another roll.

In an extended action, the character applies herself to a task and then makes a roll against a difficulty set by the Storyteller, then sees how many successes she has accumulated. If it meets the goal, the action succeeds. If not, then she must continue working at the action until the interval time has elapsed again, at which point she may roll once again and add any new successes gained to the successes she has already generated. She then checks to see if this new total meets her goal. If not, she continues.

Sometimes a character can walk away from an extended roll and return to it later. Sometimes matters are urgent and time is short, and only a certain number of rolls may be permitted before the action automatically fails; if this limit exists, it's called a *terminus*. These matters are up to the Storyteller and her interpretation of what's going on in the story.

A failure during an extended roll simply means that the interval has been spent fruitlessly and no new successes have been generated. Two failures in a row generally ruins the entire effort and forces the character to discard all accumulated successes and start over.

Contested Actions

In a contested action, two characters are struggling with one another. Both characters make appropriate rolls, and the character who generates the most successes triumphs. If the characters generate equal successes, a contested roll might become an extended roll, with each trying to become the first to gain more successes than the opponent.

Penalties

When a character suffers an ongoing problem that makes everything harder for them, this is represented as a dice pool penalty. The most common source of such penalties is being injured. **Under no circumstances can dice pool penalties reduce a supernatural being's dice pool to less than one die.** Mortal dice pools *may* be reduced to 0 by dice pool penalties.

Dice penalties generally only affect actions. That is to say, they **don't affect damage rolls, Essence rolls, Willpower rolls, or defensive calculations** unless they say they otherwise.

Finally, **penalties are applied after bonuses.** An Exalt with a Strength + Brawl pool of 6 who then uses a Charm to add +6 additional dice, while suffering a -7 dice Wound penalty, would roll a final total of 5 dice ($6 + 6 = 12 - 7 = 5$).

Teamwork and Assistance

In some situations, protagonists might try to join their efforts toward a common goal such as pushing aside a heavy boulder or appealing to a powerful god for assistance. In these cases, the players select the most qualified protagonist to undertake the task. She and she alone rolls to accomplish the feat, but if she's helped by other qualified characters, the difficulty of the action is reduced by -1.

“Qualified” in this case means that the Storyteller judges that the assisting characters have enough expertise to matter. A small child can't provide meaningful assistance in moving a boulder, but a protagonist with Strength 3, Athletics 2 has enough muscle to matter. This rule usually comes up during social scenes, when several players jump in to push an argument on an antagonist. Ultimately, only the most persuasive protagonist rolls to see what happens, but the difficulty is lowered because her comrades helped.

Teamwork can't be used to boost attack rolls in combat unless some special rule permits it.

Types of Characters

The older versions of **Exalted** used symmetrical rules for players' characters and those controlled by the Storyteller, which is to say, all characters operated using the same rules. **EX3** offers Quick Characters as a somewhat more lightweight option, but, speaking as the guy who designed the QCs, they're not lightweight enough. **EXD** doesn't bother with character symmetry, as one of its primary goals is to make running **Exalted** less of a complicated ass-ache for the Storyteller. Instead, **EXD** features three sorts of different characters: *Protagonists*, *antagonists*, and *groups*.

Protagonists are the characters players control. They use rich, crunchy rules with lots of options for customizing their place in the story and their supernatural powers.

Antagonists are the characters the Storyteller controls. They use the same basic task-resolution rules as protagonists, but have greatly simplified traits and do not have many expendable resources to track. (Yes, they're called antagonists even if they're friendly.)

Groups are large mobs of antagonists, which use a few additional rules to represent them as a combined collection of traits, rather than making you fight 1,000 conscript-soldiers one-by-one.

Rules for antagonists and groups are in Chapter Twelve, since they're something that mostly just the Storyteller needs to worry about.

Time

EXD uses the familiar framework for tracking time dramatically:

Turns are the shortest dramatic measure, the time it takes for a character to perform a single action. Combat is timed in turns. Narratively, a turn generally lasts for only a few seconds — three to six, say.

Rounds are a measure of combat time, describing the time it takes for all characters in a *scene* to take their turn. Narratively, a round usually lasts somewhere between fifteen seconds and three minutes.

Scenes are the fundamental building block of the game. When the focus changes and something else is happening or the location changes, a scene is over. If a scene needs to be abstracted out into narrative time, assume they usually last about twenty minutes on average, but *can* be significantly shorter or longer. Many supernatural powers end when a scene does.

Sessions consist of the time encompassed by everyone getting together to play the game, usually spanning several real-life hours and encompassing several scenes. You get experience points at the end of a session. Sessions aren't intended to correspond to narrative time at all, they're purely a player-facing element.

Stories are a collection of sessions that make up a connected, coherent narrative — the sessions, taken together, tell the story of how the Circle traveled to the city of Gem and gained the patronage of the Despot, for example. You also get experience points at the end of a story. Stories can differ substantially in length, particularly between different Storytellers. This game assumes that a story lasts for *roughly* three to five sessions. If you resolve a story in one session sometimes, that's fine, and if you have a big story last ten sessions, that's also okay, but if you routinely run stories lasting 12+ sessions (I have seen groups like this before), be aware the rules are written around the assumption of something *much* shorter than that and adjust accordingly, or your sorcerers in particular are going to be in a world of pain.

Your **chronicle** is the great arc of the game's narrative, spanning numerous connected stories. Once you retire your protagonists, the chronicle is over.

Downtime is time that passes in the narrative which is not actively played out. It passes between scenes, sessions, and stories. Downtime might narratively last for anywhere from a few hours to a century.

Time and Action Economy

The **Exalted Demake** uses three types of actions: *simple actions*, *swift actions*, and *reflexive actions*. This distinction is primarily important during combat, when action timing becomes crucial.

Simple actions take up most of your attention. You can take one simple action once per round, during your turn. The most common simple action is attacking an enemy.

Swift actions take up far less concentration than simple actions, and as such can be executed alongside simple actions. You can take one swift action once per round, during your turn. The most common swift action is movement.

Reflexive actions can be performed with almost no concentration or effort; often they're done without even noticing you're doing them. They occur whenever it makes sense for them to occur (such as rolling Perception + Awareness to notice an ambush), and do not have to occur on your turn. The most common reflexive actions are attempts to perceive or detect something, resist something, or say a few quick words.

Your turn is over once you have taken a swift action and a simple action, or opted to do nothing with those actions.

Advanced Difficulty Modifiers

When Charms enter the picture, an action can end up with a *lot* of effects simultaneously modifying its difficulty. Broadly, what you do is stack up all the things that increase an action's difficulty, then subtract all the things that might lower it. While you'll never *roll* a difficulty that's higher than 9 or lower than 3, you treat modifiers as though they can push a difficulty number past those boundaries while figuring them out.

Example: Let's say we're dealing with a whole bunch of ongoing effects happening to a roll at once. It started as difficulty 8, then a Charm increased its difficulty by +2, another Charm increased its difficulty by +1, and a third effect added another +1 increase. Right now it is, notionally, difficulty 12. But there are also other effects in play that apply a -2 difficulty modifier, another -2 difficulty modifier, and a -1 difficulty modifier. As a result, the final result ends up being difficulty 7. If you'd stopped counting the modifiers when they hit 9, you'd have ended up with difficulty 4 instead, and that would have been wrong, so don't do that. (If you can't remember whether to add or subtract first, don't worry about it; the nature of mathematics means you'll end up with the same result either way.)

That example is deliberately sort of absurd, but if you've got a battle-optimized Dawn Caste in your Circle scraping together every Defense boost he can find, this sort of thing can happen once in a while.

Combat

Exalted are beings of deep passions and conviction, and regularly try to kill one another when those convictions differ. Violence is a sadly regular feature of the Second Age of Man, and when it appears, the only options are to succumb to it or fight back. For those who choose the second option, the combat rules exist.

Combat consists of five basic elements: *Pace*; *attack and defense*; *damage and resistance*; *health and injury*; and *space and movement*. This chapter will deal with all of these things from the perspective of protagonists. Antagonists also use all of these concepts, but interact with them in a greatly simplified way outlined in Chapter Twelve. If, due to some great tragedy coming to pass, two protagonists battle one another, they both apply the rules found here.

The Pace of Battle

This is the principle of battle:

Whoever started the fight acts first. That is to say, the first to draw their blade, the first to decide to attack, the first to declare “I punch him in the face.” That character initiates the violence.

After that point, **alternate between antagonists and protagonists taking turns** until every character present in the scene has taken a turn.

When it is time for the protagonists to take a turn, the players decide among themselves which protagonist who has not yet taken a turn will act. If all protagonists have already acted, none of them acts until the next round begins.

When it is time for the antagonists to take a turn, the Storyteller decides which antagonist who has not yet acted will take a turn next. If all antagonists have already acted, none of them acts until the next round begins.

Once *everyone* has taken a turn, resolve any Charms or other rules that occur after all characters have taken their turns, and then proceed to the next round. Whichever group (antagonists or protagonists) started the fight gets to take a turn first, and then the rest of the round once again plays out in alternating sequence.

No protagonist or antagonist can take more than one turn per round unless some special power or rule they possess states otherwise.

If both protagonists and antagonists have special rules which resolve at the end of a round, alternate between the two groups beginning with whichever is the aggressor in the scene.

Holding the Initiative

The group of disputants who start a fight are said to *hold the initiative*. This means that they're the ones taking the first turn in each round of combat. Once one side holds the initiative, they generally continue to do so for the rest of the battle unless some special rule says otherwise.

Showdowns

Sometimes all parties arrive prepared for violence and leap into action at more or less the same time, such as at a martial arts tournament. In this case, the canniest fighters make a contested (Wits + Awareness) roll against difficulty 6, using teamwork rules (see p. XX) in the case of showdowns with more than two participants. In the case of a tie, keep rolling. Whoever gains more successes holds the initiative.

Cutting in Line

Immediately **after another protagonist has finished taking a turn**, one protagonist who has not yet taken her turn may spend a point of Willpower to immediately do so, without waiting for an antagonist to take a turn. This is known as “cutting ahead” or “cutting in line.” Two protagonists may not cut ahead in a row; that is to say, protagonists cannot take more than two uninterrupted turns back to back by spending Willpower unless some other rule states otherwise.

Cutting in line is not possible during the opening round of an ambush or other unexpected assault.

I Kill Everyone I Meet, Forever!

The perceptive will surely have noticed that these rules give a substantial reward for always starting fights, in that the aggressor always gets the first hit in. This is true. The problem of this approach is that you are known to start fights at the drop of a hat, and eventually your peers and foes are going to become aware of this fact and begin treating you accordingly.

Those who completely embrace violence with all of their being become very good at it. The only drawback to this is that you have completely embraced violence with all of your being.

Attack and Defense

The most common thing that will happen during combat when a protagonist takes their turn is that they will attack someone. This involves rolling a dice pool against an appropriate difficulty to see whether the attack succeeds or not.

Making an Attack

To make an attack, roll (Strength or Dexterity) + (Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee, or Thrown) against a difficulty equal to the target's Defense rating. If any successes are generated, the attack succeeds and you hit your target.

The weapon used for the attack determines what Attribute and Ability are combined to make the attack roll. Weapons are found later in this chapter, starting on page XX.

Receiving an Attack

Receiving an attack works the same way. Every protagonist has a **Defense** trait that determines how difficult it is to hit her.

The difficulty of attack rolls directed at a protagonist is equal to her Defense rating, but, as always, an opponent cannot be forced to roll against a difficulty lower than 3 or higher than 9 even if Defense exceeds this range.

All protagonists by default have Defense 5, which is then modified based on their fighting style and what sort of armor they're wearing (see pp. XX-XX).

There is no maximum cap on how high your Defense can rise, nor a minimum value below which it cannot drop, meaning that Defense could potentially be a negative number (while your attackers would still roll against difficulty 3, this could potentially make it very difficult to accumulate enough bonuses to raise your Defense to a useful value).

When stunting, you can describe your defense however you like, so long as it makes sense in the fiction of the ongoing scene.

Dodging Attacks

Dodge is a special rule with an associated Dodge value that can be invoked in response to an attack roll, *after* the roll is made, by spending 1 Willpower. Each time Dodge is applied against an incoming attack, a number of successes on the attack roll equal to your Dodge value are discarded. This can potentially reduce an attack to 0 successes, protecting you completely.

Each time you invoke your Dodge, its value drops by -1.

Each time you Stagger or incapacitate an opponent with an attack, you may choose to increase either your Dodge *or* your Block value by +1.

Your **base value** for Dodge is equal to the Dexterity rating on your character sheet – your current total Wound penalties. When you awaken from a full night’s sleep or an equivalent period of rest (through meditation, etc), Dodge resets to its base value. If, at the end of a scene, Dodge is higher than its base value, it drops to its base value.

A number of factors, such as your fighting style or the armor you wear, can impose modifiers to your Dodge base value. If your Dodge base value changes during a scene (such as by discarding your weapons to use the *unarmed* fighting style, or by suffering a new Wound penalty), immediately adjust your current Dodge value by the difference (in the case of switching to unarmed fighting, you’d increase your Dodge by +1 for as long as you remained unarmed).

Modifiers to your base value remain so long as the condition that modified it remains true (generally this means that you’re wearing a certain kind of armor, using a certain fighting style, suffering from Wounds, or using a Charm). Other changes to your Dodge rating (such as increasing Dodge when Staggering enemies or lowering Dodge after invoking it) remain until a rule causes you to reset your Dodge to its base value.

There is no maximum cap on how high your Dodge can rise, nor a minimum value below which it cannot drop, meaning that Dodge could potentially be a negative number due to various modifiers (although you cannot invoke your Dodge if your Dodge is presently rated 0 or less).

A single attack cannot have both Dodge *and* Block invoked against it.

In summary: **Base Value = Dexterity – Wound penalties + modifiers from armor and fighting style**. Reset to base value upon awakening, or at the end of a scene *if* Dodge is higher than its base value.

Conditional Dodge and Block Modifiers

Sometimes a special rule will modify your Dodge or Block value in a particular circumstance. Usually, the modifier is “against this particular attack,” though there are others you’ll see, such as the Night Caste anima power, which gives +1 Dodge against people who don’t know your identity while your anima is flaring. In all such cases, the modification only applies within the circumstance that created it and for the duration that the circumstance remains valid, rather than modifying your entire Dodge or Block rating until you reset to base value.

Damage and Resistance

When an attack hits, injury usually follows.

Inflicting Damage

After successfully striking an opponent, create a dice pool equal to your weapon’s Damage value (“base damage”) plus the number of successes on your attack roll (“threshold damage”). Roll this pool against a difficulty equal to the target’s Soak rating. The target suffers a number of levels of damage equal to the successes rolled.

Resisting Damage

Again, it works the same way when you are struck by an attack. Your **Soak** value is a trait that determines how difficult it is to hurt you.

The difficulty of damage rolls directed at a protagonist is equal to her Soak rating, but, as always, an opponent cannot be forced to roll against a difficulty lower than 3 or higher than 9 even if Soak exceeds this range.

Soak is based on your armor's Soak value (see p. XX), modified by your Stamina rating as follows:

If you have Stamina 1, modify your Soak rating by -1.

If you have Stamina 4+, modify your Soak rating by +1.

There is no maximum cap on how high your Soak can rise, nor a minimum value below which it cannot drop, meaning that Soak could potentially be a negative number (while your attackers would still roll against difficulty 3, this could potentially make it very difficult to accumulate enough bonuses to raise your Soak to a useful value).

Blocking Damage

Block is a special rule with an associated Block value that can be invoked in response to a damage roll, *after* the roll is made, by spending 1 Willpower. Each time Block is applied against an incoming source of damage, a number of points of damage equal to your Block value are discarded. This can potentially reduce an attack to 0 damage, protecting you completely.

Each time you invoke your Block, its value drops by -1.

Each time you Stagger or incapacitate an opponent with an attack, you may choose to increase either your Block *or* your Dodge value by +1.

Your **base value** for Block is equal to the Strength rating on your character sheet - your current total Wound penalties. In all other respects (resetting to base value, etc) Block works exactly the same way as Dodge.

In summary: **Base Value = Strength - Wound penalties + modifiers from fighting style.** Reset to base value upon awakening, or at the end of a scene *if* Block is higher than its base value.

Unblockable and Undodgeable

Some attacks cannot be Blocked or cannot be Dodged. An undodgeable attack cannot have a Dodge invoked against it. An unblockable attack cannot have a Block invoked against it.

Health and Injury

Protagonists measure the state of their health with a simple trait of the same name. Health is a value which is depleted when you take suffer damage, and which heals over time with rest.

By default, protagonists have a maximum of 7 Health. Certain Charms can modify this value.

When you take damage, mark off an amount of Health equal to the damage taken.

When all of your Health is depleted by damage, you are *incapacitated*.

Stagger Threshold

Protagonists also have a value known as a *Stagger Threshold*. This is determined by their armor (see p. XX). When you suffer damage from a single attack equal to or greater than your Stagger Threshold, you are both *Staggered* and *Wounded*.

Staggered

When you suffer damage from a single attack equal to or in excess of your armor's Stagger Threshold, you suffer a Wound and become Staggered. Being Staggered is a system state that lasts for the rest of the round it happens in. While Staggered, you cannot spend Willpower and if you have not already acted, you must wait to take your turn until all of your non-Staggered allies have already acted. Additionally, some rules, powers, and Charms key off of being Staggered or Staggering opponents. In particular, many Charms end their durations when their user is Staggered.

Finally, each time you Stagger an opponent with an attack, you may choose to increase either your Dodge *or* your Block value by +1 for the rest of the scene. Incapacitating an opponent also counts as Staggering them for this purpose.

Inflicting and Suffering Wounds

When you inflict damage to a target equal to or in excess of their Stagger Threshold (or when an enemy does this to you), then in addition to being Staggered, your target also suffers a Wound.

When you suffer a Wound, note it down on your character sheet. This Wound, along with its effects, persist until you are able to heal it or otherwise mitigate it. Wounds tend to linger, inflicting significant complications and penalties.

Some Wounds are “lasting Wounds.” Even after the Wound is healed, its penalties are permanent unless repaired with some form of powerful healing magic. Only very extreme injuries leave lasting Wounds on the Exalted.

Whenever you have a greater number of Wounds than your Stamina rating, you must decrease your maximum Health rating by –4 for each Wound in excess of Stamina until the excess Wounds heal. If this ever reduces your maximum Health to 0, you are dead. Lasting Wounds that have already been healed don't count toward this total.

Wound Penalties

Most Wounds inflict a “Wound penalty.” The total aggregate of your Wound penalties from all Wounds are subtracted from the dice pool of all of your actions and from your base Dodge and Block values. Wound penalties are not subtracted from damage rolls or Essence rolls.

Common Wounds and Wound Rules

When you inflict a Wound, you must also describe and record its nature.

Generally, the type of Wound inflicted by an attack will be determined by the weapon used, but this can be modified by stunts and styling. In particular, most weapons can be “pulled” with a stunt, and made to inflict bruised Wounds (such as by striking an opponent with the pommel of a sword rather than its edge).

To inflict any of the Wounds marked as “severe” with an attack that does not normally create them, you must *describe an appropriate stunt* and spend 1 Willpower. Unarmed fighters may

also use a stunt and spend 1 Willpower to inflict “lacerated” or “burned” if they wish, such as by hip-tossing an enemy into a fireplace or slamming him into a weapon rack.

While a Wound remains unhealed, all of its rules remain in effect.

A list of Wounds and their associated rules, follows:

- **Blinded (severe):** You’ve suffered an injury to your face that makes it difficult or impossible to see clearly. For protagonists, this generally indicates an injury that will heal in time, but for antagonists, one or both eyes may be gouged out or otherwise permanently ruined. If you’ve been blinded, the difficulty of all actions that depend on sight increases by +2. Healing from a blinding Wound takes two weeks for a mortal, or five days for an Exalt, assuming that the eyes were not totally destroyed.
- **Bruised:** You’ve been substantially roughed up, badly enough that you’re really feeling it, but haven’t sustained any more specific injury than that. You suffer a –1 Wound penalty for each time you suffer this wound. Recovering from this Wound requires three days of rest for a mortal, or one day for an Exalt.
- **Burned:** You’ve suffered serious burns, either from extreme heat or some caustic chemical, charring or melting part of your body and inflicting a –1 penalty to your Appearance rating each time you suffer this Wound. You also suffer a –2 Wound each time you suffer this Wound. Healing from this Wound takes two weeks for a mortal, or five days for an Exalt. Mortals who heal from this Wound no longer suffer a Wound penalty, but their Appearance loss is treated as a lasting Wound.
- **Dazed:** You’ve suffered a major blow, perhaps had your bell rung. It feels like the world is swimming around you. You can’t cut ahead or make re-rolls by any means, mundane or magical. Recovering from this Wound requires three days of rest for a mortal, or one day for an Exalt.
- **Disabled Arm (severe):** One of your arms has been badly injured and won’t do what you want it to. Important muscles or tendons may be cut. Bones are probably broken. For antagonists, this injury might represent a totally severed limb. The disabled limb can’t be used to do anything. Whatever weapon you were holding in the damaged hand is disarmed (see p. XX). You lose access to all fighting style benefits. Any non-combat action which really wants two hands to perform effectively (such as crafting or providing medical treatment) increases its difficulty by +1. Suffering this injury twice disables all weapons other than unarmed attacks (you can still kick, bite, and so on), and makes many tasks requiring manual dexterity either impossible, or even with a creative stunt transforms them into a difficulty 9 action demanding multiple successes (a legendary thief might, after all, be able to operate lockpicks with her teeth). Healing from this Wound takes two weeks for a mortal, or five days for an Exalt. This is a lasting Wound for mortals, and if the limb was completely severed, it is a lasting Wound for Exalts as well.
- **Disabled Leg (severe):** One of your legs has been badly injured and will not support your weight. You might have been hamstrung, or suffered a broken bone, or the limb may simply be mangled. For antagonists, this might also represent a completely severed leg. All of your movement is complex movement, and the difficulty of Athletics rolls to get somewhere quickly are increased by +2. If you suffer this wound twice, movement becomes a simple action unless you have some sort of mobility device to assist you and actions to move around quickly or nimbly increase their difficulty by +3. Healing from this Wound takes two weeks for a mortal, or

five days for an Exalt, assuming that the limb was not severed outright. This is a lasting Wound for mortals, and if the limb was completely severed, it is a lasting Wound for Exalts as well.

- **Drained:** Your body has been subjected to some significant event that robbed its vitality, such as significant blood loss, poisoning, a direct mystic attack against your Essence, or a major sickness. This is also the default sort of Wound inflicted by Charms and other powers which damage their user upon activation. You suffer a -1 Wound penalty and your Stagger Threshold is reduced by -1 for each time you suffer this Wound. Recovering from this Wound requires a week of rest for a mortal, or three days for an Exalt.

- **Lacerated:** You've been generally perforated or lacerated, and are hurting bad. You suffer a -2 die Wound penalty for each time you suffer this Wound. Recovering from this Wound requires a week of rest for a mortal, or three days for an Exalt.

- **Maimed (severe):** You've suffered some sort of crippling injury not covered by more specific categories like blinded or disabled arm or leg, such as a broken spine, horrible disfigurement or even flaying of the face, specific damage to a major organ, or loss of generative organs. Because this is a catch-all, its results are variable. You might suffer +1 difficulty on all rolls related to endurance, recovery, and general health (for organ damage), treat all swift actions as simple actions (for a broken spine), increase the difficulty of all Appearance rolls by +1 for mutilation, or, well, the consequences of taking an axe to the crotch speak for themselves. Healing from this Wound takes six weeks for a mortal, or two weeks for an Exalt. Maimed Wounds are generally lasting Wounds against mortals. The Exalted only treat them as such if the body part being targeted is entirely amputated.

- **Mauled (severe):** You've suffered some sort of catastrophic damage such as being crushed under a building, caught in a massive explosion, or totally impaled with a weapon. You suffer a -3 die Wound penalty for each time you suffer this Wound. Healing from this Wound takes six weeks for a mortal, during which time they must rest in bed around the clock; or two weeks for an Exalt.

Wound Oddities

You will have noticed that some Wounds are substantially more severe than others. This is by design. **EXD's** injury system is intended to handle both bareknuckle martial arts tournaments and being bitten by hungry dinosaurs.

If the damage you suffer when you are Wounded is Aggravated (see p. XX), then note that your injury is an *Aggravated Wound*. Healing magic is often ineffective against Aggravated Wounds

Incapacitation

When your Health is reduced to 0 by damage, you are *incapacitated*. While incapacitated, you are unconscious, cannot act, and your Stagger Threshold is reduced to 1+. In the best case, you're just knocked out. In the worst case, you may never get up again.

If you're a protagonist and you are incapacitated, you are knocked out. You'll awaken some time after the end of whatever event or circumstance took you down. If you had any Wounds, one of them is upgraded into an Aggravated Wound. If they were all already Aggravated, congratulations, life is already bad enough that it doesn't get any worse. If you have more Wounds than your Stamina rating, you are *dying* and will perish after a dramatically satisfying

period of time has elapsed if not stabilized with a (Dexterity or Intelligence) + Medicine roll against difficulty 8 (or some other Storyteller intervention to save you).

Antagonists who get incapacitated are either knocked out, dying, or dead according to whatever makes the most sense given how they got taken out, any Wounds they might have, and how narratively important they are. As a general rule of thumb, most antagonists who get punched out are unconscious, most antagonists who get hit with a daiklave just die, and important antagonists are much more likely to live to fight another day than First Age Tomb-Guarding Blood Ape #7.

To repeat and stress this, **this game does not assume that most incapacitated protagonists are dead.** You're **supposed to be able to lose fights and survive.** Fights in this system tend to be pretty dangerous, and the intent is that, in most situations, protagonists who suffer defeat will have their goals thwarted as they recuperate from their near-death experience, rather than being stabbed on the ground over and over until they're well and truly dead for good. Players should feel confident taking risks and doing cool things without worrying that the character they've invested months of work and interest in will suddenly explode. Antagonists, meanwhile, are more fragile because they're less vital to the continuing narrative. Battles with certain death as the stakes are intended to be rare and players should generally be aware of what they're getting into.

This also means that the resiliency of protagonists is not a diegetic element of the world. Usually, anyone impaled with a daiklave simply dies, even an Exalt. It is not normal for enemies to beat on a fallen and unmoving opponent until she's red paste to make sure she's dead.

Getting back to the rules, it's worth noting that a single attack can both Stagger *and* incapacitate a target, if it does enough damage. In this case, the Wound is inflicted before incapacitation, meaning it probably gets upgraded into an Aggravated Wound immediately. Wounds suffered while you're already incapacitated aren't forcibly upgraded into Aggravated Wounds.

Finally, **each time you incapacitate an opponent with an attack, you may choose to increase either your Dodge *or* your Block value by +1.** In the event that a single attack both Wounds *and* incapacitates its target, it only triggers this benefit once.

Death and Fine-Tuning

Different groups have different attitudes toward character death. This book has no interest in passing judgment over anyone's tastes. The incapacitation rules presented here act as a neutral "default." Common modifications include allowing players to decide whether or not they've killed antagonists dispatched with deadly weapons or merely injured them too badly to keep fighting; making deadly weapons always kill protagonists on incapacitation; or always giving players a say in whether their protagonists are slain or merely taken out of action. All of these modifications are fine. Talk it out among your group if someone wants to use any of them.

Healing Injuries

Mortals take a very long time to recover from their wounds, and often suffer permanent infirmity if the wounds were of a serious nature. Exalted, on the other hand, cannot bleed to death unless subjected to unbelievably gruesome damage, never die from wounds becoming infected, heal from injuries quickly, and always heal perfectly without any permanent consequence other than, at most, a cool scar.

When recovering from Wounds, injuries heal one at a time in order from most to least deadly. Upon healing from an injury, erase the recorded Wound and the mark in its associated wound threshold.

Mortal Healing Times

Mortals erase one level of damage from their Health track after two days spent without undertaking any particularly strenuous activity. Only once there is no damage left in their Health track can they begin healing Wounds.

Wounds are healed in the following order, in the listed time:

Maimed and **mauled** Wounds take six weeks to heal.

Burned, blinded, disabled arm, and disabled leg Wounds take two weeks to heal.

Drained and **lacerated** Wounds take one week to heal.

Bruised and **dazed** Wounds take three days to heal.

Exalted Healing Times

Exalts erase one level of damage from their Health track every two days, even if they are highly active during that period; or they erase one level of damage after a day spent without strenuous activity. Only once there is no damage left in their Health track can they begin healing Wounds.

Wounds are healed in the following order, in the listed time:

Maimed and **mauled** Wounds take two weeks to heal.

Burned, blinded, disabled arm, and disabled leg Wounds take five days to heal.

Drained and **lacerated** Wounds take three days to heal.

Bruised and **dazed** Wounds take one day to heal.

Space in Combat

Scenes, particularly combat scenes, occur in a series of *zones*. A zone is a conceptually defined space in which acrobatic, energetic characters might interact with one another during an action scene. Zones aren't measured in square feet, but rather in narrative boundaries. A teahouse, for example, might be broken into zones such as *the kitchen, the dining area, the second floor, and the street outside*.

Conceptually linked groups of zones are themselves contained within larger abstract spaces called *sectors*. The entire teahouse described by the zones outlined above, for example, could make up one sector.

Conceptually linked groups of sectors, in turn, are encompassed within even larger spatial divisions called *districts*. The above teahouse sector, along with the adjacent streets and buildings for several blocks around it and their corresponding sectors, making up an entire neighborhood of a city, might be a single district.

Ranged Attacks

Brawl, Melee, and most Martial Arts attacks can only target enemies within the same zone.

Thrown attacks can target enemies within the same zone or in an adjacent zone.

Archery attacks can target enemies within the same zone or up to two zones away. Archery attacks made against enemies in the same zone suffer a -3 dice penalty.

These range rules are all subject to common sense, of course. An archer outside of a building can't shoot someone inside if all the doors and windows are shut, even though they're only one zone away.

Combat Actions and Complications

Most of the time, combat consists of characters moving and attacking. But there are other things a character can do with her turn. Most of these are standard actions, and will end the character's turn.

Simple Combat Actions

A character may take one simple action on her turn during combat. The following are a list of potential simple combat actions:

Argument

Characters may use a simple action to deliver a complex or emotionally impactful argument, entreaty, or oratory, or otherwise to utilize the social influence rules (see p. XX) in combat. Simply yelling a few words to a comrade to communicate basic information or issuing a simple command ("Look out behind you!") is reflexive and may occur at any time.

Attack

Attacking is the most common combat action taken in **EXD**. It is detailed extensively in previous sections of this chapter.

Desperate Escape

You try to cut and run, and to escape from battle. This uses up both your simple *and* swift actions, allowing you to flee to an adjacent zone even if you've already been struck this round, but at a cost of lowering your Defense to 3 until your next turn. If this places you at least two zones away from all opponents, *or* if you have no remaining allies participating in the fight, you are now *attempting to escape*, and must make an extended, contested (Dexterity + Athletics) roll against those attempting to pursue you. By default, this is against difficulty 6, though if you are forced to employ complex movement (see p. XX) this increases the difficulty by +2. Being mounted reduces the difficulty by -2 , and transforms the desperate escape roll into (Dexterity + Ride). Gaining two more total successes than your pursuer(s) means you have gotten away.

If any of your pursuers accumulates two more successes than you, you are caught. If caught by a pursuer, you cannot attempt a desperate escape again until a number of rounds have passed equal to the successes by which the pursuer beat your total when he caught you.

Protect

You may use a simple action to dedicate yourself to protecting another character in the same zone. Until your next turn, the character you're protecting adds your Block value as a bonus to his Defense value, and you can invoke your Block to protect him if you wish.

Vanish

The character may conceal herself from her enemies, if there's anywhere for her to hide or any way for her to plausibly go to ground. This is a (Dexterity + Stealth) simple action with a difficulty set by the Storyteller based on the availability and quality of hiding places within the character's current zone.

Anyone who wishes to target a character who has vanished must score more successes than she did on a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll (again, with a difficulty set by the Storyteller based on the quality and density of available concealment).

A character is no longer in hiding once she takes some obvious action. If she launches an attack from hiding, its difficulty is lowered by -2.

Unrolled Actions

Sometimes you'll need to use up your simple action without an associated dice roll to do something concentration-intensive but not uncertain, such as pulling up a bucket on the end of a rope or activating a particularly demanding Charm.

Swift Combat Actions

A character may take one swift action on her turn during combat. She must always take her swift action *before* her simple action. The following are a list of potential swift combat actions:

Hold Steady

If you remain in the same zone you started the round in and don't use any of the other listed swift actions, you have chosen to *hold steady*. Narratively, holding steady doesn't necessarily mean you're standing still. You can reflexively move around inside of the zone you're in while holding steady, leaping across tables, dodging enemy attacks, doing bar slides and the like. If, for whatever reason, you are disallowed from taking any swift action at all, you are treated as having used this action.

Move

By using a swift action on her turn, a character may move from her current zone to an adjacent zone. The following restrictions apply:

- There must be a path that she can logically follow to reach that zone (such as going up the teahouse stairs to the second floor).
- She cannot use a move action if she has already been struck by an attack during the current round, even if that attack inflicted no damage.
- If this path is perilous or uncertain, such as jumping across a long gap or scrambling up a crumbling stone wall, then you may have to succeed at a (Dexterity + Athletics) roll in order to perform the move action.

Complex Movement

Sometimes when a character opts to use a swift action, particularly a move action, it will be to undertake some particular sort of movement that is not freewheeling acrobatics or traversing from zone to zone across a clear path. Examples include climbing up a wall, squeezing through a tight gap to get into another zone, or running toward a swamp pontoon through hip-deep water. These are all considered forms of *complex movement*.

Complex movement imposes a –3 die penalty on whatever other actions the character takes during that round, be they simple, swift, or reflexive. Remember that if a character is, for example, climbing to look cool and could have just as easily have taken the stairs, it's a stunt and counts as normal movement, since stunts ensure actions are never more difficult if they're needlessly elaborate for the sake of coolness. On the other hand, moving over difficult terrain such as a steep slope covered in loose, shifting flakes of shale definitely counts as complex movement. So does swimming.

Re-Arm

This swift action is used to retrieve your weapon from within the same zone after being disarmed, to pick up weapons that you find in the environment, and to change which weapon you have available and ready to use. Re-arming is always considered complex movement. You cannot use a re-arm action if you have already been struck by an attack during the current round, even if that attack inflicted no damage.

Rise

You use a swift action to spring back to your feet after being knocked down. Rising is always considered complex movement.

You cannot use a rise action if you have already been struck by an attack during the current round, even if that attack inflicted no damage.

Take Cover

When you *take cover*, you are considered to be *in cover* so long as you don't use any other swift actions other than re-arm or hold steady.

There are two forms of cover: partial cover and total cover.

Total cover completely blocks access to a character. A character behind a solid wall is in total cover. It is impossible to target a character in total cover with attacks, unless the attacker can find an angle that gives him a shot. For example, enemies on the same side of the solid wall as the hiding character could attack her with no trouble. A character in total cover likewise cannot make attacks through it.

Total cover is primarily intended to defend against opponents in the same zone, as it is impossible to direct attacks across zones if there's a solid wall separating them even without the desired target taking cover.

Partial cover gives a character limited protection from ranged attacks. A character crouching behind an overturned table is in partial cover, as is one trading arrow volleys around a tree. Partial cover grants +1 Defense, +1 Soak, and +1 Block, but only against ranged attacks.

Cover is contextual, and heavily defined by the narrative of the battle and the agreed-upon layout of the available scenery. Leaving cover is reflexive and can be done at any time.

Combat Complications and Conditions

There are a few unusual conditions that come up frequently, particularly once Charms start getting used. They're consolidated here for ease of reference.

Aggravated Damage

Some attacks which exploit a supernatural being's special weakness, or which are imbued with terrible destructive mystic power, may inflict a special form of damage known as *Aggravated damage*. Aggravated damage inflicted on a character should be noted separately from normal damage, as it is often immune to magical healing. If Aggravated damage causes a Wound, that Wound is considered Aggravated. Magical healing is often likewise ineffective against Aggravated Wounds.

Ambush and Unexpected Attacks

It is possible to blindside enemies with attacks made from concealment during a fight. When a character attacks from stealth, she reveals herself and her attack is considered to be *unexpected*. Unexpected attacks gain Overwhelming (-2) and are unblockable and undodgeable.

When one entire band of allied characters opens a battle by attacking from stealth, the result is an *ambush*. All of the ambushing group's attacks are unexpected, and during the first round, the ambushed group cannot take any turns until *all* of the ambushers have taken their turns.

Brutal

Brutal is a special quality of some attacks which inflict particularly grievous damage to the target, such as explosions, jaws full of flesh-tearing teeth, and attacks imbued with destructive magic. A Brutal attack inflicts a penalty to the target's Soak rating against it. The value of this penalty is always noted in parentheses, such as "Brutal (-2)." If an attack gains multiple instances of this rule from various sources, their penalties stack.

Darkness, Blindness, and Invisible Enemies

If you've been temporarily blinded, as a general thing, the difficulty of all actions that depend on sight increases by +2.

If you're fighting someone you can't see, either because you're blind, it's pitch dark, or they're invisible, their Defense gains a +2 bonus against you.

Disarmed

By spending 1 Willpower when making an attack, a protagonist can attempt to disarm an opponent. This attack inflicts no damage; instead, if it successfully strikes the target, they are disarmed. Natural weapons such as fists or claws cannot generally be disarmed.

When a protagonist is disarmed, this generally means the character loses one of her weapons, which falls to the ground within the zone she occupies, forcibly equipping her with unarmed attacks unless she has another weapon in her other hand.

When an antagonist is disarmed, reduce his base damage by half (round up) unless he's already fighting with natural weapons.

Retrieving a discarded or disarmed weapon within the same zone or claiming a weapon from the environment requires the use of a re-arm swift action.

Fierce

Fierce is a special quality of attacks which are especially fast, confusing, or otherwise hard to avoid. If the target of a Fierce attack invokes Dodge against it, then after the attack resolves, they lose 1 more Dodge than they otherwise would normally. Generally, this means they reduce their Dodge by -2. If an attack has Fierce from multiple sources, it does not stack.

Heavy

Heavy is a special quality of attacks which are especially powerful, weighty, or otherwise hard to block. If the target of a Heavy attack invokes Block against it, then after the attack resolves, they lose 1 more Block than they otherwise would normally. Generally, this means they reduce their Block by -2 . If an attack has Heavy from multiple sources, it does not stack.

Knocked Prone

When a character is knocked prone, she must use a rise swift action to climb back to her feet. If she remains prone, she cannot use the move action and her attack rolls suffer a -2 penalty.

Mounted Combat

There are few things more fearsome than a mounted fighter to those not similarly equipped. A protagonist fighting from atop a battle-trained mount can use the highest of her or her mount's Defense, and can treat Ride as a defensive Ability in order to calculate her own Defense.

While mounted, a character can use a move action before *or* after her simple action. If she launches a close-range attack against a non-mounted character immediately after arriving in a new zone, she adds $+2$ to her base damage.

If fighting on a mount *not* accustomed to or suited for battle, the character's Defense rating is penalized by -1 , and unless she succeeds at a reflexive difficulty 7 (Wits + Ride) roll at the beginning of the battle, all of her actions suffer a -3 dice penalty.

Overwhelming

Overwhelming is a special quality of attacks which are notably overpowering, swift, or all-encompassing, making them difficult to avoid. An Overwhelming attack penalizes the target's Defense by the amount listed against that attack, such as "An attack enhanced by this Charm is Overwhelming (-1)."

If an attack gains multiple instances of this rule from various sources, their penalties stack.

Piercing

Piercing is a special quality of attacks which are particularly likely to strike through protection on a target's vitals, or which enervate the target or otherwise render him more prone to serious injury. A Piercing attack penalizes the target's Stagger Threshold by the amount listed against that attack, such as "Damage from this attack is Piercing (-1)."

If an attack gains multiple instances of this rule from various sources, their penalties stack.

Preparing and Retrieving Weapons

Unless a character is ambushed, she is considered to have her weapon of choice ready to use when combat begins. Unarmed attacks are *always* available (in a pinch, a character can simply reflexively drop whatever she's holding to employ them). If a character wishes to draw her weapon or switch her equipped weapons once a fight is underway, she must use the re-arm swift action.

Stall

A character may opt to delay taking her turn until later in the round, jumping in at any time after the rest of her allies are done acting. If she doesn't act *at all*, she may cut in line during the following round without paying Willpower; or, if the first turn belongs to her enemies, may

spend 1 Willpower to act first *before* any of her enemies have had a chance to act, changing the action sequence for the rest of the battle. This is potentially useful as a way to undertake desperately needed movement to another zone while on the back foot and being consistently targeted by enemies.

Temporary Health

Sometimes a Charm or other power will grant a character “Temporary Health,” usually for the rest of the current scene. At the end of whatever duration it lasts for, Temporary Health vanishes. When it does so, any damage marked into it vanishes along with it, although Wounds gained due to damage inflicted against Temporary Health remain.

The practical result of this is that a character can suffer a greater amount of damage than her Health rating would normally be able to handle, but when her Temporary Health vanishes at the end of the scene, she doesn’t immediately drop unconscious or dead by being saddled with more damage than her returned-to-normal Health value can hold.

Unblockable

Some rare attacks are so overwhelmingly powerful that it is simply impossible to Block them. Block cannot be invoked against an unblockable attack.

Undodgeable

Some rare attacks fill all the space around their target, such that it is simply impossible to Dodge them. Dodge cannot be invoked against an undodgeable attack.

Weaponry and Armor

While some Exalted are personally powerful enough to face their enemies with merely their own two fists and an impressive physique, most of those who go to battle in Creation do so with weapons to kill their enemies and armor to protect themselves from harm. Both are highly efficacious.

Weapons and armor are considerations for protagonists. While antagonists certainly show up bearing arms and wearing armor, they do not actually use these weapon and armor rules to determine their traits. Those are determined off of a simplified rubric explained in Chapter Twelve.

Fighting Style

There are five basic loadouts that you’ll see combatants use. The mechanical benefits of each are blatantly and unashamedly written with an eye toward making them all competitive with one another. *In reality*, a guy with a sword and shield is almost always better off than a guy using one hand to hold a sword and the other one for jack shit, but this isn’t reality, it’s an action movie. Fighting like a fencer or samurai is cool so it needs to be viable.

Antagonists do not employ these fighting styles. They are for protagonists only.

Sword and Board: The sword in this case isn’t necessarily an actual sword — most soldiers prefer spears — but the point is, the character fights with a weapon in one hand and a shield in the other. The benefit of this arrangement is that the shield provides +1 to the character’s Defense rating and +1 to her base Block value while she is using it.

Freehanding: The character carries nothing but a single one-handed weapon, which she can freely switch between a single or two-handed grip. Thanks to this versatility and her greater ability to use feints and tricks by switching hands, or to use a free hand to wrestle with an opponent, once per battle the character may Dodge without spending Willpower and once per battle she may Block without spending Willpower.

Two-Handing: The character carries a huge weapon requiring two hands to use effectively. In addition to the high Damage value of two-handed weapons, when someone attempts to block a two-handed weapon, they suffer a -1 penalty to their Block against their attack. If forced to use a two-handed weapon in one hand, the weapon's Damage value is reduced by -2 and it does not penalize the target's Block value.

Dual Wielding: The character fights with a weapon in each hand. If the weapons are of different kinds, then the character may choose to attack with either weapon on any given turn. Once per scene, after making an attack which fails to damage its target, the character may immediately and reflexively attempt the attack again. This does not cost Willpower or use up her once per scene re-roll (it is not treated as a re-roll at all, but rather as an entirely new attack), and any Charms that enhanced the first attack attempt still enhance the second attack attempt.

Unarmed: The character fights with only those weapons nature has provided her, generally meaning her fists and feet. While fighting unarmed, she increases her base Dodge value by +1 and her base Block value by +1.

These fighting styles encompass all five combat Abilities. Bows and firewands are two-handed weapons. Throwing weapons are usually freehanded, but *could* be dual wielded or even used with a shield.

Weapons Traits

A character's choice of weaponry determined what dice pool she attacks with, how close she must be to her target, and how damaging her attacks are. Some weapons also have other special qualities.

A weapon's **Attribute** describes whether it is aimed with Strength (S), Dexterity (D), or the character's choice of either (S/D).

A weapon's **Ability** describes what combat skill is normally rolled when making attacks with it: Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts (MA), Melee, or Thrown.

A weapon's **Damage** determines how many dice of damage are rolled (before threshold damage from attack roll successes are added) when a character strikes with the weapon.

A weapon's Wound describes what kind of Wound it normally inflicts when it Staggers an opponent.

One-Handed Weapons

These weapons can be effectively wielded with one hand, leaving the other free to use a shield or a second weapon.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Axe/Chopping Sword	S	Melee	5	Lacerated
Club*	S	Melee	4	Bruised

Improvised Weapon*	S/D	Brawl/MA	4	Varies
Katar/Tiger Claws*	S/D	Brawl/MA	4	Lacerated
Knife*	D	Melee	4	Lacerated
Mace/Hammer	S	Melee	5	Lacerated
Shield Bash*	S	Melee/MA	4	Bruised
Staff*	D	MA	4	Bruised
Slashing Sword/Spear	D	Melee	5	Lacerated
Straight Sword	S/D	Melee	5	Lacerated
Unarmed*	S/D	Brawl/MA	3	Bruised
Whip*	D	Melee/MA	4	Bruised

* Weapons marked with one asterisk are considered nimble weapons. When wielding only nimble weapons, the first attack that strikes the character each round does not prevent her from using a move action. Only after being struck twice before her turn is she prohibited from using a move action.

Two-Handed Weapons

These weapons require two hands to wield effectively due to their sheer weight and size.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Great Sword	S/D	Melee	7	Lacerated
Lance	D	Melee	7	Lacerated
Polearm/Halberd/Great Axe	S	Melee	7	Lacerated
Sledgehammer	S	Melee	7	Lacerated

Ranged Weapons

These weapons can be used to attack characters in other zones. **Thrown** weapons can attack characters in directly adjacent zones. Most **Archery** weapons can attack up to two zones away and use the two-handed fighting style. Archery attacks made against enemies in the same zone suffer a -3 dice penalty.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Baton/Rock*	S/D	Thrown	4	Bruised
Boomerang**	D	Thrown	4	Bruised
Bow/Crossbow	D	Archery	5	Lacerated
Chakram/Knife/Shuriken*	D	Thrown	4	Lacerated
Firewand***	D	Archery	6	Burned
Hatchet	S	Thrown	5	Lacerated
Javelin****	D	Thrown	5	Lacerated

* Weapons marked with one asterisk are considered nimble weapons. When wielding only nimble weapons, the first attack that strikes the character each round does not prevent her from using a move action. Only after being struck twice before her turn is she prohibited from using a move action.

** Returns when thrown, also nimble

***Firewands must be wielded with two hands, can only attack one zone away, and do not suffer a penalty for attacks against targets in the same zone. Each time they are fired, it is a Resources 2 expenditure.

**** Javelins use the rules of an Archery weapon, save that they can be wielded with one hand.

Artifact Weapons

Artifact weapons use the same basic rules as mundane weapons, at least when being used to cut someone's head off. Further rules for artifacts can be found in Chapter Nine.

One-Handed Artifact Weapons

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Grimcleaver/Reaver Daiklave	S	Melee	7	Lacerated
Razor Claws/Slayer Katar*	S/D	Brawl/MA	6	Lacerated
Short Daiklave*	D	Melee	6	Lacerated
Goremaul	S	Melee	7	Lacerated
Wrackstaff*	D	MA	6	Bruised
Longfang/Reaper Daiklave	D	Melee	7	Lacerated
Daiklave	S/D	Melee	7	Lacerated
Smashfists**	S/D	Brawl/MA	5	Bruised
Direlash*	D	Melee/MA	6	Lacerated

* Weapons marked with one asterisk are considered nimble weapons. When wielding only nimble weapons, the first attack that strikes the character each round does not prevent her from using a move action. Only after being struck twice before her turn is she prohibited from using a move action.

** Nimble. Can be wielded with the unarmed fighting style, despite not being a natural weapon.

Two-Handed Artifact Weapons

These weapons require two hands to wield effectively due to their sheer weight and size.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Direlance/Grand Grimscythe	D	Melee	9	Lacerated
Grand Daiklave	S/D	Melee	9	Lacerated
Grand Grimcleaver	S	Melee	9	Lacerated
Grand Goremaul	S	Melee	9	Lacerated

Ranged Artifact Weapons

These weapons can be used to attack characters in other zones. **Thrown** weapons can attack characters in directly adjacent zones. Most **Archery** weapons can attack up to two zones away and use the two-handed fighting style. Archery made against enemies in the same zone suffer a –3 dice penalty.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Infinite Chakram/Skycutter*	D	Thrown	6	Lacerated
Powerbow/Siege Crossbow	D	Archery	7	Lacerated
Dragon Sigh Wand**	D	Archery	8	Burned

* Returns when thrown, also nimble

**Dragon sigh wands must be wielded with two hands, can only attack one zone away, and do not suffer a penalty for attacks against targets in the same zone. Each time they are fired, it is a Resources 2 expenditure.

Armor Traits

There are many kinds of armor in Creation, of varying designs and costs. Some are enormously prestigious, some are ugly and utilitarian, some are all a poor conscript can afford. In-fiction, protagonists care about all of these things, but for the purpose of our rules, armor has been boiled down to unarmored, light, and heavy stat blocks. This is in the service of both simplicity and fun. If you want your deadly vagabond to wear tattered, rivet-studded leather strips that blow in the wind, cool, we'll give him the same protection we would a sensible man with a chain shirt and iron cap. In reality, no soldier in his right mind ventures onto a battlefield without a helmet. But helmets cover up your awesome hairstyle and face tattoos, so these rules don't care whether you're wearing one.

A class of armor has five values:

Armor's **Defense** value acts as a modifier to your Defense rating while you're wearing it.

Armor's **Dodge** value acts as a modifier to your base Dodge value while you're wearing it.

Armor's **Soak** value sets the baseline for your Soak rating while you're wearing it.

Armor's **Stagger Threshold** determines how much damage has to be inflicted on you in a single hit in order to Stagger you.

Armor's **Fatigue** value describes the difficulty modifier it imposes on rolls to perform extended strenuous activities while wearing it. Further, because wearing armor is generally uncomfortable and draining, and the strain of using it builds up over time, when you go to sleep at the end of any day you mostly spent wearing armor, or in which you engaged in a strenuous battle while wearing armor, you must make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll in order to successfully regain Willpower. The difficulty is (5 + armor's Fatigue modifier). If the armor's modifier is +0, you don't need to roll.

Class	Defense	Dodge	Soak	Stagger	Fatigue
Unarmored	+1	–0	4	2+	+0
Light	–0	–1	5	3+	+2

Heavy	-1	-2	6	4+	+3
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Artifact Armor Traits

As with artifact weapons, these are just the rules for how well the armor keeps your insides on your insides. Other rules are found in Chapter Nine.

Class	Defense	Dodge	Soak	Stagger	Fatigue
Light	-0	-1	6	4+	+1
Heavy	-1	-2	7	5+	+2

Influence vs Mind Control

Although the **Exalted Demake** doesn't have keywords, the "psyche" concept from **EX3** is alive and well here.

As a Storytelling consideration, characters might come to regret things they've been talked into doing through social influence, but that happens in the same way it does in the real world: if they prosper, they're happy; if they do ill-considered things, or things don't work out well for them, they become resentful. That's how things basically unfold even if a Solar used Excellence of the Blazing Sun to roll 20 dice on his (Manipulation + Presence) action: people think they got swindled, sold a bill of goods, or given bad advice. Someone might decry this as mind control, but if they do, they're trying to deflect blame from their actions or to stir up ill-will against the character they feel used by. It's not mind control. They just got fast-talked by someone very persuasive.

On the other hand, there are plenty of Charms that entirely bypass the social influence system, such as Hypnotic Tongue Technique or — God help you — Irresistible Succubus Style. These *are* straight-up magical mind control, and people will respond to them as such. Their friends will probably notice the target is acting strangely. Once the magic abates, the target usually realizes she wasn't herself and that something was done to her. Such effects are very, very powerful, but using them cavalierly tends to breed a lot of resentment and fear of the character, and is a good way to make enemies if directed against anyone with the power or influence to retaliate later.

Social Influence

For almost five thousand years, the Chosen have attempted to forge lasting peace and justice in their world by picking up daiklaves and killing those who oppose them. This has never worked, but do not despair! If attempted for another five thousand years, and then five thousand more, perhaps you shall be the one who finally carves a bloody fuller that uncovers the perfect world.

For those of less violent disposition, there's talking.

Before getting into the specifics, **this is the essential gist of all the systems that follow:** *everyone has motives, and if you want them to do something for you, those motives need to line up with what you want.* Say you need help moving all your crap into your new upstairs apartment. If you ask a stranger to help you, he's going to say no. If you ask your friend to help you, well, he doesn't *want* to spend most of his weekend doing that either, but he probably will

anyway because he's your friend. If you don't have a friend around and *have* to convince the stranger, you'll need to bribe him, threaten him, or figure out a way to convince him that helping you move aligns with his goals or beliefs so that he's willing to do it.

Social Traits

Characters have two traits that are used to interact with the world socially and to resist the intrigues of schemers and the entreaties of true-hearted revolutionaries. These are Nature and Intimacies.

Nature

Described in greater detail in Chapter Two, Nature describes the bedrock characteristics of a person's heart and soul. Both protagonists and antagonists have a Nature (though it's common not to bother to assign an antagonist's Nature unless the Storyteller anticipates players will talk to him). Broadly speaking, it is impossible to compel a character to violate their Nature without *extremely* powerful magic.

Intimacies

All **EXD** characters have *Intimacies*, special ties or principles that are of utmost importance to them. (Again, antagonists probably won't have theirs filled in unless they're expected to stick around for a while.) Generally these are articulated either as a personal tie and the context for that tie, such as "My wife (love)," "The Despot of Gem (hatred)", or "Great Forks (civic loyalty)," or else as a statement of the character's personal philosophy or values, such as "I never expect anyone to look out for anyone but themselves," "Those who prey on the weak must be punished," or "With great power comes great responsibility."

Most protagonists have three Intimacies. If an Intimacy becomes irrelevant or impossible to sustain (for example, if a character succeeds in killing the Abyssal who murdered her family), she can adopt a new Intimacy to replace it at the beginning of the next story. Alternately, at the end of a story a protagonist's player can voluntarily abandon and replace a single Intimacy that she feels is no longer relevant to her character.

Intimacies act as shields to protect characters against being talked into acting against their own interests, but also weak points which may be used to goad them into ill-considered action that aligns with their ideology or passions.

Aim

Generally, social influence will be attempted with one of two objectives: *changing someone's mind* or *getting someone to do something*.

Changing someone's mind involves making compelling arguments or evoking particular emotional states, and is accomplished by using the **inspire** social action.

Getting someone to do something involves matching up your desire with their motives, and is accomplished using the **persuade** social action.

Finally, there is a third social influence action, in which you **read intentions** to discover more about the person you are attempting to influence.

Inspire Actions

If you don't have a good path to persuade someone, or are just looking to make some friends or enemies for later, you can always attempt to change the hearts and minds of those you meet. If they don't care about your struggle, convince them to care. Or befriend them outright, so they're inclined to do a favor because you, their friend, are asking about it.

Inspiring someone is a social action using a social Attribute matching the approach you're using + one of the following Abilities: Empathy, Linguistics, Performance, Presence, or Socialize. For example, stirring up patriotism toward your homeland with a stirring performance of its anthem would be (Charisma + Performance). Select a combination that matches whatever it is you're trying to do and roll it against a difficulty of the target's Willpower (if attempting to inspire a group of listeners, roll against the highest Willpower present). Your objective here isn't to get someone to *do* something, but to make them *feel* a certain way.

Once an inspire action has failed against a particular target, they are immune to repeated attempts for the rest of the story unless the new attempts take some notably different tack (switching from a rousing anthem to an telling a highly-propagandized story, etc).

If an inspiration attempt succeeds, the target or targets either *gain a temporary Intimacy*, *doubt an existing Intimacy*, or *are swept up in a feeling*, depending on what you were trying to do.

Temporary Intimacies: If you were trying to convince them to a certain point of view, and they did not already harbor any Intimacies around that subject, then when you succeed they gain a *temporary Intimacy* according with your inspiration. This behaves in all ways as a regular Intimacy, save that it can exceed the normal limit of having only three Intimacies at a time, and it vanishes at the end of the current story.

Note the number of successes rolled when creating a temporary Intimacy. If this is equal to or greater than the target's Willpower rating, then you have created a true Intimacy instead. If this means that the target has more than four Intimacies, they will be forced to discard one of their Intimacies at the end of the current story.

While it lasts, a temporary Intimacy may also be *reinforced*. Once per scene, in any scene after the one in which a temporary Intimacy was created, an inspire action may be used to strengthen it. Note the successes rolled and add them to the total amount of prior successes which have gone into the temporary Intimacy. If this new total matches or exceeds the target's Willpower rating, the temporary Intimacy becomes a true intimacy.

A character may also choose, at the end of the story, to voluntarily upgrade a temporary Intimacy into a permanent Intimacy rather than discarding it.

If the target finds the inspire outcome objectionable, he may, on the spot, spend 1 Willpower to reject it, so that the temporary Intimacy does not form or is not reinforced. If accepting the temporary Intimacy would conflict with his Nature, he doesn't have to spend Willpower to reject it. This can only be done at the time the action is performed; a character cannot, several hours or days later, decide that the temporary Intimacy is inconvenient and spend Willpower to be rid of it.

Doubting an Intimacy: If you were trying to convince them to a certain point of view, and they already harbored an Intimacy that conflicts with this position, then when you succeed their Intimacy is transformed into an *Intimacy in doubt*. A doubted Intimacy is effectively disabled for the rest of the current story.

Note the number of successes rolled when casting an Intimacy into doubt. If this is equal to or greater than the target's Willpower rating, then the Intimacy is removed completely.

While an Intimacy is in doubt, it can be further *undermined*. This works exactly the same as reinforcing a temporary Intimacy, culminating in destroying the Intimacy.

If the target finds the inspire outcome objectionable, he may, on the spot, spend 1 Willpower to reject it, so that the Intimacy is not cast into doubt or undermined. If casting the Intimacy into doubt would conflict with his Nature, he doesn't have to spend Willpower to reject it. This can only be done at the time the action is performed; a character cannot, several hours or days later, decide that he *does* trust his wife and spend Willpower to no longer doubt his Intimacy toward her.

Temporary Intimacies and Intimacies in doubt can both be reinforced or undermined with additional inspire actions, as well. After you cast someone's trust in his wife into doubt, one of the target's friends might come along later and use another inspire action to attempt to reinforce the faltering Intimacy. Any successes rolled would negate yours, potentially removing the Intimacy from doubt. The same process can be used to break down a temporary Intimacy, destroying it prematurely.

Being swept up in a feeling occurs when you succeed at an attempt, not to make the target think a certain way about something, but simply to experience a powerful emotional response. Being swept up in a feeling lasts for the rest of the current scene. It has two effects:

First, persuade and inspire actions which appeal to the target's current emotional state lower their difficulty by -2.

Second, a powerful emotion is considered to be equivalent to a mid-grade bribe for the purpose of persuade actions (see below). Essentially, what you're offering is "if you do this thing that aligns with your current emotional state, it will feel very satisfying."

Being swept up in a feeling can also be rejected by spending 1 Willpower. No Nature provides protection from feeling particular emotions.

Persuasion Actions

Persuasion actions are a bit more involved than inspire actions. When you want someone to do something, the first thing you need to consider is the *scope* of the request.

Scope

All persuasion attempts are not created equal.

Getting people to inconvenience themselves isn't too hard if you're charismatic, manipulative, or just plain hot enough that people regularly make fools of themselves to please you. But getting someone to *really stick his neck out* for you... that's hard.

And so, social influence based around *getting someone to do something* falls into two broad categories: *inconveniences* and *ordeals*.

An **inconvenience** is any request that would cost the target a small amount of his time or resources, or which asks him to subject himself to very minor risk (being scolded by his wife, being a few minutes late to an appointment). Asking someone to break a social taboo he doesn't

really care about and isn't likely to get caught violating is an inconvenience. Asking a farmer to let you ride in his haycart for an hour until you reach town is an inconvenience.

An **ordeal** is any request that would cost the target a significant investment of time or resources, or subject him to meaningful risk or danger to either his livelihood or his person (having his wife leave him, offending a wrathful god). Asking someone to subject himself to serious social or legal repercussions is an ordeal. Convincing a farmer to cut off his finger so that you can use it as a blood offering to pacify an angry ghost is an ordeal.

Persuading People

Persuasion rolls are constructed exactly the same way as inspire rolls: A social Attribute + one of Empathy, Linguistics, Performance, Presence, or Socialize are all likely candidates, rolled against a difficulty of the target's Willpower rating or the highest Willpower rating in a group. For example, to use the standards of etiquette and the expectations of society to maneuver someone into doing what you want out of a sense of obligation, roll (Manipulation + Socialize).

You can get characters to assent to an inconvenience with nothing but a successful social roll, but in order to get them to agree to an ordeal, you need to offer them something. "Something" means either appealing to their Nature or an Intimacy, or offering them something they want (a bribe) that they consider to be of commensurate value with the request, or something they *don't* want (a threat) that they consider to be of commensurate unpleasantness to be worth acceding to the request to avoid.

Inconveniences: When you target someone and succeed at a roll to request an inconvenience of them, they generally do what you want them to do.

If the target has an Intimacy that aligns with what you're asking for, or if it aligns with their Nature, lower the difficulty of the persuade action by -2. If the target has an Intimacy that *conflicts* with the request, increase the difficulty by +2.

If the target *really* doesn't want to perform the inconvenience you're asking for, they can spend 1 Willpower to reject it. If the inconvenience conflicts with their Nature, they do not have to pay anything to reject the request.

Ordeals: Ordeal requests automatically fail unless they accord with one of the target's Intimacies, his Nature, or you offer him a sufficiently motivating bribe or threat.

If you meet one of these criteria and succeed at a roll to request an ordeal of them, they generally do what you want them to do.

If the target *really* doesn't want to perform the ordeal you're asking for, they can spend 1 Willpower to reject it. If the inconvenience conflicts with their Nature, they do not have to pay anything to reject the request.

In either case, once a persuade attempt has failed (either through bad dice luck or rejection) it can't be attempted again during the same scene unless a different tack is taken (switching from reasoned appeals to threatening to cut the target's balls off, for example).

It's worth taking a moment to discuss intimidation and the Chosen. The Exalted are very powerful beings, and know that they're very powerful beings. A huge angry off-duty soldier threatening to peel your face off and eat it if you don't do what he wants is plenty of inducement for *most* people to do what he wants, but the majority of Exalted are well within their rights to

blow him off at no cost because they know he has no prayer of actually hurting them in a fight. If he threatens their loved ones, that might be another matter, but broadly speaking, direct threats of physical violence only work when there's some reason to think the speaker can back them up.

Read Intentions Actions

During a scene of social interaction, or a scene where a character appears to wear their heart on their sleeve in some way (leaping into a dangerous situation while shouting about one's motives is a staple for the genre), a character may attempt to scrutinize another character's behavior to figure out what *really* makes them tick. This is a **read intentions** action.

This requires the target to have first done something potentially revealing: made a substantial proposal, asked for a favor, or murdered someone in a fit of rage, for example. Small talk over dinner isn't sufficient to attempt to read someone's intentions. Make a (Perception + Empathy) roll. **If the target is an antagonist**, this roll is made against a difficulty set by the Storyteller based on how much they believe the target revealed himself during the scene and how sneaky he is. **If the target is another protagonist**, this roll is made at difficulty (4 + target's Manipulation). Success will reveal something of the target's true thoughts and motives during the scene. One success generally isn't enough to get more than a sense of honesty, duplicity, or motives that are more complex than they appear. Three or more successes may reveal an Intimacy. Five or more successes could reveal the target's Nature. This can only be attempted once per scene.

Fighting Against Influence

Sometimes social influence scenes can get pretty complex, and one character may wish to intervene on another's behalf, or the "influence" may quickly become an argument or debate. These situations are all represented by the **counterargument** action.

A counterargument is, essentially, contesting someone else's attempt at social influence with a contradicting one. If someone tries to inspire you by detailing the many admirable features of the Immaculate Philosophy, you might decide to mount a counterargument running down the many ways it is self-serving and flawed, for example; or, if you see someone talking your friend into selling his horse at far below its value, you might jump in to convince him he's being conned.

In all of these cases, the character making the counterargument constructs a dice pool in exactly the same fashion they would for an inspire or persuade action, then rolls it against a difficulty of the Willpower rating of the speaker they're attempting to counter. Their successes are then subtracted from the speaker's successes, before the original inspire or persuade action can finish resolving.

In the case of whirling debates between opposing viewpoints in a group, to keep matters simple, no matter how many people jump in to contribute to the discussion or argument, simply use the rules outlined above for persuade, inspire, and counterargument actions, backed up by the teamwork rules found on page XX.

Prayer

While spirits can be argued or debated with in the same fashion as any other character when confronted face-to-face, they can also be enticed from afar through prayer. Petitioning a god for any sort of favor via prayer is a Charisma + (Linguistics or Performance) roll. The difficulty to attract a god's notice at all is generally 9, though well-considered sacrifices can lower this by -1

or -2, and being a properly ordained priest of the god lowers the difficulty by a further -1. Depending on how distant, powerful, and widely revered the god is, it may require anywhere from one to a *very great* number of successes to attract his attention.

Solars of the Zenith Caste, Lunars of the No Moon Caste, Abyssals of the Midnight Caste, and all Sidereals are considered to be ordained priests of any and every god they might offer prayer to.

Other Deadly Hazards

The Exalted are highly resistant to mundane poisons, never contract minor illnesses, and can bounce back easily from even the most ferocious mundane disease.

Those around them are not so lucky.

Poison

Poison is a ticking clock threat. Whether administered in a character's food or drink, applied with a stealthy blowdart, or used to envenom a weapon, it either tests an Exalt's toughness or starts a race to apply an antidote before it's too late. Thus:

When a character is subjected to poison, she must immediately make a Stamina + Resistance roll against the poison's difficulty rating. Regardless of the outcome, the victim suffers the poison's listed penalty to all actions for its *duration*. At the end of that duration, she also suffers damage equal to the poison's damage rating, minus the number of successes she got on her resistance roll. The character's Stagger Threshold against this damage is always calculated as though she were unarmored.

A character who is immune to poison simply ignores both damage and penalty.

Treating poison requires an Intelligence + Medicine roll against a difficulty set by the Storyteller to figure out what kind of poison is in play and thus what antidote is needed (assuming it's not blindingly obvious, as when the attending physician saw a cobra bite the patient with her own two eyes; in that case, skip the diagnosis), followed by a difficulty 6 Intelligence + Medicine roll to apply a correct counteracting dosage if the proper antidote is available; if not, improvising something to serve in its place increases the roll to difficulty 8. Success immediately counteracts the poison, negating its penalty and reducing the damage inflicted at the end of its duration by the number of successes rolled. This reduction stacks on top of any mitigation already gained by the patient's Stamina + Resistance roll.

Multiple doses of poison must be resisted independently, and can stack their damage, but only the worst penalty applies.

Poison	Difficulty	Damage	Penalty	Duration
Alchemical poison	6	8	-1	10 minutes
Arrow frog venom	8	7	-4	6 hours
Court poison	7	8	-3	3 hours
Demon venom	8	9*	-4	12 hours
Howling lotus	9	7	-3	2 hours
Plant toxin	7	4	-2	10 hours

Serpent venom 6 3 -2 1 hour

* Demon venom inflicts Aggravated damage if not successfully resisted.

Deadly poisons such as those listed above tend to inflict mauled Wounds on mortals, but Exalted and similarly robust supernatural beings merely suffer drained Wounds from all save demon venom.

Poison damage cannot be Dodged or Blocked.

Sickness and Disease

Diseases are transmitted and contracted by various means. If potentially exposed to a disease, a character must roll Stamina + Resistance against a difficulty of its *virulence*; failure means she has contracted the disease.

Exalted do not follow any of the normal rules for mundane disease. If infected with a mundane disease, Exalted simply suffer a -2 penalty and are potentially infectious to others. Each morning at sunrise, an Exalt may make a Stamina + Resistance roll against difficulty 6 to 8 (depending on how serious the disease is, as judged by the Storyteller) to throw off its effects.

For mortals, disease is one of the greatest terrors in the world, capable of invisibly slaying entire cities or nations. Without medical treatment, mortals are generally helpless in the face of disease. A mortal protagonist left to the mercy of an untreated disease may make a difficulty 9 Stamina + Resistance roll to miraculously survive it; antagonists are not so lucky. In either case, medical treatment is *strongly* recommended in those cases where it is possible (some diseases have no known effective cure without recourse to potent healing magic).

Treating a disease requires an extended Intelligence + Medicine roll, made at one-day intervals, against a listed *difficulty* until the required *goal* is accumulated in successes. Afterwards, the patient may make a roll of Stamina + Resistance against difficulty 6 each day at sunrise to attempt to throw off the malady (antagonists roll with Expertise instead); three consecutive failures indicate a relapse and the need for another round of treatment.

Cholera

Cholera is marked by dizziness, vomiting, and ceaseless diarrhea, leading to severe dehydration. Roughly half of those who contract cholera die from it. Because of the manner in which it spreads, cholera tends to manifest in widespread outbreaks that scythe through entire communities, and is the especial bane of besieging armies. Cholera has broken far more sieges in the Second Age than military action. There is a delay of about five days between contracting cholera and the appearance of its symptoms.

Cholera is generally contracted from tainted water supplies or foodstuffs, particularly when contaminated with the feces of livestock or people. Cholera victims are also contagious to others via direct contact.

Virulence: 7

Difficulty to treat: 6

Goal: 3

Untreated Diagnosis: Once symptoms set in, make an untreated disease recovery roll once per day. Each failure inflicts one drained Wound. These Wounds cannot naturally heal while the disease persists.

Malaria

Malaria causes fever, chills, fatigue, and copious sweating, coming and going in waves. In particularly severe cases, these symptoms are joined by dehydration, stomach pain, and internal bleeding, leading to death. The disease tends to progress over the course of one to four weeks, after a highly variable incubation period.

Malaria is contracted from mosquito bites and is not contagious between humans.

Virulence: 5

Difficulty to treat: 6

Goal: 3

Untreated Diagnosis: Once symptoms set in, make an untreated disease recovery roll once per week. Each failure inflicts one bruised Wound. These Wounds cannot naturally heal while the disease persists.

Plague

The most feared of all standard diseases, plague is signified by swollen, red-black nodules that appear at the neck, armpits, and groin, accompanied by high fever, coughing, and eventually delirium. Eight in ten victims die within days. The disease burns hot and fast, incubating for two to six days and then ravaging the victim for three days or so, at which point the patient either recovers or dies.

No one is quite sure what starts plague outbreaks, but they spread like wildfire. Plague is very highly contagious, able to spread through even casual contact with victims or just about anything they've come in contact with. The only guaranteed defense against plague is to avoid an area experiencing an outbreak until the disease has entirely burned itself out. Plague has been known to depopulate entire regions.

Virulence: 8

Difficulty to treat: 8

Goal: 4

Untreated Diagnosis: Once symptoms set in, make an untreated disease recovery roll once every 36 hours. Each failure inflicts one drained Wound. These Wounds cannot naturally heal while the disease persists.

Smallpox

Among the worst of the human diseases, smallpox is marked by a very high fever, muscle aches, and chills lasting for about four days, followed by a widespread rash that develops into pustules. By day nine, the pustules burst and scab over. Approximately 30 percent of smallpox victims die, while the rest are left permanently scarred by the bursting pustules. The disease has an incubation period of 9 to 12 days between infection and the initial onset of fever.

Smallpox is an *extremely* virulent airborne disease; a breeze working its way through a boarding house can carry the disease from one infected resident to spread the sickness to everyone else living there, even without ever being in the same room as the initial victim. Smallpox also clings to a patient's clothes, bedding, and other belongings, and so when it appears, it tends to do so in spectacular outbreaks. The disease's only mercy is that if a patient survives infection once, she is permanently immune thereafter.

Virulence: 9

Difficulty to treat: 7

Goal: 4

Untreated Diagnosis: Once symptoms set in, make an untreated disease recovery roll every three days. Each failure inflicts one lacerated Wound. These Wounds cannot naturally heal while the disease persists.

Puppeteer's Plague

This magical disease was made infamous by the Mask of Winters by his use of it as a weapon of war. Puppeteer's plague infects the marrow of its victims, bringing their bones to hideous Unquiet animation within the patient's still-living body. The disease begins with restless itching, then proceeds to seizures, fugue states, and somnambulistic periods in which the victim's consciousness is suppressed and her skeleton commits horrendous acts of violence. Finally, the victim's skeleton tears its way free of her body, becoming an Unquiet horror known as a bonesider.

Puppeteer's plague occurs as the result of eating the meat of beasts that have fed on human flesh, and can also be contracted from wounds inflicted by bonesiders.

Virulence: 5

Difficulty to treat: 8

Goal: 5

Untreated Diagnosis: Once symptoms set in, make an untreated disease recovery roll once per day. Each failure inflicts one lacerated Wound. These Wounds cannot naturally heal while the disease persists. As a magical disease, puppeteer's plague can kill Exalts, although they suffer only bruised Wounds until their Wounds exceed their Stamina rating. In either case, if the victim is killed while infected (either by the disease itself or by other means), their skeleton tears free of their flesh.

The Great Contagion

The most horrifying disease in history, this magical contagion slew nine-tenths of all living things once upon a time. It is mostly considered a historical disaster, and is not known to naturally persist in any form in modern times, although a few sorcerers are whispered to possess live samples of the Contagion. In many respects it resembles common plague, producing the characteristic swelling and other symptoms, along with a greenish tinge to the flesh. It has an incubation period of two weeks, followed by a three-day burn cycle. Patients are massively contagious from the first moments of infection, long before symptoms show, able to transmit itself by even the most casual contact. Most terrifying of all, the Great Contagion was able to effortlessly cross all known species barriers, spreading far and wide by infecting birds, rats, and

even insects and plants. Thankfully, since the Scarlet Empress directed the mystic power of the Realm Defense Grid against the disease, its ability to infect across species lines seems much reduced or entirely destroyed, and so on the few occasions when some fool has unleashed it during subsequent centuries, it has eventually burned out without becoming an all-encompassing pandemic.

Virulence: 9

Difficulty to treat: The Great Contagion in its original form was untreatable by conventional or even most magical means. Modern samples or reproductions are difficulty 9.

Goal: 10

Untreated Diagnosis: Once symptoms set in, make an untreated disease recovery roll once every day. Each failure inflicts one drained Wound, which cannot heal while the disease persists. As a magical disease, the Great Contagion can readily kill Exalts, who must roll at least two successes on their untreated recovery roll to throw off the Great Contagion, while mortals must roll at least *three* successes.

Hazards and Traps

Sometimes it's dangerous and potentially deadly just to be somewhere, be it because that place is on fire, collapsing with you inside of it, or filled with deadly First Age traps. In any event, use the following rules to survive these dangers:

Hazards are ongoing environmental threats that endanger you for as long as you're exposed to them. Hazards have four traits: *difficulty*, *damage*, *Wound*, *penalty*, and *interval*.

To survive a hazard, you must make a reflexive roll to resist it. Generally this is either a (Dexterity + Athletics) roll, representing trying to avoid the hazard, or (Stamina + Resistance), representing trying to tough it out without excessive injury. By using a stunt, some other roll might be substituted if it seems appropriate, such as (Wits + Ride) to avoid it with your horse, (Dexterity + Melee) to knock aside flying hazards, or even (Wits + Sail) to mitigate the hazard with expert seamanship.

A hazard's *difficulty* dictates the difficulty of this roll. Its *damage* determines how much damage you suffer from exposure to it, minus the successes you rolled on your resistance roll. *Wound*, of course, determines what kind of Wounds the hazard inflicts if it Staggers you. A hazard's *penalty* is the dice pool penalty inflicted on all your actions while you remain exposed to it (including your resistance rolls, alas). Finally, *interval* determines how long you can be exposed to a hazard before you have to roll to resist being damaged by it again.

Most hazards can be either Blocked or Dodged. In both cases, their damage value is directly decreased by your Block or Dodge value, whichever you pay to invoke.

Unless otherwise indicated, a character exposed to a hazard must resist its damage at the beginning of each of her turns while she remains exposed to it.

Hazards increase their penalty by -3 against groups.

Hazard	Difficulty	Damage	Wound	Penalty	Interval
wAcid bath	6	4	Burned	-0	1 round
Bonfire	7	3	Burned	-0	1 round

Burning building	6	3	Burned	-0	1 minute
Tomb beetle swarm	7	3	Lacerated	-1	1 round
Lava	9	5	Burned	-2	1 round
Severe heat/cold	5	2	Drained	-1	1 hour
Severe sandstorm	6	3	Lacerated	-2	1 minute
Magical ice storm	8	4	Lacerated	-2	1 minute
Silent Wind of Hell	9	5	Drained	-3	1 round

Traps and one-time hazards work the same way as other hazards, but have usually have no penalty and always have no interval. Those subjected to them must resist them as soon as they encounter the one-time hazard, rather than at the beginning of their turn..

Traps and one-time hazards also inflict a -3 penalty against rolls by groups to resist them, even when they otherwise do not have a penalty.

Falling Damage

Characters can fall one zone without suffering any real damage. Vertical zones are assumed to encompass roughly one floor of a building.

Characters who fall for 2 or more zones are subjected to a one-time hazard which must be resisted with either (Dexterity + Athletics) or (Stamina + Resistance). This roll is made against difficulty 8, or difficulty 4 if falling into water or some other similarly yielding surface. The hazard has damage equal to twice the number of zones fallen (bruised, or mauled if the damage inflicted is twice or more the character's Stagger Threshold).

This one-time hazard caps out at 20 damage, as a falling character eventually reaches terminal velocity.

Surviving the Wyld

Characters exposed to the shifting tides of the Wyld risk corruption as it reinvents the world from moment to moment and hour to hour. This occurs according to the following rules:

Regions

The Wyld's particular behaviors afflict themselves upon distinct *regions*. A region is an ambiguous unit of measure which may correspond to a zone, sector, district, or even a vast region made up of several contiguous districts. Regions are generally conceptually bounded: "this entire forest," "this village within the forest," "this river running through the forest," "this particular clearing." If there is a particular place within the Wyld to be sought or avoided, it is always easy to discretely describe as separate from its surroundings. The Wyld is segmented into ideas, rather than indifferently measured parcels of land.

Whims and Lures

Areas infected by the Wyld are characterized by two features Creation does not have: *whims* and *lures*.

Whims

The whims of the Wyld are, for lack of a better term, “laws of nature” which it imposes on an infected region. A whim is a statement which is enforced as being true within a given area of the Wyld, such as “water runs uphill” or “any sexual union may be fruitful.” They may be negligible or brutally oppressive, harmless or deadly, or any point between.

Whims can and do sometimes override normal laws of nature, such as “nothing grows older here” or “food is not nourishing.” They can also be additions, such as “loud noises cause things to burst into flames” or “falling leaves are sharp as swords while in the air.” Others are conditional or ambiguous: “Sometimes trees are made of crystal,” “it is difficult to stop singing once you have begun,” “there might be a spider inside of any given thing,” and “many things here are actually made of hands.”

Particular whims infect entire regions, often spanning multiple contiguous regions.

Whims *can* change, but are generally fairly stable over time more often than not. A given forest where most everything is made of hands will *probably* still be a forest made of hands fifty years hence. Sudden changes in a region’s whims are usually the result of deliberate action by the Fair Folk, although very potent or emotional events within the region can sometimes rewrite some of its whims. The Wyld is a great appreciator of drama.

Lures

The laws of Creation are particularly concerned with the distinctness of sapient actors native to it, such as humans and spirits. They are endowed with features that enforce their individuality, such as souls and offices within the celestial bureaucracy. As such, they are less subject to the overriding whims of the Wyld than landscape features or animals, which are quickly subsumed.

While a person venturing through the Wyld is externally subject to its whims on a moment-to-moment basis (she cannot speak in a region whose whims prevent it, and may fly in a region whose whims dictate that “everything can fly”), people are intrinsically not subject to permanent alteration of their mind, body, or spirit by the whims of the Wyld. They may be injured or traumatized, certainly, but not changed into a stone, or made to grow a second head.

At least, not until they interact with a lure.

Lures are the barbed teeth of the Wyld, imposed upon its regions alongside whims. A lure is a condition which, when met, causes *Wyld infection* according to the rules on page XX. Like whims, lures are region-specific and hold no power outside of that region.

Lures can be obscure and difficult to accidentally engage, such as “recounting the story of the first time you knew you were in love,” or they can be very easy, like “drinking the water of this region” or “eating the fruit of the singing trees.” Some are difficult to avoid or control, like “having a nightmare,” and many can be triggered by a provocateur, such as “answering a faerie who greets you.” Most are somewhere in the middle: “remaining in the forest from sunset to sunrise,” “sleeping without being touched by firelight,” “starting a fire,” or “weeping and letting a tear fall into the dirt.” The one unbreakable law of lures is that they are never truly *unavoidable*. There are no lures of “breathing” or “being within this region.” It is always possible (although not necessarily simple or easy) for a prepared traveler who knows the lures set before her to avoid them.

Of course, identifying lures is another matter. Doing so requires some time and energy spent observing a region or gathering information about it from near its border, then making an

Intelligence + (Lore or Occult) roll. The difficulty depends on the depth of the Wyld's infection, and the more successes produced, the more information about the various lures in play is gained.

Even moreso than whims, lures tend to remain fixed in a particular region over time unless one of the children of chaos deliberately tampers with them.

Wyld Intensity

The stability of the world can be measured in six states:

Creation

The vast majority of the world is made up of the lands of Creation, where the Wyld's power holds no meaningful sway.

Tainted Lands

Tainted lands are areas which once fell under the Wyld's corrosive power, but which have since been cleansed of its taint. They may display bizarre remnants of the Wyld's influence, such as fantastically-shaped rock formations or strange animals, but those dwelling within a tainted land are at no risk of mutation.

Bordermarches

Bordermarches are the shallow places where the tides of chaos lap against the shores of the real. Transformations here occur slowly, and Creation's laws predominate — it's just that they're sometimes reinterpreted creatively. It's generally safe to make brief sojourns into the bordermarches of the Wyld, at least in terms of mental and physical integrity, but long-term habitation or extended voyages are risky.

Bordermarches fluctuate with the phases of the moon, reaching farther inland when the moon is full and receding when Luna hides her face.

Bordermarches are subject to a single whim and harbor a single lure, of which its inhabitants are often aware through painstaking trial and error.

The difficulty to research the whims and lures of the bordermarches is 7. The difficulty to resist infection by it is 7.

Middlemarches

Middlemarches are those places where the Wyld's energy holds powerful sway over the land. The laws of Creation still set the fundamental template for middlemarches, but that template is reinterpreted in baroque and bizarre ways, and change is frequent enough to witness from day to day. Travel into this depth of the Wyld without mystical protection is not advised.

Middlemarches are subject to two or three whims, and will feature two lures, one of them somewhat difficult to avoid for those who remain in the area for extended periods of time, one of them more obscure.

The difficulty to research the whims and lures of the middlemarches is 8. The difficulty to resist infection by it is 8.

Far Shoals

The far shoals are the point where stable Creation slowly scales off into the purity of chaos: the last bastions of stability and order in the face of the Wyld. They are still recognizable landscapes,

but they shift quickly enough for the naked eye to track changes from hour to hour and sometimes minute to minute. The far shoals are usually places of significant danger, both because of the powerful Fair Folk who prowl here and because of the nature of the environment itself. When it is not being dream-sculpted into a weapon by the lords of Faerie, the land is usually powerfully influenced by the nearest elemental pole.

The far shoals are subject to three to five whims, at least one of them and often two of which will be quite aggressive. They harbor three lures, at least one of them difficult to avoid on a day-to-day basis.

The difficulty to research the whims and lures of the far shoals is 9. The difficulty to resist infection by it is 9.

The Lands Beyond Creation

What waits beyond the edges of the far shoals could more accurately be described as “chaos.” Colors, shapes, and ideas blend together. Time and distance are only vestigially relevant as concepts, because a visitor brings some expectation of them with her. If coherent lands and milieus appear in the Lands Beyond Creation, it means that a traveler has been engulfed by one of the unshaped Fair Folk, and will likely soon be assailed with hostile glamours.

The Lands Beyond Creation harbor a medley of different whims as a visitor moves from sector to sector and district to district, from one to five in any given region. Its lures are so omnipresent that they’re generally not worth tracking; it can be assumed that a visitor has engaged one by the end of any given scene or period of downtime.

The Lands Beyond Creation cannot be prepared for via research, for they are far too rapidly fluctuating. The difficulty to resist infection by them is 9.

Wyld Infection

When a character is entrapped by a lure of the Wyld, she is said to be *infected by the Wyld*. Its chaotic energies pour into her, seeking to reshape her: to alter her mind, body, or very spirit. To resist this intrusion, she must make a Willpower + Essence roll against a difficulty set by the intensity of the Wyld she is immersed in at the time. Though defined above, this difficulty scale is repeated below as a chart for convenience of reference:

Wyld Intensity	Difficulty
Bordermarches	7
Middlemarches	8
Far Shoals	9
Lands Beyond	9

Success protects the character. She is not changed, at least for now. She escapes from the lure of the Wyld.

Failure inflicts *mutation*, which manifests either immediately, over the course of the next scene or period of downtime, or over the course of the remainder of the story, whichever the Storyteller feels is most dramatically appropriate.

The Wyld possesses only a singular mercy, so to speak: once a character has suffered mutation from a particular lure once, she is immune to it from that point forward, and cannot be infected by it again. For this reason, tribes and communities dwelling in the bordermarches often develop one or two common mutations shared by the majority of the group, but then avoid further transformation beyond that point by shunning travel into neighboring regions they aren't familiar with, and observing powerful taboos and ritual behaviors to avoid further mutation when they must make such journeys.

Mutation

When a character suffers mutation, roll a single die. If the result is even, they gain an Uncanny feature (see p. XX) chosen by the Storyteller. If there's an obvious feature that would bring the character more into conformity with the whims of the region, or which resonates with the lure on which they were caught, that is what is bestowed. If not, the Storyteller may inflict whatever feature they like; the Wyld *likes* to build along a theme, but it also likes surprises.

If the result is odd, the character gains a taint from the list below, again chosen by the Storyteller, again favoring congruence with the region's whims and the relevant lure:

- **Allergy:** The character has a severe reaction to some particular substance, such as iron, grass, or blood. Just being near it will set her to sneezing and coughing; direct contact subjects her to an environmental hazard with difficulty 6, damage 2 (drained), -1, one minute. Alternately, she may become dependent upon the conditions produced by one of the whims of the region in which she suffers mutation, such that if removed from it, she slowly sickens and withers away; or may become dependent upon the ambient energies of Wyld-touched regions period. In this case, the environmental hazard is removal from the whim's influence, and it has difficulty 5, damage 2 (drained), -1, one day. This last taint is particularly prone to manifest if the character already possesses a bevy of other Wyld mutations, and is rarely the first mutation a character receives.
- **Atrophy:** Some element of the character becomes withered and weakened. Select one Attribute. All rolls using it increase their difficulty by +1.
- **Blind:** The character's eyes either stop working, or vanish altogether. See page XX for blindness rules.
- **Derangement:** The Wyld warps the character's thoughts, twisting them out of true. She gains a Derangement (see p. XX).
- **Diet:** The character can only consume and digest a limited range of substances. This could be anything from raw meat to small pebbles to flowers. This taint is often accompanied by further adjustments to the mutant's mouth and stomach.
- **Disabled:** Select a particular Wound from among the following: disabled arm, disabled leg, or maimed. The character always incurably suffers from this Wound condition, as her body reconfigures itself to no longer possess some body part or feature, or that part of her anatomy is warped to the point that it is no longer functional (one arm replaced with an immobile tree branch, for example).
- **Freakish:** The character's appearance is changed in some overtly inhuman fashion that marks her as a Wyld mutant, but which does not provide any utility or necessarily render her repulsive to behold. Examples might include strange coloration or patterning of various body parts, animal features like a cockscomb, or oddities like extra hands growing out of her arms and legs, which

permanently clasp the limbs they're attached to and thus are not suitable for manipulating objects or necessarily even under the mutant's control. Nearly all communities in Creation that do not themselves dwell in the Wyld are extremely prejudiced against anyone bearing the Wyld's corrosive touch.

- **Hideous:** The Wyld has rendered the character monstrously frightening or disgusting to behold. She may be difficult to identify as human. Her Appearance rating is set to 0 and cannot be raised.
- **Fragile:** The character's bones are easily broken. Increase all of her Wound penalties by +1.
- **Plaguebearer:** The character becomes host to a communicable disease, quite possibly of supernatural character, of which she cannot be cleansed. The disease may or affect her, or she may simply be a carrier and not suffer any of its debilities.
- **Sickly:** The character heals slowly and poorly. If Exalted, she heals like a mortal. If mortal, she doubles her healing times.
- **Slow:** Something has happened to the character's legs. They may have been twisted, or perhaps they're gone altogether and she must ooze about like a slug. All of her movement is now complex movement.
- **Soulless:** The character's soul is hollowed out by the Wyld without killing her. She can no longer spend Willpower to reject or combat any form of supernatural mind control. When she loses an Intimacy for any reason, she no longer has the option to replace it with a new one between stories; she can only gain new Intimacies through the social influence or mind control magic of others. Finally, she no longer has a Nature. Soulless characters tend to be without very much volition, and will generally drift about attending to daily routines out of sheer habit if left to their own devices. Over time they pay less and less attention to taking care of themselves. Without a dedicated caretaker, they rarely live for longer than a decade.

Curing Mutation

Wyld mutation is generally irreversible, and is enormously feared as a result. Though Terrestrial physicians have struggled for centuries, the Dragon-Blooded have never successfully developed a Charm to revert transformations inflicted by the Wyld.

As a result, a character changed by the Wyld's touch faces a daunting challenge if she is unwilling to live with what has been done to her. Mortals are usually just out of luck, and even the Exalted generally lack easy answers. The Solar Exalted can cure Wyld mutations with the Charm: Order-Affirming Blow, but the Solar Exalted are newly-returned to the world and only a tiny handful of them have developed that particular Charm or possess the aptitude and inclination to ever do so in the future. An Aptitude 5 sorcerous working can strip away a Wyld mutation, but this is a considerable challenge for a Terrestrial sorcerer — and again, the demand for such a service vastly outstrips the number of beings able and willing to render it. Finally, a few spirits possess powerful healing or order-restoring miracles that are able to cure Wyld-imposed afflictions. It can be taken as a given that they will not grant these gifts for nothing.

Naval Adventure

No, we're not going to do "in-depth Sail rules." Sail works like all the other Abilities: when you want to make your boat or ship do something that seems dicey, roll it along with an appropriate Attribute against an appropriate difficulty to see if you can pull the thing off.

We *are* going to do a naval conflicts framework, and talk a little bit about ships, because Sail tends to get used as a tentpole Ability that Western chronicles, in particular, get built around in a way other Abilities just don't; and because most people are really not familiar with how historical naval warfare worked. It's surprisingly unlike World War II era artillery-and-bomber slugging matches, and *shockingly* unlike the arcade-action cannon volleys of *Assassin's Creed: Black Flag*.

This system is also, I should say up front, designed as a protagonist-centered storytelling framework, not a combat sim. I could do an entire naval battle simulator as its own game, and have in the past made the mistake of trying to put exactly that thing into the game, but the truth is that a single Solar Exalt is usually several orders of magnitude more dangerous than the entire warship she's sailing on, so that approach is not the best way to do it.

Naval Realities

Before we get into the rules, I'm going to do two things: make a recommendation, and demystify some conceptions about sailing vessels dating from the ancient world up to the Age of Sail.

First, I want to flog the **Exalted** First Edition sourcebook **Savage Seas**. It is the best-written primer on fantasy sailing you'll ever see, and if you're going to do a chronicle that mostly involves sailing from place to place, you are doing yourself a *grave disservice* by skipping it. **Savage Seas** is a goldmine in terms of lending verisimilitude and neat details to your game, like just how navigation works on a flat world without any such thing as "magnetic north."

That being said, the first thing you need to understand is that Hollywood lied to you. *Most of the ships in Exalted are not cannon-armed tall ships, and even if they were, battles from that era didn't work like they do in the movies.*

Pursuit

The fastest ship in Royal Navy during the Age of Sail, the *Endymion*, could, under optimal circumstances, hit about 14 and a half knots (about 16 and a half miles per hour, or 27.6 km/h). That's with a cooperating current, ideal wind conditions, and all of its sails open. If it wanted to actually be able to steer, we're talking more like 11 knots (12.6 mph). That's the tippy-top end. Most ships of the period **Exalted** is drawing its vessels from tend to operate more in the 4-to-6 knot range: about five miles per hour, six and a half when really piling it on.

Let me underline my point with this sentence: *Naval pursuit occurred at the speed of a brisk jog.*

The ocean is basically flat, and under good weather conditions, you can see out until your view is blocked by the curvature of the Earth. That's about three miles with your eye right up against the water, about 12 from the crow's nest atop a mast. Creation doesn't have a curvature, but it does have water vapor and atmospheric interactions at water level that I'm going to assume produce about the same practical result because nobody is paying me to make this book, and I would need

to be paid a very great deal to do all the math necessary to figure out how far you could see before atmospheric factors fuzzed out your view on a flat planet.

So, when a pirate ship spots a merchantman, or a patrolling Realm warship spots a pirate ship, or enemy vessel, or whatever, what generally happens is that the more dangerous ship tries to close with the less dangerous one, which tries to escape.

This is very often a case of one ship doing an average of 4.1 knots chasing another ship doing 3.8 knots, with the two captains frantically trimming and deploying their sails in different configurations to figure out how to squeeze the most possible speed out of their vessel while dealing with shifts in the wind and the behavior of the currents. The differential in that example, for those of you who don't like doing math any more than I do, is 0.3 knots, which you could also express as *zero point three-four miles per hour*.

One of these ships is gaining on the other one at roughly the speed of a very energetic box turtle. If an enemy ship is spotted 12 miles away and pursuit begins immediately, and the ships are remotely a match for one another, there's every likelihood this nail-biting chase will take about *thirty-five hours* before the ships close with one another. Or at least it would be if not for one little wrinkle in the otherwise straightforward business of sailing in a straight line at the guys you're trying to plunder/sink:

Nightfall. For ten to twelve hours per day, the ocean is dark. If the captain of the vessel being chased has anything resembling a brain in his skull, he'll douse the lights, beat to death any man who makes a noise louder than a whisper, and do his best to shift off in a direction his pursuer doesn't expect. The pursuing ship's captain, meanwhile, needs to anticipate what his quarry will try to do during the night to give him the slip, and adjust accordingly. He will also be dousing all his lights and silencing his men so that if he guesses well, his opponent won't realize he's sailing into a trap. As a result of these "blind" nighttime maneuvers, it is entirely possible for two ships to find themselves within bowshot come sunrise, or for the fleeing vessel to be all the way over on the horizon in some unexpected direction (or even to have vanished altogether, if it is really lucky). As a result, "thirty-five hours" is an *optimistic* estimate, because nighttime maneuvers can easily make a naval pursuit last for anywhere from half a day to two weeks of relentless, no-holds barred sailing and nocturnal tricks.

Sometimes it isn't like that of course, sometimes you have a fat wallowing merchantman being set upon by swift pirate sloops, and the only prayer is that they spot you just before sunset or that you have fighting ships of your own to fend them off. Still: that's the historical baseline. Creation, of course, has magic. It has spirit allies. It has Exalted look-outs who can see in the dark. It has sorcerers who can conjure favorable winds. But until those things intervene, that is the baseline reality. The ocean is huge, ships are slow, and a "chase scene" is usually several days of grueling endurance sailing while anxiety eats the crew alive, either that they will be caught and butchered or that their quarry will escape, leaving them bereft of profit and glory.

Battle

Yes, **Exalted** has battle magic and First Age blasto artifacts. We'll get to them in a minute. First, let's talk about the vast majority of ships that have to do without these things.

Most ships in Exalted do not have cannons. Firedust is not the same thing as gunpowder. It produces substantially more heat than force, and is a poor propellant. "Artillery"-capable ships are uncommon, and those that have the capacity generally use small siege weapons such as deck-

mounted catapults. These weapons are slow and inaccurate, and are mostly seen in large merchant flotillas arrayed around hopelessly slow treasure ships with no prayer of outrunning attackers; instead of speed, their escorts have gone in for firepower and a “fortress” strategy.

Still: the Age of Sail casts a long, long shadow in the popular imagination, so let’s go ahead and dispel its illusions, because they’re applicable to ships in general.

Here’s the big thing to understand:

It’s really extremely difficult to sink a ship that is trying not to be sunk. Ships are designed, above all other things, to float, and to continue floating even after a very great number of things have gone wrong. A quick ship-death is generally the work of hurricanes and reefs, not other ships.

During the Napoleonic Wars, the apex of real-history naval warfare, it took an absolutely heroic pounding with cannons to sink a ship. It did not take a dozen direct hits with cannonballs; it generally took well over a hundred. Once ships got into cannon range, particularly if all they could fire were forward or chaser guns, the resulting exchange of fire could last for more than a full day. Bilge pumps are *very effective* at removing water from a ship. Ships whose owners give even a tiny amount of a shit about their investment carry enormous quantities of spare timber, rope, and pitch with which to repair and replace damage to the vessel. A ship that has been holed beneath the waterline, depending on the severity and number of the breaches, can sometimes limp along for several weeks before finally sinking, rotating the crew through man-killing ceaseless operation of the pumps while the engineers do everything in their power to slow the rate at which the ship takes on water. Generally, naval battles of that era did not primarily try to aim for an enemy’s hull; they aimed for the masts and rigging, aiming to slow their enemy down, reduce its maneuverability, or, in the best of all possible worlds, to de-mast him. Once a ship can no longer move or maneuver, it can be killed at leisure. These are, of course, much smaller targets than the hull, and much easier to repair by sending crewmen up to splice cut lines, patch holes shot into sails, or even rig up entire replacement sails, so long as an entire mast doesn’t get knocked off.

In Creation, the same is true of deck-mounted siege weapons. Baskets of heavy stones, siege crossbow bolts, and other ranged attacks are generally more of a threat to the crew on deck than the ship itself, and are generally aimed to tear up a ship’s sails rather than to batter its hull in any case. The deck and hull are sturdy. The sails and ropes are not.

As mentioned, cannons or cannon-equivalent devices are not really much of a concern in Creation, as equivalents such as siege weapons and First Age weapons are uncommon. Instead, naval combat generally begins at the range of whatever missile weapons the crew has access to, which is to say, bows. The purpose of exchanging missile fire is not to sink or generally even to damage the enemy ship, but rather to deplete its crew, slowing the vessel down and softening it up for an eventual boarding action.

Boarding is the real main event of 95% of naval battles in **Exalted**. The two ships are lashed together with grappling hooks, attackers attempt to climb aboard (often under continued covering fire by archers or slingers to clear the rail until the very last second), and then a gory melee ensues.

Another thing worth keeping in mind when thinking about **Exalted** naval battles: **Sinking an enemy ship is rarely the most-desired outcome.** Ships are *very expensive* and they *don’t care*

who they're being used by. A very great number of the Realm's merchant ships and battleships began their lives as the property of some rival power, or as pirate ships. They can be re-sold, pressed into service, or, at the very least, commandeered and used to haul their treasure into *your* home port before disposing of them. Even a very badly mauled ship is usually better dragged back to port and repaired rather than sunk.

Fire is another element much more spoken-of than seen. Fire arrows are highly ineffective in actually setting things on fire to begin with, particularly things as damp as the deck and rigging of a naval vessel; and any competently-run vessel has a fire brigade ready to douse any flames that *do* catch with water and sand promptly. Burning oil is almost never employed, as it is difficult to deliver and can backfire very easily.

There is, of course, one other naval weapon worth mentioning, and the one most likely to result in the destruction of its target: the ram. Rams are generally associated with long, low-to-the-water galleys with banks of oars, which are accelerated to terrible speeds once they close with their target by teams of rowers. The Realm is the most notable employer of ramming ships with its infamous coastal defense triremes. The problem of this sort of ship is that, because it is a sleek, long, low-hulled design, it is best deployed in coastal waters and ill-suited to the rigors of the open ocean weeks from shore. That isn't to say you never see war-triremes on the open sea, but they're generally clustered around massive, slow support ships — "trireme tenders" — whose job is to shepherd them to some new destination or some major assault on a fixed target. They're very poor at open-sea pirate hunting or anything else requiring long-range search and pursuit. Ramming ships are generally seen defending ports or leading attacks on them.

Now, all this being said, the presence of the Chosen complicates naval battles tremendously. Sorcery is often able to replicate the function of deck artillery, or even to set rigging ablaze. A single Solar may very well be able to leap several miles onto the deck of an enemy ship and single-handedly kill everyone aboard. Unless the enemy has battle magic or supernatural assistance of their own, there's often nothing they can do about this but surrender or sink. First Age weapons are similarly massive advantages; a lightning ballista or implosion bow can blow off masts, shred sails and rigging, and wreak slaughter on crew, although they're generally not destructive enough to outright sink a vessel without sustained pounding. All of these things are roughly cannon-equivalent in terms of efficacy. You don't *generally* start one-shotting entire ships until you get into First Age heavy artillery of the sort only found on ancient magical warships, or Solar Circle Sorcery.

Basically, the thing I am trying to tell you, the thing I have spilled... let me see Jesus Christ over 2,000 words on, to get here, is this:

Naval conflict is, at its heart, a *very* long, stressful pursuit, largely decided by the quality of the ships and crews involved and whether or not the two captains can outsmart one another at night, finally culminating in two ships tying up and having a regular-ass combat system fight scene sprawling across their smashed-together decks. It's several days of fear and anticipation culminating in a spasm of hideously intense violence (or the pursued ship simply surrendering once it's clear they have absolutely no hope of escape and that fighting back will just get them killed; that also happens a lot).

Exalts get to enter this dynamic with all kinds of horrifying cheat codes.

That being said, on to the rules.

Ship Profiles

To start, we're going to compress every kind of nautical vessel you might potentially get ahold of into a number of small, simple profiles. Whatever is keeping you out of the water will have exactly *one* of these profiles:

None: Nothing is keeping you out of the water. You're swimming, or using magic to walk on the water. Unless you have some kind of serious speed-enhancing magic, you don't even get to roll in pursuit or escape scenes. Ships may not be very fast, but they're *much* faster than even a Water Aspect can swim without Charms, sorcery, or artifacts boosting them.

Improvised Vessel: You're a raft, some floating debris, a big log, or the like. If you can steer at all, it's probably with a paddle or a single sheet tied to a pair of sticks. You don't get to roll in pursuit or escape scenes unless it's against another improvised vessel or a small vessel, and the difficulty of all drama, perilous navigation, and weathering the storm scenes is +3.

Small Vessel: You are in something not designed for serious deep-water operation, like a canoe or jolly boat. +3 difficulty in escape and pursuit scenes, +1 difficulty in all other sorts of scenes *except* for perilous navigation, where you enjoy -2 difficulty for being so small and nimble.

Coastal Vessel: You can participate in all manner of scenes, though +1 difficulty in the open ocean well out of sight of land, and +2 difficulty specifically for weathering the storm on the open sea. Both triremes and pleasure yachts tend to fall into this category.

Swift Ship: You're designed for scouting, evasion, and pursuit. -1 difficulty for escape and pursuit scenes, +1 difficulty for weathering the storm.

Merchantman: You're a balanced ship, capable of hauling a respectable amount of cargo, and acceptably maneuverable. You are not the fastest thing on the water. No modifiers.

Heavy Vessel: You're either a support ship or a treasure ship, designed to haul enormous amounts of cargo, gear, or a small army of men. Alternately, you might be a flagship with deck-mounted First Age weapons scavenged from other sources. +1 difficulty for escape and pursuit scenes, as well as perilous navigation. -1 difficulty for weathering the storm; you're built to survive just about anything.

First Age Ship: You can probably propel yourself without the need of any wind at all if you've got a strong Hearthstone powering your Essence-driven paddlewheels. -2 difficulty for all rolls, essentially impervious to damage from anything less than heavy-duty battle sorcery or First Age weapons. You might have such weapons or your own, or they might have been long ago removed and retrofitted onto other ships, as is the case with nearly all magical ships in the Realm's navy.

Crew Modifiers

The quality and number of a ship's crew matters *tremendously*. Incredible acumen and exceptional leadership, such as that exhibited by the Exalted, is of very little use if the sailors being commanded are mostly dead or simply don't know how to do the jobs they're being expertly ordered to do. When you make a Sail roll, modify it according to the following factors:

- **Vessel's crew is incompetent:** If the crew are mostly untrained as sailors, increase the difficulty by +1.

- **Vessel's crew is exceptional:** If the crew are mostly veteran able seamen, with sailing Aptitudes and an Expertise pool in the 6+ range, lower the difficulty by -1.
- **Vessel is significantly undercrewed:** If the ship doesn't have enough sailors available to follow orders to run it properly, increase the difficulty by +1.

Ship Damage

Various events can damage a ship. When a ship takes damage, increase the difficulty of all Sail actions to operate or command it by +1.

Once a ship has accumulated 3 damage, it is *sinking*. As mentioned above, this is generally a slow process rather than a sudden catastrophic one. The captain must direct emergency efforts to pump the bilges, do emergency patches, and otherwise keep the ship afloat long enough to reach some safe harbor where it can be properly repaired.

Every 6 hours, the ship gains 1 Instability per point of damage it has suffered above 2, and the captain makes a (Charisma or Appearance) + Sail roll against difficulty 9 to inspire the exhausted crew to push themselves beyond endurance to keep the ship afloat. Each success removes 1 Instability. If the ship reaches 5 Instability, it vanishes beneath the waves.

If a ship is carrying adequate supplies of timber and other supplies and has a competent engineer, it can attempt to repair damage while at sea, but this requires 24 hours of work to repair 1 Damage, during which time only one roll may be made to reduce Instability, rather than the normal four, and no other sort of rolls (such as to avoid pursuit, or weather a storm) can be made.

As mentioned above, First Age ships are generally impervious to damage from anything other than direct battle magic. They can smash into reefs without harming anything other than their paint and laugh off hurricanes. Improvised and small vessels, by contrast, begin sinking as soon as they receive 1 damage, and accumulate 1 Instability for every point of damage they have.

Scene Types

Next, we're going to break down the several varieties of action scenes that you're likely to run into in a ship, with naval battles receiving their own special consideration at the end.

Drama

A ship is a sector unto itself, made up of several zones, and any sort of dramatic scene might occur on it: battles, social scenes, sneaking about stealing cargo below deck, and so on. These use the normal rules of the game.

Naval Escape

When protagonists encounter a hostile vessel and wish to escape from it, this is an extended, contested roll of (Wits + Sail) against difficulty 6 (as modified by ship profiles, crew status, and any other relevant factors, such as rough weather). This represents the efforts of the contesting captains to take advantage of the wind, modify the number and trim of their sails, and use currents to their favor. Make this roll at one-day intervals.

Each night of the pursuit, the two captains make a contested (Intelligence + Sail) roll, the protagonist to outwit her pursuers, the antagonists to anticipate their quarry's gambit. Remove one accumulated success from the total of each pursuer who gains fewer successes than the

protagonist. For each pursuer who gains more successes than the protagonist, remove one of her successes. Ties do nothing.

If at any point the protagonist manages to accumulate 5 more successes than one of her pursuers, they lose track of her. If at any point one or more of her pursuers accumulates 5 more successes than the protagonist, he has brought her to heel, and may choose to either immediately bring her to battle, changing the scene to a naval combat, *or* may stalk her while signaling to his allies and wait for them to catch up and reinforce him; if he chooses to do so, the protagonist must choose between losing 3 of her accumulated successes and continuing the attempted escape, or immediately turning and giving battle before any reinforcements can arrive.

Naval Pursuit

When a protagonist attempts to chase down another vessel, use the same rules as in a naval escape scene, save that if the protagonist accumulates five more successes than her quarry, she has brought them to heel and may force a battle; or else give them the choice of abandoning 3 successes or turning to fight her, if she stalls for time and tries to steer them into still-pursuing allies.

If the pursued ship has escort vessels, they are always able to choose to advance and give battle in its place, unless somehow lured away from the vessel they're protecting.

Perilous Navigation

In a perilous navigation scene, the protagonists attempt to safely navigate their ship through dangerous waters such as narrow passages or mazes or submerged reefs. This is a straightforward (Wits + Sail) roll against a difficulty based on the severity of the danger. Failure results in damage to the ship *and* forces the captain to choose between attempting the roll again or abandoning her course. If the ship is damaged, suffer +1 difficulty to all rolls to command it until it undergoes repairs. Failing more times than the captain's Sail rating fatally damages the ship (it must safely beach itself or limp to a nearby port, or else slowly sink), or strands it on a reef or shore, such that only heroic efforts or the rescue efforts of another ship can get it sailing again.

Weathering the Storm

Weathering horrendous weather on the open seas works much like perilous navigation, save that there's no option to abandon the effort and take a safer route. One (Wits + Sail) roll must be made every day and every night until conditions improve, the difficulty depending on the severity of the tempest. A failure damages the ship, while failing more times than the captain's Sail rating leaves it helplessly crippled as it loses its masts or a great number of crew are swept overboard, inflicting 3 damage.

Naval Combat

Naval combat is fairly simple. Once two ships close into threat range of one another, they generally lock up and a boarding action begins.

Closing In

Each ship is its own sector, made up of several zones, and the sea between and around them is another sector. At the beginning of a naval combat scene, the two vessels are three zones of open sea away from one another. All artillery is capable of firing at this range, and any battle sorcery

that can attack from that far away may also be used, either to target the enemy crew or the ship itself, potentially inflicting 1 damage to the ship depending on the power of the weaponry or magic employed.

The two ships close on one another at a rate of 1 zone per round until there are 0 zones separating them, at which point the boarding action generally begins.

Boarding Actions

A boarding action is, quite simply, a standard battle scene taking place between the crews and heroes of two or more ships. The enemy crew is usually a group, possibly being led by a few individual characters in the form of commanding officers, Exalts, etc. Crossing the enemy rail, if it is being actively defended, requires complex movement.

It's that simple, really. Chase the enemy down, close with them, run a fight scene.

If you want to hang back and pound them with magic, arrows, or catapults, the target ship will generally attempt to close with *you* so they can fight back with a boarding attempt of their own. Maintaining distance is a contested simple action of (Wits + Sail) between the vessels' commanders, with the vessel attempting to close rolling against difficulty 6 and the vessel attempting to stand off rolling at difficulty 8. Whichever side succeeds may choose whether the two vessels maintain distance or come one zone closer to one another. If one of the commanders is otherwise occupied (such as by casting battle sorcery) and does not wish to use her simple action in this fashion, then the other vessel maneuvers as it wishes uncontested.

There isn't a mechanic to abort out of a combat scene without the ships coming to blows, unless both sides mutually decide to abandon the attempt to close and fight in close quarters. The pursuit or escape scene already established that the quarry's attempts to avoid a mauling have failed, so they don't get a further attempt to avoid battle here.

But What If

So, you've just thought up a situation not covered by these rules, or more likely, one of your players has.

That's fine. Here's the terrible secret of the naval rules: they're not really rules, they're storytelling suggestions and guidelines that do some of the work for you in advance. If the players summon a Cirrus Skiff or, God help us, the Chariot of the Blazing Sun and decide to just fly over to the fleeing enemy ship and fuck them all up with Flight of the Brilliant Raptor bombardments, don't try to force them onto the framework provided here. It's there to help you, not constrain you. Let them just fly over and run a combat scene, or devastate the helpless mortals below, or whatever, as seems appropriate. Sidereals who can make ships teleport through subspace obviously bypass gigantic whacks of this system. An alternative to riding out a hurricane is bribing a god to calm the storm. Exalts have lots of options. Again: *this is actually just a set of framing ideas for stories and pre-built helpful system bits*. It is there to help you, *not restrict you*. If using it doesn't seem to make sense, *don't*.

Setting up the Game

The **Exalted Demake** has rules for what you do in the middle of a session, how to see if you cut the guy in half with your daiklave, whether or not you convinced that guy to help you assassinate

the prince, of course it does. It also has rules for *how to play the game*: how to build and start a chronicle. These are as important as the combat rules and character creation rules.

21st century technology makes following this process much easier than it used to be, as games can be planned asynchronously over remote messaging software, multi-participant voice calls, and so on. Indeed, many people play the game entirely in this fashion without ever being in the same room as any of their fellow players.

Step One: Assemble the Group

The first step in playing the **Exalted Demake** is to figure out who's playing. The game runs best with three to seven players, but can be pushed above or below this number for expert groups. One of these players will take the role of the Storyteller; the rest will make and control a particular hero. The story being told by the assembled group is one about the exploits of these heroes.

The following rules must be followed when assembling a group:

- **Ensure compatible personalities.** If the group has played together before, great. If it's a new group, establish some sort of opportunity to socialize, talk about games, talk about entertainment media, and just generally ensure that everyone gets along. If two or more of the players have a personality conflict or find one another annoying, your game is going to break up prematurely when one or both of them gets fed up and quits, or when they pull the group apart into conflicting cliques.

*Ultimately, playing **Exalted** is about spending time with friends doing a fun activity together.* You don't have to be friends when you start playing, but you'd better build a group where the possibility exists that you will become friends over the course of the game. Otherwise, your chronicle will not succeed and will die a premature death.

- **Ensure compatible schedules.** Figure out how often the group wants to play, and when everyone is available to do so. Quickly discuss whether people are okay with the group running without them if it happens that they can't make it.

Step Two: Establish Expectations and Boundaries

Once you've found a group of people who all want to play **Exalted** and will get along while doing so, you need to make sure you all want to play the *same* game of **Exalted**.

Exalted is a *big game*. There are a *lot* of ways you can play it, and most of them will work... but only if everyone wants to do that. If you have one player who shows up wanting an absurd, over the top, beer and pretzels action romp, and another who wants a serious game of politics, passion, triumph, tragedy, and gritty consequences, you are going to end up with two unhappy players and a game that ends up wrapping early because nobody's really grooving on what's happening. *Do not overlook this step. This sort of expectation mismatch has killed more games than anything else I have ever seen in 30+ years of gaming*, including scheduling conflicts.

You also need to *play responsibly*. People have boundaries. People, especially people you don't know super well yet, have things that they don't want to think about during entertainment activities. Or, things they *very much want to think about*.

So, here's the thing with the **Exalted Demake**. I am not interested in telling you that you're having fun wrong. I am not interested in calling you a stupid babyshit loser for not wanting to

take my favorite game setting super seriously. I am not interested in calling you a revolting pervert for wanting to use **Exalted** as an ERP platform. I am not interested in praising you for matching my tastes or excoriating you for wanting something I don't. Have a heartbreaking epic tragedy. Have a hysterical action farce where everyone pilots giant robots. Run an erotically-charged thriller. I don't care.

Here's what I do care about: making sure *you are going to have a successful game*, which means a game that everyone at the table is on-board with playing. In pursuit of that, once you have the group together, you're going to fill out a Chronicle Sheet.

Chronicle Sheet

Chronicle Name:

Storyteller:

Players:

Lethality:

Tones:

Topic	Forbidden	Referenced	Approved	Embraced	Opt-Out
Gore	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____
Racism	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____
Sex	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____
Sexism	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____
Sexual Violence	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____
Slavery	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____
Torture	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____
_____	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____
_____	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____
_____	[]	[]	[]	[]	_____

How to Use the Chronicle Sheet

Write in the name of your chronicle if it has one, along with who the Storyteller and players are. That's all self-explanatory. Then, discuss and record the following subjects:

Lethality

By default, the **Exalted Demake** has a lethality level of "relaxed" where players' characters are concerned. The default result of being stabbed in the torso until incapacitated is that you are *felled*, out of action, and in bad shape, but not in immediate danger of death. Death is the result of getting taken out when already horribly wounded from previous battles (not something that will generally sneak up on you) and not being rescued when you are *dying*, or deciding that death would be a dramatically appropriate consequence.

Some groups will want to play in what feels like a more harsh, arbitrary, and unforgiving world. For these groups, a seriously or severely incapacitated protagonist is *dying* and one taken out by critical damage is *dead*, straight-up. This is the game's "deadly" setting.

Other groups are interested in telling a story where the dice introduce uncertainty in the course of how the story will go, not whether the story will suddenly end or not. For this sort of game, record "optional." Character death here is opt-in, and only occurs with player consent.

If you want to arrive at some other place, you can, and write down something appropriate for it. Just make sure everyone agrees on what it means.

Tones

Have a group discussion about tone and story goals. Figure out if people are looking for a dramatic, no-holds-barred campaign about the glories and horrors of Dragon-Blooded imperialism, or a kung-fu western where heroes roll into town and beat the shit out of the bad guys. **If you skip this step, you are putting your chronicle in terrible danger.**

Tone can have several valid answers, and it's not unusual for a Chronicle Sheet to have a tone that reads something like "Slice of life, occasional heavy themes alright, no global-stakes bullshit" or "Horrors of war, challenges of responsible rule, occasional comedy is OK." This isn't about finding a single word that everyone is happy with, it's about setting and agreeing upon expectations: what kind of focus or tone do people *want* from their game? What do they *not* want? Everyone has to participate in this stage, detailing what will make them happy and what will prevent them from having fun. If hard conflicts appear here, maybe think about a different campaign basis or reconfiguring the player line-up, because if someone compromises all the way they're probably not going to have a great time and now there are cracks in your foundation.

Being a Fucking Adult

Several times in this section, I'm going to suggest that if you reach certain impasses, you dissolve the group and form a new one. That's because I've played a lot of games and seen a lot more, over the course of decades, and there are certain things you can do during game set-up that basically amount to installing a time bomb in your game. If four players have their hearts set on an ultraviolent splatterfest black comedy Abyssal romp and this makes the fifth player nauseous, you have three options: Find a different chronicle idea that all five players like; watch the game fall apart as one player makes excuses not to show week after week, or sits around disengaged and disinterested until everyone else stops having fun too, or whatever other dysfunction makes the chronicle peter out after five or so sessions; or *have player five not play in this chronicle*.

Let me be clear: You are *not* being an asshole by "kicking your friend out." You are saving five adults from wasting their time and one of them from maybe throwing up in the middle of a voice-over-IP call. Breaking and reforming the group is a *much better and more responsible option than starting a doomed chronicle*, which will at best leave a group of people annoyed and dissatisfied, and at worst leave someone traumatized.

Topics

Exalted is, by default, a mature game for adults, dealing with adult themes. But lots of adults have gone through some shit in their lives, and may not want to think about it in their Saturday evening social entertainment activity.

So: topics. Go through the topics on the Chronicle Sheet with the group, and settle on a value that the chronicle will be calibrated to for each of them. There are also several blank spaces provided in case players want to volunteer additions to the topic list that are important to them, like violence against animals, violence against children, or, shit, I don't know, spiders.

For each topic, choose one of the following settings:

- **Forbidden** topics may not appear in the game at all. If spiders are **forbidden**, then they never show up, nobody talks about them, there are no plot points involving them, no spider gods, nothing that reminds people of spiders, nothing. They don't even show up in anyone's backstory in a way that would make them ever get referenced in-session. If a player declares a topic **forbidden**, it is not up for voting upon or debate. Players cannot be argued or negotiated away from a **forbidden** topic. **Forbidden** takes precedent over all other considerations. This means that the topic coming up will ruin that player's afternoon. If this is a deal-breaker for the rest of the group, then you need to assemble a different group and run a different game. *Do not strongarm a player into recanting a **Forbidden** rating for everyone else's sake.*

- **Referenced** topics can come up in the game, but not be played out "in the scene." If spiders are **referenced**, then you might find a First Age ruin that is dense with cobwebs, but you will not run into their spinners. You might hear about the Mountain of the Spider God, but you will not go there.

- **Approved** topics are fine to appear in the game, but not in a focal capacity. If spiders are **approved**, then you can throw a giant wolf spider at the group, or have a spider-themed Lunar show up, or whatever. You won't, generally, have a character buried alive by thousands of spiders and lovingly describe the experience in graphic detail.

- **Embraced** topics are things the players are all fine having the game not only feature, but focus on. If spiders are **embraced** then you are free to go wild with the spider-horror.

- **Opt-Out** is a *modifier* to a **referenced**, **approved**, or **embraced** rating. Rather than being a chronicle setting, it is something a specific player (or players) signs off on. A player choosing to **opt-out** of a topic means that they're fine with its rating sitting where everyone else wants it, as long as their character is never directly involved. For example, a chronicle might have spiders **approved**, but one player chooses to **opt-out**: spiders can show up, but you won't have them crawling all over that player's character, and you won't do spider-heavy stuff in any scenes they're in.

It should also be noted that a chronicle sheet is a living document, and these ratings can change as groups decide certain subjects are too heavy for them, or as new plot developments make them interested in exploring things they previously thought they wouldn't want to. Players are free to change their opt-out status at any time, as well.

What follows is a very brief discussion on particular use of common sensitive topics that may arise in **Exalted**:

Gore

The Chronicle Sheet doesn't provide a space for "violence" because it's fairly intrinsic to **Exalted**. That isn't to say you can't add one — you certainly can — but probably most groups are fine with violence. The Time of Tumult is a violent age. How *graphic* the destruction of the human body is going to be... that's another matter. With gore **forbidden**, violence and scenes of death and disaster top out at PG: a tasteful splash of blood, a still body, that's it. **Referenced** gore is tricky, because this category is about explicitness. In a **referenced** chronicle, you might say that in the wake of a Lunar attack, the guards were torn limb from limb, but no more detail than that is needed. **Approved** gore means it's fine if things get explicit once in a while. A guy loses an arm. A bandit gets slung into the wall so hard he explodes. A man slides into a hundred pieces after standing in front of Death of Obsidian Butterflies. There are moments of jaw-dropping violence, but not all the time: just where it's dramatically most potent. **Embraced** means the Liminal player gets free reign to talk about how they put themselves back together. It means the Abyssal gets to stunt her heart out with Artful Maiming Onslaught. It means nobody minds detailed descriptions of intestines slithering out of — well, you get the idea. This is not to say that every session has to be a splatterpunk fiesta, simply that there's no expectation of punches being pulled. A player who **opts out** is essentially asking the other players to dial it down in scenes their character is involved in.

Racism

Bigotry is rife in the Age of Sorrows, but it doesn't work quite the same way as it does in the modern world. The faux-Darwinian evolutionary junk science that underpins modern racism — "I can prove, somehow, that I'm better than you" — simply does not exist in the world of **Exalted**. People are, instead, generally cultural chauvinists. They believe their way of life is better than someone else's. Or, they are xenophobic: afraid of strangers and their unclean, foreign ways. This does mean that travelers are often cut some degree of slack in Creation, as they are expected to be strange and ignorant, although being *too* strange and ignorant is a good way to raise suspicions of being fey-touched, and that gets you stoned to death.

The Realm believes it is better than everyone else by dint of its vast wealth and cultural sophistication, deeming the rest of the world "barbarians." This is because of their upbringing, rather than their ethnicity; the Blessed Isle is enormous and contains several distinct ethnic subgroups within its borders, and centuries of Dragon-Blooded promiscuity means there are Dynasts of every build, color, and ethnicity imaginable. Nonetheless, this sort of cultural chauvinism is still a type of bigotry, and lands close enough to racial discrimination for many players that it falls under this category's header.

Generally, hardcore, bitter hatred toward a cultural or ethnic group is based on a history of rivalry, raiding, warfare, or other competing interests, rather than a belief in some intrinsic higher quality of being. This *can*, of course, express itself as mockery and hostility rooted in phenotypic features; Linowans have a number of unflattering terms for Haltans based on their green hair and agile toes, for example ("monkey fucker," etc), but their hatred for Haltans is rooted in centuries of religious and resource conflicts, not in a deep-seated belief that green hair is intrinsically inferior to the brown shades that predominate among the Linowan.

Beastfolk and Wyld mutants, on the other hand, face targeted and very active discrimination in most parts of Creation, either for fear that they are stalking horses for the Fair Folk or simply because they are so odd-looking and different that people assume they must be of monstrous character as well as appearance.

When racism is **forbidden**, the topic of appearance-based discrimination simply never comes up in games. Where it is **referenced**, it will feature in a muted fashion; a Dynast displays a superior attitude, but does not refer to the locals as “stinking barbarians.” Where it is **approved**, characters may openly express bigotry toward other characters. Where it is **embraced**, this rhetoric might uneasily mirror real-world rhetoric, or act as a defining feature of a character’s story (in the case of mutant or beastfolk protagonists). When a player chooses to **opt-out**, they are accepting a story set in a world where discrimination is a thing, as long as it isn’t directed at their character.

Sex

I don’t need to tell you what sex is. It’s a big motivator in Creation. People fuck. Gods like to fuck. Sitting in your living room listening to your friend describe his character fucking... thaaat’s not for everyone. As a **forbidden** topic, sex and sexuality just doesn’t come up in the game beyond “Hello, this is my wife.” As a **referenced** topic, it can be a plot point, but not a central scene-focus. For example, a Dynast might talk about his family trying to push him into a marriage with someone he feels no attraction to. As an **approved** subject, the game can feature sex, but not explicitly. Seduction scenes end in tasteful fades-to-black. When **embraced**, explicit sexual content is permitted in the story. When running this setting, it is a *very* good idea to get a clear picture of just how explicit “explicit” means before the game starts. When a player chooses to **opt-out** of sex, their character will never be propositioned or otherwise pushed into a sexual situation that they do not initiate.

Sexism

While overall more egalitarian than the modern day in many respects, sexism is still fairly common in the world of **Exalted**. The Realm is matriarchal and establishes a glass ceiling that pushes back against male elevation to high social status under a dominant cultural belief that men are irresponsible and lacking in both proper judgment and self-control. Many other societies outside the Blessed Isle, especially in the West, are sexist in the regular old way we’re all accustomed to. Like racism, this is a topic that many people just don’t want to deal with in their entertainment time. When sexism is **forbidden**, nobody brings it up. When it’s **referenced**, it’s a misfortune that sometimes befalls Storyteller characters. When it’s **approved**, it may feature as a plot point, but generally not in a pointed or especially demeaning fashion. **Embraced** sexism is, well, it’s sex-based discrimination, sometimes culturally embedded, sometimes personal and ugly. If a player decides to **opt-out**, then they’re okay with it being a thing the rest of the world or even the other players can deal with if they want to, but they do not want their character discriminated against.

While on this subject, I’m going to hit a couple of related topics that don’t have their own default categories because targeted discrimination against them is unusual in Creation, but which are worth talking about anyway.

Creation is culturally closer to the ancient world than the modern one, and doesn’t generally have the concepts of homosexuality or bisexuality as intrinsic state-of-being level orientations, although it has *many* people that a modern audience would identify *as* homosexual or bisexual. In the Realm this is considered completely normal and unremarkable, and a person’s sexual tastes are viewed as exactly that, comparable to preferences in food or music rather than defining and immutable elements of personality. This is a common view in much of the rest of Creation as well, although legal codes differ wildly depending on the structure of societies and assumptions

about family units, marriage rights, inheritance laws, and so on. Same-sex marriage (or equivalent bindings) are *unusual* in Creation but not *unknown*. A minority of cultures feature them, a majority do not, and a second minority have some convoluted way to achieve that status; the Delzahn nomads, for example, do not allow individuals of the same *gender* to marry one another, but have a cultural institution through which an individual may become recognized as a gender not matching their physical sex, at which point they would be free to marry an individual of the same physical sex but of legally differing gender.

Broadly speaking, homophobia is uncommon in the Age of Sorrows, and generally restrained to a few unusual cultures with extremist views, or to individuals with personal motives for their discriminatory views.

Similarly, Creation doesn't broadly have the distinct concept of being transgendered, but it definitely has people that a modern audience would recognize as trans, as well as individuals who at first *seem* to fit into that category, but ultimately don't. The aforementioned Delzahn institution — the Dereth — contains individuals choosing to live as the gender that truly accords with them. It also contains individuals who simply want to live according to the cultural roles and laws Delzahn society assigns to the opposite sex, which are very different from the expectations and responsibilities of their birth sex (only men are permitted to be warriors, for example, and so a woman who wishes to pursue the arts of war becomes legally male). Finally, some Delzahn become Dereth in pursuit of a particular romance; Delzahn society expects men to court women, but doesn't particularly care what sort of genitals the men or women in question possess. A modern viewer could identify straight, gay, transgendered, and cisgendered Dereth (as well as straight, gay, trans, and cis non-Dereth Delzahn), but Delzahn society doesn't make such distinctions. I'm focusing on the Delzahn and the Dereth because they're elaborated on in the official game materials (read **Scavenger Sons!** It's great!), but there are a lot of other idiosyncratic institutions scattered across Creation where trans individuals might find self-expression. There are also, of course, plenty stuck in societies with no such outlets. In general, cultures that don't have formal institutions for exploring gender non-conformity find the whole concept strange and alarming, but most cultures in Creation are fairly parochial and expect outsiders to be strange and alarming as a matter of course.

The Realm is worthy of special notice as being one of the very few cultures in the Age of Sorrows that *does* have an articulated concept of gender transgression that maps to the modern notion fairly closely, because one of its five central holy figures, Daana'd, was gender non-confirming, living as a woman despite not having been born with a woman's body. As such, asserting a physically contrary identity in the Realm is treated as an intrinsic *social* right (and in some precincts considered an auspicious act, particularly for Water Aspects), but one with limited legal acknowledgement. In a sexism-**approved** or **embraced** chronicle, mortals are legally permitted to marry according to their acclaimed gender, but Dragon-Blooded are forbidden from marriages which are incapable of producing children. This isn't an insurmountable barrier, since accredited sorcerers can create offspring via rituals or neomah-summoning, and there are rare and expensive magics which can realign a person's physical sex, but the Realm is suspicious that these solutions harm the likelihood of a couple producing Exalted offspring, so it generally takes some rigorous convincing before a Great House will approve a marriage founded upon them. In a **referenced** chronicle or one where a player has chosen to **opt-out**, these are problems other people have to deal with. In a **forbidden** chronicle,

the Empress was unsuccessful in imposing her draconian will over her offspring on this matter, and the Realm has universal marriage equality.

If you want to break out homophobia and transphobia to their own subjects instead of shuffling them under the sexism header, you are of course free to do so.

Sexual Violence

Rape. Like sex, I don't need to explain this concept to you. This is the one most likely to get slammed directly into the **forbidden** category by many groups, and if someone sends it there, do us all a favor and *don't* ask them to justify or explain their decision. When sexual violence is **referenced**, it can appear as backstory or plot set-up, but won't feature directly in game sessions. When **approved**, it can be a plot element, but not something played out or directly depicted at the table: again, like sex, it's a "camera tastefully goes to another scene once it's clear what's about to happen" situation. When **embraced**... well, you're adults. I'm not going to tell you your business. If *anybody* at the table wants a setting below **embraced**, for God's sake don't set this at **embraced**. This is also a category where a lot of players are going to **opt-out**, in which case sexual assault cannot happen to their character *or* occur in a scene their character's part of.

Slavery

Creation is, lamentably, a place where slavery is exceedingly widespread, although its specific permutations vary widely. Nearly every polity in Creation has its own laws regulating what is or is not permissible under the institution, and in some places — some of them fairly high-profile, such as Nexus — slavery is entirely outlawed. (Not that this stops Nexus from operating as a massive clearinghouse for the transportation and sale of slaves to foreign markets, via the legal dodge of owners forcing their slaves to sign documents proclaiming themselves voluntarily bonded servants while they are moved through the city and then selling the bond of indenture rather than the person directly.)

Like racism, slavery in the setting is generally pre-modern and not based off of grotesque pretensions of innate genetic superiority, but instead is viewed as a simple state of misfortune into which some people are cast: a necessary evil by which societies prosper and men profit. People are commonly enslaved due to debt, because they lost a war, or as a form of criminal punishment. Societies where slavery is a heritable state imposed on the children of slaves exist, but are unusual. In many slave-owning societies, slaves have limited rights and protections, and slavery is often conditional or of strictly limited duration.

Unlimited chattel slavery of the sort modern audiences are familiar with thanks to the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade, wherein slaves are legally considered unpeople with no rights or protections of any kind, is unusual but sadly not unknown, and is mostly associated with two polities. One is the Guild, which often launches armed raids on isolated settlements and captures entire populations to feed the voracious appetites of foreign slave markets, to work in its own plantations and factories, or — most abhorrent of all — to sell to the Fair Folk in exchange for faerie magic.

The other, unfortunately, is the Realm. Citizens of the Blessed Isle absolutely may not be enslaved under any circumstances, but no such protection extends to the people of the Threshold nations under the Realm's rule. Mortals are also forbidden from owning slaves in the Realm; only the Dragon-Blooded are afforded that privilege, under the theory that the enslavement of foreign barbarians by the Exalted is spiritually edifying and purifying. A life of absolute

obedience to the Chosen, according to the Immaculate Philosophy, cannot do anything but improve a soul's standing in its next life. The Immaculate Order preaches strongly against the cruel mistreatment and exploitation of slaves, but Dynasts seem less keen to heed this element of their sermons than the parts where enslavement is spiritually beneficial. House Cynis, makes a very substantial part of its income from *renting* Dragon-Blooded owned slaves out to mortal Dynasts and patrician on a short or long-term basis.

In general, the average view of people in Creation is that slavery is a great evil. While many then shrug and dismiss the institution as necessary or inevitable in an era filled with great evils, others do not. For as long as slavery has existed, so have abolitionists. In some nations these sentiments are limited to disaffected grumbling, but others feature active abolitionist movements, either as activist blocs within its national political discourse, or outlaw direct action groups which act to liberate and shelter enslaved peoples.

Now, some people are grinding their teeth after reading the above material, and they have every right to do so. For some players, this is an interesting historical treatise describing yet another kind of asshole for their character to beat up; for others, it's something that happened to ancestors whose names they know, a hideous cultural legacy whose social and economic repercussions they're still struggling under to this day. It may not be something they particularly want to reckon with as part of their swords-and-sandals entertainment. When slavery is **forbidden**, it does not come up in chronicles. You don't see slaves, nobody talks about slaves, it's just not a thing. When **referenced**, slavery is background scenery, but not a plot-driving element. A Guild factor may be described as having made his fortune in the slave trade, but you don't actually see people toiling in chains in the fields. When **approved**, slavers might round up the folks in a character's hometown, forcing the Circle to track them down and kick the shit out of them. Characters might even own slaves, but the horrors of slavery are mostly elided. When slavery is **embraced** (there's a weird thing to type), the subject can feature in the game in all its realistic horror. When a player chooses to **opt-out** of slavery, they don't want to be directly involved in scenes dealing with mistreatment of slaves or characters being enslaved, and they *definitely* don't want anyone to try to enslave their character.

If this topic ends up set anywhere more restrictive than **embraced** or if players **opt-out**, it might also be a good idea for the group to discuss the issue of supernatural mind control and loss of free will.

Torture

You know what this is. If torture is **forbidden**, then it never happens on-screen. It never happens off-screen. It doesn't get referenced. It doesn't even show up in a character's backstory in a way that would make it ever get referenced in-session. If torture is **referenced**, then you might find a torture dungeon (unoccupied), or rescue a prisoner who was tortured (without going into details), or have torture in a character's backstory, but nobody will ever be tortured during a scene the players act out. If torture is **approved**, a character might be tortured as part of a plot point, or torture a captive, or it could be an active part of the ongoing story, but it would be resolved with a few Stamina + Resistance rolls, not extolled in graphic detail. If torture is **embraced** (man, that's another weird sentence) then a torture scene might linger on the details of broken fingers and extracted teeth, or a rescued prisoner might have the abuses they've suffered described with some detail. If a player chooses to **opt-out**, torture may feature as an element of the chronicle,

but that player's character will specifically *never* be tortured or forced to be directly involved in a torture scene.

Rules Glossary

A list of common rules terms are collected here for your convenience.

Action: Something a character does with game consequences. Actions generally involve rolling an Attribute + an Ability, but sometimes an action can be unrolled.

Aggravated Damage: A type of *damage* that is resistant to magical healing.

Brutal (-X): A quality of an attack which penalizes its target's *Soak*.

Caste Attribute/Ability: A trait which, when it forms part of a dice pool, grants immunity to the *rule of 1s*.

Damage: Marks placed in a target's health track by attacks, traps, environmental harm, and so on.

Defense: The difficulty to hit a character.

Difficulty: The number that rolled dice must display to count as successes.

Fierce: A quality of an attack which makes it more costly to Dodge.

Health: A track which measures a character's ability to absorb damage.

Heavy: A quality of an attack which makes it more costly to Block.

Overwhelming (-X): A quality of an attack which penalizes its target's *Defense*.

Piercing (-X): A quality of an attack which penalizes its target's *Stagger Threshold*.

Reflexive action: An *action* which does not use up your turn, such as noticing an ambush or resisting poison.

Rule of 1s: The fact that each 1 produced by rolling a dice pool subtracts one *success* from its total. Applies to all rolls in the system unless otherwise noted.

Simple action: An *action* which occurs on your turn and demands the lion's share of your effort and attention.

Soak: The difficulty to damage a character.

Staggered: A vulnerable state persisting until the end of the current round that a character enters upon suffering a *Wound*.

Stagger Threshold: The amount of damage that must be inflicted in one hit for a character to be *Staggered*.

Success: A die showing a number equal to or higher than a roll's *difficulty*.

Swift action: An *action* which occurs on your turn and uses only a small amount of effort and attention.

Wound: Narratively significant injuries inflicted on a character.

Chapter Two: Traits and Permutations

This chapter explains the Traits used by the **Exalted Demake**, particularly where they differ from the official **Exalted** corebook you are using as a reference point while playing this unofficial fan-created edition, without which **EXD** doesn't function.

This chapter also has rules for playing mortal, God-Blooded, and ghost protagonists.

Nature

A *nature* is a profound archetype which sits at the heart of each character. This is their most central and immutable self: the sort of person that, fundamentally, they are.

In game terms, this trait serves two purposes. First, Nature acts as a powerful element of social intrigue. It takes very powerful magic to force a character to violate her Nature; but by the same token, someone who understands a person's Nature has a much easier time manipulating them by appealing to that Nature.

Second, **Nature is used to regain Willpower**. Once per scene, a character may regain a point of Willpower by acting in a way that satisfies her Nature, or by witnessing the world behave in a way that affirms the fundamental rightness of her Nature's outlook.

The list below is meant to be a representative sample. If none of the Natures below fits your character, feel free to work with your Storyteller to come up with your own, or look through various **World of Darkness** books or the First Edition **Exalted** corebook and consider one of the Nature archetypes to be found there.

Architect

You are driven to build something that lasts, something that matters, something that will *make a difference*. This could be a work of art, a social revolution, a kingdom, or the founding of a dynasty.

Gain Willpower when you accomplish a significant goal to bring your dream closer to reality.

Bravo

You like to be the big dog. Your fundamental sense of self is rooted in being the toughest thing in the room. You might use that strength to bully others, or to protect them, but either way, you're the sort that has to make sure everyone *knows* you're stronger than them.

Gain Willpower when you demonstrate your dominance.

Bureaucrat

You take deep comfort from knowing that there's a right way to do everything: that systems exist to impose order on a world otherwise inclined to chaos. The system you look to might be the laws of the land, a labyrinthine set of bureaucratic codes that you spent years mastering, or just a sense of traditionalism. Whatever it is, it's your rock.

Gain Willpower when adherence to protocol saves the day.

Caregiver

Your sense of self-worth is rooted in uplifting others. When you've helped someone else, put them ahead, or gotten them out of a jam, then you know that the world is a better place because you are in it. This affirms that you are where you're supposed to be, doing what you're supposed to do.

Gain Willpower when you receive evidence that your actions have helped someone else.

Conniver

You move other people around like pieces on a Gateway board. You might be a callous manipulator, but you might also be a helpful matchmaker. Whichever the case may be, you're only at ease when everyone is where you think they should be, doing what you think they should be doing.

Gain Willpower when you get someone to do what you want.

Critic

You're here to make things better, and the first step to that is figuring out what's wrong. Nothing's perfect, and you're the sort of person who cannot help but point out what, exactly, is standing in the way of that. This might make you an excellent middle manager. It also might make you a colossal asshole.

Gain Willpower when a significant problem is avoided because of your criticism.

Explorer

The horizon calls to you. You are never satisfied with what you have or what you know. You always need more: a new day, a new sky, a new vista, a new revelation. Routine is death.

Gain Willpower when you make a significant discovery.

Follower

Everyone can't be a chief or general. You take pride in playing your part, whatever that might be, and doing it well. It sets you at ease to know someone else, someone more suited to that sort of thing, is in charge and directing you to play your part.

Gain Willpower when you receive evidence you helped out by carrying out your assigned role.

Gallant

You thrive on attention. When nobody's paying attention to you, it feels like you don't exist. Accolades are the best, of course, but the truth is that you'll take notoriety in a pinch.

Gain Willpower when you make yourself the center of attention.

Hedonist

Being completely honest, you're here to have a good time, preferably with others. Yes, life certainly is full of pressing concerns, but you really see them all as impediments to be dealt with so you can get back to the crucial business of enjoying yourself.

Gain Willpower whenever you are able to indulge yourself and have a good time.

Jester

Man bursts into tears. "But Doctor," he says, "I am Pagliacci."

Gain Willpower whenever you are able to lighten the mood or ease a tense situation.

Judge

You can't relax in the presence of strife or discord, and so take it upon yourself to act as mediator, peacemaker, or even arbiter for others. You implicitly believe that your judgment is the best, and so offer it freely to others.

Gain Willpower when you forge amicable resolution or at least issue a final judgment that others abide by.

Leader

There are two ways to do things: Your way, and the wrong way. You think of yourself as a natural leader, or perhaps just *competent*, but the truth is that you cannot stand it when you're not in charge.

Gain Willpower when others follow your instructions without a lot of back-and-forth about it.

Martyr

You find proof of your own worth in laying out all you have for others. You could have low self-esteem, or you might have learned to give up your own portion to satisfy the mighty. Perhaps you do it to prove your ethical superiority to yourself, or perhaps you went without for so long and survived with the help of others that you only feel right when you're paying it forward. Whatever the case, you only find comfort when you deprive yourself on behalf of another; otherwise, you feel you're grotesquely indulging.

Gain Willpower when you give up something of yours on behalf of another.

Paragon

You are a dedicated ideologue. You've found your specific ethic or philosophy and made it your rock, the harbor where your heart shelters. You evaluate everything in light of this ideology. This Nature might make you incredibly concerned with justice and ethics. It also might make you a completely heartless and ruthless villain; not all ideologies are kind.

Gain Willpower when you accomplish a significant task that furthers or promotes your chosen ideology.

Rebel

You're only really happy when you're going your own way. It's not that you can't stand the company of others — fellow-travelers along whatever road you've decided to walk are welcome — it's that you *really* hate being told what to do, and bristle at the very idea of authority or rules that you didn't set for yourself.

Gain Willpower whenever you defy an established authority.

Reject

You don't fit in. You never fit in. You never have, and it feels like you never will. You yearn to be accepted by those around you, to have a personal connection, to be loved and valued. In your deepest heart, you don't think any of those things are possible, and it makes you want them all the more.

Gain Willpower when someone makes you feel unconditionally accepted.

Savant

You see the world as a puzzle or riddle, waiting to be solved. Implicit in this view is the notion that everything has *rules* and *answers*, and that with sufficient diligence, both may be understood and leveraged to get things done.

Gain Willpower when you triumph by applying a methodical, rational approach.

Survivor

You understand, deeply and profoundly, that everyone walks a tightrope above the teeth of the world and that there is no safety net. You understand that the only thing keeping you on the rope and out of the pit is your own diligence. The thought of being forced to rely on someone else, of being powerless to act to ensure your own best interests and safety, sickens you.

Gain Willpower when you survive a difficult or dangerous situation through your own cunning and perseverance.

Thrillseeker

You're in it for the rush, honestly. You might dress it up in reasons, but at the end of the day, you only feel *really alive* when you can see destruction and ruin looking back at you from kissing distance, and kept there by your own talent.

Gain Willpower when you make it out of an extremely dangerous situation.

Visionary

You're driven by a great *idea*: a philosophy, goal, or way of being. This isn't an ideology or a drive to *make*, those are the provinces of the Paragon and the Architect; what you're enamored of is living up to or realizing a personal dream.

Gain Willpower when you embody or make progress toward realizing your dream.

Intimacies

If Nature is the bedrock of a character's soul, Intimacies are the buildings raised atop that fundamental land. They describe the ideas, ideals, people, places, and things that are most important to a character: the things that really *move* her.

Intimacies are generally articulated either as an ideal to be adhered to ("Always look out for number one"), or a focus and accompanying context ("My Circlemates (Friendship)").

Most characters have three Intimacies, though it's also possible for temporary Intimacies to be built through social influence. At the end of each story, a player evaluates her character's current Intimacies and, if there are more than three, selects the three she wishes to keep. She may also discard one of her existing Intimacies and replace it at the end of each story, if she feels it no longer reflects her character's heart.

A character whose actions powerfully affirm or reinforce one or more of her Intimacies may gain a point of Willpower once per scene.

Derangements

Sometimes characters are afflicted by maladies of the mind. Ordinary mental illness, a god's curse, and the twisting influence of the Wyld: these are all modeled by the same mechanic, known as Derangements.

Derangements can be used as leverage points for social influence exactly as though they were Intimacies: it's entirely possible to manipulate someone through their acute paranoia, or for the paranoiac to use her condition to shut people out because she doesn't trust them. Unlike Intimacies, Derangements make a character's life difficult in particular ways. Characters can pay a point of Willpower to suppress a Derangement for one scene. Permanently curing a Derangement generally requires powerful healing magic or very dramatic roleplaying moments.

Because Exalted is a pulp fantasy game, Derangements are modeled after the sensationalized madness of weird fiction tales, and not calibrated to reflect the real-life contours of actual mental illness. They also bundle everything from acute trauma responses to divine curses under one broad umbrella, since that's how people in the setting tend to think of anyone exhibiting signs of an unbalanced mind. It's not terribly realistic, but neither is the combat engine. Examples of potential Derangements include:

Disconnection: The character is dissociated from her emotions and processes the world around her as a series of logical puzzles and scenarios to analyze, making it difficult to empathize with others or even herself. The difficulty of all Empathy rolls increases by +2, along with all attempts to inspire others (see p. XX).

Hysteria: In conditions of extreme stress or anxiety, it becomes difficult (+1 difficulty) for the character to do anything but lash out or flee.

Madness: Once per session, the Storyteller may cite this Derangement as grounds for the character to see and/or hear things that aren't there.

Mania: The character suffers a constant sense of restless dissatisfaction with everything in the world but her most deep-seated goals. Nothing else brings her either real satisfaction or even reprieve from the urge to fixate on her most deeply embedded impulses. She can only regain Willpower by indulging her Nature or by engaging with one specific Intimacy (chosen by the player at the beginning of each session). Rest, victory, and all other criteria fail to replenish her.

Megrims: Something very much like a lead curtain hangs between the character and any feelings like hope or joy. On the really bad days, even anger and sorrow lose their power to motivate, though not to wound. Make a Willpower roll against difficulty 8 at the beginning of every session. A failure indicates that the character cannot spend Willpower for any purpose that session, save to suppress this Derangement for a scene.

Obsession: The character becomes fixated on a certain object, idea, or action. Whenever the character is reminded of her obsession, she must succeed at a difficulty 8 Willpower roll or else the difficulty to do anything unrelated to it rises by +2 for the rest of the scene.

Paranoia: The character is intensely distrustful of the motives of others, and believes someone is out to get her. She must suppress this Derangement for a scene to gain any benefit from positive Intimacies toward others.

Attributes

EXD uses the same nine Attributes as the three core editions of **Exalted** do. On the off chance you somehow came here from **Exalted Essence**, those are, *very* briefly:

The Physical Attributes:

Strength: Sheer muscle power. Used for power weapons in close combat and for Blocking.

Dexterity: Agility and grace. Used for graceful and ranged weapons in combat and for Dodging.

Stamina: Toughness. Used to resist fatigue, hardship, poison, and disease, and to calculate Soak.

The Social Attributes:

Charisma: Force of personality, passion, and conviction. Used when you say what you mean.

Manipulation: Guile and emotional appeal. Used when you say what they want to hear.

Appearance: Attractiveness and appeal. Used when you get people onboard by being striking or sexy.

The Mental Attributes:

Perception: The five senses. Observational ability.

Intelligence: Depth of thought. The ability to reason through complex ideas.

Wits: Speed of thought. The capacity to respond appropriately, quickly.

All of these Abilities are rolled as part of dice pools. None of them are expected to exist solely to provide passive modifiers, like Second Edition Appearance did.

Caste and Favored Traits

Most Exalted have *Caste Abilities*, special traits which through which their divine blessings flow.

Rolls utilizing a Caste Ability are immune to the rule of 1s.

A few Exalted instead have *Caste Attributes*. Rolls using Caste Attributes are also immune to the rule of 1s.

Caste Traits can still produce botches.

Damage rolls are *never considered to be rolls utilizing Caste Attributes or Abilities*, even if some special rule adds one of those traits to the value referenced for forming a damage dice pool.

Exalts also often have *Favored Abilities or Attributes*. Favored Traits can be purchased at a discount, and allow for certain Charms to be more easily obtained. Unlike Caste Traits, **Favored Traits do not enjoy protection from the rule of 1s.**

Abilities

EXD uses 25 Abilities. These are a little bit different than the list from any official version of Exalted, so we'll go over them in short detail, particularly since a few of the returning Abilities are wildly divergent across various editions.

Archery: Archery is used to shoot bows, crossbows, and firewands. In general, it's the default "ranged attack" Ability for anything that isn't obviously Thrown. If, somehow, you gain the

power to turn into a dragon and shoot fireballs out of your mouth, you're probably aiming them with Archery.

Athletics: Athletics is the Ability of actively using your physique to do things. It's the Ability of gymnastics, acrobatics, feats of strength, footraces, swimming... and dodging. In **EXD**, Athletics has absorbed the Dodge Ability found in First, Second, and Third Editions.

Awareness: This is what you roll to spot stuff. Usually paired with Perception.

Brawl: Punching! Also kicking. Sometimes grappling. Occasionally biting. If you use a weapon but still fundamentally attack by punching (such as with katars, aka "punch daggers") you still use Brawl. Brawl also covers the use of improvised weapons such as chairs and kitchenware.

Bureaucracy: Understanding, navigating, or designing complex systems to get things done.

Craft: I've collapsed this one down to just one Ability for the sake of everyone's sanity. Is it particularly realistic that being a talented blacksmith also makes you a master painter and carpenter? No. Is it worth making this Ability five times as complicated as any of the others to stop that? Also no. Do I expect you to just, you know, self-police what your character can and can't do with Craft according to your character concept? *It would be nice.*

Empathy: The Ability to understand what other people are thinking and feeling, and respond to them appropriately... or to viciously turn that understanding against them. One of the ugliest lessons young Dynasts learn growing up is that it's very possible for someone to perfectly *understand* you without *liking* you in the slightest.

Investigation: Fantastic clues and how to find them. This is the Ability that figures stuff out.

Larceny: Crime: the Ability.

Linguistics: This version of Linguistics tracks eloquence with words. It's used for written social influence, as well as highly-rehearsed deliveries and poetry composition. It does not have anything to do with number of languages known. Characters must have at least Linguistics • to be literate.

Lore: Knowledge of history, art, culture, and so on. The business of savants and academics.

Martial Arts: Formal systems of combat, often unarmed or utilizing exotic weapons. The gateway to powerful supernatural combat styles that can be shared by different supernatural beings. Only needs to be purchased once to cover all styles the character means to practice, for the same reason as Craft.

Medicine: Does what it says on the tin.

Melee: The Ability of hitting people with swords and other close-range weapons until they stop being alive.

Occult: Knowledge of the supernatural world. Useful knowledge about gods, ghosts, the Fair Folk, and the nature and behavior of Essence.

Performance: Song, dance, oratory. Emotional self-expression intended for an audience.

Presence: Impassioned or rational argument; or projecting force of personality; or personal appeal. In in doubt, this is your default Ability for talking to people.

Resistance: Enduring hardship, resisting disease and poison. Usually rolled with Stamina.

Ride: The Ability of controlling a mount effectively.

Sail: The Ability of operating a ship and knowing how to navigate at sea.

Socialize: Etiquette. The Ability of operating correctly in formal social environments. This is what you use at a salon, a party, or a formal dinner. The weapon of politicians.

Stealth: Not being seen.

Survival: Not starving to death or getting mauled by wild animals in the forest. Also, animal training and shelter-building.

Thrown: Hucking stuff at people. This is the default Ability for ranged attacks that come from your hands.

War: The Ability of commanding troops, devising strategies, and figuring out how the other general is planning to fuck you and what to do about it.

Whither Specialties?

This edition doesn't use Specialties.

Backgrounds

The **Exalted Demake** uses Backgrounds, as did **Exalted** First and Second Editions.

Backgrounds are rated from one to five dots, like most of the stuff in this system, and they reflect *who you are* and *what your place in the world is*.

The Backgrounds in this chapter are the universal Backgrounds that (almost) all characters work with. Unique Backgrounds specific to various Chosen can be found in their respective chapters.

Backgrounds come in four varieties, which determine *how you get more of them* and *when you can take them*. These are:

Innate Backgrounds: These Backgrounds either describe an in-born quality of the character (such as being God-Blooded), or else exist to let her get a head-start in some way out of the gate at character creation. They *usually* can't be advanced during play at all, although Storytellers are encouraged to treat them as Social Backgrounds when an exception makes sense (a character might gain the Uncanny Background during play through being mutated by exposure to the Wyld, for example).

Purchased Backgrounds: These Backgrounds represent the mastery or refinement of some esoteric quality. They can be purchased or increased by spending experience points.

Panoply Backgrounds: These Backgrounds describe property or possessions that the character owns, such as magical fortresses or ancient magical items. Panoply Backgrounds *cannot be purchased with experience points*. They are altered *by events in the story which would logically cause them to increase or decrease*. To gain Artifact, make a daiklave, or loot it from a tomb, or take it from someone else.

Social Backgrounds: These describe a character's standing and relationships in the world. They encompass the people she can depend on, her reputation, and who she knows. Social Backgrounds *cannot be purchased with experience points*. They are altered *by events in the story which would logically cause them to increase or decrease*. To gain more Allies, make friends.

Allies

Social Background

This Background works much as it does in any other version of **Exalted**, providing boon allies, fast friends who are willing to help you out. Allies are generally willing to help the Exalt without asking for repayment, but it's worth remembering that they are not servants, and may eventually feel ill-treated if the Exalt never holds up her end of their relationship.

This Background can be taken more than once to represent additional allies.

- X No one stands by your side.
- One mortal ally of substantial expertise or standing in the world.
- One minor supernatural ally such as a little god or elemental; or a mortal ally of tremendous stature, such as the ruler of a city-state.
- One ally of equivalent power to a young Dragon-Blooded.
- One ally of equivalent power to a young Celestial Exalt or veteran Dragon-Blooded.
- One ally of equivalent power to a seasoned Celestial Exalt.

Artifact

Panoply Background

This Artifact represents the character's ownership of magically potent items. The character begins play with an Artifact whose power is equal to the dots taken in this Background. Magical items can be found in Chapter Nine.

This form of the Background can be taken more than once to represent a character who has acquired several different magical items. Other chapters contain variations of Artifact which cannot be taken repeatedly.

- X You have claimed no items of supernatural power.
- You have a single lesser wonder.
- You have an impressive supernatural item such as a magical weapon.
- You have a very impressive supernatural item such as a mighty suit of magical armor.
- You have an exceedingly puissant magical item which gives you some sort of potent and unusual capability.
- You have somehow obtained a magical item whose power is so great that your reputation probably revolves around the fact that you possess it.

Backing

Social Background

This Background represents standing in a powerful organization such as the Guild, a Great House, the Bureau of Destiny, or the Cult of the Illuminated; or service to a mighty patron such as a Deathlord. Higher ratings represent greater authority to draw upon the organization or patron's resources.

This Background can be taken more than once to represent standing in different organizations.

X You are either on your own, or at the bottom of the ladder: a grunt with only responsibilities and no privileges.

- A low-ranking position of minor authority.
- A comfortable rank, with most unpleasantness delegated to underlings.
- You're able to throw your weight around, though not without consideration for your peers and superiors.
- You are trusted by the elite, and allowed to act with sufficient autonomy and leeway.
- You are a leader in your own right, or the trusted right hand of your patron.

Command

Social Background

You command a military force. This might be a mercenary company, a part of the Realm's legions, or a hideous shambling horde of the animated dead. The higher the rating, the larger and better the army. For more information on groups, see pages XX-XX. Traits for bandits, soldiers, and zombies can be found in Chapter Twelve.

Though unusual, this Background can potentially be taken more than once to represent substantially different military forces under one's command, such as an Abyssal who commands both a crack team of soldiers and a swarm of zombies.

X You command no troops.

- Choose one: A retinue of soldier bodyguards (Size 1, Drill 8); a surly band of bandits (Size 2, Drill 5); a cluster of zombies (Size 2, Drill 4; perfect morale).
- Choose one: A squad of soldiers (Size 2, Drill 8); a company of conscripts (Size 3, Drill 6); a mob of zombies (Size 3, Drill 4; perfect morale).
- Choose one: A crack company of elite troops (Size 2, Drill 9); a small army of soldiers (Size 4, Drill 7); a zombie swarm (Size 4, Drill 4; perfect morale).
- Choose one: A company of elite veterans (Size 3, Drill 9); a professional army (Size 5, Drill 7); a zombie horde (Size 5, Drill 4; perfect morale).
- A deadly army of elite veterans (Size 4, Drill 9); a highly seasoned army of career soldiers (Size 5, Drill 8).

Connections

Social Background

You know people. Connections is always purchased with a context describing *what kind of people you know* or *where you're connected*. The more dots, the deeper the well of information and minor favors you can draw on. You can combine this Background with an Attribute and roll it to try to call in little favors or acquire information.

Cult

Social Background

You're an object of worship in your own right. The prayers of your followers empower you, granting you a richer and more potent flow of Essence. If you want your cult to also obey you in other ways, you'll need to represent that with other Backgrounds. For example, if you want a wavy dagger cult that kills your enemies, you'll need Command. If you want your cult to funnel information back to you, you'll need Connections. This Background only covers the volume of worship you've accumulated.

For each dot of Cult, the character regains one additional Mote of Essence per day when they receive their daily tithe of power. If this would raise the character above her maximum Mote capacity, she may "hold" these extra Motives in abeyance, reflexively claiming one of them per scene to replenish her Mote pool. Any unclaimed Motives are lost when the character refreshes her Essence the next day.

X No one worships you.

- You have a couple of actual priests and a handful of dedicated worshipers.
- Your cult consists of several hundred individuals. It might constitute an entire village or township.
- You are venerated across a wide region, or perhaps openly rule a city-state as its god-king.
- Tens of thousands offer their prayers up to you.
- Your cult spans an entire Direction, making you one of the major religious figures of the Age of Sorrows.

Echoes

Purchased Background

The power of your Exaltation has passed through many hands before your own, stretching back to the dim vestiges of the First Age. Sometimes, when you sleep, you dream of memories not your own, glories and tragedies that befell the former bearers of your power. Sometimes you might even experience waking visions of the ancient past. And sometimes you can even grasp a resonance of ancient might, drawing upon strength you have not yet truly claimed as your own.

A character with Echoes has a pool of bonus dice equal to this Background's rating that can be drawn upon to enhance any rolled action. These dice can be expended all at once or parceled out over multiple rolls, as desired, but once rolled, they're used up until the character experiences additional visions of past lives. In game terms, Echo dice fully refresh at the beginning of each new story, and one Echo die refreshes at the beginning of each session within a story.

X You have never experienced memories of your former selves.

- Your past-life memories are few and far between, and even then fleeting and fragmentary things.
- You've dreamed a few coherent memories of your former selves, enough to get a sense of who you used to be.
- Your dreams are lucid enough to have perhaps revealed one or more of your former lives' secrets.
- You have a strong sense of connection to the former bearers of your Exaltation.

••••• You think of your past selves almost as a pantheon of mentors, guiding you back to the heights of power.

Familiar

Purchased Background

You have an animal companion with which you share an uncanny bond. You can have a number of familiars equal to your Essence rating. Each dot in this Background gives you one Familiar Point. Familiar Points may be spent to purchase features from the list below. At least one point must be spent to determine the animal's type.

This Background can be taken more than once to represent different familiars.

Companion Animal (1): Your familiar is something not terribly threatening or nimble, but which would not raise remark in most circumstances, such as a small dog or goat.

Small Animal (1): Your familiar is something small and either swift or inconspicuous, such as a bird, cat, squirrel, or monkey.

Predatory Animal (2): Your familiar is a predator of some sort, one that would pose a danger to human beings. It might be an omen dog, tiger, or claw strider.

Riding Animal (2): Your familiar can be ridden, like a horse, austrech, or giant hawk.

Great Animal (3): Your familiar is something enormous and very powerful, like an elephant or tyrant lizard. You might be able to ride it as well, given how big it is.

Communication (1): Your familiar can't actually *talk*, per se, but you can clearly understand it when it wants to communicate with you, and it can understand your commands.

Sense Sharing (1): By shutting out all other stimuli and concentrating completely, you can share your familiar's senses.

Silent Speech (1): You can issue orders to your familiar and it will hear them, wherever it may be.

Immortal Bond (2): If anything fatal should happen to your familiar, it dissolves into a wash of Essence and reforms from your anima at the beginning of the next story. If your familiar dies and doesn't have this feature, you may find a new animal to act as your familiar in a later story without having to re-purchase this Background.

Followers

Social Background

You've attracted useful people who look up to you. They might be your students, assistants in research or craftsmanship, spies, or personal aides. They're *not* people who fight for you for a living (although they might still be willing to fight on your behalf); that's Command. Followers are usually mortal, but this is not mandatory; Followers are simply loyal individuals less mighty than the Exalted. This Background might also represent loyal ghosts, a faerie lord's retinue of Fair Folk commoners, a sorcerer's automaton butler and golem servants, or a Haltan's intelligent animal comrades.

X No one follows you.

• You have five followers.

- About 25 followers.
- Around 100 followers.
- Hundreds of followers.
- Multitudes.

Influence

Social Background

You have pull in the world around you. This Background hasn't really changed across the three editions, aside from becoming a 1 to 5 dot Merit rather than Background in Third Edition. It represents broad political and social influence in the world at large, rather than within a particular organization.

- X Your fame has yet to spread.
 - You are a figure of local note: a folk hero or villain.
 - You swing some weight in the city-state or satrapy where you reside: a wealthy investor, ambitious young politico, or notorious adventurer.
 - You are very important to the region where you reside and are known in the surrounding areas. Those who make it their business to be aware of the political state of your Direction have heard your name: a powerful general, accomplished politician, or major economic driver.
 - Your words carry significant weight throughout a region, and you probably rule whatever place you dwell in: a satrap, remote warlord, prince of a backwater nation, or grand financier.
 - You either rule over a very important place, or have your fingers in almost every pie in the Direction where you reside: the satrap of a key satrapy, a warlord feared by all, the prince of a mighty nation, or a financial lynchpin for a Direction.

Inheritance

Innate Background

There's something strange in your heritage. You might have been crafted in a sorcerer's lab or born atop a demon's spire, but most likely one of your parents was a spirit of some sort, making you God-Blooded or something like it. Your rating in this Background gives you a number of points to spend on God-Blooded Inheritances, detailed later in this chapter on page XX.

Exalted cannot raise Inheritance above three dots. Any stronger pre-existing connection to the supernatural world invalidates them as candidates for Exaltation.

- X Like most folks, you are of mortal man and woman born.
 - 2 Inheritance Points. You are touched by the strange.
 - 4 Inheritance Points. One of your parents was a minor power.
 - 6 Inheritance Points. You are of substantial supernatural heritage.
 - 8 Inheritance Points. You are descended from power.
 - 10 Inheritance Points. You are the child of one of the great powers of the world or the places beyond it.

Languages

Purchased Background

You've developed fluency in a number of different languages. Consult whichever **Exalted** corebook you have for a list of the languages of Creation. Third Edition probably has the best list.

X You only speak your native tongue.

- You're fluent in a cluster of related languages allowing you to get along more or less wherever you go in a specific Direction. Alternately, you know one secret cipher (like Guild Cant), academic or magical language (like Old Realm or the Testament), or trade language (such as Riverspeak or Low Realm) that isn't native to the Direction where you live.
- You're fluent in all the languages spoken in your part of the world, as well as three or so foreign tongues.
- You know most or all of the major Directional dialects, and have thorough familiarity with all languages spoken in your native region, along with one exotic language.
- You're fluent in all major languages and conversant with a wide range of minor, obscure, or scholarly dialects.
- You have assumed fluency with any language you encounter unless you and the Storyteller agree on particular exceptions. It's not that you know *every* language — there are a dizzying number of tribal dialects around the edges of the Threshold, not to mention a number of thoroughly lost mystical tongues, some of which date back to before the creation of mankind — but rather that you know *so many* that the exceptions are few and far between.

Manse

Panoply Background

You control either a Demesne or a Manse with a rating equal to your rating in this Background. Details on Manses and Demesnes can be found in Chapter Nine. While within the grounds of an attuned Demesne or Manse, or while bearing the socketed Hearthstone of an attuned Manse, the character gains bonus Motes of Essence periodically, according to the Demesne or Manse's rating.

This Background can be purchased repeatedly to obtain ownership of different Manses and their respective Hearthstones. See pages XX and XX for more on Manses, Hearthstone sockets and attunement.

X You do not have a Manse or control of a Demesne.

- 1 Mote every 12 hours.
- 1 Mote every 6 hours.
- 1 Mote every 3 hours.
- 1 Mote every hour.
- 1 Mote every 15 minutes.

Multiple Hearthstones

A character bearing multiple Hearthstones in Evocation or power sockets gains bonus Motes only from the most powerful Hearthstone among them, but Hearthstones in dedicated attunement sockets can stack their Mote recovery benefits. When this happens, don't add their dots together, but instead allow respiration to play out independently. Thus, an Exalt with a level-4 Hearthstone in an Evocation socket and a level-2 Hearthstone in an attunement socket would gain 1 Mote every hour, and 1 additional mote every 6 hours (so that every 6 hours, she would gain 2 Motes at once).

Mentor

Social Background

A powerful and well-informed supernatural being has taken a personal interest in guiding and tutoring you. Not only can you go to your mentor for advice, you can also gain material advantage from their tutelage.

X No one that matters has taken you under their wing.

- Your mentor provides you with wise advice and one of the following: access to a martial arts style; instruction in a handful of spells; the loan of a dot of some other Background, such as Resources or Allies, once per story.

- Your mentor provides you with either two of the boons listed at one dot, or access to several martial arts styles, up to a dozen spells, or can bend a 4 or 5-dot Background to your benefit occasionally.

- Your mentor provides some access to whatever sort of specialized tutelage you need, be it in spells or esoteric battle arts, *and* is willing to bend a high-rated Background to your advantage now and again.

- Your mentor is either a powerful and reputable figure whose name you can call upon to make others think twice about trifling with you, or is a deep master of some field of particular expertise. If they are a sorcerer, they can teach you an exotic initiation and bestow either an enormous array of Terrestrial Circle spells, or a substantial selection of such spells and a few Celestial Circle spells. If they are a martial artist, they can teach you numerous styles including at least one rare and difficult-to-acquire style such as (at least for a non-Dragon Blooded) the Immaculate Dragon styles.

- Your mentor is an incredibly powerful figure such as a high-ranking god, Deathlord, or elder Lunar, and has access to First Age-quality training techniques. They can hook you up with almost anything you might desire in the way of mystical tutelage or material support, although they're so busy that your access to them is fairly limited. Alternately, your mentor is a Sidereal. A Sidereal mentor can grant access to a wide array of spells, martial arts styles both common and rare, and even the Forbidden Arts if you are capable of practicing them. In either case, once per story you may buy an Attribute dot, Ability dot, Charm, or spell as though it were favored when it is not.

Mystic

Purchased Background

You are familiar with a school of minor magic such as enchantment, fortune-telling, or weather-working. Select a particular Mystic Art from those detailed later in this chapter, starting on page XX. Each has an associated Attribute. You roll your rating in this Background with that Attribute when working your mortal magics.

This Background may be taken more than once to reflect investment more than one Mystic Art, but no instance of it can be raised higher than your Occult rating.

X You are wholly unfamiliar with low magic.

- You know a tiny bit about the magic of Creation, probably inherited from a grandparent who had the gift.
- You have made active study of one of the lesser magics of the world.
- You have a noteworthy facility with a field of lesser magic.
- You are a renowned practitioner of a form of low magic.
- If you have not hidden your talent, then people will travel from far and wide to petition you to employ your mastery of one of the low magics on their behalf.

Resources

Social Background

You have steady income and money to spend. This Background hasn't really changed across the three editions, aside from becoming a 1 to 5 dot Merit rather than Background in Third Edition.

X You are homeless and destitute. You own whatever you can carry.

- Getting by: You have a place to live and some shoddy belongings to keep in it. You may own some livestock, but certainly no riding animal. You are accustomed to missing meals, and to eating rude fare.
- Comfortable: You have a comfortable cottage or apartment, and may possess a riding animal if such would be of use to you. Your possessions are of decent make, and may include a few expensive items such as serviceable armor. Your meals are unexciting but filling. You can afford hard liquor rather than only beer.
- Affluent: You own a townhouse or prosperous farm. You probably have one fine riding animal and a backup or two beyond that. You may own a suit of fine armor and several well-made weapons. You likely have a servant or two. You are able to regard food and drink as sources of excitement and pleasure rather than necessities of survival.
- Rich: You own several properties, all staffed by servants, and adorn yourself in the finest clothing, armor, and equipment. You are able to produce lavish outlays of funds on short notice, though you cannot do so indefinitely.
- Grossly Wealthy: You are a grand potentate, merchant prince, or king of thieves. You certainly own at least one ship, even if you've never seen it, and might potentially command a small fleet if such is the focus of your wealth. You have numerous properties. Silver and jade flows in rivers through your coffers, and an army of servants waits to realize your least desire.

Uncanny

Innate Background

Your body is... different. You may be beastfolk, a Wyld mutant, or an unfortunate whose flesh was warped by sorcery run wild (or wielded deliberately). Each dot in this Background entitles you to one feature from the list found later in this chapter, starting on page XX.

This Background is largely used for making beastfolk characters. Beastfolk are of various origins: some are stable tribes of Wyld mutants who blend animal and human features, but most are distant descendants of the Lunar Exalted.

Most people outside of *extremely* cosmopolitan areas such as Nexus fear beastfolk and will at best shun them; being driven away with rocks and spears isn't uncommon. This fear isn't wholly unfounded. Beastfolk tend to dwell at the world's borders, and more than one tribe has fallen under the sway of the Fair Folk and been transformed into their hunting hounds. Despite this prejudice, beastfolk are fundamentally just odd-looking humans, and are as capable of Exaltation as anyone else.

This Background's other primary use is to depict characters whose body has been transformed by the touch of the Wyld. There are many Wyld mutants in Creation, some living in semi-stable tribes, others uniquely twisted wretches. They face an even more intense form of stigma than beastfolk, both out of fears that they may fall under the sway of the Fair Folk (a valid fear; Ravagers are a very real threat) and out of the irrational terror that their condition may be contagious (wholly superstition, but a compelling superstition nonetheless). Most characters with this Background go to some pains to conceal their unusual features, unless they dwell in a culture dominated by others like them, such as the serpentfolk and raitonfolk of Ixcoatl.

X Like most people, you are simply human, or at least appear to be.

- You have some strange feature, which can probably be hidden and which you likely do take pains to hide.

- You have a couple of unusual features. You are likely one of the beastfolk,

- You have three distinctly unusual features. If beastfolk, your body is very strongly defined by animal features. You are more likely a Wyld mutant.

- You are almost certainly a Wyld mutant or have been exposed to sorcery run terribly amok.

- You are as heavily transformed by the touch of the Wyld as a person can be while still being able to leave the bordermarches without slowly sickening and dying.

Willpower

Willpower is a trait that measures your personal fortitude, your resolve, and your ability to dig down deep when it matters. You have both a **Willpower rating** and a pool of **Willpower points**.

Your permanent Willpower rating is the number of dice you roll when something tells you to roll your Willpower, and is often used to set the difficulty of rolls to change your mind.

Your Willpower points are a resource that can be spent in a number of ways detailed in Chapter One. Most notably, you can spend a point of Willpower to re-roll a roll you don't like (see p. XX), to reject social influence (see pp. XX-XX), to cut ahead (see p. XX), to Block or Dodge (see pp. XX-XX), and sometimes to activate Charms. **All protagonists begin play with Willpower points equal to their Willpower rating, and can have a maximum of 10 Willpower points at any time.**

Many forms of supernatural attack that target the mind or spirit ask the target to roll Willpower to resist, or use his Willpower rating as the difficulty for a targeting roll. When this occurs, **Exalted characters add their Essence rating to their Willpower to form a resistance pool or to set the difficulty to affect them**. This only occurs when the Exalt is *resisting a Charm, spell, or other power*, not when she rolls Willpower to invoke a power herself, nor when responding to normal social influence. (“Normal social influence” includes social influence empowered by Charms which simply add dice or lower a roll’s difficulty.)

Willpower can be gained through the following methods:

- Once per scene, you can gain a point of Willpower by affirming your Nature.
- Once per scene, you can gain a point of Willpower by strongly upholding, defending, or advancing one of your Intimacies.
- After getting a solid night’s rest, you gain a point of Willpower. If there’s an extended period of downtime (“a week later, you all arrive in Nexus”) then rather than gaining a point of Willpower for each night that theoretically passed, only gain one Willpower in this fashion, as it is assumed some Willpower was also spent during the days of downtime.
- If you end a story by accomplishing some significant goal or triumphing over substantial adversity, then begin the next story by rolling your Willpower against difficulty 6 and getting one Willpower point per success.

Health and Wounds

Characters begin with a maximum Health rating of 7. Health can be reduced by suffering normal or Aggravated damage, as detailed in Chapter One, and Wounds can be suffered if the character takes an instance of damage equal to or greater than their Stagger Threshold. This is all explained in greater detail in Chapter One.

Healing times are repeated here, for convenience:

Mortal Healing Times

Mortals erase one level of damage from their Health track after two days spent without undertaking any particularly strenuous activity. Only once there is no damage left in their Health track can they begin healing Wounds.

Wounds are healed in the following order, in the listed time:

Maimed and **mauled** Wounds take six weeks to heal.

Burned, blinded, disabled arm, and **disabled leg** Wounds take two weeks to heal.

Drained and **lacerated** Wounds take one week to heal.

Bruised and **dazed** Wounds take three days to heal.

Exalted Healing Times

Exalts erase one level of damage from their Health track every two days, even if they are highly active during that period; or they erase one level of damage after a day spent without strenuous activity. Only once there is no damage left in their Health track can they begin healing Wounds.

Wounds are healed in the following order, in the listed time:

Maimed and **mauled** Wounds take two weeks to heal.

Burned, blinded, disabled arm, and disabled leg Wounds take five days to heal.

Drained and **lacerated** Wounds take three days to heal.

Bruised and **dazed** Wounds take one day to heal.

Combat Traits

While making your character, there are several traits that will come up constantly during combat. Calculate them now so you don't have to do so on-the-spot during a fight:

Defense

Your Defense is 5 + a modifier based on your highest *defensive Ability* (Athletics, Brawl, Martial Arts, and Melee).

If your highest combat Ability is 0, modify Defense by -1.

If your highest combat Ability is 1-2, modify Defense by +0.

If your highest combat Ability is 3-4, modify Defense by +1

If your highest combat Ability is 5+, modify Defense by +2.

Your armor will also modify your Defense (see Soak, below).

Soak

Your Soak is based on a value provided by your armor, as follows:

Class	Defense	Dodge	Soak	Stagger	Fatigue
Unarmored	+1	-0	5	2+	+0
Light (mundane)	-0	-1	6	3+	+2
Heavy (mundane)	-1	-2	7	4+	+3
Light (artifact)	+0	-1	7	4+	+2
Heavy (artifact)	-1	-2	8	5+	+3

This value is then modified based on your Stamina rating:

If you have Stamina 1, modify your Soak rating by -1.

If you have Stamina 2-3, modify your Soak rating by +0.

If you have Stamina 4-5, modify your Soak rating by +1.

If you have Stamina 6+, modify your Soak rating by +2.

Dodge

Your base Dodge value is equal to your Dexterity Attribute, as permanently recorded on your character sheet. Temporary modifiers to Dexterity from things like Charms and Lunar shapeshifting to not adjust your Dodge rating. Base Dodge can also be modified based on the armor you're wearing, as seen above, your fighting style, and your current total Wound penalties.

Block

Your base Block value is equal to your Strength Attribute, as permanently recorded on your character sheet. Temporary modifiers to Strength from things like Charms and Lunar shapeshifting to not adjust your Block rating. Base Block can also be modified based on your fighting style and your current total Wound penalties.

Stagger Threshold

Your Stagger Threshold is the amount of damage that will cause you to become Staggered if you suffer it all at once. This is set by your armor, as seen above.

Fighting Style

Your other combat traits can also be modified by your preferred fighting style. If you plan to mostly use one fighting style, factor this into your calculations.

Sword and Board: The sword in this case isn't necessarily an actual sword — most soldiers prefer spears — but the point is, the character fights with a weapon in one hand and a shield in the other. The benefit of this arrangement is that the shield provides +1 to the character's Defense rating and +1 to her base Block value while she is using it.

Freehanding: The character carries nothing but a single one-handed weapon, which she can freely switch between a single or two-handed grip. Thanks to this versatility and her greater ability to use feints and tricks by switching hands, or to use a free hand to wrestle with an opponent, once per battle the character may Dodge without spending Willpower and once per battle she may Block without spending Willpower.

Two-Handing: The character carries a huge weapon requiring two hands to use effectively. In addition to the high Damage values of two-handed weapons, when someone attempts to block a two-handed weapon, they suffer a -1 penalty to their Block against their attack. If forced to use a two-handed weapon in one hand, the weapon's Damage value is reduced by -2 and it does not penalize the target's Block value.

Dual Wielding: The character fights with a weapon in each hand. If the weapons are of different kinds, then the character may choose to attack with either weapon on any given turn. If a character uses her once-per-scene re-roll on an attack or damage roll while dual wielding, she may opt to only re-roll the dice that did not already come up as successes, and to combine the resultant successes of the two rolls. Until she employs this benefit, she enjoys +1 to her Defense rating. Once she uses her re-roll, this Defense bonus vanishes for the remainder of the scene.

Unarmed: The character fights with only those weapons nature has provided her, generally meaning her fists and feet. While fighting unarmed, she increases her base Dodge value by +2.

Essence

Exaltation carries with it a fragment of power handed down from one of the great powers of Creation. When one of the Chosen is newly-Exalted, this is little more than a humble ember, but it may grow with time and experience into a howling inferno of divine might. The intensity of this personal divinity is measured by a character's Essence rating.

Essence rating governs an Exalt's overall level of power. Crucially, it determines **how many Motes she may store in her Mote pool**, as well as how **many Motes she may spend in a single round**.

Exalted generally begin at Essence 1, and may raise this value over time through active exercise of and intense meditation upon the power within them (or, in plain language, by spending experience points; more detail is given below).

Mote Pool

The Chosen power their miracles with Motes of Essence: the quintessential power of the cosmos, distilled from their body, spirit, and breath, and granted divine power by the radiance of their Exaltation. The nature of a character's Exaltation and the power of her Essence rating determine how many Motes she can store at once, as well as how quickly she can spend her Motes to evoke Charms and other miracles.

Spending Motes

The number of Motes an Exalt can spend per round is limited by the power of her Essence rating. If she wants to use a Charm which demands more Motes to activate than she can spend in a single round (or is willing to spend without flaring her anima banner), then she must spend several consecutive turns spending Motes to fuel the effect before it activates.

Regaining Motes

Essence refines itself from the furnace of an Exalt's soul, empowered by the inherited power of a great divinity. While there are ways to stoke an Exalt's Essence to replenish itself more quickly, the Chosen are ultimately not reliant on external sources of power to renew themselves.

Of course, *renewable* power isn't the same thing as *limitless* power. An Exalt who spends her divine might with reckless abandon may soon find herself tapped out, trying in vain to conjure an inferno from the dim ashes of her exhausted spirit. This is a terrible thing, for an Exalt who has exhausted her Essence is little more than a particularly robust and resourceful mortal, and easy prey for her enemies.

Exalted characters may regain Motes in the following ways:

- Solars, Infernals, Dragon-Blooded, Getimians, Alchemicals, and Revelers gain (4 + Essence rating) Motes of Essence when the sun rises each day, whether they can see the sunrise or not. Lunars, Sidereals, Liminals, Nightmares, and Heart-Eaters gain the same amount at sunset.
- If an Exalted character begins a scene with 0 Motes, she gains 1 Mote.
- When within an attuned Manse or Demesne, or when bearing a socketed Hearthstone from an attuned Manse, the character gains Motes periodically; see the Manse Background on page XX.
- Abyssals gain (1 + Essence rating) Motes at sunset each day, unless in a shadowland or the Underworld, in which case they gain (4 + Essence rating) as normal. They have other options for Essence replenishment while in Creation, however.

Anima Banner

All human beings are surrounded at all times by an invisible spiritual aura, known as the *anima banner*. Within mere days of Exaltation, almost all Exalted instinctively learn to moderate their Essence expenditure, releasing its power with careful, measured precision as they bring forth miracles into the world through the use of their Charms. Such efforts are buffered by the invisible mantle of the anima, and do not disrupt the world.

There are times, however, when control and finesse must go by the wayside: when an Exalt needs to burn through her Essence with wild abandon, channeling *as much power as possible, as quickly as possible* in response to crisis or danger. When she does so, excess fragments of elemental or divine power flood into her anima and cause it to become visible to the naked eye, glowing and burning with a color and texture characteristic to her brand of Exaltation.

For most of the Chosen, when the anima banner first manifests, it does so as a bright but restrained nimbus of uncoiling power, like luminous smoke rising from the Exalt's silhouette, but continuing to burn Essence soon agitates it into a roaring, churning bonfire towering ten or twenty feet into the air, and sometimes even higher. For most sorts of Exalted, in moments of peak exertion this raging storm of divinity may even become a totemic image surmounting the character, one intensely personal to and emblematic of her, such as a raging aurochs or family crest.

Manifesting anima is thus *voluntary* on the part of the player. (It may or may not be voluntary on the part of the Exalt; young Exalts, in particular, can be startled into an anima manifestation by sudden threats or strong emotional responses.) An Exalt can only manifest her anima while spending Motes: the banner can't be forced into visibility simply by willing it to be so. She also must be spending her motes *on* something, like a Charm; she can't simply spend Motes on nothing to provoke her anima into visibility.

Once provoked into visibility, a manifested banner fades away (Essence rating \times 3) minutes after the Exalt stops actively spending Essence, dwindling slowly from a raging inferno to guttering embers before finally fading from sight altogether.

Once she decides to manifest her anima, the Exalt immediately gains more ready access to her Essence. She can spend Motes more freely than an Exalt who is carefully throttling her Essence so as not to provoke her anima into visibility.

Caste Marks

The Solar, Lunar, Sidereal, Abyssal, and Infernal Exalted, along with Nightmares and Getimians, are marked by invisible power-symbols upon their foreheads, denoting their castes. With a moment's concentration, any of those Chosen may reflexively cause the mystic symbol of their caste to appear and blaze upon their forehead in an unmistakably supernatural display. A character's caste mark also involuntarily appears while her anima banner does, glowing brightly enough to be visible through anything covering her forehead.

Essence and Mote Values

The following charts show how many Motes per round (MPR) an Exalt may spend with her anima muted, how many with it visible, and how many Motes overall she may hold at once.

Solars, Abyssals, and Infernals

Essence Rating	MPR (Muted)	MPR (Visible)	Mote Pool
1	1	2	10
2	2	3	12
3	2	4	15
4	2	5	17

5	3	5	20
6+	4	6	25

Dragon-Blooded

Essence Rating	MPR (Muted)	MPR (Visible)	Mote Pool
1	1	2	5
2	1	2	6
3	1	2	7
4	2	3	8
5	2	4	10
6+	3	5	13

Liminals

Essence Rating	MPR (Muted)	MPR (Visible)	Mote Pool
1	1	2	6
2	1	2	8
3	1	3	10
4	2	3	11
5	2	4	12
6+	3	5	15

Everyone Else

Essence Rating	MPR (Muted)	MPR (Visible)	Mote Pool
1	1	2	8
2	1	3	10
3	2	3	12
4	2	4	14
5	2	5	15
6+	3	5	18

Charms

The miracles of the Exalted take the form of a selection of distinct, Essence-fueled miracles known as Charms. Charms are divine acts channeled through human action, and generally manifest as incredible displays of prowess or power.

Different Exalted employ different Charms, and these various and sundry miracles are detailed in the chapters devoted to the particular varieties of Exalts. Exalted can generally only use their own Charms; Solars may only purchase and use Solar Charms, never Lunar or Sidereal Charms. Martial Arts Charms form a notable exception to this rule, and are detailed in Chapter Eleven.

Ratings

Charms come in three tiers of power, with accompanying dot ratings, measuring their relative power.

One-dot Charms are known as *lesser miracles of Essence* and are simple (but potent) expressions of Essence, easily-grasped and easily-manifested.

Two-dot Charms are known as *greater miracles of Essence* and are more complex and difficult to grasp than their one-dot counterparts. These are the workhorse Charms by which the Exalted accomplish most of their great feats.

Three-dot Charms are known as *superlative miracles of Essence* and are the most powerful and challenging of the divine powers of the Chosen. These are Charms of incredible power, able to change the course of history by their invocation. An Exalt is often defined by those superlative miracles she knows.

A Charm's dot rating represents how taxing it is for one of the Chosen to master its intricacies, and thus determines how expensive it is to purchase with experience points. Exalts are **not** obligated to purchase Charms in any sort of order. A player might purchase nothing but three-dot Charms for her character if she wishes, never buying a single two-dot Charm.

Caste and Favored Charms

Charms are divine power channeled through mortal effort. They spring from the aptitudes and abilities of the Chosen. As such, it's easier for Exalts to learn Charms that strongly resonate with their Caste or the things they're good at.

Charms are organized in lists by Caste. Furthermore, most Charms are described as *Resonant* with certain Abilities or Attributes. You can purchase all Charms that match your Caste at a significant discount, and can also apply this discount to any Charm *outside* of your Caste list if its Resonance matches at least one of your Caste or Favored Abilities or Attributes.

Charm Type and Timing

The **Exalted Demake** doesn't make use of Charm Types. By default, Charms must be used on your turn, using a type of action specified in the Charm's text. Some Charms, however, say in their rules that they are activated *reflexively*. These Charms do not use up an action, and can be used whenever they say they're to be used; if no further specifications are given, they can be used whenever you like. Occasionally, Charms also give other specific timings for their use.

Charm Use Restrictions

If you're familiar with Combos from **Exalted** First or Second Edition, the **Exalted Demake** doesn't use them. An Exalt can activate as many Charms as she likes, whenever she likes, so long as she's able to spend enough Motes that round to pay for them all; and within the limitation that she can only take one simple and one swift action per turn, if any of her Charms require such actions to use them.

Rarely, a character will be able to temporarily or permanently access Charms or similar powers that she would not normally have access to, such as via the Eclipse anima power or the Abyssal Vow of the Unconquered Hero. "Excellence" type Charms are never valid targets for such abilities; nor are the Sidereal Charm: Weaving the Threads or the Getimian Charm: Breaking the Threads.

Charms and Diegesis

So, to loop back to the old question: Are Charms actual things in-setting that characters talk about and learn and practice? The answer is *yes and no*.

Charms are a thing in-setting. They're a part of knowledgeable Exalted nomenclature. Dragon-Blooded talk about their Charms and learn about Charms at their secondary schools. There are First Age compendiums which attempted to compile every known Charm of several different eras. Peasants might not really know what Charms are, but people with any dots in Occult recognize the term and would define it as "a particular supernatural power not deriving from sorcery."

However: The Charms *in this book* aren't *necessarily* the Charms that people in the setting use. Some of them are; some of them aren't. Wyld-Shaping Technique is a very particular and famous Charm. The Lunar Charm Lore-Speaking Method is another example of a diegetic Charm: a lot of very, very powerful Lunars put a lot of work into designing it. On the other hand...

There's a Charm in Chapter Three, Fire and Stones Strike. It can be applied to any sort of attack and increases that attack's damage. Does it exist in-setting? Kind of. In-setting, Solars probably employ over a dozen different damage-boosting supernatural techniques that are particular to different fighting styles and weapons. One Solar drags her arrowheads across the ground before firing them and when she launches them, they're surrounded by a comet-trail of exploding sparks. She calls it the Glorious Solar Spike. Another sends Essence surging from the chakra at the pit of his belly into the tip of his mammoth tetsubo when he swings it overhead, causing it to flash with light and strike with enough force at the tip to pulverize a boulder. He calls it the Stone-Crushing Blow. I don't have time to write 300 Dawn Charms, so they all kind of get swept together into Fire and Stones Strike, which *is* probably a real Charm in-setting but is being used here as a stand-in for a lot of similar effects, the same way "based on true events" movies tend to compile the actions and accomplishments of a whole team of epidemiologists into one composite doctor character so as not to overwhelm the audience.

So yes, Charms are a real thing. Sometimes particular ones have some history and lore, and I'll talk about them. Sometimes a Charm is being presented as a broad abstraction of an array of different effects. Treat the presented Charmset as a thematic representation rather than an exhaustive be-all-end-all of Exalted potential. I've tried to make the powers in this book flavorful and revealing, but ultimately the map is not the territory.

Finally, not every magical output is necessarily a "real" Charm, even if it's modeled as one. "Terrestrial Circle Sorcery" is more of a narrative gateway than an actual Charm. Spells are their own different sort of magic. The "Excellence" Charms aren't particularly technique-like; the ability to push raw Essence into an action is so fundamental that it's nearly as much a part of an Exalt as her ability to spend Willpower. Charms have a particular logic and execution to them. Most of the things gods do tend to be described and thought of as "miracles." A river god who makes the river's banks swell and overflow is said to be enacting a miracle; when he repeatedly throws solidified lances of water at his foes, *that's* a Charm.

Experience Points and Character Advancement

The **Exalted Demake** uses two kinds of experience points, a bit like Third Edition. These are *standard experience points* and *supernal experience points*.

At the end of every session, the Storyteller goes over a checklist and talks to the players about the adventure they just had. This determines how many experience points get handed out. This also happens at the end of every story, with a few minutes spent reflecting on the story that was just told.

The basic expectation is that you'll *normally* hand out around 3 points of each sort, with higher values for really exciting sessions and fewer on slow nights.

End of Session Rewards

Automatic Reward (1 Standard): At the end of the session, everyone gets one standard experience point. If someone spent the whole session playing on their phone, or distracting everyone and deflating every scene with stupid jokes while you were trying to actually build a goddamn mood, or otherwise was disruptive, *don't withhold this reward*. That's a bitch move, you're not a cop or their mom, don't do that to your friends. They showed up and played; if their behavior was a problem, talk to them about it after the game like goddamned adults. Experience points are for buying cool new powers, not passive-aggressive behavior correction. If someone had to miss a session, they get the point too; no point penalizing them because their kid got bronchitis or whatever.

Character Spotlight (1 Standard): If, during the course of the session, any of the protagonists memorably expressed their Nature or Intimacies, or underwent a moment of character development, then everyone gains one standard experience point.

[Where Appropriate] On the Down-Low (1 Standard): The Solars are newly resurgent in a hostile world; Lunar Exalted frequently operate deep in the heartlands of the enemy's strength; Sidereals best serve destiny's needs by operating quietly; and so on. If the protagonists are a group of Exalted who have reasons to operate covertly, and they overall managed to achieve their goals without making a gigantic anima-flaring spectacle of themselves, they've all earned a standard experience point.

[Where Appropriate] Princes of the Earth (1 Standard): The Dragon-Blooded rule over the world by birthright; the Abyssal Exalted are the new royalty of the Underworld; the Infernal Exalted are the beloved of Hell. If the protagonists are a group of Exalted who have reasons to openly comport themselves as living divinities, and behaved according to that station, they've all earned a standard experience point.

Caste (1 Supernal): If any protagonist memorably expressed their character's Caste, Aspect, or theme of Exaltation, everyone earns a supernal experience point. This means if the Dawn solved problems with violence, if the Fire Aspect showed her deep passions (either by giving in to them or making a point of restraining them), if the Getimian had angst about the world being all wrong, or if a Solar just generally made a big splash in the world, everyone gets rewarded.

Support (1 Supernal): Sometimes the session is a frantic search through an ancient library and there's nothing for the Dawn Caste to punch. Sometimes it's an all-out fight scene and there's no chance for the Eclipse to do anything more social than yelling "Oh shit, everyone duck." If other protagonists whose skills didn't match the situation helped put the spotlight on the ones that did, if they helped another protagonist to shine and look cool doing *their* thing, then everyone gets a supernal experience point.

Stunting (1 Supernal): If the players went to the trouble of detailing what they were doing with neat descriptions, flashy moves, and acting out their dialogues more often than they just said "I

hit him with my daiklave” or “I roll to (Charisma + Presence) to convince him to fuck off,” everyone earns a supernal experience point.

Big Damn Hero Moment (1 Standard, 1 Supernal): If during the session there was ever any point where everyone at the table sat back and was impressed at how cool someone was, or the thing they’d done, or the badass entrance they made, or just how well they described their coolest Charm or whatever, then everyone gets a standard and a supernal experience point to celebrate.

End of Story Rewards

Survival (1 Standard, 1 Supernal): If a protagonist made it to the end of the story still alive (or at least not *permanently* dead), well, hey, it’s the Time of Tumult out there. Just making it is worth a point of both varieties.

Success (1 Standard, 1 Supernal): During the story, the protagonists were trying to do *something*. Did they get it done, at least to some reasonable degree? If so, everyone gets a standard and supernal experience point.

Tragedy (1 Standard, 1 Supernal): If the Great Curse (or a rough equivalent thereof) manifested and disrupted at least one protagonist’s life, then everyone in the group gets one standard and supernal experience point.

Danger (1 Standard, 1 Supernal): Did the characters face actual genuine no-shit danger and triumph in the face of it? If so, then triumphing over something *that* nasty is surely worth one standard and one supernal experience point.

Fuck That, I Hate Quiz Time

If you don’t care for the checklist, just hand out 3 standard and 3 supernal experience at the end of every session, and an additional 3-and-3 when a story wraps up.

Standard Experience Point Costs

Trait	Cost per dot
Attribute	12
Caste/Favored Attribute	9
Ability	6
Caste/Favored Ability	3
Purchased Background	3
Willpower	3

Supernal Experience Point Costs

Trait	Cost
Caste or Favored Charm	Charm rating x 3
Other Charm	Charm rating x 4
Martial Arts Charm (Favored)	Charm rating x 3

Martial Arts Charm (Unfavored)	Charm rating x 4
Forbidden Arts Charm (Favored)	Charm rating x 4
Forbidden Arts Charm (Unfavored)	Charm rating x 5
Terrestrial Spell (Favored)	3
Terrestrial Spell (Unfavored)	4
Celestial Spell (Favored)	6
Celestial Spell (Unfavored)	8
Solar Spell (Favored)	9
Solar Spell (Unfavored)	12

Essence Progression

Essence progression in the **Exalted Demake** works a lot like Third Edition. Would just having you spend experience points to raise the trait feel more old school? Yes. Did doing it that way absolutely gargle balls? Also yes. So we're not doing that.

Essence passively rises over time as you gain experience wielding your Exalted might. When you've earned *and spent* certain total amounts of supernal experience points, your Essence rating goes up.

Essence doesn't generally rise *immediately* after spending sufficient experience, although it's possible for it to happen in a blazing moment of dramatic glory. What's more common is for Essence to increase after the end of the current story, when the Exalt feels the burgeoning power and potential within herself and either withdraws into seclusion to meditate upon it and coax forth its awakening, or else engages in feverish training to break that nascent power out of its shell.

The chart below shows how many supernal experience points are necessary before an Exalt becomes eligible to raise her Essence. You *can* still spend bonus points during character creation to "jump ahead" and have a higher starting Essence rating. If you do so, subtract 20 from all given numbers if you start at Essence 2, 55 if you start at Essence 3, or 100 if you start at Essence 4.

Essence Rating	Supernal Experience Points spent
2	20
3	55
4	100
5	250

You also might notice that, compared to the chart in **EX3**, this uses *substantially* lower experience thresholds. If you're using the recommendations in this chapter, you'll be averaging four-ish supernal XP per session overall (roughly 3 per session, plus roughly 3 more as end-of-story bonus every few sessions), compared to **EX3's** flat 5-per-session. Thus, smaller numbers.

No value for Essence 6+ has been provided, as if you want to go there, that's an epic accomplishment even by the lofty standards of the Chosen, and you'll need to craft an appropriate story for your ascension rather than just spending enough experience to float up there.

Essence Progression and Diegesis

These are the assumptions the **Exalted Demake** makes about Essence ratings and Essence progression:

First, Essence as a trait runs from 1 to, potentially, 10. The most powerful beings in the entire cosmos have an Essence rating of 10. The Unconquered Sun is an Essence 10 god. The Yozis are Essence 10 beings. There are, theoretically, Essence 10 Exalted. A being's Essence rating measures, in simple terms, the intensity and scale of its spiritual and supernatural power.

For the vast majority of beings, Essence is a fixed value. Nearly every mortal is born with Essence 1 and dies with Essence 1. Most gods come into being with a particular Essence rating, dictated by the size and importance of their domain, and remain that way for eternity. Demons, likewise, are born with a fixed Essence rating, and this does not change over the course of millennia.

(There are, of course, always ways to cheat. If a god manages to get herself assigned a new divine portfolio, this might make her drastically stronger or weaker. Gods granted a great deal of worship sometimes see their Essence rating rise by a point, and the same is true of demons. But for the most part, Essence is static.)

For a few beings, this is not so. Elementals grow mightier as they grow older, though this accumulation becomes increasingly marginal as time goes on. Fair Folk may unpredictably increase in power as they strengthen their internal narratives. Ghosts can somewhat refine their Essence through spiritual cultivation and worship.

The Exalted, most of all, possess the capacity for dramatic personal growth.

Essence 1: Newly-Exalted, the Chosen have an Essence signature hardly above that of the mortals around them. The power within them is yet but a spark, shedding ambient divinity... which, *unlike* the mortals around them, one of the Exalted may channel into potent miracles in the form of her Charms. Still, at this point her supernatural manifestations are weak and fleeting, and her command of her Essence slow and sluggish, accomplished only with difficulty, and her reserves of might easily exhausted.

Essence 2: This is the "maturity" of Exalted power — the point where the supernatural world generally considers an Essence-user to have gained competence and control over her Essence. Essence Fever is less of a constant burden. Charms are no longer brief flickers of power. Motes flow more freely.

It is the nature of Exaltation's power to increase over time, but only up to a point. Even the most idle of the Chosen will eventually find that her Essence thickens and intensifies enough to bring her to Essence 2 within a matter of a few short years, or a couple of decades at the outside. Beyond this point, she has no guarantees, and must seek power for herself. Active, ambitious Celestial Exalted may reach this rank in a matter of months, while for Dragon-Blooded the process generally takes several years.

Essence 3: There are many, many, *many* roads an Exalt might walk in the course of increasing her potency. Vigorous exercise of her supernatural powers, exposure to new vistas and experiences, and the simple thrill of danger, accomplishment, and emotional highs and lows are generally enough to goad an Exalt to Essence 3 sooner or later. At this stage, she commands substantial reserves of Essence and may generally channel her power with sufficient freedom to produce truly impressive miracles by weaving several Charms together in tandem.

Most Exalted eventually reach this level of power, and some never pass beyond it.

Essence 4: No one reaches Essence 4 simply by having adventures and a keen knack for personal growth. This is the point where Essence cultivation becomes an active process, requiring a conscious effort to push the boundaries of an Exalt's power. Many Exalts delve into sorcery and study the characteristics of Essence itself in the course of trying to strengthen their own, while others engage in martial arts practices to cultivate and refine their supernatural strength. Meditation, exercise, and study are the steady companions of those seeking advanced mastery of their divine power.

This is the point where Essence growth becomes incremental. The Chosen do not leap to new heights of power, they gain a few precious inches of progress toward their next landmark at a time, and they sweat and struggle for each of those inches. Many Dragon-Blooded never reach Essence 4; for those who die of old age, this is the most common rating at which they do so. The majority of Celestials get to Essence 4 sooner or later, but it's a journey of decades or centuries for many, and often the end of the road to power.

Essence 5: True mastery. Reaching Essence 5 requires an intensification of the practices that lead to Essence 4, often combined with special dietary regimes, specific training regimens intended to produce no result other than cultivating stronger Essence, petitioning blessings from powerful spirits, deliberate exposure to dangerously powerful Essence manifestations, and harrowing ordeals that demand the Exalt push her already quite considerable supernatural power to the limit and beyond.

Few Dragon-Blooded accomplish this level of Essence refinement. Setting aside those who die before they have the chance to challenge these rarefied heights, only about half of Celestial Exalted ever manage to reach Essence 5. Having done so, they enjoy comprehensive command of their supernatural might, bountiful reserves of power, and potent miracles whose effects linger well past the moment of their invocation. Further cultivation is possible at Essence 5 — indeed, a great deal of it — but simply repeating the steps that led to this rating produces only minute, incremental gains in power. These can add up over a very long time, but not enough to constitute a true breakthrough.

Power Beyond Reason

Very, very few Exalted in the Age of Sorrows ever surpass Essence 5. The territory beyond that point is sparsely documented and largely unexplored. Even in the First Age, breaking through “the Essence barrier” was a noteworthy accomplishment. Not impossible, but so daunting and demanding that even in an age of incredibly sophisticated cultivation theories and artifacts dedicated to facilitating such exercises, few made serious attempts at the challenge and fewer still succeeded. It is not, after all, as though an Essence 5 Exalt lacks for power. Solars with “mere” mastery of their Essence could and did erase cities, turn deserts into verdant forests, and slay the makers of the world.

For more details on Essence 6+, see **Volume IV**'s Appendix. For standard games, Essence 6+ is considered to be an aspirational state rather than something to be accomplished during the scope of a chronicle. Those who pursued such power, even in the former Age, almost never achieved it within the span of a mortal lifetime.

Uncanny Features

Characters who take the Uncanny Background visibly differ from the common folk of Creation. Usually, taking that Background means that a character was born beastfolk: a person with animalistic features. Beastfolk are widely feared and discriminated against. They're often descended from the Lunar Exalted, though some beastfolk are the result of Wyld mutations that have stabilized within a population over time. Despite their odd appearance, beastfolk are as human as anyone else, and entirely capable of Exaltation.

The next most common source of Uncanny features is the Wyld, which can warp the bodies and minds of those who suffer prolonged exposure to its power. There's a certain threshold beyond which Wyld mutants can't effectively survive within Creation, their anatomy simply too impossible for prosaic reality, but that threshold is somewhere past the scope of what you can buy with five dots of Uncanny. Wyld mutation doesn't disqualify a hero from receiving the power of Exaltation; moreover, Exaltation doesn't provide immunity to permanent transformation by the Wyld!

Finally, there are a few people who have been granted strange transformative blessings by gods (or demons), or been subjected to mystic experimentation by a sorcerer. The transformations inflicted on them can also be modeled with the Uncanny Background.

Aspects

- **Bioluminescent:** The character's body can illuminate itself and its surroundings with natural light-producing organs without recourse to anima flare. The character has significant control over the colors and patterns she displays, and might devise a secret language around her bioluminescent signals.
- **Body Spikes:** The character is covered in spikes, quills, bony protrusions, or something similar. Anyone who directs an unarmed attack against her or is grappled by must resist a one-time hazard (difficulty 8, damage 2, lacerated).
- **Bonesmasher:** The character is equipped with blunt weapons such as a bony club-tail, spiraling horns, or massive crushing fists made of stone. Her unarmed attacks inflict +1 base damage and may inflict dazed Wounds.
- **Bounding Legs:** Once per scene, the character may leap up to a vertically adjacent zone she would otherwise have no means of reaching, or may bypass using complex movement to do so.
- **Burrower:** The character's body is adapted for digging. She can tunnel through anything softer than solid rock as a form of complex movement.
- **Camouflage:** The character is adept at blending in with her environment. Reduce the difficulty of Stealth attempts by -2.
- **Centaur:** The character has the lower body of a horse, antelope, or similar quadruped. Alternately, she might have the lower body of a spider, or a serpent. In any case, she enjoys the benefits of mounted combat (see p. XX), substituting Athletics in place of Ride.

- **Deadly Breath:** The character can issue some deadly expulsion such as fire or corrosive gas (Essence rating) times per scene. This is an attack made with Dexterity + (Archery or Thrown) against targets up to one zone away, and inflicts 3 base damage.
- **Extra Limbs:** The character possesses more than the normal compliment of arms and legs, or perhaps sports a prehensile tail or trunk. This enables her to potentially use multiple fighting styles (see p. XX) at once. If she goes all-in on dual wielding, then her dual wielding benefit lets her select a single failed die to roll a third time after her initial reroll. This feature also grants the character more leeway to remain capable of action in the face of multiple “disabled arm” wounds.
- **Fins:** The character has piscine anatomy. She doesn’t treat swimming as complex movement, and while in the water she enjoys the benefits of mounted combat (see p. XX), substituting Athletics in place of Ride, but treats all movement on dry land as complex movement.
- **Flexible/Slime:** The character can slither, squirm, or disjoin herself to gain great flexibility, or else is covered in glistening slime. The difficulty of all rolls to squeeze through tight spaces or escape from bonds are reduced by –2. Squeezing through tight gaps doesn’t count as complex movement.
- **Gills:** The character is fully amphibious and may breathe underwater or in the open air.
- **Hardiness:** The character is immune to environmental penalties and incidental damage from a certain type of harsh environment, and doesn’t count the terrain in that type of environment as requiring complex movement.
- **Horrible Odor:** The character can project a nauseating stink which inflicts a –2 dice penalty on all actions taken by anything within the same zone which has a sense of smell.
- **Keen (Sense):** One of the character’s senses (sight, hearing, or smell) is incredibly acute. Lower the difficulty of all Perception rolls using that sense by –2.
- **Natural Weapons:** The character is equipped with deadly natural weapons such as claws, fangs, or horns. Her unarmed attacks inflict +1 base damage and can inflict lacerated Wounds.
- **Nightvision:** The character can operate in the dark with no more difficulty than in broad daylight.
- **Poisonous Flesh:** The character’s flesh and blood are deadly if ingested. Anyone who bites the character or drinks her blood is immediately dosed with arrow frog poison (see p. XX).
- **Rugged Hide:** The character is covered in some manner of natural protection: a carapace, thick fur, scales, or just a tough, leathery hide. Increase her Soak rating by +1.
- **Stealthy:** The character has foot pads, dark coloration, and other adaptations to help her creep up on her prey. Add +2 dice to all Stealth rolls.
- **Swift Stride:** Lower the difficulty of all chase or foot race rolls by –2. Once per scene, the character may pay a point of Willpower to move two zones on her turn, but doing so uses up both her swift and simple actions.
- **Tentacles:** The character has, if not actual tentacles, then at least some body parts of unusual length, such as a long prehensile tail, frog tongue, or very long neck. The character can take appropriate actions against targets in an adjacent zone.

- **Terrible Grasp:** Once per scene, the character may prevent someone she strikes with an unarmed attack from moving for the rest of the current *and* the following round, so long as she also doesn't move.
- **Venomous:** The character may inject snake venom (see p. XX) with one of her natural attacks, so long as that attack could be logically stunted to shed the target's blood; if she lacks exotic options such as tail stingers or claws, a bite will do the trick. Her envenomed bite counts as an unarmed attack.
- **Wall Crawler:** The character can climb up and cling to walls without the need of a roll, and without treating the wall-climbing as complex movement.
- **Webbed Hands and Feet:** The character can move through water as easily as though on dry land. Swimming doesn't count as complex movement.
- **Webbing:** The character can project a sticky substance such as webbing or a slimy glue, with a range up to one zone away. Roll Dexterity + (Archery or Thrown) to aim this projectile. Anyone struck by it suffers a -2 die penalty to all actions per coating until they use a simple action to roll (Strength + Athletics) against difficulty 7 to disentangle themselves. Webbed or otherwise "stuck" victims also cannot leave their current zone until they free themselves.
- **Wings:** The character is capable of flight, though it is considered a form of complex movement.

Mysticism

Creation abounds with minor miracles which those of proper inclination or learning can enact. Mysticism is the common magic of mortal folk across the five directions, stirring the Essence of the natural world through ritual or proper action.

Exalts may enhance the Mystic Arts with "Excellence"-type Charms. Attribute-based Exalted do so by empowering the rolled Attribute, while Ability-based Exalted may treat a rating in a given Mystic Art as though it were the Occult Ability. Thus, a Solar rolling Intelligence + Astrology could use Excellence of the Blazing Sun to add a number of dice equal to her Intelligence + (the lower of Astrology or Occult ratings).

Alchemy (Intelligence or Stamina)

There are two major forms of alchemy in Creation: external and internal.

External alchemy is the standard form of the art, in which different substances are combined to produce mystically efficacious results. This form of alchemy is rolled using Intelligence + Alchemy, with a difficulty that varies depending on the complexity and power of the preparation.

Internal alchemy is a rare and much more dangerous art, in which the alchemist imbibes the ingredients in their raw forms herself and transforms them into a magically effective (and non-lethal; many alchemy ingredients are incredibly toxic) substance within her own body. This process uses Stamina + Alchemy, with a difficulty that varies based on the toxicity of the ingredients and fairly dire repercussions for a failure or botch.

External alchemy is used to prepare a variety of wondrous substances, including but not limited to drugs that permit their users to interact with ghosts; anagathic elixirs that prolong life; incense that helps those who breathe it fight off disease; and even rare and expensive vials of sweet cordial, a miraculous healing potion. Internal alchemy can also produce these results, but they

are only of use to the alchemist herself, as the reaction occurs within her body and cannot be stored or passed on to others.

Most alchemists stick to tried-and-true formulas passed down from their mentors or uncovered in alchemical manuscripts of hopefully genuine authenticity (nonsense alchemy formulae manufactured by con-artists abound, sadly). This is because the art is potentially fairly volatile when something goes wrong, and because alchemy always uses at least one or two uncommon ingredients with some degree of intrinsic magic to them, often harvested from a Demesne or the lands near one of the Elemental Poles, cut from the corpse of a Wyld mutant, and so on. That is to say, alchemy ingredients are often difficult to procure, quite specific, and *expensive*. Trying to use a substitute ingredient causes a formula to demand three successes rather than merely one.

Designing a new alchemical formula from scratch is a difficult and dangerous process requiring months of experimentation with mystically potent ingredients. This is represented by an extended roll (Intelligence + Alchemy) roll at difficulty 9, with an interval of one month and a goal of (the formula's final difficulty to make once perfected times 5). Use the example formulae provided here as benchmarks.

Most alchemy takes a couple of hours to mix up once the ingredients have been procured. A few formulae can take much longer, involving hours of steeping, ritually preparing, or purifying certain materials until they are suitable for use.

- **Alchemical Poison (difficulty 6, Resources •):** This distressingly cheap and easy formula makes a dose of alchemical poison, as seen on page XX.
- **Cleansing Unguent (difficulty 6, Resources •):** This paste, smeared on a patient's wounds, acts as an automatically successful attempt to stanch bleeding and to treat infection. It can retain its potency for up to three years if stored somewhere cool and dry.
- **Maiden Tea (difficulty 6, Resources •):** Produced from the bitter fruit of a low bush that grows in warm climates throughout Creation, this drug renders a woman infertile for a month or a man infertile for a week. This drug is a favorite of concubines, high-class courtesans, women having affairs while their partners are away and wealthy men who wish to avoid siring bastard heirs.
- **Philtre of Desire (difficulty 6, Resources ••):** This nasty mixture makes the person who drinks it intensely suggestible for the next hour, treating any request that doesn't violate their Nature or an Intimacy as an inconvenience.
- **Randy Ox Formula (difficulty 6, Resources ••):** This gritty drink, made primarily of ox-blood and sands gathered near the Pole of Fire, acts as a reliable cure for impotence.
- **Draught of Blessed Respite (difficulty 7, Resources ••):** This soothing, mint-green drink puts the person who consumes it into a deep and restful sleep. It takes a Willpower roll against difficulty 8 not to fall asleep within fifteen minutes after consuming the formula, and the sleeper automatically regains Willpower upon awakening even if she would normally be prevented from doing so by a Derangement or by failing a Fatigue roll.
- **Heroic Revitalization Brew (difficulty 7, Resources ••):** Made of the blood of predators mixed with certain herbs, this drink causes a mortal who imbibes it to heal her next Wound as though she were Exalted.

- **Night Eagle Potion (difficulty 7, Resources ●●):** Whoever drinks this potion—which must be very carefully mixed indeed, as its primary ingredient is several varieties of nightshades—gains superlative night vision and keen sight for the next six hours, ignoring all penalties to vision due to distance or poor lighting.
- **Universal Antivenom Tincture (difficulty 7, Resources ●●):** This potion acts as a universal antidote to all poisons that do not inflict aggravated damage. It retains its potency indefinitely so long as it is not subjected to sunlight, which causes its components to separate and lose their efficacy within three hours.
- **Ghost Tea (difficulty 8, Resources ●●●):** Made from the petals of rare flowers that grow in certain shadowlands, anyone who imbibes this tea becomes able to perceive and interact with dematerialized ghosts for several hours afterwards.
- **Seven Bounties Paste (difficulty 8, Resources ●●●):** Seven Bounties Paste is made from the roots of seven rare plants. Mixed with alcohol, it makes a bitter, red, hot-tasting paste usually mixed with rice and broth to make it palatable. It is used to treat disease: after imbibing Seven Bounties Paste, someone trying to throw off a disease does not increase his penalty after failing a resistance roll the next seven times this occurs.
- **Tiger Heart Salve (difficulty 8, Resources ●●●):** Rubbed into several major muscle groups, this greasy mixture makes the person who uses it completely immune to Wound penalties or any other pain-based penalties for one scene, but inflicts an aggravated drained Wound at the end of the scene as it overtaxes their body.
- **Wind-Fire Potion (difficulty 8, Resources ●●):** This powerful battlefield elixir strengthens warriors as they head into battle, at the cost of clouding their thoughts. For one scene after taking a Wind-Fire Potion, a character gains +1 to one of her physical Attributes, but suffers a –1 penalty on all mental Attribute rolls for the next 24 hours. Taking a double dose of Wind-Fire Potion can raise a second Attribute by +1, but inflicts an aggravated drained Wound. Taking any more than, while it does grant a +1 to the remaining physical Attribute, also provokes an immediate difficulty 9 (Stamina + Resistance) roll, requiring a number of successes equal to the number of dosages past two the foolhardy fighter has taken. Success merely inflicts a second aggravated drained Wound, while failure inflicts an aggravated mauled Wound in the form of a massive heart attack.
- **Age-Staving Cordial (difficulty 9, Resources ●●●●):** Created from the sap of a vine found in the deep jungles of the Far East combined with the diluted poison of a species of small, brightly-colored clams found on the coasts of the South and West, this drug takes the form of small packets of dark-red powder which are mixed with wine. Depending on how frequently this brew is imbibed, the user's aging is slowed by anywhere from 10% to 45%.
- **Heavenly Transmutation Process (difficulty 9, Resources ●●●●):** This is actually a wide variety of different formula for transforming one substance into another, such as lead into gold, granite into marble, and so on. Unfortunately, no formula has ever been found that can refine raw common elements into the magical materials, and alchemy is a poor money-making scheme as the solvents necessary to transform a few nuggets of, say, zinc into silver, tend to cost about as much as the silver nuggets produced at the end of the process.
- **Sweet Cordial (difficulty 9, Resources ●●●●):** Brewed from orchids found only in the Southeast jungles, tubers from the slopes of the Imperial Mountain, and the glands of certain deep-sea fish

found only near the Elemental Pole of Water, this purple cordial's overwhelming sweetness is matched only by the astronomical prices it commands on the open market. A character who imbibes Sweet Cordial heals the most severe Wound she is afflicted by over the next hour, even if it aggravated. If she has no Wounds, she heals all damage she may have over the course of that hour instead. Taking Sweet Cordial again before 28 days pass to clear its effects from her system does not heal the character, but instead inflicts hours of violent, upsetting hallucinations, inflicting a -4 penalty to all actions.

Astrology (Intelligence or Wits)

The workings of destiny, many believe, are writ in the stars. Through painstaking study of the night sky, the astrologist may draw up a horoscope and determine the most likely course for the future to take, or determine whether or not a particular course of action is likely to be auspicious. All of these are (Intelligence + Astrology) rolls requiring most of a night spent studying the stars. The difficulty to determine if a particular enterprise is auspicious is 6. The difficulty to determine what the future is likely to hold for a person is 7. The difficulty to determine the same for an organization, nation, war, or other broad sweep of history is 8.

Despite the name of this form of mysticism, there are many other forms of divination in Creation in addition to the reading of the stars. Some mystics attempt to glimpse the future in tea leaves, the cracks that form in scapulae set in a hot flame, or in the patterns made by the unwinding entrails of sacrificial animals (or even people). These methods are generally much quicker than astrology, and do not require waiting for a clear night, but are substantially less precise. They use (Wits + Astrology), and the difficulty of all inquiries is $+1$ higher than with stargazing.

Banishment (Manipulation)

Banishing a ghost, demon, or elemental is a very specialized form of ritual involving abjurations of the target that mix together particular anathemas they cannot stand such as the ringing of bells or the burning of incense with prayers for intervention. Generally this culminates in a contested (Manipulation + Banishment) roll against the target's (Willpower + Essence); if the exorcist gains more successes, the target is driven from her presence. If she gains five more successes, a ghost is sent howling back into the Underworld, an elemental is forced to flee the area for a month, and a demon is driven from her presence for three days, during which time the Bureau of Destiny dispatches a Sidereal Exalt to deal with the disruptive spirit.

Enchantment (Wits)

The art of enchantment is a means of stealing a bit of luck from the world and sealing it into a special talisman, often known as a walkaway. Talismans can look like almost anything, and fakes abound. A true talisman must be crafted by a mystic, who rolls (Wits + Enchantment) during its forging. The difficulty of this roll is based on the worth of the talisman: $(9 - \text{the object's Resources value})$.

A walkaway will deflect one terrible mishap per two successes rolled during its creation. This converts a botch into a mere failure, staves off one incidence of Wyld mutation, or leaves a character merely injured when she might have otherwise been killed.

Exorcism (Charisma)

Evicting a ghost or other spirit from a person, beast, or object is a contested ritual roll of (Charisma + Exorcism) against the spirit's (Willpower + Essence), both at difficulty 6. If the

exorcist gains more successes, the spirit is forced out of its host. Exorcism generally demands that the host be restrained or idle.

Summoning (Charisma)

Many and varied are the arts of summoning. Unlike the sorcerer's art, mystical summons entice and invite but do not bind. A mystic merely opens the way for what she calls and intrigues it enough to answer her summons.

Summoning beasts requires the mystic to possess at least Survival 3+. After enacting an appropriate ritual, roll (Charisma + Summoning) against a difficulty of the beast's Willpower. The mystic may either attempt to summon a great number of her target species, or may endeavor to receive a swift response to her summons; in any case, the more successes rolled, the more the result of her endeavors matches her desire. Calming a summoned creature requires another (Charisma + Summoning) roll, again rolled against its Willpower. One success is enough to prevent a creature from immediately attacking or fleeing. Three or more are needed to interact with it safely, while five will compel its obedience (but cannot make it betray its Nature).

Summoning a person requires that the summoner know the target's name and possess a part of his body, such as nail clippings, hair, or the like. This sample is consumed in a summoning ritual. Make a resisted roll of (Charisma + Summoning) against the target's Willpower, with the summoning roll at difficulty 8 and the Willpower roll at difficulty 6. Depending on how many more successes the summoner wins by, causality will nudge her target toward her presence with greater and greater urgency. Exalted are generally too powerful to be turned from their course with such feeble magic unless they're already letting happenstance carry them where it will.

Demon summoning is perilously simple, requiring only a difficulty 9 (Charisma + Summoning) roll and a suitable offering. Neomah and teodozja will often answer a summons for nothing more than the opportunity to ply their respective trades, while an erymanthus will answer the blood of a cat; most other demons require a human sacrifice. The demon arrives in the summoner's presence unbound and free to do as it pleases. Demons of the Second Circle require specialized, difficult-to-discover rituals. Five successes are required to beckon them, and they can only be invited, not compelled to appear. Third Circle demons are beyond the power of lesser magic.

Elementals can be readily beckoned with simple rituals by rolling (Charisma + Summoning) against difficulty 8 and generating a number of successes equal to their Essence rating, but arrive free-willed and often impatient to discover why they have been diverted from their course to answer to a mortal.

Summoning ghosts is extremely easy. All that is required is the individual's name and a dish full of human blood (one damage level's worth). The difficulty of this (Charisma + Summoning) roll is 7, or 6 if at the ghost's grave or the location of her corpse. Simply calling a ghost does not compel him to obey the summoner in any way.

Finally, it is not possible for humans to compel a god to appear before them. Prayer (see p. XX) is as close as humans can come to beckoning the divine.

Warding (Manipulation)

Warding is the simplest and most fundamental of the mystic arts, and nearly every community of any size in Creation possesses a number of individuals initiated into its secrets.

Warding comprises a very great number of rituals tailored to barring different sorts of supernatural beings. A ward of salt is efficacious at repelling ghosts, while talismans of iron bar the advance of the Fair Folk. More specifically, hungry ghosts are afraid of lily blossoms, while a dreamcatcher will defend against silverwights. Establishing a ward to repel a broad class of beings requires a long ritual and a (Manipulation + Warding) roll against difficulty 8, while repelling a particular sort of creature is difficulty 7.

When a barred being tries to bypass a ward, subtract its Essence rating from the successes rolled to create the ward. Essence 4+ entities and all Exalted double their Essence rating for this purpose, while Essence 8+ entities triple their effective Essence rating. Consult the remaining effective successes to determine what happens:

Successes	Result
------------------	---------------

0	The target hesitates for a turn before tearing through the ward.
1	The target can approach the ward and even reach through it, but cannot employ magic against anyone on the other side of the ward.
2	The target can walk up to the ward but cannot penetrate it at all.
3	The target must make a successful difficulty 9 Willpower roll to even approach the ward.
4+	The target cannot approach the ward at all and must roll Willpower against difficulty 8 to even remain within sight of it.

Most wards require regular maintenance and refreshing of their power to remain efficacious unless created with painstaking care and expensive material outlays (investing either Resources 4+ or spending months or years on their creation).

Weather Working (Charisma or Appearance)

It is not possible to directly influence the weather through mere ritual action. What *is* possible is to enact dances, performances, songs, and rituals known to be pleasing to gods and elementals who influence the wind and sea. Weather working requires long, long hours of extended rituals, chants, dances, song, or other offerings which stir local Essence flows into patterns which induce particular moods in spirits touched by them.

Weather working is a roll of (Charisma or Appearance) + Weather Working. Six hours of work produces a difficulty of 9, twelve hours difficulty 8, and an entire day's uninterrupted labor difficulty 7. The more successes rolled, the stronger the result. Weather working can't produce flatly impossible results such as a snowstorm in the deep desert.

Inheritance

Characters with Inheritance are born to power or had it infused into them, though that Background describes lesser powers than Exaltation. Most of the time, characters with Inheritance are the offspring of a mortal and a supernatural being: God-Blooded, Ghost-Blooded, Demon-Blooded, or Fae-Blooded. Inheritance also sometimes describes the mortal children of powerful Celestial Exalted, such as the Moon-Touched heroes who often serve as champions or emissaries of elder Lunars. On rarer occasions, Inheritance represents a person transformed by the power of sorcery.

It is possible for Exalted to be uplifted from among the ranks of the God-Blooded and other minor inheritors of supernatural power, though they cannot have an Inheritance rating above three dots.

- **Anima Imitation (1 point):** The character gains a replica of an Exalted anima power. If it requires the expenditure of a Mote or anima flare, the character may instead spend 1 Willpower to trigger it. Exalted cannot have this power, as they already have an anima power; this feature is normally seen on their children.
- **Atrocity Gateway (1 point):** Temporary paths between Creation and Hell sometimes open when an exiled man starves to death in darkness, when a temple of the gods is ritually defiled by vivisection of one of the faithful upon the altar, when a statue of the Unconquered Sun is brought to life and commanded to engage in sexual congress with a corpse, and in the wake of other highly-specific atrocities. The character has the gift of sanctifying any such baroque atrocity she witnesses or commits by spending a point of Willpower to travel into and out of Hell, potentially bringing along a few companions with her. This Inheritance is restricted to Demon-Blooded.
- **Attunement (1 point):** The character can attune to a single magical item, reducing her permanent Willpower rating instead of Essence if it has an attunement cost higher than 0. Exalts can't take this Inheritance since they already possess this power.
- **Banquet of Blood (2 points):** Once per day, the character may drink at least one health level's worth of human blood that has been offered to her freely. Doing so allows her to regain a point of Willpower. Many Ghost-Blooded have this Inheritance.
- **Beauty of the Dance (1 point):** When the character dances or sings, observers without extremely pressing business must succeed at a difficulty 8 Willpower roll to do anything other than watch her perform. This is a common Inheritance of Demon-Blooded, but not exclusive to them.
- **Brand of Power (1 point):** The character may, with a moment's concentration, manifest a supernatural mark somewhere on her body, indicating her connection to a great supernatural power — generally her parent. If she is the daughter of Ligier, the Green Sun, then lesser demons who see the mark know that they are trifling with one who may be precious to one of the penultimate lords of Hell. If she is the daughter of Ahlat, then other gods know they risk the war-god's ire by harming her.
- **Defensive Power (1 point):** The character can spend 1 Willpower to conjure some manner of supernatural protection, be it hardened flesh like stone or an aura of steel-edged feathers swirling about her. She gains +1 Soak rating for the rest of the scene.
- **Deathwalker (1 point):** The character can always perceive and interact with ghosts, regardless of either of their states of materialization. This power is usually exclusive to Ghost-Blooded.
- **Dematerialization (3 points):** The character may spend 2 Willpower and a simple action in concentration to translate her flesh to spirit-stuff. At the end of the *following* round she dematerializes. She may later resume her material form by spending a simple action in concentration, becoming solid and visible again at the end of the next round.
- **Divine Blessing (2 or 3 points):** The character's efforts are touched by the grace of divinity. Each purchase of this Inheritance grants a Caste Ability (for 2 points) or a Caste Attribute (for 3 points). Exalted characters cannot take this Inheritance.

- **Domain Manipulation (3 points):** The character may spend 1 Willpower and roll her Essence rating as a simple action against a difficulty set by the Storyteller to evoke natural miracles from her parent's domain. Natural miracles are things that it would make sense for the domain to do. If the domain is a river, then it might flood its banks or offer up an abundance of fish. If the domain is a field, it might become free of pests or offer a bountiful harvest. If the domain is a city, all the shops might be closed, but the city could not be made invisible or commanded to fly, for that is not the way of cities. This Inheritance is only available to God-Blooded.
- **Draught of Passion (2 points):** Once per day, whenever the character witnesses someone experiencing a particular powerful emotion, she may roll her Willpower rating against difficulty 9 as a swift action. Success allows her to regain Willpower as though she had satisfied her Nature.
- **Dreamscape (1 points):** The character may spend 1 Willpower and use a simple action to send her mind into the dreams of a sleeping target within the same zone. There, she can make a contested Willpower roll against the dreamer to take control of his dreams.
- **Elemental Dominion (2 points):** The character can manipulate one of the five elements by rolling (Appearance, Charisma, or Intelligence) + (Craft or Occult) as a simple action, causing trees to bend into new shapes or grow quickly, flames to sculpt themselves into pleasing designs or spread rapidly, boulders to reshape themselves into thrones, and so forth. The more impressive the display, the higher the difficulty. Used as an attack, the elements have a base damage of 5 (bruised, lacerated, or burned, depending). This Inheritance is primarily found among the offspring of elementals, but might also be imbued by a sorcerer or inherited from a god with strong elemental associations.
- **Elemental Immunity (2 points):** The character can reflexively spend 1 Willpower to become immune to harm from a specific element for the rest of the scene (in the case of water, she also gains the ability to breathe underwater; earth does not provide immunity to metal weapons). This Inheritance is primarily found among the offspring of elementals, but might also be imbued by a sorcerer or inherited from a god with strong elemental associations.
- **Feral Soul (3 points):** The character may spend 1 Willpower and a simple action of concentration to separate her lower soul from her body as a hungry ghost for the rest of the scene, which promptly attacks her enemies. The character cannot spend Willpower while her lower soul is elsewhere. If it is destroyed, she immediately loses all of her Willpower points and cannot use this power again for the rest of the story. This power is exclusive to Ghost-Blooded.
- **Goblin Body (Variable points):** For each point invested in this power, select one Uncanny feature. The character may spend a simple action in concentration and make a difficulty 8 Willpower roll to transform into her Goblin Body shape, then do the same to change back.
- **God-Body (1 point):** The character heals at the same rate and with the same perfection as one of the Exalted. Exalts can't take this Inheritance since they already possess this power.
- **Harrow the Mind (2 points):** The character can craft phantasmal illusions. She must spend a point of Willpower, suffer a level of Aggravated damage, and make a (Manipulation + Empathy) roll as a simple action to craft these illusions. The difficulty for the illusionist is set by how elaborate the illusions are. **Illusions must relate to the character's heritage.** The daughter of a fire elemental could conjure phantom flames or an illusory fire spirit, but not illusory zombies. The daughter of a ghost could devise haunting, creepy images, or craft illusions of the dearly

departed. A cursory examination reveals that the illusions are precisely that, but they can still serve to make a point, establish a mood, or frighten people. Stunts taking advantage of the illusion for dramatic effect lower their difficulty by -1 . The character must suffer another level of damage every ten minutes to sustain the illusions.

- **Impossible Beauty (3 points):** The character gains one additional dot of Appearance, which may raise her rating as high as 6.
- **Longevity (0 or 1 point):** The character ages very, very slowly, and barring violence or mishap can expect to live for centuries. Exalts can't take this Inheritance since they already possess this power. This power generally doesn't cost anything since most games won't last long enough for it to matter, but in a game that anticipates downtime periods lasting for years or decades, it is worth 1 point.
- **Measure the Wind (1 point):** The character can sense Essence, identifying it by flavor and intensity of power. She can scrutinize other characters with (Perception + Awareness) to determine if they are an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being they are. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are. This power always has a particular method to it — it's never as simple as just looking at someone. If the character's parent was the god of a vineyard, she might need to share a glass of wine with someone to taste their Essence. If she is the daughter of a ghost or a Lunar, she probably needs to taste their blood. If she is the offspring of a demon, she might need to witness them praying.
- **Mien of Passion (1 point):** The character can shroud herself in a powerful cloak of overriding emotion by reflexively spending a point of Willpower. Any attempt she makes for the rest of the scene to evoke or exploit that emotion in others lowers its difficulty by -1 .
- **Obfuscation (1 point):** The character may spend 1 Willpower and use a simple action to conjure an obscuring effect of some kind, such as a fog bank, a smothering darkness, a choking smog, or a flood of luminous butterflies, filling a zone of her choice and obscuring vision through it. Anyone performing an action depending on sight through this obscuring haze suffers a -3 dice pool penalty.
- **Ordination of Lies (1 point):** Once per scene, when attempting to deceive someone, the character lowers the difficulty of her action by -1 .
- **Phenomenal Restoration (2 points):** While in the presence of a strong manifestation of a certain element or phenomenon, the character heals her injuries at twice the normal speed.
- **Read the World (2 points):** Define a particular narrow circumstance such as "participating in a funeral," "while drowning," or "while impaled upon a hook." The character may hear the thoughts of anyone who falls under the selected circumstance.
- **Sense the Unseen (1 or 2 points):** By reflexively spending a 1 Willpower, the character can see dematerialized beings and the entrance to spirit sanctums for the rest of the scene. For 2 Willpower points, she can also interact with them. Many God-Blooded have this Inheritance.
- **Sovereign Self (1 point):** The character is unconditionally immune to any form of possession.

- **Transformation (2 points):** The character may spend 1 Willpower and a simple action to transform into an animal. This is always one particular animal. Use the traits found in Chapter Five on pages XX-XX.

- **Unfettered (2 points):** The character can untether her soul from her body and walk invisibly by night. She must lay down and close her eyes to do this. She is for all intents and purposes a dematerialized ghost while walking free of her flesh (including being able to interact with the living in shadowlands). She is well advised to return to her body before sunrise, as the touch of the sun upon either her wandering spirit or her unhoused flesh acts as a hazard with difficulty 8, damage 3 (burned), penalty -0 and a one round interval. This Inheritance is exclusive to Ghost-Blooded.

- **Wyld Immunity (1 point):** The character is unconditionally immune to the transformative power of the Wyld. This Inheritance is usually bequeathed to Fae-Blooded.

Heroic Mortal Character Creation

Creating a mortal protagonist works a lot like it does in any classic edition of the game. The steps are outlined below:

Step 1: Character Concept

- Consult with the other players and come up with an appealing concept.
- Select Nature.

Step 2: Attributes

- Mark down one dot in each Attribute.
- Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to your character.
- Divide 6 dots among primary Attributes, 4 dots among secondary Attributes, and 3 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Step 3: Abilities

- Divide 23 dots among Abilities.
- No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Freebie Points.

Step 4: Advantages

- Select 5 dots of Backgrounds.
- Write down three Intimacies.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Record Willpower (3) and Essence rating (1).
- Record Health (7).
- Calculate and record Defense, Soak, Dodge, Block, and Stagger Threshold.
- Spend Bonus Points (21).

Bonus Point Costs

Trait	Cost (per dot)
Attribute	4
Ability	2
Terrestrial spell	4
Martial Arts Charm	(rating x 5)
Backgrounds	1
Willpower	1

Backgrounds

Mortals can use any Background found in this chapter. They also have some particular considerations for certain Backgrounds.

Allies

Panoply Background

Mortals use a somewhat different scale for this Background, since “a starting Exalt” isn’t a peer, but a vastly more powerful figure than the protagonist herself. Instead, the basic comrade provided by this Background is highly dedicated and competent, but also only mortal himself.

X No one stands by your side.

- One ally of modest ability, roughly equivalent to a young hero.
- Two allies or one ally of significant power.
- Three allies, or fewer allies of correspondingly higher power. Three dots in Allies can produce a single young Exalted ally.
- Four allies, or fewer allies of greater might. Four dots in Allies can produce a couple of young Exalted allies, or one somewhat seasoned Exalted ally.
- Five allies, or fewer allies of immense might. Five dots in Allies can produce a Hearth or Circle of young Exalted, or a single mature and powerful Exalt.

Artifact

Panoply Background

Mortals don’t resonate with any magical material, and cannot attune to artifacts, meaning that they can only use those artifacts which don’t require attunement. This Background can still be taken to confer ownership of an artifact, even if the character can’t use it.

Cult

Social Background

While it’s technically possible for a mortal to take this Background, prayer doesn’t provide any sort of mechanical advantages to her.

Echoes

Purchased Background

As they are not the heritors of the ancient power of Exaltation, mortals cannot take this Background.

Familiar

Purchased Background

Mortals cannot take the Immortal Bond feature.

Manse

Panoply Background

As with the Artifact Background, you might control it, but you can't attune to it.

Mentor

Social Background

Mortals can generally only benefit from material aid and advice from this Background, though sorcerers might also derive the benefit of instruction in spells.

Mystic

Purchased Background

In addition to the Background's regular uses, a mortal can make a five-dot investment in this Background (without allocating it to any of the Mystic Arts) to gain access to a sorcerous initiation (see p. XX), enabling her to cast Terrestrial Circle spells, perform sorcerous workings, and claim a control spell.

Special Rules for Mortals

Mortals use a few special rules to reflect their relative fragility and lack of divine favor, detailed below.

Drive to Survive

Mortal heroes are able to employ stunts in the same fashion as the Exalted. What they don't have access to are Charms of any kind, making them very fragile in a system where attack rolls tend to be fairly accurate and antagonists can hit very hard.

Mortal Healing

As noted in Chapter One, mortals heal much more slowly than the Chosen. They're also prone to lasting Wounds from things like having their spine broken or their teeth smashed out. Their healing times are repeated here for convenience:

Mortal Healing Times

Mortals erase one level of damage from their Health track after two days spent without undertaking any particularly strenuous activity. Only once there is no damage left in their Health track can they begin healing Wounds.

Wounds are healed in the following order, in the listed time:

Maimed and **mauled** Wounds take six weeks to heal.

Burned, **blinded**, **disabled arm**, and **disabled leg** Wounds take two weeks to heal.

Drained and **lacerated** Wounds take one week to heal.

Bruised and **dazed** Wounds take three days to heal.

As a reminder, mortals can only heal from maimed Wounds by resting around the clock.

Bleeding Out

Gaping injuries tend to bleed profusely. When a mortal suffers any severe Wound or lacerated Wound, she begins bleeding out. During combat, the effects of blood loss manifest every (Stamina rating) turns, causing the character to suffer another level of damage. Out of combat, this damage occurs every minute or so. Once this damage starts inflicting Wounds (usually after incapacitating the bleeding mortal), these are drained Wounds.

After getting out of immediate danger and resting for a few moments a mortal can roll (Stamina + Resistance) against difficulty 9 to get a bleeding wound to clot, stopping further blood loss. Otherwise, wounds need to be stanching with bandages, wet leaves, or torn-up bits of clothing to stop bleeding. Doing so requires using a simple action to roll (Wits + Medicine) roll against difficulty 6.

At the Storyteller's discretion, sufficiently strenuous activity can reopen an unhealed Wound and set it to bleeding again.

Infection

At the end of any scene in which the character suffers a Wound other than bruised, dazed, or drained, she must make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll. If the roll fails, her injury becomes infected. This roll must be repeated at the end of any scene in which her wounds are left undressed or are exposed to potential infecting agents (such as being plunged into swamp water, after grappling with a zombie, and so on). The difficulty of the roll is dictated by the circumstances in which the wound is received or to which it is exposed.

If a character's injuries become infected, she must beat the infection or die. Each day, she must make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll (factoring in the character's Wound penalties, if any). This roll begins at difficulty 6. Success lowers the difficulty of the next day's roll by one, while failure raises it. If the difficulty drops below 3, the character beats the infection. If the difficulty rises above 9, or the character botches, she dies after (Stamina rating) days. Characters' Wounds cannot heal while infected.

Successful medical treatment of infected wounds (an Intelligence + Medicine action against whatever difficulty the patient is currently rolling against) reduces the difficulty by -2.

Healing Complications

Catastrophic injuries tend to produce lingering consequences for mortals. Bones don't quite heal straight. Damaged muscles are never again as strong as they used to be. Body parts may need to be removed to prevent death from gangrene. Blinded, disabled arm, disabled leg, and maimed Wounds all specify the sort of lasting Wound penalties they inflict. In addition to these, after a mortal heals from a lacerated, burned, or maimed Wound, her player must describe the fashion in which it produces lasting medical complications such as a weakness in one arm, a stiffness in the joints in wet environments, and so on. In situations where that impairment would logically apply, the character suffers a -1 dice penalty. For long-haul career fighters, injuries of this sort can stack up over time.

It's possible to avert this sort of penalty if an expert physician or surgeon tends to the character during her convalescence and succeeds at a difficulty 7 Intelligence + Medicine roll.

Holy Shit, This Fucking Sucks

Mortals, even heroic ones, live in a realistic, gritty, dangerous world which they share with powerful demigods who can run at 100 miles per hour, punch dinosaurs unconscious, and survive being shot with half a dozen arrows. Mortals do not outrun lions, win bare-handed fights against armed and armored soldiers, or walk off blows from swords. They go into battle wearing the heaviest armor they can afford and wielding the finest weapons they can lay their hands on, or they die. Those deaths are often fairly protracted and awful, shaking with fever as sepsis eats them an inch at a time. Exalts jump into huge fights on a whim. Mortals want to be much more discerning about picking their fights, because it's very easy for any given fight to be their last. Fighting without suitable weapons and especially without armor is *terrifying*. Fighting a clearly superior opponent is *terrifying*. People are fragile.

Not everyone is looking for *The Black Company*. If you'd prefer a game more along the lines of a low-powered Hong Kong action movie, just ignore all the bleeding out, infection, and healing complication rules, maybe use the Exalted healing table if you want frequent battle to be a tenable thing. Generally, though, the rules above are presented for protagonists to provide a distinctly different feeling to playing mortals in Creation as opposed to Exalted. Exalts don't bleed out, their Wounds always heal clean, and if their Wounds *do* become infected, the difficulty to throw off the infection never rises above 6 (this book assumes, in fact, that most tables will just skip bothering with infection for Exalts at all, since the worst that can happen as the result of splashing around the Noss Fens with open wounds is an evening or two of fever).

Martial Arts

Mortals, like all beings, have Essence within them. More specifically, like all things, mortals are ultimately *made up of* Essence. However, where the Chosen have an abundance of divine Essence welling up from their Exaltation, all of a mortal's Essence is constantly tied up in acting as her life-force and keeping her, well, alive and extant. Though the gods and the Chosen alike have experimented for all of recorded history in finding ways to "awaken" mortal Essence, there have been no recorded successes to date. It does not appear to be possible or a mortal to gain and wield a native Essence pool in the same manner as the Chosen.

That is not to say that mortals cannot manipulate their own Essence, merely that it can't be done the same way the Exalted do it. For thousands of years, mortals who have practiced extreme exercises in physical, mental, and spiritual conditioning, subjected themselves to exacting diets, imbibed magical herbs, and undergone ascetic training have learned to faintly perceive and touch their own Essence, if not that of the rest of the world around them. Generally, this occurs in the context of advanced practice of the martial arts, where the bleeding-edge extreme of physical cultivation touches on interpreting all of existence and one's interaction with it through a lens of philosophically-centered combat.

All of that is a long, fancy way of saying that it *is* possible for mortal characters to buy Martial Arts Charms, just the same as the Chosen do... albeit with several significant complications to their use. These are:

- To buy Martial Arts Charms *at all* a mortal must first have a minimum of Martial Arts 4+, and to buy anything above the first dot, they must have Martial Arts 5.
- Assuming they can do so at all, mortals must pay (rating x 6) to buy Martial Arts Charms.
- Mortals cannot purchase Charms of the Immaculate Dragon styles, nor the Forbidden Arts.
- When using Charms, mortals are subject to all drawbacks and limitations that Dragon-Blooded would be, but are not granted any special advantages a Dragon-Blooded would enjoy.
- To unlock the use of Martial Arts Charms for the rest of the scene, a mortal must reflexively spend 1 Willpower.
- Mortals are subject to all of the normal prerequisites and weapon and armor restrictions when using Martial Arts Charms.
- Mortals can only ever spend a maximum of 1 “Mote” per round.
- Mortals, of course, do not have Motes. Each time a mortal spends 1 “Mote,” set aside one die next to her character sheet. This is her Essence Burden.
- At the end of any round where a mortal did not spend any Motes, check her Essence Burden. If there are any dice in it, roll them against difficulty 3. The mortal suffers Aggravated damage (drained) equal to the successes produced. Her Stagger Threshold is always calculated against this damage as though she were unarmored.

In summary, the most accomplished mortal martial artists are very briefly capable of unlocking the same transcendent battle miracles regularly employed by Chosen practicing the same styles, but doing so always takes a tremendous act of will, and then the mortal must burn her very life-force to fuel these magical techniques. Masters rarely steer their students toward this esoteric pinnacle of martial arts mastery, in part because most martial artists are simply not good enough to ever accomplish even this limited command of their Essence, but mostly because it is *exceedingly* easy for a martial artist to cripple or kill herself pushing for a victory in this fashion. Of course, the most ambitious students rarely heed their master’s cautionary warnings, and rise like eagles toward the pinnacle of accomplishment before crashing back down in flames.

Perhaps this is fate’s price leveled against those who would seek to transcend mortality and usurp Heaven’s prerogative; or perhaps it is simply the nature of the clenched fist to bring about its own destruction.

Character Advancement

Mortals cannot advance their Essence rating by spending experience, and do not gain supernal experience points.

God-Blooded

“God-Blooded” is a general appellation referring to the half-mortal offspring of humans (or occasionally animals...) and any sort of supernatural being. Specifically, it refers to those born of a union between a mortal and a god, but is often broadened into a catch-all.

Playing God-Blooded

God-Blooded are generally more mortal than not, although a few show very strong marks of their divine heritage. As such, they use the rules for mortal hero creation, with their supernatural lineage represented by taking the Inheritance Background.

Exalted God-Blooded

Most sorts of Exalted can also at least theoretically be God-Blooded, although in practice such individuals are rarely chosen to receive Exaltation. Perhaps it is because they are already a rare group within Creation, or perhaps the Incarnae do not trust their power in the hands of those with preexisting loyalties to other gods. Dragon-Blooded of competing supernatural lineage are also quite uncommon, as the blood of other supernatural parents competes with that of the dragons and greatly reduces the likelihood of Exaltation.

Still, it *does* sometimes happen. In these cases, the blessings of divine heritage coexist with the power of Exaltation.

Children of Divinity

God-Blooded break down into several distinct groups, discussed in greater detail below.

God-Blooded

The children of the little gods are by far the most common sort of God-Blooded, particularly in the wilder portions of the Threshold. In the city of Great Forks, one in fifty residents can fairly claim descent from some god or other; elsewhere, the numbers hover closer to one in every several hundred. In much of Creation, God-Blooded act as local culture heroes, strongmen, champions; elsewhere, they simply make their way in life as best they can.

The most common of all God-Blooded occupations are those of high priest or herald. While some God-Blooded are the accidental by-blows of divine trysts, most are created deliberately and trained from birth to serve their immortal parent's interests.

Element-Kin

“Element-Kin” is a scholarly term; nearly all ordinary speech simply conflates the children of elementals with their more common divine God-Blooded counterparts; or else refers to them specifically by the element with which they are affiliated (“Air-Touched,” “Fire-Touched,” and so forth).

Elementals have frequent congress with mortals, living in the physical world by default, and mate with animals nearly as often. As elementals are impulsive creatures, their children are often unintended consequences more than deliberately cultivated catspaws. A few Element-Kin make a living passing themselves off as outcaste Dragon-Blooded, but this is a very hazardous trade, both because God-Blooded are not nearly as powerful or hardy as the Exalted, and because Terrestrial Exalted who discover the ruse tend to be terribly affronted.

Demon-Blooded

Like their divine counterparts, many demons are capable of coupling with a human partner and producing offspring. Demon-Blooded grow up strange, not quite at home in Creation. A few are raised under the mad green sun of the Demon City, but Hell is a harsh place for infants and children, and few reared there survive. Demon-Blooded are often creatures of uncanny beauty

and strange appetites with little idea why they are the way they are. Others are raised within the closed circle of a demon or Yozi cult as either living saints or future ritual sacrifices.

A notable subset of Demon-Blooded are the woven offspring of neomah, the courtesans of the demon world. Left to her own devices, a neomah will frequently weave together demonic and human flesh to make an infant, simply because these are her most frequent clients; but given an eclectic range of flesh, neomah are given to make very strange and often unique things. While many believe that the children of a neomah are always tainted by the malice and strangeness of Hell, the truth is that if commissioned to do so, neomah are entirely capable of crafting a wholly ordinary human child. Should such a commission eventually grow up to display marks of the infernal despite the commissioner's desires, this bespeaks flaws in that specific neomah's work rather than an intrinsic limitation of their kind's art.

Ghost-Blooded

The children of the living and the dead are the rarest of all varieties of God-Blooded. Ghost-Blooded are found almost exclusively in shadowlands, where the living and dead are able to regularly touch and do things more intimate than touching. In nearly every case, a Ghost-Blooded is the offspring of a mortal woman and a ghostly father, as the cold wombs of the dead lack either the substance or the nature to sustain even the pale life-force of the Half-Dead. That being said, a few ghosts possess strange arts to facilitate more exotic birthing arrangements.

Fae-Blooded

When the scions of the Wyld take on shape, they gain also the ability to tryst with mortals, and trysts in the Wyld are often fruitful. Fae-Blooded are fundamentally human, grounded by the certainties of their Creation-born parent, but touched by the madness and strangeness of chaos. About half display severe Wyld mutations, which usually manifest around puberty, while the other half are almost uniformly immune to the Wyld's transformative touch altogether. Fae-Blooded are despised and distrusted throughout almost all of Creation, regarded with even deeper suspicion than the children of demons. This is not without some justification; Fae-Blooded raised in the courts of the Fair Folk are almost always trained as Ravagers.

Grandchildren of Divinity

The children of powerful Celestial Exalted sometimes carry the faintest reflection of their parent's majesty. This doesn't extend to Dragon-Blooded, alas. Their children are either Exalted, or simply mortal. If a child's Terrestrial blood is strong enough to mark her with any sort of elemental features, then it is strong enough to produce Exaltation.

Golden Children: The sons and daughters of the Solar Exalted once served as their parents' favored agents, majordomos, and heads-of-household in the First Age, overseeing the upkeep of vacation manses and far-flung estates. They were frequently subjects of tension as they assumed duties and privileges that the scions of Dragon-Blooded gentes serving the Solars felt should have rightfully fallen to them. The Golden Children were noted for their charisma, good looks, and strong health, but rarely manifested any sort of overt supernatural qualities.

Moon-Touched: The children of the Lunar Exalted are hale and hearty beings, sometimes displaying minor shapeshifting tricks, or else the keen senses or smallest gifts of the world of beasts, such as the ability to track by scent or sharp, iron-hard nails. They were oddities in the First Age, unable to keep up with their parents and unusual to boot, since Lunars with Solar spouses bore generally Golden Children instead; but in the Second Age they are much valued by

the Society of the Moon. Many Lunars take their sons and daughters into their confidence and rely on them as gamekeepers, heralds, speakers, high priests, and heroes entrusted with leading when the Lunar is away. A Moon-Touched hero is, of course, no match for a Dragon-Blooded, but that is not the point of them. The point is to inspire other mortals to become as excellent as the Lunar's own children are.

Nameless: Few in number, the handful of children produced by powerful Getimians are ruled by a strange and chaotic destiny. Misrule's hand grenades, fate takes strange twists in the presence of the Nameless. The unlikely becomes normal in their lives. Other than being plagued by odd coincidences and improbable odds, they exhibit no consistent supernatural characteristics.

Star-Blessed: The children of Sidereals are often subtly second-sighted, plagued by runs of strange luck, or both. They fall, broadly, into two camps. The first are primarily the results of one-night stands and careless liaisons with mortals during sojourns into Creation. Destiny's bastards almost never realize there's anything supernatural about their heritage, and simply live interesting lives. An unusual number of them become sorcerers by one means or another. Other members of this group include orphans dropped off into the care of mortals by a mysterious stranger, who may or may not stop in from time to time under a variety of guises to see how they're doing. Few Sidereals believe they have either the time or temperament for parenthood. The second group, far more rare, are those actively or semi-actively raised by their Sidereal parent. Many are fostered in Creation, their Exalted mother or father dropping in for visits from time to time, while a rare few are reared in Yu-Shan, within the halls and walled gardens of their parent's celestial Manse. Mortal children (and, speaking honestly, mortal adults) are generally regarded as a nuisance in Yu-Shan and are not tolerated to run about in public without a minder or escort. These Star-Blessed live *very* strange lives, raised and socialized among minor servant-spirits and likely trained to a life of service themselves, as a librarian, cook, secretary, or other menial in their parent's household. Unemployed gods despise such Star-Blessed, who they regard as holding down a job that should rightfully go to one of the teeming masses of unemployed spirits huddled in the slums of Heaven.

Other sorts of divine offspring notionally exist, such as the Shadewalker children of Abyssals and the Hellspawn offspring of Infernals, but none are as yet more than five years old. They will, in all likelihood, closely resemble Ghost-Blooded and Demon-Blooded.

Essence Cultivation and the Great Prize

Mortals cannot actively, consciously command the power of their own Essence in the manner of the Chosen, even those touched by divine heritage. A rare few of divinity's by-blows may, however, consciously cultivate the raw strength of their Essence through assiduous and deliberate exercise of those few supernatural blessings they do possess. This must be accompanied by other experimental regimens to increase understanding of the self and connection to the world: rigorous meditation, elemental ordeals, martial arts exercises, sorcerous experimentation, and philosophical inquiry are all common avenues of cultivation. What works for one God-Blooded may not work for another, as the daughter of a fire elemental and the son of a demon possess Essence whose characteristics vary greatly.

No game systems are provided for this journey; they're purely a matter of storytelling. Game systems would either mimic the Essence-cultivation of the Chosen (making the rise to power feel like a matter of inevitability rather than struggle) or demand vast expenditures of experience

points (making it feel like a serious undertaking, but also making the chronicle much less fun as the God-Blooded have to allocate all of their earnings toward... leaving the game).

Increasing Essence to 2 or 3 is a truly herculean struggle for a mortal for fairly limited gains. If they are a sorcerer, a few spells use Essence as a coefficient. A few supernatural powers may have a slightly more difficult time affecting them. Resisting Wyld mutation becomes very slightly easier. A mortal with Essence 2 is likely to live longer than most, frequently celebrating her 90th birthday before her death, while one with Essence 3 sometimes lives to 120. For the most part, that's it.

The real prize is this: reaching Essence 3 primes a mortal's Essence for a profound transformation. A blessing from a powerful god or a writ from the upper echelons of the Celestial Bureaucracy may, at this point, rewrite the individual's nature, uplifting her to the ranks of true divinity. She sheds her mortal flesh and becomes something everlasting.

This sort of transformative blessing is most useful, and most fervently sought, by God-Blooded and Elemental-Kin, who may respectively ascend to godhood or become a full-blown elemental. Demon-Blooded who achieve this sort of apotheosis become a unique First Circle demon, gaining ageless existence — but are also immediately drawn into Hell. A Fae-Blooded cannot bridge the alien gap between their mortal solidity and the ephemerality of their supernatural parent, and achieving Essence 3+ does nothing but extend her lifespan. The grandchildren of divinity, likewise, cannot make the leap to full Exaltation, and their journey ends at Essence 3. Ghost-Blooded can theoretically make a transformative ascension, but there are much simpler ways for them to become a ghost.

Chapter Three: The Solar Exalted

Chosen of the mightiest figure among the heavenly pantheon, the Solar Exalted were the anointed leaders of the armies of the gods. They raised up the Realm in reflection of their glory and ruled over it for thousands of years in the halcyon era that was the First Age.

In the end, they fell into corruption. Their armies were induced to betray them and assume their vacant thrones. Their advisors became their enemies. Their ancient bodyguards and seconds failed and fled. The Solars died and were bound away in darkness.

Now, in the Time of Tumult, they have returned to Creation in their multitudes. They are as yet children re-learning the rudiments of their divine powers, but soon things will change. The Second Age of Man will come to an end, and it will be the struggles of the Solar Exalted that ultimately determine whether the age that replaces it will be one of ruin or a climb back toward heavenly splendor.

What tales will they tell of your deeds?

Play a Solar if you want...

- to be a reborn hero of legend.
- to forge kingdoms, religions, or even worlds.
- to rediscover and reclaim (or reject!) an ancient legacy that once shaped Creation.
- to face a world full of those who fear your rise to power, or wish to guide its course.
- to be mightiest among the Chosen.

The Solar Exalted

Solar Exaltation might descend upon anyone. It is said that the Solars are heroes, but what does that truly mean? The leader of a Delzahn war-band is a hero to the men he leads into battle. His valor stokes the fires of their hearts. His cunning and ferocity make them wealthy and bring them glory. To those forced to give up their wealth or their lives at the point of his blade, he is the blackest of villains.

It was once said that the eye of the Unconquered Sun could see the hidden truths in any heart. It was believed that he chose his champions from among the mighty, yes, and the wise, and the valorous... but that to focus on such things was to miss the truth depth of the sun-god's discernment. Solar Exaltation chooses as the Unconquered Sun would choose, and it cleaves to the *exceptional*. Solars are always people of great promise, even if they do not see it in themselves. They have profound gifts... even if they have never been given the opportunity to discover them. Some Solars are warlords, champions of the bloodsands, revered savants, master burglars. Others are illiterate slaves who have never known a day without hunger, orphan sneak-thieves, painted boys who sell themselves to live, even murderers in service to a demon-cult. The Unconquered Sun has selected virtuous monks and brutal pirates to bear his symbol into the world. The one commonality is that in *every case*, when given true power, a Solar has some notion of what should be done with it... and the will to do that thing.

That, in the eyes of the Unconquered Sun, is excellence. That is what Solar heroism means.

The Golden Exaltation

Solar Exaltation often occurs in a moment of immediate crisis, when a person's back is against the wall. That might mean they're staring down three feet of sharpened steel; in fact, it often does. But it also might mean they're arguing a case in front of a hostile judge; or prying the jewel from an ancient statue's forehead when the statue opens its eyes; or trying, desperately, to discover a cure for the plague killing their village.

Without warning or preamble, the power of the sun descends like lightning and thunder, like a flood, like the fires of heaven. Time stands still as the newly-Exalted Solar's thoughts race with perfect clarity. Limitless energy suffuses her limbs, granting her as much strength or precision as she needs. The impossible is suddenly easy. If the Solar was at the point of collapse, she gains a second, inexhaustible wind. If her body is battered and broken, she finds herself renewed. The rush of power is accompanied by a blinding pulse of golden light that entwines the Exalt's limbs, even as a blazing sun-mark momentarily erupts upon her forehead.

The sense of limitless, roaring potential passes soon enough, but the power doesn't fade with it. The moment of Exaltation transforms an extraordinary man or woman into a god made flesh.

What is This?

The presentation of the Solar Exalted in the **Exalted Demake** draws equally upon all three editions of **Exalted**. For supplemental material, feel free to consult any version of the corebook, or the material in the First Edition Castebooks.

Essence Fever

Solar Essence is fierce, hot, and potent. It fills a young Exalt with wild, sometimes misplaced optimism. When she tries to calculate whether a thing is possible or not, her Essence returns a powerful affirmative: *yes, it says, reach out, take it now*. It roars and revels in accomplishment, flushing a Solar with a sense of absolute completion when she triumphs in battle, solves a problem, or wins someone to her side. This character can be very dangerous in the early weeks and months of a Solar's new life, before she develops a firm sense of her capabilities. Her Essence feels boundless and infinite right up until the moment she exhausts its strength, sending her crashing back down to near-mundanity.

Very new Solars often seem restless, nervous, or hyperactive, as their Essence shouts at them: *go, see, do, achieve*. Their anima banner manifests easily in moments of stress, fear, or anger, as the Solar's instinct is to reach down deep into the well of her power and spend from it as hard as she can.

In time, a Solar who survives learns to master her Essence rather than letting it master her. She becomes able to filter out the haze of wild glory, discerning the true strength at her disposal. She spends her strength in careful measures rather than massive pulses. A Solar in the maturity of her control likely seems the most "normal" of any Exalted. Her Essence provides her with a quiet confidence in her power, but no longer howls for unrestrained glory.

On Playing a Solar

The one thing Solars are not is uncertain of their strength. A Solar may not know what she has become, and may not know exactly what she can do, but she does know she has been

transformed into someone who can challenge the gods and triumph. The nature of her Essence screams of *power*. It is unmistakable.

Even after mastering the early throes of Essence fever, a Solar's Essence quietly radiates a sense of authority. If wickedness displeases her, why not strike it down? If ignorance offends her, why not banish it with enlightenment? If corruption stymies her, why not impose reforms? If she knows a better way, why not share it with others? These questions form easily in a Solar's mind. In the absence of external threats demanding their immediate attention, the Solar Exalted tend to seek gratification of their desires and relief from their frustrations, and the scope of their power means that their focus generally soon shifts to *the state of the world around them*. A mortal who is frustrated by the state of the world goes to a teahouse and drinks away his sorrows. A Solar has the power to banish her sorrows by resolving the ultimate source of her woes, and the hot bright glow of her Essence reminds her of this. As a result, Solars tend to be highly-motivated people, even if they weren't like that prior to Exaltation.

On the Chosen of the Sun

Newly returned to Creation, the Solar Exalted number roughly 150 across the length and breadth of the world. Of these, less than two dozen have been constantly reincarnating throughout the Second Age; the rest appeared in a great mass starting five years ago, with the first solar eclipse since the night of the Usurpation.

The natural lifespan of one of the Solar Exalted is two to three thousand years. In practice, this basic figure is misleading. Few First Age Solars ever died of old age, as they were able to requisition rare and expensive life-extending drugs, utilize experimental age-slowing sorcery, and cultivate supernaturally efficacious fitness regimens to greatly extend their potential lifespans. Solars appear to remain in the full bloom of their health (and often their youth) for nearly all of this span, showing advanced signs of age only in their final decades.

Castes

The Solar Exalted are divided into five castes, which are intrinsic to their Exaltation. A particular Exaltation is always drawn to the sort of hero who embodies the strengths and aptitudes of its embedded caste. Thus, a Dawn Caste, when she dreams of the former bearers of her Exaltation, relives the memories of other Dawn Castes.

Dawn Caste

The Dawn Caste is the caste of warriors. These heroes are the mightiest fighters Creation has ever known. They are chosen from among the ranks of Creation's soldiery, for a certainty, but their ranks also include martial arts students, veteran bar-brawlers, daring bandits, gladiators, military historians, and strapping young farmhands with dreams of adventure.

Caste Mark: The Dawn caste mark is an eight-pointed sunburst consisting of eight bars radiating around a bead of purest gold.

Anima Banner: A Dawn's anima banner is an aura of pale golden-white, tinged with the pastels of sunrise. In dramatic moments, it may momentarily become an iconic symbol of ferocious power.

Caste Abilities: Archery, Athletics, Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee, Resistance, Thrown, War

Anima Power: Once per scene, the Dawn can reflexively lower the difficulty of an attack or damage roll by -1. When the character's anima is flaring, the rule of 1s does not apply to her damage rolls.

Zenith Caste

The Zenith Caste is the caste of holy men and women. Though they are the priesthood of the Unconquered Sun, they are not selected for their great faith. In the eyes of the sun-god, faith without works is dead. Zeniths are Exalted from among those with the strength and fortitude to walk up and down in the land, inspiring those they meet to be more than they currently are. So long as even one of the Zenith Caste endures, there will always be the potential for new Exalted, for men will always have something to look up to and be inspired. As such, people of literally any background at all might become members of this caste.

The Exaltation of the Zenith Caste is slightly different from other sorts of Solars. As the raging envelope of light and power that briefly surrounded her body fades away, a firm, powerful voice speaks from somewhere deep within the Zenith's heart: *"In my anger, I turned my face from the world, but I shall do so no longer. Know you are among my chosen priests. Go, and make the world a righteous place as you know best. Take light into darkness, and know you act with my blessing."*

Caste Mark: The Zenith caste mark is a brilliant disc of glowing gold.

Anima Banner: A Zenith's anima banner is a radiant bonfire of white and gold. In dramatic moments, it may momentarily twist into a reflection of something she considers sacred.

Caste Abilities: Athletics, Empathy, Lore, Medicine, Performance, Presence, Resistance, Survival

Anima Power: By touching an inanimate corpse with a simple action, the Zenith can burn it to ashes and send its soul onward from this world. This will immediately banish and lay to rest any ghost associated with the body. When her anima is flaring, she gains Defense +1 against creatures of darkness, and any action taken by a creature of darkness which aims to oppose, attack, or otherwise thwart the Zenith suffers a dice penalty equal to her Essence rating. Thus, if she had Essence 3, a ghost trying to intimidate her would suffer a -3 penalty to do so.

Twilight Caste

The Twilight Caste is the caste of the learned and the sagacious. They are those who have cultivated strength of mind, strength of technique, strength of accomplishment. They are not, however, Chosen simply to reward them for *knowing things*. Twilights are always people whose learning or talents drive them to go forth and share their light with the world. The First Age was raised up on the labors of the Twilight Caste. They are chosen from among the ranks of diverse folks: savants, sorcerers, blacksmiths, physicians, magistrates, scavenger lords, and more.

Caste Mark: The Twilight caste mark is golden circle, its upper half full, its lower half hollow.

Anima Banner: A Twilight's anima banner is a phantasmal display of evening hues: reds, purples, blues, limned in brightest gold. In dramatic moments, it may momentarily twist into a shape indicative of great wisdom or power.

Caste Abilities: Bureaucracy, Craft, Investigation, Linguistics, Lore, Medicine, Occult, War

Anima Power: By using a simple action, the Twilight may disincorporate herself into the geomancy of the world, reforming some hours later at the boundary of a nearby place of power such as a Demesne or spirit sanctum. When her anima flares, she may, at will and as she desires, cause dematerialized beings touched by the light of her anima to become visible and audible in the physical world, and by reflexively paying 1 Mote may enable anyone to interact with them physically so long as they remain illuminated. Generally, a Solar's anima strongly illuminates the entire sector she occupies, barring solid walls and the like blocking its light.

Night Caste

The Night Caste is the caste of those who lived beyond the sun's regard. They are selected from among the ranks of criminals, assassins, pirates, and worse. They are intimately familiar with the ways of the wicked, but not themselves entirely black of heart according to the judgment of the Unconquered Sun. Through Exaltation, they are uplifted and set to hunt the villains whose ways they know so well, utilizing vile means for righteous ends.

Caste Mark: A Night's caste mark always is an empty circle of gleaming gold.

Anima Banner: A Night's anima banner is pale gold, swimming gently with tones of ghostly white, gray, and violet. In dramatic moments, it may momentarily twist into a threatening display of impending retribution.

Caste Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Investigation, Larceny, Ride, Sail, Socialize, Stealth

Anima Power: For one round per scene, the Night may treat her Mote-per-round limit as though she were flaring her anima when she isn't. She can also re-roll one Stealth roll per scene without spending Willpower or using up her once-per-scene re-roll. Additionally, when her anima *does* flare, she may shroud herself in it like an obscuring cloak, making her impossible to recognize. Anyone in the scene that has already recognized her must roll Willpower against difficulty 9 or forget the blazing stranger's identity, if the Night would rather they didn't remember who she is. She increases her Dodge by +1 against anyone who does not know who she is under the anima haze.

Eclipse Caste

The Eclipse Caste is the caste of diplomats and emissaries. Granted enormous blessings, they are tasked with walking into the halls of foes and making them allies, into the dens of monsters and convincing them to sell their fangs, into the temples of unruly gods and reminding them of the proper order of Heaven and all things beneath it. They are uplifted from the ranks of merchants, aristocrats, ministers, bureaucrats, messengers, diplomats, and poets — any who are adept with words and emotions.

Caste Mark: An Eclipse's caste mark is a disc within a circle, both of beautiful gold.

Anima Banner: An Eclipse's anima banner is a marvel resembling the corona of the sun during a celestial conjunction: a deep-gold core shading to brilliant, sparkling white at the edges. In dramatic moments, it may momentarily twist into a symbolic display of authority or unity.

Caste Abilities: Bureaucracy, Empathy, Linguistics, Occult, Presence, Ride, Sail, Socialize

Anima Power: The Eclipse may use a simple action and spend 1 Mote to sanctify any oath she personally witnesses, scribing the words of the pact on the air with Essence. Any who should break this oath suffers the wrath of Heaven and is afflicted with a potent curse of the

Storyteller's devising, which may be subtle or obvious as seems appropriate. Additionally, if the Eclipse approaches beings of the Wyld, Hell, or the Underworld on legitimate business and they offer her or her companions unprovoked violence, then any roll made by the offending beings during the course of that violence which produces even a single 1 become an automatic botch. Finally, once per story, the Eclipse may make a bargain of power with some other supernatural being, gaining a single use of any Charm or supernatural power they know. She must seal this bargain with her own oath-binding power; if she binds herself to whatever price the being demands, then she may activate the borrowed power once at any point before the end of the story as though she knew the Charm or power herself. If the borrowed power is a permanent effect, then she gains its effects for one scene.

Character Creation

Creating one of the Solar Exalted works a lot like it does in any classic edition of the game. The steps are outlined below:

Step 1: Character Concept

- Consult with the other players and come up with an appealing concept.
- Pick out the caste that fits best, and note its anima effects.
- Select Nature.

Step 2: Attributes

- Mark down one dot in each Attribute.
- Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to your character.
- Divide 8 dots among primary Attributes, 6 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Step 3: Abilities

- Select five Caste Abilities from the relevant list.
- Select five Favored Abilities, which may not be the same as Caste Abilities.
- Divide 28 dots among Abilities.
- No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Bonus Points. At least 10 must be spread among Caste and Favored Abilities. Favored Abilities must have at least one dot.

Step 4: Advantages

- Receive the Charm: Excellence of the Blazing Sun for free. Then choose additional Charms (10 dots in total). At least 5 dots of Charms must be from your Caste Charms.
- Select 7 dots of Backgrounds.
- Write down three Intimacies.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Record Willpower (5), Essence rating (1), and Mote pool (10). Mote pool begins at maximum.
- Record Health (7).

- Calculate and record Defense, Soak, Dodge, Block, and Stagger Threshold.
- Spend Bonus Points (15).

Bonus Point Costs

Trait	Cost (per dot)
Attribute	4
Ability	2
Caste/Favored Ability	1
Caste/Favored Charm	(rating x 3)
Other Charm	(rating x 4)
Terrestrial spell (favored)	3
Terrestrial spell (unfavored)	4
Essence	9
Backgrounds	1
Willpower	1

Backgrounds

Solars may use any of the Backgrounds found in Chapter Two. They also have some particular considerations for certain Backgrounds.

Artifact

Social Background

Solar Exalted naturally resonate with all of the magical materials, but in the First Age were particularly identified with orichalcum, in part because no other Exalt was able to claim an affinity for it, and in part because its golden luster made it obviously holy to the Unconquered Sun. As a result, First Age Solars strongly favored artifacts made of orichalcum, and any Solar seeking out the panoply of one of her former incarnations is likely to find primarily artifacts made of orichalcum.

Backing

Social Background

Solars might attain Backing from a wide variety of different organizations interested in exploiting their power (or which they belonged to before their Exaltation, and which remain ignorant of their true nature!). One notable group which actively recruits Solar members is the Sidereal-backed Cult of the Illuminated, which offers a network of safehouses, assistance, worship, and, once a Solar has proven herself worthy of both trust and further investment, direct Sidereal mentorship and contact with a broader network of supernatural support.

Command

Social Background

Most Solars buy this Background as it is described in Chapter Two. However, if the character knows the Charm: Tiger Warrior Training Technique, they may use the scale below:

- X You command no troops.
- A retinue of Tiger Warrior bodyguards (Size 1, Drill 9).
- A squad of Tiger Warriors (Size 2, Drill 9).
- A strike force of Tiger Warriors (Size 3, Drill 9).
- A company of Tiger Warriors (Size 4, Drill 9).
- A full army of Tiger Warriors (Size 5, Drill 9).

Cult

Social Background

The Solars are newly-returned to Creation and the Immaculate Order has spent centuries poisoning the waters of public sentiment against them throughout much of Creation. They cannot generally begin play with this Background above three dots.

Veteran Solar Creation

While the vast majority of the Solar Exalted have only just returned to the world in the last five years, a small handful have been reincarnating ceaselessly since the fall of the First Age. If you want to play one of those harried souls, who managed to avoid the Wyld Hunt for some decades and gather a modicum of power, the following character creation adjustments have got you covered:

Attributes: 9/7/5.

Abilities: 35 dots. These can go all the way to 5 without spending Bonus Points.

Charms: Excellence of the Burning Sun plus 15 dots. At least seven have to be from Caste Charms.

Backgrounds: 12 dots.

Essence Rating: Starts at 2.

Bonus Points: Spend 21.

Special Rules for Solars

In addition to the rules that normally govern the Exalted, Solars have a few unique rules all their own.

The Great Curse

When the armies of the gods struck down those who had wrought Creation from primordial chaos, the dying demon princes uttered hideous death-curses and hurled them against their treacherous creations. The Incarnae wisely warded themselves in infallible defensive miracles, which protected them from the curses of their foes. What they did not foresee, and did not realize, was that the remnant power of the shattered curses fell on the only fragments of the divine power of the Incarnae not safely guarded behind their potent wards: the Exaltations of their Chosen.

So it is that the Solar Exalted are now and have always been figures of enormous mirth and melancholy, overweening passions and compromised judgment. They are mightier than ordinary men, but not necessarily any more wise, and when the Great Curse rises up in their hearts, it drives them to seek satisfaction without regard for what is right or just.

Each Solar has a Limit track, which runs from 0 to 10 points. Limit is gained in the following fashion:

- Whenever the Solar botches a roll, she gains a point of Limit.
- Whenever the Solar acts in a way that undermines or betrays either her Nature or one of her Intimacies, she gains a point of Limit.
- The first time in a scene the Solar spends Willpower in response to social influence, she gains a point of Limit.
- The Solar has a *Limit Trigger* defined by the player. This is a situation the Solar finds abhorrent or intolerable, such as “Being humiliated,” “Witnessing the mighty abusing the weak,” or “When directly faced with temptations to the life of debauchery I foreswore.” It’s always something personally important and upsetting to the Solar. Whenever the Solar encounters her Limit Trigger, she rolls her Essence rating against difficulty 6 and gains one point of Limit, plus a point of Limit for each success rolled. The Limit Trigger shouldn’t happen every time the Solar turns around, but it also shouldn’t be something that *never* comes up.

Once a Solar’s Limit track reaches 10 points, she enters Limit Break and the track empties. Her great passions and ambitions boil over and drown her reason, causing her to take foolish and tragic action without regard for the consequences. Once a Solar enters Limit Break, she must do something extremely rash, intemperate, or ill-advised which complicates the story significantly and entertainingly, such as coming to blows with a cherished ally over a minor annoyance or breaking an important vow in favor of a moment’s self-indulgence. Until she does so, her player cannot spend experience points or supernal experience points.

The Great Curse is intended to evoke the tragic beats of ancient epics, the moments in which Achilles mourns in his tent when his allies need him to take to the field of battle, Herakles flies into a rage and slaughters his family, and Orpheus looks back at the cusp of completing his quest. The Solar Exalted are clever, passionate heroes endowed with incredible might but not necessarily wiser than any other man or woman. Under the lash of the Great Curse, they are drawn back down to Earth. There they discover that they have not been elevated above regret or prudence, and that their amplified power can create amplified disaster.

Minor embarrassment or inconvenience does not discharge the Great Curse, but neither is it intended to be a countdown clock to the utter ruination of a character. Limit Break is intended to be a narrative low point for characters who are, frankly, blessed with game system advantages mighty enough to power out of most travails. You don’t have to irrevocably destroy your life, but it’s worth designing a Solar character keeping in mind that at some point in their story, they *will* turn away from an ally in need, make a selfish decision when it comes time to repay their debts, vent their wrath upon someone who doesn’t deserve it, or otherwise fall into one of countless very human failings, *because having divine power has not expunged their humanity*. From a Watsonian perspective, this *will* happen because of the ancient, undiscovered death-curse of the makers of Creation. From a Doyleist perspective, Limit Break is there to help your chronicle feel more like *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *The Black Company*, *The Odyssey*, *The Books of the*

New Sun, A Wizard of Earthsea, and any number of other ancient epics and pulp fantasy inspirations at the root of **Exalted**, in which mighty heroes are often the ones responsible for their own greatest setbacks and challenges.

Legacies

Not only are the Solar Exalted the inheritors of the power of the mightiest of all the gods, but they once shaped an entire Age of Creation around the imprint of their power as rulers of the world. Creation still remembers the dim shape of those legends imprinted upon its history. Though newly reborn, the Essence of the resurgent Solar Exalted remembers the legends that they once were, and strives to recapture that lost power.

At the beginning of any story after reaching Essence 2+, a Solar may choose a *Legacy* for herself: the shape of the indelible legend she is growing into. This may echo her accomplishments in a former life, or may be an entirely new path for her destiny that fits some archetypal expression of Solar power. A Solar's Legacy helps accelerate her back toward the heights of power she enjoyed in the First Age, and reinforces her position as a catalyst for change in the fading years of the Age of Sorrows.

A Solar's Legacy provides certain advantages right away, with greater power unlocking each time she increases the potency of her Essence. These advantages are often fueled by a new resource, itself called *Legacy points*. There's no limit on how many Legacy points a Solar can hold at once, and they can only be lost by spending them to activate Legacy advantages. The character gains 1 Legacy point each time she gains Willpower by fulfilling her Nature (even if she already has 10 Willpower points), and certain Legacies also provide additional means by which to gain Legacy points.

Legacies have certain prerequisites a Solar must meet before she can choose to take them. A Solar can only ever have one Legacy, and once it is chosen, the choice is permanent.

Each time a Solar gains a particular bundle of advantages from her Legacy, she may, if she wishes, opt *not* to gain any of the benefits associated with that particular Essence rating, instead receiving her choice of *one* of the following two benefits instead:

- **A Favored Ability of the Solar's choice becomes a Caste Ability.**
- **The Solar gains +2 Health.**

A complete list of all Solar Legacies and their benefits may be found starting on page XX, at the end of this chapter.

Solar Charms

These are the miracles by which the Solar Exalted may, perhaps, shift the course of the world... or speed it on to its doom.

General Solar Charms

The following Charms count as Caste Charms for all Solars.

Excellence of the Blazing Sun (•)

By feeding raw Essence into focused endeavor, the Solar may perform feats far beyond the human norm.

System: Select one Ability when activating this Charm. The player may add (the Attribute being rolled + the Ability in question) additional dice to all rolls using this Ability, save for damage rolls. Activating this Charm is reflexive, and costs 1 Mote if enhancing a Caste or Favored Ability, or 2 Motes for any other Ability.

Excellence of the Blazing Sun lasts until the end of the round. **Solars begin play with this Charm.**

Should the Sun Not Rise (•)

The Solar's legend and legacy are her own, and though the candle of her life may gutter out, her works will not vanish when she does.

System: Should the Solar die with at least one point of Willpower remaining to her, the guttering sparks of her vitality restore her to fitful life at some point during the next three days. She has only a short time — a few hours at most — before her injuries reclaim her, but may use this very brief reprieve to locate a hand-selected successor, and, with her final breath, pass her Exaltation on to the mortal inheritor of her choice. Her chosen successor need not be physically present when she expires, but if he is not, she must spend a point of Willpower to send her Exaltation to him.

The newly-Exalted Solar automatically gains Mentor 3 (in the form of the Exaltation's former bearer instructing and advising him in his dreams).

A Solar must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Stubborn Boar Attitude (•)

The Solar forsakes temperance in favor of glory, becoming an unstoppable force when she casts all restraint to the wind.

System: After purchasing this Charm, the Solar's Limit Trigger rolls become immune to the rule of 1s. Additionally, once per session, when she would normally spend Motes, she may choose to spend 1 less Mote than normal and instead in its place gain 1 Limit.

While enacting a Limit Break, the Solar becomes unconditionally immune to all magic that would bind, alter, or manipulate her thoughts, memories, and actions, including shattering any ongoing effects of that nature such that they do not re-assert themselves after Limit Break ends. Additionally, select one three-dot Charm the Solar does not know. She may now never permanently learn this Charm, but always has access to it while acting out a Limit Break.

A Solar must have Essence 2+ to purchase this Charm.

Final Ray of Light (•••)

Though even her very flesh and divinity falters under the blades and maledictions of a fallen age turned against her, the Solar rises up one last time in defense of those she loves.

System: If the Solar dies in the course of protecting or fighting for one of her Intimacies, she immediately returns to life in a blaze of golden Essence. Her Essence pool restores itself to full, and she heals her most severe wound immediately. Final Ray of Light can only activate once per story.

A Solar must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Dawn Charms

These Charms primarily deal with combat prowess and training and leading soldiers.

Accuracy Without Distance (•)

Resonance: Archery

The Solar may close her eyes before striking, if she desires; she aims with her heart, kills with her will.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an attack. The attack is undodgeable and automatically hits its target, no matter how well the opponent defends or how poorly the Exalt rolls; if the dice indicate that the attack should not strike true, then it hits anyway with zero successes. Accuracy Without Distance can't strike through a perfect defense, however, nor can it strike a target if there's simply no way to reach them (such as if they're on the other side of a wall, or outside of a weapon's maximum range).

Dipping Swallow Defense (•)

Resonance: Brawl, Melee, War

The Solar lets instinct guide her defenses, and finds that her blade or fist intercepts every attack in the moment before it strikes her.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to activate this Charm. For the rest of the scene or until she is next Staggered, the Solar increases her Defense by +2. Additionally, while this Charm is active, the Solar ignores the Heavy quality of any attacks directed at her.

Divine Executioner Stance (•)

Resonance: Empathy, War

The Solar swears to protect that which she holds most dear, and Heaven stands officiant in recognition of her convictions. Her attacks ignite with holy fire, rendering wicked men into wailing ghosts.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote and select one of the Solar's Intimacies. For the rest of the scene, whenever the Solar attacks someone who threatens that Intimacy or whose actions or agenda violates it, her attack inflicts Aggravated damage (-1) and increases its base damage by +3. If she incapacitates or kills such a foe, she gains 1 Mote.

At Essence 3+, once per scene when the Solar directs an attack against someone who is a valid target for this Charm's effects, she may enhance it as though with Essence of the Blazing Sun were at no cost.

At Essence 5+, if a Solar strikes someone with an attack enhanced by this Charm, and they do not move at least one zone away from her on their next turn, then at the end of that round after all other characters have acted, she may make an extra attack against them, and may keep doing so in each subsequent round until they flee from her into another zone.

This Charm may only be activated to protect a particular Intimacy once per story. The Solar may waive the Mote cost and once-per-story activation limit if she sees a creature of darkness threatening the Intimacy she activates this Charm to protect.

Edge of Morning Sunlight (•)

Resonance: Archery, Melee, Presence

The Solar's attacks burn the undead, the unholy, and other such creatures of darkness like fire.

System: The Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote to make all of her attacks until the end of the scene or she is next Staggered inflict Aggravated damage (-2) against all creatures of darkness.

Creatures of Darkness

Creatures of darkness include all beings of Hell and the Underworld, such as ghosts and demons, or whose nature is intrinsically tied to darkness or death. Abyssal, Infernal, and Liminal Exalted are considered creatures of darkness.

Foe-Cleaving Focus (•)

Resonance: Melee, Thrown

Seizing upon a momentary weakness in her foe's battle pattern, the Solar strikes like a thunderbolt.

System: The Solar's attacks against Staggered enemies inflict Aggravated damage (-1) and gain Piercing (-1). She may also reflexively spend 1 Mote to make an attack unblockable *or* to grant it the Heavy quality.

Hauberk-Summoning Gesture (•)

Resonance: Resistance

The Solar extends her limbs and closes her eyes, remembering the weight of her armor, and a moment later memory becomes reality as she becomes enwrapped in steel.

System: The Solar either uses a swift action to summon a suit of armor she owns onto herself, regardless of how far away it may be, causing it to appear and enwrap her in a matter of moments; or else she may reflexively spend 1 Mote to instantly don the armor in a flash of light, so quickly that it can protect her from a spear already being thrust at her body.

Immortal Armory of the Sun (•)

Resonance: Archery, Melee, Thrown, War

The Solar becomes absolute master of all weaponry, and may even sculpt weapons from her own anima.

System: By using a re-arm action or reflexively spending 1 Mote, the Solar can call any weapon she can see into her hand, so long as it's not actively in someone else's possession.

Alternately, by using a re-arm action and reflexively spending 1 Mote, she can forge any personal-scale mundane weapon she desires out of raw Essence; this weapon persists for the rest of the scene, but becomes ephemeral and useless in any hands save the Solar's own. Created weapons may be anything from a great sword to a brace of throwing hatchets. Created ranged weapons enjoy effectively limitless ammunition.

Finally, the Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote to charge an existing ranged weapon with power, granting it infinite ammunition for the rest of the scene. Firewands form an exception. Created firewands, or those firing phantom firedust, require the additional use of a re-arm action

to create enough packets of phantom firedust to last until the Solar is next Staggered or until the scene ends, whichever comes first.

With Essence 5+, the Solar may create artifact weapons rather than mundane weapons with this Charm, although they express no Evocations or other special powers.

Rout-Stemming Inspiration (•)

Resonance: War

Leading from the front, the Solar's example gives heart to her troops and stiffens their resolve when it wavers.

System: A number of times per scene equal to her War rating, the Solar may treat a successful attack against an enemy as also being a successful rally or rally for numbers action (see p. XX), with a number of successes equal to her successes rolled against her enemy. Additionally, she takes heart from the renewed vigor of her troops; when she makes a successful rally or rally for numbers action, she may also increase her Dodge or Block rating by +1.

Stark Truth of Steel Method (•)

Resonance: Melee, War

Spotting a moment of acute vulnerability, the Solar delivers a killing strike to her enemy's weak point.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when attacking a Staggered opponent. The attack gains +3 base damage, Piercing (-2), inflicts Aggravated damage (-1), and if it causes a Wound, the Solar may make it a mauled Wound at no additional cost.

Thunderclap Rush Attack (•)

Resonance: Brawl, War

The Solar's Essence rises in reaction to killing intent projected against it, giving her the edge on her foes.

System: The Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote to activate this Charm. For the rest of the scene, she may act first even when her opponents initiate violence against her, causing the fight's pace of battle to play out as though she and her allies had initiated violence. She can also, at no cost, cut ahead during the scene without spending Willpower a number of times equal to (highest of Brawl, Martial Arts, or Melee ratings).

Unassailable Guardian Posture (•)

Resonance: Melee, Resistance

Setting herself to the protection of comrades and innocents alike, the Solar forges herself into an unbreakable bulwark.

System: The Solar may protect an ally as a swift rather than simple action. When the Solar uses the protect action to defend someone, once per round she may redirect an attack directed against her ward so that she becomes its target instead.

Dragon Coil Technique (••)

Resonance: Brawl

Those caught in the Solar's grasp find that it is like being enwrapped in iron chains.

System: The Solar locks herself in a deadly embrace with an opponent, immobilizing him and wrenching apart his joints one by one. By reflexively paying 1 Mote upon landing a successful unarmed attack, the Exalt locks herself and her target in place. Unless she voluntarily relinquishes the power of this Charm, neither can move from the zone they currently occupy.

While this Charm remains active, the target is subjected to an ongoing hazard (difficulty 8, damage 5, lacerated, disabled arm, or disabled leg as the Solar chooses, one round intervals). This hazard must be resisted with (Strength or Dexterity) + (Brawl or Martial Arts), or with an Aptitude appropriate for wrestling.

If the Solar attacks anyone other than her grappled target, is forcibly moved to another zone, is Staggered, or reflexively chooses to relinquish the Charm, Dragon Coil Technique ends immediately.

Empty Palm Technique (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts, Thrown

The Solar strikes with the speed of a cobra and the shock of an earthquake, neatly disarming an opponent and throwing his weapon away.

System: (Essence rating) times per scene, the Solar may reduce the cost of making a disarming attack to 0 Willpower. If the attack rolls at least three thresholds successes, then the Solar may either throw the target's weapon into an adjacent zone when she disarms him, or may reflexively catch and equip the disarmed weapon herself.

At Essence 2+, the Solar may simply pay 1 Mote upon successfully striking an opponent to forfeit all damage and disarm him instead.

At Essence 4+, when the Solar pays 1 Mote, as above, she only forfeits threshold damage, and may still inflict base damage. If this Staggers the target, she may inflict a disabled arm Wound.

Excellent Strike (••)

Resonance: Archery, Melee, Thrown

The Solar's attack is simply without flaw, slashing through her enemy's defenses and cutting deep or striking true.

System: By reflexively spending 1 Mote when making an attack, the Solar grants that attack Overwhelming (-2) and the Fierce quality.

At Essence 3+, if the Solar Staggers her opponent with an attack enhanced with this Charm, then the next time during the scene she activates Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance the Ability she made that attack with, she may do so at no cost.

Fire and Stones Strike (••)

Resonance: Brawl, Thrown

The Solar's blows burn with the roaring heat of her Essence, striking grievous wounds through the strongest armor and the most potent defenses.

System: The Solar reflexively spends 1 Mote. For the rest of the round, all of her attacks increase their base damage by the Solar's (highest of Strength, Dexterity, or the Ability used to launch the attack).

At Essence 3+, if an attack enhanced by Fire and Stones Strike Staggers or Incapacitates its target, the Solar's next use of Fire and Stones Strike within the same scene costs 0 Motes.

Hail-Shattering Practice (••)

Resonance: Melee

The Solar pitches herself into her foes' attacks, meeting aggression with aggression. A clumsy thrust cannot harm her.

System: If the Solar chooses to Block an attack directed against her which struck her with 2 or fewer successes on its attack roll, she does not have to spend Willpower to invoke her Block.

At Essence 2+, the Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, she may ignore the Heavy quality on any attacks directed against her.

Hammer on Iron Technique (••)

Resonance: Brawl

The Exalt seizes up her foe and strikes him with triphammer repetition until there is nothing left in her grasp.

System: Upon attacking and damaging a foe, the Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote to set up a shattering rhythm of repetitious blows. Henceforth, each time she strikes and damages the same target again, her attack gains a cumulative +3 to its base damage and is Heavy. This damage bonus continues to mount until the Solar launches an attack that fails to damage her target, fails to strike her target, attacks anyone other than the target, or until a full round elapses in which she does not launch a damaging attack at her target.

At Essence 3+, the Solar may also activate this Charm when striking inanimate objects or structures, allowing her to eventually punch her way through a fortress wall or smash a vast crater into the middle of the street.

Heavenly Guardian Defense (••)

Resonance: Brawl, Melee

Focusing her Essence into an unassailable barrier, the Solar may block or parry any single attack of which she is aware.

System: The Solar may reflexively spend 2 Motes when Blocking an attack to increase her Block value by an arbitrarily high number of her choosing against it, guaranteeing that the attack inflicts 0 damage. If the attack she wishes to defeat is unblockable, she may spend +1 Mote to remove that quality from it in exchange for making it Heavy instead; however, if she performs such a parry with a mortal weapon, then it shatters under she strain the subjects it to.

After Heavenly Guardian Defense protects the Solar, her Block returns to its previous value and is reduced as usual.

This Charm cannot be invoked against unexpected attacks, or if the Solar's Block value is 0 or less. When invoked, this Charm is considered a perfect defense.

Hungry Tiger Technique (••)

Resonance: Archery, Brawl, Melee

When the Solar focuses all her attention on a single foe, her strikes become peerlessly deadly.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Whenever an attack the Solar makes during the rest of the round succeeds, count its successes twice when adding them to the attack's threshold damage.

Sandstorm Wind Attack (••)

Resonance: Melee

The Solar strikes with such swiftness and power that a blur of force erupts from her hand or weapon. Touched by naught more than a liquid shimmer of displaced dust or divided leaves, foes far beyond the reach of her blade may be cleft in twain.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the Solar may direct what would normally be close-range Brawl, Martial Arts, and Melee attacks against enemies up to one zone away. By reflexively spending 1 additional Mote upon making such an attack, she can target an enemy one additional zone farther away than this Charm would otherwise normally permit.

At Essence 4+, this Charm's default range increases to two zones.

There Is No Wind (••)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

Summoning the totality of her concentration, the Solar delivers her attack along a divinely ordained vector. Distance, wind resistance: these things are of no consequence.

System: Use a simple action to spend 1 Mote and make a ranged attack. That attack gains unlimited range and can strike a target any number of zones, sectors, or districts away. If the Solar can see her target and her projectile has an unobstructed path to reach him, she can kill him.

War Lion Stance (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts, Melee, Resistance, War

Dedicating herself to the protection of an ally, the Solar becomes a steel-edged shadow, striking down everything which threatens her comrade.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to apply a protect action to a comrade in the same zone. This protection continues until one of the characters moves to a different zone, until the end of the scene, or until the Solar is Staggered, whichever comes first.

Fivefold Bulwark Stance (•••)

Resonance: Melee

Focusing her battle awareness into a preternatural trance, the Solar beholds the violent intent of her foes as golden trceries forecasting where their attacks will occur.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Solar does not have to spend Willpower to Block attacks until the end of the scene, until she is next Staggered, or until her Block value drops to 0, whichever comes first.

Lightning Strikes Twice (•••)

Resonance: Brawl, Thrown

The Solar strikes at a single opponent again and again, shattering his defenses, his bones, his hopes of victory, until only she remains standing.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes upon Staggering a target. After all other characters have acted, the Solar may launch an additional attack at that same target. If this attack Staggers the target again, then the Solar may instantly launch another attack by reflexively paying 1 Mote. Up to (Essence rating) 1 Mote attacks can be launched per round with this Charm.

If an opponent is incapacitated by an attack generated by Lightning Strikes Twice, the Solar may choose to increase her Block by +3 rather than the usual Block +1 or Dodge +1.

Meteor Storm Affray (••)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

Pouring her Essence into a ranged attack, the Solar causes one projectile to become dozens, blanketing an area in arrows or blades.

System: Use a simple action to spend 2 Motes and make a ranged attack. The Solar makes a single attack roll against the highest Defense rating in the zone she targets, and applies its result to everyone in that zone.

Alternately, use a simple action to spend 1 Mote and launch a ranged attack against a group. The attack inflicts Aggravated damage (-4).

Peony Blossom Technique (•••)

Resonance: Archery, Melee, Thrown

The Solar moves like ice on hot metal, like a deadly mirage, like an angry god amidst flying arrows, bright flashes of steel, and hanging trails of blood spatter.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes at the end of the Solar's turn. At the conclusion of the round, after all other characters have acted, the Solar may launch one attack at each Staggered opponent within reach of her weapon.

Ready in Eight Directions Stance (•••)

Resonance: Melee, Thrown

The Solar directs Essence into her killing intent until it becomes a deadly guardian angel guiding her motions by sheer instinct, cutting down those who would strike at her.

System: Spend 2 Motes reflexively to activate this Charm. For the rest of the round, anyone within reach of the Exalt's weapon who attacks her is subjected to a one-time hazard (difficulty 8, damage 4, same damage type as the Solar's weapon) after his attack resolves, representing the Solar making an instant counterstrike against them.

Heaven Thunder Hammer (•••)

Resonance: Brawl

The Solar strikes or throws her opponent, sending him hurtling unto the distant horizon.

System: The Solar uses a simple action to spend 1 Mote and makes a Brawl, close-range Martial Arts, or Melee attack against an opponent within the same zone. If the attack strikes its target it knocks him into an adjacent zone, knocks him prone, and Staggers him, even if the attack's damage does not meet his Stagger Threshold. If his Stagger Threshold is not met, the target is not Wounded when Staggered by this feature of the Charm.

If Heaven Thunder Hammer inflicts damage equal to or in excess of the target's Stagger Threshold, he is Staggered and Wounded as normal, as well as hurled into an adjacent *sector* and knocked prone. The Solar can choose for the Wound inflicted to be a dazed Wound if she desires. At Essence 4+, she may also reflexively pay +1 additional Mote at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted, to accelerate at lightning speed through the trail of broken walls and debris left in her target's wake, appearing at his feet, and to immediately target him with a second Heaven Thunder Hammer-empowered attack. Only one such follow-up attack can be made per scene.

With Essence 5+, instead of knocking an opponent into an adjacent sector, the Solar can choose to reflexively spend +1 additional Mote when she sends him flying to knock him into an adjacent *district*.

Tiger Warrior Training Technique (•••)

Resonance: War

By putting groups of soldiers through a dedicated training regimen, the Solar can transform even a ragtag mob of peasants into Creation's deadliest fighters in short order.

System: The Solar dedicates herself to leading a group of would-be soldiers through a daily regimen of drills and training exercises taking up at least one hour over the course of two weeks. She can dedicate her efforts to the training of a group of up to Size (current Essence rating + 1, maximum 5) at a time. While she's actively training a group of Tiger Warriors, her maximum Mote pool is reduced by one. She can reclaim this capacity by abandoning her students' training, but if she does this and returns to their tutelage later, she must start their training over from scratch.

After two weeks, clueless farmers gain the battle profile of professional soldiers (see p. XX), and when fighting as a unit enjoy Drill 8. Already-qualified soldiers, even green ones, gain the battle profile of elite troops and when fighting as a unit enjoy Drill 8. Elite troops subjected to this training gain the battle profile of Tiger Warriors, and when fighting as a unit enjoy Drill 9. A group of fighters may be run through this training regimen repeatedly to hone them from civilians to Tiger Warriors, if the Solar has sufficient time and inclination.

If a protagonist partakes of Tiger Warrior training, then after two weeks of training they may purchase one dot of Athletics, Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee, Resistance, Ride, Thrown, or War as though it were a Favored Ability.

Zenith Charms

These Charms deal with self-discipline, physical toughness and survival, leadership, inspiration, and smiting the unholy.

Armored Scout's Invigoration (•)

Resonance: Resistance

The Exalt uses efficacious breathing practices to circulate a cushion of Essence between her body and her armor, allowing it to ride light upon her and burden her not.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to activate this Charm. For the next 24 hours, if the Exalt's armor has a worse Defense modifier than +1, it is set to +1; if it has a worse Dodge modifier than -0, it is set to -0; and its Fatigue is set to +0.

At Essence 2+, while this Charm is active, the Solar counts as being unarmored for the purpose of qualifying to use Martial Arts Charms.

Clear Mind Discipline (•)

Resonance: Resistance, Survival

Emptying her mind for a few brief and refreshing minutes, the Solar sinks into the deep pool of her own Essence, and emerges renewed.

System: The Solar may substitute 15 minutes of meditation for a full night's sleep, leaving her refreshed and well-rested. She may regain Willpower by this method, but only once per day, and she cannot "double up" and regain Willpower later by sleeping as well. This Charm's window of eligibility for use refreshes at sunrise each day.

At Essence 4+, the Solar is a self-supporting bastion. She may go for up to a month without food, water, or rest with no ill effects, and 15 minutes of meditation at any point fulfills all of these needs for up to a month.

Enemy-Castigating Solar Judgment (•)

Resonance: Performance, Presence, War

The Solar's words burn and sear with righteous truth, laying bare the souls of the enemies of Creation before her sermons.

System: Creatures of darkness suffer a -3 penalty to all dice pools to resist the Solar's social and mind-affecting Charms. Whenever one of the Solar's rolls uses a creature of darkness's traits (such as Willpower) to set its difficulty, reduce the difficulty by -2. If a creature of darkness spends Willpower to resist the Solar's social influence or mind-influencing Charms, they must double the amount spent to get any benefit from doing so.

Harmony with Nature Approach (•)

Resonance: Survival

The Solar becomes as one with the natural world. Even the most savage of predators will avoid rather than attack her. The world offers up shelter from extreme environments merely for the asking, and finding forage is effortless.

System: The Solar reduces the difficulty of all Survival rolls to remain safe, comfortable, and fed in the wilderness, or to provide these amenities for others, by -5.

By reflexively spending 1 Mote, she becomes completely immune to damage and penalties from environmental hazards such as burning heat, blizzards, and lava for the rest of the scene.

Alternately, by reflexively spending 1 Mote, for the rest of the scene the Solar may understand animals as though they were able to speak her native language, and beasts similarly understand her when she speaks.

With Essence 3+, all of the effects of Harmony with Nature Approach are permanently active at no cost, and the Solar has no difficulty operating in environments with no breathable air, or sensing her surroundings in environments that make doing so difficult or nearly impossible (such as lightless trenches at the bottom of the sea, or when burrowing deep into a sandy dune).

Iron Kettle Body (•)

Resonance: Resistance

Infusing her body with her sense of discipline, the Solar treats even grievous injuries as mere nuisances.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the Solar's Stagger Threshold is increased by +2 and all Aggravated damage reduces the penalty it inflicts by one. If an attack would inflict a bruised Wound on the Solar, increase her Stagger Threshold against it by +3 instead.

Listener-Swaying Argument (•)

Resonance: Presence, Socialize

The Solar's words burn with conviction, striking through the cynicism and doubt of any who listen.

System: By reflexively spending 1 Mote, the Solar's words become impossible to ignore, and she reduces the difficulty of all social rolls by -2 for the rest of the scene. Anyone who wishes to spend 1 Willpower to reject her social influence must spend +1 additional Willpower to do so.

With Essence 2+, once per session the Solar may activate Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance Empathy, Performance, Presence, or Socialize at a cost of 0 Motes.

Ox-Body Technique (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Resistance, War

The Solar's body is fortified with divine power, enabling her to survive grievous injuries.

System: The Solar permanently gains +3 maximum Health.

This Charm can be purchased a number of times equal to the higher of the character's Stamina or Resistance ratings.

Phantom-Conjuring Performance (•)

Resonance: Performance

When the Solar tells a story, enacts a performance, or simply engages in dramatic actions while her anima is flaring, it spawns brief-lived and clearly unreal golden phantoms to play out her tale, emphasize her actions, or otherwise act as props. She might conjure a phantom partner for a dance, emphasize a mighty blow by surrounding herself with a larger-than-life roaring tiger, or cause her anima to unfold behind her as blazing golden wings to emphasize her divine nature.

System: This Charm is active whenever the Exalt's anima is flaring. Creative use of Phantom-Conjuring Performance can lower the difficulty of some social actions by -1 when accompanied by a dramatic stunt.

Respect Commanding Attitude (•)

Resonance: Performance, Presence

The Solar fixes her audience's attention upon her with the golden nail of her Essence. While they may not like or believe what she has to say, nor enjoy her performance, they will neither leave her presence, heckle her, nor cease paying attention to her before she's had her say.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Charisma or Appearance) + Performance against difficulty 3. Anyone whose Willpower rating is equal to or lower than the successes rolled falls under this Charm's sway until the end of the Solar's performance. They can still be distracted by violence or urgent demands such as someone stealing their coinpurse.

Righteous Lion Defense (•)

Resonance: Presence, Resistance

The Solar fortifies her convictions with the very fabric of the cosmos, making an invincible fortress of her heart.

System: The Exalt may reject or ignore any attempt to cause or force her to betray, undermine, or abandon her Intimacies or Nature at no cost and with no penalty.

Rose-Lipped Seduction Style (•)

Resonance: Presence, Socialize

The Solar's movements answer the needs of those around her. Her smile evokes carnal dreams whose fulfilment seemed impossible until that moment. She becomes a figure of intense desire, breaking every heart that beholds her and remaking it anew in the next moment, twice what it was before.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, all Appearance rolls are made at -2 difficulty. Anyone the Solar favors with a smile or a kind word may voluntarily accept a temporary Intimacy of desire for her for the rest of the story, so long as they don't already have one; doing so restores two points of Willpower.

Body-Mending Meditation (••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Solar may heal at an accelerated rate by resting.

System: So long as she takes no strenuous activity, the Solar may heal one point of damage to her Health per hour. Wounds are healed in one quarter of the time they would normally take. Aggravated damage and Wounds cannot have their healing times shortened by this Charm.

Hypnotic Tongue Technique (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Linguistics, Performance, Presence

By using nothing more than a steady patten of dialogue, the Solar can lull someone into a hypnotic trance and then talk them into doing whatever she wishes.

System: Use a simple action to spend 2 Motes and roll Manipulation + (Empathy, Linguistics, or Presence) as a simple action against a difficulty of the target's Willpower rating. One or two successes will allow the Solar to command her target to do anything that doesn't seem tremendously unusual or out of character. With three or four successes, she can command the target to do anything that doesn't endanger himself or a loved one. With five or more successes,

the target will risk his life and the lives of others at the Solar's command. The target *will* be aware his actions are unusual and inexplicable afterwards, unless the Solar spends an additional +1 Willpower. In this case, the target will rationalize his actions to the best of his ability.

Hypnotic Tongue Technique cannot hypnotize a target into harming or killing himself, compel him into certain death, or force him to betray his Nature. Those targeted by this Charm may spend 1 Willpower to escape its effects for a scene if they can cite an Intimacy that it is forcing them to act against. Spending a number of points of Willpower equal to the Solar's Essence rating breaks the Charm's hold.

Immunity to Everything Technique (••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Solar gains the hardiness of the very gods themselves.

System: Poison and disease can no longer harm or penalize the character in any way whatsoever.

Integrity-Protecting Prana (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Resistance

Fortifying her will with Essence, the Solar throws off any attempt to control or beguile her.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes to become immune to all thought and emotion-altering magic for the rest of the scene. If used in response to an attempt to use such magic upon the character, the Solar gains 1 Limit.

Inviolable Essence Bastion (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Lore, Resistance

Sinking into a meditative state, the Solar becomes utterly immune to worldly concerns. So long as her concentration remains unbroken, she is invincible.

System: The Solar takes a moment to sink into a lotus posture, empty her mind, and close out the world around her. Spend 2 Motes and roll Willpower against difficulty 8 as a simple action. Success allows the Solar to maintain an invincible meditative state for one hour. While meditating, she cannot take any voluntary actions, including deliberate thought or planning, and is completely immune to all damage of any kind. Attempts to strike her deflect harmlessly off of the momentarily-visible golden barrier of her anima. She cannot drown, suffocate, or otherwise suffer any physical harm of any kind. If the Solar wishes to extend her meditation beyond the first hour, she must pay 1 Willpower point at the beginning of each additional hour.

This Charm doesn't protect the Solar from attacks on her mind or spirit, such as possession by a ghost, a sorcerer attempting to control her mind, or even an ordinary person attempting to talk her into abandoning her meditations to act upon some pressing concern.

With Essence 3+, Inviolable Essence Bastion lasts for a number of hours equal to the successes on the Willpower roll. By paying a point of Willpower, the Solar may extend this Charm's duration for as long as she can go without food, drink, or sleep. One Zenith holy man survived for three years during the Usurpation under the auspices of this Charm, until the head of his Lunar wife was presented before him and he accepted at last that no help would ever come. In the moment that a tear formed at the corner of his eye, he was beheaded by Rakan Thulio.

Iron Skin Concentration (••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Solar fortifies her body with Essence, making her skin as tough as steel.

System: Reflexively spending 1 Mote increases the Solar's Soak rating by +2 for the rest of the scene. Whenever she Staggered or incapacitates an opponent, this Charm's bonus rises to +3 until the end of the round.

Ruin-Abasing Shrug (••)

Resonance: Resistance

Suppressing merely mortal limitations with a forceful circulation of Essence and harnessed breathing techniques, the Solar rises above the pain of her injuries.

System: Reduce the Wound penalty inflicted by each individual Wound the Solar suffers by -1, to a minimum of -0. The Solar may reflexively pay 1 Mote to ignore *all* Wound penalties for the rest of the scene.

With Essence 2+, the Solar may also reflexively pay 1 Mote while Staggered to immediately escape from the Staggered state. This does not negate the fact that she was Staggered or prevent her from suffering a Wound; it merely ends the Staggered state.

With Essence 3+, once per session the Solar may activate Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance Resistance for a cost of 0 Motes.

Saga Beast Virtue (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Survival

The Solar may pour the might of her Essence into her Familiar, briefly transforming it into a god-beast of the battlefield.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to trigger a dramatic transformation in the Solar's Familiar, causing it to swell into a divine beast of legend for the rest of the scene. The transformation grants the familiar +2 to its Expertise pool, +3 Base Damage, and +2 Soak, along with +3 Temporary Health.

Undying Solar Resolve (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Presence

The Solar roots her sense of self deep in her Essence, fortifying her will against all that might assail it.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, Willpower rolls are not subject to the rule of 1s, and count results of 9 and 10 as two successes. If such a roll fails anyway (or is defeated in a contested roll), the Solar gains a point of Limit as the pillar of her confidence is cracked.

Unshakeable Bloodhound Technique (••)

Resonance: Awareness, Survival

No force can evade the Solar once she's picked up her quarry's trail.

System: Once the character finds some evidence of a trail to follow, her player may reflexively spend 1 Mote to perfectly track the target for the next 24 hours. No roll is needed. If she knows she's tracking a creature of darkness, this Charm's Mote cost falls to 0.

Adamant Skin Technique (•••)

Resonance: Resistance

Focusing her Essence into her body, the Solar becomes momentarily indestructible.

System: Upon being damaged, the Solar may reflexively spend 2 Motes to activate this Charm. She rolls (Stamina + Resistance) against difficulty 6, reducing the final damage applied to her Health by -1 for each success she rolls. Additionally, her Stagger Threshold is increased against this damage to any arbitrarily high number she desires.

Alternately, when the Solar should take an automatic Wound for some reason (such as from falling from a great height), she may activate this Charm and simply choose not to take the Wound. Adamant Skin Technique can't be used for this purpose if the Wound is inflicted by a Charm or similar power that the Solar herself invoked.

Demon-Wracking Shout (•••)

Resonance: Performance

The Solar can bellow forth a wordless but divine cry of condemnation, shattering the resolve of the unholy.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll (Charisma + Performance) against difficulty 6. The Demon-Wracking shout is audible across the entirety of the sector the Solar occupies. All creatures of darkness who hear the Demon-Wracking Shout lose 1 point of Willpower per success rolled. If this reduces them to 0 Willpower or less, they must flee from the Solar in a blind stew of panic and self-loathing for at minimum the Solar's Essence rating in minutes. If the Solar's Essence rating is higher than the creature of darkness's, they run until they collapse of exhaustion.

At Essence 4+, the Demon-Wracking Shout becomes audible across the entire *district* the Solar occupies.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Essence-Gathering Temper (•••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Solar learns to take the pain and fury she feels when wounded and strike them against her Exaltation, producing brilliant sparks of power.

System: Whenever the Solar suffers a Wound, she may reflexively spend a point of Willpower and gain her Essence rating in Motes of Essence. This causes the Wound to become Aggravated if it was not already.

Fervent Missionary-Uplifting Practice (•••)

Resonance: Presence, Performance

By putting someone through a dedicated training regimen, the Solar can prepare him to carry out works of faith and inspiration. In little more than a week, a Solar with this Charm can transform

a group of criminal wastrels into devout holy men, mendicants, eremites, preachers, priests, leaders, and propagandists.

System: The Solar dedicates herself to educating a group of students, stoking the fires of their fervor with her sermons and challenging their dedication through ordeals which she oversees. This takes up at least one hour every day over the course of two weeks. She can dedicate her efforts to the training of a group of up to Size (current Essence rating, maximum 5) at a time. While she's actively training a group of students, her maximum Mote pool is reduced by one. She can reclaim this capacity by abandoning her students' training, but if she does this and returns to their tutelage later, she must start their training over from scratch.

After two weeks, disorganized rabble gain an Expertise pool of 5 and an Aptitude for one of the following: Demonstrations of faith, leadership, oratory, prayer, propaganda, sermons, or spreading the faith. Already-competent priests, missionaries, dogmatics, and so on instead gain an Expertise pool of 7. Experts in the Solar's class advance to an Expertise pool of 9. A group of students may be run through this training regimen repeatedly to hone them from complete indolence to Fervent Missionaries, or to branch them out into multidisciplinary mastery, if the Solar has sufficient time and inclination.

If a protagonist partakes of Fervent Missionary training, then after two weeks of training they may purchase one dot of Empathy, Presence, Performance, Lore, Survival, or Resistance as though it were a Favored Ability.

Majestic Radiant Presence (•••)

Resonance: Presence

The Solar dons the authority of kings and burns with the incandescent glory of the sun. It becomes nigh-unthinkable to belittle or deny her in any way, much less actively oppose her or raise a hand against her.

System: The Solar reflexively spends 2 Motes. For the rest of the scene, whenever anyone seeks to oppose her in any respect, either socially or physically, they must make a Willpower roll against a difficulty of the Solar's (Charisma or Appearance) + Presence or else abort their action and bow their head in shame at their own temerity, forfeiting their current turn. Characters may still freely defend against the Solar's attacks.

Memory-Reweaving Discipline (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Performance

Focusing her will and her words, the Solar may rewrite the memories of another.

System: Spend 2 Motes while detailing the subject's new memories and roll (Manipulation + Performance) as a simple action, resisted by the target's Willpower (both at difficulty 6). The subject's memories can be rewritten based on the number of successes left after subtracting the result of the opposed Willpower roll:

1 success: The events of a recent scene can be rewritten.

2 successes: The events of a recent day can be rewritten.

3 successes: A single pivotal memory in the subject's life can be rewritten. Alternately, entire weeks of the subject's past can be written so long as they're not crucial to the substance of her life or identity.

4 successes: A major feature of the subject's life can be rewritten (such as who they're married to, where they grew up, or whether the Solar is a hated enemy or their childhood friend).

5+ successes: The subject can be given an entirely new history.

Terrible Sun King Condemnation (•••)

Resonance: Lore, Presence

The Solar castigates her enemy as a foe to Creation and villain in the eyes of all upright individuals, crushing him beneath the weight of her disdain and casting a pall over him which becomes obvious to everyone he meets.

System: The Solar spends 2 Motes and uses a simple action to roll Charisma + (Presence or Performance) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower rating. The target may attempt to rebut the Solar's words by spending a point of Willpower and making a (Charisma or Manipulation) + (Empathy, Linguistics, Presence, or Socialize) roll of his own, at a difficulty of the Solar's Willpower. If he neglects to do so, or fails to gain more successes than the Solar, then he is condemned and accursed. Everyone who meets the target knows instinctively that he is a wretch and a scoundrel; the difficulty of all his social rolls increase by +2, and people distrust him on general principle. This condemnation lingers for the Solar's Essence rating in weeks. She can extend this by one additional week per extra Mote spent to activate this Charm.

With Essence 5+, the target is also considered a creature of darkness while this Charm is in effect.

You Can Be More (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Linguistics, Performance

Drawing someone aside, the Solar speaks with eloquence and conviction of the wonders she's seen and the potential for the world to be something more and better than what it is. Her words are seeds brimming with Essence, and may take root in the soul of the listener, blossoming into wisdom and power.

System: The Solar reflexively spends 2 Motes when making an attempt to instill a temporary Intimacy into someone (see p. XX). If the attempt succeeds, a true Intimacy rather than a temporary Intimacy is formed. The target can reject the formation of this Intimacy by spending 3 Willpower.

An individual can't be targeted with this Charm more than once per story.

Twilight Charms

These Charms deal with spirits, academics, sorcery, craftsmanship, medicine, and the power of the mind.

Anodyne of Celestial Dreaming (•)

Resonance: Empathy, Medicine, Occult

The Exalt may journey into her patient's mind, thereby confronting and defeating injuries to her psyche and demons that haunt her dreams.

System: Spend 2 Motes and use a simple action while sitting beside a sleeping patient to descend into the depths of her mind. Once within, the Solar may examine her patient's mind with (Perception + Medicine) against a difficulty of the patient's Willpower to determine the presence and nature of any Derangements, as well as to detect if his memories or personality have been tampered with by hostile magic. Such altered thoughts or memories (such as those created with Hypnotic Tongue Technique or Memory-Reweaving Discipline) can be corrected with a difficulty (patient's Willpower) (Intelligence + Medicine) action. Each such treatment takes one hour. Derangements may be exorcised with another such action. Exorcising a derangement ends the treatment, awakening the Solar from her trance and creating a hostile spirit which immediately attacks her.

Spirit of Madness

Aptitudes: *Attack*, frighten, manipulate, be nimble, be tough, *convince others to give up on the patient from whom the spirit originated.*

Expertise: 8; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 9

Health: 12; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Homeward Bound (passive): The spirit can always sense the location of the person it was excised from. If it can gain access to them while they are asleep, it may spend one hour re-insinuating itself into their mind, restoring their Derangement.

Savage Spirit (passive): The spirit always initiates violence, no matter how well-prepared others are for its appearance. If it does so in the presence of the person who spawned it, it contributes +3 starting Momentum.

Principle of Motion (1 Momentum, reflexive): The spirit of madness makes one extra attack at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Dematerialize (3 simple actions): The spirit of madness may, by taking three consecutive unrolled simple actions, become dematerialized. It can only use this power once per week, and may reflexively resume a materialized state at any time. It cannot dematerialize during the scene of its creation.

Burning Eye of the Deliverer (•)

Resonance: Awareness, Investigation, Lore, Occult

The Solar's searing gaze burns through supernatural deceptions and cuts through to the truth.

System: The character may reflexively spend 1 Mote to pierce supernatural disguises and transformations for the rest of the scene. If another character is using magic to appear to be someone or something she is not, the Solar automatically sees through their disguise. This pierces *deceptions*, not attempts at hiding. Thus, it could see through Flawlessly Impenetrable

Disguise, but not Vanishing From Mind's Eye Method. Burning Eye of the Deliverer sees the true face of Lunars in a form from their shapeshifting library (though it detects nothing out of place if they are wearing any of their true forms), and will detect spirits possessing a person.

Chaos-Resistance Preparation (•)

Resonance: Craft, Lore

The Solar's works and blessings provide protection from the corrosive touch of the Wyld.

System: Any item the Solar makes is eternally immune to being transformed or tainted by exposure to the Wyld. The Solar may also use a simple action to lay her hand on an object, spend 1 Mote, and roll (Intelligence + Lore) against difficulty 7. The object is protected from the Wyld for one month per success.

Alternately, the Solar may construct a vessel designed to offer protection from the Wyld, spending 1 Mote at the beginning of each session of working to construct it and increasing the difficulty of all rolls to make the vessel by +1. "Vessels" may be containers such as crates, jars, or barrels designed to hold other goods (which are protected while inside), vehicles such as wagons or ships (which protect the people and goods within), or clothes or barding for animals (which protect those who wear them). Such protections remain efficacious for a number of years equal to the Solar's Essence rating, after which they are merely ordinary crates, wagons, and clothes (albeit crates, wagons, and clothes immune to the Wyld's corrosion, since the Solar made them).

With Essence 4+, blessings of protection granted with this Charm last for one year per success rather than one month. Protective vessels retain their potency for a number of centuries equal to the Solar's Essence rating, rather than years.

With Essence 6+, blessings of protection last for one century per success, while protective vessels retain their potency for a number of millennia equal to the Solar's Essence rating.

Crafty Observation Method (•)

Resonance: Investigation

The Solar may observe a scene to its minutest detail in a matter of seconds.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to compress a scene's worth of observation into the time it takes to draw in a deep breath, allowing for such feats as a reflexive (Perception + Investigation) roll while running through a room at a full sprint.

Essence-Lending Method (•)

Resonance: Craft, Empathy, Lore

By touching another Exalt or other supernatural being, the Solar may grant them a gift of her Essence.

System: Use an action to touch another character and spend as many Motes as desired. The recipient gains those Motes if they are able. If used to lend Motes to an antagonist, then the antagonist gains a personal pool of Momentum equal to the Motes donated which only he can use, and which vanishes at the end of the scene.

This Charm's cost does not count against the Exalt's Motes-per-turn limit.

Ghost-Eating Technique (•)

Resonance: Occult

The Solar wields the ancient art of destroying the eternal. This was the dread Charm which slew the enemies of the gods and made of them the Neverborn.

System: When the Solar slays a god, elemental, ghost, demon, or other sort of spirit, the player can reflexively roll (Wits + Occult) against difficulty (4 + the target's Essence rating). Success tears the spirit's Essence apart, preventing him from ever reforming and destroying him forever. The Solar gains 2 Motes on the spot. Additionally, the Solar is a godslayer. If she wishes it to be so, any spirit that looks upon her *knows*, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that he beholds a being capable of casually ending his existence. When her caste mark shines, she cannot hide this knowledge even if she wishes to.

At Essence 4+, when she ends a being's existence forever with Ghost-Eating Technique, a shockwave ripples out that causes all spirits that witness the destruction to lose 2 points of Willpower as the outer fragments of their power are drawn out and sucked into the momentary void the Solar's act has left in the substance of the universe. The Solar, in turn, gains an additional +1 Mote of Essence if any bystanders are affected in this way. Spirits cannot be traumatized in this fashion more than once per story.

Instant Treatment Methodology (•)

Resonance: Medicine

The Solar becomes capable of blindingly swift medical treatment, able to cycle through an entire field hospital in under ten minutes while providing world-class care.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the Solar can complete any medical assessment or treatment she undertakes, regardless of its complexity, in no more than a minute at most; the vast majority of treatments can be completed in mere seconds (i.e. with one simple action during of combat time).

Material Exegesis Prana (•)

Resonance: Occult

The Solar steeps the air in her lungs in a boiling cauldron of divine authority, then speaks a short phrase of resonant power which bestows substance to the unreal and solidity to the divine.

System: Spend a simple action formulating the phrase and speaking it. Any spirit who hears the Solar utter this phrase may repeat it himself at some point during the next (Essence rating) hours, drawing upon its power to immediately materialize and remain in that state for up to the next (Solar's Essence rating) days without paying any of the normal costs of the Materialize power, or indeed needing to possess that power at all. However, repeating the phrase also creates a temporary Intimacy of reverence for the Solar that lasts for the rest of the story.

At Essence 4+, spirits must make a difficulty 9 Willpower roll *not* to repeat the Solar's words of power upon hearing them.

Order-Affirming Blow (•)

Resonance: Lore

Taking up the foundational principles of Creation in her fist, the Solar wields causality, mathematics, history, and law as hammer and chisel, shattering the corrosive dreams of the Wyld, the warping effects of sorcery, and the entangling threads of engineered destiny and leaving behind only the original form of a child of Creation.

System: Spend 2 Motes, use a simple action to strike the target, and roll (Intelligence + Lore) against difficulty 9. Each success removes one distinct change on the target imposed by the Wyld or transformative magic such as a sorcerous working or the Lunar Charm: Blood-Reshaping Technique. Alternately, this Charm can be used to knock the influence of one instance of Sidereal Astrology or Getimian Alchemy off of a target. If aimed against a Resplendent Destiny, that destiny is destroyed and the Sidereal gains a point of Paradox. If the same is done to a Getimian, her current Alchemy formula is disrupted and loses its power for the rest of the story.

Setting Sun Aegis (•)

Resonance: Resistance

While bending the Essence of Creation to her will, the Solar may also craft it into a protective barrier of gold-and-violet energy that flashes into visibility when intercepting harm that would otherwise befall her.

System: While the Solar is shaping a spell, she may reflexively sacrifice one success from her accumulated shape sorcery total to increase her Soak and Stagger Threshold by +1 until her next turn.

Spirit-Detecting Glance (•)

Resonance: Occult

The character may attune her senses to otherworldly emanations, glimpsing the ghosts as they haunt their graves and the gods in their temples. Having seen such spirits, she may also strike them.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Solar may see dematerialized beings and the entrance of spirit sanctums for the rest of the scene. She may also physically interact with dematerialized beings, including attacking them.

Terrestrial Circle Sorcery (•)

Resonance: Occult

The Solar has been initiated into the practice of sorcery. She can cast Terrestrial Circle spells and enact sorcerous workings. Purchase of this Charm grants one shaping ritual and one Terrestrial Circle spell.

System: See Chapter Seven for rules on playing a sorcerer.

All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight (••)

Resonance: Occult

The Solar attunes her senses to the subtle flows of Essence itself, sensing its active manifestations in the form of what mortals call magic.

System: The Solar can use a swift or simple action to roll (Perception + Occult) against difficulty 7 to survey the Essence of the world around her. Depending on the number of

successes rolled and the presence of anything interesting to detect, she might uncover things like the radiance of a nearby Manse or Demesne, a subtle but active spell or sorcerous working, or the fact that a ferocious amount of Essence was spent in the area sometime recently. She can also discern particular profiles, flavors, or “colors” of Essence if she has encountered them before, and thus might use this Charm to track a missing Circlemate by the trail of his expended Essence, or to deduce that a particular Abyssal she has encountered in the past was responsible for a scene of carnage she stumbles upon.

Knowledge of this Charm also counts as a Means which adds +1 roll to sorcerous workings (see p. XX).

Celestial Circle Sorcery (••)

Resonance: Occult

The Solar has been initiated into the mighty workings of the Celestial Circle of sorcery. She can cast Celestial Circle spells. Purchase of this Charm grants one shaping ritual and one Celestial Circle spell.

System: See Chapter Seven for rules on playing a sorcerer.

A Solar must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Chaos-Repelling Pattern (••)

Resonance: Lore

The Solar draws a fortifying pattern of Essence to protect her from hostile curses and transformations.

System: Whenever the character is the subject of any supernatural power that seeks to transform, infect, taint, transport, or control her body or spirit, or to alter her destiny or her place in the world (such as by magically altering her Backgrounds), she may reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Wits + Occult) against difficulty 7. Success shatters the hostile magic, protecting the Solar completely, and immunizes her against repeated attempts to exert the same sort of influence for the rest of the scene.

Contagion-Curing Touch (••)

Resonance: Medicine

Even in the absence of proper medicines, the Solar may use the purity of her Essence to burn out the most persistent and powerful of diseases.

System: The Solar needs merely lay her hands on a patient with a simple action, spend 1 Mote, and roll (Intelligence + Medicine). The difficulty is 6 for serious mundane illnesses, 7 for normally-incurable mundane diseases such as cancer or leprosy, 8 for supernatural maladies, and 9 for the Great Contagion. Success immediately burns out the disease, leaving the patient cured.

At Essence 4+, the Solar may spend 2 Motes and make an (Intelligence + Medicine) roll to banish a particular disease or malady. If she succeeds, then for the rest of the scene, anyone touched by the radiance of her anima banner is immediately cured of that illness.

Craftsman Needs No Tools (••)

Resonance: Craft

The Solar is a genius with her hands, able to improvise whatever works of craftsmanship she may need in even the most adverse of circumstances. Give her a cave and a box of scraps, and she can make just about anything.

System: The Solar can work ten times faster than normal when creating, modifying, or repairing something. By reflexively spending 1 Mote, she can forego any need for tools until she stops working, as well.

Heaven-Turning Calculations (••)

Resonance: Lore

Though she may not be the strongest, fastest, or most skilled, the Solar can make up for all other deficiencies with her lightning acumen and precise analytical abilities.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to substitute Intelligence in place of any other Attribute, *or* Lore in place of any other Ability for the rest of the scene, or until the Solar is Staggered, whichever comes first. Alternately, by reflexively spending 2 Motes, the Exalt can roll (Intelligence + Lore) in place of another *specific* Attribute + Ability pool for that duration, such as replacing (Charisma + Presence) or (Dexterity + Brawl).

With Essence 3+, the Solar is connected, in the depths of her soul, to the wellspring of all knowledge. By meditating for an hour and descending deep into the archive of human accomplishment, she may spend 1 Mote use a simple action to make an (Intelligence + Lore) roll to retrieve a desired knowledge-based Ability such as Medicine (difficulty 6), or skill-based Ability such as Archery (difficulty 8). She gains a number of dots in the retrieved Ability equal to the successes rolled (to a maximum rating of 5) until she next sleeps or meditates.

Incalculable Flowing Mind (••)

Resonance: Craft, Investigation, Lore

The Solar encounters an obstacle or mishap, but thanks to her canny foresight, has already anticipated such difficulties in advance and planned for them accordingly.

System: When makes a re-roll (usually by spending Willpower), she may use a stunt to describe how she anticipated the difficulty that faces her and planned ahead for it in advance, and then continue to re-roll all results of 1 until 1s cease to appear. Alternately, the player can spend 1 Willpower to retroactively declare that the Solar brought along some useful bit of equipment (or performed a useful bit of research), and has had it with her all along, so long as this isn't clearly in violation of the established scene. For example, a Solar might have smuggled a knife or set of lockpicks into a high-society gala, but she definitely hasn't been toting around a grand daiklave unnoticed and unremarked all evening.

With Essence 2+, when the player uses a re-roll to retcon the scene, she may cite one or more of the Solar's Backgrounds and call upon some truly implausible or significant bit of foresight: she had one of her Contacts stow her faithful yeddin Familiar within the grounds, or the courier she hired with her Resources arrives at that moment and delivers her grand daiklave.

Irresistible Questioning Technique (••)

Resonance: Investigation

The Solar focuses her Essence into an interrogatory beam, compelling answers from those she puts to the question.

System: The Solar may ask someone a question, spend 1 Mote, and make a contested roll of (Charisma + Investigation) against their Willpower (both at difficulty 6). If the Solar gains more successes, the target is compelled to answer honestly. Their only alternatives if they cannot or will not do so are to flee from the Solar's presence or attack her to make her shut up and stop interrogating them. If they can do neither (for example, because they are tied to a chair), they *must* answer.

With Essence 2+, the Solar may use this Charm at no cost whenever interrogating someone who is unable to leave her presence (for example, a prisoner in a jail cell, or someone whose throat she is holding a sword to).

Wound-Mending Care Technique (••)

Resonance: Medicine

The Solar's ministrations grant health and hardiness with a speed and efficiency unknown to mortal medicine.

System: After a mere scene of treating and ministering another character, the Solar may spend 2 Motes and roll (Intelligence + Medicine) against difficulty 6. She may spend her successes to immediately heal her patient's wounds according to the following table:

Successes	Wound
One	Bruised or dazed
Two	Drained or lacerated
Three	Burned, blinded, disabled arm, or disabled leg
Four	Maimed or Mauled
+3 successes	Wound is Aggravated

This Charm cannot repair lasting Wounds or replace missing limbs or organs, only heal the body so that it is healthy and stable. Repairing such lasting damage is the province of Wholeness-Restoring Meditation.

With Essence 5+, the Solar is the archetypal healer behind every prayer ever uttered by the sick and the dying, the deliverer of woes. The difficulty of all Medicine rolls are permanently lowered by -1, but moreover, if the Solar arrives with the intent to render aid (medical or otherwise), she needs only say something along the lines of "I'm here to help," and anyone who hears her is able to perfectly and unerringly gauge the sincerity and intent of her words, even if they don't speak the language she utters them in.

All-Knowing Enlightened Sovereign (•••)

Resonance: Lore

The Solar closes her eyes and aligns her perceptions with the cumulative wisdom of the cosmos as a whole. Her insight momentarily touches on the vast annexes of Heaven, the drifting memories of the dead, and even the dread secrets of the lords of Hell. In that moment, no insight, no leap of understanding, is beyond her grasp.

System: Using this Charm requires at least a minute of undisturbed concentration and the expenditure of 3 Motes, 1 Willpower. The Solar may make an (Intelligence + Lore) roll to recall

a fact as though she were consulting a library containing the accumulated lore of all that is, regardless of the particulars of her own education and knowledge-base. The difficulty is set by the obscurity of the knowledge sought. The more successes rolled, the more detailed the answer the Solar gains.

All-Knowing Enlightened Sovereign is of great use in probing topics of scholarly interest, but cannot return more than the vaguest hints if the Solar attempts to use it to uncover a highly specific fact about the current state of the world, such as another character's personal secrets or the answer to a mystic riddle, regardless of the successes rolled. Its purview is unveiling the secrets of history, the cosmos, and natural law, not the secrets of Ragara Jonin's infidelity or who kidnapped Fakharu's lover three days ago.

This Charm inflicts one point of Limit when used, and cannot be used more than once per story.

With Essence 2+, the Solar may also, once per session and without gaining Limit, use Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance Craft, Investigation, Lore, Medicine, or Occult for a cost of 0 Motes.

Dogstar Ruminations (•••)

Resonance: Lore

Sage-emperors returned from a long slumber, the Solars' vast beards have shattered their stone tables. In their great and terrible throes, they may call upon the forces of doom in order to save their world. Through this Charm, also sometimes known as God-King's Shrike, the Solar realizes that a certain calamity must happen, and her consciousness is recognized, in turn, by the universe.

System: The Solar must spend a full week contemplating and researching a region's history, climate, geography, and so on before using this Charm. Select a foe within the region who will be harmed by this disaster, spend 5 Motes, 2 Willpower, and roll (Intelligence + Lore) against difficulty 9. One success means the Solar has foreseen a serious natural disaster such as a flash flood, wildfire, or earthquake. At least three successes means she has foreseen a catastrophic disaster such as a tsunami, an earthquake that cracks the mountains, or the eruption of a city-destroying volcano. Five+ successes means the Solar has foreseen one of the seven great dooms: a star falls and annihilates the region; a behemoth rises from its slumber and plows through her foe's cities; an army of the dead spills from its shadowland during Calibration to wreak havoc; and so on.

The Solar decides what region to research and pronounce doom upon, but the Storyteller decides the nature of the doom she divines based on the result of the roll. The Solar *may* show mercy at any point before the cataclysm manifests itself by using a simple action to enact a counter-omen that indefinitely forestalls the catastrophe, which she also uncovered during the course of her research. This omen is always simple enough to bring about without the need of a dice roll, should the Solar choose to do so.

Using this Charm causes the Solar to gain two points of Limit. It may not be used again until the Solar has experienced Limit Break.

Emerald Induction Technique (•••)

Resonance: Occult

The Solar fortifies her Essence and will through countless hours of painstaking study and practice of various spiritual disciplines, becoming a puissant master of the mystic arts thereby.

System: Upon purchasing this Charm, the Solar lowers the difficulty of all shape sorcery rolls by -1.

Judge's Ear Technique (•••)

Resonance: Awareness, Empathy, Investigation

None can lie to the canny Chosen of the Sun without their deceit being known. Some distinct sensation alerts the Solar to attempted deception – a sour taste or smell, perhaps, or a ringing in her ears.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, whenever someone knowingly lies to the Solar, she recognizes the lie immediately for what it is.

With Essence 3+, the Solar is a master of the nuances of truth and deceit, and can construct detailed psychological profiles from the lies people tell. When she catches someone in a lie with Judge's Ear Technique, this counts as them having revealed themselves, and she can attempt to read their intentions, lowering the difficulty of her attempt by -2 (see p. XX).

Legendary Scholar's Curriculum (•••)

Resonance: Lore

By putting someone through a dedicated training regimen, the Solar can fill him with wisdom to rival the sage-kings of old. In little more than a week, a Solar with this Charm can transform a group of poor farmers into world-class physicians or savants.

System: The Solar dedicates herself to educating a group of students, subjecting them to daily lectures and demonstrations of her knowledge and expertise, which take up at least one hour every day over the course of two weeks. She can dedicate her efforts to the training of a group of up to Size (current Essence rating, maximum 5) at a time. While she's actively training a group of students, her maximum Mote pool is reduced by one. She can reclaim this capacity by abandoning her students' training, but if she does this and returns to their tutelage later, she must start their training over from scratch.

After two weeks, ignorant peasants gain an Expertise pool of 5 and an Aptitude for one of the following: Scholarship, medicine, skilled craftsmanship, the occult, or investigation. They also become literate. Already-competent ministers, savants, physicians, and so on instead gain an Expertise pool of 7. Experts in the Solar's class advance to an Expertise pool of 9. A group of students may be run through this training regimen repeatedly to hone them from total ignorance to Legendary Scholars, or to branch them out into multidisciplinary mastery, if the Solar has sufficient time and inclination.

If a protagonist partakes of Legendary Scholar training, then after two weeks of training they may purchase one dot of Bureaucracy, Investigation, Linguistics, Lore, Medicine, or Occult as though it were a Favored Ability.

Solar Circle Sorcery (•••)

Resonance: Occult

The Solar has grasped the workings of the all-powerful Solar Circle of sorcery. She can cast Solar Circle spells. Purchase of this Charm grants one shaping ritual and one Solar Circle spell.

System: See Chapter Seven for rules on playing a sorcerer.

A Solar must have Essence 5+ to purchase this Charm.

Wholeness-Restoring Meditation (•••)

Resonance: Medicine

Such is the Solar's genius that her medical care can cure the incurable, or mend permanent maiming or ailments.

System: The Solar may spend several hours treating an untreatable patient, then spend 2 Motes and roll (Intelligence + Medicine) against difficulty 9. Success cures her patient of any unwanted congenital disease, defect, or disorder; or repairs any one undesired physical debility, such as blindness, a weak heart, a missing limb, or a damaged spine. If the Solar possesses Craft rated at 3+, she may accomplish this through the construction of a wondrous prosthesis that in all respects works as well as a true part of the patient's body, and reduce the Charm's cost to 1 Mote. Otherwise, her Essence and medical expertise promotes the regrowth, realignment, or regeneration of the patient's body.

Wyld-Shaping Technique (•••)

Resonance: Lore

This is the legendary Charm by which the Solar Exalted once dreamed forth new worlds to conquer. Now that they have returned, they may do so again. The Solar strides deep into the lands of chaos and imposes her dreams upon the inchoate stuff of the Wyld, forcing it to conform to her demands.

There are few more potent miracles known to the Exalted than Wyld-Shaping Technique... and few more dangerous.

System: This Charm can only be used in a powerfully Wyld-suffused area of Creation, or at the world's margins where the fabric of the real spills out into the unformed madness beyond. The Solar casts her will into the teeth of the Wyld and forces it to yield up her desires.

Wyld-Shaping Technique is an action demanding the Solar's full attention, consisting of an extended roll of (Solar's Essence rating), made at one-hour intervals. The Solar must pay 5 Motes before making each roll. When she runs out of time, Motes, or decides she is finished, she may cash in her successes to enact a miracle of creation, or else may release the Charm's power and allow the Wyld to resume its natural courses if she is not satisfied with the successes she's gained. A botch at any point causes the Charm to run dangerously amok. If the Exalt is *lucky* this will only conjure forth a savage behemoth, a reality-shredding storm that engulfs miles of Creation, or a hostile warband of the Fair Folk. Profound transformation by the hostile Wyld is almost guaranteed without protective miracles in such circumstances.

The difficulty of the Essence roll is determined by what the Solar is trying to create.

Wealth (difficulty 6): The Solar forces the Wyld to shower her with treasure and riches which are not, in and of themselves, otherwise particularly useful. The Solar might create heaps of silver coins, bags of precious gems, or beautiful artworks and tapestries. One success is enough

to make a single mortal wealthy enough to live comfortably for the rest of his days. Three successes are enough to fund any sort of ambitious business venture such as the building of a Direction-spanning road, the construction of a fleet of ships, or the outfitting of an army. Five successes conjure enough wealth to found a nation upon. The problem of transporting such treasure is left up to the Solar's ingenuity. The Solar cannot create jade currency.

Great Works (difficulty 6): The Solar summons buildings, roads, aqueducts, and other infrastructure into existence. One success may create a simple keep, rustic town, or rough road. Three successes can make a powerful fortress, modest city, or wide, well-constructed road. Five successes conjure up either an interconnected array of useful structures — a palace and surrounding fortified city with road networks — or else one incredible structure, such as a truly unassailable fortress, enormous city, or massive series of viaducts. These works are still located within the Wyld unless a subsequent use of Wyld-Shaping Technique is used to stabilize the land. Wyld-Shaping Technique doesn't create manses.

Demesne (difficulty 7): The Solar concentrates geomantic Essence until a place of power forms beneath her. The resulting Demesne has a rating equal to the successes spent on it. It is still located within a Wyld-tainted landscape, however, unless Wyld-Shaping Technique is later used again to stabilize the region.

Land (difficulty 7): The Solar conjures forth vast tracts of new landscape and adds them to Creation. If used in a Wyld-tainted area deep within Creation, Wyld-Shaping Technique cleanses the Wyld energies and stabilizes everything within 25 miles per success spent. If used to dredge new lands from the borders of chaos, the Solar creates hundreds of square miles of new lands roughly according to her vision. One success creates hard, barren lands which are hostile to any sort of useful cultivation and filled with deadly dangers. Three successes creates a frontier of adventure filled with useful resources or the potential for developed cultivation, but first requiring conquest and taming. Five successes creates a gentle landscape of abundant natural resources, fertile lands, or natural mineral wealth which might be extracted with only modest development. The land is always congruent with the general character of the nearby Poles, so tropical jungles cannot be conjured from the uttermost North, though alpine forests could.

If the Solar wishes the land to already feature inhabitants, towns, fortresses, and the like, who are *not* familiar with her or innately inclined to trust or like her, increase the difficulty to 8.

Upon enacting this form of Wyld-Shaping, a region ceases to harbor the power of the Wyld, and cannot be transformed any further with Wyld-Shaping Technique.

People (difficulty 8): The Solar creates useful, skilled human beings from nothing. They come into being knowing who she is and possessing some manner of Intimacy of positive regard and loyalty toward her, although this is no more robust than any other Intimacy if she subsequently gives them reason to dislike her. The Solar conjures a group of people whose Size is equal to the successes spent. Those created are either a medley of the dominant ethnotypes of the direction where she's working, or appear to hail from whatever land the Solar does, as she desires. They come into being at whatever age or range of ages the Solar desires, with average levels of any range of skills desired; the Solar could make a broad cross-section of people suitable to found a settlement, for example, or she could create a platoon of soldiers. The people have a general awareness of the current state of the world, can speak their direction's dominant language, know its major landmarks, and so on; but are aware they have been dreamed from the Wyld and do not

have personal histories. The task of leading them out of the Wyld is left up to the Solar's resourcefulness.

Prodigies (difficulty 9): The Solar creates magical prodigies. This mode of Wyld-Shaping doesn't make Manses or Artifacts; rather, it creates objects with unusual or impossible properties, or fixed locations which perform useful magical functions. Generally, prodigies are things like frozen flames or glass spheres containing a single suspended moment of time: little impossibilities which might be used in the creation of Artifacts, offered as bribes to gods or sorcerers, and other miscellany. The Solar may make a number of portable prodigies equal to the successes rolled, or may expend three successes at a time for a truly impressive oddment worthy of being used for making a 4 or 5-dot Artifact. Alternately, she may create ongoing works of magic equivalent to a localized sorcerous working, such as a factory that creates an iron golem once a week, or a grotto where pink crystals grow into reflections of the dreams of those who sleep within. One success produces a magical phenomenon equal to a Terrestrial Circle working, three successes equals a Celestial Circle working, and five successes is roughly equivalent to a localized Solar Circle working. Ongoing splendors soon weaken and lose most of their miraculous properties if the region is stabilized through further uses of Wyld-Shaping Technique; the First Age Solars were forever forced to build new locations from which to harvest useful impossibilities as the borders of Creation expanded and obsoleted their old works.

Things created with Wyld-Shaping Technique do not have the same intrinsic stability as the original heartlands of Creation. If they are not routinely exposed to real people, places, and things from Creation proper, they tend to lose their reality and slowly revert back into pure possibility. Thus, it is important to import real people to explore and settle Wyld-Shaped lands, or garrison and tend to Wyld-Shaped prodigies and outposts, lest they simply vanish after a few months or years of neglect. Wyld-Shaped wealth, in particular, doesn't tend to stick around if simply left in a vault and not actively spent and traded by real people in real markets, and it is best to integrate Wyld-Shaped troops into mixed regiments with more mundane natives of Creation.

Night Charms

These Charms deal with stealth and criminality, dodging attacks, and athleticism.

Dust Motes Whirling (•)

Resonance: Athletics

The Solar fades easily into the chaos of combat by outpacing the tempo of her foes. When they look up from their frustrated blows, she is nowhere to be found.

System: After being struck before her turn, the Solar may use any swift action that would normally be unavailable as a result up to (Essence) times per scene. By reflexively spending 1 Mote, she may reset this Charm's per-scene use limit.

Easily Overlooked Presence Meditation (•)

Resonance: Stealth

The Solar can blend into any crowd, becoming impossible to discern or spot.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Wits + Stealth) against difficulty 5. For a number of hours equal to the successes rolled, it's impossible to specifically notice the Solar's presence so

long as she's not doing anything to stand out from the movement or activities of the people around her. The eye slides right off of her without noticing anything unusual or suspicious about her, even if the observer is watching for her specifically. There must be at least a dozen other people present for the Solar to hide among in order to use this Charm.

Falling Icicle Strike (•)

Resonance: Stealth, Thrown

Those who cannot see the Solar coming for their life also cannot survive her displeasure.

System: The Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote when launching an unexpected attack against a target. The final damage inflicted by the attack is doubled and if it inflicts a Wound, the Solar can choose for it to be a mauled Wound. If the Solar kills her target, she may reflexively spend 1 Mote to ensure the target's death makes no noise and will not be discovered for the rest of the scene, if that is at all possible. The Solar could hurl a knife into a guard's body in such a way that he falls behind some bushes or a carriage and isn't missed for a few minutes, for example, but couldn't hurl a knife into a prince's throat in the middle of a speech and keep his death secret from the crowd of people staring directly at him for very long at all — at best, it might look for a few moments as though the man is leaning over to consider his next words.

Graceful Crane Stance (•)

Resonance: Athletics

The Solar becomes near-weightless, and enjoys perfect balance.

System: The character needs never roll to maintain her balance, no matter how precarious her footing, and may stand or run upon even the weakest or most insubstantial of surfaces, such as falling leaves, individual threads, drops of rain, or even the surface of water. Reflexively spending 1 Mote allows her to run and stand upon walls or even to cling to ceilings for the rest of the scene.

Proof-Eating Palm (•)

Resonance: Larceny

The Solar may easily conceal anything she has on her which she ought not to have, producing it later at her convenience.

System: The Exalt can perfectly hide anything she can carry in one hand which might conceivably be concealed inside of a long coat, even if she's not wearing a long coat. Indeed, even if strip-searched by a team of experts, the Solar's contraband will not be found. When she has need of a concealed object, she may reflexively bring it to hand: it could be that it drops into place from a sleeve; or maybe she plucks it from concealment in a nearby potted plant; or perhaps she simply produces it with a magician's flourish from somewhere else. She can simultaneously conceal up to (1 + her Larceny rating) objects with this Charm.

Reed in the Wind (•)

Resonance: Athletics

The Solar yields in the face of deadly attacks, presenting no solid target for her foes to inflict calamitous damage against. Her grace ensures she can suffer no worse than mere bruises and nicks.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene or until Staggered, whichever comes first, the Solar's base Dodge is increased by +2, and if she Dodges an attack but it still strikes her, then her Stagger Threshold is increased by +2 against that attack.

Sensory Acuity Prana (•)

Resonance: Awareness

By focusing Essence into her awareness of the world, the Solar's senses become impossibly, superhumanly sharp. She can hear a person's heartbeat from rooms away, read a sheet of paper by letting her fingers trail across the ink on it, and count the hairs on a fly's legs from across a room.

System: The Solar must use a simple or swift action to activate or banish this Charm. While it is active, the difficulty of all Perception rolls drops by -3. Since Sensory Acuity Prana sharpens the Solar's senses indiscriminately, few of the Chosen leave it active at all times, having no desire to smell the odor of every midden heap they pass in superhuman detail.

Shadow-Crossing Leap (•)

Resonance: Stealth

Just when it seems certain that the Solar's hiding place will be discovered, it becomes clear that she foresaw this turn of events and has already stealthily relocated to somewhere else.

System: (Essence rating) times per scene, when another character enters a zone where the Solar is hiding in concealment and makes a (Perception + Awareness) roll to spot her, she may reflexively declare that she already snuck away, and is in an adjacent zone. The classic use for this Charm is to sneak into the room the interloper just came from, but it can also be used to backtrack, vanish into the rafters, and for many other purposes. The Solar may ignore any problems that would normally arise from complex movement or the like when exploiting this Charm.

Shadow Feint Concealment (•)

Resonance: Stealth

The Solar's opponent swings a halberd at her face. She ducks, a blur of steel obscures her for but a heartbeat... and then she is gone.

System: Once per scene, when the Solar is the target of an attack which fails to strike her, she may reflexively make a (Dexterity + Stealth) roll to enter concealment. The difficulty is 6 if the attack occurs in a dim, shadowy environment with lots of hiding places, 7 if in a well-lit but cluttered area, 8 if the Solar is in plain view with little to nothing in the way of good hiding spots, and 9 if there is really absolutely nowhere to hide other than directly behind her opponent.

Shadow Over Water (•)

Resonance: Athletics

The Solar is elusive as a shadow upon the surface of a running stream, confounding all attempts to strike her.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to activate this Charm. For the rest of the scene or until she is next Staggered, the Solar increases her Defense by +1 and her base Dodge value by +1.

Additionally, while this Charm is active, the Solar ignores the Fierce quality of any attacks directed at her.

Soaring Crane Leap (•)

Resonance: Athletics

Essence surges through the Solar's legs, propelling her effortlessly through the air.

System: The Solar's jumping distance and height is tripled, lowering the difficulty of tricky jumps by -3. In combat, she can easily relocate to zones above her without recourse to complex movement. By spending 1 Mote and using a swift action, the Solar may leap into an adjacent sector without the need for a roll of any kind.

With Essence 3+, the character always lands on her feet and is permanently immune to falling damage.

Drifting Leaf Elusion (••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Solar, finely attuned to danger, moves to avoid it at the last moment as a matter of bone-deep reflex. Even if it appears the Solar has been struck down, it may be revealed that she is safe after all, having faded away from the blow with nothing left to spare.

System: If an attack directed at the Solar generates only one success and she invokes her Dodge against it, her Dodge rating is lowered by one less than it would otherwise be (generally meaning that it is reduced by -0). Once per scene, she can also activate this effect when she attempts to Dodge an attack from a creature of darkness, regardless of how many successes are generated.

Evidence-Banishing Method (••)

Resonance: Larceny

Whatever the Solar does, she leaves no evidence of her activities behind.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote immediately after committing some sort of crime or other questionable act for which punishment or retribution might befall the Exalt if anyone links it back to her. No evidence which links her back to the act can be discovered with Investigation rolls. The only thing this Charm won't cover up are the memories of eyewitnesses.

Foe-Scenting Method (••)

Resonance: Awareness, Occult

The Solar's senses, attuned to the uncanny, immediately pick out Essence-users.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the next 24 hours, the Solar becomes aware when she stands in the presence of any supernatural being, though she doesn't inherently know what *sort* of supernatural being any given individual may be. This Charm doesn't detect dematerialized beings unless the Solar is currently able to perceive them in some fashion.

By concentrating on an individual the Solar believes to be a supernatural entity, she may scrutinize that creature's Essence for clues to its nature. Use a swift action to roll (Perception + Occult) against difficulty 8. Success causes the Solar to receive compelling clues. For example: "A deathly aura hangs about him." Or: "A great hulking wolf-shadow looms above her." Or: "A second, pale figure lurks within him." If the Solar has encountered and scrutinized this sort of

supernatural being in the past, then she can identify them as such. “He’s an Abyssal.” “She’s a Lunar.” “He’s being possessed by a ghost.”

Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise (••)

Resonance: Larceny, Performance

The Solar becomes a master of disguise, able to appear as whoever or whatever she likes with only a few moments of preparation.

System: The difficulty to see through any of the Solar’s disguise attempts is permanently set at 9. By spending 1 Mote when donning a disguise, the character can make her disguise absolutely perfect so long as she chooses to maintain it, even mimicking supernatural elements such as a god’s storm-lashed hair, a Dragon-Blooded’s aura of flames, or a ghost floating just off of the ground. These are tricks and cosmetic imitations, and won’t grant any special powers (the Solar isn’t really levitating, and the fire aura can’t burn things).

Ghost-Walking Prana (••)

Resonance: Stealth, Survival

Wheresoever the Solar goes, she leaves no trace behind.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. This Charm lasts until the Solar stops to rest for at least an hour. Until then she leaves absolutely no evidence of her passage behind, making it impossible to track her using mundane effort. Those with supernaturally acute senses or supernaturally accurate tracking must still roll against difficulty 9 to follow the Solar’s trail.

Leaping Dodge Method (••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Solar dances gracefully away from the foe’s aggressions, leaving him frustrated and confounded.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene or until Staggered, whichever comes first, the Solar may reflexively move to an adjacent zone each time an attack fails to strike her. She can use this to get away from a rapid flurry of extra action attacks, or disentangle herself from a pile of enemies.

At Essence 2+, once per round this Charm may be used to move to an adjacent zone even in response to a successful attack.

Lightning Speed (••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Solar moves with the speed of darting sunbeams, able to flash from place to place almost faster than the eye can follow.

System: The difficulty of all actions to run someone down, get somewhere quickly, or jump a difficult gap are permanently lowered by –2. By reflexively spending 1 Mote when using a move action, the Solar may move one additional zone farther away than she otherwise could.

With Essence 3+, this Charm’s 1 Mote mode enhances all of the Solar’s move actions for the rest of the scene or until she is Staggered, whichever comes first.

Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique (••)

Resonance: Athletics

Gathering all her power into her legs, the Solar propels herself into the air and over the horizon with a mighty leap.

System: The Solar spends 2 Motes and uses a simple action to roll (Strength + Athletics) against a difficulty determined by the density and complexity of the Solar's destination. Open farmland would be difficulty 5, while the middle of Nexus would be difficulty 8. The more successes rolled, the more accurately the Solar touches down exactly where she wants to land. This Charm can carry the Solar up to (Essence rating x 3) miles in a single leap. Everyone within the same zone as the Solar when she takes off or lands must make a reflexive (Stamina + Resistance) roll against difficulty 6 to avoid being knocked prone.

With Essence 3+, the Solar may reflexively pay 1 additional Mote while soaring through the air with Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique, or indeed at any time when she is plummeting toward the ground from a great height for any reason, to wrap herself in a powerful corona of Essence. When she lands, this Essence-corona detonates, and she strikes the ground without suffering any injury whatsoever with the force of a runaway meteorite. Everyone and everything within the same zone or a directly adjacent zone of the Solar's point of impact is afflicted with a one-time shockwave hazard (difficulty 6, difficulty 9 for groups, 4 damage, bruised).

Seasoned Criminal Method (••)

Resonance: Larceny

The Solar is a master of all criminal enterprise, able to trivially go where she will and take what she likes.

System: Any career criminal the Solar meets instinctively recognizes her as a fellow member of the underworld, and furthermore, one who represents potential opportunities for enrichment and advancement rather than a potential threat or rival. This is a potent first impression, but won't negate or erase any knowledge to the contrary that an individual might have (it won't make them forget their boss telling them that the Solar is an enemy and should be killed on sight, for example).

Surprise Anticipation Method (••)

Resonance: Athletics, Awareness

A sixth sense warns the Solar of impending danger, making her impossible to take unaware so long as she hasn't totally exhausted both body and spirit.

System: The Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote to automatically notice an ambush or other such unexpected attack, removing its unexpected quality.

Ten-Ox Meditation (••)

Resonance: Athletics

Essence burns and surges in the Solar's muscles, granting strength beyond strength.

System: The difficulty of feats of strength to lift or break something are lowered by -3. The Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote to cause her hand-to-hand attacks to gain +3 damage for the rest of the scene.

Bonfire Anima Wings (•••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Solar's anima bears her aloft like a comet or a pair of angelic wings, allowing her to fly.

System: Reflexively spend 3 Motes. For the rest of the scene, the Solar can fly. If activated at the apex of Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique, this Charm costs only 1 Mote. Even if her anima has otherwise faded from visibility, it streams out like a contrail behind her when she flies at maximum speed (Essence x 10 miles per hour), making her highly visible. When performing fine maneuvering in combat, she must slow down to her normal movement rate.

With Essence 4+, the Solar may use this Charm for free whenever her anima is flaring.

Clever Bandit's Rook (•••)

Resonance: Larceny

The Solar is a master of all criminal enterprise, able to trivially go where she will and take what she likes.

System: Use a simple action and spend 1 Mote to perform any of the following feats: Cause a lock to spring open, pass through a closed door or window without disturbing it, or attempt to steal an object in plain sight without anyone noticing the attempt.

With Essence 5+, once per session, shortly after leaving a location, the Solar may spend 2 Motes to retroactively declare that she successfully stole something without anyone noticing and that she has it on her right now. The object must have actually been there for her to steal it, but it otherwise doesn't matter how implausible the theft is. Stealing Mask of Winters's pants after he addressed the Circle from the battlements of Thorns is well within the Solar's capabilities.

Eye of the Unconquered Sun (•••)

Resonance: Awareness

The Solar's eyes cut through all supernatural obscurity, unerringly sighting her foes.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to immediately defeat all forms of supernatural concealment, invisibility, and the like. Any character that is trying to hide from the Solar is immediately revealed to her senses.

With Essence 3+, the Solar may spend 2 Motes when activating Eye of the Unconquered Sun to open her caste mark and unleash a flood of searing, all-revealing light. Any being within three zones of the Solar that is attempting to hide or conceal itself is outlined in brilliant white flames that shine through all covering and concealment, even through walls, revealing him to *all* characters present, not just the Solar. There's nothing subtle about this display: the air quakes and seethes with golden light, shining through walls and obstacles to banish all shadows. This display lasts until the Solar wills it to end. All attempts to target an individual wrapped in white flames (which linger for as long as a marked individual stays in the Solar's light) lower their difficulty by -1.

Flow Like Blood (•••)

Resonance: Athletics, War

The Solar moves with an impossible fluid grace. Whenever it seems that an attack has struck her down, it becomes clear a moment later that this is not the case. Indeed, when her enemies surround her on all sides, their frenzied and futile offense merely opens them to her reprisal.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Solar does not have to spend Willpower to Dodge attacks until the end of the scene, until she is next Staggered, or until her Dodge value drops to 0, whichever comes first.

Secret Police Indoctrination (•••)

Resonance: Larceny

By putting someone through a dedicated training regimen, the Solar can train him to undertake the necessary dirty-work of government. In little more than a week, a Solar with this Charm can transform a group of clueless farmhands into assassins, spies, torturers, and kidnapers with nerves of steel.

System: The Solar dedicates herself to training a group of students, subjecting them to daily exercises and drills under her oversight, which take up at least one hour every day over the course of two weeks. She can dedicate her efforts to the training of a group of up to Size (current Essence rating, maximum 5) at a time. While she's actively training a group of students, her maximum Mote pool is reduced by one. She can reclaim this capacity by abandoning her students' training, but if she does this and returns to their tutelage later, she must start their training over from scratch.

After two weeks, bumbling oafs gain an Expertise pool of 5 and an Aptitude for one of the following: Assassination, interrogation, intimidation, making people vanish, or spying. They also become familiar with a series of codes and ciphers of the Solar's devising. Already-competent intelligence agents instead gain an Expertise pool of 7. Experts in the Solar's class advance to an Expertise pool of 9. A group of students may be run through this training regimen repeatedly to hone them from total ignorance to Secret Police, or to branch them out into multidisciplinary mastery, if the Solar has sufficient time and inclination.

If a protagonist partakes of Secret Police training, then after two weeks of training they may purchase one dot of Athletics, Awareness, Investigation, Larceny, Martial Arts, Presence, Stealth, or Thrown as though it were a Favored Ability.

Seven Shadow Evasion (•••)

Resonance: Athletics

Letting her Essence instinctively carry her out of harm's way, the Solar may dodge any single attack of which she is aware.

System: The Solar may reflexively spend 2 Motes when Dodging an attack to increase her Dodge value by an arbitrarily high number of her choosing against it, guaranteeing that the attack does not strike her. If the attack she wishes to defeat is undodgeable, she may spend +1 Mote to remove that quality from it in exchange for making it Fierce instead.

After Seven Shadow Evasion protects the Solar, her Dodge returns to its previous value and is reduced as usual.

This Charm cannot be invoked against unexpected attacks, or if the Solar's Dodge value is 0 or less. When invoked, this Charm is considered a perfect defense.

Vanishing From Mind's Eye Method (•••)

Resonance: Stealth

The Solar can still her Essence, vanishing from sight and awareness completely.

System: By using a simple action to stand still in a shadowed place or obscure corner and remaining quiet, the Solar can become functionally invisible and impossible to notice so long as nobody's actively watching her. This obscurity remains in place so long as she doesn't move or make noise.

Reflexively spending 1 Mote while in a shadowed place or obscure corner renders the Solar genuinely invisible and impossible to notice for the rest of the scene, enabling her to move about without being detected, so long as she doesn't make some sort of loud noise or take blatant action such as attacking or tipping over a bookshelf.

With Essence 5+, the Solar's true invisibility is unimpeachable. She may vanish even under direct observation and in bright light, and even if she makes loud noises or begins fighting, the invisibility granted by Vanishing From Mind's Eye Method won't break. Only her anima flaring will break the Charm. See page XX for rules with dealing with invisible people.

Eclipse Charms

These Charms deal with travel, mercantilism, bureaucracy, etiquette and language, and complex social situations.

Foul Air of Argument Technique (•)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

Simply by briefly conversing with someone involved, the Solar may embed her Essence in a bureaucracy or project like a curse, causing it to bog down in inefficiency, errors, and red tape.

System: The character can spend 2 Motes to target a specific office or project with terrible inefficiency for the rest of the current story. Everyone involved in pushing the project forward increases the difficulty of all rolls to do so by +2. In narrative terms (since Storytellers rarely bother to roll out unseen antagonists' attempts to manage workers and correctly file paperwork) the project is plagued with conflicts and inefficiency and grinds to a near-halt.

Guarded Thoughts Meditation (•)

Resonance: Awareness, Empathy

The Solar's mind is a vault, holding her thoughts within like precious gems.

System: Whenever someone attempts to read the Solar's mind by any means, reflexively roll (Perception + Awareness) against difficulty 6. Success reveals not only the mind-reading attempt, but also who is responsible. If she succeeded, the Solar may then pay 1 Mote to reflexively shield her thoughts, making them impossible to read for the rest of the scene. The Solar may also pre-emptively shield her thoughts for the rest of the scene by paying 1 Mote, even before anyone attempts to pry.

Additionally, all read intentions actions directed against the Solar must discard one success, or two successes if Guarded Thoughts Meditation is being actively used to shield the Exalt's thoughts.

Insightful Buyer Technique (•)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

The Solar entangles her Essence with something she wishes to sell, transforming it into a subtle beacon that will, in time, bring a buyer into her presence.

System: Spend 1 Mote while using an unrolled simple action to contemplate something the Solar owns and wishes to sell. In time, a buyer with both the interest *and* the resources to offer a reasonable price for the item will appear. If this is a mundane transaction for something such as a well-made sword or a horse, a buyer will appear almost immediately. For more exotic sales, like the command codes for a squadron of brass legionaries, it may take several days or weeks for the Solar to bump into a suitable buyer (largely to give the Storyteller time to craft an interesting story rather than having to pull something out of their ass on the spot), but the buyer *will* appear in time.

Inverted Ego Mask (•)

Resonance: Socialize

The Solar builds up a wall of masks around the innermost truths of her heart, ensuring that none can discover who she really is unless she permits it.

System: Any ordinary or supernatural attempt to discern the Solar's Nature automatically fails, revealing whichever result she wishes to project in its place. This Charm's effects are permanent.

Irresistible Salesman Spirit (•)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

The Solar focuses her Essence into the ultimate high-pressure sales pitch, capable of convincing almost anyone to buy almost anything, and for outrageous prices.

System: After spending a few moments and a simple action delivering her pitch, the Solar's player spends 1 Mote and rolls (Manipulation + Bureaucracy) against a difficulty equal to the target's Willpower. She can raise or lower the fundamental value of whatever she's trying to buy, sell, barter, or bargain for in the target's eyes by a factor of (successes rolled + 1). This Charm is equally as applicable to political favors as to financial transactions; a Solar who rolled five successes might convince the Despot of Gem to pay her six times as much silver as he'd initially considered in exchange for her help discovering who or what is murdering his supporters, for example.

This Charm doesn't force the target to accept a deal, only to re-evaluate its reasonable worth; it also doesn't mystically enforce any agreements made under its auspices. Its enchantment fades after the Solar's (Essence rating) days, at which point the target may very well realize he's been swindled.

If the target's Willpower is equal to or lower than the Solar's Essence rating, she may use this Charm to convince him that absolutely any price she cares to name is reasonable.

Master Equestrian's Techniques (•)

Resonance: Ride

The Solar exhibits the traits of a horseman of legend.

System: This Charm conveys the following benefits:

- All Ride rolls are made at –1 difficulty.
- The Solar may reflexively whistle and spend 1 Mote, and any mount she owns, or which regards her with deep fondness even if she doesn't own it, will appear within a matter of moments, ready to be mounted and ridden.
- Any mount the Solar rides can race all out for 12 hours without tiring, and can move twice as fast as it would if bearing any other rider.
- The Solar may reflexively redirect any attack aimed at her mount to herself, unless her mount is another potent supernatural being such as a Lunar Exalt or lesser elemental dragon.
- The Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote while riding a steed to grant it the power to gallop on air for the rest of the scene.

Phantom Steed (•)

Resonance: Ride

Reaching deep within herself, the Solar finds a mount that expresses her innermost self and brings it forth into the world to serve her. Generally, her anima hardens into a golden horse to carry her into battle or to convey her along her way.

System: Use a simple action and spend 1 Mote to solidify a mount out of the Solar's anima until the sun next sets. Should she dismount, it dissipates back into the pure Essence from which it came.

With Essence 2+, a Solar's phantom steed may be some beast other than a horse that is suitable for carrying one or two riders, such as an ox or austrech.

With Essence 3+, the Solar may reflexively spend 1 Mote to maintain the solidity of her Phantom Steed even while no longer in contact with it. Not only will the mount continue to exist, it can move of its own accord in response to the Solar's will as though she were riding it, making rolls to maneuver with the Solar's dice pool. The Phantom Steed always "knows" where the Solar is and how to find her, and is otherwise as "intelligent" as the Solar in carrying out the tasks the Solar assigns to it. The Solar doesn't need to be able to see or communicate with her Phantom Steed to give it commands.

With Essence 4+, a Solar's phantom steed may be some enormous creature with an Essence-sculpted howdah on its back capable of holding up to a Size 1 group of soldiers, such as an elephant, yeddin, or tyrant lizard.

Salty Dog Method (•)

Resonance: Sail

The Solar is an exemplar of nautical daring and perseverance.

System: This Charm conveys the following benefits:

- All Sail rolls are made at –2 difficulty.
- Having stared the worst horrors of weather and the deeps directly in their dead and hateful eyes, the Solar has become inured to fear. The difficulty of all attempts to frighten her by

supernatural means is increased by +1, and the first time in any given session that someone or something tries to terrify her in such a fashion and fails, she gains one point of Willpower.

- The Solar can swim without it counting as complex movement, and may hold her breath for up to 15 minutes at a time. By reflexively spending 1 Mote, she can extend this to (Essence rating) hours, and also survive the crushing pressure of the deepest ocean trenches during that period.
- So long as she can see the sky and feel the wind against her skin, the Solar can use a simple action and spend 1 Mote to accurately predict the local weather over the next (Essence rating) days.

Subtle Speech Method (•)

Resonance: Linguistics, Socialize

The Solar becomes a master of hidden meaning, coding messages inside messages that only reveal themselves to those she wishes.

System: Spend 1 Mote while speaking or composing a written work to embed a second, hidden message inside the statement or writing. This hidden message can only be discerned by those the Solar intends to address it to.

Whirling Brush Method (•)

Resonance: Lore, Linguistics

Words pour through the Solar's mind like a rushing river, leaving wisdom behind in their wake without consuming her precious time.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the Solar may read and absorb information as fast as she can track her eyes across the page. Books can be consumed in moments. Moreover, she can copy text by hand at lightning speed, transcribing an entire book in minutes, up to and including any diagrams or illustrations.

Wyld Emissary's Resolve (•)

Resonance: Bureaucracy, Lore

The Solar fixes the certainty of her existence upon a singular mission and then strides forth into the lands of chaos, protected from its transformative touch.

System: The Solar envisions a distinct objective for herself with an attainable end-goal, such as "Sitting down with the Court of Laughing Eyes and hammering out a non-aggression treaty," or "Returning home," and then activates this Charm. Upon doing so, her maximum Mote pool capacity is reduced by one, but she gains complete protection from being transformed in mind, body, or spirit by the Wyld so long as she is acting in pursuit of her mission. If this Charm's protection abates due to completion of her mission or the mission becoming impossible, the Solar may immediately select a new mission and reactivate Wyld Emissary's Resolve, but each time she does this it increases the Mote pool reduction by one.

Secondary activities such as traveling to the Court of Laughing Eyes, or preparing a meal or resting during that journey, are considered part of a mission, but while the Solar does anything completely unrelated to her mission (pursuing a beautiful faerie she saw in the forest), this Charm's protection lapses. She may have multiple activations running concurrently to give her

multiple missions to pursue for additional protection, but each mission inflicts its own (potentially mounting) Mote pool reduction.

The Solar may voluntarily abandon this Charm at any time, but doing so leaves her unable to activate it until the sun has risen and set three times.

Elusive Mount Technique (••)

Resonance: Ride

The Solar and her mount weave through the fury of battle with the grace of the wind and the shock of a thunderbolt. Her foes' meager efforts cannot stop her.

System: The Solar can always use a move action while she is mounted, whether she has already been struck that round or not. If the Solar is Staggered, this Charm fails to function on her next turn.

Friend to All Nations Attitude (••)

Resonance: Socialize

The Solar layers her requests with the formal authority of the Most High, a blessing by which she and her peers once ruled over all Creation. To refuse the small courtesies she demands calls down Heaven's displeasure.

System: When the Solar uses a persuade action to request someone undertake an inconvenience (see p. XX), the first time per session that they decide to refuse, then in addition to the normal cost of doing so, they also suffer one "drained" Wound.

By reflexively spending 1 Mote, the Solar may also add this Charm's price to an ordeal (see p. XX) she demands of someone.

Indecent Proposal Method (••)

Resonance: Socialize

The Solar layers her words with formality and buttresses them with conditional necessity, allowing her to propose the shocking and the treasonous without causing dismay or alarm.

System: Spend 1 Mote when making a proposal to another character. No matter what it is the Solar asks or advises, it is impossible for the target to become alarmed, angered, or disgusted as a consequence; whatever the Solar says seems to fall within a strange quirk of propriety or at the very least to plainly be a necessary evil, even if she is asking an Immaculate monk to salaciously abandon his vows or a loving father to slay his children. The target may well say no, but he won't say it with heat and rancor and then report the Solar to the authorities or dash his tea in her face.

Mastery of Small Manners (••)

Resonance: Linguistics, Socialize

An instinctive facility for etiquette and social currents ensures that the Solar never commits *faux pas* or social gaffes when dealing with unfamiliar cultures or social situations.

System: The Solar lowers the difficulty of all Socialize rolls by -1, and cannot botch with Socialize when rolling it. Re-rolling a social influence action now costs 0 Willpower.

With Essence 2+, the Solar unfailingly gives excellent first impressions to all those she meets, lowering the difficulty of all social rolls against a character during the first scene she meets them in by -1. Unless given some pressing reason to act otherwise, those who first encounter the Solar are inclined to regard her well and behave favorably toward her; in short, they like her.

With Essence 3+, once per session the Solar may activate Excellence of the Blazing Sun with Bureaucracy, Linguistics, or Socialize for a cost of 0 Motes.

Orichalcum Letters of Marque (••)

Resonance: Sail

The Solar invites her vessel to partake of her legend, steeping its decks and sails in the power that once cast down the makers of the world.

System: Upon credibly claiming a ship as her own — that is to say, coming to command its crew and having her orders obeyed — the Solar may spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower to enchant the vessel. Those she has not formally accepted aboard suffer a -2 penalty to all actions while aboard her ship. Moreover, any spirit entered into the ranks of her crew may materialize reflexively and at no cost while aboard the ship. Creatures of darkness that she officially recognizes as crew are exempted from that status while serving her aboard the ship as well.

Finally, if the Solar has an Intimacy toward the vessel, it counts as a sun-ascpected Demesne equal to her Essence rating while she is aboard, which she owns and is attuned to. The Solar may only have one enchanted vessel at a time.

Sagacious Reading of Intent (••)

Resonance: Lore, Linguistics

The Solar's keen insight cuts through all attempts at dissembling, allowing her to easily decipher the intentions of others.

System: The Solar needs only hear someone speak a few words or to read something they've written to make an attempt to read their intentions (see p. XX). Reflexively spending 1 Mote after a successful roll will also let the Solar read the target's surface thoughts for a few moments.

With Essence 3+, the Solar may continue reading a target's thoughts for as long as he remains in her line of sight, rather than for only a few moments.

Speed the Wheels (••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

The Solar is like a saint of complex systems, leaving efficiency in her wake.

System: When the Solar engages with bureaucracy or labyrinthine systems such as courts of law, corporate networks, or government offices, red tape parts before her like the Red Sea and she is able to proceed in a mere fraction of the normal time. Moreover, simply by briefly conversing with someone involved, she can spend 2 Motes to place her blessing upon a project such as a certain magistrate investigation, bit of legislation, or attempt at reforming city government, and everyone involved in pushing the project forward reduces the difficulty of all rolls to do so by -2. In narrative terms, the project steams forward with uncanny speed and efficiency.

Strange Tongue Understanding (••)

Resonance: Linguistics

The Solar is a master of tongues, able to understand and be understood despite any language barrier.

System: The Solar can understand any language after a few minutes of exposure to it, and make herself understood after a few minutes more. Reflexively spending 1 Mote grants instant fluency for the rest of the scene, and makes the character sound like a native speaker.

With Essence 2+, the Solar may spend 2 Willpower to permanently retain any language she learns with Strange Tongue Understanding.

Storm-Weathering Essence Infusion (••)

Resonance: Sail

The Solar's Essence bends the sympathies of wind and tide toward her, and permeates her vessel in a protective coating.

System: Spend 1 Mote while commanding or aboard a sailing vessel, and use a simple action to roll (Wits + Sail) against difficulty 6. The ship enjoys favorable winds and cooperative currents for one day per success rolled, and if there is inclement weather, then the ship somehow manages to find calm patches that do not impair its progress. The Solar may also reflexively pay 2 Motes when the ship suffers any form of substantial harm such as being struck by a battle spell or being smashed against rocks. The ship miraculously escapes from what should have been serious damage without anything worse than some singed boards or scraped-off paint.

Twisted Words Technique (••)

Resonance: Linguistics

The Solar places careful, subliminal emphasis on certain words, striking key points in a chosen listener or reader's psyche. When that individual hears or reads her words, they awaken a deep well of feeling within him.

System: Spend 1 Mote while making a verbal speech or composing a letter, pamphlet, essay, poem, or other such written work. The Exalt must have a specific target in mind for the speech or composition. When that person hears or reads the speech, they must succeed at a (Wits + Linguistics) roll against difficulty (4 + Solar's Linguistics) or else immediately develop a temporary Intimacy of the Solar's choosing. This Intimacy persists until the end of the current story. Protagonists may spend 3 points of Willpower to reject this Intimacy for the rest of the current story, while antagonists must cite an incompatible Intimacy before doing so.

Wise-Eyed Courtier Method (••)

Resonance: Awareness, Investigation, Socialize

The Solar can quickly unravel the dynamics of any social situation she finds herself in by observing little more than word choice and body language.

System: The Solar can analyze the relationship between any two characters by spending a simple action observing them, then spending 1 Mote and rolling (Perception + Socialize) against difficulty 8. Even so much as one success not only reveals whether the two characters know one another, but also the depth and nature of that relationship ("They're business partners, but they don't advertise that relationship, and they don't trust one another").

All-Seeing Master Procurer (•••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy, Socialize

Essence connecting her to the world around her, the Solar has learned to be all things to all people.

System: By spending an hour in meditation and spending 2 Motes, the Solar may grant herself a dot of a social Background of her choice for the next 24 hours, letting her Essence lead her to the needed contacts, money, support, or whatever else.

With Essence 4+, this Charm grants two dots of Backgrounds, which may be assigned to the same Background or separately.

Asp Bites Its Tail (•••)

Resonance: Presence, Socialize

Such is the Solar's assurance and bearing that she may effortlessly turn barbs and imprecations cast against her back on those so foolish as to slander her.

System: When slighted, humiliated, or accused of wrongdoing, the player can reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Manipulation + Socialize) against the accuser's resisted (Charisma + Socialize) (both difficulty 6). Should the Solar gain more successes, then everyone present becomes convinced the aggressor was in fact the one who belittled, insulted, or implicated herself.

With Essence 3+, when using this Charm, the Solar rolls against difficulty 5 and her aggressor against difficulty 7. Additionally, should she successfully turn the tables, the difficulty of all of her social rolls against that target for the rest of the scene drop by -2, while the difficulty of all social actions made by the individual who embarrassed himself are increased by +2.

Cup Boils Over (•••)

Resonance: Linguistics

The Solar composes a condemnation of purposeless existence, which is so profound that it strikes dead those with no bastion of ego to protect them against the Exalt's words.

System: Spend 3 Motes and use a simple action to roll (Manipulation + Linguistics) against a difficulty of a particular target's Willpower rating in order to craft a condemnation of their specific life within the world. This condemnation can be verbal or written. Should a protagonist hear or read this condemnation while they have 0 Willpower points, their soul leaves their body, and they die soon after. Antagonists can be targeted at any time their Willpower rating is reduced to 0. The soul-eaten victims of the Fair Folk are also vulnerable to being destroyed by this Charm, as are artificial beings with no real personality.

The Solar must be familiar enough with her target to be able to criticize his life in at least very broad strokes, and a condemnation devised with this Charm loses its potency after one month, as the events and circumstances of the target's life cause him to no longer perfectly match the Solar's critiques.

With Essence 5+, when the target hears or reads the Solar's condemnation, he loses a number of points of Willpower equal to the successes she rolled. If this reduces him to 0 Willpower, Cup Boils Over knocks his soul off and kills him.

Heart-Eclipsing Shroud (•••)

Resonance: Socialize

As useful as it is to be herself, it sometimes suits a Solar's purposes to be someone else. She devises another persona, feeding Essence into this identity until it takes on a reality of its own.

System: Upon purchasing this Charm, design a second persona for the character. This identity has its own name, Nature, and Intimacies, which need have no connection with the Solar's own. It also has its own memories, separate from those of the Solar, and a false history she devises, with false memories to uphold it.

Each day, when the Solar awakens, her player decides which of her personas she is wearing. The Solar may voluntarily switch to a different persona at any time by using an unrolled action and spending 1 Mote, 1 Willpower. If a persona's "appearance" varies significantly from the Solar's own, the difficulty of any (Intelligence or Wits) + Larceny roll to construct a disguise to take on that appearance is reduced to 3, or 4 even in the near-total absence of useful props. Additionally, any mental compulsions or other mind-altering enchantments laid upon her only affect whatever identity they were directed against, and so switching personas is an effective way to temporarily escape from mind control.

This Charm may be purchased a number of times equal to the Solar's Essence rating. All purchases past the first treat Heart-Eclipsing Shroud as a one-dot Charm.

With Essence 3+, when designing a persona, the Solar may reallocate up to one dot in each of her Attribute categories (Physical, Social, Mental) so that, for example, a certain persona is less observant than she is but has a keener mind. She also transforms into a persona's appearance upon assuming it rather than needing to don a disguise.

Knowing the Soul's Price (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Investigation, Socialize

Everyone, no matter their integrity, no matter their morals, has a price for which they will bend to the Solar's desires. This Charm cuts through to the soul's innermost secrets, revealing that price.

System: Spend 3 Motes and use a simple action to roll (Perception + Empathy) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Success reveals the price that will cause the target to do what the Solar wants, whether it's as simple as a sum of money or as daunting as the return of a dead loved one.

Should the Solar accumulate five or more successes when using Knowing the Soul's Price, she also gains an instinctive hunch where to start looking to find the price she's uncovered, if she doesn't have it already.

Venomous Rumors Technique (•••)

Resonance: Performance, Socialize

Insinuating a thread of her Essence into ill-intended gossip, the Solar assures that her poison reaches every ear that might matter.

System: Spend 2 Motes and use a simple action to roll (Manipulation + Socialize) against a difficulty of (4 + highest of the target's Allies, Backing, Command, Influence, or Resources)

while spreading a bit of gossip. While this Charm can't ensure that everyone *believes* whatever terrible rumor the Solar wishes to spread, success does guarantee that within a day or two, everyone who matters has at least *heard* it.

With Essence 3+, by spending 3 Motes rather than 2 when activating Venomous Rumors Technique, the Solar may define the scope of the damage her rumors inflict, causing the target to lose a dot of a Background she chooses to target. This can only damage social Backgrounds like Resources and Connections.

Wise Minister Academy (•••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

By putting someone through a dedicated training regimen, the Solar can prepare him to smoothly execute the running of a nation. In little more than a week, a Solar with this Charm can transform a group of drunken layabouts into respectable magistrates, ministers, couriers, and diplomats.

System: The Solar dedicates herself to educating a group of students, subjecting them to daily lectures and rigorous testing under her oversight, which take up at least one hour every day over the course of two weeks. She can dedicate her efforts to the training of a group of up to Size (current Essence rating, maximum 5) at a time. While she's actively training a group of students, her maximum Mote pool is reduced by one. She can reclaim this capacity by abandoning her students' training, but if she does this and returns to their tutelage later, she must start their training over from scratch.

After two weeks, ignorant peasants gain an Expertise pool of 5 and an Aptitude for one of the following: Bureaucracy, mercantilism, diplomacy, sailing, or message delivery. They also become literate. Already-competent ministers, diplomats, sailors, and so on instead gain an Expertise pool of 7. Experts in the Solar's class advance to an Expertise pool of 9. A group of students may be run through this training regimen repeatedly to hone them from total ignorance to Wise Ministers, or to branch them out into multidisciplinary mastery, if the Solar has sufficient time and inclination.

If a protagonist partakes of Wise Minister training, then after two weeks of training they may purchase one dot of Bureaucracy, Linguistics, Presence, Ride, Sail, or Socialize as though it were a Favored Ability.

Legacies

A Solar may choose a Legacy at the beginning of any story after reaching Essence 2+. The Legacies outline below are not meant to be exhaustive, merely a representational sample. Players and Storytellers should free to work together to develop new Legacies if none of the ones below seem suitable.

Ancient Master

The Solar dedicates herself to the absolute mastery of the deepest secrets of philosophical combat, forging meaning and martial prowess into an inspiring and undefeatable singularity which she comes to embody.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar is of the Dawn Caste.

- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Bravo, Caregiver, Critic, Paragon, Savant, Survivor, or Visionary; or a Nature not found in this book which is based around imposing yourself on the world or seeking deeper meaning.
- The Solar has learned at least one complete Martial Arts style.
- The Solar has Martial Arts as one of her Caste or Favored Abilities.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Stamina as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that the Solar encounters someone who employs a method of fighting she is not familiar with (such as a martial arts style she has never seen before, a novel tactical approach to combat, or a powerful and unique battle-artifact), the Solar is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: When engaged in a one-on-one fight with an opponent doing most of their fighting with a martial arts style, the Solar's attacks gain Overwhelming (-1).

If the Solar is *not* a Dawn, she may add the following feature to her anima power: once per scene, she can reflexively lower the difficulty of an attack or damage roll by -1.

If the Solar *is* a Dawn, then when she uses her anima power to lower the difficulty of an attack or damage roll by -1, she instead lowers it by -2.

At Essence 4+: When she already has a Martial Arts "Form"-type Charm active, the Solar may activate a second "Form"-type Charm without canceling her already-active "Form," paying 1 Legacy or gaining 1 Limit instead of paying the Charm's normal activation cost.

Additionally, the Solar may use a swift action to roll (Perception + Martial Arts) against a difficulty depending on how hectic and distracting the Solar's surroundings are; a quiet room would be difficulty 5, the middle of the Nexus Little Market at noon could be difficulty 9. Success allows her to open her eyes and perceive anyone who would see her hurt or dead if given the opportunity as surrounded by a writhing red-black anima. Characters displaying such murderous intent cannot strike the Solar with unexpected attacks for the remainder of the scene, and if they try to initiate violence against her, she is always considered to have the initiative and the opportunity to act first and start the fight herself.

Finally, the Solar always has the option to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to automatically trigger any condition a "Form"-type Charm might have that would allow her to activate it reflexively.

At Essence 5+: The Solar may learn 3-dot Charms from the Forbidden Arts (see p. XX), develop Forbidden Arts herself, and teach them to others, all as though she were one of the Sidereal Exalted.

Dreaded Shadow

The Solar becomes fear, the sharp gleaming edge of doom in the absence of the sun's kind light.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar is of the Night Caste.

- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Architect, Conniver, Follower, Judge, Rebel, Survivor, or Thrillseeker; or a Nature not found in this book which is based around bringing order to the world or surviving hostility.
- The Solar has the Dexterity Attribute rated at 4+.
- The Solar has Larceny or Stealth as a Caste or Favored Ability.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Dexterity as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that the Solar inspires fear in a powerful being, she is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: The Solar is aware whenever she perceives someone who harbors an Intimacy of fear toward her, and may use a read intentions action against such individuals without needing to observe or interact with them.

Additionally, whenever someone with an Intimacy of fear toward the Solar attempts to detect her when she is in hiding, or to see through one of her disguises, the difficulty of his roll increases by +2 and he must discard one success from his result.

The Solar may reflexively spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when in the presence of such an individual if she wishes to enter concealment but she is being actively observed, or else there is nowhere for her to plausibly hide. The target's fear *creates* a place of concealment, a moment in which everyone present momentarily takes their eyes off the Solar to observe his nervousness; when sweat runs into his eyes and he is forced to blink. In that moment, she may attempt to conceal herself anyway, hiding within the liminal shadow of the target's fear.

If the Solar is *not* a Night, she may add one the following feature to her anima power: When her anima flares, she may shroud herself in it like an obscuring cloak, making her impossible to recognize. Anyone in the scene that has already recognized her must roll Willpower against difficulty 9 or forget the blazing stranger's identity, if the Solar would rather they didn't remember who she is. She increases her Dodge by +1 against anyone who fears her while shrouded in an anima haze.

If the Solar *is* a Night, then while her anima is flaring, she increases her Dodge by +2 rather than +1, and against anyone who does not know who she is *and* anyone who harbors an Intimacy of fear against her.

At Essence 4+: When the Solar strikes someone with an unexpected attack and damages him, and she lets him see who it was that struck him; *or* if the Solar sneaks into a target's home and leaves some clear evidence that she has been there, and he uncovers this evidence; *or* if the Solar approaches someone openly and names his crimes, and he recognizes these crimes and is not confused by them being framed as crimes: then the target must make a Willpower roll against difficulty 9 or develop an Intimacy of fear of the Solar.

Additionally, when the Solar attacks someone who harbors an Intimacy of fear against her, her attack gains Piercing (-2).

At Essence 5+: The Solar gains a +2 bonus to Block anyone who harbors an Intimacy of fear toward her.

Additionally, while in concealment, the Solar may spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to reveal herself to a single target who harbors an Intimacy of fear for her. No matter how frantic the target becomes, no one else can make rolls to notice the Solar based solely on his words or behavior, nor can he articulately speak past the lump of terror in his throat of who he sees coming for him or where she is. Any attacks the Solar launches against the target do not spoil her stealth or reveal her to others.

Finally, the Solar may spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when her anima flares to suppress it absolutely, gaining all the benefits of a flaring anima without producing any visible display.

Forger of Accords

The Solar is a bridge, bringing together disparate groups and philosophies and finding common ground by which they might raise up new pacts, new societies, new worlds; or using her silvered tongue to secure advantage for those she has chosen to favor, and ruin for those who will not fall into line with her vision of the world.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar is of the Eclipse Caste.
- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Architect, Bureaucrat, Caregiver, Conniver, Critic, Follower, or Jester; or a Nature not found in this book which is based around getting what you want or need out of interactions with others.
- The Solar has the Manipulation *or* Appearance Attribute rated at 4+.
- The Solar has Bureaucracy or Socialize as a Caste or Favored Ability.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Manipulation as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in any given scene that someone who has never done so before vocally expresses that they are placing their trust in the Solar in regards to a serious matter, or signs or swears to a consequential agreement, contract, or oath with her, or with another party with the Solar as witness and arbiter, the Solar is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: The Solar may re-roll any read intentions action she makes once without spending Willpower or using up her once per scene Willpower-based re-roll.

Additionally, she may use a simple action and spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to use a read intentions action on someone without even meeting them, working only by second- or third-hand rumors or descriptions she has heard about them from others.

If the Solar is *not* an Eclipse, she may use a simple action and spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to sanctify an oath she witnesses in the same manner as an Eclipse Caste would.

If the Solar *is* an Eclipse, then the cost to sanctify an oath becomes 0 Motes and she may do so reflexively.

At Essence 4+: The Solar gains Overwhelming and Piercing (–2) against anyone she knows with absolute certainty has broken a promise, contract, or oath they made to her, or which they made with her as the explicit witness or keeper of the oath, whether it was magically sanctified or not.

By spending 1 Legacy or gaining 1 Limit while using a read intentions action against a being, if the action succeeds with 3+ successes, the Solar also learns whether that being has ever made any oaths or promises to any of her former incarnations which might still be relevant today. With 4+ successes, she learns exactly what those promises or oaths were. With 5+ successes, she learns whether the being ever broke those oaths.

“Relevant” in this context means things like a promise to always support the Solar if called upon, or an outstanding debt that was never repaid because the Usurpation cut it short; an agreement to repay a loan, which was then successfully repaid, thus closing the matter, would not be relevant and this Legacy benefit would not detect it (although a promise to repay a loan which the being defaulted on *would* be detected, and with 5+ successes the Solar would be aware of that default).

At Essence 5+: When the Solar becomes aware with irrefutable certainty that someone has broken a promise, oath, or contract made to her or which she stood in surety of, the Solar may reflexively spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to punish the oathbreaker by causing him to burst into beautiful golden flames: a hazard with difficulty 9, damage 5, burned (Aggravated), penalty –2, one round; it persists until the victim uses a simple action to extinguish himself. If the oath was magically sanctified in some way, such as by the Eclipse anima power, she reflexively becomes aware that it has been broken in the moment the oathbreaking occurs. If these flames inflict any Wounds, the Solar becomes reflexively aware of what direction she needs to head in to find the oathbreaker until those Wounds heal.

Great Sage Equal to Heaven

The Solar takes the matter of all wisdom, all knowledge, and all learning to be her business, educating the world either directly or by granting it the opportunity to admire her sagacity and splendor.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar is of the Twilight Caste.
- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Caregiver, Critic, Explorer, Gallant, Rebel, Savant, or Visionary; or a Nature not found in this book which is based around innovation, self-centeredness, or a thirst for knowledge.
- The Solar’s Mental Attributes were set as her primary Attribute category during character creation.
- The Solar has Lore as a Caste or Favored Ability.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character’s Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Intelligence as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that the Solar is able to change the course of events by doing something that no one present has ever seen someone do before, or that no one involved in the situation believed was possible, or solves a problem by applying knowledge that no one but

she possessed, *or* that she inspires someone to upend his life to follow in her footsteps, the Solar is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: The Solar may enact sorcerous workings in which she substitutes Craft, Medicine, or Survival in place of the Occult Ability. Such workings must reflect the Ability being used, such as a Survival project to breed an impossible beast via animal husbandry, an advanced surgery using Medicine to give someone wings, or the construction of a wondrous device with Craft to purify a polluted lake. If she is not a sorcerer, the working requires three extra successes. If she is a sorcerer, and her Occult is equal to or higher than the substitute Ability she wishes to use, then making that substitution instead grants her working +1 Means and reduces the number of Motes by which her maximum Mote pool is lessened at project's end by one.

Additionally, if she knows the Charm: All-Knowing Enlightened Sovereign, she may spend 1 Legacy to reset it so that it may be used again during the same story.

If the Solar is *not* a Twilight, then when her anima flares she may, at will and as she desires, cause dematerialized beings touched by the light of her anima to become visible and audible in the physical world, and by reflexively paying 1 Mote may enable anyone to interact with them physically so long as they remain illuminated. Generally, a Solar's anima strongly illuminates the entire sector she occupies, barring solid walls and the like blocking its light.

If the Solar *is* a Twilight, then when she uses her anima power to disincorporate herself, she may choose any of the following locations she has previously visited that happen to be within (Essence x 10) miles of her: the entry of a god's sanctum that she has entered in the past; a significant private or public library; an institution dedicated to learning; an active archaeological base camp; a Manse to which she is attuned; any gateway to Yu-Shan.

At Essence 4+: If the Solar knows the Charm: Dogstar Ruminations, she may reflexively pay 1 Legacy to reset it so that it may be used again without first undergoing Limit Break.

If the Solar knows the Charm: Wyld-Shaping Technique, she may spend 1 Legacy rather than 5 Motes when she fuels the Charm for one interval of its extended roll.

At Essence 5+: Because her understanding surpasses that of all others, the Solar may spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit and use a simple action to make a (Wits + Lore) roll against difficulty 8. Success permits her to declare a fact about the world, and for the rest of the scene, this fact is true. The power of this declaration can be equal to that of a fluid sorcerous working with an Ambition equal to the successes rolled. For example, if the Solar gained enough successes for an Ambition 7 working, she might reveal that in this particular city, on this particular day, in this particular hour, anyone who attempts to enact violence will be instantly banished to Hell. For the rest of the scene, this is true.

Invincible Sword Princess

The Solar makes of herself a paragon of battle, excellent in all martial endeavor beyond even the considerable prowess of the Chosen.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar is of the Dawn Caste.

- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Bravo, Caregiver, Follower, Paragon, Rebel, Survivor, or Thrillseeker; or a Nature not found in this book which is based around using great strength for great purpose, or else pursuit of excellence.
- The Solar has one of the following Abilities rated at 5+: Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee, or Thrown.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Perception as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that the Solar Staggars a serious opponent despite them invoking Dodge or Block against her attack, the Solar is considered to have satisfied her Nature. All Exalted and all supernatural beings with Essence 2+ are considered serious opponents.

At Essence 3+: When she attacks with her bare hands or a weapon, the Solar may reflexively pay 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to make the attack unblockable and to cause the attack to emit a shockwave which blasts out in a rough line encompassing every zone in the direction she directed the attack for the rest of the sector she's in. Everyone in the afflicted zones (save for people standing to the side of or behind her in the zone she occupies when making the attack) must contend with a one-time hazard with difficulty 6, damage (attack's base damage after modification by Charms), and the same damage type as the attack itself. This hazard can be avoided by anyone who throws down all of their weapons on the ground, voluntarily disarming himself and not attempting to reclaim those weapons during his next three turns; or, if unarmed, by turning and fleeing for at least his next three turns. Attempting to fake this surrender or retreat by going for a discarded weapon or ceasing to flee during those three turns results in the hazard immediately being applied.

If the Solar is *not* a Dawn, she may add one the following feature to her anima power: while her anima is flaring, the rule of 1s does not apply to her damage rolls.

If the Solar *is* a Dawn, then she enjoys the anima benefits of a flaring anima at all times.

At Essence 4+: When the Solar incapacitates an opponent, she may use a stunt to describe the ludicrously overkill manner in which she defeats him (splitting an opponent into a dozen pieces and spraying her name on the wall behind him in a gout of blood; or punching him all the way down a long table, at the end of which he tumbles off and falls down a flight of stairs and smashes through a pile of crates at the bottom; and so on) and reflexively spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit. Any enemy who witnesses this defeat must succeed at a difficulty 9 Willpower roll or instantly develop a full-blown Intimacy of fear toward the Solar.

Additionally, the Solar must select one of the following Abilities: Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee, or Thrown. The base damage of all attacks made using this Ability are permanently increased by +1.

At Essence 5+: If the Solar did not gain the ability to create sector-spanning hazard attacks at Essence 3, she gains that ability now. If she already has that ability, then when she uses it, she may cause the hazard to fire off in a line stretching through a distance up to the full length of the *district* she occupies, if she wishes.

Additionally, if the Solar did not gain the ability to increase the base damage of a particular Ability by +1 at Essence 4, she gains it now. If she already has that ability, then she increases the base damage of all attacks made using that Ability by +2 instead.

Judge Above All

The Solar is the final arbiter of the fates of the wicked and the just, judging the hearts of those before her and meting out whatever fate she decides they have earned.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar is of the Night Caste.
- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Bravo, Critic, Judge, Rebel, Savant, Survivor, or Visionary; or a Nature based around imposing yourself on the world, or examining others and applying what you've learned.
- The Solar has the Perception Attribute rated at 4+.
- The Solar has Larceny or Investigation as a Favored Ability.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Perception as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that she proclaims a judgment against someone she feels has committed some wickedness and gives that individual whatever it is she believes he deserves, the Solar is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: When the Solar uses a read intentions action on someone, she may always lower the difficulty by -1.

The Solar may use a simple action and spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to verbally *condemn* someone in whose presence she stands. A condemned individual immediately becomes a creature of darkness, and remains condemned until the Solar enacts some retribution against him that she feels suits whatever wrong she feels he has done.

Additionally, the Solar may reject any social influence or magical compulsion to overlook a perceived crime or injustice at no cost.

If the Solar is *not* a Night, she may add the following feature to her anima power: For one round per scene, she may treat her Mote-per-round limit as though she were flaring her anima when she isn't.

If the Solar *is* a Night, then she uses her flaring Mote-per-round limit even when not flaring at all times *so long as* she is in some way acting against or pursuing someone she has condemned.

At Essence 4+: The Solar permanently gains Overwhelming and Piercing (-1) against creatures of darkness. By using a swift action, she gains a general idea of which direction to head in to find some evidence left behind by a specific person she has condemned, be it evidence of a crime or signs of a trail she can follow to track him.

At Essence 5+: The Solar reduces the difficulty of all Stealth rolls to conceal herself from creatures of darkness by -2. When she Wounds a target she has condemned, she may inflict any manner of Wound she desires at no cost.

Additionally, she may spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when observing any individual who doesn't know she is there, and use a simple action to roll (Perception + Investigation) against a difficulty of their Willpower. If she gains any successes, she can hear their thoughts for as long as she continues to observe them without her being aware of her presence.

Living God

The Solar makes of herself a divinity in human flesh, living as the gods themselves do and becoming an object of naked veneration and worship.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar is of the Zenith Caste.
- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Bravo, Conniver, Gallant, Hedonist, Leader, Reject, or Visionary; or a Nature not found in this book which is based around self-indulgence or self-gratification.
- The Solar has the Appearance Attribute rated at 4+.
- The Solar has the Cult Background rated at 1+.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Charisma as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that the Solar is present for a scene in which a group of people worship her as a divine being, the Solar is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: The Exalt may relax as completely as she is able, in a place relatively free of distractions, and make a (Perception + Occult) roll against difficulty 7. Success allows her to hear prayers uttered within a number of miles equal to her (successes x 10) miles. These prayers must be issued with sincerity, and they must be directed to the Exalt.

Once per day while doing this, if the Solar is being actively prayed to, she may pluck a particular prayer from the air and pop it into her mouth where it melts like honey, immediately restoring 2 Motes. This capability resets at sunrise.

If the Solar is *not* a Zenith, she may add one of the following features to her anima power: the Zenith ability to burn corpses, *or* +1 Defense against creatures of darkness while her anima is flaring.

If the Solar *is* a Zenith, then all benefits of her anima which apply to creatures of darkness additionally apply to gods and elementals.

At Essence 4+: The Solar may use a simple action and spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to dematerialize at the end of the current round. She may use a swift action to immediately materialize again whenever she likes.

The Solar also gains the Inheritance power: Measure the Wind, and the ability to use it against anyone praying to her or engaged in worship of her.

Additionally, the Solar gains the Inheritance power: Domain Manipulation, which she may use exclusively to attempt to answer the prayers of her worshipers.

Finally, the Solar may nominate a certain site dedicated exclusively to her worship and veneration as her sanctum. At any time, she may reflexively spend 1 Legacy, and at the end of the round she will teleport back to her sanctum. The first time she claims a sanctum there is no attached cost, but if her sanctum is destroyed, abandoned, or becomes a place that is not exclusively dedicated to her worship; or if the Solar simply wishes to relocate her center of operations to a different place of worship, then she may spend 2 Legacy and use a simple action while in that location to make it her sanctum. She can, in any case, only have one sanctum at a time.

At Essence 5+: If the Solar gained Domain Manipulation from this Legacy, she may spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using it to roll (Essence + Willpower) rather than (Essence) to fulfill prayers.

Additionally, she gains a conditional immortality: so long as she retains at least Cult 3+, she does not age, and if slain, she may roll her (Essence + Cult) against difficulty 8. Success causes her to re-manifest at a site of worship, during a worship ceremony. With one success, this takes place at the next Calibration. With 2 or 3 successes, this takes place at the beginning of the next elemental cycle of the seasons. With 4 or 5 successes, this happens after one month has passed. Any means of destruction which would permanently obliterate a god bypasses this immortality and truly kills the Solar.

Finally, if one of the Solar's worshipers gives himself to her, whole-heartedly and with nothing in his heart but adoration and devotion, she may touch his brow, spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit, and permanently change his Nature to "Lackey." He is now motivated only by pleasing and obeying the Solar, and regains Willpower by doing so.

Master Sorcerer

The Solar has dedicated herself to investigating the depths of reality's construction and the means by which it may be manipulated by symbol, ritual action, and the correct application of her Exalted will.

To assume this Legacy, the Solar *must* be a sorcerer, and at least one of the following must also be true:

- The Solar is of the Twilight Caste.
- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Architect, Bravo, Critic, Explorer, Martyr, Savant, or Visionary; or a Nature not found in this book which is based around investigation, inquiry, or a drive to be the best.
- The Solar has the Intelligence Attribute rated at 4+.
- The Solar has Occult as a Caste or Favored Ability.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Intelligence as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that the Solar creates a wonder-work of sorcery, discovers lost secrets of sorcery, or solves a problem with her mastery of sorcery, she is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: The Solar may select one additional control spell at the beginning of each story, losing the benefits of whatever control spell she used this advantage to select previously.

Additionally, she gains the following shaping ritual:

Shaping Ritual (Heritor of the Sun): While standing in direct sunlight not created by a Solar anima, the sorcerer adds one bonus success to all shape sorcery actions.

If the Solar is *not* a Twilight, she may use a simple action to disincorporate herself into the geomancy of the world, reforming some hours later at the boundary of a nearby place of power such as a Demesne or spirit sanctum.

If the Solar *is* a Twilight, then while taking a shape sorcery action, she gains +1 Soak and is able to perceive dematerialized beings, and to target them with whatever spell she is shaping.

At Essence 4+: The Solar no longer suffers a –1 penalty to her Defense while taking shape sorcery actions.

Additionally, after performing a sorcerous working, the Solar may spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to lessen the amount by which her Mote capacity is reduced by –1. This benefit may be invoked repeatedly on a single working by paying Legacy, but only 1 Limit may be gained per working. For example, a Solar performing an Ambition 6 working could spend 2 Legacy and gain 1 Limit in order to reduce her Mote capacity by a mere –3.

At Essence 5+: Once per scene, the Solar may use a swift action rather than a simple action for one interval of a shape sorcery action.

Once per day, the Solar may reduce the Willpower cost of a shape sorcery attempt by –1. This benefit resets at sunrise.

Both of these benefits may be reset by paying 1 Legacy.

Prince of the Earth

The Solar molds herself into the legend of a holy ruler, sovereign over all the powers of Creation: a leader of men and speaker for Heaven, before whom the wicked tremble and the gods stand in awe.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar is of the Zenith Caste.
- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Architect, Bravo, Gallant, Judge, Leader, Paragon, or Visionary; or a Nature not found in this book which is based around principles of leadership or pursuing a particular vision of the world.
- The Solar has the Charisma Attribute rated at 4+.
- The Solar has Presence or Performance as a Caste or Favored Ability.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Charisma as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that any given ruler of a group of at least 1,000 people, or any supernatural being with at least Essence 2+ acknowledges the Solar as his superior and vows to follow her, the Solar is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: When someone formally swears fealty or loyalty to the Solar, she may use a swift action to place a hand upon his brow and spend 1 Legacy. Doing so cures the target's most severe Wound, even if it is aggravated; *or* cures one unwanted Derangement; *or* cures one unwanted permanent physical debility or lasting Wound; *or* removes, repairs, or corrects an unwanted Wyld mutation, sorcerous alteration, or physical characteristic. Henceforth, when the target claims with sincerity that he is acting on the Solar's behalf or following her orders, he may reflexively cause a pale, tremulous copy of her caste mark to appear upon his brow. If the target attempts to manifest this proof of authority falsely, the Solar reflexively becomes aware that he has done so and in what circumstances this occurred.

If the Solar is *not* a Zenith, she may add one of the following features to her anima power: the Zenith ability to burn corpses, *or* +1 Defense against creatures of darkness while her anima is flaring.

If the Solar *is* a Zenith, then she enjoys the anima benefits of a flaring anima against creatures of darkness even when her anima is not flaring; and while it is flaring, she instead gains +2 Defense against them, and becomes immune to Piercing from their attacks.

At Essence 4+: The Solar's mental and emotional control Charms are able to force targets to violate their Nature or even to kill themselves. She also permanently inflicts Aggravated damage (-1) against creatures of darkness.

At Essence 5+: When the Solar's anima flares, she may stoke it into a towering pillar stretching miles into the sky and encompassing the entire sector in which she stands. This imposes a -5 penalty on anyone attempting to hide from her, conceal his identity from her, or deceive her. Additionally, she may spend +2 Motes per round more than she normally could while flaring her anima.

Seeker of Horizons

The Solar is a footloose adventurer, seeking to explore all the vistas of Creation and experience all it has to offer, and perhaps thence to explore even stranger horizons.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar is of the Eclipse Caste.
- The Solar has one of the following Natures: Caregiver, Explorer, Gallant, Hedonist, Jester, Reject, Survivor, or Thrillseeker; or a Nature not found in this book which is based around finding joy in life or a new place in the world.
- The Solar has the Wits Attribute rated at 4+.
- The Solar has Ride, Sail, or Survival as a Caste or Favored Ability.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Wits as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that the Solar leaves behind one of her accomplishments in pursuit of something new, reaches a place she has never been before, or meets someone she's never met before, she is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: So long as the Solar continues to travel, she is tireless and needs neither sleep nor rest nor nourishment. If she rides a mount, this benefit extends to it as well. If she commands a ship, this benefit extends to her crew.

Additionally, for the duration of the first story she spends in any general area (such as a particular province, city, forest, or mountain) she has never visited before, the Solar is immune to any native environmental hazards, up to and including corrosion of self by the Wyld if the area is Wyld-tainted, and becoming immune to drowning and the crushing pressure of the deep sea if an abundance of water and such pressures are part of the area (she can, oddly, still be drowned in circumstances where this is not the case, such as while exploring Nexus if a thug decides to hold her head in a water-filled bucket until she stops moving).

If the Solar is *not* an Eclipse, she may add the following feature to her anima power: If she approaches beings of the Wyld, Hell, or the Underworld on legitimate business and they offer her or her companions unprovoked violence, then any roll made by the offending beings during the course of that violence which produces even a single 1 become an automatic botch.

If the Solar *is* an Eclipse, then exploring, carousing, or engaging in tourism always counts as legitimate business for the purpose of her anima power's protection.

At Essence 4+: The Solar's carefree adventures delight the strange mechanical arachnid gods tasked with the drudgery of weaving the bulk of Creation's fate and manufacturing destinies for its inhabitants, leaving them willing to cheat the grand narrative of history on her behalf to facilitate them. When some circumstance or obstacle stops the Solar from traveling freely, she needs only verbally express her confidence that there's some way forward so long as she doesn't give up, spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit, and in short order an opportunity, however implausible, will present itself. Perhaps a gullible guard sneaks her out of her cell so that she might regale his family with a tale of hers that he particularly admired; perhaps there is a clerical error indicating that she does, in fact, have proper paperwork to admit her through a militarized checkpoint; perhaps a smitten lesser faerie smuggles her through his lord's domain.

Additionally, the Solar may reject at no cost any social influence or mind-altering magic that seeks to convince her to abandon an adventure or not to embark on a journey. If someone tries to physically stop her from such activities, she becomes immune to Overwhelming penalties from them, gains a +1 bonus when using Block or Dodge to protect herself from their efforts, and her attacks gain Overwhelming (-1) against them.

At Essence 5+: When the Solar leaves a place whose inhabitants she has helped in some meaningful way (deposing a tyrant, cleansing a poisoned well, killing a monster, and so on), and does so in a dramatic fashion (such as by walking off into the sunset, pausing to cut an iconic figure on the horizon, rearing her steed so it can churn the air before galloping away, or sailing her ship off into a raging thunderstorm), she may roll her Willpower against difficulty 9 and discard 1 Limit per success.

When the Solar arrives in a new place and finds some sort of trouble going on, she may make the same roll with the same consequences if she immediately dives into the thick of the situation and tries to help whoever seems worthy of her help. If she does so by making a dramatic entrance

(such as by crashing through a window, appearing in a doorway framed by a storm, or leaping from the deck of a burning ship), the roll is made at difficulty 8 and, if there's a fight going on, whatever side she throws herself in with gains the initiative and goes first each round.

Wheel-Turning Prince

Far too many of the Solars of old lost themselves in the throes of the Great Curse. This Solar echoes that tragedy, embracing power above wisdom, sanity, or restraint, but gaining great power in the depths of reckless madness.

To assume this Legacy, at least one of the following must be true:

- The Solar has have experienced at least one Limit Break in which she did something horrible.
- The Solar knows the Charm: Stubborn Boar Attitude.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Strength as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that she experiences any circumstance that causes her to gain Limit for any reason *other* than a benefit provided by this Legacy, the Solar is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: The Solar may "push" her Essence for advantage once per day, rolling her Essence rating against difficulty 7. Each success grants her 1 Mote. Each 1 rolled generates 1 Limit. This benefit resets at sunrise each day.

While in Limit Break, a small alteration in her appearance manifests as a sort of "tell." This is always subtle, such as a slight change in the coloration of her eyes or a distortion in her anima banner.

While in Limit Break, the Solar gains a +1 bonus to Dodge and Block and can cut ahead without spending Willpower, empowered by her paranoia.

At Essence 4+: The Solar may gamble her stability for greater power. Once per scene, when she spends Motes, she may roll her current Limit total against difficulty 9. If she generates any successes, the Mote cost of whatever she is trying to do is reduced by -1. If the roll fails, she gains 1 Limit. If the roll botches, she gains 3 Limit.

While in Limit Break, the Solar's attacks inflict Aggravated damage (-1). Her visual "tell" is now quite distinct, even if she did not take this Legacy's Essence 3 benefit, such as a completely different eye color, hair color, or hair style.

At Essence 5+: The Solar gains a new Derangement each time she exits Limit Break. This Derangement is based on whatever happened while the Solar was in Limit Break. The Derangement is resolved and lost when her next Limit Break begins.

While in Limit Break, the Solar may reflexively spend 1 Legacy to invoke an apocalyptic visage for the rest of the scene. In her apocalyptic visage, the Solar manifests a consistent set of signature clothing, and her visual "tell" becomes wildly dominant (glowing eyes, hair streaming out wild and windblown even indoors, blazing tattoos, etc), including one Uncanny feature (see p. XX). She may reflexively summon and equip any or all artifacts to which she is attuned.

While wearing her apocalyptic visage, the Solar may move an extra zone when using a move action. She adds +2 dice to all actions, gains +1 base damage on all attacks, and may re-roll all feats of strength at no cost and without using up her once-per-scene re-roll. She gains the ability to use a simple action to concentrate upon anyone she harbors an Intimacy toward that she can perceive, reading their thoughts so long as she continues to dedicate her simple actions in this fashion. When she inflicts a Wound, she may make it any sort of Wound she likes at no cost. While wearing this visage, the Solar gains the ability to reflexively spend up to 1 Legacy per round to increase her Block or Dodge by +2 for the rest of the scene.

Scarred by the Void

This Solar was captured by one of the Deathlords not long after her Exaltation, cast into a cruelly barbed soulsteel cage, and subjected to what seemed an eternity of torment as her Essence sought to invert itself into something unspeakable. Something blasphemous. Her will held out. She stood fast. She did not give in, and eventually, she escaped.

But the scars upon her Exaltation linger.

To assume this Legacy, the Solar must have been captured by a Deathlord and subjected to a failed attempt to convert her into one of the Abyssal Exalted.

At Essence 2+: Select one of the character's Caste Abilities. Instead of spending Motes, the Solar may choose to spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit when using Excellence of the Blazing Sun to enhance this Ability. Furthermore, she treats Stamina as a Caste Attribute for the purpose of the rule of 1s.

Additionally, the first time in each scene that she opposes or defeats a significant manifestation of death, the Solar is considered to have satisfied her Nature.

At Essence 3+: Once per session, the Solar may reflexively spend 1 Legacy or gain 1 Limit to transform one of her Solar Charms into an Abyssal Charm for the rest of the scene. The transformed Charm must be of the same dot rating, from the equivalent caste, and share at least one resonant Ability. Thus, Wholeness-Restoring Meditation (a 3-dot Twilight Charm that resonates with Medicine) could be exchanged for Corpse-Graft Technique (a 3-dot Daybreak Charm that resonates with Medicine).

Further, in addition to her own anima power, the Solar may utilize the anima power of the Abyssal equivalent to her caste. If the two powers are identical, then the Solar instead gains the ability to respire Essence at the same rate she would in Creation while in the Underworld (see Volume II, p. XX).

At Essence 4+: The Solar's anima banner acts as true sunlight, illuminating everything within the same sector she occupies that isn't blocked off from its radiance by something like a solid wall. Among any other effects sunlight might have, this notably banishes hungry ghosts, and robs ghosts within a shadowland of their material state.

Additionally, the Solar gains a sixth sense which alerts her whenever she is in the presence of one of the Unquiet or one of the Abyssal Exalted, even if the triggering creature is dematerialized or disguised.

Furthermore, the Solar may cite the taint upon her Exaltation as a Means when performing a necromantic working (see Volume II, p. XX).

Finally, while in Limit Break, the Solar's caste mark emits a thin trickle of blood upon first manifesting, and her anima occasionally darkens as patches of shadow ripple through it.

At Essence 5+: The Solar may reflexively spend 1 Legacy to invoke a deathly visage for the rest of the scene. In her deathly visage, the Solar manifests a consistent set of trappings of the grave (see Volume II, p. XX), her hair darkens, her skin becomes pale, and she may dematerialize or rematerialize with a swift action.

While wearing her deathly visage, the Solar can perceive and interact with dematerialized beings. She adds +2 base damage to all attacks against the Unquiet and the Abyssal Exalted, and may reflexively use a protect action on each turn to defend anyone or anything toward which she harbors an Intimacy. While wearing this visage, the Solar gains the ability to reflexively spend 1 Legacy to grant all of her attacks for the rest of the round Aggravated damage (-3).

Finally, the Solar may spend supernal experience points to permanently learn up to three Abyssal Charms from the Abyssal equivalent of her caste.

Chapter Four: The Dragon-Blooded

Where their onetime Celestial overlords possess the power to shatter the sky or render mountains into canyons, the Dragon-Blooded are a very different sort of Exalted. They must fight, study, scrape, and struggle for every bit of their command over the vast power of their Essence... but command it they do, and for over a thousand years the world has lain prostrate before their collective might.

The Dragon-Blooded number in the thousands, passing on a heritage of power to their sons and daughters. They rule the world: the Second Age is one of their making, shaped by their passions and ambitions. Now it is crumbling before their very eyes. Are the mighty Terrestrial Exalted facing the twilight of their reign, or can they overcome the challenges of the era and retain the power and authority to which they have become accustomed?

Play a Dragon-Blooded if you want...

- to be the scion of a vast and powerful empire in turmoil.
- to confront the intrigues of your family and your rivals, all Exalted in their own right.
- to be acclaimed a rightful Prince of the Earth, ruler of Creation.
- to struggle against the mighty passions of one of the five elements.
- to pit superhuman might against a world of gods and monsters.

The Dragon-Blooded

The Dragon-Blooded are quite literally born to power. Their Exaltation is an inheritance passed down from the beginning of the divine revolution against those monstrous forces which first made the world. The pillar of its strength has been cracked by time and turmoil and diluted by passionate excess... but still it endures. Still new heroes take the Second Breath and gain the blessing of the dragons.

Growing up Terrestrial

With the exception of outcastes, whose Exaltation almost uniformly arrives as a complete surprise that disrupts and derails their life, Dragon-Blooded tend to have extremely stressful, even neurotic upbringings. The Realm is not a loving society. Dynastic children are potential resources and are shaped and marshaled as such. Emotional closeness between parents and children is socially discouraged. While there are always exceptions, *most* Dynasts are raised primarily by a small army of nannies and tutors, with their parents standing as distant figures whose approval and affection is contingent on good performance — on demonstrating that the child is not a waste of invested resources.

Lookshy fosters stronger bonds between parent and child, but it is still a military camp, and imposes even stricter discipline on the children of the gentes than the Realm does in some respects. Children grow into the shapes the Seventh Legion demand of them, or they are broken.

Being born into military boarding-school culture is, of course, bad enough on its own, but the already-present stress of constant expectations and very little unstructured free time is exacerbated by the fact that no child can be certain whether or not she will Exalt. *Every* Dragon-

Blooded child of the ruling families of Creation knows that Exaltation is not only possible for her, but *expected* of her. She knows that her family will consider her a failure regardless of any of her other achievements if she fails in this. And time passes very slowly for children; the years that crawl by as a Dynast or cadet waits to become old enough to feel the blessed touch of the Elemental Dragons feel like so much more. They are, in fact, an entire lifetime: a child's slow, crawling years, every day spent in nervous anticipation.

The primary school years are even worse. Expectations increase. Peers multiply. Competition becomes standard, and much more aggressive. Free time is in even shorter supply... and now the child knows she is in the window. She awakes each morning knowing this might be the day she becomes more than mortal. She goes to sleep each night wondering if this was not the day because the day will never come; if she will, in fact, *not* feel the blessing of the Dragons, will not command power as her parents do, will live a disappointing threescore and ten years as a mediocrity shuffled off to some useful sideline where her failure will not be too visible. The next day, she gets to traverse this emotional arc again. And again. And again. By the end of primary school, tutors can often see a sheen of panic every day in the eyes of the late bloomers, those who will Exalt in the far end of the window for that blessed event.

Pity even more those few who graduate un-Exalted still. "Merely mortal," their society sighs, and shuffles them off to... something, to recoup the loss in their family's investment as best they may. When they finally take the Second Breath at the very end of the window of potentiality, their initial Essence fever is often spent on the floor sobbing with relief, or in a frenzy of violent retribution against a condescending relative.

Pity most of all, of course, those who do not Exalt at all.

For the children of Prasad, matters are even worse. The Pure Way teaches that Exaltation is catalyzed by proper embodiment of the divine potential in one's blood. If a child — a *child*, a boy or girl of twelve to fifteen years of age — cannot grasp, internalize, and implement the lessons of *what it means to be a god*, then her failure to Exalt belongs to her and her alone. Is it any surprise that the Dragon Caste puts so much stock in ritual purity, correct action, and strict laws prescribing acceptable interactions between castes that will not sully the spirit?

Views on Exaltation

As may be imagined, Exaltation is a central facet of Terrestrial existence. Most Dragon-Blooded spent their entire childhoods obsessing over it. Dragon-Blooded matriarchs spend a great deal of time in considerations of matchmaking, trying to build familial bonds that will strengthen the political fortunes of their Great House, gens, or clan, while *also* increasing the number of Exalts within their ranks. Even the Celestial Exalted dedicated significant research into potential means by which to increase the numbers of their Exalted subordinates.

So it is that the greatest minds of the Exalted have spent a very, very, very great deal of time pondering the inner workings and mysteries of Dragon-Blooded Exaltation; minds significantly less great than that have devoted even *more* time to the same end. As a result, a few things are known for certain about Dragon-Blooded Exaltation, surrounded by a sprawling phantasmagoria of rumor, folklore, taboo, and outright superstition.

What is known for sure is that the best way to increase the likelihood of Dragon-Blooded offspring is for them to spring directly from the union of two Dragon-Blooded parents. If both of those individuals themselves were the products of Dragon-Blooded unions, so much the better;

and if all of the Exalts above *them* were the product of such unions, even better still. Couplings with mortals, with spirits, with anything other than another Dragon-Blooded radically decrease the likelihood of the union's offspring being blessed with Exaltation.

It is believed, with strong supporting evidence, that Dragon-Blooded capacity to kindle Exaltation in their offspring builds over time, and is expended upon the conception of a child. As a result, parents are strongly encouraged to have a child no more than every decade or so (and to wait no more than twenty years between children), rather than to try to produce a new heir every year. This is believed to optimize the chance of Exaltation (and to avoid being crushed by the financial burden of raising a child to the very high educational standards of the Realm, Lookshy, or Prasad). Those who are born from hastier unions have significantly reduced likelihood to Exalt, and even if they do, are often regarded as being weaker potential matches, as though they were of inferior parentage.

These are the most foundational things known about Dragon-Blooded Exaltation, and also the most useful. Or rather, the most useful to matchmakers. They are of no use or comfort at all to children waiting to Exalt, because all decisions that matter have already been made before the individual's conception; and are of little help to a desperate couple on their fourth or fifth child, who have not yet successfully produced an Exaltation for their family. This is where the myths and rumors creep in.

Many Dynasts believe that they are more likely to produce Exalted children if they conceive them within a Manse harnessing the energy of one or both of the parents' aspects. Indeed, some Manses are specifically designed, constructed, and advertised as "fertility Manses," honeymoon sites where Dynasts pay exorbitant amounts to vacation and attempt to conceive children. The efficacy of such designs is highly questionable, but the peace of mind they bring to parents aching to produce a "good" heir is not, and so they continue to be profitable.

It is also commonly believed that same-aspect pairings are more fruitful than those of differing aspects, and a number of treatises have been written attempting to explicate on which pairings are more or less bountiful than others (with fire-water parentage commonly believed to be the most disharmonious). Sidereal genealogists are fairly certain that there is no merit to this entire school of thought, but it has persisted since the First Age nonetheless and shows no signs of going away any time soon.

An entire cottage industry has always existed for the devising of "dragon-bolstering aphrodisiacs:" alchemies, talismans, dietary regimens, and spirit-blessings purported to increase the potency of Terrestrial blood and to raise the likelihood of Exaltation in children conceived under their influences. Again, the effectiveness of any of these treatments is dubious at best.

Children, meanwhile, are endlessly inventive in scheming up ways to provoke the blood within them to catalyze, or to earn the Dragons' favor. These range from the harmless (fervent prayers to a particular Immaculate Dragon every night) to the dangerous and destructive (exposure to elemental ordeals such as practicing breathing exercises in the midst of a raging storm, or holding one's hand in a fire), to the blasphemous or criminal (drinking the blood of other children to add the potency of their blood to one's own, or petitioning gods or demons for assistance). Some persistent Exaltation-superstitions are passed down generationally at particular primary schools, passed from class to class year by year despite the instructors' best efforts to stamp them out. New ones spring up all the time, as a classmate Exalts in particular or remarkable circumstances and all of her peers immediately scrutinize the event from any and

every angle, trying to identify the key factor that provoked the Dragons' blessing to manifest so that they can replicate it and gain that blessing themselves.

It's an exhausting way to grow up.

What is This?

The presentation of the Dragon-Blooded in the **Exalted Demake** is based upon a mixture of all three of their incarnations and doesn't impose much in the way of departures from that material. As a result, this chapter is fairly sparse on setting material compared to some other chapters. The Third Edition Dragon-Blooded hardback is most strongly recommended out of the various available resources, followed very closely by the First Edition hardback. The Second Edition hardback is adequate if you have it, but is generally outperformed for quality of setting material presentation by the other two. The First Edition Aspect books are also excellent supplementary reading.

Terrestrial Essence

Dragon-Blooded are different than other sorts of Exalted. Terrestrial Essence is *coarse*. It's easy to think that because Dragon-Blooded are weaker than their Celestial counterparts, weakness is an intrinsic quality of their Essence. This is not how anyone within Creation would describe matters, at least not anyone who has had direct experience of the Terrestrial Exalted. The power of the elements is thick and heavy in Terrestrial Essence: five streams of power which combine to make up the whole of mundane existence, and which may be forced into interoperability within that framework, but only with difficulty. Only with effort.

Dragon-Blooded Essence is not weak, it is *limited*. The Terrestrial Exalted do not enjoy the bountiful Essence reserves of their former Solar overlords. This is one of the major forces that shapes their lives, outlooks, and behaviors.

As will be detailed later in this chapter, Dragon-Blooded cannot spend their last remaining Mote to enact a miracle belonging to an element that is not their own; and the first time in each scene that they draw upon the power of their native element, it does not deplete their strength. *Dragon-Blooded characters begin play with only six Motes to wield per day*. There is perhaps no more consequential difference between them and the other Chosen. Favoring the miracles of one's own element, and doing even that sparingly, is the difference between employing divine power from sunrise to sunset or being left little better than a mortal after only a few brief, ferocious minutes of supernatural exertion. Dragon-Blooded strongly, *strongly* prefer to focus on their own aspect's magic. They regard the other four elements as useful supplements to their own power, but know that such arts are unreliable and cannot serve them as a tool of last resort in the same way their native aspect can.

Dragon-Blooded Essence is *powerful*. Its paucity prevents it from being harnessed to create miraculous displays on the same scale as the Charms of the Celestial Exalted, but in and of itself, Terrestrial Essence is the stuff of the world, the fundamental truth behind solid matter and scouring energy. It is not the ephemeral light of the distant stars. It is not the metaphorical power of the sun or the grave. It is the power of a rock smashing someone's teeth out. It is the heat of fire, not as poetry, but as the thing that burns a forest down. In short, Dragon-Blooded exhibit a phenomenon they call *anima flux*: a destructive aura that accompanies their anima flare.

A Solar's anima banner feels like a warm summer's day, and makes booming and whooshing sounds when expressing itself intensely. An Air Aspect's anima banner is a miniature hurricane, and when it forks off a bolt of lightning, it is not a phantasmal display. It can fuse a doorknob into a lump of solid metal as the Exalt grasps it. Anima flux is powerfully destructive and Dragon-Blooded do not have any choice in the matter of whether they manifest it or not. It *always* accompanies anima manifestation. This has done a very great deal to shape the culture of the Blessed Isle and the behavior of its rulers.

The Dragon-Blooded tend to kill mounts that they ride into battle unless they study specialized, draining protective miracles or attune purpose-built artifacts to prevent this outcome. As a result, most Dynasts regard equestrianism as a form of artistic display or recreation rather than a serious military pursuit. Certainly, they're aware of the uses of cavalry on the battlefield, but generally tend to treat such skills as useful talents to be cultivated by... someone else. The Realm's legions are notorious for lacking in native light or heavy cavalry of their own, primarily making use of conscripted foreign forces such as Medoan janissaries to plug this particular gap, because so few Dragon-Blooded are interested in personally commanding cavalry charges.

Realm architecture strongly, *strongly* favors stonework construction for any building where Dynasts are expected to frequently visit or dwell, and every reputable primary and secondary school in the Realm, Lookshy, and Prasad is constructed like a stone bunker. They have to be; places of education are places where young Dragon-Blooded will Exalt, and then spend the next several years accidentally unleashing their animas in response to excitement, anger, panic, or arousal. None would be left standing if they weren't capable of withstanding the scouring abrasion of a localized sandstorm, the whirling thorns of an agitated Wood Aspect, or, worst of all, the completely real flames of a Fire Aspect's anima. The legends of Hesiesh emphatically stress not merely his personal qualities of calm-headedness and restraint, but the specific miracle of withholding his Essence until the moment it was absolutely required that he spend it. This is because every Fire Aspect is a forest- or city-destroying wildfire waiting to happen.

The Realm constructs its naval vessels around the expectation of Dragon-Blooded command, with copper deck-plates and moveable iron canopies beneath which flaring Exalts can stand so as not to sever (or, Dragons forfend, *burn*) the sails and rigging overhead. Fire Aspects especially are attended and advised by Immaculate monks prior to lengthy sea-voyages. No one wants to be held responsible for choosing between letting her ship go up in flames or explaining to one of the Great Houses why she ordered its most beloved scion to be thrown overboard in full jade armor.

Anima flux not only threatens to wreck the furniture — and Dynasts don't laugh when it does, because their artworks and furnishings each tend to be worth the lifetime income of several hundred peasants — it also threatens the health and lives of the mortals the Dragon-Blooded are ostensibly supposed to protect and rule. Imagine an Earth Aspect clinging to the edge of a cliff face, her anima abrading her handhold moment by moment. A brave (or perhaps foolish) soldier run forward and pulls her up. For his bravery, his hand is probably degloved by his commander's anima flux.

Realm and Seventh Legion drills emphasize quickly pivoting from shield walls into skirmishing formations to allow room for Dragon-Blooded commanders to fight without flaying, burning, or poisoning their own troops. Once a space *has* been cleared, anima flux becomes a useful weapon to wield against the enemy. Any hostile military formation that closes in to immobilize and slay

one of the Dragon-Blooded will be racing the clock against its own destruction in the vortex of her elemental fury, even before reckoning with the edge of a slashing daiklave.

All in all, Dragon-Blooded are constantly conscious of their Essence: how much of it they have available to answer them at urgent need, and just how urgent that need truly is given that vigorous expenditure unleashes a minor, localized calamity without fail.

Essence Fever

Terrestrial Essence is raw, powerful, unrefined, loud, and demanding. It is the stuff of the world, and it imposes itself forcefully upon the Dragon-Blooded.

A Terrestrial's awakening of Essence does not *transform* her. Her aspect was always a part of her; sleeping prior to her Exaltation, yes, but *there*. A cold and dour and dispassionate youth never Exalts as an Aspect of Fire. And yet, she *is* a different person after her Exaltation. Her close friends see it. Her instructors see it. She feels it herself; something new writhes within her thoughts, impels the force of her emotions. It is the fundamental Essence of one of the five elements, and in every situation it will have its say.

Where Solars speak of commanding the power of Essence through any number of elegant metaphors, the Dragon-Blooded use a single phrase again and again: "Riding the dragon." They must be trained — extensively, for years of schooling — to command their Essence, for it always seeks instead to command them. The structure of the Immaculate Philosophy is in very large part intended to tame the extremes of Dragon-Blooded Essence fever through behavioral conditioning.

Where the Celestial Exalted soon tame the power of their Essence and wield it with a steady hand in all but the most harsh and traumatic of circumstances, Dragon-Blooded must continue to struggle against substantial Essence fevers throughout their entire lives. The least stable of their kind are even sometimes seized by what is referred to as "Essence possession," in which they respond to overwhelming emotion or anxiety by seeking comfort or affirmation in their element: Earth Aspects go and bury themselves in the ground, while Fire Aspects may be found dancing in the heart of a bonfire, and Water Aspects seek the contemplative solitude of the deeps. Most Dragon-Blooded are not prone to such flagrant displays, and do eventually learn to control their raging passions or deep-seated tendencies... but there is always some effort involved.

On Playing a Dragon-Blooded

No-one is "a Dragon-Blooded." They are an Aspect of Air, or Fire, or Wood. Their nature resonates with the power of a single element, and this is not a subtle affair. It is not the quiet harmony of the universe. It is a great booming drumbeat, kept in time with the Exalt's heart. "GROW," shouts the voice of Wood, "EXPAND, CONSUME." This nature may be kept in check, but it is always there. Dragon-Blooded build their expectations of their peers around the stereotypes of their aspects even moreso than their family ties.

With the exception of outcastes, every Dragon-Blooded suffered and scraped and fought and *earned* their Exaltation. They tend to be keenly aware of their superiority to lesser beings, and to feel wholly justified in their elevation. Scions of the Realm and Lookshy are proud, touchy, and extremely status-conscious when dealing with those who are not their peers. This all goes double for Prasad, where the Dragon Clans believe they are not merely elevated humans, but living divinities, set apart from as well as above the mortals they guide and rule. For a member of the

Dragon Caste to even deign to speak directly with a mortal is to grant that person an audience with a god: a gift of inestimable value to the mortal, carrying significant risk of defilement through exposure to the pedestrian and profane for the Exalt.

On the Chosen of the Dragons

The Dragon-Blooded refer to themselves as “the ten thousand dragons,” but this is a euphemism. Roughly 10,000 Terrestrial Exalted make up the ranks of the Realm’s Great Houses and its legions, it is true, but they are by no means the only Dragon-Blooded in Creation. Lookshy harbors another 3,000 Terrestrials within its walls, while 2,000 more call the nascent empire of Prasad their home, and roughly 5,000 outcastes are spread far and wide across the rest of the Threshold.

Dragon-Blooded tend to live anywhere from 250 to 300 years. A few of particularly refined Essence push this boundary by several decades, and a *very* few have *significantly* exceeded the natural lifespan of their kind through recourse to the same sort of life-extending drugs and magics that the Solar Exalted once employed. Dragon-Blooded aging slows drastically in young adulthood; it’s not uncommon for a Terrestrial to continue to appear to be in her twenties for well over a hundred years. Outward signs of age creep in slowly during the second century, generally granting a mien of maturity and authority. A Dragon-Blooded celebrating her 200th birthday generally looks no more than a well-preserved 35. Aging resumes at something close to a mortal pace sometime in the 200s.

Aspects

Where the Celestial Exalted are separated into castes based around fulfilling specific duties and obligations, the Dragon-Blooded possess *aspects*: internal divisions of nature and being. A Solar career soldier who can whip your ass blindfolded and drunk could only ever be a Dawn Caste, but that same person might be a Dragon-Blooded of any of the five Aspects.

As a result, the notion of the Dragon-Blooded as a singular and unified people is a view that was always mostly imposed from outside. In the First Age, the Celestial Exalted saw them as a singular group because they passed on their Exaltation in the same manner and were of lesser power. Mortals in the Age of Sorrows see them as a singular unified group because the Immaculate Philosophy presents them as being of uniform spiritual superiority and their clear might sets them apart from lesser beings. (The trend of the Immaculate Philosophy toward stressing unity is in part a deliberate attempt to guide the Dragon-Blooded away from their tendency to warring with one another over power and resources, and in part a reflection of unconscious Sidereal bias in the design of the religion.)

The Dragon-Blooded largely do not share this view. They observe a kinship with Terrestrials of other aspects, certainly, but commonly think of themselves as five different related sorts of Exalted, not one. A Fire Aspect and a Water Aspect are beings with remarkably different instincts, drives, intrinsic aptitudes, and supernatural abilities. Their power originates with different ancient elemental spirits. In their daily and spiritual lives, they are expected to follow the model of different legendary saints in the form of Hesiesh and Daana’d.

Aspects of Air

Aspects of Air are beings of a simple yet powerful contrast: stillness and violence. In their more refined presentations, they are deeply thoughtful creatures who consider all the angles and think through their plans before putting them into action without restraints or reserve. Young or

undisciplined Air Aspects, by contrast, vacillate between living in their own heads and sudden violent outbursts: of words, of activity, or of actual violence.

The ideal of this aspect is the warrior-savant who wields knowledge and steel with equal facility. Air Aspects are *expected* to be erudite geniuses who have an answer for every situation, although in truth they are no more or less inclined to great intelligence than any other Dragon-Blooded.

Their patron is Mela, Petitioner of Clouds Accordant to the Call of Battle. Those who emulate her seek nothing less than uniform perfection: right thought leading into right action. Without rigorous pursuit of excellence in all she does, an Air Aspect can easily find her efforts spinning in all directions, upending her life into chaos.

Aspect Markings: Air Aspects tend to have a white or bluish tinge to their skin, particularly around the lips, ears, and fingertips. Their moods may be accompanied by errant winds. Some are cold to the touch, and may smell of fresh-fallen snow or the ozone of a recent lightning strike. A few of very powerfully refined Essence even crackle with electricity when tense.

Anima Banner: Air animas are pale blue and white, gusting ferociously. During moments of extreme effort, they may emit growls of thunder, crackle with internal lightning, issue flurries of snowflakes, or convulse into phantasmal whirlwinds, cloudy beasts, or rearing draconic forms.

Aspect Abilities: Awareness, Linguistics, Lore, Melee, Occult, Stealth, Thrown, War

Anima Power: Air Aspects ignore damage and Wounds from falling from great heights, may always reflexively land on their feet when falling, and once per scene may use a swift action to jump a daunting gap between zones or sectors without rolling, or to leap up to (Essence rating) zones vertically. They may also move despite being struck before their turn once per scene.

Aspects of Earth

Aspects of Earth are quiet, reserved individuals. Their Essence inclines them toward a conservative and traditional attitude. Before and beyond anything else, earth *endures*, and this is the nature of those who share its aspect. Earth Aspects are naturally inward-facing, cleaving to that which they know, to that which has proven itself. Left to their own devices, this tendency frequently makes Earth Aspects self-interested, self-involved, and even greedy. It is the constant work of their society and their fellows to aim Aspects of Earth toward greatness rather than selfishness.

When stir apply themselves, Earth Aspects can apply their unflinching determination to accomplish truly great things. Their patron is Pasiap, He Who Illumines Both Worlds with Majesty and Power. Those who emulate Pasiap note that he did not raise monuments to his own glory, but instead dedicated himself to a life of service of others and improving the world entire. He was a builder who used his knowledge of what would and would not work to direct the efforts of the entire world to rebuild in the wake of the wars against the Anathema. As a result, others often end up looking to Earth Aspects for organization and leadership: an aptitude often present in these Chosen if they can only overcome their natural introversion.

Aspect Markings: Earth Aspects tend to have features that are either coarse and craggy, or as refined as a classical statue. They often smell of fresh clay or sun-baked rock. Small clouds of dust rise up into the air when they stir themselves into motion after prolonged stillness.

Anima Banner: Earth animas are mantles of white-yellow light, often churning like a sandstorm or roiling like an avalanche. During moments of intense focus, they boom or clatter with the

sound of falling stones, blow about veils of loose sand, or lurch into totemic forms of power such as raging bulls or roaring dragons.

Aspect Abilities: Awareness, Bureaucracy, Empathy, Craft, Martial Arts, Resistance, Socialize, War

Anima Power: Earth Aspects add +1 to their Stagger Threshold, and reduce their Fatigue value by -1.

Aspects of Fire

Aspects of Fire are creatures of deep and compelling passion. They are classically hot-blooded: lusty, violent, impulsive. The best of them are relentlessly active heroes, inspiring others with their vigorous and virtuous actions. The worst are bullies, rakes, and fools who rush headlong from moment to moment indulging whatever desire has most recently seized them.

An ideal fire aspect is a thoughtful warrior who channels her deep passions to noble goals. Fire Aspects are expected to be personable, outgoing, and martially excellent. In practice, they run the gamut from social butterflies to bloody-handed killers to battle-sorcerers. Whatever they do, it can be assumed it is something they are strongly invested in.

Their patron is Hesiesh, Reciter of Loud Hymns and Efficacious Prayers. Hesiesh's lesson is restraint: the marshaling of one's fires until it is time to release them to some purpose other than self-gratification. Aspects of Fire are directed to apply these lessons to the battlefield, the ballroom, and the bedroom with equal diligence, lest their lives become a constant disaster beyond their control.

Aspect Markings: Fire Aspects tend to warm skin tones appropriate to their ethnicity. Red and orange hair are both very common, as is flesh that is almost hot to the touch. A few boast odder features such as black teeth that spark when they meet, or shadows that shimmer as though seen through heat-haze. They often smell of a variety of different sorts of smoke, and may even *issue* smoke from nostrils, mouth, or between the fingers in cases of particular potent Essence and high emotion.

Anima Banner: Fire animas are roaring coronas of completely real flames, which are very capable of setting other things on fire. During moments of unrestrained effort or passion, this display may present the phantasmal image of an erupting volcano, burning forest, or thrashing dragon.

Aspect Abilities: Athletics, Brawl, Empathy, Melee, Performance, Presence, Ride, Socialize

Anima Power: Fire Aspects are immune to damage from heat and flames. Additionally, when a Fire Aspect's anima flares, it does so as real rather than spiritual flames (see p. XX for anima flux rules).

Aspects of Water

Aspects of Water are fluid and adaptable. In the ideal, this makes them talented problem-solvers, independent-minded commanders who thrive when given autonomy, and resourceful heroes who are always able to find a way forward when everyone else is stuck. Without a great deal of guidance, what their nature actually gives Water Aspects is a disregard for rules or boundaries, a talent for deceit and cheating their way to victory, and a fairly deep sense that the satisfaction of accomplishing something is far more important than the means used to do it.

The Water Aspect everyone *wants* to deal with is a culture-hero who tricks her enemies, presents surprise advantages to her allies, and always has a cunning solution to any problem. In practice, Water Aspects have historically been aggressively funneled into career-paths that either give them constant organic challenges to overcome (such as the Realm's navy) or where their natural tendency toward ruthless brinkmanship will eventually be of some use to someone (such as the Thousand Scales and the Realm's various intelligence services).

Their patron is Daana'd, Arbiter of the Immaculate Complaint. Those who emulate her seek to turn their restless talents upon refining away their own shortcomings and seeing a better path for everyone. Following in the footsteps of the holy rebel who defied the Anathema and the circumstances of her own birth with equally fearless joy, they ignore convention and ask how they could make things better. Those who ignore Daana'd or misinterpret her lessons simply become independent and selfish, seeking advantage over everyone else to their own benefit.

Aspect Markings: Water Aspects tend to have a bluish-green tinge to their skin, particularly around the lips, ears, and fingertips, sometimes deepening to green-black. Their hair frequently seems damp, and they smell of salt breezes or fresh rain. When they are still in one place for a while, they sometimes leave traces of condensation behind. It's not unknown for a sigh of exasperation to be accompanied by an exhalation of fog.

Anima Banner: Water animas are deep blue-green to green-black, surging and churning like troubled water. During moments of great concentration, they may issue the growling crash of breaking waves, surge with flecks of sea-foam, or burst into iconic depictions of towering waves, whirlpools, or coiling dragons.

Aspect Abilities: Brawl, Bureaucracy, Larceny, Investigation, Presence, Resistance, Sail, Stealth

Anima Power: Water Aspects may breathe underwater and swim without it counting as complex movement. They are immune to the crushing pressure of deep water, and are strong enough swimmers to easily rise or sink as they please even when wearing heavy armor. Once per scene, when they move to an adjacent zone by swimming, they may instead move two zones.

Aspects of Wood

Aspects of Wood embody the only living element. They're keen, precocious, inquisitive, and violent. Wood Aspects are *restless*, ever-growing, never satisfied with their current boundaries or state of being. They suffer from congenital ambition. Channeled constructively, Wood Aspects advance the fortunes of themselves and their fellows, becoming great explorers, legendary healers, and mighty warriors, ever seeking to exceed their former accomplishments. When young or indolent, Wood Aspects tear down others to advance themselves, choking out the potential of their rivals and peers like creeping vines. Like wildflowers, they are vibrant, attention-getting, and compelling; like wild berries, they will kill anyone who misapprehends what they're dealing with.

The ideal of this aspect is a bold nurturer and trail-blazer, always on the way to her next and greatest adventure. The unfortunate truth of the matter is that every Wood Aspect cannot be the greatest in the world at whatever it is that takes their fancy, and so they frequently divert into bitter rivalries and worse.

Their patron is Sextes Jylis, He Who Hath Strewn Much Grass. In the wake of the war against the Anathema, he set aside his own ambitions to wander up and down the land, setting the world to rights. In the process, he did more to heal the world than any other. His lessons are those of

bending one's ambitions to the service of others, of making responsible use of a Wood Aspect's Exalted might. Those who forsake his lessons become lost in destructive self-aggrandizement.

Aspect Markings: Wood Aspects trend to eyes and hair in brilliant natural shades, from autumn riot to a verdant green. They smell of the forest. Flowers tend to turn toward them when they linger for a while. Some few, of exceptionally refined Essence, even grow flowers in their hair, or display slight inclusions of bark along the shoulders and back.

Anima Banner: Wood animas are a bright and verdant green, swaying like grass beaten by the rough fever of the wind. During powerful expenditures of Essence, they may issue the sound of a forest's rustling branches, disgorge storms of petals or leaves, bristle with spirals of phantasmal thorns, or assume the semblance of tree-like dragons.

Aspect Abilities: Archery, Empathy, Lore, Medicine, Occult, Performance, Ride, Survival

Anima Power: Wood Aspects are immune to poison. While her anima flares, a Wood Aspect becomes poisonous to the touch; anyone making skin-to-skin contact with her is dosed with "plant toxin" poison (see p. XX).

Dynast Character Creation

These rules are intended for the creation of Dragon-Blooded characters in their mid to late 20s who are products of the Realm's system of schooling and training. The steps are outlined below:

Step 1: Character Concept

- Consult with the other players and come up with an appealing concept.
- Pick out the aspect that fits best, and note its anima effects.
- Select Nature.
- Select an upbringing from among the available choices starting on page XX.

Step 2: Attributes

- Mark down one dot in each Attribute.
- Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to your character.
- Divide 7 dots among primary Attributes, 5 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Step 3: Abilities

- Select five Aspect Abilities from the relevant list.
- Select three Favored Abilities, which may not be the same as Aspect Abilities.
- Gain the following dots for free: Archery •, Brawl *or* Martial Arts •, Linguistics •, Melee •, Performance •, Presence •, Ride •, Lore ••, Socialize ••.
- Apply any relevant dots from your upbringing.
- Divide 25 dots among Abilities.
- No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Bonus Points. At least 10 must be spread among Aspect and Favored Abilities. Favored Abilities must have at least one dot.

Step 4: Advantages

- Apply any relevant benefits or Charms from your upbringing.
- Receive the Charm: Excellence of the Five Dragons for free. Then choose additional Charms (8 dots in total). At least 4 dots of Charms must be from your Aspect Charms.
- Select 12 dots of Backgrounds.
- Write down three Intimacies.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Record Willpower (5), Essence rating (2), and Mote pool (6). Mote pool begins at maximum.
- Record Health (7).
- Calculate and record Defense, Soak, Dodge, Block, and Stagger Threshold.
- Spend Bonus Points (15).

School Drama Character Creation

Nearly all Dragon-Blooded Exalt as children or adolescents. Here are rules for creating Exalts who are still attending a primary or secondary school:

Do not take an upbringing.

Attributes: 6/5/4.

Abilities: 23 dots, plus free Archery •, Brawl *or* Martial Arts •, Linguistics •, Melee •, Performance •, Presence •, Ride •, Lore •, Socialize •.

Charms: Excellence of the Five Dragons plus 6 dots. At least three have to be from Aspect Charms.

Backgrounds: 5 dots.

Essence Rating: Starts at 1.

Bonus Points: Spend 23.

Lookshy Character Creation

These rules are intended for the creation of Dragon-Blooded characters in their mid to late 20s who are products of an upbringing in the military camp of Lookshy. The steps are outlined below:

Step 1: Character Concept

- Consult with the other players and come up with an appealing concept.
- Pick out the aspect that fits best, and note its anima effects.
- Select Nature.
- Select an upbringing from among the available choices starting on page XX.

Step 2: Attributes

- Mark down one dot in each Attribute.
- Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to your character.

- Divide 7 dots among primary Attributes, 5 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Step 3: Abilities

- Select five Aspect Abilities from the relevant list.
- Select three Favored Abilities, which may not be the same as Aspect Abilities.
- Gain the following dots for free: Archery •, Brawl *or* Martial Arts •, Linguistics •, Lore •, Presence •, Ride •, Stealth •, Melee ••, War ••.
- Apply any relevant dots from your upbringing.
- Divide 25 dots among Abilities.
- No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Bonus Points. At least 10 must be spread among Aspect and Favored Abilities. Favored Abilities must have at least one dot.

Step 4: Advantages

- Apply any relevant benefits or Charms from your upbringing.
- Receive the Charms: Excellence of the Five Dragons, Wind-Carried Words Technique, and Elemental Bolt Attack for free. Then choose additional Charms (6 dots in total). At least 3 dots of Charms must be from your Aspect Charms.
- Select 12 dots of Backgrounds.
- Write down three Intimacies.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Record Willpower (5), Essence rating (2), and Mote pool (6). Mote pool begins at maximum.
- Record Health (7).
- Calculate and record Defense, Soak, Dodge, Block, and Stagger Threshold.
- Spend Bonus Points (15).

Prasad Character Creation

These rules are intended for the creation of Dragon-Blooded characters in their mid to late 20s who are scions of the Dragon Clans of Prasad. The steps are outlined below:

Step 1: Character Concept

- Consult with the other players and come up with an appealing concept.
- Pick out the aspect that fits best, and note its anima effects.
- Select Nature.
- Select an upbringing from among the available choices starting on page XX.

Step 2: Attributes

- Mark down one dot in each Attribute.
- Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to your character.

- Divide 7 dots among primary Attributes, 5 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Step 3: Abilities

- Select five Aspect Abilities from the relevant list.
- Select three Favored Abilities, which may not be the same as Aspect Abilities.
- Gain the following dots for free: Archery •, Brawl *or* Martial Arts •, Linguistics •, Melee •, Occult •, Performance •, Presence •, Lore ••, Socialize ••.
- Apply any relevant dots from your upbringing.
- Divide 25 dots among Abilities.
- No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Bonus Points. At least 10 must be spread among Aspect and Favored Abilities. Favored Abilities must have at least one dot.

Step 4: Advantages

- Apply any relevant benefits or Charms from your upbringing.
- Receive the Charm: Excellence of the Five Dragons for free. Then choose additional Charms (8 dots in total). At least 4 dots of Charms must be from your Aspect Charms.
- Select 12 dots of Backgrounds.
- Write down three Intimacies.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Record Willpower (5), Essence rating (2), and Mote pool (6). Mote pool begins at maximum.
- Record Health (7).
- Calculate and record Defense, Soak, Dodge, Block, and Stagger Threshold.
- Spend Bonus Points (15).

Outcaste Character Creation

These rules are intended for the creation of Dragon-Blooded characters who Exalted outside of any of the major dynasties of power. The steps are outlined below:

Step 1: Character Concept

- Consult with the other players and come up with an appealing concept.
- Pick out the aspect that fits best, and note its anima effects.
- Select Nature.
- Choose between the character having *no upbringing* or the Cloister of Wisdom upbringing.

Step 2: Attributes

- Mark down one dot in each Attribute.
- Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to your character.

- Divide 7 dots among primary Attributes, 5 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Step 3: Abilities

- Select five Aspect Abilities from the relevant list.
- Select three Favored Abilities, which may not be the same as Aspect Abilities.
- Divide 25 dots among Abilities.
- No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Bonus Points. At least 10 must be spread among Aspect and Favored Abilities. Favored Abilities must have at least one dot.

Step 4: Advantages

- Apply the relevant benefits if you chose the Cloister of Wisdom upbringing.
- Receive the Charm: Excellence of the Five Dragons for free. Then choose additional Charms (7 dots in total). At least 3 dots of Charms must be from your Aspect Charms.
- If the character has been tutored in advanced Martial Arts practice and can learn Immaculate Dragon styles (see p. XX), then receive the Charms: Excellence of the Five Dragons and one of the three initiation Charms on page XX for free. Then choose additional Charms (4 dots in total). At least 3 dots of Charms must be from your Aspect Charms.
- Select 7 dots of Backgrounds.
- Write down three Intimacies.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Record Willpower (5), Essence rating (1), and Mote pool (5). Mote pool begins at maximum.
- Record Health (7).
- Calculate and record Defense, Soak, Dodge, Block, and Stagger Threshold.
- Spend Bonus Points (15, or 8 if you chose the Cloister of Wisdom upbringing).

Bonus Point Costs

Trait	Cost (per dot)
Attribute	4
Ability	2
Aspect/Favored Ability	1
Aspect/Favored Charm	(rating x 3)
Other Charm	(rating x 4)
Terrestrial spell (favored)	3
Terrestrial spell (unfavored)	4
Essence	9
Backgrounds	1

Backgrounds

Dragon-Blooded may use any of the Backgrounds found in Chapter Two. They also have some particular considerations for certain Backgrounds, and two Backgrounds that are not available to most other sorts of characters.

Artifact

Panoply Background

The Terrestrial Exalted **naturally resonate with the magical material jade**. While Dragon-Blooded often prefer to utilize the variety of jade that matches their aspect for reasons of spirituality, comfort, mystical synergy, or aesthetic preference, they are equally adept with all varieties of the magical material.

Outcastes utilize the version of the background found in Chapter Two.

Dynasts enjoy the wealth of empire, and frequently enter the world bedecked in powerful artifacts gifted to them by their Great House. They use the Artifact scale found below.

Lookshy has also clung to a potent First Age arsenal, and uses the Artifact scale found below.

Prasad did not begin its history with a vast trove of mystical treasures, but has busily constructed or compiled many of them in the time since. It uses the Artifact scale below, but characters cannot begin play with more than four dots.

X None. You have earned your family's ire, proven yourself irresponsible, or have turned down the honor of bearing birthrights of mystical power for personal reasons.

- You bear a panoply with a combined Artifact rating no higher than 2.
- You bear a panoply with a combined Artifact rating no higher than 4. No individual item can be rated higher than Artifact 3.
- You bear a panoply with a combined Artifact rating no higher than 6. No individual item can be rated higher than Artifact 4.
- You bear a panoply with a combined Artifact rating no higher than 8.
- You bear a panoply with a combined Artifact rating of up to 10.

Breeding

Innate Background

This Background depicts the strength and purity of a character's bloodline. Dynasts put enormous stock in potent Breeding and will go to great lengths to arrange for men with impeccable bloodlines to be joined into their House. Women of strong bloodlines are even more highly valued, as all of their Exalted offspring directly increase the power of the Great House of their birth. Although a strong bloodline doesn't genuinely produce a *stronger* Exalt, Lookshy and the Realm both frequently behave as though it does, and a number of more conservative Dragon-Blooded believe that there is some ineffable quality of pure blood that simply makes such Exalts better than their peers. This is pure superstition, but it's *useful* superstition if you have a high rating in this Background, leading to faster promotion, more opportunities, and a general eagerness to recruit what many see as a promising up-and-comer who is assured to grow into

greatness into their plans. Prasad, meanwhile, associates high Breeding with innate spiritual advancement and divine power.

Each dot in the Inheritance Background reduces a character's maximum possible Breeding by two dots, at least in terms of likelihood to produce Dragon-Blooded offspring. If pains are taken to conceal a character's true parentage, it might be possible to reap the social benefits of presumed high Breeding regardless.

When you re-roll a social stunt (usually by spending Willpower) which takes advantage of your Breeding, directed at an audience who cares about that sort of thing, you can keep a number of successes up to your Breeding rating. For the most part, however, Breeding simply provides intangible but meaningful social advantages: preferential invitation to social events, favorable consideration for matchmaking, better seats at feasts, higher-ranking Dynasts being more willing to give you the time of day, that sort of thing.

X Your parents were probably both mortal, as were their parents. Your Exaltation was a surprise to one and all. Your aspect markings are very faint.

- At least one and possibly more of your grandparents was Exalted, or you come from a mortal family thick with the blood of dragons. You're not regarded as a great catch by suitors, though you're certainly a better choice than someone of a superior bloodline who *didn't* Exalt. Your aspect markings are subtle.

- One of your parents was Exalted. This is the basic standard for marriage prospects in the Realm. Your aspect markings are immediately noticeable.

- Either both of your parents were Exalts of questionable pedigree, or one was an Exalt of superior breeding. You're regarded as a desirable partner.

- Both of your parents were Exalted and of solid stock. Not only are you considered a major asset by your House, others notice your vibrant aspect markings and tend to offer you social deference: -1 difficulty to Socialize rolls to throw your weight around when dealing with traditionalist Dragon-Blooded.

- Your heritage is an unbroken chain of strong Dragon-Blooded couples. Fortunes will change hands when your dowry is settled. Your aspect markings make you easily visible in the midst of a crowd. -1 difficulty on Socialize rolls where you try to leverage your superior bloodline into a social advantage over others. You may claim your elemental pedigree to gain +1 Means on a sorcerous working which heavily incorporates the power of your Aspect.

Cult

Social Background

Possession of this Background is *exceedingly* illegal in both the Realm and Lookshy, but near-universal in Prasad. The Dragon-Blooded of Prasad are generally worshiped as a group, with individuals only gaining their own particular veneration if they become outstanding figures of great renown. As such, it is very unusual for a character to begin with more than three dots of Cult, representing a mixture of the generalized worship of mortals and the personal reverence of loved ones within her Clan and respected peers.

Echoes

Purchased Background

Dragon-Blooded do not inherit their Exaltation from heroes of the past, and as such, cannot buy this Background.

Hearthstone

Panoply Background

Your family controls a tremendous number of Manses, both in your homeland and in outlying territories under imperial rule. You have been entrusted with the Hearthstones of a number of these Manses, although not with ownership of the associated Manses themselves. All of these Hearthstones are from Level 1 Manses (see the Manse Background, p. XX).

A character bearing multiple socketed Hearthstones gains bonus Motes only from the most powerful Hearthstone unless using an attunement socket. As a result, these Hearthstones are primarily useful in unlocking Evocations and activating power sockets.

Characters from Lookshy may not take more than three dots of this Background, while characters from Prasad are capped at four dots. Outcastes may not buy this Background at all.

X Your family has not entrusted you with any Hearthstones.

- 2 level 1 Hearthstones.
- 3 level 1 Hearthstones.
- 4 level 1 Hearthstones.
- 6 level 1 Hearthstones.
- 8 level 1 Hearthstones.

Inheritance

Innate Background

Inhuman heritage interferes with the blood of the dragons. A single drop isn't enough to ruin the chance of Exaltation, but a Terrestrial who bears a god's child is introducing competing supernatural forces into her offspring's lineage. Each dot in the Inheritance Background reduces a character's maximum possible Breeding by two dots.

The Realm and Lookshy are both broadly aware of the dangers of diluting the blood, and tend to disapprove of permitting such liaisons to bear fruit (although, speaking frankly, it happens anyway). Inheritance is only commonly found among scions of Clan Akatha, in Prasad.

Resources

Social Background

Most Dynasts, Lookshyans, and Prasadi have Resources 3, representing their family stipend, though those with successful business interests or whose activities meet with strong approval from their elders may easily rise higher than this. A lower Resources rating than this indicates that a Dragon-Blooded character is either in trouble with her family, or is a monk.

Elder Dragon-Blooded Creation

Some Dragon-Blooded have been kicking around for well over a century. If you want to play a mighty potentate of the Realm, high-ranking officer of the Seventh Legion, living god of Prasad, or elder outcaste, use these rules:

Attributes: 9/6/4.

Abilities: 30 dots. These can go all the way to 5 without spending Bonus Points. Add free bonus dots according to origin and schooling or clan, if any.

Charms: Excellence of the Five Dragons plus 13 dots. At least seven have to be from Aspect Charms.

Backgrounds: 18 dots.

Essence Rating: Starts at 2.

Bonus Points: Spend 18.

Upbringing

The great Dragon-Blooded dynasties of Creation expend tremendous amounts of time, effort, and money in educating young Exalted, preparing them for a life of service and rule. Characters from the Realm, Lookshy, and Prasad may select an *upbringing*: a package of bonuses based on their familial upbringing or specialist schooling.

Legendary Finishing Schools: Most Dynasts raised on the Blessed Isle attempt to attend one of the four great secondary schools of legend, which are reputed to offer the finest education in Creation. Some Dragon Castes journey all the way from Prasad to be schooled at these academies. Prasad also has local secondary academies which provide similar curricula to the Heptagram and the Cloister of Wisdom, as does Lookshy in the form of the Valkhawsen Academy and special tutoring with chaplains of the Immaculate Faith.

Clans, Gentes, and Great Houses: Choosing one of these upbringings does not necessarily indicate that the character didn't attend a secondary school or attain a proper education. Rather, it indicates that she pursued a particular course of study according to the needs and interests of her family at one of a multitude of finishing schools (or mentorship programs, in the case of Lookshy).

Pasiap's Stair: Pasiap's Stair is also a legendary finishing school, though *not* for the same reasons as its four much more reputable contemporaries. Dynasts do not generally attend Pasiap's Stair; instead, it indicates that a character is a "lost egg" outcaste routed into the Empress's legions. Such characters use Dynastic character creation rules rather than outcaste rules; the brutal and unforgiving regimen at the Stair catches them up to their Dynastic cousins in a few brief years, or kills them trying.

A Special Note on the Cloister of Wisdom: The Cloister of Wisdom trains Immaculate monks, but that is not all it does. *Many* Dragon-Blooded who live secular lives in service to their Great House attended the Cloister of Wisdom without going on to take monastic vows. They're simply individuals who attended a religious academy and came away with a well-rounded education and the ability to punch gods in half.

The Cloister of Wisdom (and Equivalent)

If you attended the Cloister of Wisdom, received training as an Immaculate Faith chaplain, were trained at a Pure Way temple, or received some form of illicit martial arts initiation (such as from a meddling Sidereal, or a demon bound to your household), add two dots to Martial Arts. Additionally, gain the Charm: Spirit Walking (if from the Realm or Prasad) Tiger-and-Bear

Unity (if from Lookshy), or Iris Bulb Understanding of Secular and Profane Brokerage (if illicitly initiated) for free. You are able to purchase Immaculate Martial Arts styles.

Permitted Origins: Realm, Lookshy, Prasad, outcaste.

The Heptagram (and Equivalents)

If you studied at the Heptagram or a similar academy of sorcery such as the Valkhawsen, add two dots to Occult. Additionally, gain the Charm: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery.

Permitted Origins: Realm, Lookshy, Prasad.

The House of Bells

If you studied at the House of Bells, distribute four dots among Melee and War, and gain the Charm: Elemental Bolt Attack.

Permitted Origins: Realm, Prasad.

The Spiral Academy

If you studied at the Spiral Academy, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy and the Backgrounds Backing and Connections.

Permitted Origins: Realm, Prasad.

Pasiap's Stair

If you suffered at Pasiap's Stair, distribute five dots among Athletics, Resistance, and War.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

Clan Akatha

If you hail from Clan Akatha, distribute five dots among Occult, Performance, and the Inheritance Background.

Permitted Origins: Prasad.

Clan Burano

If you hail from Clan Burano, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy, Empathy, and Resistance.

Permitted Origins: Prasad.

Clan Ophris

If you hail from Clan Ophris, distribute five dots among Athletics, Performance, and Socialize.

Permitted Origins: Prasad.

Gens Amilar

If you hail from Gens Amilar, distribute five dots among Larceny, Lore, and Occult.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Karal

If you hail from Gens Karal, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy, Melee, and War.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Kiriga

If you hail from Gens Kiriga, distribute five dots among Melee, Resistance, and War.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Maheka

If you hail from Gens Maheka, distribute five dots among Craft, Resistance, and Socialize.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Nefvarin

If you hail from Gens Nefvarin, distribute five dots among Craft, Occult, and War.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Nerigus

If you hail from Gens Nerigus, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy, Presence, and War.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Sirel

If you hail from Gens Sirel, distribute five dots among Larceny, Sail, and Stealth.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Taroketu

If you hail from Gens Taroketu, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy, Presence, and Stealth.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Teresu

If you hail from Gens Teresu, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy, Larceny, and Sail.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Toriki

If you hail from Gens Toriki, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy, Investigation, and Socialize.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Yan Tu

If you hail from Gens Yan Tu, distribute five dots among Craft, Occult, and Ride.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

Gens Yushoto

If you hail from Gens Yushoto, distribute five dots among Empathy, Occult, and Survival.

Permitted Origins: Lookshy.

House Cathak

If you hail from House Cathak, distribute five dots among Melee, War, and the Command Background.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House Cynis

If you hail from House Cynis, distribute five dots among Medicine, Performance, and Socialize.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House Iselsi

If you hail from House Iselsi, distribute five dots among Investigation, Larceny, and Stealth.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House Ledaal

If you hail from House Ledaal, distribute five dots among Lore, Occult, and the Mentor Background.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House Mnemon

If you hail from House Mnemon, distribute five dots among Craft, Occult, and Performance.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House Nellens

If you hail from House Nellens, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy, Presence, and the Connections Background.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House Peleps

If you hail from House Peleps, distribute five dots among Investigation, Presence, and Sail.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House Ragara

If you hail from House Ragara, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy, Occult, and the Resources Background.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House Sesus

If you hail from House Sesus, distribute five dots among Larceny, Lore, and Stealth.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House Tepet

If you hail from House Tepet, distribute five dots among Melee, Socialize, and War.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

House V'neef

If you hail from House V'neef, distribute five dots among Bureaucracy, Empathy, and Sail.

Permitted Origins: Realm.

Special Rules for Dragon-Blooded

In addition to the rules that normally govern the Exalted, Dragon-Blooded have a few special rules and features.

Essence Fever

Dragon-Blooded are powerfully influenced by their aspect element. Where other Chosen soon learn to tame the early Essence fevers that follow their Exaltation, for the Dragon-Blooded it is an ongoing struggle throughout their lives.

- **Aspects of Air** are drawn to consideration and excellence. They must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) before embarking on any course of action with serious consequences without first deliberating upon it and drawing up a plan. Once per story, they may voluntarily fail this roll and gain a point of Willpower as though they had satisfied their Nature.
- **Aspects of Earth** are stolid, contemplative, even passive by nature. They cleave to what they know, and must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) to adopt a new strategy or idea they see as untested or uncertain. Once per story, they may voluntarily fail this roll and gain a point of Willpower as though they had satisfied their Nature.
- **Aspects of Fire** are passionate, impulsive, fiery individuals. When offered significant provocation of some sort, they must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) to avoid responding in kind. Once per story, they may voluntarily fail this roll and gain a point of Willpower as though they had satisfied their Nature.
- **Aspects of Water** are manipulative and secretive by nature, preferring to keep the inner depths and currents of their thoughts to themselves. It's not their nature to approach anything by the straight and clear path. As such, an Aspect of Water must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) in order to take any sort of straightforward action that would make her Intimacies or Nature clear to those who don't already know of their importance to her. Once per story, they may voluntarily fail this roll and gain a point of Willpower as though they had satisfied their Nature.
- **Aspects of Wood** are ever-expanding and ever-ambitious. When they see an opportunity to advance themselves or their interests, they must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) to restrain themselves and consider the situation rather than jumping in feet-first. Once per story, they may voluntarily fail this roll and gain a point of Willpower as though they had satisfied their Nature.

Anima Flux

All Dragon-Blooded are trained to be cautious with their use of Essence, because alone among the Exalted, their anima flare is highly destructive.

- Air animas surround the Exalt with rampaging winds and even the occasional blast of wild electrical discharge.
- Earth animas grind anything caught within their nimbus into rubble.
- Water animas are filled with wild riptide currents and are powerfully corrosive.
- Wood animas batter and smash whatever is caught in them, and periodically surge into frantically twisting mandalas of ripping thorns.

- Fire animas are most destructive of all, manifesting as literal, completely real flames. While an Exalt of any of the other Aspects can wreck the furniture or kill a horse with her anima during an incautious flare, a Fire Aspect can easily burn down an entire building if she loses control. The Realm strongly favors stone as a building material for any place Dynasts are expected to dwell for this reason.

A Dragon-Blood's own clothing and any direct belongings carried on her person (such as her weapon, jewelry, anything in a backpack she's wearing or hung from her belt, etc), along with anything she's holding in her hands is immune to her anima flux.

When a Dragon-Blooded's anima flares, she generates an environmental hazard which afflicts anything and anyone in sustained close-quarters contact with her. Luckily, the destructive nimbus of anima flux is wrapped relatively close around the Exalt's body, so this hazard only impacts those in sustained contact with her, such as a horse she's riding, a physician trying to treat her injuries, soldiers attempting to pull her out of a pile of rubble, etc. In combat, enemies usually have room to dodge in and out of the edge of an Exalt's anima flux, and are only subjected to its full properties as an ongoing hazard if they are forced to fight her in extremely close confines (such as within a closet-sized room, backed into a corner with no way out, or if grappling).

Aspect	Difficulty	Damage	Wound	Penalty	Interval
Air	7	3	Dazed	-2	1 round
Earth	6	4	Bruised	-1	1 round
Fire	9	5	Burned	-0	1 round
Water	8	2	Drained	-3	1 round
Wood	7	3	Lacerated	-1	1 round

This is not to say that glancing contact with anima flux is in any way safe or pleasant, merely *less destructive* than sustained exposure. A Dragon-Blood's close-range attacks add +1 to their base damage while her anima is flaring, and anyone attempting to strike her with a close-range attack during anima flux lowers his Stagger Threshold by -1 (to a minimum of 1+) until the end of the round each time he attempts to do so. If the Exalt in question is a Fire Aspect, the attacker's Stagger Threshold penalty is -2 instead.

Elemental Manipulation

Dragon-Blooded may, with a moment's concentration, manipulate their aspect element in small, subtle ways. This isn't usually of mechanical consequence, but rather takes the form of parlor tricks such as closing a book with a small puff of wind, lighting a candle with a fingertip, or causing a flower to momentarily incline toward the Exalt or to bloom in response to her gesture. With a stunt, simple action, and a difficulty 6 Essence roll, elemental manipulation might be used to take meaningful actions such as setting a held letter on fire before it can be seized, causing a torch to gutter and plunge a room into darkness, or using a splash of water to cause a momentary distraction.

Aspect Affinity

Though they may learn to wield any of the five elements, all Terrestrial Exalted possess a much greater affinity for their native aspect. The first time in a scene a Dragon-Blooded spends Motes

on a Charm from her native aspect, reduce that Mote cost by -1, to a minimum of 0. Conversely, Dragon-Blooded find the other elements resist complete mastery; if a Terrestrial only has one Mote of Essence remaining, she may not spend it on Charms that are not of her native aspect, including non-elementally-aspected uses such as most Martial Arts Charms or on versions of Excellence of the Five Dragons which don't match her aspect Abilities. This affinity, in combination with the extremely limited Essence reserves of the Terrestrial Exalted, does a great deal to incline the Dragon-Blooded to heavily favor their aspect Charms.

Sworn Brother's Oath

Dragon-Blooded regularly practice a form of swearing blood-bonds of loyalty to one another that transcend family lines. This tradition, which dates back to the First Age, draws upon an exceedingly ancient sorcerous working which long ago carved true power into the fundamental substance of reality to enforce the sanctity of the Sworn Brother's Oath.

Throughout the First Age and Shogunate, Terrestrial groupings united under this oath were commonly known as Sworn Brotherhoods. Lookshy still uses this terminology into the modern day, as do some other outcaste groups, and it has not completely vanished even from the Realm or Prasad, but it has fallen out of favor in recent centuries under the influence of the Scarlet Empress and her dynasty, whose matriarchs do not favor a masculine framing for expressions of loyalty. The terms "Sworn Kin" and "Hearth" have largely displaced older usages.

Kinship represents a chosen personal loyalty of a particular kind, a sharing of blood where no such bond would otherwise exist. As a result, it's not at all unusual for a Dragon-Blooded *not* to share Kinship with her close blood relations or even her spouse, nor is this considered to constitute a snub. It is understood that this is not the point of a Hearth, although such overlaps do sometimes occur.

All major Dragon-Blooded cultures consider the swearing of Kinship a highly serious and sacred matter, not to be entered into lightly or impulsively (which is not to say that this doesn't occur anyway; drunken oath-pledging on the night before final field trials is a sadly time-honored tradition at the House of Bells, and Daana'd famously swore her oaths to other Terrestrial rebels the very night she met them in the prison cell her Anathema liege cast her into). Kinship is considered to be as significant a personal link as a blood tie or marriage. Many famous plays in the Realm center upon the drama of a conflict between the interests of the hero's family and her Hearth.

Generally, the Sworn Brother's Oath is framed somewhat along these lines: *Before the eyes of Heaven and the Dragons, I, (Exalt's name), take [names of other oath participants] as my sworn (brothers and/or sisters). As the earth supports the sky above, so I shall support them. Should I turn my face from them, may the blood of the Dragons forsake me.* Once all participants have made their oaths, the ritual is generally concluded with a sacrifice to Heaven.

The power of the Sworn Brother's Oath can encompass as few as two individuals and as many as ten, but no more. It is not possible for a Dragon-Blooded to participate in more than one Hearth at a time, though two separate Hearths can be linked together if all of their members consent to do so, and a pre-existing Hearth can admit new members. Swearing to a Hearth is an irrevocable act; only the death of its members can shatter the bond.

The specific effects of the ritual are:

- The Exalt gains an additional permanent Intimacy of loyalty toward her Hearth. Once per story, she may call upon the power of her oath to deny, at no cost, any form of social influence or magic that would cause her to betray this Intimacy.
- Once per story, when the Exalt takes an action specifically to aid a member of her Hearth, she may lower its difficulty by –1.
- The Exalt is always aware of the precise location of the other members of her Hearth if they are the same sector. If they are farther away, she may make an Essence roll against difficulty 6 to sense their location; the more successes rolled, the more detailed the knowledge she gleans.
- If a member of the Hearth is in terrible trouble, her Kin may make a reflexive difficulty 9 Perception + Awareness roll to become aware of this fact. If a member dies, every other member of the Hearth feels it as an unmistakable sensation of pain and loss.

Dragon-Blooded Charms

The Charms of the Dragon-Blooded are divine expressions of the five elements, channeled through living flesh.

General Terrestrial Charms

The following Charms count as Aspect Charms for all Dragon-Blooded, and include many important workhorse miracles employed by countless Terrestrials.

Excellence of the Five Dragons (•)

By drawing upon the latent Essence of her aspect element, the Dragon-Blood may accomplish incredible feats.

System: Select one Ability when activating this Charm. The player may add (that Ability's rating) additional dice to all rolls using this Ability, save for damage rolls. Activating this Charm is reflexive, and costs 1 Mote if enhancing an Aspect or Favored Ability, or 2 Motes for any other Ability.

Excellence of the Five Dragons lasts until the end of the round. When using this Charm to enhance an Aspect Ability, this Charm is eligible for an aspect affinity discount. **Dragon-Blooded begin play with this Charm.**

Dragon-Blessed Stride (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Survival

The Dragon-Blooded attunes her elemental nature to an untamed landscape matching her aspect, and moves through it as though it were a clear roadway.

System: The Exalt can navigate a certain form of difficult terrain without being forced to employ complex movement.

- **Air:** The Exalt can move through deep snow and on slippery ice unimpeded.
- **Earth:** The Exalt can move through debris fields, steep mountainsides, and the uneven floor of caves unimpeded.
- **Fire:** The Exalt can cross shifting and treacherous sand slopes and dune faces unimpeded.
- **Water:** The Exalt can move through deep mud and waist-high water unimpeded.

- **Wood:** The Exalt can move through tangled thickets and choked undergrowth unimpeded.

It can be repurchased to obtain the effects of a non-native Aspect. Repurchases are not considered general Charms, and use the Resonance listed.

If leading her fellows through difficult terrain, a character can reflexively spend 1 Mote to extend this Charm's benefits to the other members of her Hearth so long as they continue to directly follow the trail she blazes.

Dragon-Graced Assault (•)

Resonance: Archery, Melee

The Dragon-Blooded imbues an attack with the surging power of elemental Essence. This is the source of fists wreathed in flame, arrows trailing lightning bolts, and blades studded with thorns.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to enhance all attacks made until the Exalt is Staggered or the end of the scene, whichever comes first. The effects of this Charm depend on the Exalt's Aspect:

- **Air:** The attack is surrounded by buffeting winds and crackling lightning. Add +3 to its base damage, and if the target suffers any damage, he is knocked prone (see p. XX).
- **Earth:** The attack is studded with jagged protrusions of stone and crystal. Add +3 to its base damage, and the target is momentarily stunned; his next action suffers a -2 dice penalty.
- **Fire:** The attack is wreathed in flames. Add +4 to its base damage.
- **Water:** A concentrated edge of water cuts through defenses, inflicting Aggravated damage (-2).
- **Wood:** The attack is covered in bristling thorns. Add +3 to its base damage. Anyone who suffers damage from the attack cumulatively increases his Wound penalties by one for the rest of the scene as a painful toxin burns through his body.

Dragon-Graced Assault can be repurchased to obtain the effects of a non-native Aspect, but only one effect can enhance any single attack. Repurchases are not considered general Charms, and use the Resonance listed.

Dragon-Marked Hooves (•)

Resonance: Ride

Spurring her mount on to an all-out gallop, the Dragon-Blooded channels her Essence through it, leaving a dangerous hazard in her wake.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote while riding a mount all-out to transform the ground it crosses into a hazard. The exact manifestation depends on the character's Aspect.

- **Air:** A massive blast of turbulent air trails in the Exalt's wake, raising the difficulty to pursue her by +2.
- **Earth:** The mount's hooves or feet chew up the ground, both pulverizing its surface and pulling up spikes of jagged stone from deep within the earth. Pursuers must succeed at a Perception + Awareness roll against difficulty 8 or else be violently dismounted or knocked down, with both rider and mount being knocked prone (see p. XX) and subjected to a one-time hazard (difficulty 6, damage 4, bruised).

- **Fire:** The ground catches fire in the Exalt's wake, creating a bonfire environmental hazard (see p. XX) along her backtrail.
- **Water:** A slick of ice coats the ground where the Exalt passes, causing anyone trying to pursue her to subtract successes on results of both 1 and 2, and to suffer a botch if reduced to no successes by 1s and 2s.
- **Wood:** Grasping vines smash up through the ground and quickly choke its surface. Everyone trying to move through the mess must use complex movement to do so. Pursuers suffer a -3 dice penalty.

This Charm lasts as long as the Exalt keeps her mount running all-out. It can be repurchased to obtain the effects of a non-native Aspect, but only one effect can be used at a time. Repurchases are not considered general Charms, and use the Resonance listed.

Elemental Bolt Attack (•)

The Dragon-Blooded concentrates her Essence into a weapon, hurling a deadly elemental manifestation at her enemies. This manifestation varies based on her Aspect: Air Aspects hurl a lightning bolt; Earth Aspects, a jagged stone spike; Fire Aspects, a bolt of flame; Water Aspects, a lance of gleaming ice; and Wood Aspects, a wooden javelin.

System: When the Exalt has at least one hand free, she is always considered to be armed with a nimble Dexterity + Thrown weapon which can target opponents up to one zone away, with a base damage of 5. If she opts to reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an attack, this weapon's base damage increases to 7.

A group of Dragon-Blooded who know this Charm can coordinate their use of it through a single leader. If they all opt to stall until all of their opponents have acted, they can nominate a single one of their number as a leader. This individual makes an attack roll to use Elemental Bolt Attack, with its base damage boosted by +3 for each Exalt supporting her. Anyone supporting the main attacker forfeits their turn to feed her power. Each supporter who spends 1 Mote increases the base damage of the bolt by a further +2.

Elemental Sheath (•)

The Dragon-Blooded pushes a weapon or small object into a manifestation of her aspect element such as a large stone, a roaring fire, or a pool of water. Later, she may retrieve it from another such manifestation.

System: Sheathing an object in her aspect element costs only the use of a swift action. Retrieving it later requires either another swift action, or else the reflexive expenditure of 1 Mote.

Miraculous Coils of the Dragons (•)

Through painstaking study of and meditation upon her own Essence, the Dragon-Blooded learns to expand the scope of her panoply.

System: The Exalt may attune to one artifact without it counting toward the normal (Essence + 1) attunement limit, but this artifact *must* be made primarily of jade in a color corresponding to the character's aspect.

(Element)-Protection Form (••)

Resonance: Resistance, Survival

The Dragon-Blooded enfolds herself in her Aspect element, gaining protection from its hostile manifestations.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to activate this Charm. For the rest of the scene, the Dragon-Blooded is immune to environmental damage from her Aspect element (such as storms, avalanches, wildfires, and the like), and increases her Soak against direct attacks using that element by +1. This Charm may be re-purchased (in which case its Resonance comes into play) to gain protection from other elements as well, though each version of the Charm must be activated separately. (Metal, it should be noted, is not considered to fall under the direct protection of any element.)

At Essence 4+, the native mode of this Charm is active at all times at no cost.

Fire Aspects do not treat this as a general Charm, and can skip directly to purchasing protection from other elements, since their anima power already provides comprehensive protection from fire.

Elemental Succor Method (••)

By seeking refuge in her element, the Dragon-Blood may rapidly restore herself to health.

System: By resting while surrounded by a potent manifestation of her Aspect — strong winds or intense cold, bare soil, intense heat, immersing water, or growing things — the Dragon-Blood may heal one point of damage to her Health every six hours. Wounds are healed in half of the time they would normally take. Aggravated injuries cannot have their healing times shortened by this Charm.

Elemental Empowerment Meditation (•••)

In extreme circumstances, the character may cannibalize her Aspect element for power, ripping the Essence out of the world and leaving it injured and barren.

System: This Charm must be invoked in the presence of a significant manifestation of the character's aspect element: a powerful wind or storm; an enormous rock edifice, grand cavern, or great stonework construction; a roaring fire at least the size of a cottage; a river, or sizeable reservoir, or shoreline; a mighty elder tree, or incredibly dense tangle of wilderness, or grand garden.

Spend 1 Willpower, suffer an Aggravated drained Wound, and use a simple action to roll (Strength or Intelligence) + Occult against difficulty 7. Each success restores 1 Mote, but also destroys or ruins the focus of this Charm. Storms and winds fade and die within minutes; earthworks and stone structures crumble into ruin over the next several years; flames are immediately extinguished; waters grow foul and stagnant over the next several weeks, becoming unsuitable for any use and devoid of fish; plants die over the course of a few days.

Habitual use of this Charm tends to anger local gods and elementals whose domains are damaged or ruined. The Realm has exceedingly strict restrictions on the use of Elemental Empowerment Meditation on many parts of the Blessed Isle, outright forbidding it within the Imperial City and any regions whose geomancy supplies power to the Manse of anyone of consequence. Enforcement of these bans has become spotty since the Empress's disappearance. The Seventh Legion and Prasad have similar bans, though they apply only to Lookshy and Kamathar.

Fivefold Dragon Shout (•••)

Resonance: Presence, War

The Dragon-Blooded dredges up all the power of her Essence, and releases it as a mighty roar which bathes the battlefield in a wild and uncontrolled manifestation of elemental fury.

System: Spend 2 Motes and use a simple action to roll Charisma + (Presence or War) against difficulty 6. A blast of unleashed elemental power washes over everyone within one contiguous zone for each success rolled, starting with the zone the Dragon-Blooded occupies. The Exalt is immune to her own invocation of this Charm.

- **Air:** For Air Aspects, this is the Storm-Throated Thunder Shout. Everyone caught in the blast is subjected to a one-time hazard (difficulty 7, damage 4, bruised) and is knocked prone.
- **Earth:** For Earth Aspects, this is the Earth-Shattering Dragon Roar. Everyone caught in its area of effect is subjected to a one-time hazard (difficulty 8, damage 3, bruised), suffers –1 die to all actions for the next two rounds, and is knocked prone (see p. XX).
- **Fire:** For Fire Aspects, this is the Incendiary Dragon Shout. Everyone caught in its area of effect is subjected to a one-time hazard (difficulty 8, damage 5, burned). The blast leaves particularly flammable objects still burning.
- **Water:** For Water Aspects, this is the All-Consuming Tsunami Shout. Everyone caught in its area of effect is subjected to a one-time hazard (difficulty 9, damage 3, dazed) and their lungs are also filled with water. They suffer a –3 dice drowning penalty on all actions until they successfully use a simple action to make a Stamina + Resistance roll (difficulty 7) to vomit up a great quantity of water.
- **Wood:** For Wood Aspects, this is the Verdant Cry of the Wood Dragon. Everyone caught in its area of effect is subjected to a one-time hazard (difficulty 7, damage 3, lacerated) and the area is left covered in tangles of sudden plant growth that makes all movement undertaken within the affected area by anyone other than the Exalt herself into complex movement.

This Charm can be repurchased to obtain the effects of a non-native Aspect, but only one effect can be used at a time. Repurchases are not considered general Charms, and use the Resonance listed.

The Exalt may weave the path of elemental devastation around her Sworn Kin, sparing them from its effects.

Unassailable Body of (Element) Defense (•••)

The Dragon-Blooded utterly surrenders herself to the purity of her aspect, achieving a moment of oneness in which she approaches invulnerability. She momentarily transforms into her aspect element — she becomes a figure made of mist, dust, smoky flame, water, or swirling leaves — allowing an attack to pass harmlessly through her.

System: Once per scene, the Dragon-Blooded may reflexively spend 1 Motes when Dodging an attack to momentarily set her Dodge value to an arbitrarily high number of her choosing, guaranteeing that the attack does not strike her. After Unassailable Body of (Element) Defense protects the Dragon-Blooded, her Dodge returns to its previous value and is reduced by –1 as usual.

This Charm cannot be invoked against undodgeable attacks, unexpected attacks, or if the Exalt's Dodge value is 0 or less. It also has a particular weakness, depending on the character's aspect.

- **Air:** Air is vulnerable to earth-aspected attacks and against attacks made with two-handed close-range weapons, whose sheer bulk disrupts her form. The Charm fails to protect the Exalt against such attacks.
- **Earth:** Earth is vulnerable to wood-aspected attacks and against attacks made with wooden weapons such as arrows or clubs, as the earth habitually yields to burrowing roots. This Charm fails to protect the Exalt against such attacks.
- **Fire:** Fire is vulnerable to water-aspected attacks; this Charm fails to protect the Exalt against such attacks. It also cannot be activated while the Exalt is wet, such as when underwater, standing in the rain, or when she has just emerged from a bath.
- **Water:** Water is vulnerable to air-aspected attacks and attacks made with ice or with freezing cold. This Charm fails to protect the Exalt against such attacks. It also cannot be activated while the Exalt stands in freezing temperatures.
- **Wood:** Wood is vulnerable to fire-aspected attacks and to burning attacks such as flaming arrows. This Charm fails to protect the Exalt against such attacks.

All forms of this Charm are considered a perfect defense.

Air Charms

These Charms balance a focus on lore and learning with sorcery, spiritualism, communication, and direct combat prowess.

Drifting Zephyr Step (•)

Resonance: Athletics

Essence lightens the Dragon-Blood's step, allowing her to quickly disentangle herself from the fiercest fray by riding the shafts of arrows and treading upon the tips of spears.

System: Once per battle, being struck any number of times before her turn does not block the Exalt from using her movement action. The Exalt may pay 1 Mote to reset this Charm up to (Essence rating) times within a scene.

Elemental Concentration Trance (•)

Resonance: Lore

An ever-popular Charm among diligent students of the Spiral Academy and the Heptagram, this technique permits the Dragon-Blooded to compact a week's worth of learning into a single day of furious study, assuming she has all of the materials she'll need to consult ready to hand.

System: The Exalt suffers a drained Wound upon activating this Charm, and another at the beginning of each subsequent day of using this Charm, which she cannot heal until her studying binge is complete.

Gale-Force Research Technique (•)

Resonance: Lore

While standing within a library or similar archive, the Dragon-Blooded fixes a question in her mind and unleashes her Essence. Violent winds disrupt the room, toppling books from shelves and scattering loose papers in all directions. If the information she seeks is present, then when she opens her eyes, she will find it sitting before her; the relevant papers have been blown into her hands, or the relevant book has tumbled open in front of her, opened to the passage she needs.

Exalts are encouraged not to use this Charm in the library of anyone they particularly care about keeping friendly toward them, since even if it doesn't damage rare volumes or fragile relics, it always makes a hell of a mess.

System: The character uses a simple action and spends 1 Mote. She locates any relevant information instantly if it is there to be found.

Grasping Talon of the Wind Dragon (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Thrown

The Dragon-Blooded creates a powerful wind-vortex in her hand, drawing a nearby object into her grasp.

System: With a simple or swift action, the Exalt's player may pull an object into the character's hand. The object can weigh no more than 10 pounds (or must be an attuned artifact, which may ignore this weight limit), must be no more than one zone away, and cannot be held or carried by another character. Alternately, the Dragon-Blooded can spend 1 Mote to draw the item to hand reflexively (but otherwise still subject to the above restrictions).

If a Dragon-Blooded knows this Charm, then any Thrown weapon she hurls always reflexively returns to her hand at the end of the round unless she wishes it not to.

Harmonious Wind-Luring Song (•)

Resonance: Linguistics, Occult, Performance

The Exalt composes a quick performance — a song, a musical number, a recited poem — as a gift to the elementals of the world. If they find it pleasing, the winds soon begin to blow according to her desire.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Charisma + (Linguistics or Performance) against difficulty 6. The wind picks up and blows as the Exalt desires for a number of hours equal to the successes rolled. By default, this is a stiff, substantial wind: not violent or damaging, but enough to reduce the maximum range of Archery attacks launched directly against it by one zone, and to move a sailing vessel. If three successes are rolled, the Dragon-Blooded may instead opt to conjure a violent storm which runs out of her control for an hour, with successes beyond the three required to conjure it being used to extend its duration for additional hours. The storm isn't at the level of a full-blown environmental hazard, but getting around in it requires complex movement, it imposes a -2 penalty to all Awareness rolls, and it will generally play havoc with shipping, troop movements, public gatherings, and the like. If more than one Exalt who knows this Charm is present, they may spend 0 Motes and make their own activation roll, adding their successes to the primary user's result to grant her invocation greater duration.

Language-Learning Ritual (•)

Resonance: Linguistics, Lore

By spending at least an hour listening to a language, the Dragon-Blooded may gain temporary fluency in it.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Intelligence + Linguistics (difficulty 6) to capture a swirl of unfamiliar words within the familiar embrace of the wind. The character gains fluency in the targeted language for a number of days equal to the successes rolled. If no successes are rolled, she gains fluency for one scene. If other Dragon-Blooded bonded to her through Sworn Brother's Oath spend at least a scene listening to her using the language, they can also pick it up and use it so long as the Charm-user is present to anchor their understanding. Use of a language through a Hearth-bond is faltering and strongly accented, relying on occasional corrections and adjustments by the Charm-user, but understandable.

Soundless Action Prana (•)

Resonance: Stealth

The Dragon-Blooded stirs the air to smother all noises she makes.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the character's actions make no noise at all unless she wishes them to.

Voice of Mastery (•)

Resonance: Linguistics, Presence, War

The Dragon-Blooded may use her Essence to compress data into its most compact and efficacious presentation, conveying a wealth of meaning in only a few words: a useful talent indeed for a battlefield commander.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Exalt may use only a single simple action — in dramatic time, about five to ten seconds — to completely and concisely sum up data that would normally require up to a (Essence rating) hours of careful explanation, without losing any nuance at all.

Whispering Thief Technique (•)

Resonance: Larceny, Linguistics, Performance

The Dragon-Blooded may breathe her words into the wind, allowing her to throw her voice.

System: The character may, at any time, make her voice seem to issue from anywhere, anyone, or anything within the same or an adjacent zone without need for a dice roll. By reflexively spending 1 Mote, she may project her voice up to (higher of Essence or Linguistics rating) zones away for the rest of the scene.

Wind Armor Technique (•)

Resonance: Craft, Occult, Resistance, War

The Dragon-Blooded, in a moment of ferocious concentration, solidifies the air around her into a suit of shimmering armor.

System: The Exalt may use a swift action and succeed at a difficulty 9 Wits + (Craft, Occult, or Resistance) roll in order to immediately create and don a suit of mundane light or heavy armor which lasts for the rest of the scene. Alternately, she may reflexively pay 1 Mote to sculpt the armor without need for a roll or an action. This armor's Fatigue value is +0. It cannot be worn over the top of real armor.

Wind Weapons (•)

Resonance: Melee, Thrown

With but a moment's concentration, the Exalt may solidify melee or throwing weapons out of the very air itself.

System: Spend a swift action to sculpt a desired mundane melee or throwing weapon from the air itself. Melee weapons last for the rest of the scene, while throwing weapons dissipate after being hurled, only to be immediately replaced by a fresh copy. Alternately, spend 1 Mote to reflexively begin wielding Wind Weapons without needing to use a swift action. While the character is armed with Wind Weapons, dematerialized beings in the same zone appear as faint distortions in the air, and may be targeted by attacks with Wind Weapons, though at a –2 penalty if the character has no other means of perceiving and targeting them.

Cloud-Armor Technique (••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Exalt crafts uplifting cushions of wind to help bear the weight of her armor, increasing her mobility.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll Stamina + (Athletics or Resistance) against difficulty 6. Each success may be spent on one of the following:

- Improve your armor's Defense modifier by +1, to a maximum of +1 overall.
- Improve your armor's Dodge modifier by +1, to a maximum of –0 overall.
- Improve your armor's Fatigue modifier by –1, to a maximum of +0 overall.
- If your armor's Defense is +1, Dodge is –0, and Fatigue is +0, and you still have successes to spend, you may count as being unarmored for the purpose of qualifying to use Martial Arts Charms.

These benefits last for the rest of the scene or until the Exalt invokes this Charm again, whichever comes first.

Crosswind Gale Offense (••)

Resonance: Melee

The Dragon-Blooded may conjure a powerful wind to carry even the heaviest of weapons into a distant enemy and then return it to her hand.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the character can make Melee and Martial Arts attacks against enemies up to one zone away by throwing her weapon and then having it come back to her once the attack resolves. This Charm does nothing to enhance unarmed attacks.

Distracting Breeze Meditation (••)

Resonance: Occult, Thrown

The Dragon-Blooded may stir the wind to knock over small objects, slam doors, rustle curtains, and otherwise cause small distractions.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Dexterity + (Occult or Thrown) against difficulty 6. For the next (1 + successes rolled) hours, all opposed rolls against the Dragon-Blooded (such as to detect her while she hides) suffer a –2 dice penalty, as do attack rolls.

Ferocious Thunderclap Attitude (••)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

A ferocious martial wind stirs in the wake of the Dragon-Blood's attacks, speeding her movements and surging to multiply her victories.

System: The first time in a scene that the Dragon-Blooded chooses to increase her Dodge modifier after Staggering or incapacitating an opponent, she raises her Dodge by +2 rather than the usual +1. This Charm can be reset to function again by reflexively spending 1 Mote.

Grace of Mela (••)

Resonance: Athletics, Lore, Occult

The Dragon-Blooded may fill herself with the ferocity of the cyclone, the speed of the gale, or the grandeur of the raging storm simply by exposure to such forces of nature.

System: When exposed to a significant manifestation of the element of wind such as a powerful storm, or when at great elevation (atop a tower, high up on a mountain), the Dragon-Blooded adds one bonus die to all rolls based on Strength, Dexterity, Charisma, Perception, or Wits.

Horizon-Spanning Arc (••)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

The Dragon-Blood uses a concentrated stream of wind to carry her attack much farther than it should possibly be able to reach.

System: The Exalt may launch an Archery, Thrown, or ranged Martial Arts attack against a target one zone farther away than the normal maximum range of her weapon. This Charm may be used a number of times per scene equal to her Essence rating.

Seeking Missile Technique (••)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

The Exalt bends the winds around the course of her attacks, granting even those arrows and knives that disappoint her at first an ultimate second chance to do their work.

System: When a ranged attack fails to strike its target, spending Willpower to re-roll the attack doesn't count against the Exalt's once-per-scene re-roll limit. Alternately, she may re-roll the attack without spending Willpower, but this uses up her once-per-scene re-roll.

Speech Without Words (••)

Resonance: Linguistics, War

The Exalt may instinctively craft highly expressive hand signals, facial expressions, and nonverbal communicative ticks (such as winking, tapping a foot twice, clicking a spoon against her glass, or pulling an earlobe) in order to secretly convey information to those she is familiar with.

System: This Charm grants the Exalt a highly informal secret language that she can adapt to be understood by anyone she has been familiar with for more than a day. She can tune her semaphore at any time to be understood only by those she wishes to understand it. Observers can make a reflexive Perception + Awareness roll against a difficulty of (4 + Exalt's Linguistics rating) to realize she's using code-signs and not simply feeling restless, but the actual code itself is as difficult to decode as any language would be. If Charms are used to do so, they do not convey an enduring benefit; the Exalt essentially invents this language anew in each scene where she uses it.

Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique (••)

Resonance: Awareness, Occult

The Exalt may attune her senses to the subtle presence of gods and ghosts, glimpsing them in reflective surfaces such as mirrors or still water.

System: Use a simple or swift action to roll Perception + Occult (difficulty 8) while staring into a reflective surface, or reflexively spend 1 Mote to bypass the roll and need for an action. For the rest of the scene, if she succeeded at the roll or spent the Mote, the Exalt can see dematerialized beings and spirit sanctums reflected in that surface, and can physically interact with them. Targeting opponents in combat by such awkward means imposes a -2 die penalty.

Voices on the Wind (••)

Resonance: Awareness

The Exalt stirs the wind to bring words to her ears, allowing her to eavesdrop from afar.

System: The Exalt may devote her full concentration to stirring the air. While she does so, she can listen in on what is being said in a location up to (Awareness rating) zones away as though she stood in the midst of the speakers. She can take no other simple or swift actions while doing so. By reflexively spending 1 Mote, she can extend this Charm's range to (Awareness rating) sectors until she breaks her attention and stops focusing on it.

Wind-Carried Words Technique (••)

Resonance: Linguistics

The Dragon-Blooded may entrust her words to the wind, letting it carry whatever she says to a desired recipient.

System: The character uses a simple action to speak a message no longer than a few sentences. The wind carries her words to a desired character up to ([higher of Essence or Linguistics] × 10) miles away. If the target is Sworn Kin, the subject of one of her Intimacies, or if the Dragon-Blooded reflexively spends 1 Mote, they may be up to ([higher of Essence or Linguistics] × 100) miles away.

With One Mind (••)

Resonance: War

The Dragon-Blood moves in perfect synchronicity with her comrades to seize the advantage in battle, carving an opening that they instinctively see the opportunity to support.

System: When an Exalt with this charm cuts ahead in battle, one of her allies may immediately follow her and do so as well before any of their opponents gets a chance to act, and does not

have to pay Willpower to take advantage of the opening. This Charm can activate a number of times per battle equal to the user's Essence rating.

Dragon Focus Curriculum (•••)

Resonance: Lore

By intently focusing her Essence into an hour of rigorous study or training, the Dragon-Blooded may temporarily hone her skills to an enormous degree.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Intelligence + Lore (difficulty 7). The player may add the character's Essence rating in additional Ability dots to whatever subjects or activities the character studied. These dots remain for a number of days equal to the successes rolled, and cannot raise an Ability above 5 dots. Only one instance of this Charm may be active at a time.

Dragon Shroud Technique (•••)

Resonance: Stealth

The Dragon-Blooded can wrap herself in a shroud of concealing air, becoming little more than a faint shimmer.

System: Reflexively spending 2 Motes on her turn renders the Exalt invisible and impossible to notice for the rest of the scene, so long as she doesn't make some sort of loud noise or take blatant action such as attacking or tipping over a bookshelf.

Elusive Cyclone Defense (•••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Dragon-Blooded girds herself in a powerful barrier of howling winds, brushing aside incoming projectiles.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until she is Staggered or the end of the scene, whichever comes first, the Exalt does not need to spend Willpower to Dodge ranged attacks.

Haunting Words Infliction (•••)

Resonance: Presence

The Dragon-Blooded's words wind their way deep into the soul of another, striking through his cynicism and practical concerns to find his heart.

System: Spend 1 Mote when making an inspiration attempt (see p. XX) to lower its difficulty by -2. If the character is trying to instill one of her own Intimacies into the target, lower the difficulty by -3 instead.

Terrestrial Circle Sorcery (•••)

Resonance: Occult

The Dragon-Blooded has been initiated into the practice of sorcery. She can cast Terrestrial Circle spells and enact sorcerous workings. Purchase of this Charm grants one shaping ritual and one Terrestrial Circle spell.

System: See Chapter Seven for rules on playing a sorcerer.

Vengeful Gust Strike (•••)

Resonance: Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts

The Dragon-Blooded learns to harness the gale as her weapon, sending foes flying.

System: When the Exalt launches an attack, she may reflexively spend 1 Mote before rolling to wreath her attack in a latent stormburst. If the attack succeeds, it increases its base damage by +2, sends her opponent flying into an adjacent zone and knocks him prone (see p. XX). Additionally, any 10s on the damage roll count as two successes, as the Dragon-Blooded fortuitously aims her enemy at something hard or dangerous.

Whirlwind Shield Form (•••)

Resonance: Athletics, Resistance, Stealth

The Dragon-Blooded bends ferocious air currents around herself, creating a defensive barrier against ranged attacks.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the character increases her Soak rating against ranged attacks by +1.

Earth Charms

These Charms focus on resilience of both mind and body, along with powerful sensory magics and craftsmanship.

All-Encompassing Earth Sense (•)

Resonance: Awareness

By concentrating for a moment, the Dragon-Blooded extends her senses down into the earth itself, “seeing” the weight and tremors of movement upon the ground.

System: The character can “see” perfectly in the dark, so long as what she’s “seeing” is connected to the ground in any way. This Charm cannot sense any flying creature or object, and is entirely useless in or upon deep water or in the air, including on ships and boats. The Exalt also enjoys –1 difficulty on any roll to detect something that is touching the ground.

Crystal Sight Focus (•)

Resonance: Awareness

Sharpening her vision by focusing her Essence like a prism, the Dragon-Blood gains unsurpassed clarity of sight.

System: The Exalt must use a simple or swift action to activate or banish this Charm. While it is active, the difficulty of all vision-based Perception rolls drops by –3. This level of constant visual overstimulation is difficult to manage, and so the character suffers a cumulative –1 die penalty to all rolls involving her mental Attributes for each consecutive scene after the first where she has this Charm active most of the time, as well as a +1 Fatigue modifier.

Earth Dragon’s Stony Glare (•)

Resonance: Presence

The character makes her eyes hard and unforgiving as flint, even as her features subtly sharpen.

System: All intimidation attempts are made at –1 difficulty.

Entombed Mind Technique (•)

Resonance: Empathy

The Dragon-Blooded may carefully infuse the somnolent Essence of Earth into someone, placing them into a deep slumber.

System: By force, guile, social obligation or trickery, the Dragon-Blooded must arrange for her target to remain relatively still for five minutes in order to use this Charm (sitting in a chair and eating dinner is about as active as a target can be for this Charm to do its job). She may then use a simple action to spend 1 Mote and roll Stamina + Empathy, contested by the target's Willpower (both at difficulty 6). The target falls asleep for one hour per success by which the Dragon-Blooded wins the contest, and cannot be roused by anything shy of a cacophonous sound or being physically shaken or harmed. If supported by other Dragon-Blooded who also know this Charm, the minimum period of inactivity before the Charm can begin to do its work is reduced by one minute per supporting Exalt, to a minimum of 30 seconds. Supporting Exalts need only concentrate on helping the primary Charm-user, and do not need to spend Motes.

Inviolable Diamond Soul (•)

Resonance: Resistance

The Dragon-Blooded hardens her spirit against the corrosive influence of the Wyld, turning the flows of her Essence inward to survive extended forays into the lands of madness. This inversion slowly poisons her, and so is not an indefinite defense, merely an extended one.

System: It takes only an unrolled simple action to activate this Charm. The character is protected against the mutating and maddening influence of the Wyld while it is active. At the end of every full 24 hours in which this Charm is left active, the character must succeed at a difficulty 7 Stamina + Resistance roll or suffer an Aggravated drained Wound as her body slowly turns into living stone or crystal. This Wound cannot be healed by any means while the Charm remains active. If she permits Inviolable Diamond Soul to kill her, she leaves behind a stone or crystalline statue brimming with potent Essence and potentially useful in artifact-crafting.

The character may spend 1 Mote to extend this Charm's benefits to up to (Essence rating) companions when she activates it, but the difficulty of her roll to resist calcification rises to 8 if she does so unless she also knows Chaos-Warding Prana.

Mountain-Trampling Hoof (•)

Resonance: Ride

The Dragon-Blood sheathes herself and her mount in a temporary shell of powerful Essence, protecting them both and allowing them to break through all opposition.

System: While mounted, spend 1 Mote and use a swift action to roll Stamina + Ride against difficulty 8. Success increases the Soak rating of both the Exalt and her mount by her Ride rating until her next turn, and allows her to move from one zone to an adjacent zone regardless of obstacles up to and including solid stone walls: she simply crashes through in a cloud of dust and debris, unharmed.

Ox-Body Technique (•)

Resonance: Resistance

The Terrestrial's body is fortified with the solidity of the earth, enabling her to survive grievous injuries.

System: Upon purchasing this Charm, the character gains +2 maximum Health.

This Charm can be purchased a number of times equal to the higher of the character's Stamina or Resistance ratings.

Upon purchasing this Charm a third and final time, the character may select whichever option she did not take during her second purchase.

Righteous Lion Defense (•)

Resonance: Presence, Resistance

The Dragon-Blooded fortifies her beliefs with the solidity of the Earth itself, encasing her convictions in the heart of an unassailable mountain.

System: The Exalt may reject or ignore any attempt to cause or force her to betray, undermine, or abandon her Intimacies at no cost.

Shaping Hand Style (•)

Resonance: Craft

The Exalt may use her bare hands as though they were a variety of mundane tools without suffering any damage, hammering in nails with her fists or pulling them out with her teeth, sawing boards with a knife-edge hand motion, and so on.

System: The Exalt never suffers any penalties or problems from lacking the proper tools to construct or repair something, and may perform complex repairs and construction without tools that would otherwise be necessary.

Stone-Carving Fingers Form (•)

Resonance: Craft

Taking a moment to concentrate her Essence into her fingertips, the Exalt gains the ability to work stone with her bare hands as though it were soft clay.

System: This Charm can be activated and deactivated reflexively. While this Charm has obvious utility in sculpture, it can also be used to dig through or easily climb up stone surfaces.

Veins of Stone Concentration (•)

Resonance: Medicine, Resistance

The Exalt can bring her metabolism to a near-total halt, calcifying any poisons that dare sully the temple of her flesh.

System: The Exalt is never subject to the rule of 1s when rolling to resist poisons (see p. XX). She may reflexively spend 1 Mote to "freeze" the duration of all poisons and toxins in her system for 24 hours, giving her time to seek treatment. While frozen in this fashion, any poisons that may afflict her inflict only a -1 penalty at most.

Chaos-Warding Prana (••)

Resonance: Occult, Resistance

The Dragon-Blooded solidifies her Essence to resist hostile magic and the powers of chaos.

System: Whenever the character is the subject of any hostile supernatural power that seeks to transform, infect, taint, transport, or control her body or spirit, or to warp her destiny or place in the world (such as by attacking her Backgrounds), the difficulty to do so is raised by +1. If affected anyway, she may use her next simple action to spend 1 Mote and roll Stamina + Occult against difficulty 8. Success shatters the magic, protecting the Dragon-Blooded completely. Since this expenditure isn't reflexive, the Dragon-Blooded may spend a few moments fluctuating in mid-transformation or teleportation, as her Essence battles with the magic seeking to suborn her.

If the nature of the hostile magic would prevent her from taking a turn, gaining a simple action, or spending Motes, she retains those opportunities anyway. For example, if successfully struck down by Soul Mastery (see p. XX), the Exalt would normally die instantly, rendering her unable to invoke Chaos-Warding Prana to protect her soul from being torn asunder. Instead, she lingers long enough to attempt to use this Charm to protect her from the deadly magic. If Chaos-Warding Prana fails, then she does indeed drop dead after a moment of ferocious struggle to hold herself together. If it succeeds, then she does not die and proceeds as though Soul Mastery had never done anything to her at all.

Flawless Diamond Heart (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Presence, Resistance

The Exalt's resolve has about it the solidity of stone, its roots sunk as deep into her spirit as the Imperial Mountain which anchors all of Creation.

System: So long as the Exalt has not violated her Nature or any of her Intimacies during the current story, her Willpower rolls are not subject to the rule of 1s, and count results of 10 as two successes.

Granite Curtain of Serenity (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Resistance

Entombing her mind in a crystalline shell of Essence, the Dragon-Blooded protects herself from attempts to subvert her thoughts and feelings.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to become immune to all thought and emotion-altering magic for a number of minutes equal to the character's Essence rating. If already affected by an ongoing mind control effect, the Exalt must make a Willpower + Essence roll against difficulty 9 at the end of her period of freedom. Success destroys the ongoing effect, while on a failure it reasserts itself.

Heart-Crushing Stone (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Resistance

The Exalt may, when her own values are being turned against her, crush them between the stones of her resolve and her Essence in order to escape their influence.

System: The Exalt may use a simple action and pay 1 Mote to destroy one of her permanent or temporary Intimacies. It cannot be rebuilt until (Essence rating) stories have ended.

Impervious Skin of Stone Meditation (••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Dragon-Blooded draws the solidity of stone up into her flesh. She must be in contact with stone or soil to use this Charm. Traditionally this is accomplished by standing upon bare earth or a stone floor, but many Dragon-Blooded carry a small rock in their pocket, or wear a precious stone on a ring in order to use this Charm at any time.

System: Reflexively spending 1 Mote allows the Dragon-Blooded to add +1 to her Soak value and Stagger Threshold until she is Staggered or until the end of the scene, whichever comes first.

Pasiap Still Stands (••)

Resonance: Awareness, Athletics, Presence, Resistance

The Dragon-Blooded may fill herself with the unyielding solidity of the Earth itself simply by being enfolded in its mass.

System: When surrounded by earth and stone, such as within a cave or canyon, within a structure primarily made of earth and stone, or when underground (in a basement, sewer system, etc), the Dragon-Blooded adds one bonus die to all rolls based on Strength, Stamina, Charisma, Perception, or Intelligence.

Sense-Destroying Technique (••)

Resonance: Awareness, Occult

Through a moment's total concentration and a precision application of offensive Essence, the Dragon-Blooded may shut down someone else's senses, striking them blind, deaf, or bereft of taste and smell.

System: Use a simple action to concentrate utterly upon a target no more than one zone away and roll Intelligence + Awareness, contested by the target's Willpower, both at difficulty 6. If the Exalt beats the target's successes, he loses access to a sense of her choosing until the end of the current round: sight, smell and taste, or hearing and touch. If she beats the target by a number of successes equal to his Perception rating, or opts to reflexively spend 1 Mote after beating his Willpower roll by a lesser number of successes, then she may shut down that sense until the end of the current scene. See page XX for rules on fighting while blind.

Seismic Assault (••)

Resonance: Brawl, Martial Arts

Striking her foe a mighty blow, the trauma of the Dragon-Blood's assault rumbles through her enemy's body and mind in a series of aftershocks.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote upon Staggering an opponent. The opponent remains Staggered for one additional Round, and the Dragon-Blooded may increase her own Stagger Threshold by +1 until the end of the scene or until she is next Staggered, whichever comes first.

Strength of Stone Technique (••)

Resonance: Athletics, Brawl

The Dragon-Blooded draws power from the Earth itself into her body. She must be in contact with stone or soil to use this Charm. Traditionally this is accomplished by standing upon the bare

Earth or a stone floor, but many Dragon-Blooded carry a small rock in their pocket, or wear a precious stone on a ring in order to use this Charm at any time.

System: The difficulty of feats of strength to lift or break something while in contact with stone or soil are lowered by -2. The Dragon-Blooded may reflexively spend 1 Mote to cause her unarmed attacks to increase their base damage by +3 and to inflict lacerated Wounds for the rest of the scene while she is in contact with stone or soil.

Touch of Unmaking (••)

Resonance: Craft

Everything that has ever been made has its origin in the earth's bounty. The Dragon-Blood may return those creations to their mother's bosom.

System: Spend 1 Mote and touch an object up to the size of a wagon, then use a simple action to roll Strength + Craft against a difficulty based on the object's complexity (basically, the difficulty should match the difficulty of a roll to craft the object). Success renders the object back down into its component elements: a wagon becomes a pile of disassembled lumber and steel, while a sword would be reduced to raw iron. This Charm isn't sufficient to destroy artifacts.

Five-Dragon Blow (•••)

Resonance: Archery, Melee, War

The Exalt's strike completes a rhythmic sequence of blows, burning with the combined power of her allies.

System: Spend 1 Mote and launch an attack. Its base damage is increased by twice the number of attacks already directed at the target by other characters during the current round. If this generates a +6 or higher bonus, the damage roll also ignores the rule of 1s.

Five Dragons Fight as One (•••)

Resonance: War

Drawing upon the greatness of her spirit, the Dragon-Blooded lends out her power and surety to her allies in a time of crisis.

System: Spend 1 Mote use a simple action to roll Charisma + War against difficulty 7. The Dragon-Blooded may divide a pool of her Essence rating or successes rolled (whichever is lower) dice between allies she can perceive in the same sector at the beginning of each round of combat for the rest of the scene. Her allies may add allotted dice to any roll they like until all dice have been used. Any unused dice vanish at the end of the turn. A character who is staggered cannot use these bonus dice while in that state.

A character can only receive dice from a single Dragon-Blooded in any given turn.

Magma Hell Upheaval (•••)

Resonance: Athletics, Brawl

The Dragon-Blooded strikes or stamps the bare earth, drawing up the molten blood of Creation to scatter her foes.

System: Spend 1 Mote and a simple action striking the ground. Select a zone within the same sector as the Exalt. On her next turn, molten lava comes gushing up from the ground in the center

of that zone, splashing about and spreading to cover it. For the rest of the scene, everyone in that zone must then deal with a lava hazard (see p. XX). If one or more Dragon-Blooded who also know this Charm uses a simple action lending support to the user of Magma Hell Upheaval during the turn she activates the Charm, the lava will erupt, exposing everyone in each zone adjacent to the one targeted by Magma Hell Upheaval to a one-time lava hazard.

Perfected Scales of the Dragon (•••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Dragon-Blooded may summon the power of the earth into her body, fortifying herself with borrowed vitality. Her anima becomes an invisible shell over her skin, absorbing a modicum of damage on her behalf.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The character increases her Stagger Threshold by +1 and gains Temporary Health equal to her Essence rating until the end of the scene or until Staggered, whichever comes first. This Charm can only be activated once per scene.

Ramparts of Obedient Earth (•••)

Resonance: Craft, War

With but a gesture and a surge of Essence, the Dragon-Blooded may cause trenches to appear in the Earth, walls of stone to burst from the ground, or even force open gaps in stone surfaces.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes. For the rest of the scene, the Dragon-Blooded may use a simple action to roll Dexterity + (Craft or War) to manipulate gross quantities of earth and stone anywhere within five zones, forming trenches, pits, walls, or other structures (difficulty 6 to 8, depending on how large or intricate a manifestation she's trying to create). Those caught inside of a zone mid-transformation who would be entrapped or endangered by the new configuration of the landscape may use their next swift action or to make a (Dexterity + Athletics) roll against difficulty 7 to avoid the danger (groups roll their Drill instead). The transforming area requires complex movement to navigate, in either case, until it finishes solidifying, which may take two or more rounds in the case of elaborate restructuring.

Sense-Riding Method (•••)

Resonance: Awareness, Empathy

Through total concentration, the Dragon-Blooded may insinuate her senses into the mind of another, "riding" their perceptions to see and hear whatever they do.

System: Spend 1 Mote to target a creature the Dragon-Blooded can see for sense-riding, then use a simple action to roll Perception + Awareness against a difficulty of his Willpower. The Exalt can ride her target's senses for one hour per success gained, but her own body falls into a comatose state while doing so, and she can only be roused prematurely by voluntarily abandoning the Charm or by taking damage. If she rides one of her Sworn Kin, and they assent to her doing so, the cost drops to 0 Motes.

Unfeeling Earth Meditation (•••)

Resonance: Resistance

With a moment's intense concentration, the Dragon-Blooded may become as enduring as the Earth itself.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Willpower (difficulty 6). For each success, the Dragon-Blooded may enjoy one of the following benefits for the rest of the scene:

- She no longer experiences penalties for fatigue and exhaustion, including Fatigue from armor, and indeed needs neither rest nor sleep.
- She no longer experiences penalties for starvation or dehydration, and indeed has no need to eat or drink.
- She no longer needs to breathe.
- She does not age.

Alternately, the character may activate this Charm while quietly meditating, and may extend the Charm's benefits for as long as she continues to do so.

Unflinching Vengeance Meditation (•••)

Resonance: Resistance

Taking a moment to bury her pain and weaknesses deep within, the Dragon-Blooded becomes temporarily unstoppable.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to ignore all Wound penalties until the end of the scene or the character is next Staggered, whichever comes first. If the Dragon-Blooded is acting in direct support of her Nature or an Intimacy, this Charm cannot be ended by Staggering her.

Virtuous Mountain's Shadow (•••)

Resonance: Presence, Socialize

When the Dragon-Blooded sees matters within a social milieu going somewhere that offends her sensibilities, she may smoothly intervene to put a stop to it, expressing either her personal convictions or the rules of propriety to do so.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote in response to another character's social influence action. Roll Charisma + (Presence or Socialize) against difficulty 7, or difficulty 5 if this intervention supports one of the character's Intimacies. Each success rolled negates one of the original speaker's successes.

Fire Charms

These Charms heavily center on combat and socializing, with a secondary focus on athleticism.

Backdraft Assault Method (•)

Resonance: Brawl, Melee

Having failed to strike down the Dragon-Blooded, her opponents find her roaring back at them with renewed vigor and fury.

System: After Blocking an opponent's attack, if the Dragon-Blooded uses her next simple action to Stagger or incapacitate that opponent, she gains one point of Willpower.

Blinding Spark Distraction (•)

Resonance: Archery, Melee, Thrown

When errant blades or arrows strike against the world, they do so in a great welter of stinging sparks.

System: When the Dragon-Blooded fails to strike her target with an attack made with a stone or metal weapon of any kind, the impact sends up a great eruption of sparks which cascade over her target, causing any actions he takes on his next turn to suffer a –3 dice pool penalty. This penalty also applies against anyone who Blocks such an attack. Blinding Spark Distraction doesn't activate if an attack botches.

Alternately, the Exalt may deliberately aim a shot to optimize the cascade of hot, bright sparks, forfeiting any chance of landing an attack to instead use a simple action to inflict a –5 penalty upon her “target.”

Effortlessly Rising Flame (•)

Resonance: Athletics

The Exalt may propel herself upward with a controlled explosion beneath her.

System: By reflexively spending 1 Mote, the Dragon-Blooded may increase her jumping distance or height threefold for the rest of the scene, lowering the difficulty of any attempt to jump a gap by –3. In combat, she can easily relocate to a zone above her without recourse to complex movement. When knocked prone, she may either reflexively pay 1 Mote to rise back to her feet, or may reflexively rise from prone for free up to (Essence rating) times per scene, without using a rise swift action and even if she *cannot* use a rise action due to being struck before her turn.

Ghost-Fire Arsenal (•)

Resonance: Archery, Melee

The Dragon-Blooded sculpts weaponry out of elemental flames.

System: By taking a swift action and spending 1 Mote, the Dragon-Blooded can forge almost any mundane weapon she desires out of elemental flame, which persists for the rest of the scene. If anyone else tries to pick it up, they are considered to be exposed to a bonfire hazard for as long as they hold onto it. Created weapons may be anything from a burning sword to a bow and flaming arrows. Only firewands and other incendiary weapons are off-limits; even in phantasmal form, firedust is too unstable for this Charm. Ammunition for created ranged weapons may be drawn from another source of fire (a Fire Aspect's own anima flare will do). The base damage of weapons created with this Charm is +1 higher than normal.

Glowing Coal Radiance (•)

Resonance: Presence, War

The Exalt briefly feeds Essence into her anima, brightening it into an eye-watering display of white-hot radiance.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the end of the current round, the Exalt's anima flux (if manifest) increases its damage by her Essence rating for anyone in sustained contact with it. Additionally, anyone who wishes to attack her must first succeed at a reflexive (Stamina + Awareness) roll against difficulty 9 or else reel away, blinded by her radiance. They do not lose their turn, but must take some action other than to attack the Exalt instead.

Heat-Haze Negation (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Melee

In the moment of her absolute ruin, the Exalt's foe finds that she is nothing but a dissipating mirage and a few drops of blood left upon his weapon, having narrowly escaped destruction.

System: If the Exalt Blocks an attack but still suffers damage, she does not reduce her Block by -1.

Incense Smoke Ladder (•)

Resonance: Athletics

The Exalt may run across walls or even ceilings, leaving behind glowing footprints seared into the surfaces she traverses.

System: The Exalt may run up vertical surfaces or even across ceilings by sprinting all-out. As soon as she stops moving, gravity reasserts itself as normal. This may allow her to reach normally inaccessible zones without using complex movement.

Loquacious Courtier Technique (•)

Resonance: Presence

The Exalt's passion becomes contagious, spilling out of her words to fill the hearts of those around her.

System: Whenever the Dragon-Blooded speaks in support of one of her Intimacies, reduce the difficulty by -2.

Moth to the Candle (•)

Resonance: Presence

The Dragon-Blooded stokes her Essence into an irresistible flame which blinds an enemy to all other threats.

System: Select a target, then use a simple action to roll Charisma + Presence against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. If it succeeds, then for the rest of the scene, they suffer a -3 penalty to attack any other target while the Dragon-Blooded is present and not incapacitated. A target can only be affected by one instance of Moth to the Candle at a time.

Smoke Ascends to Heaven (•)

Resonance: Occult, Performance

The Dragon-Blooded may make of her Essence a gift to the divine, offering it up as a sacrifice when she composes a prayer to one of the little gods.

System: Spend as many Motes as desired and make a prayer roll (Charisma + Linguistics or Performance) to direct a prayer to a particular god, starting against difficulty 8 rather than the usual difficulty 9; see p. XX. If the character takes at least an hour to perform elaborate prayers or worship rituals and commit her petition to writing upon fine silk before burning it, reduce the starting difficulty to 7. The expenditure of Essence acts as a sacrificial offering specifically in line with the target's tastes, with a Resources value equal to the Motes expended, reducing the difficulty further by -1 per Mote spent. If this expenditure at least matches the god's Essence

rating, they are highly likely to take particular notice of the prayer and regard it favorably, even if the petition only rolls a single success. Multiple Exalts who know this Charm may contribute their Motes to the sacrifice.

Spirit-Searing Proposition (•)

Resonance: Presence

The Dragon-Blooded's impassioned entreaties strike deep into the hearts of those she petitions. Those who deny her feel a part of their convictions rendered unto smoke and ash.

System: When another protagonist cites an Intimacy to refuse the character's persuasion attempts, she may reflexively pay 1 Mote. The character refusing her persuasion must either pay one additional point of Willpower or else doubt the cited Intimacy for the rest of the current story.

When an antagonist cites an Intimacy to refuse the character's persuasion attempt, she may reflexively pay 1 Mote to lower the antagonist's Willpower by -2 for the rest of the current story.

Tireless Footfalls Technique (•)

Resonance: Performance, War

So long as the Exalt encourages those she leads or accompanies with rousing songs, ribald tales, or other forms of performance to lift their hearts and fortify their spirits, they may march without cease, inured to the need for sleep or rest.

System: So long as the Dragon-Blooded maintains a steady stream of uplifting song, music, or stories, she and a group of companions of a Size up to (lower of her Essence or War rating, or higher of the two if she spends 2 Motes when beginning her performance) may march without rest or sleep. Every six hours, the Dragon-Blooded must make a Stamina + Resistance roll to keep marching and performing without flagging. This roll begins at difficulty 6, and increases by +1 on each subsequent interval. Once she finally fails, she cannot reactivate this Charm or benefit from its use by another character until she has slept.

Warm-Faced Seduction Style (•)

Resonance: Presence, Socialize

The Exalt fills herself with the hot Essence of passion, stirring the appetites of those she interacts with.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, all Appearance rolls are made at -1 difficulty, and all rolls to inspire lust or to seduce another character are made at -2 difficulty.

Auspicious First Meeting Attitude (••)

Resonance: Presence, Socialize

The Exalt gives the impression of a warm face and friendly attitude to all those she meets, regardless of her actual expression or mood. She easily makes friends wherever she goes.

System: During the scene when someone first meets the Exalt, they're favorably inclined toward her, and all her social actions against them are rolled at -2 difficulty.

Bellows-Pumping Stride (••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Dragon-Blooded runs, and her footfalls strike flames from the earth, leaving a trail of fire in her wake.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the difficulty of all actions to run someone down or get somewhere quickly are lowered by -2. When uses a move action to move to an adjacent zone, the Dragon-Blooded may move two zones instead, leaving a trail of flames in her wake. Anyone who tries to follow her into that zone before the end of the next round must resist a one-time bonfire hazard (see p. XX), although she may exempt her Sworn Kin from this damage if she wishes, bending and banking her flames to let them pass. She cannot use this burning two-zone movement option again if she did so on her previous turn.

Confounding Escape (••)

Resonance: Athletics, Ride, Stealth

Flooding her Essence into the ground in a flash of heat, the Dragon-Blooded produces a great cloud of smoke to cover her escape or advance.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a swift action to fill the zone the Dragon-Blooded occupies with a dense cloud of smoke that is nigh-impossible to see through for more than a foot or so. This cloud expands at a rate of one zone in every direction until it fills the sector where it was invoked. Swirls and eddies in the smoke allow the Dragon-Blooded to see through it with no difficulty. The smoke dissipates at the end of the scene or when the Dragon-Blooded is Staggered, whichever happens first. Her Hearthmates are also able to see through the smoke, if she wishes. Anyone who can't see through the smoke must fight as though blind (see p. XX).

While fighting within the smoke, anyone who can see through it enjoys a +1 Dodge modifier against anyone who can't.

Flickering Candle Meditation (••)

Resonance: Athletics, Brawl, Melee

Giving herself over to absolute defense, the Dragon-Blooded sways and flickers like a candle before the wind, aggressively untouchable.

System: So long as the Dragon-Blooded has not cut ahead, Blocked, or been Staggered at any point during the current battle, she increases her Defense rating by +1.

Hesiesh's Tempered Heart (••)

Resonance: Athletics, Presence, Socialize

The Dragon-Blooded may fill herself with the simmering heat of banked coals and the power of the raging inferno when she is surrounded by heat and flames.

System: When engulfed in oppressive heat or flames, such as in a sauna or burning building, the Dragon-Blooded adds one bonus die to all rolls based on Strength, Dexterity, Charisma, Appearance, or Wits.

Hopping Firecracker Evasion (••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Dragon-Blooded twists the Essence of her enemy's killing intent into explosive flames, hurling herself across the battlefield to avoid rapid sequences of attacks.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, once per round the Dragon-Blooded may reflexively move to an adjacent zone after an attack fails to strike her. She can use this to get away from a rapid flurry of extra action attacks, or disentangle herself from a pile of enemies. Alternately, once per round if the Exalt Dodges an attack and as a result the attack fails to hit her, she may regain any Willpower spent to invoke the Dodge, at the cost of not moving to an adjacent zone.

At Essence 3+, this Charm may be used once per scene to move to an adjacent zone even in response to a successful attack.

Passion-Transmuting Nuance (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Presence

Blowing on the heart of another, the Dragon-Blooded fills their soul with smoke and flame, confusing their passions and manipulating them into whatever form she desires.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Manipulation + Empathy against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. This Charm governs the emotions of joy, rage, and terror. If the target is experiencing any of the three, and the Dragon-Blooded's roll succeeds, she may transform that emotion into one of the other two at an equal degree of intensity. Targets may spend 2 Willpower to shut out this transmutation.

Thoughts as Ashes Defense (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Presence, Resistance

The Dragon-Blooded stokes the fire of her true passions, and burns away any externally-imposed thoughts or feelings.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to utterly reject all thought and emotion-altering magic from a specific character or source for the rest of the scene. By spending 1 Willpower, the character may also open the use of this Charm to any members of her Hearth present in the same sector for the rest of the scene, though they must spend their own Motes to use it.

Threshing Floor Technique (••)

Resonance: Archery, Melee, War

The Exalt sets up a battle rhythm for her allies to follow, singling out a target and leading the assault against him.

System: Upon successfully attacking a target, reflexively spend 1 Mote. Each time another character attacks that same target before the end of the current round, they cumulatively increase the base damage of their attack by +1. If an attack empowered by Threshing Floor Technique Staggers or incapacitates its target, the attacker may choose to gain +1 Block *and* +1 Dodge.

Bonfire Shadow Evasion (•••)

Resonance: Athletics, Occult

The Dragon-Blooded vanishes into the churning shadows of her own anima. Her opponents strike at her, only to discover they have targeted a coil of smoke or a wavering phantom rather than the Exalt herself.

System: While the character's anima is flaring, her Defense is increased by +1 against the first attack directed against her in each round.

Brother-Against-Brother Insinuation (•••)

Resonance: Socialize

Using only a few cutting words or an off-handed remark, the Exalt burns the bonds of camaraderie, friendship, love, and brotherhood that bind two characters together.

System: The Exalt selects two other characters as the target of this Charm and makes some small comment intended to provoke strife between them, such as “*What* did you say about him?”, “I hear he has some plans that don't involve you,” or “It's a shame how that business back in Nexus worked out,” then reflexively spends 1 Mote. Each must succeed at a difficulty 9 Willpower roll or any positive Intimacy they have toward the other is cast into doubt for a number of scenes equal to the Dragon-Blooded's Essence rating.

Comet-Deflecting Defense (•••)

Resonance: Melee

The Dragon-Blooded moves into a perfected moment, flaring the inner spark of her Essence into a momentary, invincible conflagration. In its wake, she is briefly left as little more than exhausted ashes, but at least she still endures.

System: The Dragon-Blooded may reflexively spend 1 Mote when Blocking an attack to momentarily double her Block value. After Comet-Deflecting Defense protects the Dragon-Blooded, her Block returns to its previous value and is reduced by -1 more than it would otherwise be.

This Charm is so taxing that the character cannot use any swift action other than hold steady during the round she invokes it, and it increases her Fatigue by +2 for a number of hours equal to the damage negated by the Block.

Comet-Deflecting Defense cannot be invoked against unblockable attacks, unexpected attacks, if the Exalt's Block value is 0 or less, or if she has already used a swift action other than hold steady during the round. It can only be used once per scene.

Passion-Attuning Attitude (•••)

Resonance: Empathy

Closing her eyes for a moment and shutting out the rest of the world, the Dragon-Blooded becomes attuned to a certain passion in those around her: lust, anger, or fear. When she opens her eyes, those in the grip of the attuned passion seem to burn with an aura of pale flames only the Exalt can see.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, those experiencing the attuned passion stand out like beacons to the Exalt's senses.

Ringling Anvil Onslaught (•••)

Resonance: Brawl, Melee

The Dragon-Blooded's attacks strike, one after another, like a smith's hammer shaping white-hot steel.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes upon attacking a target but failing to incapacitate them. The Dragon-Blooded may take a second turn after all other characters have acted, using it to launch a second attack at that target. This Charm costs only 1 Mote if used against a group that someone else has already attacked during the current round.

This Charm cannot be activated while Staggered, and if a character is Staggered after activating it but before she gets to make her extra attack, that extra attack is lost.

Safety Among Enemies (•••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Dragon-Blooded dodges through the midst of her enemies, confusing them with the bright gleam of her eyes and contrails of smoke that trail in her wake. Before they know what has happened, they lay dead, cut down by their own crossfire.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote upon Dodging an attack, if doing so would cause that attack not to strike the Exalt. After negating the attack's successes, she causes the attack to be re-rolled and applied to a target of her choosing within the same zone. The results of the new roll must be kept.

Smoothing Over the Past Technique (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Socialize

Focusing her Essence through a warm smile and a few quick words, the Dragon-Blooded suppresses her target's memories of past unpleasantness.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll (Manipulation + Socialize), resisted by the target's Willpower (both at difficulty 6). For each success by which the Dragon-Blooded exceeds her target, she can make him temporarily forget about one scene or major event from their shared history together, such as the time he caught her sleeping with his wife or the time she cheated him out of a month's wages at the card table. The target recovers his suppressed memories at the end of the scene, making repeated use of this Charm against the same target increasingly difficult as it becomes necessary to also suppress memories of previously using the Charm against him.

Virtuous Negation Defense (•••)

Resonance: Athletics, Melee, War

Surrounding one of her allies like a warding pall of smoke, the Dragon-Blooded deflects and draws away attacks directed against him.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to apply a protect action to a comrade in the same zone. This protection continues until one of the characters moves to a different zone.

Water Charms

These Charms are split between rough-and-tumble battle magic, organizational bureaucracy, and criminality and deceit. Nautical magic can also be found here.

Confluence of Savant Thought (•)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

When the Dragon-Blooded stands amidst the complex workings of a formal organization, knowledge of its structural workings trickle down to inform her smooth interactions with it.

System: When the Exalt engages with bureaucratic systems such as courts of law, temple-complexes, or government offices, red tape parts before her like the Red Sea and she is able to proceed in a mere fraction of the normal time. Generally, matters of protocol that would normally eat up an entire day can be resolved within a matter of minutes, and procedures taking months to expedite can be accomplished in hours.

Crane Takes the Frog (•)

Resonance: Larceny

The Dragon-Blooded may plunge her hand through a solid surface such as the door of a safe or the lid of a chest and draw out an object from within.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to reach through a solid object. This Charm only allows a few moments to reach and grasp, and doesn't provide time for carefully rummaging around before it forcibly pushes the character's hand back out. It *can* be used for a quick stab with a weapon through a thin wall. This Charm does nothing to help the Exalt see through the surface she's reaching through, and so is best used in conjunction with Window-in-the-Door Technique.

Homeward Trail Discovery Method (•)

Resonance: Awareness, Investigation, Survival

Everyone is carried downstream from their home, and the Dragon-Blooded may follow that stream back to its source.

System: This Charm can be used to target anyone the Dragon-Blooded has met in the past 24 hours. Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll (Perception + Investigation) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Success allows the Dragon-Blooded to depart immediately and follow her instincts unerringly back to the building or structure that the target considers his primary home. This Charm is no more accurate than locating a building; it won't lead to a specific apartment, for example.

Naked Thief Style (•)

Resonance: Larceny

The rise and fall of tumblers within a lock is not, in its way, so unlike the motions of ocean waves. The Dragon-Blooded may pick locks and otherwise defeat security measures without any specialized or even improvised tools.

System: The character suffers no penalties for lacking proper tools for lockpicking, safecracking, jimmying windows and the like, nor is any such action flatly impossible for lack of necessary tools.

Observer Awareness Method (•)

Resonance: Awareness

No one can gaze upon water without the water capturing their likeness in turn. The Dragon-Blooded becomes keenly aware when she is being watched.

System: The difficulty to determine if the character is under observation is always lowered by – 2.

Perfect Gambling Prana (•)

Resonance: Larceny

With a tilt of her hand and a small burst of Essence, the Dragon-Blooded may alter the flow of probability so that it takes the course she desires.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote while observing something governed entirely by chance: the dealing of cards, the fall of dice, a raffle drawing. What should be up to sheer randomness instead generates the outcome the Dragon-Blooded desires.

Precise Ink Technique (•)

Resonance: Craft, Larceny, Linguistics

The Exalt is a master of forgery, perfectly able to duplicate someone else’s handwriting, signature, or even painting style. She may also quickly and flawlessly copy or transcribe any letter, document, or piece of art she has to hand as a reference.

System: The Exalt lowers the difficulty of all attempts to forge a handwriting style, signature, seal, or art style she has seen before by –4. If she has a reference copy to hand, she can always create a perfect duplicate which can only be uncovered as a forgery when subjected to supernatural scrutiny (and even then, the difficulty is 9). She can also transcribe text or copy images in a third the time it would usually take, if she spends 1 Mote.

Ten Thousand Eyes of Heaven (•)

Resonance: Awareness, Investigation

The Exalt extends her awareness into the water around her, gaining knowledge of the presence and exact position of anyone moving through it.

System: The Exalt is automatically aware of the presence and location of anyone the same sector so long as they are moving through water. If the Exalt is not actually swimming, the most common situation this Charm can be used in is “while it’s raining,” but it can also be used cleverly to spot characters who step into puddles or similar obstacles. Ten Thousand Eyes of Heaven detects invisible characters, but won’t defeat magic which forces the Exalt to fail to notice intruders by clouding her mind. By closing her eyes and concentrating fully, the Exalt can extend this Charm’s effects by to encompass the entire district she’s currently in.

Water-Walking Technique (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Sail, Survival

Calling upon her blood’s affinity for water, the Dragon-Blooded becomes the master of surface tension, able to walk upon the surface of the waves without sinking.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Exalt may stand, walk, or run upon water for the rest of the scene. In the case of particularly violent, churning waters, doing so may count as complex movement. By spending an additional Mote, the Exalt may extend this Charm’s effects to any of her Sworn Kin within the same sector.

Wave-Breaking Palm (•)

Resonance: Brawl

Imbuing herself with the surging power of the tides, the Exalt becomes adept at blocking strikes.

System: The Exalt may spend 1 Mote in place of 1 Willpower to invoke her Block against an attack. This Charm can't be used while Staggered.

Window-in-the-Door Technique (•)

Resonance: Awareness, Larceny

The Dragon-Blooded passes her hand over a wall, and a small portion of it briefly becomes as transparent to her as a calm stream.

System: The Dragon-Blooded can see through a small section of enchanted wall for so long as she concentrates completely upon it.

Drowning Embrace (••)

Resonance: Brawl

The Dragon-Blooded impregnates an attack with the invasive Essence of water, allowing her to drown her enemies on dry land.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to enchant an attack with this Charm. If it deals any damage, then the target's lungs fill with water. They suffer a -3 dice drowning penalty on all actions until they successfully use a simple action to make a Stamina + Resistance roll (difficulty 9) to vomit up a great quantity of water. Characters asphyxiate and suffer an automatic drained Wound if they cannot do so within three turns, at which point the drowning effect ends.

If the Dragon-Blooded successfully strikes a drowning target before they have taken their turn, she paralyzes their lungs for a moment and they cannot attempt to expel the water from their lungs that round.

Flow Past Defenses (••)

Resonance: Archery, Brawl, Melee

Water finds a way through anything, given time enough. So it is with the Exalt's attacks.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene or until Staggered, whichever happens first, the Exalt's attacks gain Piercing (-1).

Fluid Recollection Insinuation (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Presence

The Dragon-Blooded shines forth a false memory which is briefly reflected upon the surface of a stranger's mind, convincing him ever-so-briefly that they know one another.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll (Manipulation + Presence) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. If successful, the target gains a false recollection of having met the Dragon-Blooded before, in a situation and context she dictates upon activating this Charm. Fluid Recollection Insinuation builds a false Intimacy that lasts for a number of hours equal to the successes rolled to activate it, at which point the false memories become unreal and impossible to recall, and any commitments made while under their influence no longer feel real

or binding (though they certainly still are if sanctified by magic like the Eclipse Caste oath power).

Fog Conjunction Prana (••)

Resonance: Sail, Stealth

The Dragon-Blooded spends a few moments concentrating her Essence into her lungs, then breathes out a thick, obscuring fog.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Stamina + (Stealth or Sail) against difficulty 5. If used on land, the fog encompasses a number of contiguous zones equal to the successes rolled, raising the difficulty of all Awareness rolls made by anyone other than the Exalt herself by +2. If used aboard a boat or ship, the entire ship and the district surrounding it are engulfed in a thick, obscuring fog that hides the vessel from observers and pursuers, and the fog lasts for a number of hours equal to the successes rolled. Other Dragon-Blooded who know this Charm can support the primary invoker, spending 0 Motes and making a roll themselves to add their successes to the activation total.

Riptide Method (••)

Resonance: Brawl

The Dragon-Blooded's muscles surge with the inevitable fury of the undertow, drawing an enemy into an embrace from which there is no escape.

System: The Dragon-Blooded locks herself in a deadly embrace with an opponent, immobilizing him. By reflexively paying 1 Mote upon landing a successful unarmed attack, the Exalt locks herself and her target in place. Unless she voluntarily relinquishes the power of this Charm, neither can move from the zone they currently occupy. The initial attack adds the Exalt's Essence rating to its base damage, as do all subsequent unarmed attacks during the duration of Riptide Method. While Riptide Method persists, the Exalt may opt not to roll to attack her grappled target if she desires, instead automatically scoring (Essence rating) successes with an unarmed attack on each of her turns.

Attacking anyone other than her grappled target immediately ends Riptide Method. If the Dragon-Blooded is struck by an attack, Riptide Method ends immediately.

Stone and River Revelation (••)

Resonance: Investigation

The Dragon-Blooded, faced with a piece of evidence at the scene of a mystery, can follow her instincts until she reunifies it with the culprit responsible for its creation.

System: The character touches a piece of physical evidence and reflexively spends 1 Mote. She gains a flash of insight which replays in her mind's eye the events of the crime or occurrence that generated the evidence she found.

Storm-Outrunning Technique (••)

Resonance: Sail

The Dragon-Blooded exhorts her crew to bend all their efforts to the working of a ship, even as her expert eye, Essence-guided, judges the perfect trim of sail from moment to moment and the perfect bearing to take advantage of swift currents.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Intelligence + Sail against difficulty 6. The character's ship moves at twice its normal speed (assuming there's any wind to move it at all) for a number of hours equal to the successes rolled. In a naval chase, this lowers the difficulty to catch another ship or escape from a pursuer by -2. Other Dragon-Blooded who know this Charm can support the primary invoker, spending 0 Motes and making a roll themselves to add their successes to the activation total.

Sun on Water Deceit (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Presence, Resistance

The Dragon-Blooded projects into the world only those impressions she wishes to, hiding the truth within the depths of her heart.

System: All rolls to discern the truthfulness of the Exalt's actions or words are made at +1 difficulty. If the character spends 1 Mote, increase the difficulty by +3 instead for the rest of the scene, and decrease the difficulty of all Manipulation rolls she makes by -2.

Thrashing Carp Serenade (••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

The Dragon-Blooded casts turbulent Essence into the workings of a bureau, organization, or project, damming up its efficient function.

System: The character can spend 2 Motes to target a specific office or project with terrible inefficiency for the rest of the current story. Everyone involved in pushing the project forward increases the difficulty of all rolls to do so by +1. In narrative terms, the project is plagued with conflicts and inefficiency and while its progress does grind forward, it does so slowly and painfully.

Tidal Roar Strike (••)

Resonance: Brawl

Sensing an opponent's vulnerability, the Exalt surges forward in his moment of weakness, casting him down with shattering force.

System: When the Exalt attacks a Staggered target, that attack's damage is Aggravated (-1).

Tides of Daana'd (••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy, Lore, Presence, Resistance

The Dragon-Blooded may fill herself with the mercurial adaptability of water and the power of the pounding tidal wave while immersed in or surrounded by water.

System: When surrounded by water (either by being immersed in it, standing in the rain, or being upon the deck of a ship on a lake or at sea), the Dragon-Blooded adds one bonus die to all rolls based upon Dexterity, Stamina, Manipulation, Appearance, or Intelligence.

Distraction of the Babbling Brook (•••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy, Socialize

The Dragon-Blooded uses a dash of Essence to obfuscate her true intentions during a negotiation or business agreement, inserting an unnoticed clause of her choice into a contract or agreement.

It will become unambiguously clear upon later review, but in the heat of hammering out a deal, she manages to keep anyone from noticing its presence.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. All other principal participants in the bargain or contract must make a reflexive (Perception + Bureaucracy) roll against difficulty 9 to notice the inserted clause or proviso prior to reaching a formal agreement (assuming that a formal agreement is reached). This Charm does nothing to actually enforce the contract.

Dragon Mariner Method (•••)

Resonance: Sail

The Exalt is a master of all aspects of the sea and those who make their living upon it, able to adopt whatever pose within that milieu suits her present needs.

System: Any sailor the Exalt meets instinctively recognizes her as a fellow mariner. Moreover, she can decide at any time whether she is presenting herself to be identified as an able seaman, a prize pick to crew any vessel in the world; a criminal such as a pirate or smuggler, eager to be recruited into illicit activities; or a mighty captain sure to bring wealth and glory to any who sail under her flag. This is a potent first impression, but won't negate or erase any knowledge that an individual might already have about the Dragon-Blooded.

Ebb and Flow Approach (•••)

Resonance: Brawl, Empathy

The Dragon-Blooded aligns her Essence with that of an opponent, letting it draw her forward when her foe retreats and push her back when he advances, flowing like water into the weaknesses in his offense and defense.

System: Use a swift action and spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, or until the Exalt is Staggered, whichever comes first, she increases her Defense against a specific opponent of her choosing by +1, and her attacks against him inflict Aggravated damage (-1) as well.

Falsehood Unearthing Attitude (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Investigation

The Dragon-Blooded becomes keenly aware of the disturbances and ripples in a person's Essence that indicate deceit.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to interrogate a statement made to the Dragon-Blooded. If the speaker is intentionally attempting to speak falsehood, the Exalt detects it as a dark shadow passing beneath the speaker's words.

Flow With Strife (•••)

Resonance: Brawl, Resistance

The Exalt falls back before an attack, absorbing its force and sending it back whence it came.

System: Upon Dodging or Blocking an attack, reflexively spend 1 Mote to add the number of successes negated to the base damage of the Dragon-Blooded's next attack, provided that she launches that attack on her next turn and directs it against the enemy she Dodged or Blocked.

Geese Flying South Administration (•••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy, Occult

Sometimes a diligent leader cannot be present for even the most crucial of tasks, and must entrust her power and authority to others. The Dragon-Blooded has learned to do so, and can pour her elemental miracles into a mortal assistant, as one fills a cup with water.

System: Touch a mortal, use a simple action, and spend as many Motes as desired. The mortal gains however many of her Charms the Dragon-Blooded wishes to impart, as well as a pool of Motes with which to use them equal to the Motes contributed to this Charm. While the mortal is in possession of the bestowed Charms, their original owner cannot use them, and the mortal has no way to replenish their borrowed Motes; once they're gone, they're gone. A mortal cannot benefit from more than one use of this Charm at a time.

This Charm lasts until the Dragon-Blooded uses a simple action to reclaim her loaned-out Charms. She cannot reclaim any unspent Motes; they are simply lost.

Returning Wave Counterstrike (•••)

Resonance: Brawl, Thrown

Accepting the forces turned against her, the Exalt may send them back against her attacker.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a swift action to activate this Charm. Make note of each attack directed at the Dragon-Blooded until the end of the round. At the end of the round, she may launch a number of attacks equal to the attacks she received, up to a maximum of her Essence rating, which may only be aimed a single target. This target must be one of the enemies who attacked her.

Thoughtful Gift Technique (••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy, Investigation, Larceny

Minutely examining the situation she finds herself in and the eddies of her subject's Essence, the Exalt intuits the precise gift or offering that would ease her way forward.

System: Spend 2 Motes and use a simple action to roll Perception + (Bureaucracy or Larceny) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Success reveals what bribe, flattery, or gift will induce the target to agree to a particular thing that the Dragon-Blooded desires from them. Thoughtful Gift Technique does nothing to help procure or produce the gift in question.

Wood Charms

These Charms are split between woodlands survival, healing, socializing, and battle enhancement.

Aspect-Blessed Companion (•)

Resonance: Ride, Survival

The Dragon-Blood's familiar is not only immune to damage from her anima flux, it also manifests an extension of her anima when she flares.

System: The character must have the Familiar Background to use this Charm. Her familiar is immune to damage from her anima flux, and when she flares her anima, the familiar is also surrounded in a roaring anima flux if she wishes it to be so. This is an extension of her own flux,

and so uses her traits and any Charms that might be modifying her anima flux. This flux cannot harm the Exalt.

Blossom Hides Thorns (•)

Resonance: Performance

Nature is a constant dance of life and death, but most observers see only the tranquility of the glade. So it is with the struggles of the Dragon-Blooded, who may conceal a vicious sword duel with a deathknight as a romantic waltz or bit of good-natured roughhousing.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to entangle a scene of supernatural violence in a concealing shroud of Essence that weaves it into the normal goings-on of the world. Mortals cannot perceive the battle as anything supernatural or even truly threatening unless they suffer a direct injury from it. Essence-users must succeed at a reflexive difficulty 8 (Perception + Awareness) roll to notice what's really happening.

Disease-Banishing Technique (•)

Resonance: Medicine

By infusing a patient with the Essence of the good and growing earth throughout the course of a treatment, the Dragon-Blooded empowers them to throw off any disease.

System: After a holistic regimen of traditional remedies lasting several hours, the Dragon-Blooded's patient makes a (Stamina + Resistance) roll against difficulty (9 – the Exalt's Medicine rating), adding one die for each Mote the Exalt spends on this Charm (if any). If the illness is considered incurable by mortal medicine, this inflicts a –3 dice penalty. A single success cures whatever ailment they are being treated for. This Charm cannot cure the Great Contagion.

Grasping Vine Shot (•)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

The Exalt threads the Essence of wood into a projectile. When it strikes home, a sturdy vine-rope flashes into existence, stretching between it and the hand of the Exalt who launched the projectile.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when throwing a weapon or shooting an arrow. The vine is sturdy enough to bear the weight of up to (Essence rating) people, and will not pull a throwing knife or arrow out of whatever surface it has lodged in unless that is the Exalt's intent. If the attack struck an opponent, then the Exalt may reflexively pull them one zone toward her by winning a contested (Strength + Athletics) roll (both at difficulty 6). This Charm may be used for a cost of 0 Motes (Essence rating – 1) times per scene.

Harvest of the Hunter (•)

Resonance: Archery, Melee

Nature itself abhors the thought of the Dragon-Blooded ever being caught helpless and unarmed by her enemies. At any time she can reach into a nearby plant or wooden object and draw forth both weapon and ammunition with which to fight

System: Use a re-arm action to retrieve one of the following from any plant or wooden object or surface larger than the Exalt's fist: A wooden Martial Arts or Melee weapon; a bow, strung with

springy vines; a bundle of arrows sufficient to keep the Exalt stocked with ammunition for one battle. These weapons and arrows sublimate back into Essence at the end of the scene.

Hidden Petal Aria Method (•)

Resonance: Performance

As beautiful flowers may conceal deadly poison, so the Dragon-Blooded's performance contains concealed messages for select members of her audience.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote while enacting a live performance to embed a secret, hidden message inside the words, motion, or music. This hidden message can only be discerned by those the Dragon-Blooded intends to address it to.

Seed-Planting Lessons (•)

Resonance: Lore

When the Exalt teaches or trains someone else, she may quietly embed hidden lessons into her students' curriculum which later bear useful fruit.

System: This Charm is used when the Dragon-Blooded grants extended and complex instruction to another person or group of people. Giving someone instructions on how to get to the nearest teahouse isn't sufficient to employ Seed-Planting Lessons. Teaching a farmboy how to use a sword, tutoring a young sorcerer in a new spell, or instructing a group of physicians in the proper treatment of a foreign disease — these are the sort of investments the Charm requires: instruction that will permanently improve its recipient.

After the period of tutelage finishes, recipients must make a Willpower roll against difficulty 9. Failure causes them to form a temporary Intimacy of the Dragon-Blooded's choosing, which persists until (tutor's Essence rating) stories have concluded.

Sweeten-the-Tap Method (•)

Resonance: Socialize

The Exalt exhales a pulse of Essence into a social affair, making all drink in her vicinity much richer in flavor, and powerfully intoxicating if it was not already so.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. All potable liquids within one zone of the Exalt are affected for the rest of the scene. Even plain water becomes sweet and refreshing, while coarse wines take on the refined character of well-aged stock from a fine vineyard. Enchanted drink becomes strongly intoxicating: anyone who partakes of it treats his Willpower rating as being two lower than its true value until he next goes to sleep, and his inhibitions are generally lowered.

Talented Improvisation (•)

Resonance: Performance, Socialize

So bright is the Exalt's smile, so ringing her laughter, so disarming her mannerisms that she can smoothly recover from any misstep or mistake.

System: Once per scene, when the Dragon-Blooded spends Willpower to re-roll a social action, the cost to do so is 0 Willpower.

Trail-Concealing Measure (•)

Resonance: Stealth, Survival

The world tidies itself in the Dragon-Blooded's wake, making it nearly impossible to tell where she has passed.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the next (Survival + 1) hours, anyone trying to track the Exalt across the route she takes does so at difficulty 9. Unless the Exalt is intentionally trying to leave an easy-to-follow trail, this Charm is always active at no cost when traveling through an environment strongly dominated by her native element (tundra, snowfields, or snowy peaks for an Air Aspect; caves, canyons, or mountains for an Earth Aspect; deserts, volcanic regions, and steaming fumaroles for a Fire Aspect; swampland or riverbanks for a Water Aspect; and woodlands or jungle for a Wood Aspect).

Moving through a region matching her aspect's element allows the Dragon-Blooded to extend this Charm's benefits to any Hearthmates traveling with her.

Wild-Wandering Forester Style (•)

Resonance: Survival

Nature welcomes the return of the Dragon-Blooded. Predators avoid her, and the wilderness offers up shelter and bounty for the taking.

System: The Dragon-Blooded makes all Survival rolls to remain safe, comfortable, and fed in the wilderness at difficulty 3. By reflexively spending 1 Mote, she becomes immune to environmental damage from extreme weather or temperatures (but not actual flames, lava, etc) for one day. She may extend this protection to her Sworn Kin while they are within the same sector as her.

Aegis of Grasping Branches (••)

Resonance: Athletics, Martial Arts, Melee, Survival

While the Exalt is surrounded by branches, brambles, or other foliage, she may instinctively move in tune with the living things around her, guiding her opponents' attacks to strike trunk and branch rather than her own flesh.

System: While within a heavily wooded zone such as a forest or garden, the Exalt gains +1 Defense. Once per scene while in such environs, she may Block an attack and declare that her surroundings have intercepted the strike, reducing the Willpower cost of the Block to 0.

Bounty of Sextes Jylis (••)

Resonance: Athletics, Awareness, Performance, Socialize

The Dragon-Blooded may fill herself with the boundless energy of life itself when surrounded by nature and growing things.

System: When surrounded by plant life (whether in a forest, park, or greenhouse), the Dragon-Blooded adds one bonus die to all rolls based on Strength, Stamina, Charisma, Manipulation, or Perception.

Creeping Liana Insinuation (••)

Resonance: Presence, Performance

The Dragon-Blooded's impassioned words wind deep into a listener's psyche, resisting any effort to uproot them.

System: After rolling 5+ successes on a persuade or inspire action that the target chooses to reject, reflexively spend 1 Mote to increase the cost of rejection by +1 additional Willpower. The Exalt may also treat this refusal as justification for a reflexive read intentions action at -1 difficulty.

Enchanting Performance (••)

Resonance: Performance

Over the course of an intimate, one-on-one artistic performance, the Dragon-Blooded lulls her target into a suggestive state, and may plant commands deep into his psyche.

System: Spend 2 Motes and use a simple action to roll (Appearance + Performance) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower rating. One or two successes will allow the Dragon-Blooded to command her target to do anything that doesn't seem tremendously unusual or out of character. With three or four successes, she can command the target to do anything that doesn't endanger himself or a loved one. With five or more successes, the target will risk his life and the lives of others at the Exalt's command.

Enchanting Performance cannot hypnotize a target into harming or killing himself, compel him into certain death, or force him to betray his Nature. Any lingering orders fade after a year has passed. Protagonists targeted by this Charm may spend 1 Willpower to escape its effects for a scene if they can cite an Intimacy that it is forcing them to act against. Spending a number of points of Willpower equal to the Exalt's Essence rating breaks the Charm's hold.

Life-Swelling Sap Strike (••)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

In the hands of the Dragon-Blooded, wood is not merely a hard substance suitable for cracking skulls or shaping into arrows, it is a vector for life itself, and thus inimical to the Unquiet.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when wielding a wooden weapon. For the rest of the scene, it inflicts Aggravated damage (-2) to Unquiet targets, causing their flesh to untwist into fresh flowers and to transform into knotted roots. Alternately, the Charm can be unleashed against a target that is not one of the restless dead with the same result, but doing so causes the Charm to end as soon as the attack resolves.

Poisoned Tongue Technique (••)

Resonance: Linguistics, Socialize

The Exalt may release her Essence to corrode, confuse, or corrupt the course or context of a discussion, twisting it out of true to serve her needs without making it clear that she is responsible for steering the direction of the discourse.

System: Spend 1 Mote during a scene of conversation, debate, oratory, or any other occasion where words are being spoken. The Dragon-Blooded must use a simple action to roll (Wits + Linguistics) against difficulty 7. Each success allows her to implement one of the following changes:

- Alter the mood of the conversation (to one of confusion, flirtatiousness, or dismay, for example).
- Alter the primary topic of the conversation (such as from a formal response to new aggressions by Mask of Winters to a certain person's all-too-public infidelities).
- Alter the way a certain speaker is coming off to others involved (as heroic, cowardly, or crude and offensive, for example).

Supernatural beings may make a reflexive Willpower roll against difficulty 8 to realize someone is tampering with the course of the discussion.

Swallows Defend the Nest (••)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

Guided by an unerring instinct to protect life, the Dragon-Blooded may send forth deadly projectiles to protect herself or another, parrying attacks with knives or arrows.

System: This Charm can only be used if the character is wielding a ranged weapon. Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Dexterity + (Archery, Thrown, or Martial Arts, as appropriate to the wielded weapon) against difficulty 8, or difficulty 7 if in a sector filled with dense foliage. The Exalt fires a flurry of projectiles in all directions, which zip off down secret pathways, guided by her Essence. These are her “swallows.” She gains a number of swallows equal to the successes rolled.

For the rest of the scene, or until Staggered, whichever comes first, these projectiles lurk and wait, ready to protect the Exalt or any allies within a number of zones equal to the weapon's effective range. Whenever the Exalt or an ally in range is struck by an attack, she may reflexively spend one or more of her swallows to create a Block against that attack's damage roll with a value equal to the swallows spent. Alternately, she may expend one or more swallows to momentarily increase the Block rating of a more traditional Block she or an ally in range has invoked by the number of swallows spent.

This Charm can be activated repeatedly to stack the number of swallows at the Dragon-Blood's disposal

At Essence 4+, Swallows Defend the Nest expands its elemental power. If the user is an Air Aspect, the difficulty drops to 7 in a sector dominated by powerful winds. If the user is an Earth Aspect, the difficulty drops to 7 in a sector full of labyrinthine stone darkness, such as in a deep cavern system or First Age tomb. If the user is a Fire Aspect, the difficulty drops to 7 in a sector full of smoke or blowing sand. If the user is a Water Aspect, the difficulty drops to 7 in a sector full of fog or heavy rain. If the user is a Wood Aspect, the difficulty drops to 6 in heavily wooded sectors.

A Word About Charm Logic

The **Exalted Demake** is a storytelling game. That is to say, a game (with rules) whose objective is to tell a cool story. Where there's an ambiguity between those elements, err on the side of the story making sense. I have opted not to make every Charm ten pages long with a million legalistic edge-case notices and riders because I believe in you. I trust that you have a brain and working neurons inside of it. I

believe that sometimes you'll bump into weird situations, and resolve them correctly. Here's what "correctly" means:

The logic of Swallows Defend the Nest is that you have a bunch of arrows or throwing knives lurking around on currents of Essence, waiting to jump out and deflect your enemies' attacks. That's cool! The Charm says you can use it with any ranged weapon, and you can, but what if your ranged weapon is like... a boomerang, which says it comes back after you throw it? Well, the Charm doesn't say anything special about boomerangs, so it's up to you to apply some logic. Either the boomerang comes back (in which case there's nothing waiting out there to intercept attacks and the Charm doesn't do anything), or the boomerang stays lurking out there to intercept attacks (in which case it doesn't come back until after it's used up deflecting an attack). Either answer is acceptable, but you *will* need to pick one, because the video-game-glitch answer (the boomerang hangs around out there *and* comes back, so now I guess there's multiple boomerangs?) doesn't make sense unless your story is heavily focused on Sidereals repairing causality breakdowns.

Three String Swordsman (••)

Resonance: Performance

The Exalt may transform music into both weapon and shield. So long as the Exalt carries some musical instrument and plays it, she is considered armed for battle. She may parry attacks by playing particularly loud and aggressive notes, causing blades to turn aside from her flesh and arrows to tumble from the air. She may conjure phantasmal attacks made of pure sound, which take the form of phantom flights of arrows, slashing blades, or charging beasts.

System: While using a musical instrument, the Exalt may treat Performance as a defensive Ability for the purpose of Defense calculation. Her instrument is a ranged weapon using Dexterity + Performance, with a base damage of 5 (lacerated), capable of attacking up to two zones away with the drawbacks of an Archery weapon. At the beginning of each scene in which she fights with an instrument, she must decide whether she wants to gain the benefits of the sword and board fighting style or the two-handed fighting style (in which case her musical attacks inflict 7 base damage).

Other Charms consider attacks made with Three String Swordsman to be Archery or Thrown attacks, and if another Charm (such as Swallows Defend the Nest) demands an Archery or Thrown roll while this Charm is active, Performance may be substituted in their place.

Quarry Revelation Technique (••)

Resonance: Survival

The Dragon-Blooded can read the shape her quarry leaves in the world; it is as though the land, the plants, the air itself conspire to lead her to her prey.

System: Once the character finds some evidence of a trail to follow, her player may spend 1 Mote to perfectly track the target for the next 24 hours. No roll is needed.

Wilds-Stalking Ways (••)

Resonance: Survival

The Exalt attunes her Essence to the natural world, becoming an instinctive stalker and killer.

System: While within a natural environment, or while surrounded by abundant plant life in an urban environment, the Dragon-Blooded may substitute Survival in place of her Awareness, Stealth, and Athletics Abilities.

By reflexively spending 1 Mote, for the rest of the scene she ignores all movement, environmental, and complex movement penalties due to natural terrain complications or thick foliage, and also lowers the difficulty of all attempts to conceal herself while within a natural or vegetation-heavy environment by -2; and, finally, while in an appropriate environment, increases her armor's Defense modifier by +1 (to a maximum of +1) and reduces its Fatigue modifier by -1 (to a minimum of 0).

Wound-Closing Touch (••)

Resonance: Medicine

The Dragon-Blooded's ministrations fortify the burgeoning life within her patient, urging his flesh to recover in record time.

System: After a mere scene of treating and ministering another character, the Dragon-Blooded may spend 1 Mote and roll Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty 6). Success allows her patient to convert one non-Aggravated Wound into a bruised Wound, while each full three successes beyond the first allows another non-Aggravated Wound to be converted in this fashion. Alternately, instead of converting other sorts of Wounds to bruised Wounds, she can heal bruised Wounds outright.

Blossoms of the Hanging-Tree (•••)

Resonance: Occult, Survival

A wind blows between worlds, stirring otherworldly petals from within the Exalt's anima. While her enemies touch these petals or smell their fragrance, they are afflicted by a weakening poison.

System: While the Exalt's anima banner is burning, her player may invoke this Charm by either using a simple action to roll Charisma + Survival against difficulty 8, or reflexively spending 1 Mote. All enemies within the same zone as the Exalt or a directly adjacent zone are afflicted by the petals' poison for as long as the character's anima remains active and they remain in an affected zone. This poison doesn't damage its victims, but does inflict a -3 dice penalty to all actions. To her allies and those she wishes to spare, the petals are sweetly fragrant but otherwise inert.

At Essence 3+, the Exalt may use a simple action to concentrate her toxic petals so that they only fill the zone she occupies until her next turn. Anyone taking a turn in that zone that she has not spared from their fragrance counts as being exposed to plant toxin (see p. XX).

Deep Roots Defy Storms (•••)

Resonance: Athletics, Martial Arts, Survival

The Exalt roots herself in place, tying her Essence into the greater cycle of Creation around her and drawing immense defensive power from that connection.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when using a hold steady swift action. This Charm lasts until the Exalt is Staggered, takes any swift action other than hold steady, or is knocked down or forcibly moved (such as by Crosswind Gale Offense).

Immediately upon activating Deep Roots Defy Storms, and then at the beginning of each additional round it remains active, the Exalt may choose one of the following benefits:

- Her Block is increased by +1 until the end of the Charm.
- Her Defense increases by +1 until the end of the Charm.
- Her Soak increases by +1 until the end of the Charm.
- Her Stagger Threshold increases by +1 until the end of the Charm.

Individual benefits may be chosen more than once to stack them, and the Dragon-Blooded may have a total of (Essence rating) benefits active at once. If she cannot sustain any more benefits, she can keep the ones she has chosen or drop an old benefit and exchange it for a new one at the beginning of each round.

This Charm draws on mighty forces and ending it abruptly is dangerous. To safely end this Charm, the Exalt must use an unrolled simple action to disentangle herself from the Essence-cycle of Creation. If she ends Deep Roots Defy Storms by simply using a swift action other than hold steady, by being Staggered, or by being forcibly knocked down or moved, she immediately suffers an Aggravated drained Wound.

Dread Infection Strike (•••)

Resonance: Archery, Medicine, Melee

The Exalt insinuates a thread of poisoned Essence into an attack, causing any wound it might inflict to fester.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote before making an attack. The target's Stagger Threshold is lowered against this attack (to a minimum of 1+) by the number of 10s on the attack roll rolled. If this attack inflicts a Wound, it is considered to be an "infected Wound."

No other Wounds can be healed while a target has an infected Wound; the infected Wound *must* heal first. Whenever the target ought to heal an infected Wound, they must make a reflexive (Stamina + Resistance) roll against difficulty 9. If they fail, the Wound does not heal, any time or effort spent healing it is wasted, and they gain a new drained Wound. This sequence repeats itself each time they try to heal the infected Wound until they finally succeed at the roll or succumb to the infection.

Elemental Halo's Mercy (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Ride

The Dragon-Blooded, through careful practice and refinement, learns to modulate her anima flux so that it discriminates between friend and foe. This visibly changes the texture and motion of her anima, making it calmer and clearer in those moments when she suppresses her flux's destructive power. Few Dynasts bother with the rigorous meditative training necessary to learn this Charm, instead expecting the world to get out of their way once their blood is up. It is more favored in Lookshy and Prasad. Lookshy cannot afford to depend wholly upon its alliance with the Marukani to answer its needs for heavy cavalry, while in Prasad mastery of this Charm is

regarded as a sign of advanced spiritual cultivation. To permit a mortal to breathe in one's spiritual aura without being destroyed by it is to bestow a priceless blessing.

System: The Dragon-Blooded no longer damages anything with her anima flux that she does not mean to destroy, allowing her to perform selective miracles such as sparing her mount while still lashing her foes with bristling Essence-thorns.

Most Beneficent Seed of the Five Dragons (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Medicine, Survival

Through the most careful cultivation of her Essence, the Dragon-Blooded awakens the seed of the other four elements within her soul. Early versions of the Immaculate Philosophy stressed mastery of this Charm as prerequisite to holding high office and commanding substantial numbers of other Dragon-Blooded, stressing the diversity of perspective it facilitates; it has fallen into obscurity under the influence of the Scarlet Empress, who preferred her subjects divided and feuding. The Charm has recently returned to popularity among the Dragon Caste of Prasad, who regard it as a display of advanced spiritual control.

System: By spending ten minutes in undisturbed meditation and spending 1 Mote, the Dragon-Blooded may change her aspect to that of a different element for one day. She exchanges her anima power for that of her new aspect, adjusts her aspect affinity and Essence fever accordingly, and all of her Charms treat her as though her assumed aspect was her native one. She retains her usual Aspect Abilities.

Purity of Mind Method (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Medicine

The Exalt may carefully infuse her Essence into a patient, smoothing out damage done to the psyche by trauma or hostile magic.

System: Spend 2 Motes, spend an hour slowly realigning the patient's Essence flows with a holistic treatment combining elements of acupuncture, deep-muscle massage, and efficacious incense, and make a contested roll of (Intelligence + Medicine) against the patient's Willpower (both at difficulty 8). If the Dragon-Blooded gains more successes, she may cleanse her patient of one Derangement (see p. XX) or remove the effects of one incident of mind or emotion-influencing magic, such as Hypnotic Tongue Technique (see p. XX) or Memory-Reweaving Discipline (see p. XX).

Ravenous Thorn Technique (•••)

Resonance: Archery, Melee

Imbuing a wooden weapon with the febrile Essence of unchecked growth, the Dragon-Blooded fills her target's flesh with rapidly-expanding roots and thorns that relentlessly seek the heart.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an attack with a wooden weapon. This attack is undodgeable. If it inflicts any damage, then the target's Stagger Threshold is lowered by -2 for the rest of the scene (to a minimum of 1+), and the next Wound the target suffers during the scene is automatically an Aggravated mauled Wound.

Spring Follows Winter (•••)

Resonance: Archery, Brawl

The Exalt's attacks express the same certainty as the turning of the seasons, smashing aside all defenses set in their way.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an attack. That attack is unblockable and gains Overwhelming (-1). If the Exalt is supporting another Exalt's group-attack Charm (such as Elemental Bolt Attack), she may reflexively spend 1 Mote to make the supported Charm unblockable and grant it Overwhelming (-1).

Chapter Five: The Lunar Exalted

At a bellow from a short man in a red jacket — their chief, Logen reckoned — the whole crowd turned, levelled their spears and began to advance across the square, heavy boots tramping together. Each man the same, armed the same, moving the same. It was quite a sight, all that shining metal moving steadily in bristling squares, spear-points glittering, like some great square hedgehog with two hundred legs. Deadly enough, no doubt, on a big flat space, against an imaginary enemy right in front. How it would work on broken rocks, in the tipping rain, in a tangled wood, Logen was less sure. Those men would tire quickly, in all that weight of armour, and if the squares could be broken, what would they do? Men who were used to always having others at their shoulder? Could they fight alone?

—Joe Abercrombie, *The Blade Itself*

The Lunars used to be defined by their oaths. They were the sacred guardian beasts of the First Age, the consorts and sworn servants of the Solar Exalted. When the Age fell, so did they. When the trauma of their failed and shattered pledges almost destroyed them, the strongest of Luna's Chosen came together and tore off bloody hunks of their fundamental nature, casting them aside in the name of survival. They remade themselves into beasts of the new era: mighty survivors, wild and strong and forever free, beholden now to only one oath: to never again wear chains.

Unfortunately, that transformation isn't yet complete. Creation is still caught in the turning of the wheel of ages, held back by those clinging to the crumbling edifice of the world that was, the stolen spoils of the Usurpation — the world the Lunars failed to protect. Until that legacy is gone, until history is free to flow unhindered, the Lunars are caught between states, striving toward the new but never quite getting there, the wounds in their nature never allowed to finish healing.

And so, they rise over the walls of stolen cities. They march from under the boughs of primeval forests. They lead those who have nothing to a reckoning with those who have everything. They forge sheep into wolves, and together tear down the rotting edifice of the Realm, feasting on anyone who tries to stop them.

Play a Lunar if you want...

- to wield the savage power of beasts.
- to be a master shapeshifter, donning a thousand skins to confound your foes.
- to rend your enemies with fang and claw in pursuit of an ancient vendetta.
- to be a living god, worshiped by mortals.
- to go where you wish and live as you please, without chains or constraint.

A Thousand Years of War

Once, long ago, the Lunar Exalted were something very different to what they are now. In the beginning they were defined by their oaths to the Solar Exalted. They were the agents and consorts of the rulers of Creation. They protected their lords and spouses. They hunted and executed the enemies of the Old Realm. They treated with the spirits on behalf of their patrons, and spied on those who might plot against Solar hegemony. They fixed their castes with pledges

sworn to the Chosen of the sun. They were the noble protectors, sacred guardian beasts, and fatal shadows that upheld an age of gilded splendors.

In the end, the Lunars failed, and that failure broke them. All of their oaths lay shattered around them, splitting their Essence asunder. The First Age ended in nights of blood and fire and terrible killing sorcery. Luna's children fled to the seething edges of Creation under the onslaught of the usurpers and lingered there for a generation. At first they thought to merely to lick their wounds, regroup, and counterattack; but as months became years and their liege-spouses failed to reincarnate, as the totality of their failure became impossible to deny, they were struck down by the torment of their shattered purpose. Their broken oaths strangled them. Their very nature rebelled. Their shapeshifting prowess, Luna's most sacred gift, became something rancid and feral under the Wyld's acid caress. Their fangs turned inwards, devouring memory, identity, sanity. They found themselves transforming into ravening, maddened horrors.

The wisest and mightiest of Luna's heroes came together in their goddess's holiest fane and enacted powerful sorcerous rituals to save themselves. In desperation, they shattered the fundamental nature of their Exaltation. They tore the anchor-bolts of their broken oaths from the gory heart of their power. They gutted their own fundamental shape-of-being. They amputated three of their ancient castes as a beast gnaws off its leg to escape the hunter's trap. Scarred and wounded, but no longer defined by their debts and obligations to the dethroned and absent Solars, the Lunar Exalted gathered up their broken natures and forged themselves anew. They painstakingly recreated the two most primal of their old castes, then constructed an entirely new third caste from the remnants of all that they had cast aside. They remade themselves, not as servants, but survivors. Never again, the Lunars swore, would they wear chains. Never again would they be the gilded slaves of all-conquering heroes. Their claws and fangs and great feral hearts now belonged to them, and them alone.

Alas, the world would not permit the Lunars to wholly escape the shadow of their bondage. Rather than allowing what they had cast down to fall into ash and ruin, the Dragon-Blooded and their Sidereal puppeteers salvaged what they could of the Realm. They put out the fires, scrubbed off the worst of the soot, defaced the Solars' monuments, rewrote history, and claimed the glories and splendors of the First Age for themselves. They named themselves the rightful rulers of the Realm — the Realm which the Lunars had been entrusted to uphold and protect — and thus the legitimate inheritors of all Creation.

It was not the lies that the eldest of the Society of the Moon could not stand, though they left a bitter taste. It was not the audacity, either, for the Dragon-Blooded were relative children next to the ancient beasts of the margin and were being misinformed as to their proper place, while the Sidereals had never for a moment in Lunar memory concerned themselves with propriety, only necessity; who could rightly expect upright behavior from children or oracles? Nor was it the outrage of seeing the usurpers occupy the thrones of their murdered spouses, or seize titles and lands and legacies to which they had no honest claim. The punishment for such affronts might have been dispensed in a few paltry decades, had that been the beginning and end of the matter.

No, it was the preservation of the tottering husk of the Realm itself that the Lunars could not abide or overlook. It was the suspension of a fallen age, denying it a true ending and new beginning. To be clear, this was not a matter of outrage, but a festering wound of the spirit. Delaying the turning of the wheel of ages trapped the Lunar Exalted in a world still defined by what they had been, what they had lost, what they now had not entirely escaped. It made the old

wounds in their Exaltations break open and weep. It provoked dreams of the Usurpation and the horrible decades that followed.

A consortium of potent elders and their like-minded followers came to an agreement: all of it would have to go. Every ancient city which stood under a stolen name; every miracle of geomancy which empowered the usurpers; all of the wonders their former masters had built and which the Dragon-Blooded now wielded in their petty wars; the many titles and rights that had been seized through murder: they must do away with it all. Only when the Realm had been reduced to rubble and ashes and lived only in cautionary songs and memorial sagas might the Lunars be truly free to finish their transformation into beasts of a new age. Only then could they escape their legacy. So decided, the Lunar Exalted went to war.

Those who actively participate in this war are known as the Silver Pact. In the Time of Tumult, they make up roughly half of the moon's children. The Silver Pact fosters powerful raiding cultures among the margin-folk of the outer Threshold. They bring forth beastfolk and mighty Moon-Touched heroes. They raise up war dominions, and then throw them against the might of the Realm. Sometimes the war dominions succeed, and the Silver Pact captures new territory. Usually, a war dominion breaks against the Realm's superior might. This is acceptable. War dominions are replaceable. The First Age inheritance that underlies the Realm's strength is not. So long as the Silver Pact can deplete their enemies' strength in each battle, they have taken one step toward their ultimate goal: a world in which they can be free to dream a new identity for themselves.

What is This?

The Lunar Exalted have had strongly varying presentations across the three editions of **Exalted**. This section establishes the basic narrative and stylistic assumptions of the **Exalted Demake**. It draws heavily from a mixture of the feral gods of First Edition and the eternal warfare of Third Edition, while largely eschewing the society-building and factionalism of Second Edition.

The Lunar Exalted

Once, Luna sent her blessing to those who lived in service to unworthy masters: bloodsworn warriors, bondsmen, banner-bearers, slaves, scullery maids, heralds, priests. Compelled by an unfinished blessing, they sought out the sovereign rulers of Creation and found completion in swearing service to one of the mightiest exemplars to ever live.

No more. The Silver Lady, it seems, approves of her Chosen's self-reinvention as the beasts of the margin, for now Lunar Exaltation favors those touched by the strange: outsiders, outcasts, iconoclasts, rebels... odd men out. It's drawn to those who don't fit into the place the world provided for them. In one part of Creation, this may mean someone whose ambition doesn't align with their society's expectations for their station of birth or gender: the noble second son who seeks his own glory rather than becoming his brother's retainer, the daughter of the West who dreams of blood and salt and steel rather than the mending of clothes and fishing nets. Elsewhere, someone may be shunned because of the Wyld's touch, or due to tribal taboos, or simply because they speak their mind more freely than those in power would like. A loner who lives deep in the wilderness, disparaging the company of others, is another sort of deviant.

Sometimes a Lunar-to-be was simply born under inauspicious omens. She is always viewed askance, whatever her place in the world.

Furthermore, the Argent Exaltation seeks the exceptional: the mighty, the clever, the insightful. It is unconcerned with *success* or *accomplishment* in this regard, only *raw potential*. Great learning is of less value than a keen and adaptable mind. A cunning beggar will draw the eye of the Fickle Goddess long before a complacent, dim-witted maharaja whose only virtue is an inheritance of wealth and authority. The Lunars have recast themselves as hardy survivors in a hostile world. Those who are weak, stupid, and plain might gain a Lunar's sympathy, but they will never taste the blessings of Luna's power.

The Feral Exaltation

Without exception, Lunar Exaltation occurs in life-threatening circumstances. A hero stands outnumbered and overwhelmed on the battlefield. Or she's lost in a trackless forest, with howls shivering through the pines and growing closer. Or she's being led toward the noose, one strong hand holding each of her arms. Or she stands before a haughty god and sees that he is about to use her to demonstrate his displeasure to her people. In this moment... Luna watches. Luna waits.

The candidate must make the choice to live. To fight. To struggle against her end. To reach for life, even if there is no obvious way out. She raises her blade and fights on. She runs, or hides, or conceives a plan, however desperate, to escape the woods and whatever's hunting her. If nothing else, she screams her defiance until her voice breaks. If she assents to the noose, if she bows her head before the god, then her moment passes and her fate is whatever the world decides. But if she fights, *if she bears her fangs against fate...*

Sometimes Exaltation arrives in a surge of adrenaline and a blast of pure instinct that pushes the Lunar to greater exertion, that floods her limbs with power and her thoughts with clarity and her words with eloquence. Sometimes, *most times*, she shifts into another skin. Silver radiance erupts across her body. She overcomes. She escapes. She triumphs. And then, waiting for her once she's safe, she finds the Silver Lady.

Sometimes it's not like that. Sometimes Luna puts in her appearance right off the bat. Sometimes she steps in to befuddle a panel of judges with eloquent arguments and leads her new champion to safety. Sometimes she arrives as a great silver ram and permits the Exalt to ride her into battle. Sometimes she is a hawk who tears out the eyes of those leading her Chosen to the gallows.

Always, always, Luna personally attends the Exaltation of her Chosen, either during or after its most exciting moments. Sometimes she lingers to answer a question or two. Often she departs with little more than a smile or a kiss on the forehead to mark her approval. Rarely does she present the same face or form to any two Lunars: she may be any sort of woman or man or beast, and on rare occasions assumes a presentation beyond even those broad categories.

Usually, Luna suggests that the young Lunar may want to head off in a particular direction, or seek a specific location. If they do so, they invariably find an older Lunar to induct them into the Society of the Moon.

The Society of the Moon

The Lunar Exalted generally consider themselves part of a widespread brotherhood united by shared experience and Luna's blessing. Those actively dedicated to the destruction of the Realm

and the cleansing-away of all remnants of the First Age so that they and Creation can emerge into a new age are known as the Silver Pact. Those who eschew membership in the Silver Pact have no formal name. They're simply independent Lunars pursuing their own interests and ambitions.

Both independents and the Silver Pact exist beneath the broader umbrella of the Society of the Moon: the beasts of the margin, the universal brotherhood that is understood to unite all of Luna's Chosen. The Society's interests are, in descending order of primacy, the survival and freedom of the Lunar Exalted, the maintenance of a continuity of history and identity for the Children of the Fickle Lady, and advancing the interests of its members. That last item is key to all the priorities above it.

The one universal and absolute expectation the Society of the Moon imposes on all of its members is that everyone will drop everything when Luna inducts a new Exalt into their ranks. Often the Silver Lady points her young Chosen directly toward a qualified No Moon; if not, whoever first finds a fresh Exalt is honor-bound to bring her to someone who can handle her education and fix her caste. Blowing off the induction of a new Lunar to focus on other matters, or pawning her off on a less qualified Exalt if she came to you first, are both considered tremendously shameful acts, tantamount to spitting in Luna's face.

The Cage

When the Scarlet Empress declared herself sovereign ruler of Creation, she specifically did so by styling herself *Empress of the Realm*. When most people of Creation hear the words "the Realm," they think of the Scarlet Empress's world-spanning empire. Those who make references to the ancient polity ruled by the Solar Exalted tend to refer to it as the *Old Realm*, or simply use "the First Age" to refer to the era and its government interchangeably, but according to the conceit of the Scarlet Dynasty, these empires are one and the same. The same, original Realm has *always* ruled Creation: first under the ultimately flawed and unstable genius of the Solar Anathema, later under a succession of Dragon-Blooded Shoguns, and finally under the blessed leadership of the Empress.

The Society of the Moon loathes this legal fiction. This isn't a dogmatic or semantic quibble — most Lunars could care less about such things — nor even a matter of personal disgust. Certainly, for the oldest Lunars, it's like seeing a stranger parading a dead spouse's corpse around town on the end of a pole, pretending to chat up the neighbors in their voice, but that's not the heart of the issue. After all, most Lunars were born long after almost everyone involved in the Usurpation died. No, the crux of the problem is this:

The Lunar Exalted were once defined as *guardians of the Realm*. This was not an empty ceremonial title; it was the fundamental organizing principle around which their Exaltation was designed. Their castes were fixed by the kind of oaths of service they swore to support and uphold the Solar hegemony over all Creation. The Realm is not merely a collection of lines on a map or a name in history books, it is the central concept around which the entirety of the First Age of Man was organized. The Realm is the anchor-bolt of vast amounts of infrastructural sorcery, enduring pacts between Creation and its enemies, and innumerable gods in Yu-Shan devote their immortal existences to embodying its various properties. The Realm, in most ways that matter, *is* the *corpus* and *spiritus* of the First Age.

The Dragon-Blooded crawl like maggots within its tattered carcass, refusing to let it lay down and finally die.

Lunars generally use “the Realm” to refer to the fallen edifice created and ruled by the Solar Exalted, which should have died with its rulers. Its direct successor is always the Shogunate or Dragon-Blooded Shogunate, and the Scarlet Empress’s... *creation*... is generally referred to around outsiders as “the empire,” “the Scarlet Empire,” “the Scarlet Dynasty,” or “the Scarlet Realm” if the Lunar is trying to stay incognito in hostile company. Among the brotherhood of their own kind, Lunars name it the Cage. The Cage traps them in a rotting epilogue to a fallen history. The Cage holds them back from the full freedom of reinvention. Referring to the Cage as “the Realm” in the average Lunar’s presence is a good way to instantly drop the temperature of the conversation by several degrees.

By keeping the Realm’s name and works and infrastructure alive, the Dragon-Blooded have made it impossible for the Lunars to completely relinquish their old identity — the identity they mutilated themselves to escape, because it was *killing them*. The Realm, which encompasses *all Creation*, fell... but then it didn’t, not fully; just enough to leave the Lunars no place in it. It’s like a fishhook caught in every Lunar’s soul. That’s the Cage. Some learn to live with it and pursue their own goals and interests... but many simply can’t. They can’t rest until there’s nothing left to rake up the coals at the bottom of their hearts. That’s the Silver Pact. Even outside of the Pact, all Lunars understand that they are trapped within the Cage, an annex to a dead history which smothers the Second Age in its unquiet shadow. A Lunar may devote herself to amassing treasures, or glory, or knowledge; or she may take to the woods and live as a beast; or she may become a champion of her mortal kin, advancing their interests; she may do any number of things that have nothing to do with making war against the Dragon-Blooded and their stolen empire... but at all times, in she feels the bar of the Cage around her, hemming her in.

The Lunars are beasts of an unborn era.

The Silver Pact

Blades at the gate. Fangs in the night. An unquenchable rage for a fallen age. The Silver Pact is the eternal and implacable nemesis of the Realm, the great grinding wheel of claws that wears away at the stability of the great world-spanning empire of the Dragon-Blooded.

But what does that actually *mean*?

In practice, the Silver Pact is more of a mentorship network and mutual aid society than a formal army. Lunars who wish to participate in its larger goals provide service to its more powerful members in exchange for introductions to other like-minded Pact members or useful supernatural contacts, training, mentorship, and grants of resources. The elders of the Silver Pact largely refrain from trying to impose a top-down battle plan on the organization. Given the sort of people Luna chooses to become her champions, it would be a comedy at best: Lunars are good at self-motivated improvisation, not following orders.

For similar reasons, those same Lunars discourage insularity within the Pact. Only a few hardline ultraconservatives are unwilling to deal with the broader body of the Society of the Moon, although it’s not uncommon for Pact Lunars to be less gracious and more mercenary in favor-trading with those outside of the organization. And while they’re certainly not shy about making active recruitment efforts, the Pact’s elders consider it foolish to try to strongarm young Exalts

into a war they're not committed to, for largely the same reasons they don't try to hammer the Pact into a top-down command structure.

Indeed, membership in the Silver Pact is often a fluid thing. It's not unusual for an otherwise-independent Lunar to temporarily participate in or contribute to the organization's war efforts in order to repay a debt, secure the assistance of a hardline Pact elder, or to join forces with Pact-affiliated Lunars in order to destroy a mutual enemy. At other times, an ostensibly Pact-sworn Lunar may drift away from the organization's war efforts for decades or even centuries to pursue other matters. A few notable elders have publicly sworn off the Silver Pact's goals in disgust or despair, only to return to the fold decades later after finding no other suitable outlet for their rage.

Goals of the Silver Pact

At a fundamental level, the purpose of the Silver Pact is to organize groups of Lunars for war. Usually, but not always, that war is waged against the Realm as a function of the Pact's fundamental ideology.

The core and ultimate goal of the Silver Pact is the liberation of the Lunar Exalted as a people and as individuals by allowing the First Age to finally die and be put to proper rest. During the great ritual which remade the Lunars at the end of the First Age, the elders who went on to form the Silver Pact sensed a vast potential lurking in their Essence: a possibility for further evolution into something beyond oath-sworn guardians and helpmates or rugged survivors with no purpose beyond endurance. They did their best to unlock that potential, but ultimately failed. Most have come to believe that failure was not due to any shortcoming on their own part, but rather a result of the incomplete demise of the First Age. Because remnants of that fallen era continue to endure, so too do remnant bonds upon the nature and potential of the Lunars. Bonds... and scars.

Younger Lunars, those who were not alive during the reforging of the castes, are generally unconcerned with future potential and more fixated on perfecting their liberation in the *now*. They feel the jagged edges of unburied history grinding against their Essence and wish to be free. What shape they and the world will take in the face of ultimate freedom is of primarily academic interest; mostly, they just want to stop living in a world that feels, in every hour of every day, like the bars of a cage.

As such, the destruction of the Cage is the largest and most difficult goal of the Silver Pact. So long as the Dragon-Blooded prop up the tottering shell of the Creation-spanning empire the Lunars once defended, the Silver Pact feels they can never pass from beneath its shadow and discover what they might become in a clean, new world. This is a clear goal, but not a simple one. Luckily, most of the steps necessary to achieve it are also independently necessary elements of the Silver Pact's agenda.

Since the liberation of the Lunar Exalted depends upon laying the First Age to rest, another way to articulate the grand goal of the Silver Pact is *to do away with the remnants of the Old Realm*. As such, the Pact seeks to steal, sabotage, or lay waste to any polities, machinery, or sorceries of the First Age which continue to recognizably operate under their original identity and purpose. In pursuit of this goal, they steal artifacts, deface or destroy infrastructural Manses, confound ancient sorcery, disrupt bindings, and conquer or lay waste to ancient cities. It was for this reason that upon seizing the great libraries and universities of Sperimin, Raksi renamed the city in her own honor and drove the scholars into the jungles to be devoured by wild animals. It is for this

reason that Ma-Ha-Suchi's lair is nameless, its frescoes defaced. It is for this reason that Lunars tear down the walls of cities they conquer, carry powerful war-artifacts thousands of miles away before burying or disassembling them, destroy ancient dams, and disrupt 2,000-year-old climate regulation systems. Such vandalism not only weakens the infrastructure upon which the modern empires of the Dragon-Blooded and lesser powers are dependent, it is a goal in and of itself.

Because the Silver Pact is a subset of the greater Society of the Moon rather than an organization wholly separate from it, its members also sometimes bend the Pact's efforts and resources toward the personal goals of independent Lunars in order to repay debts, to honor the wishes of a powerful elder, or simply because they agree that the proposed joint action is useful or necessary. As a result, the Silver Pact sometimes mobilizes against dangerously powerful Fair Folk courts, hunts and thwarts escaped demons, gathers to punish upstart gods, investigates heavy Sidereal activity, or reacts to miscellaneous threats such as the massing revel in Dajaz or a theoretical invasion from Autochthonia.

Reasons for Membership

The war against the Scarlet Dynasty is of course deeply personal for the oldest Lunars, those who lived through the fall of the Realm. Their lieges and spouses were murdered. They watched their comrades among the Society of the Moon fall to the Wyld's madness. Their world burned, and rather than being put decently to rest with a respectful funeral service, they have watched its murders parade its corpse about for a thousand years, bedecking themselves in stolen titles, honors, and finery.

Were this the only foundation for the Silver Pact, its crusade would have sputtered out into the personal vendettas of a handful of elders centuries ago. It is not. Many Lunars find their way into the organization's ranks, for many reasons.

A few are simply recruited by older members, convinced to take up a struggle not truly their own by silver-tongued ideologues. They may not realize there are other things they could do with their newfound power. Most Pact elders discourage this sort of recruitment because it rarely sticks in the long-term and often alienates young Lunars against having future dealings with the Pact, but habitual manipulators will habitually manipulate and so it happens nonetheless.

Some Lunars, of course, are motivated entirely by personal grudges of their own. Many grew up in margin-cultures, making war against the Realm and its client-states for simple survival or to avoid enslavement. Others came from within the satrapies, and watched the Realm crush their people under its heel in the name of profit and power. Others still had no particular thoughts on the Realm until the Wyld Hunt rode against them and forced them to flee to survive, abandoning everything they had, and now seethe with resentment.

These, too, are thin reasons. While some who come to the Pact for retribution become embroiled in an eternal cycle of reciprocal revenge, those with such motives often only join for a matter of decades, prosecute a war or two, and then move on to other affairs once they have seen enough blood to satisfy their rancor. The Realm is a vast opponent with seemingly inexhaustible resources, after all.

Ultimately, most hardline Silver Pact devotees work toward its goals because they feel they must. They are motivated by a sick ache of the soul, an inherited trauma within their Exaltation itself. They feel the eyes of their past lives upon them when they sleep. They feel an unaddressed lack when they call upon Luna's changing gifts: a stymied potential to become... something

more. And a rage: a soul-deep fury which comes again and again when the Lunar is faced with what has been stolen from her, with her inheritance of shattered oaths, with the defilement of all she once failed to protect.

Each of the Lunar Exalted has inherited a blessing of power, and with it, a history and a legacy. That legacy is tarnished. Every day, that history is defiled. The First Age haunts them. They join the Silver Pact in order to lay it to rest, if not for decency's sake, then to attain some measure of peace.

Tools and Methods

The Silver Pact largely uses the same tools and ethos that are popular among the broader body of the Society of the Moon: stolen artifacts, hit-and-run and terror tactics, espionage, assassination, and all the other improvisational techniques to which Lunar Essence lends itself. The Pact *does* have one tool that is all its own and for which it is particularly known and feared: Lunar war dominions.

In short, war dominions are cultures, societies, tribes, kingdoms, and other polities of the margin which have been co-opted by one or more of the Lunar Exalted, either openly or covertly, and repurposed for open war against the Realm. As both former wardens of the First Age and eternal foes of the modern Cage that replaced it, the Silver Pact has made a great study of the nature of empire. They have concluded that no empire can exist without creating an inexhaustible supply of people who despise it. This, then, is the limitlessly renewable resource from which the Pact forges its premiere weapon of conflict.

In most cases, one or more Lunars openly rules a war dominion as a living god, posing as either a literal divinity or as a divinely empowered culture-hero. The distinction generally doesn't matter; in either case, the Lunar builds a cult around herself and becomes the beneficiary of widespread worship. Usually she bribes, sweet-talks, or strongarms local spirits into supporting the dominion with blessings or even direct battlefield assistance. She encourages the society to embrace martial virtues and to raise up a powerful and numerous warrior class, often one that cannot possibly be sustained by any means other than viciously raiding the dominion's neighbors. And — the last part is often the easiest step — she inculcates or stokes an existing hatred of the Realm, or at least of the nearest Realm-dominated satrapy.

This is the true and ultimate purpose of any war dominion: to act as a spear hurled at the Realm's throat. Sometimes this gambit succeeds, and howling warriors shatter one more bar of the Cage, driving its legions into retreat and claiming its lands as their own. Much more frequently, the dominion either prosecutes decades of skirmishes that slowly bleed the Realm's strength without ever culminating in a decisive conflict, or suffers crushing defeat when that conflict finally manifests. This bothers the Silver Pact very little. War dominions are disposable weapons by design. They're much less difficult to raise and outfit than a Realm legion. In particular, if they can force the Realm to expend any irreplaceable First Age magic in the course of destroying them, or can damage or destroy magical infrastructure the Realm has no way to easily repair or replace, then they have served their purpose. Empires exist to brutalize the conquered and to push their borders outward. There will always be another band of bitter refugees and outlaws on the Realm's edges, or another marginalized culture at the empire's borders that fears being conquered next. War dominions are easily replaced. Warstriders are not.

Victory, curiously, can be one of the most difficult things for the Silver Pact to handle when deploying a war dominion. While the Pact is united in the goal of breaking the Cage, its members' *reasons* for pursuing that goal differ widely, and it has little internal ideological consensus. One Lunar warlord may despise the machinations of empire and style herself a liberator of those lands the Realm has conquered. Another is merciless in victory and allows her troops to run amok, burn a defeated satrapy to the ground, and oversee atrocities largely indistinguishable from those of the Realm itself. It's not unknown for a Lunar pack to descend into open conflict between its members in the wake of an unexpected triumph.

Lunar Philosophy

The Society of the Moon has very few formal laws as such, but it does have a culture, and within that culture, some accepted norms and standards.

Brotherhood

First and foremost, the Society of the Moon views itself as a brotherhood: an extended family. The Lunar Exalted are not merely strangers with a common body of supernatural powers. They are united by Luna's blessing. They are the inheritors (and victims) of the legacy of the First Age — and, in the eyes of the Silver Pact, thus duty-bound to lay its unquiet spirit to rest. The beasts of the margin are the keepers of the true history of the Exalted and thus Creation, undistorted by Sidereal lies or Dragon-Blooded propaganda. These are meaningful, substantial ties and sacred burdens.

Lunars are generally Exalted from the outcast and the reviled. They are people who were turned away by the families their societies of birth said should have cared for them. Or, if they had such support, it was stripped from them when they were forced to flee to the margins to avoid the Wyld Hunt. In the Society of the Moon, they have been granted a new family, a fellowship of beast-gods, their innate value ratified by the judgment of the goddess of the moon. To spit on any other Lunar and turn them away out of hand is to insult Luna's decision to grant them her blessing.

As such, before anything else, the Society of the Moon is one of mutual aid and fellowship. *Most* Lunars accept that their peers have a right to approach them and to request parley. *Most* Lunars believe that if a state of enmity does not exist between themselves and another of Luna's Chosen, they owe their brother or sister at least the basic trappings of short-term hospitality, including food and water, a safe place to sleep, and shelter if they are being pursued by enemies outside of the Society. It is *also* commonly held that calling upon this last form of hospitality incurs a standing debt, and that a Lunar's willingness to honor her debts is one of the primary measures of her worth.

Face

Reputation is important within the Society of the Moon. Most Lunars like to stop and gossip when they encounter others of their kind. One of the most popular topics of this gossip is who among the Society can be relied upon to repay their debts, who is generous to their brethren, who is miserly, who can be trusted and who cannot. Without a body of formal laws or any mechanisms to enforce those few which do exist by broad consensus, a Lunar's worth is nothing more and nothing less than what her peers believe it to be.

Broadly speaking, Lunars care nothing for technicalities or precedent. If one Lunar comes to another's doorstep, and the second believes her guest to be a liar, oathbreaker, and liability to her

safety, no one will think less of her for chasing him away without giving him even the most cursory hearing or greeting.

Instinct

The Lunar Exalted are predators. Even one whose Feral Heart sees her wearing the shape of a stag or a hare receives, along with the power to harness her own Essence, a beast's killing instincts. The key to Lunar shapeshifting is blood and death. It is predation. It is the slaying of something alive and the devouring of its blood and flesh. This is the one historical constant of Lunar Exaltation, from the time when they were oath-forged servants to their current incarnation as history-shattering beast-gods: they have always been hunters. Once they hunted at the behest of their lords. Now they do so for themselves.

As a result, even Lunars from sheltered upbringings usually become accustomed pretty quickly to thinking of violence as a viable and acceptable tool for solving any sort of problem, from matters of basic survival to settling interpersonal disputes.

This doesn't make Lunars a pack of casual murderers, it should be noted, particularly within the fellowship of the Society. Predators kill, certainly, but they also learn to treat violence as a language and a resource expenditure. A successful hunter doesn't pick fights that will leave her injured or risk her life, nor does she savage her packmates. As such, while Lunars may be cavalier with the lives of enemies or outsiders, it's very uncommon for matters within the Society of the Moon to escalate beyond the odd temper-driven brawl or corrective beating.

Faith

Every Lunar has met their patron goddess at least once. Many owe her their life. As a whole, the Society of the Moon does not have to wonder if Luna approves of their activities. They *know* she does.

Most Lunars exhibit a deep and genuine love for the Fickle Lady, a position broadly encouraged by their peers. It was by her judgment that each of them was made more than a mere victim of the world's cruel whims. It is her nature that coils in their Essence. She granted them power, fangs, and freedom. If she also once bound them in chains... well, she did not object when they set themselves free, did she?

Luna rarely seeks out or contacts her Chosen after their Exaltation, seeming content to let them set their own goals and itinerary as they see fit, but *rarely* does not mean *never*. Most of the truly ancient elders have at least one story of a grand moot where numerous Chosen of the Moon met to swap stories and trade favors only to realize at the end of the tale-telling that there was one more figure around the fire than there should have been, who then came forward to exchange a few words with those present. Ma-Ha-Suchi and Raksi, in particular, are considered nigh-unimpeachable in the eyes of the Silver Pact because Luna has been heard to praise the former's warcraft and the latter's hoarding of wisdom on behalf of her people.

On other occasions, Lunars have sought out the Silver Goddess on the streets of Heaven during the Carnival of Meeting. Doing so is always something of a calculated challenge, testing some quality or other of the Lunar to reach their goddess; but those who persevere find Luna to be knowledgeable of her Chosen's activities and quick to dispense minor gifts of helpful wisdom or old secrets.

Most Lunars practice one or more forms of ritual worship of the moon goddess. These take diverse forms, from the sacrifice of enemies to the creation of beautiful artworks in Luna's name, but by far the most common is the dedication of the Sacred Hunt for heart's blood to Luna's glory. Particularly devout Lunars will swear to forsake certain potential advantages (such as refusing the use of artifacts, locking themselves to a single predator-form, swearing to kill with a single arrow, and so on) when undertaking particularly noteworthy or difficult hunts, making their hardship into an act of devotion.

Responsibility

Up to a point, the Society of the Moon largely believes that might makes right, or at least that its members have a right to exercise the power that they have cultivated. In practice, what this means is that if a Lunar's sense of justice, propriety, or integrity is offended, she is considered to have the right to remonstrate with whoever it is that has offended her. If she lacks the strength to do anything but issue a sternly-worded condemnation, that is usually her problem. If she finds that she has offended an elder capable of breaking her in half, then figuring out some way to mollify his wrath before he does precisely that is also her problem.

In a vacuum, this would be a brutal and callous philosophy, and to some extent it is precisely that. More than half of the Society of the Moon is engaged in constant, grinding warfare, either against the Realm or against other hostile forces. It has little patience or sympathy for those who cannot look after themselves. That being said, Lunars *don't* exist in a vacuum. They exist within a Society which values brotherhood and face. They generally have social ties: to former mentors who regard them fondly; to packmates, past and present; to those they have helped along the way.

While the Society may have little use for the weak, it has even less for those who habitually prey upon their brethren without justification. A powerful Lunar who exerts herself to claim the domain of a weaker member of the Society... once... is simply exercising her prerogative and any grudges she creates in the process are a personal matter. One who frequently attacks and steals from Lunars much younger and weaker than herself risks being viewed as a problem by the Society as a whole, and drawing down censure from an even mightier elder or a coalition of less-powerful Lunars. Where the Society of the Moon is concerned, "censure" usually means being beaten nigh unto death and thrown into a river, or even killed outright if the parties involved are sufficiently incensed.

Territory

Lunars are intrinsically territorial. This tendency is present in their Essence from the earliest days after Exaltation, and while other aspects of Essence fever are generally tamed over time, the territorial urge only deepens as the centuries pass. As a result, the Society of the Moon tends to bias many of its social judgments less around *what happened* than *where it happened*.

In general, a Lunar is considered to have enormous latitude to behave as she wishes while within territory she has claimed, defended, and clearly marked as her own. Most agree that she is owed some amount of deference by visitors, even if those visitors are of substantially greater age, power, and status. As such, it's very common for elders to demand that much younger Lunars seek them out on their home turf rather than entering an upstart's territory themselves, or to send in a younger envoy to parley on their behalf, to avoid the social necessity of showing deference to a weaker Exalt.

It is understood by the Society that powerful elder Lunars can be assumed to have equally powerful enemies, and thus substantial security concerns where their territory is concerned. As such, it's considered an act of considerable forbearance for them *not* to immediately attack any young Lunar that shows up on their doorstep unannounced and uninvited, much less to permit entry and to extend their hospitality. This is why, for example, Raksi's abominable table manners and habit of sporting with her guests earns her no censure and loses her no face in the eyes of the Society of the Moon. Considering the scope of the treasures held within its libraries, anyone who heads to Mahalanka without learning about its mistress well in advance is thought to deserve whatever fate befalls them; indeed, there are more than a few Lunars who consider the Queen of Fangs indulgent and permissive. She hasn't eaten an unannounced guest in almost a hundred years, after all.

Self-Sufficiency

As a general matter, most Lunars place a great deal of emphasis on self-sufficiency, preferring to rely only on Luna's gifts and their own personal talents. As such, instruction in and knowledge of martial arts and sorcery are generally much more highly valued than possession of artifacts, hearthstones, Manses, or Demesnes.

This mindset is particularly emphasized by the Silver Pact, which stresses that war dominions and all other infrastructural tools are ultimately disposable assets. The Cage is tied down to protecting roads, cities, anchorages, and other fixed locations. The Fair Folk are bound to their freeholds. Lunars suffer no such restrictions. In extremis, a Lunar can always transform into a bird or a fish and simply leave. If she needs to kill, she can always resort to her own claws and fangs. If she loses an army, a magical sword, or a palace, so what? Creation is full of armies, magical swords, and palaces, ripe for the taking. A Lunar's life and experiences are the only things she has which are irreplaceable.

In practice, of course, nearly every Lunar harbors exceptions to this philosophy: friends, lovers, children, cherished heirlooms, bitter vendettas, long-held territory. Even the Silver Pact has committed itself to a grinding, bloody stand-up fight over Luna's fane on the Caul. But broadly, the Society of the Moon believes in the wisdom of being able and willing to cut everything loose at need. Its enemies are highly dependent upon infrastructure. The Lunar Exalted are not, and are urged not to transform strength into weakness by over-committing to the defense of things that can always be replaced.

Ferocious Purpose

There is a concept which has become broadly popular within the ranks of the Society of the Moon since the days of the Great Contagion. The idea is not original to the Lunar Exalted — it has been proposed by a number of mortal philosophers, discovered and discarded and rediscovered over the centuries — but among Lunars, it was popularized by His Divine Lunar Presence, Sha'a Oka, and underpins the concept of not only the war dominions, but many ideas of the Society of the Moon in general.

The notion, in short, is this: Great deeds have their roots in great hunger. Mighty empires are not forged by the comfortable and the well-fed. The Solar Realm did not begin with the dreams of gilded philosophers in perfumed gardens, but with the courage and ruthlessness of the grim survivors of a reality-shattering war as they scattered into the wilderness on campaigns of fearsome conquest. The Haslanti League, the Delzahn confederacy, the League of Many Rivers: all of these started as coalitions of bold, ferocious outsiders, nomads, rebels, and survivors united

in a common purpose. Even the hated Cage began as the harried survivors of the Great Contagion and Wyld Crusade rallying to the banner of a powerful leader to restore their shattered fortunes. This fierce sense of purpose, many Lunars believe, arises from people who have nothing and no one to turn to except one another. When they close ranks against the rest of the world, united by a shared brotherhood and common goals, no force in Creation can stand before them.

But once that brotherhood sets aside its goals in the name of consolidation and comfort, this ferocious drive and singular will fades like mist before the rising sun. With wealth and comfort comes personal ambition, corruption, and fear that one's brothers will steal one's treasures for themselves. As crusade gives way to empire, sophistication summons an inevitable and nigh-incurable rot. This process, the Society of the Moon believes, is what ultimately brought low the Old Realm, destroyed the Solar Exalted, and mutilated the Lunars themselves. They now observe the principle in action once again as the Scarlet Empress's creation lurches toward all-consuming civil war, cannibalizing its own strength and abandoning all pretense of honor or principle in preparation for naked grappling for power and advantage, brother against brother. The invincible unity that once drove these mighty empires — "Ten thousand dragons stand as one!" — is a long-faded memory.

So it is that the Society of the Moon urges its members to value only brotherhood and personal honor. So it is that they abandon their triumphant war dominions once the first signs of rot appear; or scourge them with the fires of religious revolution and drive them to fresh crusades before they can grow comfortable and decadent (or, occasionally, scourge them with literal fire and steel, using them as a whetstone to sharpen the next generation of hungry young war dominions). The Lunars best trust those who have nothing, finding their motives clear and easy to rely upon. This is why they choose to walk as gods, the better to wield the singular fervor of the margin folk as a killing blade.

Freedom

In the end, Luna's blessing is one of freedom. The Lunar Exalted abhor all chains: not merely those which tie them to their painful history, but any constraints which attempt to dictate how they may live, what they must think, or what goals they must pursue. As a result, it is understood that Lunars have the right to reject the accepted wisdom and standards of their peers, and even to walk away from the Society of the Moon altogether should they wish to do so and believe themselves to have the strength to go it alone.

While very few go so far as to entirely shun their brethren, it's not uncommon for Lunars to buck one or more of the Society of the Moon's norms. As a result, there are Lunars who work tirelessly to accumulate enormous vaults of treasure or expand personal empires. There are Lunars who maintain working relationships with Sidereals, Fair Folk, and other traditional enemies. There are a few Lunars who spend years at a time incognito on the Blessed Isle itself. And, as the Solar Exalted unexpectedly return to the world in unprecedented numbers, there are some Lunars who seek them out in the hopes of renewing ancient relationships, despite the warnings of their elders. If the Society of the Moon as a whole believes all of these things to be terrible mistakes (and, broadly speaking, it does), then it also believes that its members have the right to make those mistakes, and to deal with the consequences.

Elder Beasts of Note

The Society of the Moon in its modern form is the product of the heroic labors of a number of rugged First Age survivors. A few of their number are detailed below.

Ma-Ha-Suchi

Ma-Ha-Suchi was once a beautiful warrior and artist, the glory of the eastern courts. His preferred medium of expression was himself, using his own body as a canvas. He frequently attended events at his wife's side, adorned only in gloriously hypnotic patterns of body paint and scanty armor crafted from scales and hide-strips harvested from his most legendary kills; or as a sleek wolf, the talismans tied into his fur creating a rhythm of hunting-music as they clicked and rattled together when he moved.

Those days are memories the Grand Warlord of the East is loathe to revisit. Now the only thing beautiful about the master of the Nameless Lair is his voice, which tinkles like silver bells: one of many unwanted gifts he gained during his decades suffering in the Wyld after fleeing his wife's bloodstained corpse, half a hundred poisoned arrows hanging from his body. Ma-Ha-Suchi dedicates himself now to the raising of armies, forsaking art and beauty as frivolities in an age of endless violence. He is a grim and gruesome creature, wearing his rage form at all times he lacks pressing reason to do otherwise, making no effort to hide the hooves and horns of a goat which mark every form he adopts; but he is also an excellent host. Many young Lunars have spent years studying combat, strategy, and tactics at the Nameless Lair. He asks little in return, the most common request being a tithe of proven warriors willing to join his cult, adopt his rituals, and lend their strong bloodlines to his beastfolk legions.

Ma-Ha-Suchi has many allies and much respect among the Society of the Moon, and is lauded as a hero of the Silver Pact, but few would call him friend. Bitterness has eaten his heart, bitterness at all that he has lost: from the spouse he loved to the youthful joy he now scorns as folly and hates himself for having once embraced. He hates also that the war he prosecutes is largely waged against the distant descendants of those who ruined his world. He hates that they are ignorant of the depths of his rancor or the reasons he harbors it. He hates that his justifications for despising them are so thin. Most of all, he hates that he stopped being able to believe there was any sanity to his quest for revenge centuries ago, any motive at all beyond unreasoning fury each time he catches a glimpse of the Cage through the soothing backdrop of broken stone and jungle growth with which he surrounds himself. He presses on in the dim hope that with the renewal of the world, so too perhaps can he become something more than a numb fist thrusting a spear into the guts of history.

Raksi, Queen of Fangs

Centuries ago, Raksi seized control of the glorious city of Sperimin, arguably the greatest center of learning ever established during the First Age. She put its Dragon-Blooded guardians to death, feasting on their hearts and mounting their burning heads on pikes in the city center, then drove the savants and librarians out into the jungle to be devoured by beasts. Renaming her conquest Mahalanka, she has never permitted it to be meaningfully resettled. She instead lets her apefolk children run wild in the streets and establish villages in the surrounding wilderness. She does not educate them. They cannot read the treasure-trove of ancient wisdom that surrounds them on all sides. They are feral things, driven half-mad by jungle diseases and the lingering death-curses of the Solars who died here. They bring her sacrificial victims from surrounding regions as acts of devotion.

Once, Raksi was a priest, leading entire nations to ever-grander ceremonies of worship of her spouse's divine allies. She no longer cares for the glorification of others. Polyglot, polymath, and one of Creation's greatest sorceresses, Raksi has wholly embraced the Age of Sorrows, reinventing herself as a monster of the frontier. She makes furnishings and talismans from human remains, and has learned to cook and devour human beings with the same level of skill she once reserved for divine services. Of all the millions of volumes in her possession, she counts among her very favorites a volume of illustrated fables from the Blessed Isle which was gifted to her fifty years ago, depicting her as a great and vicious horror who eats up misbehaving children.

Violent and vicious though she may be, Raksi is neither stupid nor selfish. She welcomes her colleagues of the Society of the Moon, so long as they abide by whatever terms she sets while they are in her territory. Raksi has a reputation for cruelty and ill manners, deliberately provoking visitors and attempting to trick them into violating her mercurial terms of hospitality, and while this is well-earned, the Queen of Fangs is not capricious. She has among her possessions much of the accumulated lore of the First Age, including the legendary *Book of Three Circles*: a repository of every spell publicly known to the Solar Exalted. She is very cautious about who she entrusts with access to these treasures, believing great wisdom to be a dangerous thing to place into small minds, particularly knowledge of a dead age she does not wish to see revived. Raksi is not genuinely invested in forcing other Lunars to eat roasted babies, but rather in forcing them to confront their unquestioned assumptions, convictions, and patterns of behavior. She wishes for them to think about (and to inform her through their subsequent actions) who they are and why they have such a pressing need to dare set foot in Mahalanka to treat with the Queen of Fangs. Those who weather her initial gauntlet of traps and trials find that she is one of the greatest mentors Creation has to offer, at least until she decides she has done enough teaching and chases her students off into the jungle.

The Queen of Fangs often appears as a great red ape with backwards-facing hands. No one can say with certainty that they have seen her Birth Skin — whenever she dons a human form, it is inevitably the face of someone she has eaten.

Lilith

Lilith's heart has been broken more times than she can remember, and so she does not remember, flying from the past on snowy wings.

Her husband was a great potentate and speaker for the Realm, a breaker of behemoths, forger of coalitions, and poet with very few peers. The love sonnet he recited at their wedding was widely studied as one of the finest examples of the form in the First Age, and persists still (scrubbed of context) in many modern volumes of historical poetry still in circulation in the Realm today.

Lilith, in turn, was his outrider and companion, flying ahead of his missions, uncovering treachery and dispatching it with her mastery of martial arts. She was his keen eye and talon in the night, serving as the bloody left hand of civilization to his bright public diplomacy. They were perfect together.

Except when they weren't. As the centuries wore on, she watched paranoia and anger consume her beloved. His star fell in the Deliberative, and what had always been a razor wit became a weapon he sharpened upon her. When they practiced battle forms together, normal training

injuries became deliberate punishments: a finger broken and held out of joint in a moment of lingering eye contact for some failure, or criticism, or lapse of faith, real or imagined.

She redoubled her convictions, remembered his best days, and held fast to her oaths, even as the world darkened and the rot spread, and the days of glory were increasingly eclipsed by nights of sickness.

In the end, when the assassins came, she took up her spear... and hesitated. Just for a moment. Just for a heartbeat in which she could not tell right from wrong, love from hate. It was time enough for a Sidereal blade to pierce his heart.

This is what her peers say when they speak of Lilith, who has not been seen since the mending of the castes. Given her freedom, she used it to forget. They do not speak of her ferocity and cunning, her devotion and dedication, or even of the beauty and grace for which she was once immortalized. They speak of a broken creature who despaired at the sickness of the Chosen and so spent long, long centuries living the simple life of a snowy owl.

At least, that is what they used to say. Shortly after the first eclipse since the fall of the First Age, Lilith reappeared in the River Province. Her eyes are still keen, her sense of judgment strong and unclouded for the first time in centuries. Her beloved, or some version of him, once again walks in the world. She will find him, and judge what she finds, and the course of history will be set in response to her decision.

Leviathan

The former Grand Admiral of the 3rd Naval Force of the Realm now lurks at the bottom of the Great Western Ocean, a monstrous orca guarding the ruins of Sunken Luthe. Once a city-sized mobile dock, Luthe no longer serves its original purpose, instead acting as the armory and containment vault of the Silver Pact, where artifacts too valuable or volatile to destroy or deploy are placed in safekeeping. Its contents may only be removed and utilized with Leviathan's permission.

When he is not cruising the nearby waters as the Great Whale, Leviathan sometimes meets visitors inside of sorcerous air pockets within undamaged portions of Sunken Luthe. Leviathan is a handsome dark-skinned man with white markings sweeping back from his eyes, voice rusty from disuse but still eloquent once he gets going. He can sometimes be convinced to participate in actions attacking Realm shipping, but is primarily concerned with the maintenance of Luthe. He is not forthcoming with the fine details of his past beyond admitting that, like every Lunar to survive the fall of the First Age, it is a tragedy whose details are only of relevance to himself.

While most Silver Pact elders eschew a top-down approach to war, the Great Whale is an exception. Leviathan has lost none of his legendary strategic acumen and uses a mixture of sorcerous communication with other elders and string-pulling with indebted younger Lunars to orchestrate his long-range plans. At the moment he has taken a particular interest in the West, seeing an opportunity to potentially sever the Cage's influence from an entire direction.

Luthe is one of the Pact's most secure facilities, and so in addition to its role as armory, it plays semi-permanent host to the mortal loved ones of certain Lunars, as well as several permanent beastfolk populations who act as its caretakers. Leviathan is also willing to "rent" outer modules as private vaults or sorcerous labs in exchange for favors.

Sublime Danger

The Peregrine Blade, she of the gold-scored eyes and the thousand daiklave wings, is generally believed to be the oldest still-living Lunar. She is not merely a survivor of the First Age, but of the Divine Revolution in which the gods overthrew their makers. In those days her husband was Eternal Nova, called the Sword Priest, and her most cherished friend and blade-brother was Rakan Thulio, called the Sleepwalker.

The Usurpation was not merely the end of the world for Sublime Danger, but an unimaginable personal betrayal. Heartsick from loss and half-mad over her failure to kill Rakan when he approached her with the echo of her beloved's blood on his hands, she vanished not long after the reforging of the castes, and was widely assumed to have perished.

Danger reappeared in the century following the Great Contagion, having cheated Saturn's call by giving birth to an infant duplicate of herself before advanced age could claim her life. Her Exaltation and memories reawakened in her daughter upon reaching adulthood. Unfortunately, she was forced to rebuild her mastery of Essence from scratch, and it took decades for her to even begin to handle possessing three and a half millennia of memories and identity, never mind navigate and utilize them comfortably. Sublime Danger then set herself to reconnecting with the few surviving members of the Society of the Moon she had previously counted as allies, and began hunting Rakan Thulio and his Celestial Brigands, despite being far below the level of strength she'd enjoyed during their last battle.

Recently, she felt the Exaltation of the Sword Priest return to Creation. She has yet to decide how to respond. It is, after all, a different age, and she knows its bearer will be a different man. For now, she steers younger Lunars his way to challenge him, and awaits the results; well she remember that it was always with his blade that her beloved spoke most clearly.

Sha'a Oka, the Black Lion

His titles and honors are manifold. Rumored to have sworn his oaths to the entirety of the Elder Chamber of the Solar Deliberative rather than to any specific lord, he was the Supreme Champion of Meru, and to the Society of the Moon was known by the title His Divine Lunar Presence after being honored by the Fickle Lady by having the talons of his right hand silvered in five tears shed in admiration of his accomplishments. He is neither the oldest nor mightiest of his kind, but he is among the most charismatic and beloved, embodying all that is wild and proud and free in Luna's Chosen.

Sha'a Oka was one of the earliest and loudest voices in the foundation of the Silver Pact, and was believed killed during the Wyld Crusade when the Caul was torn loose and cast out of reality. In RY 322, he steered it back into stable Creation by means still not generally understood. Upon his return, he revitalized the war against the Cage and turned the Caul into a killing field into which his enemies have poured entire generations of promising scions and untold fortunes in irreplaceable treasure. The Fane of Luna and Gaia has served as the spiritual heart and tactical command center of the Silver Pact ever since.

The Black Lion was finally confirmed slain by the Wyld Hunt in RY 727 by three Lunar eyewitnesses who fought by his side (and substantially more non-Lunar witnesses fighting on behalf of the Realm). And yet, in the last three years, wildfire rumors have spread that he stalks the jungles of the Caul once again, tearing apart Realm patrols and whispering from the shadows at war-meetings of Pact elders.

Fara-Ur, Who Was Lost

In his time, Fara-Ur was a mighty warrior and respected sorcerer. He helped uncover the first rubric of the Testament, and scouted the eventual founding-site for the Cryptmind installation. After his spouse was slain during an honor duel in the Shadow Deliberative era, he became the honored guardian and advocate of his reincarnation, though the two never renewed their vows. He was blessed with many friends among the fellowship of Luna's chosen. His cheeks were marked with vivid crimson scales. His smile was inscrutable.

He did not die in the chaos that followed the Usurpation. More's the pity.

Fara-Ur's protectorates were set to burn. His Solar liege, now grown into the maturity of his power, died in the Lunar's arms, vomiting something black and toxic that was not blood as demon venom and death-spells ate away at him from within. Fara-Ur's failed vows wrenched apart within him, pressing at his soul like shattered bones. The Wyld seeped in through these wounds, infecting his Essence, singing soothing lies to his Exaltation until it no longer knew its owner, or itself.

Fara-Ur was lost, but did not die. The Society of the Moon has been hunting him for all the centuries since with no luck.

It roams between the verdant jungles of the Southeast and the warm waters of the Dreaming Sea, a serpent of inconstant size: sometimes the size of a caiman, sometimes half a mile from nose to tail-tip. Pleasant hallucinations writhe within the pattern of its scales. Once in a while it forgets to be a snake, and mouths open all across its body, and some devour whatever they may catch, and others spill out ophidian coils that quest and seek in all directions, dissolving and absorbing what they touch, until it seems more octopus than serpent. Sometimes it breaks apart into hundreds of men with inscrutable smiles, or serpents, or things that are partly both, and wanders through the streets of a town or city, becoming a gnashing congeries of fangs when it finds something living. Then it takes on the form of the multitudes that it has devoured, and returns to the heart-serpent, and reconsolidates itself, and moves on. Sometimes heroes come and cut it into pieces, but the pieces become serpents and the serpents become multitudes and eventually then the heroes become part of the serpent as well.

This is Fara-Ur, Who Was Lost, one of the great chimerae, of whom the Lunar Exalted are ashamed to speak.

Essence Fever

Lunar Essence is deep, primal, predatory. It calls the Exalt to the wild places. It fills her mouth and belly with a hunger sated only by new blood. It sharpens her senses, attuning her to the smallest actions of the world around her: the slithering of a serpent through dry leaves; a pocket of quiet in the midst of a furious downpour that indicates a cave mouth; the distant motion of a flock of birds. She is drawn to these things. She is drawn to *hunt*.

Young Lunars have extremely active fight-or-flight responses, which scream at them to do one or the other whenever alarmed, surprised, or excited. These instincts are filtered through the Lunar's human upbringing, and often translate to things like deference in the face of an irritated god or elder or a bold overture to an attractive stranger, rather than simply attacking or running away. In short, a young Lunar is more active than she used to be, more bold, less reserved and less restrained; and generally less squeamish about things like drinking an animal's blood straight from its throat as it dies. She can feel the power in the act.

Lunar Essence is also uncomfortable. It's sensual, mercurial, and powerful right up until the moment when it isn't. When the Lunar least expects it, she experiences a jagged pain ripping through her spirit like splintered bones pressing against healthy muscles. Or she reaches into the deep well of her Essence, expecting it to flow like water and finding it instead constrained, blocked, wound into an iron-hard knot which disperses after a moment. The Lunar soon understands that she is *almost* wholly of one nature, but not completely. Something old and unfinished still lingers in her Essence, sometimes catching like a lump in her throat.

These feelings radically intensify in the presence of anything from her past lives, sometimes to the point of physical pain: migraines, shortness of breath, palpitations. Touching the ruin of what came before sends the Lunar's Essence into violent turmoil, producing symptoms not unlike a panic attack.

Lunar Essence is difficult to tame, but far from impossible. Successful Lunars learn to let their instincts guide them without ruling them, and to ride out the turmoil of First Age atavisms. Still, few completely grow beyond being motivated by these things, nor does the Society of the Moon encourage attempting to do so. A Lunar's Essence is a gift from the goddess, after all.

On Playing a Lunar

To devout believers in the Immaculate Philosophy, Lunars are the monsters beyond the firelight. To those who suffer in deprivation at the margins of the Threshold, they are culture-heroes and beast-gods offering a chance at something better. Both of these perspectives are true.

Lunars tend to be powerfully self-motivated, with the younger members of the Society of the Moon often spending decades consumed in the pursuit of treasure, glory, and adventure before settling down and facing the question of what they plan to do with a life that will, with a bit of luck and talent, last for thousands of years. Thanks to the ease with which they may adapt to any situation they find themselves in, the even greater ease with which they may deceive others, and the predatory means which forms their default approach to gaining power, Lunars quickly grow very accustomed to simply taking whatever they want, restrained only by those ethics they choose to maintain after their promotion to the ranks of semi-divinity.

On the Chosen of the Moon

Luna's Chosen are the most numerous of the Celestial Exalted, numbering nearly 400. Of these, the vast majority are young beasts out proving themselves in the world. Lunars die frequently and reincarnate quickly; Luna seems to favor the brave, the bold, and the foolhardy.

Lunars naturally live anywhere from two to three millennia. Like their Solar lords of old, few Lunars respect this limit. While they no longer have access to many of the age-defying miracles the Solars once cultivated, the Lunars have found their own tricks. Most No Moons rely upon sorcery to secure some form of quasi-immortality, while others pursue more direct stratagems. A popular Charm requiring potent Essence permits a Lunar to age in reverse while in a state of long-term hibernation, and some have won themselves precious time by laying quiescent in a hidden den somewhere for long centuries. Others devise more demanding or idiosyncratic strategies. Little can be said of the outward effects of aging upon the Lunar Exalted, for any Lunar past her first century is most assuredly capable of controlling every facet of her appearance. Wrinkles and white hair are affectations for Lunars, signifying nothing save that the Lunar has chosen to wear wrinkles and white hair today.

Castes

Lunars have no inherent caste. By default, they are *Casteless*, and if they never receive formal training under a qualified No Moon, or reject such instruction, they may potentially remain in this state forever. Given the frequency with which Lunars are forced into the Wyld to escape their enemies, this is a very dangerous way to live.

In the First Age, the Lunar Exalted fixed their castes through the swearing of mystic oaths to the Solar Exalted. They do so no longer; indeed, they *cannot*: they have rebuilt their Exaltations so that such rituals no longer hold any power over them. Instead, the modern Lunar castes are evoked through a series of ordeals. A young Lunar is subjected to a battery of physical challenges, contests, riddles, quests, and spiritual seekings by her No Moon mentor over a span of time ranging from a few months up to a full year. The results of these tests shape the Lunar's Essence into a receptive state, clearly echoing the power of one of the three castes of the Age of Sorrows.

Her mentor then ritually primes a supply of moonsilver and permanently fixes the young Lunar's caste by etching magical tattoos into her flesh. These not only induct her into her caste, but also provide invulnerable and infallible protection against the power of the Wyld.

Once her caste is fixed, a young Lunar is technically free to go and do as she pleases. Sometimes her mentor tries to induct her into the Silver Pact during her period of training. Sometimes he simply cultivates her as an ally, or even invites her into his own pack. Sometimes by that point he's fed up, and once his obligations to her are discharged, he kicks her out of his territory.

It's good manners to be thankful to the Exalt who fixed your caste for you, of course, but the Society of the Moon doesn't consider a young Lunar in any way indebted to her first tutor. Trying to leverage a young Lunar into servitude by holding her induction over her head is considered profoundly corrupt. While the Society of the Moon has no formal enforcement mechanism for punishing those who break its handful of taboos, it also has no proscription against a powerful member of Luna's family crossing into a weaker Lunar's territory to beat the living shit out of him for offending her sensibilities.

Full Moon Caste

Full Moons inherit the strength, ferocity, and deadly forms of beasts.

The Full Moon Caste is as old as Lunar Exaltation itself; it is said that the moon goddess chose a mighty berserker to be the first of her children. This caste has never needed any modification to suit the needs of the Lunars. It is the caste of the *strong*: those who are gifted with physical excellence. In the First Age, the Full Moons were the bodyguards and champions of the Solars. Now, they're deadly warriors and apex predators who fight for their own goals, their own glory, and their own plunder. A Full Moon Caste shrugs off blades with her tough hide, slides between arrows with a dancer's grace, and laughs through the bloody fangs she uses to kill her foes.

Feral Heart: Full Moons typically embody either deadly predators, animals known for their size and power such as aurochs and mammoths, or those known for their grace and swiftness such as deer and hawks.

Caste Mark: The Full Moon caste mark is a full circle, often with ragged edges, gleaming in radiant silver.

Anima Banner: A Full Moon's anima banner is a steady glow of soft white or silver light. In dramatic moments, it may momentarily twist into a reflection of her Feral Heart.

Caste Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Anima Power: The first time in a scene the Full Moon should be incapacitated by damage, she instead discards all remaining damage that would bring her below 1 Health. She may also be Staggered without suffering a Wound once per scene. Additionally, while the Full Moon's anima is flaring, she may cut ahead without spending Willpower.

Changing Moon Caste

Changing Moons inherit the feral allure, animal magnetism, and stunning beauty of beasts.

The Changing Moon Caste was constructed in the wake of the Usurpation, built from remnants of the lost Waxing, Waning, and Half Moon Castes along with prayers and dreams of a cold, beautiful night of absolute freedom on the far side of the current era of tribulation. It is the caste of the *cunning* and the *bold*: those who are gifted with a silver tongue, a trickster's wit, or sublime beauty. In the First Age, they served the particular needs of the Solars' civilization. Now Changing Moons serve their own desires, rooking the gullible out of their treasures, uncovering the secrets of the wicked, and filling their drinking-halls with friends and their beds with lovers in the same fashion a merchant would stock his vault with coins (if only some Changing Moon hadn't already emptied out said vault).

Feral Heart: Changing Moons often embody animals famed for their beauty or grace: great cats, birds of prey, serpents, and those hunted for their lovely pelts are all common.

Caste Mark: The Changing Moon caste mark varies widely from Lunar to Lunar. It may express itself as a moon in any state from crescent to gibbous, either waxing or waning.

Anima Banner: A Changing Moon's anima banner is a shifting prism of bright silver light and dark-blue or purple shadows. In dramatic moments, it may momentarily twist into a reflection of her Feral Heart.

Caste Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Anima Power: The Changing Moon may use a simple action to wrap herself in a veil of illusion for a scene, perfectly disguising herself as anyone she has ever seen, fooling all senses used to perceive her. When her anima banner is burning, she may reflexively pull it around herself to make her impossible to recognize. Anyone in the scene that has already recognized her must roll Willpower against difficulty 9 or forget the blazing stranger's identity, if the Changing Moon would rather they didn't recognize her. Finally, when a Changing Moon's anima is blazing, her Tell doesn't automatically become visible and of obvious significance to onlookers; they must still make a successful roll according to the normal rules (see p. XX) to spot it.

No Moon Caste

No Moons inherit the wisdom of the wilderness and the secret knowledge and perfect instincts of beasts.

The No Moon Caste is a caste of the First Age, but not precisely the *same* caste as it was in the First Age. When the Lunars remade themselves, they took what had been battlefield sorcerers and librarians and reweave them into lore-keepers, spirit-tenders, and deadly mystics, incorporating key pieces of the lost castes — particularly the Waxing Moon Caste — to create

something more robust and well-rounded. It is the caste of the *wise*: the smart, the observant, the gifted. No Moons are now the keepers of Lunar history and tradition. They are respected by the Society of the Moon, for they induct the newly-Chosen and fix their castes. They are shamans, witches, mystics, and sorcerers of tremendous power. They carry more obligations than any other caste, but garner much face from giving up a portion of their freedom to uphold them. It is the No Moons who carry the memory of what has been lost, and the dream of what might yet be.

Feral Heart: No Moons typically embody animals of mystic significance or which are associated with wisdom, such as cats, owls, tortoises, stags, elephants, bears, and creatures of the deep sea.

Caste Mark: The No Moon caste mark is an empty ring, sometimes wholly connected, sometimes a brittle crust with small breaks in its edge.

Anima Banner: A No Moon's anima banner is a dreamy veil of dark-blue and purple, edged in silver which flares brighter when Essence is spent. In dramatic moments, it may momentarily twist into a reflection of her Feral Heart.

Caste Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

Anima Power: No Moons can scent and taste power in the world around them and in those they meet. While within the bounds of a Demesne, the Lunar may always perceive dematerialized beings and the entrance of spirit sanctums, and may enter such sanctums with a difficulty 7 (Intelligence + Occult) roll. Additionally, she gains the Inheritance power Measure the Wind (see p. XX) with the activation condition of either tasting someone's blood or inhaling their scent. If wearing a form with an acute sense of smell or gaining such a sense with Charms, this can be done from within the same zone as the target. In forms with a human-equivalent sense of smell, the Lunar must lean into the target's personal space and obviously sniff them. Finally, while the Lunar's anima is flaring, the difficulty of all rolls for shaping sorcery are reduced by -1.

Casteless

Casteless Lunars inherit the mutability of the Fickle Lady and the limitless potential of the untamed wilds.

This is the default state of the Lunar Exalted, and to some degree it always has been. All Lunars are Casteless in the moments immediately after their Exaltation, and might potentially remain that way for the rest of their very long lives if they reject the fellowship of the Society of the Moon or at least do not trust their tutor to fix their Caste. Other Lunars tend to look askance at those who are Casteless by choice rather than circumstance, and often steer clear of them: they have, after all, chosen to walk apart from the customs and fellowship of their brethren. The Casteless, for their part, are usually capable of going it alone: Luna doesn't choose weaklings to be her champions.

Casteless do not have moonsilver tattoos, and as such, have no more protection from the transformative power of the Wyld or from body-warping magic than any other character.

Feral Heart: Casteless might embody any sort of Feral Heart at all.

Caste Mark: A Casteless Lunar's caste mark always reflects the current phase and state of the moon.

Anima Banner: A Casteless's anima banner is chaotic swirl of blues, purples, and silver. In dramatic moments, it may momentarily twist into a blurry approximation of her Feral Heart.

Caste Attributes: Casteless Lunars may select any three Attributes as their Caste Attributes. At the beginning of each story, the Storyteller removes a Caste Attribute of her choice, and may pick any Attribute which is not currently Caste or Favored to replace it.

Anima Power: The Lunar's anima power also shifts to match the cycle of the moon. She has the No Moon anima power during the three nights of the new moon, the Full Moon anima power during *those* three nights, and the Changing Moon anima power the rest of the time. During the five nights of Calibration, when the moon does not rise at all, she has no anima power.

Lunar Character Creation

Creating one of the Lunar Exalted works a lot like it does in any classic edition of the game. The steps are outlined below:

Step 1: Character Concept

- Consult with the other players and come up with an appealing concept.
- Pick out the Caste that fits best, and note its anima power.
- Select Nature and Feral Heart (see below).

Step 2: Attributes

- Mark down one dot in each Attribute.
- Note your Caste Attributes. If Casteless, select three initial Caste Attributes.
- Select two Favored Attributes, which may not be the same as Caste Attributes.
- Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to your character.
- Divide 8 dots among primary Attributes, 6 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.
- Assign one additional dot to a Caste or Favored Attribute of your choice.

Step 3: Abilities

- Select four Favored Abilities.
- Divide 25 dots among Abilities.
- No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Bonus Points. Favored Abilities must have at least one dot.

Step 4: Advantages

- Receive the Charm: Excellence of the Shifting Moon for free. If you are tattooed, also receive the Charm: Hide of the Cunning Hunter for free. Then choose additional Charms (9 dots in total). At least 4 dots of Charms must be from your Caste Charms.
- Gain one dot of Echoes for free, then select 7 dots of additional Backgrounds.
- Write down three Intimacies.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Record Willpower (5), Essence rating (1), and Mote pool (8). Mote pool begins at maximum.
- Record Health (7).
- Calculate and record Defense, Soak, Dodge, Block, and Stagger Threshold.
- Spend Bonus Points (15).

Bonus Point Costs

Trait	Cost (per dot)
Attribute	4
Caste/Favored Attribute	3
Ability	2
Favored Ability	1
Caste/Favored Charm	(rating x 3)
Other Charm	(rating x 4)
Terrestrial spell (favored)	3
Terrestrial spell (unfavored)	4
Essence	9
Backgrounds	1
Willpower	1

Backgrounds

Lunars may use any of the Backgrounds found in Chapter Two. They also have some unique Backgrounds of their own, and particular considerations for certain Backgrounds.

Artifact

Social Background

Lunar Exalted naturally resonate with the magical material moonsilver. As such, most of their artifacts are generally made of this substance. Moonsilver artifacts have the unique ability to partially reshape themselves in response to Lunar shapechanging. Thus, a Lunar wearing moonsilver armor who became a wolf would have her armor transform along with her, continuing to provide its protection.

The Society of the Moon as a whole has the attitude that moonsilver is sacred to the Argent Goddess, and that moonsilver artifacts belong to the Lunar Exalted as a whole. As such, they take a dim view of anyone else carrying such artifacts unless known to have been gifted them by a Lunar.

Backing

Social Background

Backing for a Lunar often represents standing within the Silver Pact, though it's certainly possible for a Lunar to become involved with other organizations. The Silver Pact uses a peerage system for ranking its membership, although this system is highly informal. There's no ceremony for ascending to a new rank, nor any criteria; it's entirely based on an Exalt's accumulated reputation and the rough consensus of her peers and elders.

X You have rejected membership in the Silver Pact and gone your own way.

- Nain-ya. "Kin." You are a provisional member of the Pact, performing service to your superiors to prove your dedication. Anything you receive from this Background is probably to help you carry out your orders.
- Uf-ya. "Honorable." A Pact member in good standing, who is trusted to represent the Pact when dealing with outsiders. You can make minor requests of your peers and superiors and expect them to be granted.
- Ikth-ya. "Respected." You've made a reputation for yourself through your service to the Pact. Lesser members defer to you and will do your bidding. Your elders largely give you free reign to conduct your campaigns as you wish, and will grant you significant support so long as you keep producing results.
- Murr-ya. "Revered." You sit in on the war councils of the Silver Pact's leaders and your advice is valued. You command a substantial amount of the Silver Pact's resources, with many agents at your disposal. You are frequently petitioned for aid and guidance by junior Lunars.
- Shahan-ya. "The Greatest." You are a living legend in the eyes of a consortium of walking gods, one of the Great Beasts of the Threshold. The leaders of the Realm's wretched houses know your name, and curse it.

Urrach-ya

"Nonperson." A Lunar who has been expelled from the Silver Pact due to a history of treachery or who has made herself an enemy of the Pact or its goals. Merely rejecting membership in the Silver Pact is not sufficient to be declared urrach-ya. Being urrach-ya does not *definitionally* mean exclusion from the broader Society of the Moon... but anyone aiding and abetting such a Lunar is at risk of making some fairly dangerous enemies.

Command

Social Background

Lunars often lead groups of margin raiders, beastmen, or Wyld mutants into battle.

Cult

Social Background

Lunars are particularly prone to cultivating this Background, as widespread Cults are harder to strike at than a stationary Manse or Demesne. They often get their beginning as a peripheral subject in a mentor's pantheon of worship. Lunars have no restrictions on how high they can raise this Background at character creation.

Echoes

Purchased Background

All Lunars possess at least one dot of this Background, and most have it rated substantially higher.

Followers

Social Background

Lunars frequently utilize their own Moon-Touched sons and daughters as Followers. While a protagonist Lunar probably hasn't been Exalted young enough to have adult Moon-Touched offspring, she might have been gifted a few from a mentor. Moon-Touched are the mortal children of Lunars, and are often subtly uncanny. Many are talented at little magics, are second-sighted, or have a minor mystical trick such as turning into one particular animal.

Heart's Blood

Innate Background

You have already exercised yourself in the Sacred Hunt, and expanded your shapeshifting library beyond its humble beginnings. This Background lets a protagonist start with extra forms that she may assume with her shapeshifting.

Each dot grants her a handful of forms that are useful for a *specific purpose* in a *particular biome*.

Examples of purpose include: blending in, enormous size, predation, speed, stealth, and survival.

Examples of biomes include: arctic wilderness, deep sea, desert, freshwater river, rugged mountains, temperate forest, tropical island, urban environment.

Manse

Social Background

The general wisdom of the Society of the Moon is that a Manse is a tremendous investment of resources that cannot run away from danger and begs its owner to get killed defending it. Lunars are much more likely to claim Demesnes than to raise up Manses unless their territory is *very* far from any Realm holdings. If a Lunar has a Manse, she probably took it from someone else.

Mentor

Social Background

This Background is exceedingly common among Lunars, as the Society of the Moon holds in high esteem those who take younger Lunars under their wing. A Lunar's mentor is most often an older Lunar.

Stolen Faces

Innate Background

You have already exercised yourself in the Sacred Hunt, focusing your efforts upon human prey. This Background lets a protagonist start with extra human forms that she may assume with her shapeshifting. Each dot grants her either a handful of forms fitting some particular archetype ("peasant laborer," "courtesan," "well-fed merchant," and so on) or one specific shape taken

from a character of substantial political, economic, or military power, who is not yet known to be dead.

A character must have Prey's Skin Disguise to take this Background.

Uncanny

Innate Background

This Background isn't uncommon among Lunars. It generally indicates that the Lunar was marked by the Wyld, either before her Exaltation or not long afterwards, before she was able to gain her tattoos. Some Lunars, on the other hand, were born as beastmen, or bear a particularly extravagant Mark of Luna which might be reflected by taking a dot of this Background.

Any features gained from this Background which were bestowed by the Wyld persist into *all* of the Lunar's forms.

Elder Lunar Creation

Some Lunars have been around for a long time. Some Lunars have been around for a *very* long time. Perhaps you're interested in playing a Lunar who isn't fresh out of the trials and still getting used to having tattoos. Perhaps you'd like to be old enough to have produced several generations of Moon-Touched and beastfolk offspring. Here are the rules for that:

Attributes: 10/7/5, add two more dots to Caste or Favored Attributes.

Abilities: 32 dots. These can go all the way to 5 without spending Bonus Points.

Charms: Excellence of the Shifting Moon (and potentially Hide of the Cunning Hunter) plus 17 dots. At least seven have to be from Caste Charms.

Backgrounds: 15 dots.

Essence Rating: Starts at 2.

Bonus Points: Spend 23.

Special Rules for Lunars

In addition to the rules that normally govern the Exalted, Lunars have a few additional special rules and features.

The Great Curse

Luna's blessing is neither gentle nor intrinsically kind. The Lunars Exalted are people who have gained the monstrous power of beasts; when they forget themselves, they can become swallowed up by a deep and primal fury. Complicating matters further, the Lunars once tore their very souls apart to escape the chains that bound them to the collapsing hulk of the First Age. The anger that helped them survive its dissolution continues to burn in their Essence, their hearts, their souls. When something reminds them of what they've lost, that rage strains to burst free of all confines, laying waste to whatever provoked it.

Each Lunar possesses a Limit track, which runs from 0 to 10 points. Limit is gained in the following fashion:

- Whenever the Lunar botches a roll, she gains a point of Limit.

- Whenever the Lunar acts in a way that undermines or betrays either her Nature or one of her Intimacies, she gains a point of Limit.
- The first time in a scene the Lunar spends Willpower in response to social influence, she gains a point of Limit.
- Whenever the Lunar is belittled, disrespected, or humiliated, she gains a point of Limit. The criteria for what counts as slighting a Lunar is that the Lunar *feels* slighted.
- Take note the first time in the course of each story that the Lunar encounters a particular location, artifact, organization, or polity that she was responsible for protecting or overseeing in *any* of her First Age incarnations. If that First Age remnant is still operating under anything close to its original name, being used for its original function, or being deployed under the authority of the Realm, then when the Lunar next sleeps, she suffers terrible nightmares of her past lives' failures and awakens in physical and spiritual agony, reinterpreting and reliving them as her own. She does not recover Willpower and gains two points of Limit.

Whenever the Lunar is provoked to significant anger (her player generally gets to make the call whether this is the case unless some form of social influence or emotional control magic is in play which forces her into a rage), roll her current Limit rating as a dice pool against difficulty 6. If she rolls any successes, she loses a point of Limit, but also raises the difficulty of all non-intimidation based social rolls for the rest of the scene by +1 for each success rolled; other characters can sense the bestial fury radiating off of the Lunar, and it makes them ill at ease. If the Lunar rolls five or more successes, then she suffers *restrained Limit Break*: She flies into a frenzy, attacking whatever provoked her ire until it has fled or is incapacitated.

When she reaches 10 Limit, the Lunar's track empties and she suffers *unrestrained Limit Break*. She has the choice, in that moment, of succumbing utterly to her fury and indiscriminately attacking whoever and whatever is present until there's nothing left moving in front of her; or assuming the form of her Feral Heart, fleeing the scene, and forgetting herself to live as a beast for the next (Essence rating) weeks, or until someone she has an Intimacy for comes to find her and remind her of who and what she is.

Shapeshifting

All Lunars gain the power to don the shape of beasts along with their Exaltation. To do so, Luna has granted them a ritual known as the Sacred Hunt.

To enact the Sacred Hunt, a Lunar must deliberately kill an animal whose form she wishes to wear, and then drink its blood or consume its flesh on the spot. Blood or flesh bought from a butcher or served up at the dinner table are of no use; without the intimate connection of hunter and prey, without dealing death herself, consuming the meat of a beast means nothing.

Upon completing the Sacred Hunt, the Lunar masters a beast's shape forever after. This shape is said to be added to her *shapeshifting library*.

By default, a Lunar can transform into any beast in her shapeshifting library, so long as it's between the size of a house cat and an elk. In order to transform into a shape from her library, the Lunar uses a simple action to roll her Essence rating against difficulty 6. Success allows the Lunar to adopt the beast form. Alternately, she can spend 1 Mote to transform reflexively without the need for a roll. In either case, whether simple or reflexive, this is a *shapeshifting action*.

A Lunar in beast form gains any inherent abilities the animal has, such as flight or venom, and replaces her Physical Attributes with the animal's for the purpose of calculating her dice pools, Soak, base Dodge value, and base Block value. Examples of common animal traits may be found at the end of this chapter, on pages XX-XX.

When a Lunar's anima flares, she's forced to abandon her library of stolen shapes, and *must* reflexively assume one of her **true forms**. By default, her true forms are her own human form (the Birth Skin) and the form of her Feral Heart, though some Charms provide additional true forms. If she wishes to default back to a Charm-granted true form, such as her rage form, she must reflexively pay 1 Mote to do so.

The Birth Skin

Every Lunar was someone before their Exaltation. The newly-Chosen tend to think of this as their *true* true form, often for years or even decades. It is not. It is simply the first and most comfortable of their now manifold skins.

Still, there's something to be said for familiarity. A Lunar can return to her human true form — the Birth Skin — as a reflexive shapeshifting action that costs 0 Motes.

The Feral Heart

Upon Exaltation, each Lunar's soul expresses itself in the form of a particular animal that is an iconic embodiment of the Lunar's spirit and personality. This is her Feral Heart, the second of her true forms. The Lunar may shapeshift into this Feral Heart form from the moment of her Exaltation without first needing to hunt anything; her Feral Heart is already a part of her, waiting within her Essence.

A Lunar can assume her Feral Heart form with a reflexive shapeshifting action that costs 0 Motes.

The Mark of Luna

After Exaltation, the Lunar's body gains some marking of feral divinity, often in a place where Luna touched her. Sometimes it's subtle, such as a shock of silver hair, uncanny or inhuman eyes, or a feral musk. Other times it's some relic feature of the Lunar's Feral Heart, such as a fox tail, ox hooves, or the antlers of a stag. Elders refer to this feature as the Mark of Luna, but on informal occasions younger Lunars often call it the Tell.

The Tell manifests in every single form the Lunar wears. If her Tell is a fox tail, and she becomes a bear, she is a bear with a fox tail. Luckily, the Tell is powerfully imbued with Luna's blessing, and its nature is to hide itself. As a result, people see the bear but fail to notice that it has the tail of a fox, or that they should find it unusual that a bear has a fox's tail.

When a Lunar wears one of her true forms, those who meet her *and consider her behavior in any way suspicious or unusual* may, once per scene, make a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll against difficulty 8. If successful, they notice her Tell, notice that there is something odd about it (even in cases where, for example, her Tell is stag antlers and she's wearing her Feral Heart form, which is a stag), and will remember it afterwards. This roll may only be attempted once per scene, no matter how odd the Lunar is acting.

When a Lunar wears a form from her shapeshifting library, those who meet her, have reason to be suspicious of her for any reason, *and know of her Tell* may, once per scene, reflexively roll

(Perception + Awareness) against difficulty 9. Success lets them spot her Tell, at which point they realize who the Lunar *really* is. A person does *not* have to have previously *seen* the Lunar's Tell to *know of* it. An incautious Lunar who fails to guard her Tell will soon have to navigate a region full of peasants who've been warned to look out for the fox-tailed devil playing tricks on people.

When a Lunar's anima flares, she is forced back into one of her true forms and her Tell becomes unmistakably obvious to everyone who sees her, without need of a roll or suspicion.

Finally, once someone *has* spotted the Lunar's Tell, if they specifically point it out to others present in the scene ("You fool, don't you see that messenger has a fox tail?"), then the Tell's protection vanishes and everyone can see it.

The Tell in Play

In practice, what this all means is that Lunars are very good at operating incognito as long as they don't draw attention to themselves or "break character," but as they slip up over time, it becomes harder for them to take advantage of their shapeshifting; they become local folk terrors, and people learn to spot them.

When a Lunar is herself: When a Lunar wears her Birth Skin, an entire market full of people will overlook the hooded stranger with a fox tail as long as she doesn't draw attention to herself. Even the merchants she deals with have no hope of noticing her fox tail so long as she doesn't do something to cause them to intensely scrutinize her. At that point, the merchant would have a chance to notice the stranger's fox tail, and to realize that it is not normal for hooded strangers to have fox tails. If he has already heard rumors that a fox-tailed shapeshifter killed the satrap last month in the dead of night, then he will at that point probably realize who it is that is buying dried fish from his stall. If he hasn't, then he'll at least know he's dealing with some manner of supernatural being, since nobody else seems to be reacting to the fox tail. Such qualities are generally associated with the Lunar Anathema and the Fair Folk.

The key point of distinction is that when a Lunar wears any of her true forms, *it is possible for the Tell to be discovered by those who do not know of it.*

When a Lunar wears a stolen skin: It is much easier for a Lunar to remain incognito wearing a form from her shapeshifting library. Not only is the Tell harder to spot (represented by a higher difficulty on the relevant Perception + Awareness roll), but it takes *two* criteria for spotting it to be possible: heightened scrutiny and preexisting awareness of the Tell's existence. If, soon after arriving in a new city, she walks through the market in the shape of a cat or indeed even in a stolen human skin, there is no chance of anyone spotting her Tell even under intense scrutiny, because no one knows what her Tell is. Only someone who already knows about her Tell has any chance of seeing it and thus puzzling out her true identity.

There are essentially two ways for this vulnerability to come about. One is for someone to encounter the Lunar in her true form, spot the Tell, and then encounter her again in another shape. The person, if given reason to scrutinize that form, might then spot the Tell and realize who the Lunar really is. The second, much more common scenario, is that someone who has previously seen her Tell realizes what it is and tells others about it. Once someone knows to look for a particular Tell, they become able to spot it if the Lunar arouses their suspicions, the same as they could if she was in one of her true forms.

The Immaculate Philosophy has a rich body of folk tales about the Lunar Exalted. Most people raised in areas where the religion has a significant presence grow up being chastised with frightening tales of Lunars who gobble up misbehaving children. These stories are not only calculated to frighten children into obeying their parents, they are also fairly accurate guidelines for foiling Lunar infiltration. At first, a teahouse owner might not make a fuss about the rowdy swordsman with the memorable silver scar... but when local Dragon-Blooded start to turn up mysteriously dead, he'll warn every customer that comes through about the man with the silver scar over his eye. Suddenly all of the eye-scarred Lunar's forms are in danger of being compromised.

Hide of the Cunning Hunter is of course the foremost tool of any Lunar working to guard her Tell, while anima flare represents the final failure of such efforts, as it causes the Tell to become both visible and obvious to everyone who sees the Exalt, without the need of suspicion or scrutiny.

Some Lunars don't much prize subtlety in the first place, of course. If they want to cause trouble, they'll fly into the satrap's palace as a hawk, then don the rage form and kill everyone within, anima blazing wildly. They take no efforts to guard their Tell, and only employ shapeshifting for the utility of travel, stealth, infiltration, combat, and the like.

Other Lunars, particularly Changing Moons, often guard their Tell jealously, sometimes going so far as to kill anyone they suspect of having spotted it. These Lunars almost universally learn Prey's Skin Disguise and habitually conduct their affairs in a stolen human skin, only wearing their Birth Skin in the presence of other Lunars.

Moonsilver Tattoos

A Lunar who has had her caste fixed bears gleaming mystical tattoos etched in magical silver across much of her body. These tattoos provide absolute protection against the Wyld. No matter how much time the Lunar spends in the chaos-blighted lands at Creation's edge, her body will never be transformed and her mind will never be twisted. Furthermore, the tattoos provide absolute (indeed, involuntary) defense against *all* external magic that seeks to change the Lunar's shape. This protection is equally absolute against a spirit's curse that seeks to turn the Lunar to stone, and her own attempt to cast the spell Invulnerable Skin of Bronze upon herself. She may only use her own Lunar Charms and shapeshifting arts to transform her body. No other force is capable of it.

Like her Tell, a Lunar's tattoos are present in every form she shapeshifts into. This almost always gives strangers a reason to regard her suspiciously, and thus to spot her Tell. As a result, most Lunars use the Charm: Hide of the Cunning Hunter to conceal their tattoos when not in the company of their brethren.

Lunars and the Wyld

The Wyld is a particularly dangerous threat for Casteless Lunars, as its energies have the potential to corrupt and agitate their shapeshifting powers. Any mutation inflicted on a Lunar by the Wyld remains a part of her in every form she assumes, much like her Tell, save that it enjoys no mystical blessing to hide it from prying eyes. Worse, at least in the eyes of the Society of the Moon, the Wyld can warp a Lunar's mind if she isn't protected by moonsilver tattoos. The Solar Exalted once wielded miracles by which such blights could be healed, but the Lunars themselves lack the native ability to reverse such blemishes.

Worst of all, infection from the Wyld can open one of the Casteless up to creeping intrusion of chimerism. The elders would warn them to steer clear of the Wyld and avoid that dread fate... but then, the Casteless are the Casteless because they've forsaken the guidance of those who know better.

Chimerae

When the mighty First Age Lunar Exalted fled to the Wyld to regroup, they weren't defenseless, of course. They came bearing Charms and Artifacts to protect them from brief sojourns into the Wyld, or even extended hunting forays. But their retreat wasn't an extended foray, and it certainly wasn't a brief sojourn. They found themselves stranded in the middlemarches of chaos for *decades*, their Essence in revolt, their miracles unraveling around them. They fought. Of course they fought. Every Lunar is a fighter. They struggled to hang on while the wisest, most cunning, most viciously potent of their kind tried to devise a solution.

Not everyone made it. Some broke completely, by the end. Their Essence collapsed. Their wards and defenses failed. The Wyld rushed in, a dissolving tide, to fill the void. The elders don't like to speak of such things, but those who announce their intent to venture into certain extremely dangerous areas of the Threshold may hear a word whispered with dread from the tongues of the fearsome beast-gods: *Chimera*.

The chimerae were once Lunars. Now they are something more than human, less than divine: a living infection that changes, kills, consumes. Some say that Ma-Ha-Suchi himself only narrowly escaped such this fate. To this very day, the oldest members of the Silver Pact look askance at those who routinely blend the anatomy of various beasts within their flesh... and remember... and suppress a shudder.

Beastfolk

The Lunar Exalted aren't the only source of beastfolk in Creation — some are unfortunates marked by the Wyld, while others are the products of sorcerous experimentation, and others yet bear the dubious blessing of wild gods — but they're the most common source. Border tribes with animal features have been associated with the Lunar Exalted since time out of mind, and will likely continue to be a major feature of Lunar dominions for the foreseeable future.

Beastfolk were rarities in the First Age. Most stable populations dated back to the earliest days of Solar hegemony; throughout most eras of the Old Realm, the act of creating them was seen as distasteful, though a few endured as kept curiosities, such as the peacock-acrobats who entertained in the courts of Meru.

In the Age of Sorrows, the Lunars have by and large set aside the perfumed amusements of the fallen age and re-evaluated their beast-marked children. They have come to favor the rugged power, shock factor, and unusual capabilities of beastfolk for their armies and priesthoods. Luna's Chosen are no longer ashamed of their feral divinity, and surround themselves with hybrid tribes as reflections of their personal glory.

As to the actual creation of beastfolk... that is another matter. The oldest method of creating beastfolk is for one of Luna's Chosen to copulate with an animal within the marches of the Wyld while wearing her human guise, or with a human while wearing the form of her Feral Heart.

Such pairings sometimes produce beastfolk even where ordinary humans and animals are concerned — the Wyld is ceaselessly enthusiastic in enabling the impossible — but Lunar Essence makes the outcome much more reliable.

The problem, of course, is that most Lunars find the very idea revolting. (Elder Lunars, who have spent centuries living in a bewildering variety of different bodies and often passed entire years living the life of a simple animal in answer to the rancor of their Feral Heart, often mock such “mortal squeamishness,” but generally acknowledge that there are far better uses of their time than getting caught by a Fair Folk warband chasing a goat with their pants down.) As such, Lunars have developed a number of Charms to facilitate the creation of beastfolk without resorting to the six-legged tango.

Lunar Shapeshifting and Martial Arts

Lunar Charms are, for the most part, wholly interoperable with Martial Arts styles. However, martial arts are generally designed with a human body-plan in mind. As such, for a Lunar to use the techniques of a Martial Arts style, she must generally be wearing a human or at least *humanoid* form. Her rage form generally qualifies, as would a monkey or gorilla, but the form of something like a crocodile, tyrant lizard, or bear would not. As a singular exception, “animal styles” designed to emulate the motions of a particular sort of beast may be used while the Lunar is using that beast’s shape (thus, a Lunar could practice Tiger style while wearing the form of a tiger).

Ataraxia

The Lunar Exalted are, as a group, caught in a transitional state. Once they were guardians, servants, and heralds of the Solar Exalted. Now they have recast themselves as independent survivors, but this is not their final ambition. Each Lunar’s Essence strives toward some ultimate evolution, but it is not clear what this final state is meant to be. Each Lunar proceeds toward it differently.

This complex path of evolution, Ataraxia, is detailed in full at the end of this chapter (p. XX).

Lunar Charms

These are the uncanny arts and changing ways by which the Lunar Exalted adapt and overcome in the face of any challenge.

General Lunar Charms

The following Charms count as Caste Charms for all Lunars. They mostly consist of ‘pure’ shapeshifting effects, including the vitally important Prey’s Skin Disguise.

Excellence of the Shifting Moon

By suffusing herself with pure Essence, the Lunar may perform incredible feats.

System: Select one Attribute when activating this Charm. The player may add (that Attribute’s rating) additional dice to all rolls using this Attribute, save for damage rolls. Activating this Charm is reflexive, and costs 1 Mote if enhancing a Caste or Favored Attribute, or 2 Motes for any other Attribute.

Excellence of the Shifting Moon lasts until the end of the round. **Lunars begin play with this Charm.**

Lunar Attributes

Unless it says otherwise, any Lunar Charms which modify something by a value equal to a Lunar's Attribute use the dots permanently recorded on her character sheet for her Birth Skin when applying that modification, *not* the Attribute rating of whatever form she happens to be wearing. Thus, a Lunar with Strength 2 who turns into an elephant and uses Excellence of the Shifting Moon to add dice to a Strength + Brawl roll only adds two extra dice. Likewise, the same Lunar wearing her rage form would still only add two extra dice, despite that the rage form grants her +3 Strength.

Hide of the Cunning Hunter (•)

Though it pains her to do so, the Lunar can forcibly hide the marks of Luna's blessing upon her flesh.

System: The Lunar may spend 1 Mote and use a simple, unrolled shapeshifting action to cause her moonsilver tattoos to vanish, becoming impossible to spot. Additionally, while this Charm is active, three successes are required to spot her Tell. Flaring her anima ends this Charm, causing her tattoos to burst into brilliantly illuminated visibility and making her Tell clearly visible to all observers.

The Lunar may reflexively end Hide of the Cunning Hunter at any time she likes, making her tattoos visible and returning the difficulty to spot her Tell to normal. It otherwise lasts until the Lunar's anima flares.

While Hide of the Cunning Hunter is active, all animal and human forms from the Lunar's shapeshifting library are considered to be magical disguises for the purpose of effects that make such distinctions, such as Measure the Wind.

Lunars who are not Casteless begin play with this Charm.

Changing Plumage Mastery (•)

The Lunar may recast her appearance through the application of Essence and will, making minor cosmetic changes to her body.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use an simple shapeshifting action to roll (Appearance + Presence) against difficulty 6. For each success, the Lunar may change one feature of her appearance from the following list:

- Hair length, presence, and/or texture (including facial and body hair).
- Hair color.
- Eye color.
- Skin color.
- Apparent age.
- Height.
- Build and weight.
- Facial or bodily features (cheekbone structures, shape of chin, presence or absence of scars or tattoos, weathering, etc).

- The Lunar may transform her sexual characteristics, assuming a fully male, female, intersex, or androgynous or sexless body. This is no mere cosmetic transformation; if the Lunar gives their body reproductive organs, they are fully functional.

Changing Plumage Mastery can't remove or alter Wyld mutations or the Mark of Luna, or hide a Lunar's moonsilver tattoos. If used on any of the Lunar's true forms, the changes wrought by this Charm last until Changing Plumage Mastery is used again to manually revert them one by one, and are otherwise permanent. If used to alter any form from her shapeshifting library, the changes vanish once the Lunar shifts out of that form, and are not present when she next dons it. This Charm may be used repeatedly to stack up a dramatic number of alterations.

Gender, Pregnancy, and Shapeshifting

Luna is traditionally styled as feminine in her titles, but has not shown offense at being addressed by any set of gendered terms regardless of the form she was wearing at the time — and those forms are often something other than strictly female. Is it any wonder her Chosen have an ambiguous relationship with sex and gender?

While every Lunar is certainly born into a body with particular sexual characteristics, the Chosen of the Moon fundamentally have no “true” sex. Through the auspices of Changing Plumage Mastery and their shapeshifting library, they may be whatever they wish to be. Lunar shapeshifting is not an illusory process; a Lunar's physical anatomy changes when she transforms herself, possibly into a different sexual configuration than the one she was born with, and often into a different species as well.

As a result, Lunars have a complex relationship with the idea of gender. Many strongly identify with a certain gender (often but not always the one they were born with) and consider transformations that take them outside of their preferred body type to be temporary masquerades. Others take a more relaxed or fluid outlook, adopting the attitudes and expectations of whatever shape they happen to be wearing, or changing their internal self-image depending on their feelings of the moment without regard for their body's current shape. A few consider themselves above the constraints of gender identity altogether and simply treat their mutable anatomy as a convenience to be shaped to whatever best suits their needs, or grant themselves forms that transcend or transgress binary divisions.

All that being said, pregnancy forms a particular concern since the Lunar shares her body with another being for its duration (or at least the potential for one; people in Creation are ensouled upon taking their first breath outside their mother's body). While any form with male anatomy is capable of impregnating others, in order to become pregnant herself, the Lunar must possess a womb in her Birth Skin, and may only be impregnated while wearing either one of her true forms *or* a shape of the same species as one of her true forms with the relevant anatomy. *Usually* what that means is that she can be impregnated while wearing other human guises via Prey's Skin disguise. Usually. (Older Lunars tend to view sexual taboos of any kind as quaint and amusing.) Meanwhile, those who lack childbearing anatomy in their Birth Skin need not worry about becoming pregnant while wearing alternate forms from their shapeshifting library.

As to how much pregnancy constrains a Lunar, it mostly doesn't. The Lunar is always visibly pregnant in her true forms once the process gets far enough along, but can hide the condition in other forms capable of childbearing by increasing the difficulty of the shapeshifting roll by +1. While doing so, or while wearing body configurations that lack a womb or are too small to accommodate the developing fetus, the child continues to gestate elsewhere. If the Lunar decides to do away with her Birth Skin's womb during pregnancy via Changing Plumage Mastery, this terminates the fetus as her body painlessly reclaims its borrowed flesh.

Chimerical Ascension (•)

Giving her flesh and mind over to the beast within her soul, the Lunar fortifies her rage form with additional beastly or otherworldly features. These new alterations need not match the Lunar's Feral Heart. Though this Charm is, itself, relatively safe, the eldest members of the Silver Pact tend to keep those who cultivate it at arm's length either out of distrust or because their hybrid form stirs up painful memories.

A character must know Chain-Eating Guise to learn this Charm.

System: The Lunar adds one new Uncanny feature to her rage form. This Charm may be purchased as many times as desired, but while the Lunar has more purchases of this Charm than her Essence rating, she suffers one permanent Derangement (see p. XX) per purchase over that limit, as her mind is consumed by bestial impulses and instincts.

Humble Mouse Shape (•)

The Lunar expands her shapeshifting prowess, learning to don the forms of animals smaller than a housecat. Forms taken with this Charm must still be easily visible to the naked eye, and so while mice and most spiders are valid, fleas are not.

System: This Charm's effects are permanent. This Charm must be taken during character creation to have a Feral Heart smaller than a housecat. It is possible to use the Sacred Hunt to stock the character's shapeshifting library with tiny forms prior to learning this Charm; they're simply not usable until Humble Mouse Shape has been mastered.

Intimate Training Recollection (•)

The great limitation of the Lunar's human faces is that she takes only the shape and not the knowledge. With mastery of this Charm, the Lunar may also snatch fleeting bits of knowledge from the human shapes in her form library. **She must know Prey's Skin Disguise to learn this Charm.**

System: In a situation where the Lunar is in danger of being uncovered as an impostor because she doesn't know something her current form's original owner would have, or because she has said or done something incongruent with her current form's personality, the Lunar may reflexively make a (Wits + Empathy) roll against difficulty 7 to dredge the correct response to smooth things over from the depths of the shape's history and to immediately enact it or blurt it out without any contextual understanding of what she's doing or saying beyond knowing it's the *right* thing.

Intimate Training Recollection can only be activated when the Lunar feels in genuine danger of blowing her cover. She can't use this to go fishing for the form's secrets, for example by having

another Lunar leer suspiciously at her, because she knows there's no real deception and no stakes attached to being found out.

Monkey Arm Style (•)

The Lunar may stretch any part of her body out, permitting her to strike or grab from a frightening distance. This Charm is normally used to enhance a character's limbs, but might also grant her a long, flexible serpentine neck or even stranger anatomical transformations.

System: The Lunar can reflexively stretch portions of her body into an adjacent zone. She might also potentially lower the difficulty for interacting with hard-to-reach targets, as she can snake her body around corners or through twisty confines. She can launch Brawl, Martial Arts, and Melee attacks against targets in adjacent zones, suffering a -2 dice penalty when doing so.

Prey's Skin Disguise (•)

The Lunar expands her shapeshifting prowess. By performing the Sacred Hunt upon a human being, the Lunar may claim his appearance for her shapeshifting library.

System: Learning a specific human appearance works the same as hunting and consuming an animal form. The shapeshifting roll to assume a human skin is made at difficulty 7 rather than 6.

This Charm must be taken during character generation to buy the Stolen Faces Background.

Meet Exotic Strangers, and Devour Them

Should a Lunar somehow run into someone from Autochthonia and acquire their form with Prey's Skin Disguise, this disguise also includes a facsimile of the person's soulgem. The Alchemical Exalted can also be imitated via Prey's Skin Disguise, despite their artificial flesh. An imitated Alchemical displays whatever Charms he had installed at the time his form was taken.

Rat-Head Technique (•)

The Lunar can collapse her bones, allowing her to pour herself out of any sort of restraints or confinement, or even to squeeze through narrow pipes and cracks no larger than two of her fingers.

System: Use a shapeshifting action to activate this Charm. For the rest of the scene, the Lunar can automatically escape from chains, ropes, or similar restraints by using an unrolled simple action, and can slowly squeeze herself through spaces that should be far too small to admit her as a form of complex movement. She may also use complex movement to move away from grapple-type powers and Charms such as Dragon Coil Technique, despite that they would normally immobilize her.

Somnolent Statuary Method (•)

The Lunar can press herself against an inorganic surface — a wall, a statue, the earth itself — and sink into it, merging with its substance and hiding perfectly within. She remains aware of her surroundings while inanimate.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to merge with an object, which must be at least as large as the Lunar's current form. Any serious disruption to the Lunar's hiding place (smashing a statue, digging up the ground) ejects her, and she suffers a -2 penalty to her actions for a minute

afterwards due to disorientation. Otherwise, she may reflexively emerge from hiding whenever she likes. The Lunar ages at only half her normal rate while using this Charm. At Essence 3+, the Lunar does not age at all while using this Charm, while at Essence 5+ she ages in reverse while merged with an object.

Towering Beast Form (•)

The Lunar expands her shapeshifting prowess, learning to don the forms of great beasts of enormous size. Forms taken with this Charm may encompass any large animal, such as an elephant, whale, or mighty tyrant lizard.

System: This Charm's effects are permanent. This Charm must be taken during character creation to have a Feral Heart larger than an elk. It is possible to use the Sacred Hunt to stock the character's shapeshifting library with huge forms prior to learning this Charm; they're simply not usable until Towering Beast Form has been mastered.

Blood and Ash Masquerade (••)

The Lunar shrouds herself in a deathly veil, making it easy to mistake the form she dons for one of the restless dead.

System: The Lunar increases the difficulty of a rolled shapeshifting action by +2 or increases the cost of a reflexive shapeshifting action by 1 additional Mote (making the cost to apply Blood and Ash Masquerade to her Birth Skin or Feral Heart true forms 1 Mote in total). While she wears the enchanted form, it seems pale, drawn, and otherworldly. Unless given some reason to suspect otherwise, those who see her believe she is a wandering shade, ghost-animal, or other deathly spirit. Blood and Ash Masquerade lasts as long as the Lunar wears the enchanted form.

“Wandering about in broad daylight outside of the Underworld or a shadowland” generally counts as reason to be suspicious of a ghost, so this Charm is mostly useful for infiltrating shadowlands and the Underworld. Those who regard the Lunar's guise with suspicion may make a (Perception + Awareness) roll against difficulty 9 once per scene to try to see through this Charm's disguise.

Confounding Mercurial Flash (••)

Weaving subtle Essence into her transformation, the Lunar may take on another shape in plain sight without giving away the game.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote while shapeshifting in front of one or more people who haven't seen the Lunar's current form for more than a few seconds (in combat, one round at most). Such observers must make a reflexive (Wits + Awareness) roll against difficulty 9 and gain at least two successes, or else they dismiss the Lunar's transformation as a momentary trick of the light — surely, *surely*, this cat wasn't a young woman just a moment ago. That would be absurd.

Dreadful Encore Performance (••)

The Lunar's body splits open and a human being drawn from her shapeshifting library climbs out of her. This doppelganger acts according to the Lunar's will, displaying a very crude approximation of its original personality but lacking its original memories and skills. **The Lunar must know Prey's Skin Disguise and Intimate Training Recollection to learn this Charm.**

System: Spend 1 Mote and use an unrolled shapeshifting action to manifest a person whose form the Lunar holds in her shapeshifting library. The person intuits the Lunar's will and acts according to the purpose for which they were created; when their task is done, they attempt to return to the Lunar and rejoin with her flesh, at which point she gains any knowledge they learned while abroad on their task. The Lunar loses access to the person's shape while they're separated from her, and if they are slain or otherwise prevented from rejoining the Lunar, she loses that shape from her library.

The person is treated as an antagonist with an Expertise pool of 5 dice relating to whatever their strongest Attribute was (if burly, to feats of strength and brawling; if pretty, to socializing and seduction, and so on) and a utility pool of 3 dice for all other purposes.

Hybrid Body Rearrangement (••)

The Lunar may conjure a particular beastly feature into whatever shape she currently wears.

System: Use shapeshifting action (difficulty 7 if rolled). Success allows her to manifest one or more Uncanny features from her Feral Heart, rage form, or shapeshifting library while wearing a different shape. These features remain present until this Charm is used again to dismiss them, or until the Lunar changes into a different form.

Ox Dragon Charge (••)

Driving herself into an opponent, the Lunar's body momentarily grows an abundance of bony plates and spikes, increasing her mass and killing force.

System: When the Lunar advances into an adjacent zone and immediately makes an unarmed attack against someone in it, she may reflexively spend 1 Mote before rolling to transform her body into a living ram. The attack increases its base damage by +2 (or by +4 if the Lunar is already wearing a heavy form capable of devastating charges, such as a rhinoceros), becomes Heavy, and if it inflicts any damage, it sends the target flying two zones away where he lands prone.

Shadow of the Beast (••)

The Lunar's flesh roils, shudders, and disgorges a beast drawn from her form library, which moves and acts according to her will.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use an unrolled simple shapeshifting action to manifest an animal whose form the Lunar holds in her shapeshifting library (which is *not* her Feral Heart). The beast intuits the Lunar's will and acts according to the purpose for which it was created; when its task is done, it will attempt to return to the Lunar and rejoin with her flesh, at which point she gains any knowledge the beast learned while it was abroad on its task. The Lunar loses access to the beast's shape while it's separated from her, and if it is slain or otherwise prevented from rejoining the Lunar, she loses that shape from her form library.

Tyrant Mouse Dominion (••)

The Lunar may increase or decrease the size of any of her animal forms, becoming a bear capable of creeping in through pipes or a cobra of terrifying size.

System: When transforming into an animal form, either increase the difficulty of the shapeshifting roll by +1 or reflexively spend 1 additional Mote. The shape may be adjusted up to the scale of any beast the Lunar can hold in her form library (and so Humble Mouse Shape and

Towering Beast Form significantly expand the scope of this Charm). An animal made much smaller than its normal size suffers -1 to its Strength and Stamina (to a minimum of 1), but +1 to Dexterity. A scaled-up form adds +1 to Strength and Stamina, but reduces Dexterity by -1 (to a minimum of 1). Additionally, the Lunar may choose to add one of the following features to the form, as appropriate:

Massive: The form is enormous. When it makes an attack against a man-sized or smaller opponent which inflicts at least 2 damage it knocks the target prone.

Obscure: The form is small enough to conceal itself easily. Roll Stealth dice pools twice and keep the better result; this does not count against the Lunar's once-per-scene re-roll. This form can always vanish in any environment.

Weapon-Snatching Coils (••)

Upon upsetting an enemy's grip with an attack, the Lunar's body erupts with writhing tentacles, lashing pseudopodia, or coiling serpents, tearing the foe's weapon from his grasp.

System: Once per scene, the Lunar may reduce the cost of a disarm action to 0 Willpower. If she rolls at least three successes when doing so, she may reflexively claim and equip the disarmed weapon.

Staggering or incapacitating an opponent resets this Charm.

Wondrous Lunar Transformation (••)

The Lunar can transform another character by feeding them a bit of her blood, causing them to shapeshift into a human or animal shape from her form library.

System: The Lunar must feed her target a bit of her blood with a simple action and spend 1 Mote. If she feeds him only a few drops, the transformation lasts for one hour. If she feeds him enough blood to inflict a drained Wound on herself, the transformation lasts for (Essence rating x 3) days. If the subject doesn't wish to transform, the Lunar must beat him in a contested Willpower roll against difficulty 6.

Ant and Starfish Division (•••)

The Lunar splits herself asunder, creating independently active duplicates of herself.

System: The Lunar spends 3 Motes and uses an unrolled simple shapeshifting action to split off a clone of herself from her own flesh. The clone shares the Lunar's personality, agenda, memories, Traits, and doesn't consider itself to be an independent entity — it is, rather, a remote extension of the original Lunar's identity and being. The clone shares the Lunar's Charms and other powers, but both bodies must spend resources from shared Willpower and Mote pools, and any wounds inflicted on one of the Lunar's bodies also appears on the other.

The Lunar may reabsorb her clone by spending a round in physical contact with it and using a simple action, gaining all of its memories in the process. The Lunar may also cause her clone to denature into streamers of unraveling silver Essence at any time by reflexively spending another 1 Mote, which may prove necessary if it is captured, trapped, or otherwise in imminent danger of death, since any wounds inflicted on the clone are also suffered by the Lunar.

Becoming the Swarm (•••)

The Lunar can multiply her Essence again and again, becoming not merely a small creature, but a swarm of them. **She must already know Humble Mouse Shape to learn this Charm, and must have a suitable creature in her shapeshifting library to become many copies of.**

System: The Lunar uses a simple shapeshifting action and spends 2 Motes, then erupts into a swarm of small creatures: insects, rats, bats, nothing larger.

As a swarm, the Lunar becomes an environmental hazard that threatens every enemy in the same zone she occupies (difficulty 8, damage 4, lacerated, penalty -2, one round). As a swarm, the Lunar cannot cut ahead. When she attacks, she is treated as being unarmed, with her attacks inflicting lacerated Wounds, as she focuses the swarming elements of her body against a single target, and her attacks are Fierce.

The Lunar suffers a -1 penalty to her Defense and Soak as a swarm, but gains +1 Stagger Threshold, and if she suffers any sort of Wound other than burned, it instead is turned into a bruised Wound. Attacks or hazards that target entire zones increase their damage or base damage against her by +2.

Being Staggered terminates this transformation, forcing the Lunar to return to one of her true forms.

Internal Form Mastery (••)

Through meticulous practice, the Lunar learns to master the art of shapeshifting.

System: The difficulty of all shapeshifting actions, including those that are part of Charms such as Hybrid Body Rearrangement, are reduced by -2. All simple shapeshifting actions become swift actions instead.

Many-Faced Moon Transformation (•••)

With some difficulty and turmoil of the spirit, the Lunar may temporarily reconfigure her Essence. While today it provides flexible utility to Luna's champions, centuries ago this Charm's development and refinement was instrumental in the breaking and reforging of the Lunar castes.

System: By spending ten minutes in undisturbed meditation, spending 1 Mote, 1 Willpower, and gaining 1 Limit, the Lunar may change her caste to a different one for one day. She exchanges her anima power for that of her new caste, and changes her Caste Attributes to those of the new caste for the purpose of dice rolls and Excellence of the Shifting Moon, though not for the purpose of experience point costs.

If the Lunar has a fixed caste, her tattoos do not offer her any protection while Many-Faced Moon Transformation is active.

If the Lunar is casteless, the cost to activate this Charm is increased by +1 Limit.

If the Lunar has Echoes 4+, she may gain an extra +1 Limit in order to adopt one of the three lost castes of the First Age (see Volume II, p. XX).

Quicksilver Second Face (•••)

With meticulous concentration and a great expenditure of divine power, the Lunar may redefine herself bit by bit.

System: The Lunar uses an unrolled simple shapeshifting action and spends 2 Motes. She may subtract a dot from one of her Attributes and add it to a different Attribute within the same

category (so she could trade a dot of Appearance for one of Charisma, but not for a dot of Strength). This can't raise an Attribute above 5 dots or reduce it to 0 dots.

Terrible Ogre Refinement (•••)

After rigorous communion with her predatory instincts, the Lunar learns to draw forth a second face for her fury. **She must already know Chain-Eating Guise to learn this Charm.**

System: The Lunar gains a second rage form, with different Uncanny features but otherwise conforming to the standard rules for rage form design. Any purchases of Chimerical Ascension upgrade both forms, and the Lunar need not choose the same new Uncanny features for both.

Vicious Hydra Transformation (•••)

The Lunar transforms some portion of her body into a deadly serpent or serpents. Transforming one's hair into a nest of writhing snakes is traditional, but a tail, the tongue, or even the fingers of one hand are also all potential options, along with other possibilities best not dwelled upon.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes. At the end of every round, after all other characters have acted, roll an extra (Strength or Dexterity) + (Brawl or Martial Arts) attack with base damage 4 (lacerated) against an opponent in the same zone. This Charm persists until the end of the scene or the Lunar is Staggered, whichever comes first.

Full Moon Charms

The following Charms deal primarily with battle and athleticism.

Adder Fang Method (•)

Resonance: Dexterity, Intelligence, Stamina

The Lunar transforms her Essence into a debilitating poison and infuses it into her saliva, talons, or some other natural attack, the better to disrupt an enemy's body.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when the Lunar inflicts damage with a natural attack capable of inflicting lacerated Wounds. This debilitating poison prevents the target from healing, by *any* means, for a number of days equal to the Lunar's Essence rating.

Bear Embrace Method (•)

Resonance: Strength

The Lunar's muscles surge as she crushes the life out of those caught in her grip.

System: The Lunar locks herself in a deadly embrace with an opponent, immobilizing him and wrenching apart his joints one by one. By reflexively paying 1 Mote upon landing a successful unarmed attack, the Exalt locks herself and her target in place. Unless she voluntarily relinquishes the power of this Charm, neither can move from the zone they currently occupy.

While this Charm remains active, the target is subjected to an ongoing hazard (difficulty 8, damage 5, lacerated, disabled arm, or disabled leg as the Lunar chooses, one round intervals). This hazard must be resisted with (Strength or Dexterity) + (Brawl or Martial Arts), or with an Aptitude appropriate for wrestling.

If the Lunar attacks anyone other than her grappled target, is forcibly moved to another zone, is Staggered, or reflexively chooses to relinquish the Charm, Bear Embrace Method ends immediately.

Burning Venom Attack (•)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar may spit streams of sizzling, acidic venom at her enemies.

System: The Lunar is always armed with a (Dexterity + Thrown) weapon which can target opponents up to one zone away, with a base damage of 5. She may employ this attack in any form which has a mouth. By reflexively spending 1 Mote when she makes the attack, it also doses anyone it strikes with alchemical poison (see p. XX). Ignore this weapon's presence when determining the Lunar's fighting style.

Deadly Assassin's Claw (•)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar may break off fragments of her own body — her claws, her teeth — within an opponent's flesh, there to work themselves toward the enemy's heart.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote after successfully inflicting damage with a natural attack capable of causing lacerated Wounds. The target is subjected to an ongoing hazard which must be resisted with Stamina + Resistance, with difficulty 9, damage 2 (lacerated), one round. This hazard lasts until someone succeeds at a difficulty 8 (Dexterity + Medicine) action to pull the fragments of the Lunar's claws, teeth, spines, etc. out of the wound.

Deadly Mantis Practice (•)

Resonance: Strength

The Lunar suffuses her muscles with Essence, enabling her to fight with heavy weapons as though they weighed little more than feathers.

System: The Lunar may adroitly wield two-handed weapons using a single hand without suffering the usual penalties for doing so (see p. XX), allowing her to enjoy their enormous damage potential while taking advantage of freehand, sword and board, or dual wielding fighting style bonuses. She must still actually use two hands to gain the Block-penalizing benefits of the two-handed fighting style.

Eagle Eye Advantage (•)

Resonance: Dexterity, Perception

Observing her prey for a few moments, the Lunar's keen instincts give her an infallible sense for where he will be just... *now*, in the moment she strikes.

System: If the Lunar uses a simple action to carefully observe a specific opponent, then on her next turn she may launch an undodgeable attack against him. If she uses a swift action to observe him, the attack is instead Fierce.

Foot-Trapping Counter (•)

Resonance: Dexterity, Wits

Matching herself to the rhythm of her foe's movements, the Lunar hems in an enemy's motions, preventing him from disengaging or running away.

System: Whenever someone in the same zone as the Lunar tries to move to another zone, she may reflexively make a contested roll of (Dexterity + Athletics) against the opponent's (Dexterity + Athletics), both at difficulty 6. If the Lunar gains more successes than her opponent, he cannot successfully leave the zone during this round.

Heron Sheds Rain (•)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar flicks away clumsy attacks with a dismissive toss of solidified hair, a casually extruded armored tendril, or by bending her joints to drift just out of the path of an assault not worth her full attention.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to activate this Charm. For the rest of the scene or until she is next Staggered, the Lunar increases her Defense by +2.

Life of the Hummingbird (•)

Resonance: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

The Lunar may briefly teach her flesh the shape of another by drinking his blood, without adding that form permanently to her shapeshifting library.

System: If her target isn't already bleeding, the Lunar needs to create a wound that inflicts at least one point of damage, ideally using sharp teeth for simplicity's sake. In any case, upon drinking a beast's blood (or a human's, if the Lunar knows Prey's Skin Disguise), she may reflexively pay 1 Mote to assume his form. Once she shifts into a different form, she loses access to this temporary shape.

Mighty Lunar Panoply (•)

Resonance: Intelligence, Stamina

The Lunar learns to fortify her Essence so that she can gird herself in an even greater number of the tools of Exalted warfare.

System: The Exalt may attune to one artifact without it counting toward her normal (Essence + 1) limit, so long as that artifact is primarily made of moonsilver.

Osseous Aegis (•)

Resonance: Stamina

The Lunar extends her skeleton into a broad bony shield protecting both of her forearms.

System: Use a shapeshifting action (difficulty 7 if rolled). For the rest of the scene, the Lunar enjoys the benefits of the sword and board fighting style in addition to whatever other method of combat she's employing, even if she suffers a "disabled arm" wound that renders one of her arms useless.

Ox-Body Technique (•)

Resonance: Stamina

The Lunar's body is so rugged as to endure the most catastrophic damage imaginable.

System: The Lunar permanently gains +4 maximum Health.

This Charm can be purchased a number of times equal to the character's Stamina rating.

Predator Grace Method (•)

Resonance: Dexterity, Wits

The Lunar moves with the grace and surety of a jungle cat on the prowl.

System: The character needs never roll to maintain her balance, no matter how precarious her footing, and may stand or run upon even the weakest or most insubstantial of surfaces, such as falling leaves, individual threads, drops of rain, or even the surface of water. Reflexively spending 1 Mote makes her immune to falling damage for the rest of the scene, and ensures she always lands on her feet.

Sinuous Striking Grace (•)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar allows her bestial instincts to guide her actions, leading her to strike when her foes least expect it.

System: The Lunar may reflexively spend 1 Mote to cut ahead without spending Willpower for the rest of the scene, or until staggered.

Spider Climbing Technique (•)

Resonance: Dexterity, Manipulation

The Lunar's toes and fingertips subtly reshape themselves to exploit even the smallest imperfections in any surface, allowing her to scale sheer surfaces as easily as though she were traversing the ground.

System: The Lunar never needs to roll to climb any surface, and does not treat doing so as complex movement. She may also cling to horizontal surfaces or even ceilings without any difficulty or need for a roll.

Armor-Forming Technique (••)

Resonance: Stamina, Intelligence

The Lunar extrudes her Essence into bone armor or a hardened carapace.

System: Reflexively spending 1 Mote grants the Lunar +2 Soak and +1 Stagger Threshold for the rest of the scene.

Armor-Rending Claw Fist (••)

Resonance: Strength

Exerting all of her force into an attack, the Lunar smashes through the toughest opposition as though it did not exist.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the end of the current round, all close-range attacks inflict Aggravated damage (-1) and gain Piercing (-2).

Bounding Hare Evasion (••)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar ranges where she pleases, moving in quick bursts and bounds that confound the efforts of her foes to restrain her.

System: If an attack that strikes the Lunar before her turn fails to damage her, it does not prevent her from using any swift actions that would normally be disabled by being struck before her turn. She may also cite this Charm as permitting her to do so even if an attack against her does inflict damage (Essence rating) times per battle. Finally, she may respond to an attack, after it resolves, by reflexively paying 2 Motes to move into an adjacent zone.

Crouching Tiger Exercise (••)

Resonance: Strength

The Lunar's muscles bunch and surge as she feeds them Essence almost to the point of self-destruction.

System: Reflexively gain 1 Limit or spend 1 Mote to reduce the difficulty of a feat of strength by the Lunar's Strength rating, or to add her Strength rating to the base damage of an attack. The Lunar suffers 1 aggravated damage (bruised) after the enhanced action resolves.

Ferocious Guardian Beast Stance (••)

Resonance: Dexterity, Stamina

Synchronizing her Essence with the movements of a nearby comrade, the Lunar's blade becomes a quicksilver flash, intercepting all harm that might befall her ally.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to apply a protect action to a comrade in the same zone. This protection continues until one of the characters moves to a different zone. The first time per scene that an attack slips through the Lunar's guard and injures a character she's protecting, the Lunar gains 1 Limit.

Flowing Body Evasion (••)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar flows like quicksilver away from an attack, parting her body around it if needs be.

System: The Lunar may reflexively spend 2 Motes when Dodging an attack to increase her Dodge value by an arbitrarily high number of her choosing against it, guaranteeing that the attack does not strike her. If the attack she wishes to defeat is undodgeable, she may spend +1 Mote to remove that quality from it, but this sets her Dodge to 0 after the attack resolves.

After Flowing Body Evasion protects the Lunar, her Dodge returns to its previous value and is reduced as usual.

This Charm cannot be invoked against unexpected attacks, or if the Lunar's Dodge value is 0 or less. When invoked, this Charm is considered a perfect defense.

Furious Beast Drive (••)

Resonance: Stamina, Strength

The Lunar draws great strength from her rage, enough to tear her foes limb from limb.

System: If desired, the character can enter restrained Limit Break (see p. XX) by rolling only three successes on a Limit roll. While in either restrained Limit Break or in the throes of the rage generated by the Lunar Charm: Relentless Lunar Fury, the Lunar ignores the rule of 1s on damage rolls for close-range attacks.

Hide-Toughening Essence (••)

Resonance: Stamina

Growing accustomed to the rigors of an existence of hardship and toil, the Lunar conditions her body to resist injury.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Lunar gains 3 Temporary Health. This Charm can only be used once per scene, but this limitation resets if the Lunar is Staggered.

Hyena Jaw Method (••)

Resonance: Strength, Stamina

The Lunar forms a powerful set of teeth somewhere on her body and locks them into an opponent's flesh during an attack, painfully joining the two.

System: After striking with an unarmed attack, reflexively spend 1 Mote to increase its base damage by +2. If the attack Staggers the target, the Lunar's jaws lock in. So long as she maintains the bite, if she or her opponent wishes to move to a different zone, they must first gain more successes in a reflexive contested (Strength + Athletics) roll (both rolls against difficulty 6). Success permits them to drag their conjoined opponent along with them as a form of complex movement; failure means they cannot move. The target suffers 1 damage (lacerated) each time they participate in such a roll, though if the Lunar attempts to drag them into another zone, they do have the option of forfeiting their resistance roll to avoid the damage.

The Lunar may reflexively relinquish her grip whenever she chooses. Otherwise, the opponent must use a simple action to pry her fangs loose by gaining more successes in a contested (Strength + Athletics) roll against difficulty 6; or Stagger or incapacitate the Lunar; or else simply rip himself free reflexively at the beginning of his turn, suffering 3 damage (lacerated) in the process.

Instinct-Driven Beast Movement (••)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar moves with terrifying speed and agility, inescapable in her pursuit of her prey.

System: The difficulty of all actions to run someone down, get somewhere quickly, or jump a difficult gap are permanently lowered by -2. By reflexively spending 1 Mote when she uses a move action, the Lunar may move two zones instead. If she's pursuing someone who Wounded her during the current scene, then once per scene she may reduce this Charm's cost to 0 Motes.

Lightning Stroke Attack (••)

Resonance: Dexterity, Strength

The Lunar drives home a killing blow, faster than the wind and as unstoppable as an avalanche.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote before making an attack. The attack is both Fierce and Heavy.

Relentless Lunar Fury (••)

Resonance: Dexterity, Strength

The Lunar unleashes her inner fury, letting her killing instincts guide her and insulate her from trivialities such as pain and danger.

System: Reflexively gain 1 Limit. The Lunar enters a killing rage, which she is able to direct against her enemies so long as no allies get in her way or try to restrain her. She treats her total Wound penalties as 0, increases her Soak and Stagger Threshold by +1, and may cut ahead without spending Willpower. Each round, she *must* attack one of her enemies if at all possible, and if she's not in the same zone as an enemy, she must attempt to get into the same zone as an enemy. This frenzy lasts until all enemies are incapacitated or fled.

She may also enjoy this Charm's benefits when in the frenzy-state produced by restrained or unrestrained Limit Break (see p. XX).

Scimitar Claw Technique (••)

Resonance: Dexterity, Strength

The Lunar refines her natural weaponry into transcendental killing tools, adorning herself with a mouth crowded with teeth like daggers, and claws like gleaming machetes.

System: When transforming into a shape capable of inflicting "lacerated" wounds with its natural attacks, the Lunar may increase the difficulty of her shapeshifting action by +1 (or enjoy this Charm's benefits automatically if she pays 1 additional Mote to assume the form). The enhanced form's unarmed attacks inflict 7 base damage, or +1 damage if they would already inflict that much damage or more.

Scorpion and Toad Mastery (••)

Resonance: Manipulation, Stamina

The Lunar transforms her body into a transcendent poison.

System: The Lunar is immune to poison, regardless of its potency. By reflexively spending 1 Mote, she can use her Essence to flood her body with deadly toxins for the rest of the scene. Any being which bites the Lunar, drinks her blood, or eats her flesh is immediately dosed with demon venom (see p. XX).

Wary Swallow Technique (••)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar, sure-footed and with keenly tuned instincts, dances away from danger.

System: When the Lunar invokes her Dodge against an attack, she may reflexively spend 1 Mote to reduce the amount by which her Dodge is reduced in the process by one. If she uses this Charm in conjunction with Flowing Body Evasion against an undodgeable attack, then her Dodge is reduced by -2 rather than set to 0.

If a Dodge enhanced by this Charm causes an attack to miss the Lunar entirely, she may reflexively move into an adjacent zone.

Chain-Eating Guise (•••)

Resonance: Dexterity, Stamina, Strength

The Lunar learns to wear her innermost fury upon her flesh, conjuring forth a battle form that is a terrifying mixture of human features and those of her Feral Heart, designed for violence and

fueled by repressed fury baked into her very Exaltation since the dawn of time: the *rage form*. A Lunar's rage form is usually significantly larger and heavier than her human aspect, endowed with natural killing tools, and completely impossible to mistake for anything other than a primordial killing machine dredged up from prehistory and nightmare.

System: The Lunar gains access to the rage form. It is considered one of her true forms. To assume her rage form, the Lunar uses a shapeshifting action (difficulty 7 if rolled) to assume a hybrid killing shape. While in her rage form, the Lunar gains the following features:

- **Enhanced Attributes:** While in her rage form, the Lunar adds +3 to her Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina ratings, even if this raises their ratings above 5. This adjustment modifies her dice pools and her Soak, base Dodge, and base Block calculations.
- **Tough:** The Lunar increases her Soak by +1 and her Stagger Threshold by +1.
- **Deadly:** The Lunar adds +2 to the base damage of her hand-to-hand attacks. Additionally, all rage forms are capable of inflicting lacerated Wounds with unarmed attacks, whether this comes from sharp teeth, small horns, talons, or simply bone-crushing strength.
- **Fearsome:** The Lunar's Appearance rating is reduced by -3, but the cost to re-roll intimidation actions drops to 0 Willpower.
- **Unsubtle:** When wearing her rage form, the difficulty to spot the Lunar's Tell is reduced by -2, and the rage form itself is generally immediately alarming enough to qualify as a reason to regard the Lunar with suspicion.
- **Bestial:** The Lunar gains the benefit of two features drawn from the Uncanny list on page XX, inspired by her Feral Heart.

The Lunar may also select the following unique feature in lieu of one of her Uncanny features when designing the rage form:

- **Elegance:** The rage form retains far more human features than is normal, and does not accrue an Appearance penalty or automatically provoke suspicion from those who see it. It still enjoys its bonus to intimidation attempts.

Coiled Cobra Stance (•••)

Resonance: Dexterity, Strength

The Lunar draws down, tightening her muscles, marshaling her will, and maximizing her potential. When she strikes, it is like a thunderclap, an avalanche, a god taking the first step of the dance that ends the world.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the round, if the Lunar adds any dice to a Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina-based roll with Excellence of the Shifting Moon, she bases the number of bonus dice on the physical Attributes of her *present form* rather than the value on her character sheet. She may also add her current form's Strength to the base damage of all close-range attacks. This Charm can only be used once per scene unless the Lunar is under the effects of restrained or unrestrained Limit Break, or Relentless Lunar Fury.

Ferocious Biting Strike (•••)

Resonance: Dexterity, Strength

The Lunar's attacks curve through the air as they seek out organ and artery, smoothly eliding her opponent's attempts to survive.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an attack. That attack gains Piercing (-3). If the target is Staggered, it also gains Overwhelming (-1).

Halting the Scarlet Flow (•••)

Resonance: Stamina

The Lunar's Essence is a dynamo that will keep her up and fighting no matter what, beyond sanity and beyond the limits of bodily endurance. Her very rage pulls her back together.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes to activate this Charm. For the rest of the scene, the Lunar reflexively heals 1 non-Aggravated damage at the beginning of each round. If she uses a simple action to concentrate on pulling her body back together, she heals one non-Aggravated bruised, dazed, lacerated, or burned Wound. If in her rage form or using Relentless Lunar Fury, this Charm may instead be activated by gaining 1 Limit.

Outside of combat, so long as she takes no strenuous activity, the Lunar heals non-Aggravated damage at a rate of 1 damage per hour, and heals her non-Aggravated Wounds ten times faster than normal. She may regenerate amputated body parts when she heals the associated Wound.

Octopus and Spider Barrage (•••)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar moves like something out of primordial nightmare, either launching a flurry of attacks, or else splitting her extremities momentarily into several, perhaps even dozens, of darting tentacles and claw-tipped killing limbs.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes. At the end of the round, after all other characters have acted, the Lunar may make a hand-to-hand attack against a target of her choice. This attack is Fierce and has Overwhelming (-1).

Ravenous Beast Maw (•••)

Resonance: Stamina, Strength

Upon defeating an opponent, the Lunar's body grows a cavernous maw and clutching tendrils to feed his remains into it. She messily devours her foe, adding his strength to her own, even as she continues to battle on.

System: Upon slaying an opponent within the same zone or causing a group that overlaps into the Lunar's zone to lose a point of Size, reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Lunar immediately adds the slain target's form to her shapeshifting library if she is able to do so (or adds a few generic soldiers or whatever else to her library if she tore through a group). Moreover, she gains 3 Temporary Health.

Sensing the Deadly Flow (•••)

Resonance: Dexterity

Moving within the currents of violence, the Lunar's keen instincts guide her through a multitude of blades to be where her foes' attacks are not.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Lunar does not have to spend Willpower to Dodge attacks until the end of the scene, until she is next Staggered, or until her Dodge value drops to 0, whichever comes first.

Unhesitant Scorpion Lash (•••)

Resonance: Strength, Stamina

The Lunar flows from form to form, tearing apart her enemies and bursting through the bloody haze of their demise wearing a new and even more ferocious skin.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote upon making an attack that Staggers or incapacitates its target. The Lunar must immediately transform into a different form, (which may be either another true form or a form from her shapeshifting library) reflexively and at no cost; at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted, she can then launch another attack at an enemy she can reach. If she Staggers or incapacitates that enemy as well, she might potentially invoke Unhesitant Scorpion Lash again, transforming and attacking immediately. This Charm can be used a number of times per round equal to the Exalt's Essence rating. The Lunar cannot use the same form more than once in a single attack sequence.

Wound-Mastering Body Evolution (•••)

Resonance: Stamina

The Lunar's flesh learns from that which harms it, adapting to temporarily adapt her body against a particular kind of damage.

System: After suffering a Wound, the Lunar may reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the Lunar's Stagger Threshold becomes arbitrarily high against any attack which would inflict that sort of Wound, and her Soak also increases by +3 against such attacks.

Wound-Mastering Body Evolution *cannot* be stacked; activating it again while it's already running simply changes what the Lunar is fortified against.

Writhing Serpent Defense (•••)

Resonance: Dexterity

The Lunar moves in deceptive and confusing patterns, tempting her enemies to overextend and expose themselves, then striking viciously.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the first time each round the Lunar is targeted with an attack by an opponent in the same zone and their attack fails to strike her, that opponent must resist a one-time hazard (difficulty 7, damage 4, same damage type as the Lunar's weapon).

Changing Moon Charms

These Charms deal mostly with social interaction, inspiration, and trickery.

Beast Calming Method (•)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma

By standing her ground and projecting a powerful and assertive energy, the Lunar may back down any lesser beast than herself.

System: The Lunar uses a simple action to focus on a target and makes a Charisma + (Empathy or Presence) roll against a difficulty of their Willpower rating. Valid targets include all hostile animals, as well as any being in the grip of some sort of wild passion or rage. Success causes the aggressive state to immediately end, and the target to become calm. While mundane beasts affected by this Charm will never voluntarily attack the Lunar, this doesn't guarantee that intelligent targets won't still take violent actions, only that it won't be the result of rampant aggression.

Dog Tongue Method (•)

Resonance: Charisma, Intelligence

The Lunar learns the trick of understanding the intentions and speech of animals, and can make herself understood to them in turn.

System: The Lunar reduces the difficulty of all Survival rolls when dealing with animals by -2. Additionally, she can employ human speech in any of her beast forms, regardless of the shape of her mouth or throat. Finally, she may reflexively spend 1 Mote to understand and make herself understood by animals for a scene.

Emotion-Shaping Technique (•)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma

By merely smiling, scowling, or otherwise emoting at her subject, the Lunar can afflict them with the pantomimed emotion. They are helpless not to feel it.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll (Manipulation + Empathy) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Their heart is filled with powerful sorrow, fear, anger, despair, joy, apathy, contentment, or whatever else the Lunar wishes them to feel for one hour per success (see p. XX).

Fearful Lunar Form (•)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma, Strength

When the Lunar decides to lean on someone, she subtly brings small aspects of the beast within into her appearance, putting a gleam in her eye and sharpening her teeth ever-so-slightly, finished off with a slight predatory musk.

System: The Lunar permanently reduces the difficulty of all attempts to intimidate others through social influence by -2.

Freedom of the Beast (•)

Resonance: Charisma, Wits

Realizing that she has formed an unwise attachment, the Lunar feeds her foolish sentiments to her Feral Heart, liberating herself thereby.

System: The Lunar gains 2 Limit and makes a Willpower roll against difficulty 7. If she succeeds, then she may erase an Intimacy of her choice.

Generosity of the Cuckoo (•)

Resonance: Manipulation

The Lunar enwraps an object in her own alluring Essence, increasing its desirability tenfold.

System: When offering to give, sell, or barter an object to another character, spend 1 Mote and make a contested roll of Manipulation + (Bureaucracy or Larceny) against the potential recipient's Willpower, both at difficulty 6. If the Lunar gains more successes, the target becomes convinced that whatever the Lunar is offering is of tremendous value. This impression lasts for a number of hours equal to the successes by which the Lunar's roll beat her target's.

Glance-Oration Technique (•)

Resonance: Appearance, Manipulation

The Lunar can communicate even complex concepts with nothing but a sultry glance, toss of her head, subtly adjusted eyebrow, shrug, or other bit of body language.

System: The Lunar's player may reflexively roll Appearance + (Presence or Performance) (difficulty 7) to communicate a message of any degree of complexity silently, through body language alone, and this communication is only perceptible to those she intends to understand her.

Heart-Drinking Allure (•)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma, Manipulation

The Lunar may briefly teach her flesh the shape of another by sharing physical intimacy with him. This Charm is *normally* used to temporarily assume human shapes, and doing so requires Prey's Skin Disguise... but it *can* technically be learned without meeting that prerequisite.

System: The Lunar must share a minute or so in extended romantic intimacy with the target of this Charm. A deep kiss or a few intimate caresses are sufficient for its activation, but few Lunars stop there unless they're in a hurry. Whatever the case, upon reflexively paying 1 Mote she assumes her partner's form. Once she shifts into a different form, she loses access to this temporary shape.

Imposing Presence Attitude (•)

Resonance: Charisma, Manipulation

The Lunar's words, threaded with Essence, entrance and beguile.

System: By reflexively spending 1 Mote, the Lunar's presence and words become deeply compelling. She reduces the difficulty of all social rolls by -2 for the rest of the scene. Anyone who wishes to spend 1 Willpower to reject her social influence must spend +1 additional Willpower to do so.

Kindred Spirit Recognition (•)

Resonance: Appearance, Intelligence, Perception

The Lunar becomes immediately recognizable to the outcast and the unwanted as a fellow traveler and potential friend.

System: The Lunar lowers the difficulty of all social rolls by -1 when dealing with outsiders, outcasts, exiles, and those with either no place in the society to which they must attempt to belong, or who are formally at the bottom rung of a regimented society. This includes not only mortal outcasts such as the lepers, beggars, criminals, and those of deviant personal practices in

highly traditional communities, as well as untouchables such as the corporal caste of Prasad, but also supernatural outsiders: Exalts on the run from the Wyld Hunt, Wyld mutants without a tribe to take them in, bound demons, and the like.

Perfect Symmetry (•)

Resonance: Appearance

The Lunar makes instinctive, subtle adjustments to the finest details of her appearance to best appeal to those she treats with.

System: Lower the difficulty of all Appearance-based rolls by –1. Once per story the Lunar may activate Excellence of the Shifting Moon to enhance Appearance at a cost of 0 Motes.

Righteous Lion Defense (•)

Resonance: Intelligence, Manipulation, Perception

The Lunar shields her convictions in an invulnerable shell of Essence, guarding them against all hostile influence.

System: The Exalt may reject or ignore any attempt to cause or force her to betray, undermine, or abandon her Intimacies or Nature at no cost and with no penalty.

Sharing the Pantheon's Heart (•)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar enfold the lessons of her people around her heart, learning to perceive the world through the shared eyes of the Society of the Moon entire. As such, she knows when she stands in the presence of someone or something precious to her people.

A character must have listened to a recital of Lore-Speaking Method (see p. XX) at least once in order to learn this Charm.

System: The Lunar is instinctively aware when she stands in the presence of a person, place, or thing toward which another living Lunar holds an Intimacy. The Exalt may attempt to discern the nature of this attachment by spending 1 Mote and using a simple action to roll (Intelligence + Lore) against difficulty 8. One success tells her whether the Intimacy is positive, negative, or ambiguous (if multiple Lunars hold conflicting Intimacies toward the subject, it will report back as ambiguous). Three successes tells her the specific context of the Intimacy (if multiple Lunars hold Intimacies toward the subject, she will simply learn that fact rather than the Intimacies' context). Five successes also tells her which Lunar or Lunars hold the Intimacy or Intimacies she is scrutinizing.

A Lunar can make a reflexive (Perception + Lore) roll at difficulty 8 whenever someone rolls five or more successes to scrutinize the subject of one of her Intimacies. One success lets her know that someone has done so, while three or more successes tells her precisely what Intimacy was scrutinized, and five or more successes lets her know who did it.

Magic which protects a Lunar from mind-reading *can't* stop other Lunars from accessing knowledge about their Intimacies through Sharing the Pantheon's Heart. Wisdom granted to the communal pool of the Charm is irrevocable.

Silver-Maned Glory (•)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma

Howling an exhortation to push onward to glory, the Lunar stiffens the resolve of faltering allies.

System: Spend 1 Mote to make a reflexive rally action after an allied group has failed a rout check. This Charm can be used at no cost a number of times per story equal to the Lunar's Essence rating.

Tale-Spinning Mastery (•)

Resonance: Charisma, Intelligence

The Society of the Moon cherishes its oral histories, and teaches young Lunars to charge their tales with Essence to inspire listeners to greatness.

System: The Lunar spends at least half an hour reciting a story, fable, parable, or personal recollection, which the player should at least detail in broad strokes. Then, spend 1 Mote. Everyone who listened to the tale counts dice results of 10 as two successes on all actions that are in some way related to the themes, details, or moral of the story for the next 12 hours. For example, a Lunar might stand before her gathered army and regale them with the tale of Ma-Ha-Suchi's sacking of the ancient Shogunate temple-complex which now serves as his lair, then lead them to perform a similar attack on a fortified Immaculate monastery.

Wild Daughter Cultivation (•)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma

The Lunar cultivates the power of her Feral Heart that she might pass it on to her children.

System: The Lunar may spend 1 Mote during the potential conception of a child to imprint it with the features of her Feral Heart, ensuring that it will be beastfolk. If her body possesses an Uncanny feature at the time of conception (such as from Hybrid Body Rearrangement, the rage form, or the Feral Heart form, although in that case the only thing this Charm is doing is to save the Lunar the hassle of going out into the Wyld...), her child will be beastfolk reflecting whatever sort of beast the Uncanny feature came from.

Beast-God's Blessings (••)

Resonance: Manipulation, Intelligence

The Lunar devises a fertility rite and infuses it with her Essence. Those who deliberately couple under the auspices of the rite create a child that has been spiritually sired by the Lunar, even if she is hundreds of miles away at the time, and that child will be beastfolk.

System: Designing a fertility rite requires several weeks of research, the expenditure of 5 Motes, and a difficulty 8 (Intelligence + Occult) roll. Success produces a functional rite that the Lunar can pass down to her worshipers. This rite only works for members of her Cult, who regularly offer up reverence to the Lunar. Their children will be beastfolk, usually reflecting the Lunar's Feral Heart, although she can assign some other beast identity from her shapeshifting library by increasing the difficulty of rite creation to 9.

Fertility rites lose their power over time, and the Lunar must devise a new rite once every ten years or so.

Chameleon Skin Disguise (••)

Resonance: Appearance, Dexterity, Manipulation

The Lunar can shift her coloration to match her environment, becoming difficult to detect.

System: The difficulty of all Stealth rolls is lowered by -2 . By reflexively spending 1 Mote, the Lunar can intensify this capability for one scene (and causes its effect to spread to her clothing), making her functionally invisible so long as she moves no faster than a slow walk and doesn't make any sudden, violent motions, which obviate the illusion (see p. XX for the effects of invisibility).

Crowd-Inciting Method (••)

Resonance: Charisma

The Lunar releases her ever-burning rage into the air around her: her breath, her very pheromones sizzle with anger, and those in her immediate vicinity react in kind.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Appearance + (Empathy or Performance) against difficulty 5. Everyone present whose Willpower rating is equal to or less than the number of successes rolled becomes angry, aggressive, and combative for the rest of the scene (see p. XX).

Earth and Moon Song (••)

Resonance: Charisma

Lunars wear no chains, but rather define themselves, and defend that self-definition with unmatched ferocity.

System: Once per scene, when the Lunar takes an action to support, advance, or protect one of her Intimacies, that action's difficulty is reduced by -1 .

Forgetful Victim Exercise (••)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma

The Lunar may blank out the memories of those she meets, either through terror or delight.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll either (Appearance + Socialize) (if the target's interaction with the Lunar was pleasant), or (Charisma + Presence) (if it wasn't) against a difficulty of the victim's Willpower. Each success allows the Lunar to erase the memory of one scene from the target's life. No new memories take the place of these devoured moments; the victim's mind simply develops blanks containing only a vague sense of bliss or terror.

Heart-Wasp Assault (••)

Resonance: Charisma, Manipulation, Stamina

The Lunar transmutes her rancor into a swarm of stinging, biting insects. She opens her mouth and issues forth a medley of wasps, hornets, and biting flies to bedevil one of her enemies.

System: The Lunar opens her mouth, spends 1 Mote, and uses a simple action to vomit up a torrent of stinging and biting insects which surrounds a foe of her choosing, either within the same zone or up to one zone away. For the rest of the scene, or until the Lunar is Staggered, whichever comes first, that opponent is pursued by an environmental hazard with difficulty 6, damage 2 (bruised), penalty -2 , one round interval. If, before this Charm's duration elapses, the target dies or flees somewhere that the swarm can't follow (such as underwater), the Lunar may

reflexively assign it a new target on her turn. The swarm can reflexively move one zone per round to chase its target, moving at the end of the round.

Laughing into the Teeth of Madness (••)

Resonance: Appearance, Wits

The Lunar braces her Essence against the shapeshifting potential of her Exaltation, partially calcifying herself to gain protection from the corrosive influence of the Wyld.

Very few Lunars learn this Charm in the Age of Sorrows, as their moonsilver tattoos obviate the need for it. A few Casteless still rely on it to protect them during their sojourns into the kingdoms of the Fair Folk.

System: Upon activating this Charm, the Lunar's maximum Mote pool capacity is reduced by -1 and the difficulty of all shapeshifting actions increases by +2, but she gains complete protection from being transformed in mind, body, or spirit by the Wyld. She may sustain Laughing into the Teeth of Madness for a number of days equal to her Essence rating, at which point she must make a difficulty 8 (Wits + Occult) roll. Success grants her another (Essence) rating days of protection, after which she has to roll again. Failure means she cannot sustain the tension in her Essence any longer, ending the Charm. Once this Charm's protection lapses, it can't be reactivated again during the current story.

Lion Roar Method (••)

Resonance: Charisma, Strength

The Lunar draws in a deep breath, fills the air in her lungs with Essence, and then emits an ear-shattering, primeval roar.

System: The Lunar uses a simple action to produce an earth-shaking roar or ear-piercing scream. Everyone within the same sector who hears it that is *not* a friend or ally of the Lunar must succeed at a Willpower roll against difficulty 9, or else suffer a -3 penalty to all actions on their next turn as they stagger from the force of the Lunar's cry; their Defense and Stagger Threshold are also reduced by -1 until the end of the following round.

Mirror Sight Dismay (••)

Resonance: Manipulation

Using her Essence as a mirror, the Lunar can use clever wordplay to reflect a target's views back at him in reverse, briefly convincing him that something he believes is not true.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll Manipulation + (Linguistics or Socialize) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Success allows the Lunar to convince the target that one of his beliefs is false. This confusion lasts for 10 minutes per success.

Moon Beckons Tide (••)

Resonance: Appearance

The Lunar fuses together pheromones, carnal allure, and her enchanting Essence to make her attention and her touch physically addictive.

System: The Lunar must share at least a minute in extended romantic intimacy with the target of this Charm, and then spend 1 Mote and make a contested roll of (Appearance + Presence) against

the target's Willpower, both at difficulty 6. If the Lunar gains more successes, her paramour becomes physically and psychologically addicted to her. She's constantly in his thoughts, and he desires to see her and to be the focus of her attention again. He gains a positive Intimacy of some sort toward her, with a context chosen by his player. Spending more than (his Willpower rating) days away from the Lunar causes acute withdrawal symptoms: all dice pools suffer a -1 penalty that climbs each day until it reaches -3. At any point while suffering this penalty, the victim may spend 2 Willpower to make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll against difficulty 8. Succeeding once clears away the Intimacy. Spending the Willpower and succeeding again gets rid of the physical symptoms of addiction as well, and clears the penalty.

Natural Selection Glance (••)

Resonance: Manipulation, Perception

The Lunar may focus her Essence to momentarily heighten all of her senses to an incredible degree and focus them upon one person, taking in his posture, scent, the rate of his heartbeat, and even, in the barest subliminal flash, the color of his soul. With nothing more than the blink of her eye, she may gain a summation of who that person is and what he's currently doing.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to immediately make an attempt to read the target's intentions (see p. XX) without the need for him to do or say anything revealing.

New Friend Aroma (••)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma, Manipulation

Perhaps it's something in her pheromones, or simply her incredible confidence, but everyone who meets the Lunar regards her well.

System: During the scene when someone first meets the Lunar (or at least, when someone *thinks* they're first meeting the Lunar) they're favorably inclined toward her, and all her social actions against them are rolled at -2 difficulty.

Soporific Venom Injection (••)

Resonance: Stamina, Manipulation

The Lunar distills a numbing venom from her Essence and imbues it into her attacks.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an attack with a natural weapon which is capable of inflicting lacerated Wounds. If the target suffers any damage (and the Lunar may limit the attack to *only* a single point of damage, if she wishes), he must make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll against difficulty (4 + Lunar's Manipulation). Success allows the victim to fight off the venom and continue to act for the rest of the scene, albeit at a -1 penalty due to the poison in his system. Failure causes him to fall unconscious for the rest of the scene.

Thousand Years' Fury (••)

Resonance: Charisma, Manipulation

The Lunar draws up the bestial rage lurking in the depths of her Exaltation and temporarily casts it into another, driving him mad.

System: The Lunar targets someone within her line of sight, spends 2 Motes, and uses a simple action to make a contested roll of her current Limit points (difficulty 6) against his Willpower (difficulty 8). If the Lunar gains more successes, the target flies into a nigh-uncontrollable rage

for a number of minutes equal to the successes by which the Lunar won the roll. While in the grip of this fury, in each round the target must either attack a target of his choice, break nearby objects and furniture, or subject a target of his choice to a screaming, unrestrained tirade in which he insults, belittles, and provokes them.

While this Charm is active, the Lunar *cannot* make Limit rolls to fall into a rage herself: her fury is occupied elsewhere. Nor can she benefit from the Charms: Furious Beast Drive or Relentless Lunar Fury. When the Charm ends, the Lunar must roll a number of dice equal to the successes by which she defeated her opponent against difficulty 6. Each success grants her one point of Limit as her provoked and active fury comes home to roost.

Traceless Passage Technique (••)

Resonance: Dexterity, Manipulation

The Lunar may smooth her passage through the world with an occulting expenditure of Essence.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the sun next rises or sets, the Lunar leaves absolutely no evidence of her passage behind, making it impossible to track her using mundane effort. Those with supernaturally acute senses or supernaturally accurate tracking must still roll against difficulty 9 to follow the Lunar's trail.

Animal Magnetism (•••)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma, Manipulation

The Lunar wears her power and allure like a mantle, making her irresistible, terrible, compelling.

System: The Lunar gains access to a new form, the allure form. It is considered one of her true forms. Her allure form defaults to sharing the appearance of her Birth Skin, though it may be independently modified with Changing Plumage Mastery. To assume her allure form, the Lunar uses a shapeshifting action (difficulty 7 if rolled) to adopt a form of limitless appeal.

When wearing the allure form, the Lunar's Charisma and Manipulation are increased by +2 and her Appearance rises by +3. These increases can raise her ratings above 5 dots. However, the difficulty to spot her Tell is reduced by -2. Any inspire actions taken in this form (see p. XX) count results of 10 as two successes, and each time the Lunar creates a temporary Intimacy or casts an Intimacy into doubt, she may spend 1 Willpower to instead create a permanent Intimacy or destroy a targeted Intimacy. Finally, when assuming the allure form, the Lunar may opt to manifest one Uncanny feature associated with her Feral Heart, if she wishes.

Brotherhood of Lake and River (•••)

Resonance: Charisma

The Lunar bonds herself to another through a mingling of blood and Essence. This Charm is traditionally used to unite a group of young Lunars as packmates, a bond considered blessed by Luna by much of the Society of the Moon.

Some Lunars, it must be admitted, use Brotherhood of Lake and River for less friendly purposes than to adopt those they feel a bond with as siblings. The Charm is also useful for keeping an eye on agents, victims, or stalking horses that the Lunar wants to keep on a long leash for the time being.

System: The Lunar and her sibling(s)-to-be must cut themselves (suffering 1 damage, lacerated) and bind the wounds together so that their blood mingles for at least a minute while the Lunar spends 1 Mote and all spend 1 Willpower. Though this is traditionally a Lunar rite, it is not actually necessary for the ritual's other participants to be Lunars or even Exalted.

Those united by a pack-bond can always dimly sense how far away their new siblings are, and in what direction. When a member of the pack is injured or killed, everyone she's bound to knows it. Siblings within the same district can even communicate silently, their words heard only within the minds of whichever other pack members they wish.

A character can be simultaneously bonded to a number of other characters equal to three times her Essence rating. The Brotherhood of Lake and River can be severed by two means. One is death. The other is for a participant to spit into her hand, 1 Willpower, and slap the sibling she wishes to be severed from across the face.

Cobra Hypnotic Method (•••)

Resonance: Appearance, Manipulation

By maintaining eye contact with her victim, the Lunar may hypnotize them into doing whatever she likes. They *will* be aware their actions are unusual and inexplicable afterwards.

System: Spend 2 Motes and use a simple action to roll (Appearance or Manipulation) + Presence against a difficulty of the target's Willpower rating. One or two successes will allow the Lunar to command her target to do anything that doesn't seem tremendously unusual or out of character. With three or four successes, she can command the target to do anything that doesn't endanger himself or a loved one. With five or more successes, the target will risk his life and the lives of others at the Lunar's command. The target *will* be aware his actions are unusual and inexplicable afterwards, unless the Lunar spends an additional 1 Willpower. In this case, the target will rationalize his actions to the best of his ability.

Cobra Hypnotic Method cannot hypnotize a target into harming or killing himself, compel him into certain death, or force him to betray his Nature. Characters targeted by this Charm may spend 1 Willpower to escape its effects for a scene if they can cite an Intimacy that it is forcing them to act against. Spending a number of points of Willpower equal to the Lunar's Essence rating breaks the Charm's hold.

Glib Tongue Technique (•••)

Resonance: Manipulation

The Lunar clouds her requests with a haze of Essence, making the unreasonable and the onerous seem entirely reasonable, at least for a little while.

System: When the Lunar requests someone to undertake an ordeal (see p. XX), she may reflexively spend 2 Motes and make a contested roll of (Manipulation + Presence) against the target's (Wits + Empathy), both at difficulty 6 (for antagonists, Aptitudes such as "quick thinking," "manipulation," or "reading intentions" would qualify for use of Expertise). If the Lunar gains more successes, the target sees the request as a mere inconvenience (see p. XX). After a number of minutes equal to the successes by which the Lunar beat him on the roll, he realizes the true magnitude of what she proposed, and if he agreed to it, may re-evaluate that decision as though now making it for the first time.

Mind-Blanking Fear Technique (•••)

Resonance: Charisma, Strength

The Lunar unleashes her rage in a single concentrated scream, stunning an enemy.

System: On the Lunar's turn, target an enemy no more than one zone away, then use a swift action to spend 1 Mote and roll (Charisma + Presence) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Success stuns him and causes him to be unable to use his next simple action to attack the Lunar, though he can still defend himself. If the Lunar immediately departs, he can't bring himself to follow after her for one minute per success rolled. A character can only be affected by this Charm once per scene.

Outlander's Condemnation (•••)

Resonance: Manipulation

Crouching over a defeated opponent, the Lunar may drink the breath from his lungs and in doing so, consume that which ties her enemy to the world and his life. He is no longer recognized as kith or kin by those who knew him, and his fortune and privilege crumbles beneath him within a matter of days.

System: The Lunar draws breath from the lungs of an unconscious, sleeping, or otherwise incapacitated or unresisting target with a simple action, then spends 2 Motes and rolls (Manipulation + Socialize) against difficulty 7. For each success, the target loses one social Background dot, starting with whatever he would consider most important. This broadly manifests as a sense of alienation: those who formerly accepted the individual no longer consider him "one of us," whatever that might mean, and find excuses to exclude, disenfranchise, and disown him in short order.

Those with Essence rated at 2+ regain lost Background dots at a rate of one per week, beginning with those they have put the most effort into regaining, as their contacts and allies forget the strange and alienating distance that pushed them away from the character. Otherwise, this Charm's effects are permanent unless the target takes substantial efforts to repair the damage to his life. A character may not be targeted by this Charm more than once per story.

River Reflects Desire (•••)

Resonance: Manipulation

Faced with a bold assertion, the Lunar deploys cunning wordplay to fence with the speaker until his certainties are as distorted as the moon's reflection upon a rushing stream.

System: In response to a statement of belief, the Lunar reflexively spends 1 Mote and makes a contested roll of Manipulation + (Linguistics or Socialize), resisted by the target's Willpower (both at difficulty 7). For one day per success by which the Lunar exceeds her target, the speaker is left confused and confounded, believing in the *opposite* of whatever belief he had professed certainty in. For example, a magistrate expressing certainty in a criminal's guilt could be befuddled into believing his innocence, or someone who just called the Lunar a liar could be turned around until he is sure she is in fact truthful.

Serpent-in-the-Belly Suasion (•••)

Resonance: Manipulation, Perception

The Lunar breathes directly into the mouth of another, solidifying her Essence into a serpent, spider, or rat that crawls down the target's throat and nestles in his belly. There it listens to all that transpires, and possibly expresses the Lunar's displeasure if it does not like what it hears.

System: To use this Charm, the Lunar must have access to another character's mouth. Generally this is accomplished by using *Serpent-in-the-Belly Suasion* upon a sleeping target, in the middle of a lingering kiss, or at the culmination of a ritual involving the Lunar's Cult, but it can be accomplished in combat with a successful disarm attempt, leaving the target armed in exchange for creating an opportunity to breathe into his mouth. In any event, the Lunar spends 1 Mote and the target is treated to the horrifying sensation of a beast sliding down his throat and nestling in his stomach.

The beast is immune to digestion and soon aligns itself with the target's Essence flows, becoming undetectable in the course of normal activity. By shutting out all other stimuli and concentrating with a simple action, the Lunar may hear whatever is going on around the host of a particular stomach-spy. She has no access to the target's vision, and any (Perception + Awareness) rolls she makes through her vermin spy suffer a -3 dice penalty due to the muffling of the host's flesh.

The Lunar can at any time use a simple action and spend 1 Mote to command her embedded agent to express her displeasure; the host must use Stamina + Resistance to resist a one-time hazard (difficulty 9, damage 2, lacerated, Aggravated), and suffers several minutes of excruciating agony that inflicts a -3 Wound penalty on all actions as the beast within gnaws on his innards.

The Lunar may have a number of stomach-spies active at once equal to her Manipulation rating. If she has no more use for one, she may reflexively sever her connection to it; it harmlessly disperses into its host's Essence flows over the next several hours. Otherwise, the only way to remove an unwanted passenger is by accumulating five successes on an extended difficulty 9 (Dexterity + Medicine) action that inflicts a lacerated Wound with each roll.

Unspeakable Aura of Dread (•••)

Resonance: Appearance, Charisma

The Lunar bristles with the Essence of a predator king, causing others to tremble at the thought of opposing her.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes. For the rest of the scene, any character who wishes to oppose, insult, demand something from, or attack the Lunar must either suffer a -3 dice penalty to do so, or else spend a Willpower point to momentarily negate the power of this Charm for a round.

No Moon Charms

These Charms encompass learning things, communicating wisdom, dealing with spirits, and sorcery.

Beast Instinct Method (•)

Resonance: Intelligence, Stamina, Wits

The Lunar taps into her savage instincts, allowing them to help her exist with grace and ease in even the harshest of environments.

System: The Lunar needs never make a Survival roll to remain safe, comfortable, and fed in the wilderness. The difficulty to feed and protect others in such environments is reduced by -3 . By reflexively spending 1 Mote, she fortifies herself against environmental damage so that she can suffer no more than 1 damage from any particular source of it during a scene (such as from a particular snowstorm, forest fire, and so on).

Blood-Reshaping Technique (•)

Resonance: Appearance, Intelligence, Manipulation, Perception

By allowing someone else to drink her blood, the Lunar may dream a new appearance for them, or allow them to dream it for themselves.

System: The Lunar suffers 1 damage (lacerated) and rolls (Wits + Empathy) against difficulty 7. Each success allows her to inflict one change on the person drinking her blood from the list found under Changing Plumage Mastery on page XX. The Lunar may choose these alterations herself, or may allow the subject to choose them. Alternately, if she rolls at least three successes, the Lunar may then spend 1 Mote to cause the subject to perfectly duplicate her own likeness.

One alteration of the Storyteller's choosing will revert to its prior state after each week that passes, unless the subject spends a point of Willpower to keep it.

Calls of the Human Prey (•)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar may refine the subtleties of language from the heady tang of blood.

System: The Lunar can learn a single language from anyone whose blood she drinks or whose flesh she devours.

Debt of Borrowed Skin (•)

Resonance: Charisma, Manipulation, Intelligence, Wits

The Lunar may barter or gamble for someone else's face. She must know Prey's Skin Disguise to learn this Charm.

System: The Lunar makes it explicitly clear that she wishes to purchase the right to wear the subject's face, and must provide him with compensation he feels is adequate. Upon doing so, she gains the right to transform into his shape precisely once. After doing so once and then shifting into a different form, the subject's shape is erased from her shapeshifting library. She may make another deal in the future, if she wishes, but cannot stockpile multiple unused bargains with the same individual.

Alternately, she may steal her target's form by defeating him in a game of chance or skill, if he's willing to wager his face. The Lunar is free to cheat, so long as she doesn't get caught. This variant of the Charm is also subject to all of the above restrictions.

Eyes of the Cat (•)

Resonance: Intelligence, Perception

The character may attune her senses to otherworldly emanations, glimpsing the ghosts as they haunt their graves and the gods in their temples. Having seen such spirits, she may also strike them.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Lunar may see dematerialized beings and the entrance of spirit sanctums for the rest of the scene. She may also physically interact with dematerialized beings, including attacking them.

Form-Fixing Method (•)

Resonance: Wits

The Lunar scratches or paints stabilizing glyphs upon the surface of an object, immunizing it against the Wyld's corrosive touch. Some hold that this humble and very ancient Charm was the seed from which the modern Lunar caste-fixing rituals were devised.

System: Use a simple action to spend 1 Mote and make a (Wits + Craft) roll against difficulty 6. Success protects the object from the influence of the Wyld so long as the markings upon it are undisturbed.

Hackle-Raising Exercise (•)

Resonance: Perception

The Lunar's senses are ever-attuned to danger, warning her when she is about to be struck down.

System: After the Lunar fails to notice an ambush or other such unexpected attack, she may reflexively spend 1 Mote to notice it anyway, removing its unexpected quality.

Harmony with Reality Technique (•)

Resonance: Intelligence

By giving a gift of her Essence, the Lunar may harmonize a prodigy of the Wyld with the solidity of Creation.

System: The Lunar touches a fantastic marvel of the Wyld such as a flower made of delicious fire or a sword forged of solidified love and spends 1 Mote, infusing it with her protean Essence. The enchanted object may be carried into Creation without losing any of its fantastic or impossible qualities, and may endure there for a year and a day, or even longer if this Charm is used again to extend the duration of its protection. By spending 3 Motes, the Lunar may grant this blessing to a Wyld-touched being too fantastic or badly mutated to survive beyond the bordermarches, granting them protection from the grinding touch of reality for (Essence rating) months. Used upon one of the Fair Folk, this provides protection from withering (see **Vol III**, p. XX).

Labyrinth of the Beast (•)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar hides her thoughts within an Essence-sculpted warren, leading those who would try to steal them astray.

System: Whenever someone attempts to read the Lunar's mind by any means, reflexively roll (Perception + Awareness) against difficulty 6. Success reveals not only the mind-reading attempt, but also who is responsible. The Lunar may then pay 1 Mote to reflexively shield her thoughts, making them impossible to read for the rest of the scene.

Lore-Speaking Method (•)

Resonance: None

This Charm was devised in tandem with the new Lunar Castes. Learning and enacting it is one of the most holy rites of the No Moon Caste. Any No Moon who has not yet mastered the Lore-Speaking Method is looked upon as a child by her peers — not with contempt, but as someone who is not yet ready to assume the responsibilities and obligations of her caste.

Lore-Speaking Method is enacted by reciting a litany of ancient wisdom in the form of a myth-cycle: an oral history of the Lunar Exalted from the first-blessed of Luna, across the lofty heights of the First Age, the terrible tribulations that followed, and on to the modern day and the Lunar performing the recitation herself.

Subtly encoded into the telling is *everything the Lunar speaking it knows*: all of her experience, wisdom, and secret knowledge of the world. Moreover, the recitation also contains the accumulated wisdom of *every Lunar that has ever spoken it*. In short, Lore-Speaking Method encapsulates the sum collected knowledge and lore of the Society of the Moon in its totality.

A number of First Age survivors, notably including Sha'a Oka and Raksi, consider exposing any non-Lunar to a recital of Lore-Speaking Method to be a direct betrayal of the Society of the Moon, punishable by death.

System: Lore-Speaking Method's recital requires the expenditure of 3 Motes and at least four hours of uninterrupted speech, pantomime, shapeshifting, and phantasmal landscapes sculpted from the speaker's anima. The wisdom it encodes into its listener is entirely subliminal and inaccessible aside from the broadest strokes of the surface history of the Lunars as a people. While other Charms draw on the foundation it builds, all Lore-Speaking Method does on its own is enable the listener to learn it, and permit his next expenditure of normal *or* supernal experience points to purchase an Attribute or Ability at Favored cost discount if the Lore-Speaker possesses that trait as a Caste or Favored Attribute or Ability. This benefit can only be enjoyed once per story.

While No Moons are the only Lunars *expected* to learn this Charm, other castes are capable of it. Any Lunar who has received her tattoos and gone through a traditional mentorship and induction into the Society of the Moon has already been exposed to Lore-Speaking Method.

Scent of Secret's Theft (•)

Resonance: Perception

The Lunar becomes intimately familiar with the obscuring magic that shrouds and protects her Mark of Luna. She feels the subtle eddies of Essence as it deflects the gaze of the unwary... and fails to move the eyes of those who know her great secret. These individuals are marked as dangerous to the Lunar's senses.

System: The Lunar knows immediately whenever she perceives, with any of her senses, someone who knows her Tell. This Charm is very precise, allowing the Lunar to pick individuals who know her Tell out of even the densest crowd as though each stood under a spotlight.

Tattoo-Carving Wisdom (•)

Resonance: None

This powerful Charm is used, after a period of extensive trials and ordeals which clearly display a young Lunar's aptitude, to fix her Caste by marking her with moonsilver tattoos.

System: Spend 5 Motes and spend six hours applying the tattoos with painstaking care. The underlying pattern the young Lunar's Essence has assumed over the course of the trials guides the shape and placement of the tattoo patterns, so that they always reflect and complement her caste, attitude, and the shape of her body. A Lunar's caste may differ from incarnation to incarnation, rather than being intrinsic to the Exaltation in the fashion of Solar or Sidereal Exaltation.

This Charm requires a supply of materials to be set aside before it can be enacted, but even ordinary silver will do. During the course of the Charm, the metal is transformed into purest moonsilver as the Lunar touches it with her tattooing tools: a miracle that the designers of the Charm interpreted as Luna's personal blessing of approval over their endeavors.

There is no mechanical benefit for using this Charm, save for granting a young Lunar her protective tattoos and fixing her caste. However, while Lunar convention holds that a freshly-tattooed Exalt does not owe the one who fixed her caste any sort of repayment, it's common for older members of the Society of the Moon to present discreet gifts or favors to a tattooist who is young enough herself to be in need of such things, in recognition of her labors.

Although this complex Charm is traditionally only passed down to No Moons, any Lunar is capable of learning it.

Terrestrial Circle Sorcery (•)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar has been initiated into the practice of sorcery. She can cast Terrestrial Circle spells and enact sorcerous workings. Purchase of this Charm grants one shaping ritual and one Terrestrial Circle spell.

System: See Chapter Seven for rules on playing a sorcerer.

Tool Hand Technique (•)

Resonance: Intelligence

Focusing her malleable Essence into her hands, the Lunar can harden and reshape flesh and bone to suit the needs of the moment.

System: At any time, the Lunar may use a swift or simple action to reshape her hands into whatever sort of mundane tool she needs, from hammers and clamps to lockpicks to bone saws.

Sense-Borrowing Method (•)

Resonance: Perception

The Lunar may cast her Essence into a person or animal and perceive as they do.

System: Spend 1 Mote to target a creature the Lunar can see, then use a simple action to roll (Perception + Awareness) against a difficulty of their Willpower. The Exalt can ride her target's senses for one hour per success gained. She can remain active while borrowing the senses of another, but suffers a -3 dice penalty on all actions due to distraction. If either the subject or the Lunar has tasted the other's blood in the past, she may waive the Charm's Essence cost.

Sense-Sharpening Change (•)

Resonance: Perception

The Lunar coaxes subtle transformations out of her flesh to give herself the keen senses of a menagerie of beasts. Her nose might develop the convoluted ridges of a bat when she scents the air, or her eyes become those of a hawk when she peers at something.

System: The Lunar must use a simple action to activate or banish this Charm. While it is active, the difficulty of all Perception rolls drops by -3.

Breath-Drinking Executioner Attack (••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Perception

The Lunar may suck the breath out of a foe, absorbing their will and perhaps even their very life-force.

System: The Lunar must be in control of her enemy; either they must be incapacitated, restrained, unconscious, or for some reason unable to leave the Lunar's current zone during this round or the round following (such as when restrained by Bear Embrace Method). The Lunar draws out the opponent's breath with a simple action, spends 1 Mote, and rolls a (Wits + Athletics) action, contested by the target's (Stamina + Resistance), both difficulty 6. Each success by which the Lunar exceeds her opponent causes the target to lose 1 point of Willpower. The Lunar gains 1 point of Willpower for every 3 points the enemy loses. If this Charm reduces a mortal opponent to 0 Willpower, they immediately perish, while supernatural beings are knocked out until the end of the scene.

The dead and beings which need not breathe are immune to this Charm.

Buried Winter Hoard (••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Wits

Spending a few moments digging a hole, the Lunar secures her possessions for retrieval at a later date.

System: The Lunar must dig a hole large enough to receive whatever it is she wishes to squirrel away, bury it, and spend 1 Mote. At any later time, she can spend 1 additional Mote to dig up anything she has buried with this Charm, regardless of where she happens to be at the time. Even if she's inside of a building, she can tear up the floorboards to find the daiklave she buried in a swamp a year ago and a thousand miles away. It is thanks to this Charm that the Society of the Moon is so cavalier about doing things like sinking a priceless warstrider into the mud at the bottom of a bog in the middle of nowhere.

Celestial Circle Sorcery (••)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar has been initiated into the mighty workings of the Celestial Circle of sorcery. She can cast Celestial Circle spells. Purchase of this Charm grants one shaping ritual and one Celestial Circle spell.

System: See Chapter Seven for rules on playing a sorcerer.

A Lunar must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Devil-Restraining Grip (••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Perception

Clenching her fist, the Lunar entangles a spirit in a snare of Essence and drags it bodily into the physical world.

System: Target a dematerialized being the Lunar can perceive and spend 1 Mote, then use a simple action to make a contested Willpower roll against difficulty 6. If the Lunar gains more successes, the god, ghost, demon, or whatever it may be is immediately forced to materialize at no cost and remain in that state for the rest of the scene.

Dreaming Wisdom Revelation (••)

Resonance: None

The Lunar retreats from all distractions to enter a meditative state in which she sinks into the tumultuous and savage core of her Exaltation, drinking deep of the well of wisdom embedded within her Essence.

Lunar Essence is a dangerous and volatile thing, and descending into the accumulated memories of all of Luna's children is a harrowing experience. This Charm is generally entrusted to No Moons, with members of other castes expected to petition them for its use on their behalf — and to compensate them for doing so.

A character must have listened to a recital of Lore-Speaking Method at least once in order to learn this Charm.

System: Using this Charm requires at least an hour of undisturbed seclusion and the expenditure of 3 Motes, 1 Willpower. The Lunar may make an (Intelligence + Lore) roll to recall a fact as though she possessed the memories of every Lunar who has ever learned Lore-Speaking Method, with the difficulty set by the age and obscurity of the knowledge sought. Each success rolled grants the Lunar incredibly precious knowledge... and one point of Limit.

It's possible to use this Charm to plumb the dark personal secrets of other Lunars, but doing so is a very good way to make powerful enemies. A Lunar can make a reflexive (Perception + Lore) roll at difficulty 8 whenever someone uses this Charm to consult her most personal memories; one success lets her know that someone has done so, while three or more successes tells her precisely what information was retrieved, and five or more successes lets her know who received it.

Magic which protects a Lunar from mind-reading *can't* stop other Lunars from accessing knowledge through Dreaming Wisdom Revelation. Wisdom granted to the communal pool of the Charm is irrevocable.

Flesh Sculpting Art (••)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar may sculpt living flesh and bone as though it were modeling clay, creating masterworks or horrors as her whims and skills dictate.

System: The Lunar's subject must either willingly submit to her ministrations or else be restrained. Using this Charm is neither fast nor painless. The Lunar's hands sink into her subject's flesh as though it were made of water until she finds an organ, strand of muscle, bit of ligament, or bone that interests her. That... she is able to seize. And stretch. And mold. And reshape. Spend 2 Motes and make a (Dexterity or Intelligence) + Medicine roll against difficulty 7. If the Lunar is successful, then after an hour of work, she can impose one Uncanny feature on

the subject. These are never beautiful or elegant: the “wings” feature, for example, does not grant the target swan wings, but rather hideous membranes extruded from his back and made of repurposed skin, ribs, musculature, and ligaments. Alternately, the Lunar can simply reduce the target’s Appearance rating by –1. A subject can sustain up to (Stamina) treatments from this Charm; any more will kill her at the end of the current story, her anatomy too severely altered to sustain her life.

Alterations inflicted with this Charm upon mortals are permanent unless the Lunar chooses to use Flesh Sculpting Art again to undo them. Beings with supernaturally effective healing, such as the Exalted, revert alterations as though they were healing a mauled Wound.

Knowing the Arrow’s Path (••)

Resonance: Perception, Wits

The Lunar’s ever-keen senses constantly track and calculate every possible trajectory along which a projectile might travel to strike her. She then does her best not to intersect those points during battle.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to gain +1 Defense and +2 Dodge against all ranged attacks for the rest of the scene.

Lick Wound (••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Wits

The Lunar brings relief and healing by lapping her tongue at an ally’s wounds or blowing her Essence-infused breath into his injuries.

System: Use a simple action to employ this Charm as described above. For each Mote spent powering this Charm, one of the subject’s Wounds is enchanted so that it heals at the same speed as though it were a bruised Wound. Bruised and dazed Wounds can be healed outright.

The Lunar *can* use this Charm on herself, but doing so costs 1 additional Mote. This Charm doesn’t change the nature of the wounds it treats, only their healing time. Lick Wound can’t speed up the healing of Aggravated Wounds.

Alternately, the Lunar may spend 1 Mote and suffer one drained Aggravated Wound to create an efficacious healing potion from her own blood. Consuming it vastly empowers an individual’s restorative abilities, either lowering the difficulty of all (Stamina + Resistance) rolls by –2 for the next week; or else healing one non-aggravated Wound over the course of the rest of the scene. The potion retains its potency for (Stamina rating) days. The Lunar cannot benefit from her own healing potions.

Life Without Chains (••)

Resonance: Wits

Letting a surge of unbridled rage rip through her psyche, the Lunar shatters any magic that attempts to enslave her mind.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes to become immune to all thought and emotion-altering magic for the rest of the scene. If used in response to an attempt to use such magic upon the character, the Lunar either gains 2 Limit or is compelled to attack the responsible creature until it has died or fled, or until the scene ends.

Penumbral Self Meditation (••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Manipulation, Wits

The Lunar fortifies her mind with a momentary taste of future bliss, dreaming and almost touching a vision of a cold, dark, and beautiful night under which she might run free under the frosted light of the moon, without compunction, without constraint.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, Willpower rolls are not subject to the rule of 1s. If a Willpower roll fails anyway (or is defeated in a contested roll), the Lunar gains a point of Limit as her dream of future liberation blows away in tatters and seems unattainable.

Pulse of the Invisible (••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Perception

The Lunar attunes her senses to the subtle flows of Essence itself, sensing its active manifestations in the form of what mortals call magic.

System: The Lunar can use a simple action to roll (Perception + Occult) against difficulty 8 to survey the Essence of the world around her. Depending on the number of successes rolled and the presence of anything interesting to detect, she might uncover things like the radiance of a nearby Manse or Demesne, a subtle but active spell or sorcerous working, or the fact that a ferocious amount of Essence was spent in the area sometime recently. She can also discern particular profiles, flavors, or “colors” of Essence if she has encountered them before, and thus might use this Charm to track a missing Circlemate by the trail of his expended Essence, or to deduce that a particular Abyssal she has encountered in the past was responsible for a scene of carnage she stumbles upon.

Knowledge of this Charm also counts as a Means which adds +1 roll to sorcerous workings (see p. XX).

Resisting the Lure of Madness (••)

Resonance: Wits

The Lunar trusts to her own inherent mutability to slip free of any attempts to taint her Essence.

System: Whenever the character is the subject of any supernatural power that seeks to transform, infect, taint, transport, or control her body or spirit, or to alter her destiny or her place in the world (such as by magically altering her Backgrounds), she may reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Wits + Occult) against difficulty 7. Success shatters the hostile magic, protecting the Lunar completely.

Spirit-Maiming Essence Attack (••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Wits

The Lunar imbues her strikes with Essence which negates the coherence of the otherworldly.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the round, or until she is next staggered, all the Lunar’s attacks inflict Aggravated damage (–2) to gods, elementals, demons, ghosts, and other beings not clothed in flesh.

Twin Beasts Dancing (••)

Resonance: Charisma, Wits

The Lunar draws upon her bond with an animal companion to exchange places in the world with her Familiar.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a swift action to enact this Charm. At the end of the next round, the Lunar shapeshifts into her Familiar's form, while her Familiar shapeshifts into the Lunar, causing the two to switch locations.

Weapon-Shaping Prana (••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Wits

By picking up a bit of wood, stone, or bone and infusing it with her Essence, the Lunar may reshape the object into a deadly weapon.

System: Use a re-arm action to transform a stone, bone, or hunk of wood into a fully functional mundane weapon.

Blood on the Wind (•••)

Resonance: Perception

No one, no matter how clever or desperate, can evade the Lunar once she has their scent.

System: If the Lunar can find any sort of sign that a being she wants to find has been in her present location, she can infallibly trace his steps from there to wherever he is now, following a mixture of scents, subtle signs of his passage, and when all else fails, the dim impressions of his Essence. No roll is needed. The Lunar's tracking is supernaturally perfect.

Normally, the Lunar must cast about and carefully examine her quarry's trail to follow it with Blood on the Wind, but by paying 1 Mote she can track as swiftly as she can move until the sun next crosses the horizon.

Breath-Regaining Exercise (•••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Perception

The Lunar focuses her breathing into a ritual pattern which conjures up precious Motes of power from her Exaltation as the moon calls forth dew upon a flower's petals.

System: The character must spend at least an hour in meditation, spend 1 Willpower, and roll her Willpower rating against difficulty 9. Each success rolled restores 1 Mote of Essence. This Charm can't be used again until the moon has risen and set.

Ecstatic Inspiration Satori (•••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Perception, Wits

The Lunar fills herself with the wisdom of the great beasts, the dark moon, and the tribulations of her people.

A character must have experienced the litany of Lore-Speaking Method to learn this Charm.

System: The Lunar gains access to a new form, the mystic form. It is considered one of her true forms. Her mystic form defaults to sharing the appearance of her Birth Skin, though it may be independently modified with Changing Plumage Mastery. To assume her mystic form, the Lunar uses a shapeshifting action (difficulty 7 if rolled) to transform into a form of dark wisdom.

When wearing the mystic form, the Lunar's Perception and Wits are increased by +2 and her Intelligence rises by +3. These increases can raise her ratings above 5 dots. However, the difficulty to spot her Tell is reduced by -2. Additionally, her results of 10 on rolls to shape spells generate two successes, and attempts to read her intentions must discard two successes as the Lunar cloaks herself in a shroud of menacing obscurity. Also, enacting an entire sorcerous working while wearing this form acts as a Means adding +1 roll. Finally, when assuming the mystic form, the Lunar may opt to manifest one Uncanny feature associated with her Feral Heart, if she wishes.

Lessons in the Blood (•••)

Resonance: Intelligence, Perception

All that a person is or has ever been dwells within their blood and flesh, and the Lunar learns to taste these lessons.

System: Spend 2 Motes while drinking someone's blood or devouring their flesh (at least enough to inflict a drained Wound, minimum; a single drop of blood isn't enough for this Charm), and roll (Perception + Awareness) against difficulty 7. Each success allows the Lunar to harvest one Ability dot from the target, which she may add to her own Abilities. The Lunar can't raise an Ability higher than the target's rating. These stolen dots persist for 24 hours.

Lessons of the Winter Wolf (•••)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar leads by example when commanding troops. So long as they follow the Lunar's orders, she may aid them in effectively living off of the land and navigating hazardous terrain.

System: A Lunar with this Charm can effectively lead a number of up to Size 5 groups equal to her Essence rating, which are usually but not necessarily military troops. They could potentially be anything from professional soldiers to refugees to lost children; so long as they follow her instructions and do as she does, the Charm is effective.

Groups led by the Lunar are able to effectively forage off the land to feed and hydrate themselves, no matter how barren the landscape and no matter the state of their supply lines. Moreover, if the Lunar can effectively blaze a trail for the group to follow, they may navigate it as quickly and safely as the Lunar does, so long as she's using a form of travel they can imitate (which usually means walking on foot, as very few armies are capable of flying, swimming like a fish, or squeezing into a mole's tunnel). As a result, while Lessons of the Winter Wolf doesn't directly aid a Lunar leader in winning battles, it *does* allow her to safely bivouac her troops in remote, inhospitable wastes, and to quickly march entire armies through terrain that should be by normal standards impassable such as craggy mountains and malarial swamps.

Secure Den Dream (•••)

Resonance: Wits

The Lunar dreams, and in her dreams creates a world shaped after the fiercest needs and desires of her heart. When she wakes, she senses a doorway within her, which she may place somewhere in the world by standing in an empty portal — the arch of a tree root, or a door frame with no door, or an open window — and whispering the secret name of her den-realm.

System: The Lunar creates a small spirit sanctum, and may spend 5 Motes and use a simple action to place a gateway leading to it somewhere in the world. She can pass through that gateway by using a swift action while touching it, and may exit in the same way. The gateway is invisible and intangible to everyone who can't see dematerialized beings, and generally works exactly like a spirit's sanctum.

The Lunar can relocate the entrance to her sanctum if she wishes, touching it and spending 3 Motes to "swallow" it back into her Essence, and then spending another 5 to disgorge it again somewhere else.

The sanctum is always a few miles of habitat natural to the Lunar's Feral Heart (such as marshland for an alligator Lunar, or jungle for a tiger Lunar), with a small temple in its center decorated to suit the Lunar's interests and aesthetic preferences.

Truth-Scenting Method (•••)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar recoils when she detects the stink of deceit. Woe betide those who would persist in such folly.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to interrogate a statement made to the Lunar. If the speaker is intentionally attempting to speak falsehood, the Lunar detects it as a terrible stench. Moreover, she learns something of the nature of the liar, and her next roll directed against him is made at –1 difficulty.

Walking Between Worlds Methodology (•••)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar learns to find the secret ways that wind between worlds.

System: The Lunar may find a crack in the space between Creation and what preceded it. She must locate a corpse, grave site, memorial, or other place that is directly touched by or which commemorates death in order to use this Charm. Then she uses a simple action to spend 3 Motes and roll (Intelligence + Occult) against difficulty 8. Success allows her to open a storm-swept crack into the Underworld at that location for a few moments, and to lead through a number of willing followers equal to the successes rolled. This Charm cannot bring a Lunar from the Underworld to the lands of the living: she must find a shadowland if she wishes to return.

Wearing the Pantheon's Face (•••)

Resonance: Intelligence

The Lunar descends into the archival records of the Society of the Moon and dredges from its depths not wisdom, but a purloined form: the face of another of Luna's children.

Young Lunars are advised to be very cautious about the deeds they perform while wearing another Lunar's identity. Broadly speaking, the Society of the Moon doesn't frown on the simple use of this Charm — Luna smiles on those who cheat creatively — but they also don't frown on elders knocking the hell out of young upstarts who disrupt their plans or sully their reputations by impersonating them. By broad consensus, any Lunar is considered to have an ironclad right to wear the likeness of any of her own former incarnations for any purpose she wishes.

A character must have listened to a recital of Lore-Speaking Method at least once in order to learn this Charm.

System: Using this Charm requires at least an hour of undisturbed seclusion and the expenditure of 1 Mote, 1 Willpower. The Lunar assumes the true face of another Lunar Exalted, either living or dead. This may be any of the target Lunar's true forms. The Lunar does retain her own Tell, but is considered to be wearing a form from her shapeshifting library rather than a true form during this masquerade.

A Lunar can make a reflexive (Perception + Larceny) roll at difficulty 8 whenever someone uses this Charm to wear one of her faces; one success lets her know that someone has done so, while three or more successes tells her precisely where that Lunar is, and five or more successes lets her *who* that Lunar is. Magic which protects the integrity of a Lunar's being or identity can do nothing to stop other Lunars from wearing her likeness; her contributions to the communal pool of this Charm draws from are irrevocable.

Animal Traits for Lunars

When a protagonist Lunar turns into an animal, she replaces her Attributes with those found here and gains the listed Uncanny features, weapon profile, "armor" profile, and any special powers that might be listed. In terms of fighting styles, an animal form is always considered to be unarmed. (S) indicates that the animal attacks with Strength, (D) indicates Dexterity. Animal attacks almost always use Brawl, though a rare few with the Martial Artist feature may also use Martial Arts if the Lunar knows an appropriate style.

A Lunar's Charms still reference the Attributes on her character sheet when they say something like "add Strength to an attack's base damage" or "add a number of dice equal to Dexterity" or "roll against a difficulty of (4 + Dexterity)," not the Attributes of whatever animal form she's wearing, unless they specifically mention using her current shape's Attributes. Lunars keep their own Health rating as an animal, which can make them strangely durable at times, but getting accidentally stepped on as a spider would be a rather ignominious end for one of Luna's heroes, so eh.

If the Lunar manages to don real armor while in an animal shape (something moonsilver artifact armor is often designed to do), she replaces the form's "armor" profile with her actual armor's profile.

Many animal powers reference "(animal) attacks." Those are attacks made with the animal's weapon profile. An alligator attack, for example, would generally mean turning into an alligator and biting someone.

Alligator/Crocodile

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5

Uncanny Features: Rugged Hide, Webbed Feet

Weapon: 6 (lacerated, S)

"Armor:" Defense -0, Dodge -1, Soak 7, Stagger 4+, Fatigue +0

Death Roll: After making a successful alligator attack, spend 1 Willpower to increase its base damage by +2 and to knock the opponent prone.

Austrech

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Swift Stride

Weapon: 4 (lacerated, D)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge –0, Soak 5, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Badger

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Uncanny Features: Burrower, Rugged Hide

Weapon: 3 (lacerated, S), nimble

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –0, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Blend In: The Lunar’s form is small and blends into natural environments, lowering the difficulty to hide in underbrush by –2.

Bat

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Uncanny Features: Keen Hearing, Nightvision, Wings

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +2, Soak 4, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Adept Flier: Flight in this form is not complex movement; moving upon the ground is.

Obscure: The Lunar’s form is small and hard to spot, as well as unobtrusive. Roll Stealth dice pools twice and keep the better result. This form can always vanish in any environment.

Tiny: This form requires Humble Mouse Shape to assume. Unless it’s one of those big flying foxes, in which case take this and Obscure off.

Bear

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5

Uncanny Features: Keen Smell, Terrible Grasp

Weapon: 5 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge –1, Soak 6, Stagger 4+, Fatigue +0

Death Grip: The cost of Bear Embrace Method is lowered to 0 Motes in this form and the difficulty of its hazard rises to 9.

Bird (Small: Finch, Sparrow, Pigeon...)

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Uncanny Features: Wings

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +2, Soak 4, Stagger 1+, Fatigue +0

Adept Flier: Flight in this form is not complex movement; moving upon the ground is.

Tiny: This form requires Humble Mouse Shape to assume.

Unobtrusive: This form arouses no remark or notice around people.

Bird (Substantial: Hawk, Owl, Raven...)

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Uncanny Features: Keen Sight, Wings

Weapon: 4 (lacerated, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Adept Flier: Flight in this form is not complex movement; moving upon the ground is.

Bird (Large: Crane, Eagle, Vulture...)

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Uncanny Features: Keen Sight, Wings

Weapon: 4 (lacerated, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Adept Flier: Flight in this form is not complex movement; moving upon the ground is.

Martial Artist: The Lunar may practice Crane style while in this form.

Stoop: Moving down from a zone above the target and immediately attacking them increases the attack's base damage by +2. This attack can inflict the “blind” wound without spending Willpower (see p. XX for blindness rules).

Boar

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Rugged Hide

Weapon: 5 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –0, Soak 5, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Gore: The cost of Ox Dragon Charge is lowered to 0 Motes in this form.

Bull

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5

Uncanny Features: Swift Stride

Weapon: 5 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –0, Soak 6, Stagger 4+, Fatigue +0

Gore: The cost of Ox Dragon Charge is lowered to 0 Motes in this form.

Camel

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Uncanny Features: Hardiness (Deserts)

Weapon: 4 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense -0, Dodge -0, Soak 5, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Desert Survivor: The Lunar can go an entire week in this form without water and not become dehydrated.

Cat

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Uncanny Features: Nightvision, Stealthy

Weapon: 3 (lacerated, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +2, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Agile: This form is nimble, lowering the difficulty of all Athletics rolls to jump or maintain balance by -1.

Unobtrusive: This form arouses no remark or notice around people.

Coyote

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Uncanny Features: Keen Smell, Swift Stride

Weapon: 4 (lacerated, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Pack Hunter: When attacking a target that has already been attacked this round, increase the base damage of a coyote attack by +2.

Deer/Stag

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Uncanny Features: Swift Stride

Weapon: 4 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Fleet: The benefits of swift stride last for two rounds in this form.

Dog (Small)

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Uncanny Features: Keen Smell

Weapon: 3 (lacerated, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 4, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Unobtrusive: This form arouses no remark or notice around people.

Dog (Medium)

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Uncanny Features: Keen Smell

Weapon: 4 (lacerated, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Pack Hunter: When attacking a target that has already been attacked this round, increase the base damage of a dog attack by +2.

Unobtrusive: This form arouses no remark or notice around people.

Dog (Large)

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Keen Smell

Weapon: 5 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Pack Hunter: When attacking a target that has already been attacked this round, increase the base damage of a dog attack by +2.

Dolphin

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Fins, Gills (not really but they can stay down for about a scene at a time)

Weapon: 4 (bruised, D)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Echolocation: This form can navigate without penalty even when blind, but must make noise to do so and thus cannot employ stealth.

Elephant

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 3, Stamina 8

Uncanny Features: Rugged Hide

Weapon: 7 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense -0, Dodge -1, Soak 7, Stagger 5+, Fatigue +0

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Massive: Elephant attacks against man-sized or smaller opponents which inflict at least 2 damage knock their target prone.

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Prehensile Trunk: This form can manipulate objects as though it had hands, though at +1 difficulty.

Fox

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 2

Uncanny Features: Swift Stride

Weapon: 3 (lacerated, S), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Blend In: The Lunar’s form is small and blends into natural environments, lowering the difficulty to hide in underbrush by –2.

Frog/Toad

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Uncanny Features: Poisonous Flesh, Swift Stride

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 4, Stagger 1+, Fatigue +0

Blend In: The Lunar’s form is small and blends into natural environments, lowering the difficulty to hide in underbrush by –2.

Tiny: This form requires Humble Mouse Shape to assume.

Giant Spider

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Uncanny Features: Venomous, Wall Crawler, Webbing

Weapon: 4 (lacerated, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Agile: This form is nimble, lowering the difficulty of all Athletics rolls to jump or maintain balance by –1.

Goat/Ram

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Rugged Hide

Weapon: 5 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Agile: This form is nimble, lowering the difficulty of all Athletics rolls to jump or maintain balance by –1.

Gore: The cost of Ox Dragon Charge is lowered to 0 Motes in this form.

Gorilla

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6

Uncanny Features: Terrible Grasp

Weapon: 5 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 6, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Martial Artist: The Lunar may practice Martial Arts styles with Strength-based unarmed attacks while in this form.

Death Grip: The cost of Bear Embrace Method is lowered to 0 Motes in this form and the difficulty of its hazard rises to 9.

Great Cat (Substantial: Jaguar, Panther...)

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Camouflage, Stealthy, Swift Stride

Weapon: 5 (lacerated, D)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +2, Soak 5, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Agile: This form is nimble, lowering the difficulty of all Athletics rolls to jump or maintain balance by -1.

Maul: Inflicting a “disabled arm” or “disabled leg” wound does not cost a point of Willpower while in this form.

Great Cat (Large: Lion, Tiger...)

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Uncanny Features: Stealthy, Swift Stride

Weapon: 5 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 4+, Fatigue +0

Martial Artist: The Lunar may practice Tiger style while in this form.

Maul: Inflicting a “disabled arm” or “disabled leg” wound does not cost a point of Willpower while in this form.

Hellboar

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Uncanny Features: Rugged Hide

Weapon: 7 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense -0, Dodge -1, Soak 6, Stagger 5w+, Fatigue +0

Gore: The cost of Ox Dragon Charge is lowered to 0 Motes in this form.

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Horse

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Uncanny Features: Centaur, Swift Stride

Weapon: 5 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge –0, Soak 5, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Hybroc

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Uncanny Features: Keen Sight, Wings

Weapon: 7 (lacerated, D)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge –0, Soak 6, Stagger 4+, Fatigue +0

Abduction: If the Lunar uses Bear Embrace Method while in this form, she may move while maintaining the Charm, and may carry a man-sized or smaller victim away with her when she moves without employing complex movement.

Adept Flier: Flight in this form is not complex movement; moving upon the ground is.

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Massive: Hybroc attacks against man-sized or smaller opponents which inflict at least 2 damage knock their target prone.

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Hyena

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Keen Smell

Weapon: 5 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Bone-Crushing Bite: The character may spend 1 Willpower before making a hyena attack. If the attack succeeds, its damage is Piercing (–1). Additionally, inflicting a “disabled arm” or “disabled leg” wound does not cost a point of Willpower while in this form.

Lizard

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Uncanny Features: Camouflage, Wall Crawler

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 4, Stagger 1+, Fatigue +0

Obscure: The Lunar’s form is small and hard to spot, as well as unobtrusive. Roll Stealth dice pools twice and keep the better result. This form can always vanish in any environment.

Tiny: This form requires Humble Mouse Shape to assume.

Mammoth

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 3, Stamina 8

Uncanny Features: Hardiness (Tundra) Rugged Hide

Weapon: 7 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense -0, Dodge -1, Soak 7, Stagger 6+, Fatigue +0

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Massive: Mammoth attacks against man-sized or smaller opponents which inflict at least 2 damage knock their target prone.

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Prehensile Trunk: This form can manipulate objects as though it had hands, though at +1 difficulty.

Monkey

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Hardiness (Jungle)

Weapon: 4 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +2, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Agile: This form is nimble, lowering the difficulty of all Athletics rolls to jump or maintain balance by -1.

Brachiation: This form can move through treetops without resorting to complex movement, can climb trees as though with the wall crawler Aspect, and enjoys the swift stride Aspect while in the canopy.

Martial Artist: The Lunar may practice Martial Arts styles with Dexterity-based unarmed attacks while in this form.

Octopus

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 6, Stamina 2

Uncanny Features: Camouflage, Fins, Flexible, Gills, Extra Limbs

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Ink Jet: Spend 1 Willpower when leaving an underwater zone to fill it with a cloud of ink that renders everyone in it blind. The ink cloud disperses after two rounds.

Ox Dragon

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 2, Stamina 7

Uncanny Features: Centaur, Rugged Hide

Weapon: 7 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –1, Soak 8, Stagger 5+, Fatigue +0

Gore: The cost of Ox Dragon Charge is lowered to 0 Motes in this form.

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Rabbit/Hare

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Uncanny Features: Bounding Legs, Swift Stride

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +2, Soak 4, Stagger 1+, Fatigue +0

Blend In: The Lunar’s form is small and blends into natural environments, lowering the difficulty to hide in underbrush by –2.

Rat

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Uncanny Features: Burrower, Hardiness (Urban), Swift Stride

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge +2, Soak 4, Stagger 1+, Fatigue +0

Obscure: The Lunar’s form is small and hard to spot, as well as unobtrusive. Roll Stealth dice pools twice and keep the better result. This form can always vanish in any environment.

Tiny: This form requires Humble Mouse Shape to assume.

Rhino

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6

Uncanny Features: Rugged Hide

Weapon: 6 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –1, Soak 6, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Gore: The cost of Ox Dragon Charge is lowered to 0 Motes in this form.

River Dragon

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6

Uncanny Features: Fins, Gills (again, not really, but close enough), Rugged Hide

Weapon: 7 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –1, Soak 7, Stagger 5+, Fatigue +0

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Death Roll: After making a successful river dragon attack, spend 1 Willpower to increase its base damage by +2 and to knock the opponent prone.

Shark

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Fins, Gills, Keen Smell

Weapon: 6 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –0, Soak 6, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Bone-Crushing Bite: The character may spend 1 Willpower before making a shark attack. If the attack succeeds, its damage is aggravated. Additionally, inflicting a “disabled arm” or “disabled leg” wound does not cost a point of Willpower while in this form.

Siaka

Attributes: Strength 10, Dexterity 4, Stamina 8

Uncanny Features: Fins, Gills, Keen Smell

Weapon: 8 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –1, Soak 6, Stagger 6+, Fatigue +0

Bone-Crushing Bite: The character may spend 1 Willpower before making a siaka attack. If the attack succeeds, its damage is aggravated. Additionally, inflicting a “disabled arm” or “disabled leg” wound does not cost a point of Willpower while in this form.

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Massive: Siaka attacks against man-sized or smaller opponents which inflict at least 2 damage knock their target prone.

Simhata

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Uncanny Features: Centaur

Weapon: 5 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 6, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Skunk

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Uncanny Features: Horrible Odor

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –0, Soak 4, Stagger 1+, Fatigue +0

Blend In: The Lunar's form is small and blends into natural environments, lowering the difficulty to hide in underbrush by -2.

Snake (Venomous: Cobra, Viper, Rattlesnake ...)

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Uncanny Features: Flexible, Venomous

Weapon: 4 (lacerated, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 4, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Blend In: The Lunar's form is small and blends into natural environments, lowering the difficulty to hide in underbrush by -2.

Snake (Constrictor: Anaconda, Boa, Python...)

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Uncanny Features: Flexible, Terrible Grasp

Weapon: 4 (bruised, S), nimble

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge -0, Soak 6, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Martial Artist: The Lunar may practice Snake style while in this form.

Death Grip: The cost of Bear Embrace Method is lowered to 0 Motes in this form and the difficulty of its hazard rises to 9.

Spider

Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 4, Stamina 0

Uncanny Features: Venomous, Wall Crawler, Webbing

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense -0, Dodge +1, Soak 4, Stagger 1+, Fatigue +0

Obscure: The Lunar's form is small and hard to spot, as well as unobtrusive. Roll Stealth dice pools twice and keep the better result. This form can always vanish in any environment.

Spider: The spider's attacks remain venomous despite not inflicting lacerated Wounds.

Tiny: This form requires Humble Mouse Shape to assume.

Squid

Attributes: Strength 9, Dexterity 6, Stamina 5

Uncanny Features: Bioluminescence, Camouflage, Fins, Gills, Extra Limbs, Tentacles, Terrible Grasp

Weapon: 7 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge -0, Soak 5, Stagger 5+, Fatigue +0

Ink Jet: Spend 1 Willpower when leaving an underwater zone to fill it with a cloud of ink that renders everyone in it blind. The ink cloud disperses after two rounds.

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Massive: Squid attacks against man-sized or smaller opponents which inflict at least 2 damage knock their target prone.

Death Grip: The cost of Bear Embrace Method is lowered to 0 Motes in this form and the difficulty of its hazard rises to 9.

Squirrel

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 1

Uncanny Features: Wall Crawler

Weapon: 3 (bruised, D), nimble

“Armor:” Defense -0, Dodge +2, Soak 4, Stagger 1+, Fatigue +0

Agile: This form is nimble, lowering the difficulty of all Athletics rolls to jump or maintain balance by -1.

Tiny: This form requires Humble Mouse Shape to assume.

Unobtrusive: This form arouses no remark or notice around people.

Turtle

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 1, Stamina 3

Uncanny Features: Rugged Hide, Webbed Feet

Weapon: 3 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense -0, Dodge -1, Soak 6, Stagger 2+, Fatigue +0

Blend In: The Lunar’s form is small and blends into natural environments, lowering the difficulty to hide in underbrush by -2.

Tiny: This form requires Humble Mouse Shape to assume.

Tyrant Lizard

Attributes: Strength 9, Dexterity 3, Stamina 9

Uncanny Features: Keen Smell, Swift Strider, Rugged Hide

Weapon: 8 (lacerated, S)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge -0, Soak 7, Stagger 6+, Fatigue +0

Bone-Crushing Bite: The character may spend 1 Willpower before making a tyrant lizard attack. If the attack succeeds, its damage is aggravated. Additionally, inflicting a “disabled arm” or “disabled leg” wound does not cost a point of Willpower while in this form.

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Massive: Tyrant lizard attacks against man-sized or smaller opponents which inflict at least 2 damage knock their target prone.

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Whale

Attributes: Strength 10, Dexterity 3, Stamina 10

Uncanny Features: Fins, Gills (again, not really, you get the picture)

Weapon: 5 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –1, Soak 6, Stagger 6+, Fatigue +0

Gore: The cost of Ox Dragon Charge is lowered to 0 Motes in this form.

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Massive: Whale attacks against man-sized or smaller opponents which inflict at least 2 damage knock their target prone.

Wolf

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Uncanny Features: Keen Smell, Swift Stride

Weapon: 5 (lacerated, D)

“Armor:” Defense +1, Dodge +1, Soak 5, Stagger 3+, Fatigue +0

Pack Hunter: When attacking a target that has already been attacked this round, increase the base damage of a wolf attack by +2.

Yeddim

Attributes: Strength 10, Dexterity 2, Stamina 11

Uncanny Features: Hardiness (dense undergrowth)

Weapon: 7 (bruised, S)

“Armor:” Defense –0, Dodge –1, Soak 6, Stagger 5+, Fatigue +0

Huge: This form requires Towering Beast Form to assume.

Massive: Yeddim attacks against man-sized or smaller opponents which inflict at least 2 damage knock their target prone.

Mount: Another character may ride upon the Lunar, enjoying mounted defense bonuses, though they exercise no control over where the Lunar goes. The Lunar is still free to move regardless of whether her rider has been attacked or not before her turn.

Ataraxia

The Lunars are still not free of the chains that bound them in the First Age. They are caught in the spokes of the Wheel of Ages, where it hesitates in its turning. Only by breaking the wheel, by shattering or seizing command of the past, can a Lunar proceed toward... whatever it is she is becoming. The elders name this process *ataraxia*; younger Lunars speak of it, simply, as *becoming*.

Ataraxia is a new trait which only Lunars possess, represented by a numerical value beginning at 0 and with no upper boundary.

Gaining Ataraxia

At the end of each story, the Lunar's player should see if any of the following statements are true:

- During the story, the Lunar seized control of a First Age artifact, item of cultural or historical importance, or location.
- During the story, the Lunar destroyed a First Age item or location.
- During the story, the Lunar concealed a First Age item or location so that no non-Lunar Exalted know how to find it.
- During the story, the Lunar caused those in control of a First Age item or installation to abandon its original identity or purpose.
- During the story, the Lunar achieved some sort of tangible progress in pushing the Realm toward collapse, such as defeating a legion, liberating a satrapy, assassinating an important scion of its ruling class, or eliminating an important catspaw.

If any of these things are true, then at the end of the story, the Lunar gains +1 Ataraxia.

If and only if she gains 1 Ataraxia in this fashion, then she also gains +1 *additional* Ataraxia for *each* of the following which are true:

- During the story, she was eligible to regain Willpower by affirming her Nature at least once.
- The Lunar or one of her former incarnations had some direct personal history with the First Age remnant she dealt with, and she was aware of this fact.

Metamorphosis

At any time, a Lunar may venture into a Wyld-touched area of at least bordermarches intensity or greater and attempt to commune with the potential for change within her Essence. This process, known as *metamorphosis*, requires at least a week of intensive inner focus, which might be accomplished through living as a beast, imbibing hallucinogenic drugs, exhaustive physical exercise, ascetic meditation, and so forth. At the end of this process, she rolls her current Ataraxia as a dice pool against difficulty 6, recording her successes, and then reduces her Ataxia rating to 0.

If the Lunar's Ataraxia successes total 5 or more, she may spend those successes to purchase one or more *Evolution* from the list below. Then, whether she could afford any Evolutions or not, she banks any remaining successes.

If the Lunar still has 1 or more Ataraxia successes banked when she next attempts metamorphosis, she discards one of those successes at the beginning of the process. It is more effective to stockpile a great deal of Ataraxia and to pursue a grand transformation than to make frequent, small sojourns into the Wyld to seek incremental evolution.

Evolutions

Purchasing an Evolution during metamorphosis costs 5 Ataraxia successes. The list below is intended as an array of examples of potential Lunar evolution, not an exhaustive list of all possibilities.

A Lunar cannot have more Evolutions than her Essence rating. If she is at this limit and wishes to gain another Evolution, she may either wait until her Essence rating first increases, or else go ahead and metamorphose a new Evolution, discarding an existing Evolution in the process to make room for it.

- **Beast-God:** The Lunar may relax as completely as she is able, in a place relatively free of distractions, and make a (Perception + Occult) roll against difficulty 7. Success allows her to hear prayers uttered within a number of miles equal to her (successes x 10) miles. These prayers must be issued with sincerity, and they must be directed to the Lunar. While doing this, if the Lunar is being actively prayed to, she may pluck a particular prayer from the air and pop it into her mouth where it melts like fresh blood, allowing her to reflexively assume the form of whoever was praying to her. This form is not permanently added to her shapeshifting library; once she shapeshifts into a different form, it is lost.
- **Equanimity:** Whenever the Lunar gains Ataraxia, she also loses an equal number of points of Limit.
- **Finesse:** One of the Lunar's Favored Abilities becomes a Caste Ability. This Evolution can be obtained more than once.
- **God-Eater:** Once per story, the Lunar may devour the heart of a supernatural being she has slain within the same scene, thereby gaining a single use of one Charm or supernatural power they knew. She may then activate the stolen power once at any point before the end of the story as though she knew the Charm or power herself. If the borrowed power is a permanent effect, then she gains its effects for one scene. Antagonist powers which cost Momentum convert their Momentum cost to Motes.
- **Handicrafts:** The Lunar does not need to spend 1 Willpower when making a splendor (see p.XX), so long as it is crafted from unalloyed natural materials such as wood, stone, and bone.
- **Hardiness:** The Lunar gains +2 Health. This Evolution can be obtained more than once.
- **Immortal Flesh:** When the Lunar has more Wounds than her Stamina rating, each excess Wound only reduces her maximum Health by -2 rather than the usual -4 (see p. XX), making her immensely difficult to kill.
- **Lineal Dynasty:** The Lunar may use a simple action to share the senses of any of her direct offspring, or to learn the present location of a particular one of her children. Children conceived under the ritual of the Charm: Beast-God's Blessings are considered to be the Lunar's direct offspring for the purpose of this Evolution.
- **Martial Mastery:** When she already has a Martial Arts "Form"-type Charm active, the Lunar may activate a second "Form"-type Charm without canceling her already-active "Form."
- **Martial Transcendence:** The Lunar becomes capable of learning 2-dot Charms from the Forbidden Arts (see p. XX).
- **Parthenogenetic Reincarnation:** The Lunar gains absolute control over her reproductive processes, able to ensure that any coupling she engages in does or does not produce a child as

she desires. She may also impregnate herself with a mere minute of concentration. When pregnant, she can fine-tune the gender, appearance, and health of the child growing within her. She may also, if she desires, pass both her soul and Exaltation into her offspring in the moment they are born. She dies a few minutes later. The child inherits her Nature and the basic outline of her personality (though that may end up being modified by the conditions of their upbringing), but does not gain her memories or the ability to access any of the powers of Exaltation until some time during puberty. The “reincarnated” Lunar must rebuild her Attributes, Abilities, Charms, Essence rating, and other traits from scratch, but does at least pay favored costs for any traits or Charms she possessed before resetting herself in this fashion.

- **Skin Dancer:** By using a shapeshifting action while wearing the form of her Feral Heart, the Lunar may cause her skin to split open, allowing her to step out of the empty animal skin in the form of her Birth Skin. If she does so, she becomes entirely mortal, leaving her Exaltation and all of her Charms behind within the empty animal skin. Whosoever dons the animal skin gains the Lunar’s Exaltation and all associated powers, including this Evolution, though they retain their own Essence rating and do not gain any of the Lunar’s memories. If this would disable some of the Lunar’s Evolutions, Skin Dancer is always the first Evolution retained. The only power that does not transfer with the skin is initiation into sorcery, along with any known spells, creating the incredibly rare potential for the former Lunar to exist as a mortal capable of wielding Celestial Circle sorcery.

- **Titan:** The Lunar gains a second copy of her Feral Heart true form, which is many times greater in size than it should be. This form can be altered with Changing Plumage Mastery independent of her original Feral Heart form, essentially granting her another true form. The Titan form is based on her Feral Heart, but gains +3 Strength, +3 Stamina, +1 Soak, –1 base Dodge, and +2 Stagger Threshold.

- **Twin-Faced Moon Hero:** The Lunar gains a second “copy” of her Birth Skin, which she may modify as she likes with Changing Plumage Mastery without impacting the appearance of her “original” Birth Skin. This second Birth Skin is treated as an additional true form for all purposes. This Evolution may be obtained as many times as desired.

- **Unstoppable Terror:** While in restrained or unrestrained Limit Break, the Lunar simply cannot die, no matter how badly injured she is. Additionally, while incapacitated during Limit Break, she remains conscious and able to act, though she is still subject to all the other rules of incapacitation.

- **Will-Breaker:** The Lunar’s mental control Charms are able to make targets violate their Nature.

Chapter Six: The Sidereal Exalted

Long ago, the Maidens of Destiny selected mortal men and women to be their champions in the Divine Revolution. Unlike the heroes of the Unconquered Sun, they were not incomparably mighty. Unlike the heroes of Luna, they were not infinitely savage and adaptable. Unlike the multitudes imbued with the power of the Elemental Dragons, they were neither legion nor hardy in battle. Unlike **[RECORD EXPUNGED BY ORDER OF THE MAIDEN OF SECRETS]**

The Maidens' champions were the weakest of the Exalted. Their bodies were fragile. Their magic was highly specific and limited. The Maidens granted their Chosen two gifts. One was the power of foresight, the ability to *anticipate*. The second gift was a word of advice. The first Sidereals approached the Maidens after liaising with their fellow Chosen. They said: "Oh, wise Maidens, the other Exalted are mightier than we. Their blessings are more abundant. They are robust, powerful, adaptable. They are not constrained by patterns and rules. Oh, gracious Maidens, the war before us is too terrible to contemplate, and we are fragile and limited. What can we do?"

The Maidens smiled. "Cheat," they said.

The Sidereals guided their fellows using predictive forecasting. They avoided the front lines. They arranged for the armies of the gods to fight always under auspicious omens and with destiny's favor. Afterwards, when the Solars raised up the First Age of Man, the Sidereals stood behind them as their honored advisors.

Matters have changed a great deal since then. The Solars are dead, slain by their once-trusted seers and oracles. Creation is torn and wounded. The Sidereals have hidden themselves from history's eye, abandoned their First Age honors and titles, and become Creation's secret masters, acting behind a curtain of obscurity. And yet... nothing has changed. Still, they regard the present and future with a dry and unflinching clarity. Still, they stand as guardians of terrible necessity that the world might survive. Still, they make up all shortcomings with cleverness, ruthlessness, and a willingness to break the rules.

They have to. All of history is at stake.

Play a Sidereal if you want...

- to have a very different relationship with time and causality than others.
- to live a series of double-lives as an agent of Heaven.
- to guide the rise of mighty heroes, or orchestrate their downfall.
- to dwell in Heaven as a senior peer among the ranks of the gods.
- to know much, much more about the truths of the world than anyone else.

Of the Beginning of Things

In the beginning, great calamities beyond mortal measure created the world, weaving it from the raw substance of the Wyld. They called forth the land and seas, dreamed the sky and hung it with stars, and thence had a home in which to dwell. But the swirling shores of the Wyld forever ate away at the fabric of the House of the Primordials, and so they created the gods to be its tenders. Luna and the Unconquered Sun were set to patrol the borders of the real and to strike down the

parasites who worked especial wickedness upon its fabric, while the Maidens of Destiny were set at their looms to weave new fabric for the pattern of destiny. This work was tedious and endless, and in time they grew discontent with their role as the churls of the Primordials. The tale of what followed that discontent has been told.

What is not often recounted is that, when the flames were extinguished and the smoke blown away, the Wyld and the forces of entropy continued to ceaselessly erode the fabric of reality, and it continued to need eternal renewal. The Maidens petitioned the treacherous titan Autochthon: they would no longer maintain the entirety of destiny themselves, and yet could not pass on the task to their Chosen, who were very few and whose own inevitable discontent did not bear contemplating, given the recent events of the war. Autochthon agreed, and created a host of simple mechanical gods — the pattern spiders — to oversee the day-to-day weaving of the common fabric of fate and destiny. These were installed in Heaven, near the new estates of the Maidens.

A very great deal of consequence would follow from this development.

Of the Nature of the World

The people of Creation live their lives sequentially, one moment at a time, in a world governed by natural law and haunted by supernatural forces. The great movements of fate and destiny are the distant and abstract concerns of the gods. The people can, by and large, conceive of no other means by which a world might be ordered.

This is not the nature of the world. This is the illusion of the world with which nearly every being in it — including most of the gods — interacts from the moment they are born until the moment they die, and often on beyond that, into death and what waits after.

The Maidens of Destiny, the gods who serve them in the heavenly Bureau of Destiny, and their arch-agents, the Sidereal Exalted, see the true nature of the world with unclouded eyes. It is this:

Creation is a story writ upon a tapestry of fate and destiny. In one sense — entirely real and entirely true — it is a sprawling epic of limitless potential, in which nearly anything might happen. Heroes clash, driven by their passions, and redefine the world thereby; the Sidereals themselves are far from the least among these actors. The thread of events jumps and writhes like a serpent. Titans are brought low and mutilated into demonic suzerains. A golden age rises and falls. Eras of war come and go. The enemies of Creation march, and suffer defeat.

In another sense, equally real and true, Creation is a story carved into stone, its ending already written, its every movement and moment preordained.

This is the nature of the world, as understood by the Sidereal Exalted:

Creation is spun from two fictions, and these are destiny and fate. The common folk imagine these things to be the esoteric dictates of Heaven, imposed for inscrutable purposes and occasionally subject to modification through heartfelt prayer or heroic deeds. This definition is not strictly incorrect, but it is shallow and surficial.

Of the Weaving of Fate

Fate is, in truth, what the common folk misconstrue as *natural law*. Creation has no natural law. It is an ongoing construct of flowing and evolving Essence. Fate is the fabric of the real. When a child drops his toy, it is fate that draws it to the ground. When a man grows old and sick, it is fate

that bids him die. When a river surges, it is fate that decrees it overflow its banks and unleash the floodwaters.

In the beginning, the Maidens of Destiny personally wove the substance of fate from threads of raw possibility they drew from the Wyld through the distant pinholes of the stars, which each touch upon the potentiality of the infinite. This fate was abundant and nigh-infallible, for not only were the Maidens peerless and supreme in their weaving, but Creation itself was still young and strong and unblemished. This is no longer the case. The foundations of Creation itself have been substantially altered and damaged by the battles of the Divine Revolution, a number of First Age calamities, and the Wyld Crusade which followed the Great Contagion. Moreover, the Maidens now only weave the most important skeins of fate's design themselves, and even those they sometimes delegate. The drudge-work of producing enough fate each night to perpetuate natural law throughout the following day is performed by the pattern spiders, who are tireless and uncomplaining, but not nearly so infallible as the Maidens once were.

The corrosive tidal action of the Wyld, the entropic touch of the Underworld and the seed of oblivion festering within it, and even the violent exertions of particularly powerful beings such as demons, faerie nobles, and the Exalted, all fray and erode the threads of fate, ensuring that the weave must continually be replenished and restored. If this diligent work were to cease, causality would no longer ensure that things burn only when they are set ablaze, or that people arrive in a place only after journeying there. Creation would shortly unravel back into the pure chaos of the Wyld.

Of the Shape of Destiny

Destiny, meanwhile, is made up of phrases in the grand narrative which, in its totality, those subject to the linearity of time have named *history*. Destiny is largely unconcerned with the minutiae of continuity. Destiny is the grand shape of things. Destiny is water, flowing from here to there. There are many paths it might take, but it *will* find a course.

Many people in Creation believe that they are in possession of free will. They believe that their passions, their dreams, and their ambitions are of great import, and that with heroic exertion of effort, they can make these things come true. The Exalted, in particular, often feel that they may achieve such aims even in the face of determined opposition from the great powers of the world, even Heaven itself. The Sidereal Exalted nod in assent. "Yes," they say, "this is so."

Many other people in Creation believe that their lives are preordained. They believe that destiny scribes the events of their lives in the stars, and that to struggle against this truth is futile and brings only suffering. They believe that not one letter of a man's destiny might be changed, and that if it seems he has done so, then that, too, serves destiny's design. Again, the Sidereals nod in approval. "Yes," they say, "that is precisely correct."

The Sidereal Exalted are given great power over the forces of destiny, which they know more accurately as *time*. They understand that they are conscious agents moving within the mighty river of causality and history, ensuring its integrity. Nearly everything that happens in Creation is the result of deliberate action by being with absolute agency over the course of their lives (though often this agency is overruled by other, mightier beings such as gods, princes, and the Exalted). And yet, out of the vast set of *things that might happen*, there is, ultimately, the subset of *things that did happen*. What this subset might look like in the future is generally unknowable to most creatures. The shape it occupies at previous points in time is commonly called "history."

Ayesha Ura demonstrates the nature of the world to a newly-Exalted Sidereal: “Over seven hundred years ago, at the end of the Great Contagion, the woman now known as the Scarlet Empress seized command of the Realm Defense Grid and defeated the hordes of the Fair Folk. When a coalition of Dragon-Blooded generals demanded that she surrender control of its weaponry into their hands, she turned its geomantic power upon them, ensuring that she must spend the rest of her life ruling from a position of iron-handed control. This was the decision she made, understanding full well its ramifications and consequences. Now: Have I abrogated her free will at that time by recounting this tale to you? Would I have done so had I recounted it the morning before the decision was reached? Before you speak, consider this: a man reading a history of your life, written ten thousand years hence, could see printed there the answer you are about to give. Does this make your answer less meaningful?”

One privilege and burden of Sidereal Exaltation is the power to sometimes, with a powerful expenditure of Essence, look a few pages ahead in the book of ages and read a cryptic passage or two of what is written therein. This is the nature of destiny as the Sidereals understand it.

What is This?

The conception of the Sidereal Exalted in the **Exalted Demake** is primarily based upon their presentation in their First Edition hardback, mixed with new plot threads from Third Edition. It chooses to omit the ill-advised tonal and detail shifts introduced during Second Edition.

The Sidereal Exalted

Sidereal Exaltation begins at birth. It enters each of the Maidens’ Chosen in the same moment they take their first breath. A Sidereal receives her Exaltation along with her soul.

Who might become a Sidereal? Only someone fated to be a Sidereal. Only someone chosen by destiny. It is a circular answer, not useful. The choices of the Maidens are purposeful, but the perspective of the Maidens is so far-ranging that their purposeful actions usually seem random to outside observers. Why might one Chosen of Endings be the son of a widow and a ghost in a poverty-stricken shadowlands village, when another is the firstborn daughter of a mighty Southeastern rajah? The Maidens know, but they do not explain themselves.

Growing Up Sidereal

The Sidereals take some pains to locate their newly-incarnated brethren as quickly as possible, but by long-standing policy avoid interfering with their mortal lives. They generally assign a little god or two to watch over the nascent Exalt, and may check in from time to time, but it is believed to be both inauspicious and unwise to deprive one of the Chosen of the perspective a mortal life brings by prematurely involving them in divine matters. This watchfulness is largely a matter of caution, ensuring that Creation’s enemies do not detect the young Exalt while she is still unable to defend herself.

So it is that young Sidereals grow up surrounded by odd omens, portents, and feelings that some great power watches over them. Part of this is the weight of destiny gathering around them like a thunderstorm as the years pass, but a larger measure of it is the coming and going of powerful seers and subtle gods checking in on their lives.

The Fated Exaltation

Sidereal Exaltation is a slow, subtle process compared to the eruption of wild power that accompanies the choosing of their counterparts. It occurs across a span of days or weeks, during which the Sidereal experiences odd flashes of extrasensory perception. She notices omens with a crisp, unsettling clarity. Her thoughts strike directly to the truth of things. She makes connections she shouldn't be able to, understanding how the leaping of a fish from a river will lead to a drunken brawl in her home village two days hence. She sees shining threads, subtle, almost invisible, connecting the thoughts, actions, and outcomes of people and events around her. She likely believes she is going mad at first, but the hallucinations and the predictions keep lining up. The pattern behind the auspices that haunt her becomes clearer and clearer.

Eventually, a crisis manifests. Usually, the young Sidereal has sensed it forming around her for days. Perhaps the Fair Folk raid her village. Perhaps a wicked uncle tries to assassinate her. Whatever the case, she finds that she is now able to not only see but touch the threads of fate running all around her. She may twist everything to her benefit. She wields causality as a blade, and triumphs.

Later that night, as her Maiden's star shines bright and strong in the sky, her caste mark manifests. It will continue to display itself for days, sometimes for an entire month, before it abates. Not long after, the lambent fires of her anima begin to limn her in a soft halo. Before these things happen, other Sidereals or their agents appear to whisk her away before she can cause a panic or get herself into serious trouble. They hide her from any who might report a strange glowing youth to agents of the Wyld Hunt. They carry her away from her old life, to begin training for her duties as a member of the Fivescore Fellowship.

A Life of Service

The other Exalted are itinerant adventurers, independent warlords, talents-for-hire, or landed aristocracy. The Sidereal Exalted may temporarily play at such roles, but they are fundamentally something different. They are agents of Heaven, and Heaven treats them as such.

A newly Exalted Sidereal finds herself taken to a secret gateway by her peers. On the other side is the Celestial City of Yu-Shan, which men know as Heaven. This is now her home. She is installed in a humble starter lodging (by the standards of Heaven; its opulence puts a mortal sultan's palace to shame), the most frantic of her questions are answered, and she is assigned a battery of tutors. Upon the next morning, she begins a year and a day of intensive training under a regimen designed in the First Age and personally blessed and sanctified by the Five Maidens. In an impossibly short span, this miraculous curriculum instills in the young Sidereal an advanced education in both the classical subjects and a great deal of secret lore, hones her body to an acceptable standard of fitness, teaches her the foundational lessons of battlefield martial arts and fundamental combat, schools her in magic and theoretical sorcery, and familiarizes her with the workings of the Bureau of Destiny. Most Sidereals pursue additional studies well past the end of this formal instructional period, but a year and a day is all that is allotted for the Maidens' Chosen to attend to self-betterment and nothing else.

Their services are too desperately required for any more idling.

Things Fall Apart

This is the world that Sidereals are given:

Creation is beset on all sides. The Neverborn plot to drag all that lives into the arms of death, and then to destroy the mechanisms of death as well. The Wyld surges restlessly, eager to end the blasphemy of causality and return all to primal chaos. The lords of Hell strain against the bounds of their prison, their futile struggles tearing at the fabric of reality. Even the activities of Creation's ordained rulers and ministers strain the stability of fate by imposing bright, hot miracles upon it with little warning. And, of course, the pattern spiders, even weaving in their multitudes, are not a match for the efforts of the Maidens. There are days when they only just weave enough to cover the bare necessities of destiny's most likely scenarios.

There are times and places when the pattern of fate grows thin and rigid and brittle. Here, cords may tangle one upon another. Here, the fabric may grow too thin to support the heavy burden of destiny. Fate stretches, pushed to its limit. If it breaks...

Chejop Kejak speaks to a young member of the Fivescore Fellowship: "The course of destiny is dictated by likelihood. In the ideal, anything at all could happen on any day, and the abundance of available fate would cover all eventualities. In practice, some events are so outlandish that their potential is discarded out of hand. The possibility of the moon simply falling from the sky hasn't been woven for since I was a boy. But during periods of fate shortage, long-shot destiny paths or even merely unlikely potentialities must be sacrificed to make up the shortfall, and should events nonetheless turn in that direction... well. It is our job to make sure that events do not turn in that direction."

Sidereals live within the flow of time and safeguard it against histories which causality is not prepared to process. Dedicated predictive cabals within the Bureau of Destiny examine the Loom of Fate every day, scrutinizing it for upcoming errors. Most of the time, they are able to submit priority prayers for destiny amendment to the pattern spiders, but sometimes the spiders cannot work fast enough or simply don't have sufficient material to account for an unexpected twist of fate. In this case, a memorandum is sent down to a Sidereal agent on the ground.

Troubleshooting Destiny

When a Sidereal receives a priority mission, a folded strip of silk appears discreetly somewhere on her person, containing the known parameters and desired resolution of the impending error in destiny. Generally, this will take the form of a set of instructions which look something like this: "A red-haired merchant with a diamond pin in his left eyebrow is traveling from the Lap to Gem. You must prevent him from being ambushed along the way." Or: "A man named Rafan Nejdari is about to die somewhere in Nexus. You must prevent anyone from discovering his death until three days and six hours have passed." Or: "There exists a cell of the demon-worshiping Salmalin cult in Paragon. You must shatter its influence and disperse its members without killing any of them." Or: "You must cause the god Bright Branches to be convicted of treason against Heaven by the directional censor Fakharu."

Sidereals are intimately connected to the deepest process of destiny and fate. As a result, they always happen to be relatively close to wherever it is they need to be when trouble occurs. They can sense the local stability of fate and the impending build-up of damage to the structure of destiny. They know when their actions have sufficiently resolved an error in history, when they have not, and when they've simply bought more time to deal with the problem.

Usually, resolving a mission received from the Bureau is the end of the affair. Destiny unfolds along a course that does not damage the fabric of the tapestry of Creation. Occasionally, this is

not the case. Sometimes damage has already occurred and a Sidereal or group of Sidereals is left playing catch-up. As an example:

A very great deal of long-term destiny planning is woven around the nigh-inevitable rise and fall of a terrible, bloody-handed tyrant in the Threshold principality of Haz-Bajjr. A powerful destiny is bestowed upon the infant son of the sultan of Haz-Bajjr to become this tyrant. He will be blessed with success in war, mighty in battle, and cruel of disposition. A great deal of fate is woven to account for this. Then a jealous concubine, furious at rumors that the infant will be named rightful heir over her own unborn child, smothers the newborn tyrant in his crib.

Shit.

In later years, priority destiny amendments send Sidereals to Haz-Bajjr again and again. A new young man must be shaped into a cruel, talented, brilliant warrior and tactician. His rise to power must be orchestrated. It proves impossible to guide him into the formal line of succession, and so the Maidens' Chosen intervene to clear a path for him to usurp the throne, beginning his reign of blood and chaos. At this point, destiny has been adequately patched and may resume marching along in its own course.

The Wages of Failure

If the Chosen do not complete a mission, the fabric of causality strains and tears. A single minor destiny conflict is usually not too bad. It merely weakens the integrity of the rest of the tapestry, making future errors more likely. As errors mount, however, paradoxes occur. A man drowns even after being pulled safely from the water. A fire that is not extinguished on schedule cannot be extinguished at all, and spreads unchecked for weeks or months. The assassination of a prince throws his nation into chaos, despite the fact that he is still alive.

Paradoxes are highly disruptive, unpleasant, and frightening for those subjected to them, but were they the worst outcome of a failure to uphold the integrity of destiny, even then that would not be too bad. Unfortunately, paradoxes place even greater strain on the totality of fate's design. They become progressively longer, more widespread, until an entire sector of the design of Creation completely destabilizes. At this point, in order to prevent the cascade-failure of all reality, the pattern spiders exercise their discretion and sever a portion of the tapestry of Creation. An entire forest, road, city, or region is simply excised from existence, falling into the conceptual graveyard of time. Occasionally a powerful god or a Celestial Exaltation escapes the excision, but otherwise everyone and everything affected ceases to exist. The total pattern of Creation is lessened and weakened. If the pattern spiders cannot deftly weave a replacement narrative into the resulting gap, the Wyld comes surging through, creating a lagoon of chaos deep within the borders of reality. Powerful demons and their lesser servants also often escape into Creation during such breaches, and must thence be hunted down.

The results of cascade-omission have never been seen and must never *be* seen; the general consensus is that at some point, were the fabric of the tapestry of Creation to grow too weak and diminished, the irresistible gravity of the Pole of Earth would draw the outer Poles into Creation's borders until all met in the center, resulting in the obliteration of all life and geography, shortly after followed by the dissolution of the world entire.

This is why the Chosen of Endings stand officiant over the overthrow of tyrants and the murder of saints, and their great concern in both cases must be that the death occurs in the proper hour of the afternoon.

Sidereals, Agency, and What Must Be

Does all of this mean that Sidereals have no room for the discretion of personal ethics? If destiny demands that they throw a baby into a volcano, is that the end of it? Into the volcano goes the baby, too bad, so sad? Elder Sidereals generally tell their younger contemporaries that yes, this is the burden of terrible necessity which they shoulder to ensure that everyone else still has a world to live in tomorrow.

The truth is that Sidereals can exercise personal ethics... if they're willing to be clever and put in the legwork. Mission briefings are usually short and approximate, and fate is, by design, flexible. Let's say a group of Sidereals receive orders to have the god Bright Branches convicted of treason by Fakharu. Bright Branches is their friend and ally. They might simply frame him and throw him to the wolves, yes. Mission accomplished.

Or... they might investigate the upcoming snarl and find that they have a bit of time to work a hustle. They discover a conspiracy of forbidden gods plotting against the great powers of the spirit courts that caused their respective downfalls. They use their Charms to brainwash Bright Branches and send him off to join this conspiracy and to turn it against Fakharu. They come to Fakharu with evidence of the plot against him. They oversee the destruction of the conspiracy. They wait until judgment is passed upon Bright Branches, and then reveal to Fakharu that he has been their double-agent to uncover the conspiracy all along. They use further Charms to undo the god's brainwashing. Their mission is fulfilled, their friend is saved (albeit probably less trusting of the Sidereals than he was before), and a consortium of divine troublemakers has been put out of commission. Job well done all around.

Sadly, this sort of definition-hedging, cheating run-around to hoodwink destiny on technicalities, though effective, is *exhausting*. There generally arrives a point, some centuries into a Sidereal's service, when she gets a memo saying "A man rides to warn the village in Mill Gorge of a river god's wrath. The village at Mill Gorge must be destroyed by the floodwaters, and no one living there may be warned in advance." She considers. The courier must be waylaid, clearly. After that... she *could* use Neighborhood Relocation Scheme to drag the village out of the path of the flood. She *could* use the Charm *again* to replace it with an old abandoned village up in the mountains she knows of. Then "the village at Mill Gorge" would be destroyed via flood, and no one in either version of it would have been forewarned... but that will take most of her Essence and the better part of a day and a half, and she has other pressing concerns, like the escaped demon she's supposed to be tracking and which she does not want to face with no Motes left to work with.

Once a Sidereal abandons a village to the waters once, it becomes much easier to do it a second, third, and fourth time.

The Great Prophecy and the Schism

This was the defining moment of the Sidereal Exalted:

In the twilight of the First Age, the Chosen of the Maidens gathered in a secure and secret chamber within the house of Jupiter and spent the best part of a year casting auguries and

prophecies, examining the paths of destiny, and generally trying to get a feel for the state of their world and its future.

The subject of their concern was the Solar Exalted, who had grown mighty beyond description, paranoid beyond belief, and arrogant beyond measure. In the distant South, the poet-general Namash Garlanded-with-Lightning had conjured a sixteen-thousand mile long and two hundred mile wide corridor directly into the depths of the Wyld, simply for the joy of dreaming up new frontiers each morning and conquering them each day. Its progression was destabilizing the location of the Elemental Pole of Fire and the effort of reinforcing the reality of the corridor in his wake was putting a greater and greater strain on the Bureau of Destiny's resources. In the foundries of Meru, the current standard for cutting-edge wonder-crafting was to artificially culture entire fully-featured alternate timelines, then compress them into raw ingredients so that ten-thousand-year daiklaves could be forged with a history of war longer than the entire existence of the Chosen. Each such act shook the foundations of true destiny like an earthquake. Somewhere in the black depths of the Underworld, a cabal was reported to be working on an artificial god-machine to impose a destiny of their own design upon the machinery of death and rebirth.

Things were becoming unmanageable.

The Sidereals spent a great deal of time comparing notes on their various prognostications and forecasts, and eventually general trends and potentialities emerged. The weave of destiny, they came to see, supported three basic templates for events going forward: three futures which the fabric of existence might support without coming unraveled.

In the first valid future, the First Age continued as it was. The Sidereals set aside their misgivings and continued to act as the seers and viziers of the Solar Exalted. Unchecked, the Solars' madness would grow in time. Their destructive indulgences would become constant and unchecked atrocities. The world would become a charnel house of suffering, eventually wracked by wars and plagues and mystic disasters one after another, until all the strength of the Chosen was squandered, far too late. Creation itself would become a gray and diminished thing, a house of lament: a world of darkness in which monsters skulked and reveled in the shadows for an age, until finally eternal darkness fell and brought about a merciful conclusion to all things.

This, it was universally agreed, must not be allowed to come to pass.

In the second future that the Sidereals believed destiny was able to support, the members of the Fivescore Fellowship approached their lords, their friends, and by various means attempted to bring about reform and renewal. They tried to cleanse the madness from the paranoid minds of the rulers of Creation. They tried to steer the Solars back toward an age of righteousness. This destiny was... chaotic, difficult to define. It branched into many possible outcomes. In a few a very few, the Sidereals succeeded, and the First Age continued, raised up to even higher glories than it had yet known. But along the majority of branches — the overwhelming majority, it must be said — the Sidereals failed. The Solars' paranoia won out. Creation was devastated by an immense series of wars fought between the Chosen at the apex of their might. The world was shattered, and the numberless hordes of the Fair Folk swept in and devoured everything.

Tammiz Ushan attempted to lighten the mood with a joke: "Well, they're not the worst odds we've faced." It gained a few chuckles. Rakan Thulio, who had fought in the Divine Revolution from its very first day, was not among those who laughed.

In the third path which destiny supported, the Sidereals turned the heads of the major Dragon-Blooded gentes against their lords. They tricked the Lunars to draw them away from their mates and masters, or confounded their hearts to make them stand aside in the crucial moment. Then then they struck, killing the Solars one and all and removing the threat of their unchecked and unstable power forever. This resulted in a degraded and diminished world, but a stable one, whose future was assured. This destiny was the strongest of the three, demonstrating overwhelming likelihood of success.

Because a year of rigorous auguries had produced no prophecies which did not accord with one of these three possibilities, the Sidereals assumed that the substance of fate would not support any other path, and that to pursue any other course would push destiny into a series of fatal cascade errors. And so, the debates began. They never truly ended. The Fivescore Fellowship shattered into factions that day, and never have they been whole since.

Bronze Faction Sidereals

The Bronze Faction (so named for its support of a future bereft of the gold of the Solars and the silver of the Lunars) is the dominant Sidereal faction, making up a plurality (but falling just shy of the majority) of the Maidens' Chosen. For a very long time, it made up a very solid supermajority of the Sidereal Exalted, but its numbers are now in decline. Bronze Faction Sidereals are the architects of the Second Age in most ways that matter. They crafted the Immaculate Philosophy as a place to hide, a convenient political catspaw, and a mechanism by which to uplift and legitimize the Dragon-Blooded as rulers of Creation. They guide the Wyld Hunt in its continued suppression of the Solar Exalted and oversee the Realm's war-efforts against the Lunar Exalted, who would very much like to see every Bronze Faction Sidereal dead.

Most Bronze Faction Sidereals split their time between attending to personal projects in Creation and maintaining what they consider to be their "real lives" in Yu-Shan. They tend to treat events "on the ground" as either personal hobby-projects or as the drudgery of field work. The real action, in their eyes, occurs in the halls of power in Heaven. They are often highly politically active, with ambitions for advancement into the higher managerial echelons of the Bureau of Destiny. Senior members of the faction encourage and facilitate such ambitions, partly to keep operational authority consolidated in the faction's hands and partially because the faction runs on a system of patronage and mentorship in which elder Sidereals pass down training and political favors in exchange for gaining powerful agents in the field who are strongly beholden to them.

The Bronze Faction is shrinking as the Time of Tumult picks up steam. It is still the more powerful of the two major Sidereal groups, but its arguments ring increasingly hollow to younger Sidereals. The Bronze Faction expends a great deal of energy shutting out the mounting evidence that their branch of the Great Prophecy is somehow flawed. They maintain that the Great Prophecy is a matter of broad outline and not fine details. They maintain that it is irrelevant that they did not foresee the Great Contagion or the Wyld Crusade that followed; clearly, Creation survived and re-stabilized, they say, and it will do so again once the Deathlords and their new servants, along with the Realm succession crisis, have been dealt with. They make many loud assertions as the shadow of doom stretches closer to their feet day by day.

Gold Faction Sidereals

The Gold Faction (so named for fairly obvious reasons) comprises roughly a third of the Maidens' Chosen at present. It began its existence as the smaller, losing disputant in the discussion about what to do with the Grand Prophecy, and became even smaller as Bronze

assassins struck down several particularly bold Gold Sidereals who defied the results of their brethren's vote and tried to warn the Solars of their impending treachery. The rest of the faction vanished into hiding during the Usurpation, intending to intercept and shelter the reincarnating Solars that they might put their former friends' mistakes to right.

The Bronze Faction anticipated this. The Solars never reincarnated. When the Gold Sidereals realized how thoroughly they'd been outplayed, they returned to Yu-Shan by ones and twos over the following decades and slowly settled into an uncomfortable and distressed existence as troubleshooters for a global destiny they no longer believed in. Some abandoned their convictions over time and were convinced that Kejak's path had been the right one after all. Some simply resolved themselves to doing the best they could in the rubble of their peers' cowardice. A few... a few bided their time. They watched cracks develop in the structure of the Vision of Bronze. They waited.

Five years ago their patience was finally rewarded. Creation saw its first solar eclipse since the Usurpation, and with it the widespread return of the Solar Exalted. Overnight, the Gold Faction went from a defunct political black mark to an active organization once again.

Gold Faction Sidereals tend to spend most of their time in Creation, returning to Yu-Shan only periodically to touch base or attend priority briefings. They tend to think of Heaven as a place they go in the course of their work rather than as their primary residence or focus. They are *very* busy trying to find and guide the returned Solars, secure resources for their rise to power, and puzzle out the movements of their enemies. Their numbers have swelled dramatically with discontent younger Exalted who have lost faith in the Vision of Bronze.

Independent Sidereals

For most of the Second Age, most Sidereals were functionally independent or only notionally Bronze. At present, this status has taken on a new and drastically different meaning. Independent Sidereals are those who refuse to commit to either the restoration of the Solars or active promotion of the Realm and its various systems. A few see themselves as impartial arbiters of destiny and consider faction politics or manipulating other Chosen to be crass and beneath their station.

The majority are very young Sidereals who Exalted in places where the Immaculate Philosophy held dominant sway. They were dismayed (to say the least) to be told that their faith is a lie constructed by hidden Anathema. They recoil from the suggestion that they should manipulate the Dragon-Blooded, who they have been trained all their lives to treat with absolute deference, and respond with undisguised horror to the idea that they should restore the Solar Anathema to their thrones. Such independents generally want as little to do with their fellow Sidereals as possible, and primarily interact with gods in the course of their work, who they view as, if not trustworthy, then at least known quantities whose power and station are of legitimate origin.

At present, the number of independent Sidereals is less than a dozen. Most of their peers believe it is a phase they will grow out of if given time and space to process things.

The Righteous Society of Celestial Brigands and Heaven-Upending Devils

Much, much more concerning are the bare handful of Sidereals who have abandoned their loyalty to the Fivescore Fellowship and the Bureau of Destiny altogether. Believed to number less than ten, Rakan Thulio and his Sidereal supporters wage a guerilla war against the authority of Heaven from a number of hidden safehouses and training facilities within Creation. What

other Sidereals call service to the workings of destiny, they call enslavement by the gods and theft of the freedom that is their ordained right as Exalted. They believe that an uncaring Heaven has permitted Creation to fall into a state of catastrophic disrepair and distracted the only heroes that could save it by making them perform constant maintenance on the failing machinery of destiny. They believe the only truth of the gods is that they are selfish and greedy. They believe mortals are condemned to destinies of suffering and woe so that the gods may grow fat on their desperate prayers. They believe that the world does not have to be this way. They believe that there is a better, brighter order of things, and that the first step to bringing it about is to shatter the pillars of Heaven and cast down the corrupt gods from their thrones of indolence.

Sidereal Ages

Sidereals are aware that they are the most fragile of the Chosen, and as such, generally take very great pains to avoid dangerous situations they don't have a way out of. They rarely perish as a result of mishap and misadventure. As a result, most Sidereals occupy three thick age-clusters. The first are ancient First Age survivors, such as Chejop Kejak. These Exalts are now reaching the end of their natural lifespans and have been passing on in significant numbers over the last two centuries. Only a handful remain at the head of the Bronze Faction, and the Gold Faction possesses only two surviving members with first-hand memories of the Solars as they truly were in the First Age. These elders have now dwindled to less than a dozen in total.

The second group are potent elders whose current incarnations began either in the immediate wake of the Solar Purge or following the Great Contagion, both of which produced significant die-offs in the Sidereal population. They make up the majority of the Bronze Faction, though the current leader of the Gold Faction, Ayesha Ura, is also from this group. Over half of the Sidereal Exalted now fall into this age group.

The third Sidereal age group is made up of youths Exalted sometime in the last two centuries as the truly ancient First Age survivors reach the end of their lives and surrender their Exaltations to new bearers. They number about a third of the Maidens' Chosen.

Finally, a smattering of Sidereals fall outside of these groups, being mostly less than 1,500 years old. These are primarily reincarnated from Exalts slain by Lunars or Rakan Thulio during missions in Creation.

Factional Conflict

Outsiders would be shocked (and suspicious) to discover that relations between the Bronze and Gold Factions are strained but cordial. This is the result of a long-standing and vigorously enforced dictate by Chejop Kejak and echoed, for the time being, by Ayesha Ura. Put bluntly, the core responsibility of troubleshooting destiny is simply too crucial to be ignored in favor of factional infighting. While it's quite common for Sidereals to pull in favors and throw their weight around to disadvantage or thwart the efforts of their factional rivals, or to get friendly agents installed onto desired jobs where they can combine destiny repairs and agenda advancement, outright sabotaging fate-mending efforts is absolutely forbidden.

There are, bluntly, not enough Sidereals to do the work as it stands. Every petty political assassination results in a fifteen to thirty-five year vacancy while the victim reincarnates, Exalts, and is trained anew from scratch. Destiny cannot afford delays of that sort. Bronze and Gold Sidereals fight through pawns and fronts. They shift assets at one another. They ruin one another's projects. They do not trade fists. Sidereals do not attack and waylay other Sidereals. Those who do so are censured. They *especially* do not kill one another. Anyone who makes the decision to buck that dictate does so at the risk of discovering whether they can overcome Chejop Kejak's mastery of Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic style when he arrives to put them in the dirt and replace their misshapen excuse for a personality with something less catastrophically stupid.

Sidereals in Heaven are *expected* to comport themselves with the dignity inherent to a divine magistrate whom one of the Incarnae has bestowed with her authority and power. While there are many shades of subtle sniping and political brinksmanship available within those limits, it is generally expected that propriety's limits will be observed and that Bronze and Gold feuds, no matter how high the stakes, will be kept away from the prying eyes and gossiping lips of the little gods.

Where Rakan Thulio and his rogue Sidereals are concerned, none of this applies. The Celestial Brigands have been declared enemies of Heaven, far too dangerous for forcible rehabilitation, and lethal force has been authorized in recycling their Exaltations. Thulio is equally willing to resort to murder, but less eager, preferring to kidnap and indoctrinate young Sidereals rather than killing them when possible.

Essence Fever

Sidereal Essence is a shallow pool with frighteningly deep reflections. If Solar and Lunar Essence is a raging torrent, Sidereal Essence is a steady stream. It does not smash the world aside with unchecked power. It does not do very much at all — but it is steady, and it is constant. A wheel might be set into it, and turned by its force, and that might in turn power any manner of work.

Sidereal Essence does not produce a fever. It does not demand, nor compel. It *listens*. It imposes consciousness upon the young Chosen. It makes her aware of the gleaming threads of fate and destiny which connect to everything around her. She cannot actually *see* these threads, but she can sense them so acutely that she often imagines they are visible. If she draws her Essence to herself and reaches out, she can feel her fingers resting upon these strings, taut and humming like piano wire. And when she closes her fists, or twists her wrists, gathering up the threads and dragging them this way or that, she both *feels* and *sees* the world respond. Disaster descends or is averted. Things go her way. Outcomes align with her desires. Her fingers ache. The power is real. It is not her power. It is *the power of the world*, and it *answers* to her. That is the true strength of Sidereal Essence: a mark of authority to edit reality.

In time, a Sidereal learns that her Essence touches upon numerous things, many of them surprising, most undocumented by the Bureau of Destiny. She struggles to do many of the things of which her Exalted counterparts are capable... but finds that her nature touches upon anything destiny may eventually demand of her. The Essence of Battles knows every conceivable facet of conflict, opposition, struggle, and adversity. The Essence of Secrets holds within it every hidden thing in Creation and beyond. As a result, Sidereals spend a great deal of time in advanced study of subjects others would deem esoterica: the underlying principles of particular spells, the history

of distinct recurring common omens in the world, the possibly-meaningless obsessions of particular Second Circle demons. Sidereals do not have an all-conquering torrent of power to call their own. They find hidden might where others have overlooked it, and catalyze these secret associations with what power they *can* call their own.

On Playing a Sidereal

Sidereals know that, as supernatural beings go, they are physically fragile. They also know that they are of inestimable value to the continued functioning of the world. It is because of their tireless labors on behalf of the Bureau of Destiny that there is still a reality for others to inhabit.

And yet, Sidereals are more than faceless, tireless functionaries of Heaven. They are *Exalted*. They cite the Unconquered Sun's ancient proclamation (even those who slaughtered his champions), made at the end of the war against those who forged Heaven and the world alike: that the gods would ascend to live in celestial splendor, and the Exalted would become rightful owners and rulers of Creation. A Sidereal has the unimpeachable right to descend to Creation and order it as she sees fit. She has the right to establish or destroy nations, meddle in politics and wars, delve into the lost depths of First Age (or older...) ruins, and claim whatever she finds within as her own. The only check on her power and remit in this regard is the censure of her peers, an unofficial but very significant balancing factor.

In short, Sidereals are expected not to widely expose the secret of their continued survival to the pages of history. They are expected not to be indiscriminately destructive forces, throwing the world into catastrophe for their own amusement. Beyond that, manipulating the fortunes of the Realm, opposing the expansion of the Lunar Exalted, or orchestrating the rise or systematic execution of the resurgent Solars are personal matters that fall within their discretion as Exalted and thus rightful masters of the world.

In the past, many Sidereals spent the lion's share of their time in Yu-Shan, pursuing ambitions in divine politics. In the current Time of Tumult, this trend has reversed itself. More and more of the Maidens' Chosen — especially the youngest Sidereals — spend most of their time and energy in Creation, diverting to handle priority missions from the Bureau but primarily fixated upon attempting to guide the future shape of Creation by either holding the Realm together through its current succession crisis (in the case of the Bronze Faction) or attempting to foster and guide Solars toward seizing their destiny as the returned stewards of Creation (in the case of the Gold Faction).

What is true across both factions is that Sidereals are predisposed to view themselves as “above” or “beyond” those they deal with. Sidereal training promotes detachment. Sidereals have many catspaws, few peers, and even fewer friends. They have a wider-perspective view than others, and frequently see themselves as adjusting history from within its flow by manipulating the positions and attitudes of figures within a certain framework of destiny rather than *making alliances* or *sharing experiences* with people as real as they are.

On the Chosen of the Maidens

The Sidereal Exalted number precisely 100, with 20 Chosen allocated to each of the five Maidens. This leaves them constantly, desperately short-staffed.

Sidereals are the longest-lived of the Celestials, with a lifespan of four to five thousand years. Unlike the other Chosen, Sidereals do not appear to be able to extend this span by any standard means. Anagathic drugs do nothing, and immortality-conveying sorcery is ineffective. Saturn

measures the days of each of the Chosen of the Maidens, and when the appointed hour comes, she cuts the Sidereal's thread. It is as simple as that. Like their Celestial brethren, Sidereals only show signs of advanced age in their final years.

A Final Concise Reminder

This chapter deals with a great deal of abstract esoterica, so, to sum it up very quickly:

Destiny is the overall shape of history, either in the form of *things that do happen* or *things that could happen*. Destinies are made up of *fate*. Destiny can be likened to a tapestry.

Fate is the raw fabric from which history is woven and reality is structured. Fate is what supplies the world with causality, and is manually created in vast amounts every day by the pattern spiders, which is then consumed by being actualized into the history of the world that day. If destiny is a tapestry, fate is the cloth it is woven from.

Pattern spiders are mechanical gods who weave fate out of raw Essence drawn from the Wyld. Pattern spiders are incredibly industrious, but cannot weave an unlimited amount of fate, and so they generally focus on weaving "standard" and "likely" fates before supplying as many unlikely fate-patterns as they have left-over time for each night.

Paradoxes occur when the pattern spiders do not weave enough fate or the correct sort of fate to supply for the demands of a destiny that manifests into actuality. Sidereals must be sent to correct paradoxes before Creation destabilizes.

Castes

By technicality, the Sidereal Exalted belong to five different patrons, making them siblings rather than a unified variety of Exalted. In practice, their five castes work together as a singular whole in much the same fashion as the Maidens themselves. Rather than being divided by aptitude or purpose like their Solar and Lunar counterparts, Sidereal castes determine which aspect of destiny's design an Exalt is specialized in dealing with. Like Solars, their castes are fixed from incarnation to incarnation. A Chosen of Battles will also have been a Chosen of Battles in all of her previous lives as well. That being said, unlike other Exalted, it is very unusual for a Sidereal to experience past-life memories of her Exaltation's prior incarnations in her dreams. Perhaps they are simply more inclined to look to the present or future, or perhaps Saturn prefers that those things within the scope of her personal works which have ended do so decisively.

Chosen of Journeys

Life is a journey.

Chosen of the Maiden of Journeys are marked by an insatiable wanderlust, a burning need to *go* and *see*. They are Heaven's foremost couriers and messengers. The Bronze Faction uses them to coordinate the efforts of Immaculate temples and the Wyld Hunt, while the Gold has them act as scouts sniffing out the location of newly-Exalted Solars and leading them to its hidden training temples.

Caste Mark: The eyes of Chosen of Journeys turn amber yellow in the wake of Exaltation, their pupils shot through with yellow flecks like a field of stars. When they spend Essence, the mark of Mercury appears upon their brow.

Anima Banner: When intensely spending Essence, a Chosen of Journeys manifests a brilliantly glowing yellow halo that wavers all around her.

Caste Abilities: Athletics, Linguistics, Martial Arts, Resistance, Ride, Sail, Survival, Thrown

Anima Power: The Sidereal spends 1 Mote and uses a swift or simple action to make the Lesser Sign of Mercury. For the rest of the scene, the Sidereal and her allies within one zone drastically increase their speed, lowering the difficulty of all actions to move or ride at speed by -2 . In combat, when they use a move action they may reflexively move two zones, though this benefit cannot be called on two rounds in a row. This benefit activates for free while the Sidereal's anima banner flares.

Chosen of Serenity

Life is pleasure.

Chosen of the Maiden of Serenity see the potential in the world to be a good and joyful place. They are Heaven's foremost priests and celebrants. The Bronze Faction uses them as matchmakers, ensuring the strength and stability of Dragon-Blooded households and family lines, while the Gold uses them as bards and storytellers, recounting tales of a golden age that once was and might yet be again.

Caste Mark: The eyes of Chosen of Serenity turn sapphire blue in the wake of Exaltation, their pupils shot through with cerulean flecks like a field of stars. When they spend Essence, the mark of Mercury appears upon their brow.

Anima Banner: When intensely spending Essence, a Chosen of Journeys manifests a brilliantly glowing blue halo that wavers all around her.

Caste Abilities: Athletics, Craft, Empathy, Linguistics, Martial Arts, Performance, Presence, Socialize

Anima Power: The Sidereal spends 1 Mote and uses a swift or simple action to make the Lesser Sign of Venus. For the rest of the scene, the Sidereal and her allies within one zone add her Essence rating in additional successes to any Linguistics or Performance rolls they succeed at. This benefit activates for free while the Sidereal's anima banner flares.

Chosen of Battles

Life is a battle.

Chosen of the Maiden of Battles are always at home on or near the battlefield, or in those places where war is planned or prepared for. They are Heaven's foremost strategists and tacticians. The Bronze Faction uses them to advise the Realm's military endeavors, while the Gold deploys them to confound their Bronze rivals and to train newly recruited Solars in the ways of battle.

Caste Mark: The eyes of Chosen of Battles turn scarlet in the wake of Exaltation, their pupils shot through with red flecks like a field of stars. When they spend Essence, the mark of Mars appears upon their brow.

Anima Banner: When intensely spending Essence, a Chosen of Mars manifests a brilliantly glowing red halo that wavers all around her.

Caste Abilities: Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee, Presence, Resistance, Stealth, War

Anima Power: The Sidereal spends 1 Mote and uses a swift or simple action to make the Lesser Sign of Mars. For the rest of the scene, the Sidereal and her allies within one zone gain +1 Soak and +1 Stagger Threshold. This benefit activates for free while the Sidereal's anima banner flares.

Chosen of Secrets

Life is a mystery.

Chosen of the Maiden of Secrets are drawn to knowledge, particularly knowledge that nobody else has or that nobody wants them to have. They are Heaven's foremost spies and oracles. The Bronze Faction uses them to locate newly Exalted Solars that the Wyld Hunt might strike them down, while the Gold applies them to the same task, then rushes to recruit the new Exalts before the Hunt can strike.

Caste Mark: The eyes of Chosen of Secrets turn emerald in the wake of Exaltation, their pupils shot through with green flecks like a field of stars. When they spend Essence, the mark of Jupiter appears upon their brow.

Anima Banner: When intensely spending Essence, a Chosen of Journeys manifests a brilliantly glowing green halo that wavers all around her.

Caste Abilities: Awareness, Empathy, Investigation, Larceny, Lore, Martial Arts, Occult, Stealth

Anima Power: The Sidereal spends 1 Mote and uses a swift or simple action to make the Lesser Sign of Jupiter. For the rest of the scene, the Sidereal and her allies within one zone drastically become mystically inscrutable. Their intentions cannot be read, nor their thoughts, by either mundane or magical means. This benefit activates for free while the Sidereal's anima banner flares.

Chosen of Endings

Life is a series of endings.

Chosen of the Maiden of Endings possess a keen understanding of the finite nature of things, and often an appreciation of the fragile beauty of all that is temporary. They are Heaven's foremost assassins and funerists. The Bronze Faction employs them in taming the dead created by the Realm's heavy-handed policies, while the Gold focuses their efforts on bringing a conclusion to the reign of the Scarlet Dynasty.

Caste Mark: The eyes of Chosen of Endings turn violet in the wake of Exaltation, their pupils shot through with purple flecks like a field of stars. When they spend Essence, the mark of Saturn appears upon their brow.

Anima Banner: When intensely spending Essence, a Chosen of Endings manifests a brilliantly glowing purple halo that wavers all around her.

Caste Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Bureaucracy, Empathy, Martial Arts, Medicine, Occult, Stealth

Anima Power: The Sidereal spends 1 Mote and uses a swift or simple action to make the Lesser Sign of Saturn. For the rest of the scene, the attacks of the Sidereal and her allies within one zone gain Overwhelming (-1) and Piercing (-1). This benefit activates for free while the Sidereal's anima banner flares.

Sidereal Character Creation

Creating one of the Sidereal Exalted works a lot like it does in any classic edition of the game. The steps are outlined below:

Step 1: Character Concept

- Consult with the other players and come up with an appealing concept.
- Pick out the caste that fits best, and note its anima effects.
- Select Nature.
- Decide on the character's faction.

Step 2: Attributes

- Mark down one dot in each Attribute.
- Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to your character.
- Divide 8 dots among primary Attributes, 6 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Step 3: Abilities

- Select five Caste Abilities from the relevant list.
- Select four Favored Abilities, which may not be the same as Caste Abilities.
- Gain the following dots for free: Awareness ••, Archery *or* Melee *or* Thrown •, Bureaucracy ••, Linguistics •, Lore •••, Martial Arts ••, Occult ••, Socialize •, Stealth •.
- Divide 28 dots among Abilities.
- No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Bonus Points. At least 10 must be spread among Caste and Favored Abilities. Favored Abilities must have at least one dot.

Step 4: Advantages

- Receive the Charms: Excellence of the Starry Vault, Weaving the Threads, and Auspicious Prospects for free. Then choose additional Charms (9 dots in total). At least 5 dots of Charms must be from your Caste Charms. Finally, choose Colleges (3). At least two must be from your Maiden's house.
- Gain Mentor 5 for free and select 12 dots of Backgrounds. (Celestial Brigands choose 7.)
- Write down three Intimacies.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Record Willpower (5), Essence rating (1), and Mote pool (8). Essence pool begins at maximum.

- Record Health (7).
- Calculate and record Defense, Soak, Dodge, Block, and Stagger Threshold.
- Spend Bonus Points (15).

Bonus Point Costs

Trait	Cost (per dot)
Attribute	4
Ability	2
Caste/Favored Ability	1
Caste/Favored Charm	(rating x 3)
Other Charm	(rating x 4)
College	3
Terrestrial spell (favored)	3
Terrestrial spell (unfavored)	4
Essence	9
Backgrounds	1
Willpower	1

Backgrounds

Sidereals may use any of the Backgrounds found in Chapter Two. They also have some unique Backgrounds of their own, and particular considerations for certain Backgrounds.

Acquaintances

Social Background

A Sidereal with this Background has worked through the obscuring effects of her Arcane Fate to build a genuine relationship with one or more mortals, who regard her favorably and will stick out their necks on her behalf. Each dot of Acquaintances acquires either a single close friend or a small group of friendly acquaintances who remember who she is when she shows up and are glad to see her.

Allies

Social Background

Since Sidereals have a very difficult time being remembered by mortals, their Allies are generally gods.

Artifact

Panoply Background

Sidereal Exalted are resonant with the magical material starmetal. They go to tremendous lengths to recover any shooting stars that fall to Creation, but as it is the rarest of all magical materials, they use the same Artifact scale found in Chapter Two.

Backing

Social Background

Sidereals generally use this Background to represent standing within the Gold or Bronze faction.

Cult

Social Background

Mortals cannot worship what they do not remember. Sidereals cannot cultivate this Background.

Echoes

Purchased Background

Sidereals generally don't experience memory-echoes of their former incarnations. Instead, they sometimes dream of the future they are destined to bring about. As a result, Echoes is an uncommon Background for Sidereals, and may only be used to enhance Sidereal Astrology petition rolls.

Followers

Social Background

Sidereal followers can only be oddities such as magical constructs or minor spirits. Mortal friends are obtained through the Acquaintances Background.

Languages

Purchased Background

All Sidereals are expected to be fluent in Old Realm.

Manse

Panoply Background

Most Sidereals in good standing with the Bureau of Destiny have at least a humble Manse somewhere in Heaven.

Mentor

Social Background

All Sidereals in good standing with the Bureau of Destiny are able to take advantage of its seminars and to solicit advice and aid from elder Chosen, granting them an effective five dots in this Background. Being taken under the wing of a particular established luminary is handled by the Sifu Background. Sidereals obtain Forbidden Arts from the Sifu Background, rather than Mentor. Celestial Brigands, meanwhile, are able to solicit instruction from Rakan Thulio himself.

All Sidereals begin play with Mentor 5.

Resources

Social Background

Sidereals do not use this Background, instead using the Salary Background.

Salary

Social Background

Members of the Fivescore Fellowship draw a regular paycheck from Heaven, partially in quintessence and partially in ambrosia. This makes most Sidereals wealthy beyond dreams of avarice by mortal standards, and modestly prosperous by those of Heaven. Bureau of Destiny regulations forbid maintaining a standard of living above Resources ••• while in Creation unless undercover on Bureau business in order not to draw undue attention. (That being said, since Heaven doesn't self-police as a matter of course and hasn't for at least a millennium, flaunting this statute too blatantly generally results in censure from one's own peers among the Fivescore Fellowship rather than provoking official prosecution.) The other major financial restriction Sidereals are expected to abide by is to exercise some discretion in spending their tremendous wealth. Purchasing a scavenger lord's miraculous discovery is one thing; giving out alms in the form of jade talents to every beggar on the streets of Great Forks, thereby destabilizing the entire economy of the River Province, is quite another.

X Your wages are currently being garnished as censure for some spectacular misdeed (or because you pissed off the wrong god).

- The starting salary for most gods. This is the stipend of a freshly-Exalted Sidereal still under training. You can afford one meager feast per day. You have trouble affording your own dragon boat rentals, and must often resort to passenger dhows. You have Resources 3 in Creation.

- Your feasting-board is constantly full. There's a bit of Ambrosia in your pay, but most of it is Quintessence that goes to pay your servants and basic needs. You have Resources 4 in Creation. This is the standard rating of members of the Gold Faction, who are generally paid at the bottom of their grade.

- You have your own personal dragon boat and a retinue of fine servants. Most of your pay is in ambrosia, allowing you to routinely eat divine victuals. You have Resources 5 in Creation. This is the standard pay packet for members of the Bronze Faction.

- You have several residences in Heaven and an entire staff of servants and assistants. You are able to perform most of your transactions in Ambrosia with plenty left over for your own indulgence. Sidereals rarely ascend to this pay grade before they have put in a few centuries of diligent service and influence-mongering.

- You are a potentate even by the standards of Heaven, with several lavish townhouses, your own pleasure barge, and a legion of servants. You routinely dine on the Peaches of Immortality.

Sifu

Social Background

An older Sidereal has taken a particular interest in your career. They pull strings on your behalf, and may instruct you in the deeper secrets of your power.

X No one that matters has taken you under their wing.

- Your sifu knows one Forbidden Art, but has no particular political standing in Heaven.

- Your sifu knows two Forbidden Arts, and has a few useful connections to share with you within Yu-Shan.

- Your sifu knows three Forbidden Arts, and can pull strings within Heaven's judiciary to get audits dismissed and to trip up rivals, at least to a very limited point.
- Your sifu knows four Forbidden Arts, and can get you occasional invites to influential parties as his plus-one.
- Your sifu knows five Forbidden Arts, and is a serious mover and shaker in Heaven. You inherit a great deal of his favor, and no small number of his enemies.

Elder Sidereal Creation

A fair number of Sidereals have been kicking around for centuries. If you want to have lived through the harrowing days of the Great Contagion, here are the rules for that:

Attributes: 9/7/5.

Abilities: 35 dots. These can go all the way to 5 without spending Bonus Points. Add free bonus dots according to training.

Charms: Excellence of the Starry Vault plus 20 dots. At least nine have to be from Caste Charms.

Colleges: 7, at least three must be from your Maiden's House.

Backgrounds: 25 dots.

Essence Rating: Starts at 2.

Bonus Points: Spend 23.

Colleges of the Constellations

The power of the stars is bound up especially in the 25 constellations, each of which dwells in the house of one of the five Maidens of Destiny. The pattern spiders, likewise, are arrayed into 25 Colleges, each corresponding to one of the constellations, which defines the sort of destinies they are specialized in weaving. By undertaking intensive study of the astrological signifiers of a specific constellation, the Sidereal may initiate herself into the mysteries of its associated College, learning efficacious prayers that allow her to petition its pattern spiders to enact astrological miracles on her behalf (see Sidereal Astrology and Resplendent Destinies, below).

Sidereals begin play with initiation into three colleges, two of which must correspond with their patron Maiden. Further Colleges cost 3 supernal experience points.

Mercury: The Captain

This is the College of strength, determination, orderliness. As the captain guides a well-disciplined ship through danger, so do those under the influence of this constellation overcome hardship through organization and drill. In its negative aspects, it is the constellation of obsession for authority, organization, and orderliness. It is the domain of the ship's officer and the professional soldier, the work-gang boss and the strict matriarch.

Trappings: The Captain wears an *emblem of rank* and carries a *token of authority*. He is *fearless, showing no signs of fatigue*. He is *concerned for the wellbeing of his followers*.

Correlations: Military command, fatherhood, tyranny, crystals, bureaucracy, discipline

Resplendent Power: The Captain drills his followers, and they learn by his example. After a week of rigorous instructions at the Captain's feet, antagonists may gain a new Aptitude, while protagonists may purchase one dot of whatever Ability the Sidereal drilled them on as though it were a Favored Ability.

Mercury: The Gull

The Gull is the constellation of travel for the sake of travel. As a metaphor, it stands for self-examination and inner change. It is the wisdom of outside perspectives and the freedom of the wanderer. In its negative aspects, it stands for thoughtless irresponsibility and shallow self-examination. It is the College of the stray dog, the vagabond, the wandering monk and the circuit laborer. The Gull is the sign of fish and migratory birds.

Trappings: The Gull carries a *staff* and wears a *traveler's cape*. It is *dirty* and *hungry* but also *happy*.

Correlations: Wandering, wind, fish and birds, irresponsibility, rakish charisma, unexamined life

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal gains the Hedonist nature in addition to her own. She never appears to be slacking or goldbricking, regardless of her state of productivity, and will always be judged trustworthy to undertake menial tasks such as cleaning a chamber or delivering a message.

Mercury: The Mast

The Mast stands for pure physical strength. It is the College of raw, unspeaking, unquestioned exertion and muscular might. In its negative aspects, it is the constellation of unwillingness to question orders and the inability to communicate. It is the college of the soldier, the ditchdigger, the scribe and the house servant. It is the sign of the insect.

Trappings: The Mast is *drably dressed* and *unspeaking*. It is *strong* and *honest* but *ignorant*.

Correlations: Stoicism, tools, insects, architecture, manual labor, silence, ignorance, the phallus as a symbol of masculinity.

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal automatically succeeds on any feat of strength attempt that could conceivably be accomplished by a being with the strength of ten elephants.

Mercury: The Messenger

The Messenger is the sign of the professional servant. It signifies brave, skilled service and professionalism. In its negative interpretations, it is the College of good service for bad ends, of thoughtless abuse of power and moral abdication. It is the constellation of the valet, the aide, the diplomat and the young Dragon-Blooded living in the house of her cousins. This is the College of non-migratory birds such as raptors and owls, and of service to one's family.

Trappings: The Messenger has a *mount* and rides on *urgent business*. It is *daring* and *armed*. It carries a *package, from which it cannot be separated*.

Correlations: Duty, raptors, bravery, arrogance, journeys, communication, selflessness, news

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal may cause any familiar she possesses to carry her as a rider without difficulty or injury, no matter how unsuited it may be to do so.

Mercury: The Ship's Wheel

The Ship's Wheel stands for perseverance in the face of hardship. In its negative aspects, it represents quixotic obsession and clinging to doomed causes. It is the College of the steersman, the furnace-stoker, and those witlessly in pursuit of their beloved.

Trappings: The Ship's Wheel is *sleepless* and *unwashed*. It wears a *long cape or jacket* and *wristlets or a belt of rope*. It is *unspeaking*.

Correlations: Underdogs, cult beliefs, Solars, obsessive love, martyrdom, burdensome debt, wild animals as a group

Resplendent Power: Once the Sidereal begins working on a task, she may continue without stopping to rest or sleep until the work is done, ignoring all accumulation of Fatigue. If she is killed in the course of performing her task, her corpse carries it through to completion.

Venus: The Ewer

The Ewer signifies partnerships based in affection, romance, or the love of a dream. It encompasses flirtation, seduction, and adoration. In its negative facets, it is the sign of the devouring matriarch and of thoughtless, obsessive, or impossible love. It is the College of the idealist, the revolutionary, the marriage-seeker and the good monk. The Ewer symbolizes incestuous couplings and amphibians.

Trappings: The Ewer bears *flowers* and a *work of poetry*. It is *blissfully happy* and *in love with love*. It wears its *finest clothes*.

Correlations: Love, motherhood, righteousness, idealism, monastic duty, obsession, seduction, dreams and fantasies

Resplendent Power: Once per scene, the character may reflexively add his Charisma rating to a Bureaucracy, Socialize, or Presence roll.

Venus: The Lovers

The Lovers symbolizes physical lust, carnal indulgence, uneven relationships, and the sex act. In its less savory connotations, it is the constellation of depravity and the sexual or social exploitation of the helpless. It is the sign of the fixed-price prostitute, the slave, the debtor, the beggar, the pedophile and all individuals indulging in sex acts. This College is also the sign of vermin and rodents, and of ravagers and other victims of the Fair Folk.

Trappings: The Lovers are dressed in *silk robes*, and *their hair is rumped*. They are *superficially friendly* and *attractive* but *betray some sign of violence or restraint*, even if merely love-bites.

Correlations: Service, submission, slaves, vermin, ravagers, lust, the sex act, abuse

Resplendent Power: Once per session the Sidereal may employ a simple trick involving mouth and hands that brings about total sexual ecstasy for a cooperating partner in precisely three minutes. The recipient must succeed at a difficulty 9 Willpower roll or gain a temporary positive Intimacy toward the Sidereal for the rest of the story.

Venus: The Musician

The Musician is the College of contentment-in-living. It symbolizes pleasure in the finer things, representing gourmets, gluttons, and poets. In its less savory facets, it is the constellation of

hollow avarice, blind materialism, and scandalous excess. It is the sign of homosexual couplings and herbivores who travel in small family groups.

Trappings: The Musician wears *facial makeup*, *dresses outlandishly*, and carries a *musical instrument*. It is *cynically wise* and *uninhibited*.

Correlations: Excess, laughter, hedonism, music, homosexuality, drug use, finery, greed, extramarital pairings, contentment in living, theater

Resplendent Power: While the Sidereal performs, everyone who witnesses her doing so reduces their effective Willpower rating by -2 .

Venus: The Peacock

The Peacock is a sign of practical alliance, thoughtful breeding, and considered partnerships. In its unpleasant aspects, it is the College of loveless marriages, forced alliances, and other half-functional partnerships. It is the sign of the courtesan, the goodwife, the thoughtful matriarch and the established Dragon-Blooded household. It is also the sign of predators who hunt in packs.

Trappings: The Peacock displays *magnificent finery*. It is *proud* and has *excellent bearing*. It shows *discerning taste* and is *obviously sexually available*.

Correlations: Greed, love for wealth's sake, procreation, dualities, alliances, bright colors, necessity, traps, distraction

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal always looks good, lowering the difficulty of Appearance-based rolls by -2 . All of her persuasion attempts are considered to offer a modest bribe in the form of making such an appealing person happy.

Venus: The Pillar

The Pillar signifies partnerships tested and true: the just prince, the just matriarch, the caring parent. In its negative precincts it is the sign of bad parenting, of partnerships and authority found wanting. It is the College of the asexual partner: the mother, the business partner or drinking buddy. It is the sign of the bureaucrat and of herd animals such as mammoth and elk.

Trappings: The Pillar wears a *wedding ring* and *dresses plainly*. It is *perceptive* and *practical*, *firm but just*.

Correlations: Family, friendship, stability, civil society, unjust authority, stagnation, queens and princes

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal may hold and comfort someone before they sleep. They are infallibly protected from nightmares and other disturbances of the mind when they fall asleep, and recover two points of Willpower upon awakening.

Mars: The Banner

The Banner is the College of reputation, glory, and awe, governing fame, heroic reputation, and leadership. Less pleasantly, it is the constellation of terror as a weapon, panicked rumors, infamy, uninspiring leadership and living on reputation. It is the sign of the rumormonger, the crier, the witness, the martyr, the tyrant, and all those possessing heroic renown.

Trappings: The Banner is *strikingly clad* and *always among you*. It is *fearless*, *victorious*, and *larger than life*.

Correlations: Reputation, pageantry, leadership, epics, infamy, reigns of terror, philanthropy, tidings, symbols, heraldry

Resplendent Power: Any troops the Sidereal commands exhibit perfect morale.

Mars: The Gauntlet

The Gauntlet symbolizes the choice between bad and worse. It is the College of ruthless expediency, battlefield logic, and the courage to undertake unpleasant necessities. In its bleaker aspects, it is the constellation of callousness, ruthlessness, and a willingness to justify the whims of the moment as necessary. It is the home to the sergeant, the martinet, the surgeon, the judge, the policeman, the thug in uniform and the practical matriarch.

Trappings: The Gauntlet is *bloodstained* and *brutal*. It wears a *uniform* and carries a *cudgel*. It makes *meaningless demands*.

Correlations: Sergeants, confrontation, callousness, sacrifice of others, necessity, livestock management, pragmatism, surgery, the greater good

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal knows when anyone she faces is frightened of or intimidated by her, and to what degree.

Mars: The Quiver

The Quiver is the College of flexibility and swiftness of thought. In its darker aspects, it represents stupidity, bad ideas explained convincingly, and thinking in lockstep with one's peers. It is the sign of the duelist, the know-it-all, the Dragon-Blooded in secondary school, the socialite, the general, the quick-witted scholar and the urbane boor.

Trappings: The Quiver carries a *bow* or a *map case*. It is *clever* and *witty*. Its valor is less important than its *education*.

Correlations: Strategy, choices, haste, pride, archery, boorishness, self-absorption, clever ideas

Resplendent Power: Once per session, the Sidereal may re-attempt a social influence action after being denied by her target, without bothering to change tacks or use a different approach.

Mars: The Shield

The Shield is the College of the ecstatic warrior who seeks battle without regard for victory, of those who fight and die for their peers, or draw strength from pain. It is the sign of heroism without regard for consequence. In its uglier aspects, it is the constellation of sadism, masochism, suicidal bravery, and battle literally without thought. It is the College of scouts, assassins, heroic warriors, and lone predators who hunt with tooth and claw.

Trappings: The Shield always carries a *shield* or a *leather strap* for biting. It is *always armed* and *always eager for battle*, and carries *trophies* of its kills.

Correlations: Berserkers, warrior codes, fearlessness, protection, bragging, pain, heroism, heroic suicide, wrath, Lunars

Resplendent Power: So long as the character is unarmored, she increases her Soak by +2.

Mars: The Spear

The Spear represents skill, discipline, and professionalism in conflict. In its negative symbology, it is the College of superficiality, professional myopia, and the inability to see alternate solutions

outside one's scope of interest. It is the sign of the professional soldier, the bodyguard, the skilled militiaman, the arms instructor and the mercenary. It is also the sign of other skilled professional competitors, such as the gambler, the athlete, and the gladiator.

Trappings: The Spear *wears a uniform but possesses no rank*. It is called by its *family name or nickname*. It is *disciplined and brave*.

Correlations: Soldiers, bodyguards, bravery, professionalism, training, taking initiative, lack of vision, tactics, skillfulness, competition

Resplendent Power: No one fighting alongside the Sidereal in the same sector can suffer a Wound penalty worse than her own.

Jupiter: The Guardians

The Guardians is the College of practical knowledge and rewards earned through long labor, representing the wisdom of beasts and the elderly. In its negative facets, it encompasses quackery and meaningless superstition. It is the sign of the shaman, the snake-oil salesman, the talisman seller, the midwife and the old duffer.

Trappings: The Guardians are *uneducated and carry a talisman*. They are *suspicious*. They *know the weather* and a *wisdom that can aid you* in whatever you are about.

Correlations: Hearth wisdom, respect for the elderly, age, superstition, charlatans and mountebanks, tradition, patience, observation, inevitability

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal can unerringly detect when someone she's dealing with intends to take advantage of her.

Jupiter: The Key

The Key is the College of wisdom discovered through scholarly study and intellectual understanding, and more broadly of things gained or accomplished through cleverness, experimentation, inquiry, and sharp solutions. In its negative symbolism it is the constellation of wasteful experiments and tinkering with things best left undisturbed. It is the sign of the scavenger lord, the tinker and the junk seller. It is also the sign of monkeys and other primates.

Trappings: The Key has a *measuring stick* and a *pen*, but nothing to write upon. It claims it is *innocent* with a *dishonest expression*. It has *large appetites*.

Correlations: Innovation, hubris, corruption, automata and mechanical devices, books, libraries, medicine, curiosity

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal may use a simple action to sketch out a few quick calculations to irrefutably prove that the Calibration Gate is currently at her present location, and she is correct. Also, while performing research, she needs only sleep for one heartbeat per day, and may survive on Essence alone.

Jupiter: The Mask

The Mask is the College of religious wisdom, rites of passage, and the secrets of the bed. Its negative connotations encompass obfuscation, mountebanks, and humbuggery. It is the sign of the spy, the priest, and the librarian.

This constellation was damaged shortly after the Solar Purge by Sidereals of the Bronze Faction, who enacted powerful rituals to cause the world to forget the existence of the Sidereal Exalted.

As a result of this damage, Sidereals cannot use the Sidereal Astrology of this College upon themselves, only aim it at others or wear it as a Resplendent Destiny.

Trappings: The Mask *wears a mask* and *clothes of soft fabric*. It is *quiet* and *does not announce itself*. The Mask *clings to sacred places*.

Correlations: Secrets, lies, security services, guarded individuals, religious worship, extortion, trickery

Resplendent Power: The sector the Sidereal occupies is perfectly protected against supernatural scrying, teleportation, and other forms of intrusion or observation such as taking the form of a shadow or eavesdropping invisibly.

Jupiter: The Sorcerer

The Sorcerer is the College of secret wisdom and the secrets of power, of things known but concealed. It is the constellation of the Exalt, the god, the geomancer, the talisman maker, of artifice and sorcery. In its darker moments, it signifies demon summoning, Yozi worship, and necromancy. It is the sign of tasks accomplished through the use of Essence.

Sidereal Exalted frequently use this College to set up front identities as Sidereal Exalted so they can smoothly conduct business in Heaven and with other Chosen. Many individuals who believe they know a Sidereal may one day have a hard time remembering or naming her. Few Sidereals maintain a particular false front for more than 100 years at a time.

Trappings: The Sorcerer is one of the Exalted, and a prince of the earth. It displays goods of the *five magical materials*, a *caste mark*, and a *regal bearing*. It wears *armor* and carries a *daiklave*.

Correlations: Humanity, geomancy, artifice, demon summoning and infernalism, talismans, Essence use, egotism, Yozi-slaves

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal is immune to any effect that would cause her to lose her memory, lower her Essence rating, or block her access to any of her supernatural powers. All mortals who believe she is an Exalt gain a very temporary Intimacy of awe, respect, or fear (their choice) which only lasts so long as she is present.

Jupiter: The Treasure Trove

The Treasure Trove is College of revealed wisdom, of rewards earned and tasks accomplished through excellence, of erudition, education, enlightenment, and of knowledge held up like a beacon. In its negative aspects, it is the domain of intellectual elitism, pointless celebration, the bookworm and know-it-all. It is the constellation of the teacher, the revolutionary, the prophet, the savant, and of animals that hunt by stinging and leaping upon their prey.

Trappings: The Treasure Trove carries a *book of wisdom* and *wears a scholar's robes*. It is *poor* in terms of money, but *educated*. It is deeply *impractical*.

Correlations: Horoscopes, schools, scholarship, savants, blights, blindness, inflexibility, secret societies, prophecies

Resplendent Power: Everyone the Sidereal meets assumes that she is an authority on scholarly matters and will instinctively turn to her for advice, answers, and judgment when there is a need for such a thing.

Saturn: The Corpse

The Corpse is the College of ending lives, in both a literal and metaphorical sense. In the ideal, it represents planned endings with grace and dignity. All too often, it is the sign of existences ended in agony and wailing. It is the constellation of the man on his deathbed, the affianced youth, the family moving house, the middle-aged man forced to change professions. It is also the sign of the dragonfly, the butterfly, and other non-amphibious creatures that transform during their life-cycle.

Trappings: The Corpse *wears its best clothes*. It is *calm* and bears the *emblem of a butterfly*. It carries a *textbook* guiding its way, and is *unshod*.

Correlations: Quick and painless deaths, exits, sudden change, transformation, unfinished business, shapechangers, thresholds

Resplendent Power: Once per day, the Sidereal may cite her impending mortality as the grounds for refusal of any social influence she wishes to reject, as though she were citing her Nature. This power resets itself at sunset.

Saturn: The Crow

The Crow is the end of illusions and dreams. It is the College of inevitability, of comfort in death, morbid humor, and the heroism of forlorn hope. It is also, of course, the rush to death disguised as acceptance, false bravado lurking behind the skull mask of the Calibration dancer, and indifference to the suffering of others. It is the constellation of the ancestors and the ancestor cult, of the young widow and the old man. It is the sign of death by old age.

Trappings: The Crow wears *black feathers* and a *black cloak*. It is *morbidly humorous, clever, and attracted to shiny objects*.

Correlations: Slow and painless deaths, inevitability, ancestors, widows and orphans, acceptance of death, dark humor, depression, waking, indifference

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal may eat the eye of a corpse to see the last scene the deceased saw. She instinctively knows if the individual left behind a ghost or hungry ghost. She may also, once per story, use a simple action to transform into a crow for up to 24 hours. She can reflexively turn back into herself prematurely at any time.

Saturn: The Haywain

The Haywain is the constellation of ambiguous endings. It is the sign of gradual decline, the failure of systems with indistinct boundaries. It overlooks the broken Circle, the faltering alliance, the deteriorating government, and the troubled family. With luck, the ruin gives way to new growth, but without it the result is placid stasis or bucolic decay. This is the College of death by sorcery, divinity and senescent senility, and is the sign of the Dragon-Blooded retiree.

Trappings: The Haywain wears *disheveled robes* and an *informal attitude*. It is *hard of hearing, arrogant, and demands bribes*.

Correlations: Muddled and difficult to categorize deaths, mystery, cover-ups, treachery, comebacks, aging and decrepitude

Resplendent Power: The Sidereal may tell simply by walking into the front door of one of its offices or holdings whether an organization, bureau, or business is “wholly corrupt,” “mostly corrupt,” “somewhat corrupt,” “mostly honest,” or “totally honest.” Only one of those five answers will be given, with no further nuance or indication if any given specific individual is

part of any present corruption or to what degree. Also once per story, the Sidereal may contemplate a misdeed she is about to commit and determine whether, if she commits it right now, she “will not,” “may possibly,” or “is certain to” receive negative official scrutiny as a result.

Saturn: The Rising Smoke

The Rising Smoke signifies the end of journeys, metaphorical and otherwise: it is the College of the young man, the journeyman, the corpse on its way to burial, the pubescent Dynast who has not yet Exalted and those up on charges or entangled in lawsuits. It may be hoped that these journeys end in transformation to a new state, but in its darker facets it is the constellation of bootless errands and death by accident, heart attack, stroke, and murder. Heretics in the Realm often take terrible risks to make offerings to this constellation upon the death of a loved one, asking for his Exaltation in the next life. The pattern spiders take no heed.

Trappings: The Rising Smoke carries *good luck prayer strips*, a *purse of money from its teacher* and *brand new journeyman’s equipment*. It is *optimistic* and *naïve*.

Correlations: Quick and painful deaths, rest, stagnation, growth, chance, new employment, fresh prospects, murder

Resplendent Power: Once per story, the Sidereal may touch someone and, by the terms of her surrender pact, set the silent wind Adorjan upon them. This wind blows forth from the demon city, assaulting the target for the next three rounds. They are subjected to the Silent Wind of Hell hazard (see p. XX) during that time.

Saturn: The Sword

The Sword is the College of the end of hope. In its better moments, these hopes and dreams are realized. However, this is not the constellation of fulfillment, but rather the realization that now the individual must carry on without the assistance of that hope. In its bleaker facets, hopes and dreams wither and die, and so this is the sign of the crushed, the broken, and the worn-down. It is the College of the salesman, the has-been, the virgin, the ghost and the pregnant woman. It is the constellation of death after prolonged suffering and illness.

Trappings: The Sword is *worn out*. It carries or wears a *withered flower*, and dresses in *burial cerements*. It is *unshod*. It *weeps but cannot be consoled*.

Correlations: Slow and painful deaths, perseverance, failure, illness, tribulation, inheritance, resignation, the vanquished

Resplendent Power: Merely by seeing a Martial Arts style used, the Sidereal is considered to have studied it under a tutor and can now learn it herself.

Special Rules for Sidereals

In addition to the rules that normally govern the Exalted, Sidereals have a few special rules and features.

The Great Curse

Living with true comprehension of the flow of time and causality around her grants Sidereals a certain natural arrogance, which the curse of the dying Primordials crystallizes into hubris. Others do not share a Sidereal’s perspective of the world, and thus cannot be trusted to

understand or act appropriately upon the knowledge she gains from that perspective. As a result, Sidereals grow secretive and close-mouthed around outsiders, believing that it would be a waste of time to explain the deeper nuances of things, and possibly a liability as others act upon information they cannot comprehend. A Sidereal must succeed at a difficulty 9 Willpower roll to bring a non-Sidereal into her confidence when pursuing a mission, acting in response to information she has gleaned through her Charms, or coordinating with the movements of destiny set in motion by her Charms and Sidereal Astrology. Much more often, a Sidereal simply acts without explaining herself, or dispenses information without bothering to explain where she got it or why it should be regarded as reliable. She gets results; isn't that enough?

When they gather together and work in groups, the Great Curse exacerbates this tendency. If there are more than five Sidereals in a room, a Sidereal must succeed at the same difficulty 9 Willpower roll to credit that another member of the Fivescore Fellowship might have any insights into the workings of destiny that would be of value to her. Otherwise, she retreats into stubborn myopia and shuts out potentially useful insights or perspectives for the crime of not being her own.

Sidereal Anima Flare

A Sidereal's anima is a quieter and subtler affair than that of other Exalted. One round per scene, a Sidereal may spend Motes at her anima-flare limit and only manifest her caste mark rather than producing a full anima display. The caste mark glows, but does not shine bright enough to burn through something placed over it such as a hood, turban, headband, or headdress. If she exceeds her normal Mote limit a second time in the same scene, her anima appears as a softly burning halo around her, as it would for other Exalts.

Arcane Fate

In the wake of the Solar Purge, the Bronze Faction undertook a daring series of powerful supernatural rituals to erase all evidence of the Sidereal Exalted from the histories of the Realm and the memories of the common folk, damaging the constellation of the Mask in the process. This supernatural obscurity shrouds the Sidereals to this day, a phenomenon known as Arcane Fate.

Anyone who meets a Sidereal subsequently has great difficulty recalling that they did so; or if they *must* remember (after all, *someone* surely stabbed them and left them bleeding out by the side of the road), then they cannot recall any distinguishing features: they were stabbed by an old man... or... possibly a young woman? Their hair, in any case, was surely red. Or, no, were they just wearing a red hat? Actually, was it red at all? It might have been brown. Likewise, records of their likeness and evidence of their presence tends to get lost or to disappear.

Protagonists trying to remember identifying details about a Sidereal must succeed at a difficulty 9 Intelligence + (Empathy or Investigation) roll to do so. The more successes rolled, the more details they can accurately recall. Antagonists can roll Willpower, but should generally simply be portrayed as forgetting the Sidereal in short order unless they are exceptionally powerful or strong-willed.

Characters have no trouble dealing with a Sidereal when she is present; it is only once she leaves the scene and has been gone for a while that the Arcane Fate creeps in and begins to go to work. Other Sidereals are immune to Arcane Fate, as are Getimian Exalted, gods employed by the Bureau of Destiny, extremely powerful demons, and the Yozis. Individuals who spend a very

great deal of time around a Sidereal slowly build up a tolerance to the Arcane Fate, and so it may be defeated by repeated exposure, allowing Sidereals — with some diligence — to build up lasting relationships with particular gods outside the Bureau of Destiny, Solars or Dragon-Blooded they are mentoring, and even mortals they are fond of.

Guising

The Arcane Fate also means that a Sidereal's identity is slippery. She may present herself as something she is not with great ease, a practice known as *guising*. Nearly all Larceny actions a Sidereal takes to disguise herself are made at difficulty 3, no matter how half-hearted the deception or how inadequate the Sidereal's resources. A naked female Sidereal in the men's side of a bathhouse could pass herself off as a man using nothing more than strategic placement of shadows, body language, and perhaps a towel.

Guising only applies to attempts to masquerade as *something* the Sidereal is not, rather than *someone* she is not. If she wants to pretend to be a generic criminal that she made up, it is easy; if she wants to impersonate a specific crime lord who really exists, she must roll against the same difficulty any other character would.

Fated Effects

Sidereal magic frequently afflicts targets with curses or blessings which overwhelm the course of their lives without an obvious vector for defense such as blocking a punch. These are noted as Fated Effects. Fated Effects may be defended against by the Solar Charm: Chaos-Repelling Pattern and similar Charms and effects available to other sorts of characters.

Sidereal Astrology

Mortal astrologers look up at the starry vault of the night sky and, from its alignments and movements, divine hints at what the future holds. This not how the astrology of the Sidereal Exalted functions. Sidereal Astrology is the unique privilege, irrevocably encoded into each Sidereal's very Exaltation, to demand on-the-fly amendments to destiny. Sidereals do not *read* the future, they *write* the future.

Sidereal astrology has three requirements: a plan, a petition, and authorization.

Securing Authorization

Authorization is the simplest facet of Sidereal Astrology. The Sidereal must be initiated into a College dealing with the sort of destiny she wishes to create. If she wanted to afflict a village with a fearsome plague, she would need to make a petition to the College of the Sword, whereas if she wished to see it consumed with a crisis of opium addiction, she would need to be initiated into the College of the Musician.

Crafting the Destiny

When a Sidereal deploys Sidereal Astrology, she is asking Creation to produce a narrative on her behalf. The pattern spiders cannot control the minds of ensouled beings to bring about the Sidereal's petition; instead, they wield the forces of causality to orchestrate the outcome the Sidereal has requested.

If a Sidereal makes the petition: "Oh spiders of the College of the Ewer, please make Ragara Tiset and V'neef Nawar fall in love with one another," her Sidereal Astrology cannot force the two characters to fall in love, but it can ensure that they keep meeting one another under

romantic circumstances. If the Sidereal wishes to nudge the odds any further herself, she must take a personal hand to act as matchmaker.

Likewise, Sidereal Astrology cannot simply strike someone dead, but it can arrange for him to encounter dangerous circumstances. It is not, in short, a means for single-handedly resolving problems, but rather a tool to help stack the odds in the Sidereal's favor and to ensure that the circumstances will align as she needs them to, when she needs them to, and where she needs them to, that she might personally capitalize on them to maximum effect.

Sidereal Astrology is excellent at shoving mortals around and capturing them in webs of serendipity and circumstance, but less useful for constraining or corralling supernatural beings such as the Exalted. "Oh spiders of the College of the Peacock, please keep Arianna tied up in Nexus until the coming of spring." Circumstances will do their best to pile pressing local business onto Arianna's plate, probably routed through obligations to her Circle, but they cannot stop her from summoning the Stormwind Rider and setting out for Thorns if that is her plan; at best, they can besiege her with reasons, great or small, to return to Nexus, which she may put off or ignore if she desires, or place obstacles in her path to discourage her progress, which she will probably overcome with trivial ease thanks to her Exalted might.

Competing and Canceling Astrology

A being can only be subject to a single instance of Sidereal Astrology at a time. If subjected to another astrological influence, the one originating with the character with the higher Essence takes priority. If both have the same rating, then they roll Essence ratings against one another to determine which is more auspicious.

Sidereals cannot voluntarily revoke an Astrological destiny before it has run its course. The Bureau of Destiny *is* able to cancel an Astrology-forged destiny through the submission of a great deal of formal paperwork directly countersigned by one of the Maidens, and may be forced to in the case of a broad-scope long-duration poorly-aimed death curse run amok. This is the definition of "breaking the one law of Yu-Shan by pissing off important and powerful gods by wasting their time," and young Sidereals are extensively cautioned to be conservative with their Sidereal Astrology to avoid this result.

Making the Petition

Ultimately, a Sidereal Astrology petition is a prayer to the pattern spiders. This is, by default, a Charisma + (Linguistics or Performance) roll against difficulty 7 (6 if the College is part of her Maiden's house), but it may be modified fairly extensively with a bit of footwork, adding extra dice to the prayer roll. A Sidereal may undertake the following actions to enhance a Sidereal Astrology roll:

- **Compute Horoscopes (+2 dice):** The Sidereal spends one night consulting the stars to better orient her petition with existing trends in the local design of fate and destiny, and succeeds at a difficulty 7 (Intelligence + Occult) roll, or, if she has the Mystic (Astrology) Background, a difficulty 6 (Intelligence + Astrology) roll.
- **Ritual Trappings (+2 dice):** The Sidereal spends three days before making her prayer wearing the trappings of the constellation.

• **Formal Prayer (+1 die):** The Sidereal spends an hour formally writing out the prayer on a fine strip of silk using excellent calligraphy, and succeeds at a difficulty 8 (Dexterity + Linguistics) roll.

• **Cosignatories (+1 die each):** If the Sidereal drew up a formal prayer strip, it may be cosigned by certain other supernatural beings with a successful difficulty 6 (Dexterity + Linguistics) roll on their part. The prayer roll gains one bonus die for each of the following that cosigns the prayer: one Sidereal of each of the four other Castes; up to (Essence rating) other Sidereals who are initiated into the College being petitioned; one Solar Exalt; one Lunar Exalt; one Exigent.

• **Countersignature (+3 dice):** If the Sidereal drew up a formal prayer strip, it may be countersigned by a god. Petitioning the divine head of the division of the Bureau of Destiny which will process the resulting Sidereal Astrology requires a successful six-hour long prayer (Charisma + Linguistics or Performance at difficulty 8, or 7 if the god is the Sidereal's own boss), at which point the petition is subjected to divine scrutiny and generally approved unless the god has some pressing reason not to. This grants three bonus dice. If the Sidereal doesn't wish to subject herself to official scrutiny, she may attempt to cajole, bribe, or strongarm some other god into countersigning. This grants a number of bonus dice equal to the god's Essence rating.

• **Lengthy Prayer (+1 die):** If the Sidereal spends at least 12 hours in the act of making the final, formal prayer to enact the astrology, she adds one bonus die.

Creating the Effect

The successes gained on the prayer roll must now be spent to create the Astrological effect. Characters are *not* required to use all the successes they roll, and it's often a bad idea to do so, as particularly overwhelming Sidereal Astrology badly strains the fabric of destiny and contributes to the buildup of Paradox in the Sidereal's own Essence.

Characters must spend successes to purchase an Astrology effect's *Scope*, *Duration*, and *Intensity*.

Scope

Scope determines how widespread the Sidereal's requested destiny is. How many people does it sweep up in its net? How wide is its focus? It's much easier to try to push two people into a rivalry than it is to impose a particular destiny on an entire city.

In addition to spending to determine how far the effect can spread, the Sidereal must also specify who she wishes it to affect. This can be very specific ("these two characters") or somewhat bounded ("everyone living in this village"). It can be a floating category that allows people to enter or leave the destiny's area of action ("everyone in this village" vs "everyone living in this village;" one is restricted to residents, the other will grab anyone who wanders in for as long as they stay). It can even be open-ended and catastrophically ill-advised ("everyone who plots against me," and good luck dealing with the fallout when that tries to land on the Bureau of Destiny's Convention on Essence-Users next time they start doing scenario modeling to account for destinies in which it would be possible for you to suffer various common misfortunes).

Successes Spent Effect

0 One individual is affected, though the effect is sloppy and may disrupt the destinies around him. If he becomes an invalid target for the destiny, it will go looking for someone else who fits its criteria for as long as its duration lasts.

1 If this is all the Sidereal spends, then one individual and one individual *alone* is affected. The narrative is intelligent and minimizes disruptions outside of its focus, and will not “travel” if the original target becomes invalid. If only one success is spent on Scope, it is not counted toward the eventual Paradox pool.

2 Small group (up to 10 people).

3 Hamlet (up to 25 people).

4 Village (up to 100 people).

5 Town or neighborhood (up to 1,000 people).

6 City (up to 10,000 people).

7 Principality or prefecture (up to 100,000 people).

8 Kingdom or dominion (up to 1,000,000 people).

9 Local region (up to 10,000,000 people).

10 Astrological direction (up to 100,000,000 people).

Double If the Sidereal spent two or more successes on Scope, she may pay that many successes again to place additional, specific constraints on the group of individuals it will interact with and to minimize its disruption outside the scope of the destiny (“All redheaded members of the Guild in Nexus” vs “everyone in Nexus”). These extra successes don’t count toward the eventual Paradox pool.

Duration

Duration determines how long the destiny keeps trying to fulfill itself. The Bureau of Destiny strongly frowns on over-scoping the duration of Sidereal Astrology, as each such effect is an ongoing inflexibility in the pattern of destiny and the fabric of fate that makes the entire Bureau’s job that much harder, and ties up the pattern spiders weaving custom-tailored fate to serve it before they can attend to the rest of their daily work. Sidereals are encouraged to get in, get the job done, and let their effects lapse.

Successes Spent

Effect

0 The destiny persists for a month.

1 The destiny persists for a season.

2 The destiny persists for a year.

3 The destiny persists for 10 years.

4 The destiny persists for 20 years.

5 The destiny persists for 60 years (unto the third generation).

6 The destiny persists for 140 years (unto the seventh generation).

7 The destiny persists for 260 years (unto the 13th generation).

- 8 The destiny persists for 600 years (unto the 30th generation).
- 9 The destiny persists for 1,000 years (unto the 50th generation).
- 10 The destiny persists for 2,000 years (unto the 100th generation).

Intensity

Finally, how pushy is the destiny about imposing its narrative on the lives of those under its power? Intensity is the difference between “a run of good or bad luck” and what comes to seem like an intelligent supernatural blessing or curse dogging the character’s every footstep.

Successes Spent

Effect

- 1 The destiny is subtle. It only really intrudes on its targets about once a week.
- 3 The destiny is overt. It tries to shape things to suit the Sidereal’s desire on a near-daily basis.
- 5 The destiny is aggressive. It manifests itself at least once in nearly every scene.
- 8 The destiny is relentless. It impresses itself at every opportunity it can.

Deploying Astrology

While it would be nice if a Sidereal could reshape history from the comfort of her office in Yu-Shan, this is not the case. Once her petition has succeeded and she has crafted the Astrology she wishes to unleash, the Sidereal must either *touch one of the individuals the Astrology is meant to affect*, or must *journey to the location it is meant to be inflicted upon*. Only then does it begin to go to work.

Sidereal Astrology is a Fated Effect.

The Paradox Pool

After building and unleashing a destiny with Sidereal Astrology, total up the successes spent to create its effects. (*Not* successes rolled, successes *spent*; this is why it’s a good idea not to burn successes just because you have them.) Roll this as its own dice pool against difficulty 6. For each success, gain one point of Paradox (see below). This roll can’t botch.

The Limits of Sidereal Astrology

You can *ask* for any sort of destiny when you’re making a petition with Sidereal Astrology, which begs the question: What can it actually do? The answer is that Sidereal Astrology can implement a powerful bias to the currents of causality, but not rewrite its fundamental tenets. It is, in short, constrained to only employing events which are possible and generally tries to confine itself to the plausible as well. Thus, the petition “Oh spiders of the College of the Ship’s Wheel, root out and destroy the merchant dynasty of Lingar Yhin” could cause an unfavorable audit of his accounts by the Guild, or his caravans to be attacked by wild animals, or his servants to fall sick, or his ships to be dogged by storms, but it could not simply cause the man and his holdings to spontaneously burst into flames.

Additionally, Sidereal Astrology cannot override the free will of individual actors. As a result, while it is certainly possible to say “Oh spiders of the College of the Crow, please make Mnemon kill herself,” she will not be compelled to pick up a knife and open her own throat. This destiny can cause the circumstances of her life to give her reasons to despair, or arrange for her to meet an Abyssal suicide advocate, but that’s about all it can do. If she has thoughts of futility or anxiety, the astrology can assure there are means of self-harm readily to hand. But it cannot make her use them, and is *very* likely to fail in its goal.

In particular, Sidereal Astrology performs poorly when aimed at Exalts or gods as a blunt weapon, as they are generally mighty enough to overcome whatever challenges happenstance puts in their way, and many possess Charms such as Chaos-Repelling Pattern which permit them to deflect hostile destinies completely. In the end, the Sidereal Exalted themselves are destiny’s foremost weapons, not the Sidereal Astrology they wield.

Paradox and Pattern Shock

Sidereal Astrology demands sudden extreme amendments to the details of history and the flows of causality. This would normally place tremendous strain upon the fabric of fate, but because these changes are authorized by a writ intrinsic to the Sidereal’s Exaltation, the resulting damage to the structural integrity of reality is instead localized into her own Essence pattern. This accumulated tension is known as Paradox.

Each Sidereal has a Paradox track, which runs from 0 to 10 points. Paradox is gained from the use of Sidereal Astrology and from breaking character while wearing a Resplendent Destiny, or from prematurely destroying a Resplendent Destiny.

Once a Sidereal’s Paradox track reaches 10 points, she suffers *Pattern Shock* and the track empties. The accumulated Paradox within her Essence discharges violently, injuring the fabric of her body, spirit, or destiny in some way. The Storyteller rolls a single die and consults the following list to determine what happens:

- 1. Power-Neutralizing Curse:** The Sidereal loses all of her Motes and does not regain any Motes when the sun next sets.
- 2. Blunted Mind Curse:** The Sidereal loses all of her Willpower points.
- 3. Burning Muscle Curse:** The Sidereal suffers a –3 Wound penalty for the next 1-10 scenes, which cannot be negated by any means.
- 4. Divine Anesthetic Curse:** The Sidereal’s Essence rating is reduced by –1 for the next 1-10 scenes. If the Sidereal is Essence 1, ignore this result and roll again.
- 5. Resolve-Decaying Curse:** The Sidereal can gain no positive advantage from her Intimacies for the rest of the story.
- 6. Essence-Weeping Curse:** The Sidereal bleeds away 1 Mote at the beginning of each scene for the next 1-10 scenes.
- 7. Visage-Twisting Curse:** The Sidereal’s Appearance is reduced to 0 for the next 1-10 scenes.

8. Black Voyage Curse: The Sidereal falls into a nightmare-tortured slumber and cannot be awakened by any means for the next 1-10 days. She does not regain Willpower upon awakening.

9. Dissolving Essence Curse: The Sidereal suffers a one-time hazard with difficulty 7, damage (1-10, roll to determine), drained, Aggravated.

10. Dead Spouse Curse: Some living mortal or animal the Sidereal loves dies horribly. If the Sidereal does not love anyone who fits this description, the curse lies in wait until such love finally blossoms in her heart, then slays its object. This is the only Pattern Shock that one can become immune to through repeated exposure.

Any curse measured in scenes is only concerned with scenes that are actually played out at the table, not scenes abstracted away without engagement.

Reducing Paradox

Sidereals have three means of reducing the accumulated build-up of Paradox within themselves.

The first is to simply wait. Over time, the tension within their Essence safely disperses into the rest of the greater fabric of Creation. At the end of each cycle (every three months), the Sidereal loses one point of Paradox. This is generally inadequate to keep up with the rate at which Sidereals accumulate the stuff.

The second is to amend flaws in destiny's design. When the Sidereal successfully completes a mission to resolve a causality error from the Bureau of Destiny, she may discard one point of Paradox for a tangled destiny, two for an opposed destiny, three for a major destiny, or four for a legendary destiny (see p. XX). This is a much more effective means of dispersing Paradox, but the rate at which Sidereals are assigned missions is highly unpredictable.

The third is through a special prayer known as the Wrapped Fly Ritual. The Sidereal sacrifices a gift of her time and activity to the pattern spiders, remaining completely idle and motionless for 25 hours, during which time the spiders are able to devote additional effort to weaving fate that needs not account for the highly dynamic actions of the Sidereal. She must then spend eight hours laboring to pen a prayer strip with flawless calligraphy exemplifying one of the seven verses that the pattern spiders enjoy most: a difficulty 7 (Dexterity + Linguistics) roll. If this succeeds, she must then make a difficulty 7 Charisma + (Linguistics or Performance) roll while burning the prayer strip, accompanied by spending a point of Willpower. Success on this roll causes her to lose one point of Paradox.

Resplendent Destinies

Sidereals soon learn that destiny moves in comfortable courses, and that for every unique and world-changing destiny, there are countless soldiers or fishermen whose destiny is simply to be a soldier or fisherman. With just a bit of practice, a Sidereal can learn to wear one of these "template" destinies like a cloak. This is called a Resplendent Destiny.

When a Sidereal wears a Resplendent Destiny, nobody can recognize her for who she truly is. Instead they instinctively see a sailor, a soldier, a priest, or whatever else the Sidereal is masquerading as, plus any embellishments she's added such as a name or more specific job ("Silver Morning, monk of the Immaculate Order" rather than a generic "priest").

Creating a Resplendent Destiny is an act of Sidereal Astrology, and as such requires a successful prayer to the spiders of the College governing the sort of destiny the Sidereal wishes to construct

for herself. Resplendent Destinies don't have Intensity, and must spend the Sidereal's current Essence rating in successes on Scope. Otherwise, their only concern is Duration.

A Sidereal may harbor a number of simultaneous Resplendent Destinies equal to (1 + her Essence rating). If she wishes to do away with an old Resplendent Destiny before its duration elapses, she may do so by using a simple action and accepting one point of Paradox.

A Sidereal's Arcane Fate does *not* apply to a Resplendent Destiny while it persists, regardless of whether she's actively wearing it or not. People have no difficulty remembering it, and Sidereals can wear the same particular Resplendent Destiny again and again if they wish to. However, once it is permanently discarded (either by accepting Paradox to prematurely shred it, or because its Duration elapses), the identity attached to that specific Resplendent Destiny is gone for good, and the Arcane Fate swallows people's memories of it.

Donning a False Destiny

After creating a Resplendent Destiny, it hangs in potential as a note appended to the Sidereal's destiny, which she may draw about her with a simple action and the expenditure of 1 Willpower.

While wearing a Resplendent Destiny, the Sidereal gives off the "vibe" of being whatever she is masquerading as, but may still be recognized as herself unless she assumes a disguise. The power of guising means that even the most half-assed and perfunctory disguise is incredibly effective; the difficulty to prepare a disguise with (Manipulation or Wits + Larceny) is always 3, even if the Sidereal does nothing more than to don at least two of the trappings of her Resplendent Destiny.

If she "breaks character," then her Resplendent Destiny cracks and others can potentially see through it (such as if a stern drill sergeant expresses concern for someone's feelings). At that point, anyone who notices the lapse can roll (Perception + Awareness) against difficulty 9 (or 6, if the Sidereal isn't disguised) to realize who the Sidereal is (or at least that she's not who she seems to be). Otherwise, so long as she stays in character, the Sidereal's disguise is infallible.

It's worth noting that this "disguise" doesn't have to be in *any* way intuitively convincing: an enormous musclebound Sidereal man can don the Resplendent Destiny of a "caring mother" and that's the identity people will read from his presence, papering over any inconsistencies in their minds. He needs only to raise the pitch of his voice slightly or alter his body language a bit to achieve this effect.

A Sidereal can't don a false destiny while being observed by anyone other than fellow Sidereals, and other Sidereals can always see through another of their kind's false destinies. In fact, while they know when they observe another Sidereal wearing a Resplendent Destiny, they have no idea what others are seeing the Exalt as, and must guess from his behavior and trappings.

To put aside a Resplendent Destiny requires only a simple action. Flaring her anima also causes a Sidereal's Resplendent Destiny to automatically deactivate.

Resplendent Destiny Powers

Each College carries with it a special power that the Sidereal may take advantage of while actively wearing any Resplendent Destiny crafted under its auspices.

Alternately, a Sidereal may reflexively accept 1 Paradox to gain access to the Resplendent Power of one of her extant-but-inactive Resplendent Destinies for the rest of the current scene.

Resplendent Destinies and Paradox

A Sidereal must make a Paradox roll after crafting a Resplendent Destiny, as with any other use of Sidereal Astrology. Also as with any other use of Sidereal Astrology, she's not required to use up all of her successes on the prayer roll if she accumulates more than she needs.

Donning and removing Resplendent Destinies doesn't generate more Paradox, but breaking character does. At the end of any scene where the Sidereal commits any of the following offenses, tally up the total dice earned and roll them against difficulty 6. The number of resulting successes is the number of points of Paradox she earns;

Dice Gained Offense

- +1 Every out-of-character act.
- +1 At the end of every month lived in an area where the Sidereal has used 10 or more Resplendent Destinies within the last decade.
- +3 The Sidereal's anima flares while wearing a Resplendent Destiny.
- +1 Someone who knows the Exalt's true identity becomes confused about who she is while meeting her when she's wearing a Resplendent Destiny.
- +2 Someone who knows another of the Exalt's Resplendent Destinies becomes confused about who she is while meeting her wearing a different Resplendent Destiny.
- +1 ...and they conclude she's one Resplendent Destiny imitating another.
- +2 ...and they conclude she's a supernatural being disguising her identity with magic.

The Greater Signs

As a Sidereal's Essence grows potent, her Exaltation unlocks a latent authorization to use the great destiny-editing signs of the Maidens themselves. The Greater Signs demand a great price, they also offer incredible power that may be wielded in a crucial moment to pivot the course of history.

To wield one of the Greater Signs, a Sidereal must be of the appropriate Caste, have an Essence rating of at least 4, and have achieved initiation into all five Colleges of her Maiden's house.

The Greater Sign of Mercury

The Chosen of Journeys reduces her maximum Essence rating by -5 for the rest of the story and uses a simple action to make the Greater Sign of Mercury. She and all allies within (Essence rating) miles are instantly teleported to a point of her choosing anywhere in Creation or Heaven save for inside the Jade Pleasure Dome.

The Greater Sign of Venus

The Chosen of Serenity reduces her maximum Essence rating by -5 for the rest of the story and uses a simple action to make the Greater Sign of Venus. All ongoing magic that is not Solar Circle Sorcery, a direct miracle of one of the Incarnae, or a permanent mystical enhancement such as Ox-Body Technique are immediately snuffed out. This includes ongoing Terrestrial and Celestial Circle spells and sorcerous workings, Charms, Sidereal Astrology, artifact powers, and other magical effects. This effect extends out a number of miles equal to the Sidereal's Essence. Enchantments and

workings stilled by this Sign do not re-establish themselves, and must be manually reactivated, repaired, or replaced.

The Greater Sign of Mars

The Chosen of Battles reduces her maximum Essence rating by –5 for the rest of the story and uses a simple action to make the Greater Sign of Mars. For the next 24 hours, no attack directed against the Sidereal or any of her allies within (Essence rating) miles is capable of inflicting more than (attacker’s Essence rating) levels of damage, no matter how many successes are rolled. This damage cap occurs before soak is rolled or applied.

The Greater Sign of Jupiter

The Chosen of Secrets reduces her maximum Essence rating by –5 for the rest of the story and uses a simple action to make the Greater Sign of Jupiter. The Sidereal makes a (Wits + Lore) roll against difficulty 6. She may edit the memories of everyone within (Essence) rating miles, deleting specific memories of her choosing that were formed up to (successes rolled) days ago. She may remove memories in whole (including inducing a total blank-out over the whole affected time period) or may omit only certain details from them (such that individuals would remember going to market, but not witnessing a Solar battle the Wyld Hunt through the middle of it), as she chooses.

The Greater Sign of Saturn

The Chosen of Endings reduces her maximum Essence rating by –5 for the rest of the story and uses a simple action to make the Greater Sign of Saturn. For the next 24 hours, all of the attacks made by the Sidereal and her allies within (Essence rating) miles convert all of their damage dice into automatic successes.

Sidereal Charms

These are the miracles by which the Sidereal Exalted reweave the destiny of Creation.

General Sidereal Charms

The following Charms count as Caste Charms for all Sidereals.

Excellence of the Starry Vault (•)

By channeling the latent power of untapped destiny through herself, the Sidereal fortifies herself with godlike power.

System: Select one Ability when activating this Charm. The player may add the Sidereal’s Essence rating in additional dice to all rolls using this Ability, save for damage rolls. Activating this Charm is reflexive, and costs 1 Mote if enhancing a Caste or Favored Ability, or 2 Motes for any other Ability.

Excellence of the Starry Vault lasts until the end of the round. **Sidereals begin play with this Charm.**

Weaving the Threads (•)

By manipulating the threads of fate to produce the most favorable possible outcome, the Sidereal makes the impossible almost assured.

System: Select one Ability when activating this Charm. The player may lower the difficulty of all actions using this Ability by -2 , save for damage rolls. Activating this Charm is reflexive, and costs 1 Mote if enhancing a Caste or Favored Ability, or 2 Motes for any other Ability.

Weaving the Threads lasts until the end of the round. **Sidereals begin play with this Charm.**

Auspicious Prospects (•)

All Sidereals are intrinsically attuned to the vibrations of destiny, able to pluck guiding omens from the patterns of the world around them: the color of a messenger boy's shoes; the alignment of clouds and tree branches and a passing flock of birds; a child's nursery rhyme heard at a certain moment. Any of these things might carry a freight of meaning for the Chosen, speaking to her of destiny's needs. Should she see to them, she furthers the health of the fabric of Creation.

The Great Prophecy that brought about the Solar Purge and ended the First Age was initiated due to dire portents delivered by this Charm, warning the Fivescore Fellowship that they needed to gather and examine the future's course to avert certain calamity.

System: Once per session, the Sidereal may use a swift or simple action and roll (Wits + Occult) against difficulty 7. Success allows her to ask the Storyteller one question from her caste list, which they must answer to the best of their ability.

Chosen of Journeys may ask the following:

- Where should I go next?
- Where, if anywhere, does [a person or object other than the Sidereal] need to go?

Chosen of Serenity may ask the following:

- Who here needs my help?
- What do I need to bring into this person's life?

Chosen of Battles may ask the following:

- Should I escalate or de-escalate this situation?
- Which side of this conflict should triumph?

Chosen of Secrets may ask the following:

- Should this information be buried, or brought to light?
- Who here, if anyone, has a secret that needs to be revealed?

Chosen of Endings may ask the following:

- What here, if anything, needs to be brought to an end?
- What here, if anything, must not yet be allowed to come to an end?

If the Sidereal brings about the result that destiny asks of her, she discards one point of Paradox.

Additionally, sometimes destiny doesn't wait for the Sidereal to consult it. The Storyteller may also, at any time of their choosing, simply tell the player that the omens are gathering and they recognize the hand of destiny at work: that they realize a great journey awaits the person that has just brought them their tea, or that a terrible and destructive secret is going to come to light if

they do not travel to Chiaroscuro with all speed, for example. A Sidereal will only ever receive omens according with her Caste in this fashion. If she heeds the omen and acts as destiny bids, she gains 1 Willpower as though she had affirmed her Nature.

All Sidereals begin play with this Charm for free.

Journeys Charms

These Charms deal with travel, enduring hardship, dealing with the natural world, ranged combat, using people as a means to an end, and familiars.

Adopting the Untamed Face (•)

Resonance: Survival

The Sidereal learns to bend the fate that processes all that is wild, untamed, and savage around herself as a protective weave, aiding her in dealing with feral beasts.

System: Whenever the Sidereal hunts, battles, befriends, tricks, tracks, or hides from any wild beast, animalistic elemental, or one of the Lunar Exalted, the difficulty of all of her actions is reduced by -1. At the Storyteller's discretion, this Charm may also assist against certain wilderness or beast-associated Exigents as well.

Dreaming the Wild Lands (•)

Resonance: Survival

Mirroring her Essence to the land, the Sidereal rewrites the wilderness to suit her design. She may shift the elevation of hills, subtly bend the curve of rivers, and move trees about in any way that suits her. Wild animals also become furious or docile at her command.

System: Use a simple action and spend 2 Motes. For the next (Essence rating) days, the Sidereal may reshape the landscape of any untamed wilderness in which she finds herself in whatever fashion suits her by using a simple action and succeeding at a difficulty 6 (Wits + Survival) roll. Man-made elements such as hunting lodges, cabins, or roads are utterly immune to alteration by this Charm.

Echoes of Saffron Footfalls (•)

Resonance: Awareness, Sail, Survival

The Sidereal gains the power of perspective over journeys, able to reveal the journeys of others or twist how others perceive her own.

System: Whenever someone asks the Sidereal "Where are you going?" or some paraphrased variation of that question, she may supply any answer she likes, and they will always believe her unless they know that she is not telling the truth, or unless they gain contradicting information (someone tells them otherwise; they search the Sidereal and find a letter urging her to come to Nexus with all haste; etc), in which case they may make a difficulty 9 Willpower roll to disbelieve her. The Sidereal's answer or behavior being suspicious or implausible is not enough to trigger the roll; only contradictory testimony, physical evidence, or prior knowledge of her plans is sufficient.

Additionally, if the Sidereal poses the same question to anyone, she always knows whether or not the answer they give her is truthful. She is immune to other Sidereals' use of Echoes of Saffron Footfalls.

Flight of Mercury (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Ride

The Sidereal asserts her destiny to travel even in the face of overpowering adversity.

System: If a swift action would be disabled due to the Sidereal being struck before her turn, she may use it anyway up to (Essence rating) times per scene.

Glory Path (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Ride

Essence enwraps the character or her mount in a nimbus of yellow light, speeding her along her path and ensuring no obstacle can stand in her way.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote while running or riding a mount. Until she stops moving, the Sidereal's travel speed is tripled, and she can navigate any obstacle without crash or calamity. The Sidereal can jump chasms, run up the side of buildings, speed over the surface of water, or ride through the densely-packed stalls and foot traffic of Nexus's Little Market without breaking anything or knocking anyone down. She ignores all difficult terrain and is never forced to use complex movement so long as she uses her swift action each round to move.

Ox-Body Technique (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Resistance, Survival

Destiny demands that the Sidereal endure until her appointed hour, and her body obeys.

System: The character increases her maximum Health by +1.

This Charm can be purchased a number of times equal to the higher of the character's Stamina or Resistance ratings.

Pain Amplification Stratagem (•)

Resonance: Empathy, Thrown

The Sidereal touches her weapon to her face, just beneath her eye, and bleeds three drops of blood upon it to symbolize the sorrow she might theoretically feel for the violence she is about to inflict. Her weapon resonates with her targets' pain, becoming unerringly deadly.

System: Use a swift or simple action and spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene or until she is Staggered, whichever comes first, all of the Sidereal's attacks gain Overwhelming at a value equal to their target's current Wound penalty, minimum of (-1).

Righteous Lion Defense (•)

Resonance: Empathy, Sail, Survival

The Sidereal anchors her passions and convictions into the very foundation of destiny. The weave of the world guarantees that her commitments endure.

System: The Exalt may reject or ignore any attempt to cause or force her to betray, undermine, or abandon her Intimacies at no cost and with no penalty.

Salt into Ash Sleight (•)

Resonance: Empathy, Occult, Survival

Clapping her hands, the Sidereal momentarily surrounds someone in a brilliant saffron aura. He suddenly realizes that he has incredibly pressing business elsewhere. This isn't a trick or illusion: there really is an urgent reason for the target to journey elsewhere. This Charm simply calls that fact to mind.

System: The Sidereal uses a simple action and spends 1 Mote, focusing on someone she can perceive within the same sector. Not only does the target remember that he has pressing business elsewhere, but for the rest of the scene, all actions intended to drive the target away or cause him to depart — by *any* character, using *any* means, from persuasion to violence — reduce their difficulty by -1. Attempts to persuade him to go and attend to his business, whatever it is, are always treated as inconveniences.

This is a Fated Effect.

Sky and Rain Mantra (•)

Resonance: Sail, Survival

The Sidereal's fingers find the strings of destiny which control the weather, and bend them to her will.

System: Use a simple action, spend 1 Mote and roll (Stamina + Survival) against difficulty 7. If the Sidereal wishes to calm the weather or produce unseasonable weather within the district where she activates this Charm, she does so for one day per success rolled. If she wishes to produce violent storms which raise the difficulty of all actions attempted by those exposed to them by +1, then the storm lasts for one hour per success rolled and encompasses the district where she uses this Charm.

Sky Spirit Demand (•)

Resonance: Occult, Survival

The Sidereal makes her Essence a mirror of the clouds and wind, reflecting her priorities onto a spirit who represents those things.

System: Use a simple action, spend 1 Mote, and roll (Manipulation + Survival) against difficulty (3 + spirit's Essence rating) when dealing with an air elemental or a god of the wind or sky. Success allows the Sidereal to give the spirit a temporary Intimacy matching one of her own Intimacies for the remainder of the current story.

This is a Fated Effect.

Stone Skipping Spirit (•)

Resonance: Sail

The Sidereal blows into the winds of fate, stirring them in favor of a particular ship's voyage.

System: The Sidereal spends 2 Motes while focusing on a particular ship that she can see, uses a simple action, and rolls (Wits + Sail) against difficulty 5. For a number of days equal to the successes rolled, that ship enjoys fair conditions, calm seas, and untroubled sailing. All Sail rolls to navigate, maneuver, operate, and guide the vessel are made at difficulty 6 unless they would naturally be lower, even if attempting to steer through a treacherous reef in the midst of a hurricane. If the ship was already taking on water when this Charm was used, it ceases to sink until the Charm elapses.

Unswerving Juggernaut Principle (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Resistance, Ride

Yellow stardust cascades around the Sidereal and glitters in her footsteps. So long as she moves forward without stopping, she is inexhaustible.

System: So long as she keeps running or riding in a more or less straight line, the Sidereal is tireless. She needs not eat, sleep, or rest. She gains +2 Soak while running all-out in this fashion, beginning after two rounds of constant acceleration, and being struck before her turn once this Soak has manifested does not disable her ability to use any swift actions. The difficulty of rolls to escape from pursuit are lowered by -1.

If the cause for the Sidereal's journey ceases to apply (her pursuers have given up; the old man she's trying to retrieve medicine for has died), she becomes instinctively aware of this fact.

Becoming the Wilderness (••)

Resonance: Survival

The Sidereal devises and oversees an intensive training regimen for a small group of students in which she weaves a challenging ordeal of wilderness survival from the threads of destiny. Those who come through the training are vastly empowered by her tutelage, wise in the ways of journeys and meeting dread necessity.

System: The Sidereal spends an entire night consulting the stars, and then an entire day weaving a customized training scenario into the fabric of destiny, and spends 5 Motes, 1 Willpower. She must then, within the next seven days, use simple actions to touch each student she wishes to put through the training, spending 1 Mote per student. Students need not consent to this training or realize they are undergoing it. The Sidereal may train up to (Essence rating) students at a time. Once she has attached all the students she wishes to train to the destiny she's woven, the Charm takes effect.

If used to train antagonists, the Charm unfolds in a largely narrative fashion, usually occurring over the course of a week, at the end of which they may gain a new appropriate Aptitude chosen from among the following: Athletic displays, delivering messages, overcoming hardship, sailing, throwing attacks, or wilderness survival. Once every other story, if they are Exalted, they can gain a new power relating to one of those Aptitudes.

If used to train protagonists, this Charm either occurs during about a week of downtime, or consumes a session of gameplay, as the group prefers, during which they are drawn into some challenging survival ordeal. If they overcome it, then the next time they spend experience, they may treat up to three of the following as Favored Attributes or Abilities (the Sidereal chooses which when she devises the regimen): Stamina, Perception, Athletics, Linguistics, Martial Arts, Resistance, Ride, Sail, Survival, and Thrown. This discount applies both to buying Ability dots *and* to buying Charms which resonate with those Attributes or Abilities. This Charm cannot provide any benefit again until a protagonist has spent experience points on *something*, and only provides a discount for one purchase (so if the player has enough normal experience points banked to buy an Ability dot, and enough supernal experience points banked to buy a Charm, she could only apply the discount to one or the other, not both).

This is a Fated Effect.

Breaking the Wild Mortal (••)

Resonance: Ride

Deciding to incorporate a mortal into her life, the Sidereal summons a bit made of stardust and sets it into his mouth, linking his destiny to her own.

System: The Sidereal uses a simple action and spends 1 Mote to conjure the bit. Mortals always consent to letting her put it in their mouth, then promptly forget that humiliating experience as it vanishes. Alternately, the Sidereal may use a simple action, spend 1 Mote, and petition Mercury to guide her to a mortal suitable to become part of her life. She may attach one simple descriptor to the sort of mortal she seeks, such as a blacksmith, poet, or a good Gateway player. Her wanderings soon bring her to a suitable individual, who again accepts the stardust bit.

In either case, using this Charm causes the Sidereal to gain a dot of the Acquaintances Background. If the mortal she chooses is not suitable for riding (as most aren't, excepting some Wyld mutants), this Charm's cost increases to 1 Mote, 2 Willpower.

This is a Fated Effect.

Essence Thorn Practice (••)

Resonance: Thrown

The Sidereal draws a yellow Essence-sculpted knife from the armory of destiny. Its fate is to strike its target. She may ride the wind of its passage toward her foe if she likes, the better to deliver a coup-de-grace.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to make a (Dexterity + Thrown) attack, using a nimble conjured weapon with base damage 4 (lacerated). This attack is undodgeable, has a maximum range of (Sidereal's Essence rating) zones, and the Sidereal may reflexively advance one zone in the direction she hurled the weapon if she wishes.

If this weapon strikes one of the Unquiet, who have already passed through the gate of death, it draws them closer to life. Rather than suffering damage, they lose Willpower points equal to the damage they would have suffered had the Essence Thorn been a normal knife. An Unquiet target reduced to 0 Willpower is plunged into disorienting memories, illusions, and hallucinations of life. They can take no actions save to wander about in reverie, defend themselves, or try to escape for the rest of the scene.

Godly Companion (••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy, Ride

The Sidereal petitions Heaven to uplift one of her companions, elevating a Familiar from animal to little god.

System: The Sidereal's familiar becomes a lesser divinity. It becomes intelligent and capable of speaking Old Realm as well as the Sidereal's native language. It has all the standard features of a god, including being naturally dematerialized, and having the ability to use the powers Materialize and Measure the Wind. It gains Essence 2. It may use a simple action to shift between its animal form and a humanoid form with strong animal features.

Heaven registers the Familiar as a small god whose duties are to serve the Sidereal as an assistant. One of its new duties under Heaven is to routinely file reports on the Sidereal's

activities. Although these reports are theoretically vulnerable to interception and inspection, in practice they are generally rushed unopened and unread through the Bureau of Destiny's mail room and forwarded to the august weaver Caturasya, who eats them.

This is a Fated Effect.

Heartless Maiden Trance (••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Sidereal's chest convulses as she swallows her heart. Henceforth she becomes as unfeeling as a stone.

System: Use a simple action and spend 1 Mote. The Sidereal no longer suffers penalties from Wounds, poison, hunger, thirst, disease, fatigue, inclement weather, or temperature. She doesn't need to breathe. She can still be killed, but cannot be rendered unconscious by any means; if incapacitated, she can remain upright and active, although she suffers all the other rules for being incapacitated. So long as she maintains this Charm — and it lasts until she uses a simple action to restore her heart — the Sidereal automatically fails all Empathy rolls, is immune to inspire actions intended to provoke emotional responses, ignores all the effects of her Intimacies, and does not regain Essence when the sun sets.

Mirror Shattering Method (••)

Resonance: Sail

The Sidereal casts salt into a puddle or body of water beneath her. Its surface breaks and dissolves into foaming whitecaps, and the Sidereal vanishes, traveling upon a white field that is, from moment to moment, water, wind-blown flower petals, or butterflies. She travels through paths beyond the normal logic of the world.

System: Use a simple action and spend 3 Motes when either standing upon or above water, or when aboard a ship or other construction upon or above water. If the Sidereal is aboard a ship, this Charm transports it and its passengers along with her. She or her ship travels at twice their normal speed, ignoring restrictions of geography; a ship may sail deep inland under the auspices of this Charm, its presence felt only as a slight stirring in the wind. The Sidereal may travel in this fashion for up to five days before she and her vessel must return to the world (ideally in a place with water if she took a ship with her). Alternately, the Sidereal may steer deep into the field of white for five days in order to arrive somewhere in the waters of Heaven, Hell, or the Underworld.

Unwavering Well-Being Meditation (••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Sidereal's calm certainty in her own destiny becomes a shield which deflects unexpected misfortune.

System: Anyone who strikes at the Sidereal unaware must succeed at a reflexive difficulty 9 Willpower roll, or else treat the Sidereal as though she had 108 Defense and 108 Soak against that unexpected attack.

Willful Weapon Method (••)

Resonance: Thrown

The Sidereal hurls her weapon's shadow. Should it intersect the shadow of an opponent, her weapon vanishes from her hand and reappears, embedded in his chest.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when attacking with a weapon. The attack is unblockable and gains Overwhelming (-2). This attack is compatible with any sort of weapon that doesn't fire ammunition, but is most often employed with thrown weapons since it leaves the Sidereal disarmed if it succeeds.

Yellow Path (••)

Resonance: Athletics, Survival

The shining yellow light of destiny illuminates the fastest — if not most straightforward or safest — path to the Sidereal's destination.

System: The Sidereal fixes a destination firmly in mind. Reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Wits + Survival) against difficulty 6. For one success, the Sidereal finds a path that cuts her travel time in half. For three successes, if the character has a deadline and there is *any* possibility of making it on time, the Sidereal does so; otherwise, it simply cuts her travel time to a quarter. Five successes allow the Sidereal to arrive by the time of her deadline or appointment no matter what. If no such time limit exists, she finds a route that gets her there in a tenth of the normal travel time.

Again, it bears repeating: the shortcuts uncovered by this Charm are guaranteed to be *fast*, but not to be safe or easy to use.

Five Ordeals Odyssey (•••)

Resonance: Sail

The Sidereal conjures forth a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Maiden at Sea and casts it at a hazard or adversarial force that impedes her progress during a journey by water, where it hovers wreathed in dandelion-hued lightning. When she overcomes that particular adversity, the prayer strip detonates and sweeps it away, strengthening the implicit bias of fate and destiny in support of her future success.

System: Spend 2 Motes and use a simple action to summon the prayer strip. This Charm does nothing to overcome the hazard or opposition, but if the Sidereal manages to defeat it, then it violently sweeps all remnants aside: a hurricane is blasted apart leaving clear skies; a pirate ship is shattered into kindling; a sea monster's corpse is incinerated. In the wake of the prayer strip's triumphant destruction, the Sidereal increases her Essence rating by +1 for the rest of the story.

“A journey by water” generally means across the sea, but this Charm also works when traveling by river or across the dead waters of the Underworld. Five Ordeals Odyssey can *only* be utilized if the Sidereal is engaged in purposeful travel; she can't just sail in circles looking for trouble to power herself up with.

This Charm may also be used on land if the Sidereal can arrange some symbolic trapping of a journey by sea, such as standing upon a wooden conveyance, surrounding herself with sailors, or becoming drunk on grog, but the cost to do so rises to 5 Motes.

Life Gets Worse Approach (•••)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

The Sidereal makes the Inferior Sign of the Gull over her weapon, whispers to it to seek its target, and attacks. Not only is the shot quite deadly, but if it strikes, it bends the fate of all other harmful things toward the target.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to make a ranged attack. If it strikes, the attack adds the Sidereal's Essence rating to its base damage. Moreover, until the victim uses a simple action to drawing out the offending knife or arrow, all other ranged attacks against him gain Overwhelming (-1) and are Fierce. If left in place long enough, the wound may even attract stray insects and floating debris.

One Direction Invocation (•••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Sidereal summons a prayer strip scribed with Scripture of the Eternal Maiden and affixes it to her forehead. This script names a goal — grand or simple, it matters not — which the Exalt then pursues with single-minded fervor. Until she achieves her goal, she forsakes her name and identity, but becomes nigh-unstoppable.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to activate this Charm. Until the Sidereal achieves her goal, almost nobody not directly in her presence can remember her, and even those individuals must roll (Intelligence + Investigation) at difficulty 9 to remember her name, even if they are normally immune to Arcane Fate. The Sidereal gains a new Intimacy dedicated to fulfilling her goal, which may take her above her normal limit of only 3 Intimacies. The Sidereal must spend a Willpower point to do anything completely unrelated to her goal, and all rolls which don't directly further her goal are made against difficulty 9. While this Charm remains in effect, the Sidereal heals 1 non-Aggravated damage at the beginning of each round. Every hour, she heals her most severe non-Aggravated Wound.

The Sidereal may end this Charm at any time by removing the prayer strip and casting it aside with a swift or simple action, but cannot reclaim her name or identity until she completes her goal. If this becomes impossible, then both are lost — even the Exalt can no longer remember them — and she must work to establish a new name and identity.

Optimistic Security Practice (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Resistance

The Sidereal passes a hand over the weave of fate, infecting it with her own generosity of spirit. The universe becomes very protective of her, turning aside all sources of harm.

System: The Sidereal reflexively spends 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, she increases her Soak by +1, or +2 if she has Empathy 4+. Any being whose Willpower rating is lower than the Sidereal's Empathy must spend one Willpower point the first time in a scene that he attacks her, or the attack automatically fails. This Charm doesn't function if the Sidereal is wearing armor: destiny frowns on those who hedge their bets.

Riding the Dragon (•••)

Resonance: Ride

The Sidereal seizes a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Desirable Maiden from thin air, burning with brilliant yellow Essence, and affixes it to the forehead of a mortal strongly connected to the weave of her life. The mortal transforms into a mighty dragon who serves as the

Sidereal's obedient mount for a time; afterwards, it transforms back into the mortal it formerly was, but that individual's mind is shattered beyond repair.

System: Spend 2 Motes and use a simple action to summon the prayer strip. Upon affixing it to the forehead of a mortal Acquaintance, they transform into a mighty celestial dragon for one scene, which will allow her to ride it and obey her commands. At the end of the scene their body returns to normal, but their mind is riddled with multiple Derangements, leaving them barely functional if not entirely catatonic. The Acquaintance dot they represent is lost.

This is a Fated Effect.

The Dragon of Mercury

Aptitudes: *Battle*, fly, intimidate, resist harm, keen senses.

Expertise: 15; **Utility:** 5

Base Damage: 7 (mauled)

Defense: 8; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 5; **Willpower:** 9

Health: 20; Stagger Threshold: 5+

Powers

Celestial Mount (Passive): The Dragon of Mercury can bear up to a six riders into battle on its back.

Fly (passive): The Dragon of Mercury can fly at 500 miles per hour.

Dragon's Suspire (1 Momentum, simple): The Dragon of Mercury unleashes an unblockable plume of saffron fire, subjecting everyone within a chosen zone adjacent to the dragon to a one-time hazard with difficulty 8, damage 5 (burning), unblockable.

Principle of Motion (1 Momentum, reflexive): The Dragon of Mercury takes three turns during the current round. It will not take two or more turns consecutively unless all of its allies have already acted.

Terrifying Roar (1 Momentum, simple): The Dragon of Mercury unleashes an earth-shattering roar. Everyone who hears it save for those riding on the dragon must make a Willpower roll against difficulty 9 or lose their next turn.

Unrelenting Torment Technique (•••)

Resonance: Thrown

The Sidereal hurls a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Maiden and the Shadow at an opponent. It adheres to her enemy, wreathing him in a pulsing yellow glow, and condemns him to mutual destruction.

System: The Sidereal spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to make a (Dexterity + Thrown) attack against an enemy up to two zones away. If it strikes the target, he is cursed by the Sidereal's prayer strip until the Sidereal chooses to nullify its power or until he uses a simple extended action to physically tear the strip off of himself (a difficulty 9 Strength + Athletics roll with a one-round interval and a goal of 5). The Sidereal can have only one active prayer strip empowered by this Charm at a time.

While the target is cursed, then at the end of any round in which the Sidereal suffers damage, if she has a free hand she reflexively hurls a hatchet made of yellow Essence at the cursed target. It passes through all obstacles to unerringly strike him with 0 threshold successes and a base damage of the Sidereal's Essence rating (lacerated). The Sidereal heals damage equal to the damage this hatchet inflicts. This attack cannot strike through a perfect defense.

Despite understanding the ramifications of his actions, the target must succeed at a difficulty 8 Willpower roll each round or else use his turn attacking the Sidereal. This compulsion abates if he can no longer see the Sidereal.

Wilderness-Commanding Practice (•••)

Resonance: Survival

The Sidereal casts a prayer strip into the air marked with the Scripture of the Maiden Entombed, which sheds formless golden phantoms. It bends the destiny of the wilderness to her aid in all respects, temporarily making her the master of a forest, tundra, coral reef, stretch of desert, or other untamed frontier.

System: The Sidereal uses a simple action and spends 2 Motes to co-opt the fate of a wilderness area for roughly ten miles in every direction around the location of her prayer strip. So long as she remains within sight of the prayer strip, she is automatically aware of the location and movements of all individuals she would find of interest within the enchanted wilderness. If someone uses an effect that perfectly defeats supernatural tracking, she may make an Essence roll against difficulty 9 to track them anyway. She can lower the difficulty of anyone in the region's Survival rolls by -3, or reduce their dice pool for Survival actions to 0 before the effect of Charms, as she chooses.

She may also convey the location of someone within the enchanted wilderness to a local beast or spirit by reflexively paying 1 Mote and rolling (Manipulation + Survival) against a difficulty of the beast or spirit's Willpower. Success causes the affected beast or spirit to become instinctively aware of the target's location, and to develop a temporary Intimacy of fearful hatred toward him as they become instinctively convinced that the intruder is a threat.

This Charm lasts for five days. If there are small areas of developed habitation or infrastructure within the wilderness (such as a tiny village or a road), they and everyone within them are beyond the Sidereal's power to track and influence.

Serenity Charms

These Charms deal with avoiding unpleasant fates, constructing favorable destinies, creating drastic imbalances of social power, and forging or changing relationships between people.

Absence (•)

Resonance: Athletics

Predicting the path of her foes' attacks well in advance, the Sidereal contrives to be somewhere else.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to activate this Charm. For the rest of the scene or until she is next Staggered, the Sidereal increases her Defense by +2.

Avoidance Kata (•)

Resonance: Athletics

There are some problems whose best solution is to have not been there to get into them in the first place. The Sidereal can escape from danger (or just meeting tedious people at parties) by retroactively having been somewhere else all along.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote within the first minute after encountering someone socially or within the first two rounds of combat. The Sidereal relocates immediately to somewhere else she might plausibly have been instead, and her magic amends destiny to patch up the inconsistencies as best it can, giving everyone involved new memories of the Sidereal *not* having been present where she was, and *having* been present where she now is... although they don't actually *lose* their existing memories of the Sidereal having been present before she absented herself, or not having been present before she appeared. Those old memories just... don't make as much sense as the new ones, given the amended circumstances.

This magic also doesn't remove the consequences of actions anyone took before the Sidereal made herself absent, so if she stabbed someone before vanishing, they're still perforated and bleeding, even though the Sidereal was never there to perform the stabbing to begin with. Maybe they just burst into cuts spontaneously? It happens sometimes.

The limitation that the Sidereal can only go somewhere else she might have plausibly been makes Avoidance Kata good for escaping danger, but bad for escaping confinement. A Sidereal who finds a group of inmates coming to murder her in her prison cell might have plausibly been under interrogation down the hall instead, but by that point it's implausible that she wasn't in prison at all.

Blue Vervain Binding (•)

Resonance: Linguistics

The Sidereal conducts a minute-long formal blessing in Old Realm. It ties together the fates of two beings (one of whom can be the Sidereal herself). After the successful conclusion of the ceremony, the two beings can forever after understand one another and make themselves understood, regardless of any barriers of language or even physical or mental disability.

System: Spend 1 Mote and roll (Intelligence + Linguistics) against difficulty 6 to establish the binding, whose effects are permanent.

Destiny-Knitting Entanglement (•)

Resonance: Craft

The Sidereal entangles her destiny with that of one or more objects which interest her. She may henceforth always know where that object resides within the grand movements of destiny, or call it to her hand by tugging on the threads of fate.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to entangle an object in the Sidereal's possession. She may entangle a total number of objects equal to her Craft rating. If she wishes to abandon her connection to an object, doing so takes only a simple action spent concentrating on letting go.

While an object is entangled with the Sidereal's destiny, she may reflexively spend 1 Mote to gain a general awareness of where it is and what's going on with it, such as "the object is in a scavenger lord's treasure-vault somewhere in Kirighast" or "the object is being carried in a Solar's backpack through a snowfield somewhere in the North."

She may also reflexively spend 1 Mote and describe a means by which the object returns to her possession: “A thief steals it from the vault and is forced to flee the city.” “The Solar is chased south by the Wyld Hunt.” This may or may not work, depending on the plausibility of the request and the efforts of gods, demons, and heroes to strive against the nudging of fate, but if the Sidereal tries often enough, the object will *eventually* return to her.

If the object is within one zone of the Sidereal, she may reflexively draw it back to her hand by simply tugging on a string of fate at any time. If it is within the same district, she may do so by using a re-arm action.

Elemental Vision (•)

Resonance: Craft, Empathy

Each of the Maidens resonates with a particular element. Fortifying the connections between the Essence of this element and her personal destiny, the Sidereal becomes highly adept at influencing those who also dwell within the element’s sway.

System: Upon learning this Charm, the Sidereal permanently lowers the difficulty of all social influence actions directed against Dragon-Blooded who match her Maiden’s element by –1, and against elementals or gods who resonate with her Maiden’s element by –2. Mercury resonates with air, Venus with wood, Mars with fire, Jupiter with water, and Saturn with earth.

Excellent Implementation of Objectives (•)

Resonance: Craft

Fixing the end result of some work of craftsmanship or creativity in her mind, the Sidereal deftly weaves its design into the pattern of destiny. The world hastens to ensure its creation.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action bless a project to create, modify, or repair something. The Sidereal can work five times faster than normal when laboring on that project. If she blesses someone else’s project, work proceeds on it at twice the usual rate.

Faultless Ceremony (•)

Resonance: Linguistics, Socialize

When the Sidereal officiates over a ceremony, her actions impart a meaningful bias to destiny within the purview of her caste. The world will bend in its best attempt to impart happiness and fertility on a couple wed by a Chosen of Serenity; a Chosen of Endings who oversees the conclusion of a dead man’s affairs speeds those affairs toward a swift, equitable, and relatively painless resolution; and a warship launched by a Chosen of Battles will find fortune and opportunity in war, at least insofar as that happenstance and circumstance can influence its success or failure.

System: There are no dice rolls or resource costs associated with this Charm. It’s a permanent modification to the impact of the Sidereal’s actions upon the world. If mechanics are needed, assume that the difficulty of an actions in line with the Sidereal’s blessings are made at –1 difficulty once per scene, but primarily this Charm is a narrative device, and it falls upon the Storyteller to depict its impact in the world accordingly.

Additionally, if the Sidereal attempts to use Sidereal Astrology to lay a blessing or curse that is congruent with the ongoing effects of Faultless Ceremony (a Chosen of Serenity devises a blessing of fertility to lay on a Dragon-Blooded couple whose wedding ceremony she officiated,

for example), the roll to gain Paradox after activating the Astrology is made against difficulty 9 instead of 6.

Ice and Fire Binding (•)

Resonance: Empathy, Linguistics

The Sidereal conducts an hour-long ritual in Old Realm, conjuring forth a fire elemental chosen by destiny and binding it to a certain location or person by the authority of the Maiden of Serenity. For one cycle — three months — the elemental is bound to seek the joy, health, and pleasure of those around it.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll (Intelligence + Linguistics) against difficulty 9 to establish the binding. The Sidereal must roll more successes than the conjured elemental's Essence rating. Other Sidereals can join in on the ritual, rolling and contributing successes of their own; they need not know this Charm to do so. Once the binding concludes, the elemental is set free, his memory wiped clean of all recollection of who summoned or bound him, but carrying a compulsion to work to the benefit of the individual or locale named in the Ice and Fire Binding. Locations can be as specific as a particular teahouse or as broad as the entire city of Nexus.

This is a Fated Effect.

Hot-Eyed Snake Whispering (•)

Resonance: Socialize

Whenever the Sidereal senses that others' trust in her words is faltering, she can gently nudge the threads of fate to lend additional urgency and impact to her statements, causing them to resonate with listeners' most deeply held inner truths.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to re-roll any Empathy, Linguistics, Presence, Performance, or Socialize roll. This does not count against the Sidereal's once-per-scene re-roll.

Mending Warped Designs (•)

Resonance: Craft

The Sidereal may repair damage to the weave of fate inflicted by those who dwell outside of Heaven's regard.

System: The Sidereal may spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll (Dexterity + Craft). If she is healing a character's injuries, the difficulty is 6 and one level non-Aggravated damage is removed per success. If she wishes to heal a non-lasting and non-aggravated Wound, the difficulty is 7. If she is trying to cleanse a Wyld mutation or similar curse, such as to free someone from possession by a ghost, or to heal a lasting Wound, amputated limb, or unwanted birth defect or Derangement, the difficulty is 8. If she is trying to repair damage done to a sector (such as by a Deathlord casting Rain of Doom, or reducing the intensity of Wyld taint in that sector by one level), the difficulty is 9.

This Charm can only heal or repair damage caused by beings native to or steeped in the power of the Underworld, Hell, the Wyld, or similar strange realms such as Autochthonia. It is useless to undo the actions of Creation's own gods, elementals, mortals, beasts, and so forth.

Sudden Martial Dishabille (•)

Resonance: Performance

With a series of simple shrugs and sinuous motions, the Sidereal may remove any armor that may encumber her. With only slightly more effort, she may swiftly don protective gear.

System: The Sidereal may remove as much of her armor or clothing as she desires in a matter of seconds, using only a swift action. If she wishes it to be so, any armor or clothing discarded in this manner is lost as soon as nobody is paying direct attention to it, quietly filed away as a notation attached to the Sidereal's thread of destiny. It still theoretically exists somewhere in the world, but it is always in a place where nobody will encounter it so long as the Sidereal lives.

The Sidereal may also put on a complete outfit or suit of armor using only a single simple action, fairly jumping into it so that serendipity causes all of its clasps to fall together, its buckles to tighten in response to the twin influences of gravity and her movements.

Finally, if the Sidereal wishes to don notional clothing or armor she banished with this Charm, she may do so with a swift action, pulling it around her with a casual gesture from the fabric of fate itself.

World-Shaping Artistic Vision (•)

Resonance: Socialize

The Sidereal develops a signature specialty in manipulating the threads of fate, which slightly influences her appearance over time. A Sidereal who specializes in destiny manipulation "in the halls of power" becomes more urbane and imposing, while one who specializes "against wicked spirits" may take on a shamanic or martial aspect, clothes dramatically stirred by an unseen wind from time to time.

System: Define a *narrow* specialty such as "rural communities," "against wicked spirits," "formal debates," or "between sunrise and noon." All actions the Sidereal takes which fall under this specialty reduce their difficulty by -1.

This specialty should not encompass the majority of the use of an Ability or the totality of the scope of a Maiden's purview, and so "when speaking," "in battle," and "when unarmored" are not valid specialties. Essentially, if the suggested specialty is both boring and feels like an attempt to always get a -1 in some circumstance the Exalt will almost always satisfy, it's not a valid use of World-Shaping Artistic Vision. This is a Charm that bestows a persistent situational advantage, not a way to come up with a clever end-case so the character always gets -1 to hit in combat. Thus, "when unarmored," taken on a martial artist who never wears armor sucks, but "in one-on-one duels" or "when seriously outnumbered" are both fine.

Favorable Inflection Procedure (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Linguistics

The Sidereal may speak a being's name or nickname with an inflection which affirms and completes their sense of being in the world, granting a momentary gift of true inner peace.

System: Speak the target's name and roll Charisma + (Empathy or Linguistics) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower rating. Success creates a moment of peace, happiness, and personal connection to the Sidereal. If the target is upset or violent, he loses his train of thought and forgets whatever has caused his unhappiness, although events *can* actively remind him (such as noticing the Sidereal standing over the murdered bodies of his family, covered in their blood).

Heart-Brightening Gathering (••)

Resonance: Survival

The Sidereal devises and oversees an intensive training regimen for a small group of students in which she weaves a series of social difficulties and complications from the threads of destiny. Those who come through the training are vastly empowered by her tutelage, gifted in the measure of society and personal elegance, and able to tell when it's time to cut and leave.

System: The Sidereal spends an entire night consulting the stars, and then an entire day weaving a customized social milieu into the fabric of destiny, and spends 5 Motes, 1 Willpower. She must then, within the next seven days, touch each student she wishes to put through the training, spending 1 Mote per student. Students need not consent to this training or realize they are undergoing it. The Sidereal may train up to (Essence rating) students at a time. Once she has attached all the students she wishes to train to the destiny she's woven, the Charm takes effect.

If used to train antagonists, the Charm unfolds in a largely narrative fashion, usually occurring over the course of a week, at the end of which they may gain a new appropriate Aptitude chosen from among the following: Any manner of artistic performance, any manner of craftsmanship, avoiding danger, etiquette, poetry, or understanding others. Once every other story, if they are Exalted, they can gain a new power relating to one of those Aptitudes.

If used to train protagonists, this Charm either occurs during about a week of downtime, or consumes a session of gameplay, as the group prefers, during which they are drawn into some complex social situation. If they overcome it, then the next time they spend experience, they may treat up to three of the following as Favored Attributes or Abilities (the Sidereal chooses which when she devises the regimen): Manipulation, Appearance, Athletics, Craft, Empathy, Linguistics, Martial Arts, Performance, Presence, and Socialize. This discount applies both to buying Ability dots *and* to buying Charms. This Charm cannot provide any benefit again until a protagonist has spent experience points on *something*, and only provides a discount for one purchase (so if the player has enough normal experience points banked to buy an Ability dot, and enough supernal experience points banked to buy a Charm, she could only apply the discount to one or the other, not both).

This is a Fated Effect.

Implicit Construction Methodology (••)

Resonance: Craft

The Sidereal conjures a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of Lover and Maiden and twists it about her wrists, where it becomes a set of cold blue bindings. By the binding of her hands, the Sidereal induces fate to work on her behalf, finishing a crafting project without her further intervention.

System: The Sidereal spends 2 Motes and uses a simple action to name a Craft project whose materials she has already gathered. The processes of fate perform the work of crafting it for her, without her activity or presence being required. This labor takes place at the same speed it would if the Sidereal were present and doing the work herself, and may be enhanced with Excellent Implementation of Objectives, which acts as though she were working on the project personally.

This Charm persists for as long as the Sidereal's wrists remain bound together, inflicting a -3 penalty on all dice pools using her hands. She may reflexively snap the bonds at any time, ending

Implicit Construction Methodology, but once she does so, she cannot reactivate it for the rest of the current story.

Joy in Adversity Stance (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Performance

The Sidereal dances to safety, and all Creation rejoices, affirming her being with an influx of Essence flavored with the tang of Serenity.

System: At the end of any round in which the Sidereal invoked her Dodge and caused an attack to miss her thereby, she regains 1 Mote. This Charm doesn't activate if the Sidereal used a perfect defense to remove any doubt about her safety, nor if the attack was not truly intended to harm her or if it was launched by someone so weak that he posed her no true danger.

Life Without Compunction (••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy, Socialize

Everyone knows that those with the right connections can make legal crimes simply disappear. The Sidereal knows similar tricks with which to bribe destiny to make a *social* crime vanish. Paying a small tithe of her Essence to the universe, the Sidereal renders some social blunder or taboo violation that she or someone else has committed broadly acceptable to those who know of it.

System: The Sidereal may target any social misdeed, be it her own or someone else's. Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to roll (Manipulation + Socialize) against difficulty 6 if the Sidereal is present for the gaffe and uses the Charm immediately, or difficulty 8 if she uses it later when encountering the gaffe's consequences or the person who was responsible for it. Success ensures that nobody much gives a damn about the misdeed, whatever it may have been. Those who are pressed on the issue may make weak excuses or issue paint-by-numbers condemnations, but they don't really *care*. With three or more successes, the character responsible for the social breach somehow comes off as an admirable rebel (i.e. a social critic who makes a bold, daring statement by urinating on Chejop Kejak's desk). It would be reprehensible if anyone else did it, but in *this* case it's not only okay, it's laudable.

Socially acceptable acts may still be illegal, and unmotivated constables are often still willing to detain criminals.

Neighborhood Relocation Scheme (••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Sidereal summons a long cerulean prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Hunted Maiden and binds it around her waist, where it becomes a band of Essence the color of a clear sky. She connects herself to the destiny of the landscape around her, and then begins to run, dragging the local geography along in her wake until it has been relocated to a more auspicious location.

System: Spend 3 Motes. The Sidereal connects herself to all geographic features and buildings within (Essence rating) miles (although she can target a smaller area, if desired), and may drag them somewhere else by walking or running: no other manner of conveyance is acceptable, although she can increase her running speed by as many forms of magic as she may have available. The Sidereal is subjected to an ongoing hazard until she releases this Charm (difficulty

6, damage 3 (drained), interval one hour) as the prayer strip constricts around her. This damage cannot be healed until she releases the Charm by tearing off the prayer strip with a swift or simple action.

Neighborhood Relocation Scheme isn't destructive. The relocated geography slides smoothly through the world, rerouting existing terrain around itself as it goes, and when it arrives at its new destination, it integrates into the existing landscape in a way that makes sense. For example, a borough moved from one end of a city to the other would configure itself so that all of its sewage lines are still connected to the grid in a functional manner, and doesn't make complete hash of the city's roads. Likewise, destiny "fills in" the missing gap left behind by the Sidereal's efforts with a new geographical arrangement that makes sense for the location, whether that means collapsing surrounding neighborhoods together, or simply creating a new patch of generic parks or woodland. Even the regional geomancy reconfigures itself so that a Demesne relocated by this Charm doesn't have its power disrupted.

As far as the world is concerned, the new geographical configuration is the way things have always been; old land surveys and other records reflect as much, and people form new memories of the relocated land having always been where it is now... although they *also* retain their old memories of it having been somewhere else.

Shun the Smiling Lady (••)

Resonance: Empathy, Socialize

Fixing an individual's name or face in her mind, the Sidereal strikes their name out of the book of love.

System: Use a simple action to spend 2 Motes and roll (Manipulation + Socialize) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Success curses them for one day per success. They have an effective rating of Appearance 0 while under the curse (although their physical form doesn't change), and if they wish to use any sort of supernatural power which leverages unnatural appeal (such as Warm-Faced Seduction Style) they must first spend a Willpower point to do so.

If anyone of a lower Essence rating than the Sidereal has romantic feelings for the target, this curse terminates those feelings instantly, obliterating any relevant Intimacy. They do not automatically reappear when the curse ends.

This Charm can be targeted against anyone whose name the Sidereal knows, or who she can directly perceive. It is a Fated Effect.

Song of Spirit Persuasion (••)

Resonance: Performance

The Sidereal sings a lay woven into the stars by Venus, which completes the tensions and uncertainties that underlie all of the spirits of the terrestrial world.

System: Use a simple action to spend 1 Motes and roll (Manipulation + Performance) against a difficulty of an elemental or elementally-aligned god's Willpower. If the Sidereal rolls successes equal to or greater than the spirit's Essence rating, they become an ally (as per the Allies Background) for the rest of the story. At the end of the story, the spirit forgets why they granted the Sidereal their favor, and will no longer trouble themselves on her behalf. Treat the Willpower of spirits of wood and fire as two lower than their true rating.

This is a Fated Effect.

Trouble Reduction Strategy (••)

Resonance: Athletics

Foreseeing doom for those she cares for, the Sidereal may twist the threads of fate on their behalf.

System: The Sidereal may use the Charms Absence, Avoidance Kata, and Duck Fate to protect her allies as well as or instead of herself. By reflexively paying 1 extra Mote when activating any of those Charms, she may invoke them on behalf of all of her allies within the same zone as well as to protect herself. Characters who do not wish for this protection may reflexively reject it. Duck Fate may only activate once per round to protect characters other than the Sidereal.

Cash and Murder Games (•••)

Resonance: Socialize

Brutally looping several threads of destiny together, the Sidereal informs the world that one character has dominion over another — generally through fear or desire, sexual or otherwise — and fate acknowledges that this is so.

System: Use a simple action to spend 2 Motes and roll (Manipulation + Socialize), opposed by the Willpower of the target to be dominated, both at difficulty 6. If the Sidereal gains more successes, then they are enthralled, intimidated, or impressed to the point of servitude by the character granted power over them. All persuasion actions their regnant directs at them are treated as inconveniences, and Willpower cannot be spent to resist them. Only the character being dominated needs be present when this Charm is activated.

Cash and Murder Games can be nullified for a scene by spending 1 point of Willpower, and once a number of Willpower points have been spent equal to the successes the by which the Sidereal won when activating Cash and Murder games, its power comes to an end. The Sidereal *can* name herself as the beneficiary of this Charm, if she likes.

This is a Fated Effect.

Defense of Shining Joy (•••)

Resonance: Performance

Taking up fate's threads between her fingers and infusing herself with the Essence of the dance, the Sidereal's every movement becomes the perfect instinctive match of the movements of those who move against her, allowing her to smoothly pirouette through storms of arrows and flurries of savage claws without harm.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Sidereal does not have to spend Willpower to Dodge attacks until the end of the scene, until she is next Staggered, or until her Dodge value drops to 0, whichever comes first.

Additionally, the Sidereal henceforth permanently calculates her base Dodge using the higher of her Dexterity *or* Performance, and also treats Performance as a combat Ability for the purpose of calculating Defense.

Duck Fate (•••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Sidereal senses danger approaching in the weave of destiny, and viciously twists its threads aside to deflect whatever this misfortune might be.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes and roll Dexterity + Athletics against difficulty 8. If successful, the Sidereal perfectly avoids any damaging, deleterious, or unwanted effect aimed against her. This could be a physical attack, a spirit attempting to possess her, a Solar talking her into abandoning the Bronze Faction, or even being struck down by the curse of a broken Eclipse Oath. Continuous effects (such as being burned and asphyxiated by a house that's burning down with the Sidereal inside of it) need be avoided only once to protect the character while she remains exposed. Once this Charm has been successfully invoked, the Sidereal's Dodge is reduced by -1. Duck Fate cannot be invoked if the Sidereal's Dodge is 0 or less, while she is Staggered, or to avoid harm inflicted as the cost of activating one of her own Charms or other powers. It also cannot avoid Pattern Bite.

Harmonic Completion (•••)

Resonance: Performance

The Sidereal conjures a cerulean prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Dancer and binds it across her eyes, whereupon it becomes a band of starmetal and blue jade. Her words sound to others like the affirmations and truths they have waited all their lives to hear.

System: Use a simple action to spend 2 Motes, conjure the prayer strip and bind it across the Sidereal's eyes. The Sidereal is genuinely blind, and suffers appropriate penalties (see p. XX). The Sidereal may re-roll each failed die in any social influence roll she makes for the rest of the scene. Inspire rolls to make others form an Intimacy of love for her (romantic or platonic) are made against difficulty 3. She ignores the Overwhelming, Piercing, Fierce, and Heavy quality on all attacks. However, if she lashes out in violence herself, the Sidereal's blindfold shatters, inflicting 2 damage (lacerated) upon her, and the Charm ends.

Lover's Oath (•••)

Resonance: Empathy, Linguistics

The Sidereal winds a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Bride around herself and another consenting character's fingers. It splits and hardens into a pair of starmetal rings, binding the fate of the two characters together.

System: Spend 3 Motes, 1 Willpower. The two bound characters may reflexively banish some or all of the damage they suffer in the moment they are wounded; it is instead applied to their partner.

Both characters must understand the ramifications of the ritual for it to be effective. Neither can directly or indirectly attempt to remove or harm the rings once they are created, though other characters can destroy the rings with a carefully-placed blow (a difficulty 8 action requiring at least three successes), ending the Charm's effects.

Venus considers this Charm to be tantamount to a wedding ceremony, and frowns on its casual exploitation or callous misuse. Still, such things are possible for characters willing to deal with the fallout upon their return to Yu-Shan. The Sidereal needs not have any sort of emotional tie whatsoever to her partner. Only one bond created by this Charm can exist at a time.

Perfection in Life (•••)

Resonance: Performance

The dance of Venus is the dance of completed patterns, whole fates, and perfection in life: the realization of all that those who witness it might be, and strive to be, bringing temporary peace and affirmation to the most broken heart. This Charm imbues the Sidereal's words and actions with the cadence of that most sacred of dances, even though outwardly she may be doing no more than chatting at a café or cooking dinner for her friends.

System: Use a simple action to spend 2 Motes and roll (Charisma + Performance) against difficulty 6. If successful, then for the rest of the scene the Sidereal grants 1 Willpower point to herself and everyone she interacts with, so long as this wouldn't raise their current Willpower above the higher of either their Willpower rating or the number of successes she rolled to activate Perfection in Life (in the case of antagonists, just use the successes rolled). A character can't benefit from Perfection in Life more than once per day.

You and Yours Stance (•••)

Resonance: Socialize

The Sidereal entangles herself in every thread of fate which gives rise to lust and desire. She becomes impossible to recognize: those who behold her see only that which their heart most fervently desires, and know that to harm or deny her is to shatter their own heart.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, anyone who wishes to harm or deny the Sidereal must make a Willpower roll against difficulty 8 each time they attempt to do so. Failure makes such effrontery unthinkable. She lowers the difficulty of all seduction rolls by -2.

Wanting and Fearing Prayer (•••)

Resonance: Socialize

The Sidereal holds up two prayer strips marked with the Scripture of the Whore. One by one, she names their targets, and they vanish, reappearing wrapped around their targets' bones. They burn with cold blue light which cannot shine through flesh, but glows brilliantly if that flesh is ever cut away. The power of the two prayer strips rewrites destiny to impose a new relationship on the two characters according to the Sidereal's dictates.

System: Use a simple action to spend 3 Motes and make a contested (Manipulation + Socialize) roll against the Willpower of each target (difficulty 6 for all rolls). The targets must both be within 10 miles of the Sidereal. If the Sidereal beats both targets, then she dictates a new social and emotional relationship between the two of them. As quickly as can be plausibly arranged, destiny moves the characters into this relationship. This is partly a work of circumstances and partially a work of magical influence; as such, its effects can be resisted for a scene by citing an Intimacy (or a character's Nature) that the Charm is forcing them to act against, and spending a point of Willpower. If Willpower equal to the Sidereal's Essence rating is spent in this fashion, the power of the Charm breaks.

Otherwise, the only way to be free of the Wanting and Fearing Prayer is to cut out one of the prayer strips. Doing so requires an extended (Dexterity + Medicine) action, rolled against difficulty 8, requiring 12 successes, with each roll inflicting one lacerated Wound.

This is a Fated Effect.

Battles Charms

These Charms form the primary Sidereal arts of battle, but also deal with forceful resolution of problems and with designing efficacious battle strategies.

Any Direction Arrow (•)

Resonance: Archery

The Sidereal's attacks curve along the vectors and threads of inevitability to find their targets.

System: The character's ranged attacks ignore partial cover and are Fierce.

Crimson Palm Counterstrike (•)

Resonance: Brawl, Martial Arts

The Sidereal steps into her opponent's aggressions, shattering first his attack and then his jaw.

System: When the Sidereal is attacked before her turn by someone in range of her weapon, she may reflexively spend 1 Mote after the attack roll is made. She makes an attack roll of her own against the attacker. Each success on this roll negates one of the aggressor's attack roll successes. If this reduces the attack to 0 successes, the attack is deflected and does not strike her. If the Sidereal then has any successes left over, she strikes her attacker and applies them as threshold damage.

Activating Crimson Palm Counterstrike consumes the Sidereal's simple action for the round unless she Staggers or incapacitates her target with this Charm's counterattack. She cannot activate Crimson Palm Counterstrike and invoke her Dodge against the same attack.

Five Seasons Approach (•)

Resonance: Archery

If the Sidereal's skill does not suffice to strike her opponent, then she may trust to the world's esteem for her. If that does not serve, then to the world's fear of what she hopes to save it from. If that too is insufficient, then to the world's dreams of the glories she seeks to achieve. If all else fails, there is always luck.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an attack. The attack is undodgeable and automatically hits its target, no matter how well the opponent defends or how poorly the Exalt rolls; if the dice indicate that the attack should not strike true, then it hits anyway with zero successes. Five Seasons Approach can't strike through a perfect defense, however, nor can it strike a target if there's simply no way to reach them (such as if they're on the other side of a wall, or outside of a weapon's maximum range).

Generalized Ammunition Technique (•)

Resonance: Archery, Thrown

Destiny blesses the Sidereal's ongoing quest to propel objects into her enemies at high speeds, enabling her to do so in any circumstance.

System: This Charm grants a number of blessings once the Sidereal reflexively spends 1 Mote to activate it for the rest of the scene. First, she always has a few more throwing knives, arrows, or

crossbow bolts hidden *somewhere* on her person or in her immediate surroundings. Second, when firing a bow, she can use nearly anything as an arrow: a scream, some flames, a sunbeam, a beehive, an angry squirrel; as long as it's not too large and unwieldy to fit it to her bow, she can fire it. Third and finally, if she has no ranged weapon of any sort available, she can use anything she can pick up as a ranged weapon, even throwing iron-stiff strands of her own hair or shooting her saliva through a curled fist like a blowgun if nothing else is available.

It will generally fall to the Storyteller to determine if improvised projectiles have any unusual effects and what sort of Wounds they inflict.

Impose Nature (•)

Resonance: Presence

The Sidereal taints someone else's destiny with her Essence, imposing her own nature upon them.

System: The Sidereal makes her own personal sign at another character. Use a simple action to spend 1 Mote and roll (Charisma + Presence) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. The target gains the Sidereal's own Nature in addition to his own, as well as the Sidereal's Intimacies. They may regain Willpower according to both Natures, and benefit in full from the bestowed Intimacies; their personality is also, of course, heavily influenced by their new Nature and Intimacies. This Charm's effects last for one day per success rolled.

If the target has 0 Willpower points when targeted by this Charm, it instead *replaces* all of his Intimacies and his Nature with the Sidereal's own for its full duration.

Opportune Shot (•)

Resonance: Archery, War

Spotting a perfect opportunity shining like a diamond among the threads of what might be, the Sidereal seizes it, allowing her to act before her foes.

System: The Sidereal may reflexively spend 1 Mote to activate this Charm. For the rest of the scene, or until she is Staggered, she and her allies hold the initiative (see p. XX) and she *must* act first every round. If for any reason she does not, Opportune Shot ends immediately.

Predestined Triumph Practice (•)

Resonance: War

The Sidereal devises a battle plan and weaves it into destiny. If a group of soldiers follows this plan, fortune in war surely favors them.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to make an (Intelligence + War) roll against difficulty 6 to bless a group that is currently fighting under the Sidereal's direct leadership, or about to go into battle employing a tactical plan devised or advised by her. A number of times during the battle equal to the successes rolled (up to a maximum of the Sidereal's Essence rating), that group's attacks may gain Overwhelming (-2).

Presence in Absence Technique (•)

Resonance: Presence

The Sidereal crafts a message or performance and infects someone's future with it. At some point the Sidereal specifies, no matter what the target says or does, his words and deeds will resonate with the Sidereal's intended meanings and connotations, and he *will* deliver the Exalt's message.

System: Use a simple action to spend 1 Mote, touch the target, define a social influence action, then specify the circumstance when it will go off ("When this Dragon-Blooded next meets with Mnemon," for example). At that point, the Sidereal's social action deploys through the target's words and deeds. To continue the example, let's say the Dragon-Blooded she tagged earlier, upon meeting Mnemon, unknowingly becomes the vector for a (Manipulation + Presence) persuade action to convince Mnemon that the tagged Dragon-Blooded is plotting to betray and murder her.

If the Sidereal wishes to enhance the social action with any of her Charms, she must pay for them at the same time she invokes Presence in Absence Technique. A target can only have one instance of this Charm "hanging" on them at a time. Presence in Absence Technique is a Fated Effect.

Red-Handed Maiden Approach (•)

Resonance: War

Altruism is rarely seen in the precincts of Mars, and there it goes hand-in-hand with misfortune. The Sidereal may pass on her suffering to those unwise enough to protect her.

System: The Sidereal reflexively spends 1 Mote while another character uses a protect action to defend her. For the rest of the scene, whenever she suffers damage, she may reflexively choose not to suffer (up to defender's Essence rating) of that damage. It is instead inflicted upon her would-be protector instead.

This is a Fated Effect.

Water and Fire Legion (•)

Resonance: Resistance

The Sidereal may weave protective destinies out of the threads of fate which govern water and fire, either protecting herself and her allies or binding spirits of those elements as vigilant protectors.

System: Using a simple action, the Sidereal touches water or flame and spends 1 Mote. If this is all she does, she rolls (Wits + Resistance) against difficulty 6. For a number of days equal to the successes rolled, fire cannot burn or suffocate her; *or* water cannot drown, crush, boil, sicken, or freeze her, depending on what she touched to activate the Charm. If she is also touching someone else, then the person she is touching instead gains the benefits of Water and Fire Legion. If the Sidereal activates this Charm while actively leading a group of soldiers of any sort, or delivering a blessing to a military force about to enter battle, she may pay an extra +1 Mote to extend the Charm's protection to the entire military force under her command.

If the Sidereal touches a water or fire elemental, or a god strongly representing one of those elements, then she may use a simple action and spend 1 Mote to roll (Charisma + Resistance) against a difficulty of its Resolve, compelling it to protect something that she names for one

month per success rolled. It will do so to the best of its ability, though will stop short of violating its Nature in the process. This is a Fated Effect.

Wearing Red to a Wedding (•)

Resonance: Presence, War

The Sidereal wraps herself in a nonchalant skein of desensitized violence. No matter how alarming her appearance, she seems unthreatening and unworthy of special notice, even if she's covered in blood and openly carrying several gory daiklaves. Unless the Sidereal actually attacks someone, it seems ridiculous to consider her a threat.

System: This Charm's effects are permanent, though if she wishes to intimidate someone with her gruesome demeanor, the Sidereal may use a swift or simple action to dismiss its effects for a scene.

Demon-Blocking Battle Pattern (••)

Resonance: War

The Sidereal devises a plan to confound those whose power originates outside of Creation and weaves it into destiny. If a group of soldiers follows this plan, then their strength of arms can prevail even over demons and the dead.

System: Use a simple action, spend 1 Mote, and make an (Intelligence + War) roll against difficulty 6 to devise an auspicious battle plan for a group or collection of individuals that are currently acting under the Sidereal's direct leadership, or about to go into battle employing a tactical plan devised or advised by her; this roll can enjoy a maximum number of successes up to the Sidereal's Essence rating.

At any time during the next fight the warriors engage in, one of the beneficiaries of the Demon-Blocking Battle Plan (be it a Circlemate or an entire group of soldiers) may use a simple action to declare that on their turn, they are "following the plan." For the rest of that round and until the end of the following round, all creatures native to or filled with the power of the Underworld, Hell, the Wyld, or other strange realms such as Autochthonia involved in the battle suffer a dice pool penalty to all of their actions equal to (number of characters who followed the plan) x (successes on the roll to devise the plan). A group counts as a number of characters equal to its Size. Thus, if the Sidereal herself and a Size 3 group all followed a two-success plan in the first round of a fight, then on the second round all ghosts, zombies, and Abyssals on the battlefield would suffer a -8 penalty to their actions. This Charm was instrumental in checking the power of those who made the world during the Divine Revolution.

Once any character has followed the plan, or a battle has concluded without anyone following the plan, the power of this Charm is discharged and a new plan must be designed.

The Demon-Blocking Battle Pattern's penalty is a Fated Effect.

Force Decision (••)

Resonance: Presence, War

When she beholds someone about to make a choice, the Sidereal reaches out and severs all future possibilities save the one she desires.

System: Use a simple action to spend 1 Mote and roll (Charisma + Presence) against a difficulty of the target character's Willpower rating. If the roll is successful, then the target makes his decision as the Sidereal chooses. The target must be confronted by some manner of clear choice, such as what to order off of a menu, or whether or not they'll cheat on their spouse; the Sidereal cannot force someone loitering on a corner to "decide" to give the Exalt all the money in his purse unprompted. The target may spend 2 Willpower to resist this Charm and choose as he likes despite destiny's urgings. Force Decision cannot force someone to make a choice that is contrary to his Nature, as his destiny does not encompass such possibilities.

Horrorific Wreath (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts, Brawl

The Sidereal fortifies herself with the Essence of every manner of bane and calamity, every being's worst day all rolled into one.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the end of the scene or until the Sidereal is next Staggered, whichever comes first, her attacks inflict Aggravated damage (-2).

Many Missiles Bow Technique (••)

Resonance: Archery

The Sidereal summons a crimson prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Clay Maiden, which she quickly twists into a mighty bow, capable of launching anything she draws and fires from it.

System: The Sidereal uses a re-arm action to create her crimson bow. When she fires the bow, if she does not fit an arrow to its string, then she may pay 1 Mote to name and fire a potentiality drawn from the threads of fate, with results adjudicated by the Storyteller. The destiny of fertile fields might cause a field of wheat to spring up where the arrow lands. The destiny of fine glass might produce a nearly-invisible arrow which is unblockable unless the target succeeds at a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll against difficulty 9. The destiny of darkness might allow the Sidereal to fire an arrow into the sky and briefly transform day to night. The destiny of well-being might allow the Sidereal to fire an arrow that heals rather than hurts the one it strikes. These are destinies of only modest potency, and so cannot enact truly dramatic miracles such as granting Exaltation, bringing the dead back to life, or turning a vast desert into a verdant forest (though they might crack a rock and draw forth a spring).

If the Sidereal chooses to fire a particular destiny from her bow more than once per story, each repeated use causes her to gain 1 Paradox as her greed depletes the structural integrity of fate.

Meditation on War (••)

Resonance: Melee, War

Calm and precision envelops the Sidereal as she manipulates the threads of fate. She learns to let her pain spill out into the threads of the tapestry of Creation, to be later conveyed to someone else so that she needs not suffer now.

System: Each time the Sidereal activates Weaving the Threads, she reduces her total Wound penalties for the rest of the scene by -1, to a minimum of 0. While her Wound penalties are 0 for any reason, the Sidereal increases her Stagger Threshold by +1.

Orchestration of Conflict (••)

Resonance: Survival

The Sidereal devises and oversees an intensive training regimen for a small group of students in which she weaves a challenging military conflict from the threads of destiny. Those who come through the training are vastly empowered by her tutelage, skilled in the arts of battle and tactics.

System: The Sidereal spends an entire night consulting the stars, and then an entire day weaving a customized conflict into the fabric of destiny, and spends 5 Motes, 1 Willpower. She must then, within the next seven days, touch each student she wishes to put through the training, spending 1 Mote per student. Students need not consent to this training or realize they are undergoing it. The Sidereal may train up to (Essence rating) students at a time. Once she has attached all the students she wishes to train to the destiny she's woven, the Charm takes effect.

If used to train antagonists, the Charm unfolds in a largely narrative fashion, usually occurring over the course of a week, at the end of which they may gain a new appropriate Aptitude chosen from among the following: Archery, combat, hardiness, oratory, rhetoric, strategy, swordsmanship, or tactics. Once every other story, if they are Exalted, they can gain a new power relating to one of those Aptitudes.

If used to train protagonists, this Charm either occurs during about a week of downtime, or consumes a session of gameplay, as the group prefers, during which they are drawn into some challenging military conflict. If they overcome it, then the next time they spend experience, they may treat up to three of the following as Favored Attributes or Abilities (the Sidereal chooses which when she devises the regimen): Strength, Charisma, Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee, Presence, Resistance, Stealth, and War. This discount applies both to buying Ability dots *and* to buying Charms. This Charm cannot provide any benefit again until a protagonist has spent experience points on *something*, and only provides a discount for one purchase (so if the player has enough normal experience points banked to buy an Ability dot, and enough supernal experience points banked to buy a Charm, she could only apply the discount to one or the other, not both).

This is a Fated Effect.

Red Haze (••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Sidereal makes the Inferior Sign of the Shield. A misty haze of crimson-gleaming starlight protects all things it illuminates from the denizens of Hell and Underworld.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. A haze of crimson starlight encompasses everything within the sector the Sidereal occupies for the rest of the scene. Within this haze, all demons and Unquiet raise the difficulty of all rolls (including damage rolls) by +1.

Shield of Mars (••)

Resonance: Resistance

Tangling her destiny with that of her foe, the Sidereal passes on damage that she might have suffered to the one who sought to inflict it.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower after being targeted by an attack. The attacker must reflexively roll Willpower to resist a one-time hazard (difficulty 6, damage equal to the

number of “1” results rolled on the damage roll on their attack against the Sidereal, drained). This is a Fated Effect.

Smiling at the Damned (••)

Resonance: Melee

In the moment she strikes true, the world turns a lurid red in acknowledgement of the Sidereal’s murderous intent.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote upon successfully striking an opponent. The attack’s base damage is increased by the higher of (number of Colleges of her Maiden’s House the Sidereal is initiated into) or (number of Colleges of the House of Mars the Sidereal is initiated into), and if it Staggers the target, the Sidereal may choose for it to cause any sort of Wound she wishes.

Someone Else’s Destiny (••)

Resonance: Resistance

The Sidereal compresses a drug or poison within her body into a memorandum attached to her destiny. At some point in the future, she attaches that memo to an attack, and passes the toxin or drug on to her target.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to purge the drug or poison from the Sidereal’s system. At any point in the future, the Sidereal may reflexively discharge it through an attack which inflicts at least 1 damage to its target, thereby also afflicting her target with the drug or poison.

Unobstructed Blow (••)

Resonance: Brawl, Melee

The Sidereal loops an unbreakable string of Essence between an attack and her opponent. There can be no other outcome save pain and ruin.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to enchant an attack. This may be an attack the Sidereal makes herself, or it may be an attack made by anyone else in the same sector that she can perceive. The attack becomes unblockable and gains Piercing (–2).

Easily Accepted Proposition Stance (•••)

Resonance: Brawl, War

In the heat of battle the Sidereal summons a crimson prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Drowning Maiden, whispers her proposal to the fortunes of war into it, and then knots it into her shadow, where it vanishes into the design of destiny. So long as the Sidereal’s request is the sort of thing that might happen within the course of a battle, it comes to pass: reinforcements arrive, or a wall collapses to create an escape route, or the character’s decimated allies turn out to be merely stunned and dazed rather than wounded and dead. The sky won’t tear open and unleash a horde of spirits upon her foes, though, nor is a comet going to fall from the heavens to destroy her enemies.

System: Use a simple action to spend 3 Motes and roll (Intelligence + Brawl) against a difficulty of the Willpower rating of the most prominent, dangerous, or highest-ranking enemy on the battlefield. If the roll succeeds, then that enemy instinctively understands that he must make a decision: either allow the Sidereal’s dictate to occur, or else stand in destiny’s path. If he stands in destiny’s path, then he suffers a one-time hazard which must be resisted with a Willpower roll

against difficulty 7, with Aggravated damage equal to the successes on the Charm's activation roll as the crimson prayer strip (burned) appears upon his forehead and burns away in a welter of crimson Essence.

This is a Fated Effect.

Every Direction Arrow (•••)

Resonance: Archery

The Sidereal fires a flurry of arrows, which vanish along the vectors of fate before reappearing to simultaneously strike their target from all directions.

System: This Charm cannot be used in the same round the Sidereal moves. Use a simple action to spend 3 Motes and end the character's turn without taking any further actions. At the end of the round, after all other characters have acted, make three Fierce Archery attacks against a single target.

Harmony of Blows (•••)

Resonance: Brawl, Melee

The Sidereal exists in harmony with the battlefield, letting the gleaming crimson lattice of destiny guide her into auspicious moments and opportunistic blows.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes. At the end of the round, after all other characters have acted, the Sidereal may launch an attack on one enemy in range. The Storyteller decides which of her foes this attack targets, rather than the Sidereal's player. If the Sidereal is an antagonist, then the players collectively decide who the attack targets.

Impeding the Flow (•••)

Resonance: Melee

A casual flick of the Exalt's hand momentarily severs the strand of destiny connecting an attack with the possibility of harming her.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to force all of the attacks a certain character directs at the Sidereal this round to generate 0 successes. This Charm has no power to protect the Sidereal against damaging or deleterious effects with no attack roll, such as environmental hazards or curses which target her Willpower, nor against attacks which always hit their target such as the Solar Charm: Accuracy Without Distance. It also cannot confound unblockable attacks or unexpected attacks.

Perfection of the Visionary Warrior (•••)

Resonance: Melee

The Sidereal summons a prayer strip scribed with the Scripture of the Maiden on the Shelf and affixes it across her eyes, filling them with blood and starlight. Violence becomes a second nature to her, and her body moves to kill of its own accord.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes, 1 Willpower. At the end of the round, after all other characters have acted, roll an extra attack against an opponent of the Sidereal's choice, picked when this Charm is first activated. This Charm persists until that target is defeated, escapes the battlefield, or the Sidereal fails to wound them during a round. The Sidereal cannot have two

instances of Perfection of the Visionary Warrior active simultaneously; if she wants to direct her extra attacks at a different enemy, she must first deal with her current destined foe. The prayer strip does not impede the Sidereal's vision.

Spirit-Binding Battle Pattern (•••)

Resonance: War

The Sidereal summons a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Maiden at War and burns it; only the letters writ upon it survive as drifting smoke. She consecrates an upcoming battle as a binding act of fate, which summons and imposes that destiny upon a spirit of her choosing through the power of those tales concluded on the red altar of war.

System: Spend 3 Motes and outline a battle plan for a group fighting under the Sidereal's leadership, or about to go into battle employing a tactical plan devised or advised by her. The Sidereal must also name a spirit of up to Essence 5, which may be a god, ghost, elemental, or demon, as she chooses. Up to one Sidereal of each of the other four castes can cosign her prayer strip before burning it; each that does so adds 1 to the maximum Essence rating of the summoned spirit.

The pool to summon and bind the spirit is rolled in a contest against the spirit's Essence rating, both at difficulty 6. The pool begins at 0 dice. One die is added for every Exalt who dies following the Sidereal's battle plan. Whenever a group loses a point of Size following her plan, that also adds another die. If a group is destroyed and slaughtered as it tries to flee because it acted according to her plan, the pool gains dice equal to its Size at the time of the dissolution. Once the Sidereal is satisfied with the pool's size, she may roll it.

If she beats the spirit's successes, the spirit is bound to either complete a single task and then seek no retribution, or serve the Sidereal loyally for a year and a day and then seek whatever revenge it may desire. This binding cannot force a spirit to commit suicide or any act tantamount to it, or to violate its Nature.

Storm's Eye Stance (•••)

Resonance: Melee

The Sidereal conjures a crimson prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the One-Handed Maiden and casts it into the air above her. The Sidereal's surroundings darken, and she is illuminated by the prayer strip which burns like a coal. By the blessings of war, any injury inflicted upon her is also visited upon her foes.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes and select a number of enemies equal to the Sidereal's Essence rating as this Charm's targets. For the rest of the scene, or until she is Staggered, whichever comes first, whenever the Sidereal suffers damage, make a reflexive Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success forces the targets of Storm's Eye Stance to use their Willpower to resist a one-time hazard with difficulty 7, and damage equal to the damage the Sidereal suffered (with the same associated Wound type). This is a Fated Effect.

Secrets Charms

These Charms deal with Sidereal Astrology, learning secrets of the present and the future, gathering data, and twisting or burying the truth.

Avoiding the Truth Technique (•)

Resonance: Lore

The Sidereal ties threads of fate connected to the most horrible and unthinkable of things to a statement she knows to be true, making that truth unthinkable. All who hear her speak become convinced that she is lying.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote while speaking. All listeners become mortally certain the Sidereal is lying. If they *know* she is telling the truth (for instance, she says the sky is blue, and they can look up and clearly see this is so), they can spend 1 Willpower to resist this Charm. Otherwise, they will disbelieve the Sidereal even if their own knowledge and senses argue otherwise.

Efficient Secretary Technique (•)

Resonance: Investigation

Upon learning this Charm, the Sidereal spits out a small jubilant spider sculpted from emerald Essence. When asked to do so by the Sidereal, it scurries off along the threads of fate to find and retrieve some fact, so long as that information is neither generally lost nor actively hidden. Five seconds later, it whispers its answer in the Exalt's ear.

System: The Sidereal may use a simple action to roll (Intelligence + Investigation) against difficulty 6, or reflexively spend 1 Mote to automatically succeed. Success deploys the spider to retrieve the information the Sidereal wants. Each subsequent use of the spider in the same scene increases the difficulty by +1, and when this would push it above 9, the spider can no longer be used without spending Essence.

When not in use, the spider rests within the Sidereal's Essence. Examples of information the spider might retrieve would include the name of a local satrap or carpenter, but not that of a mysterious masked bandit; how many years ago a widow lost her husband, but not how many days ago Mnemon met with secret conspirators; the status of the war between Lookshy and Thorns, but not the two sides' plans for how to wage the conflict; the temperature in Nexus, how many cattle a rancher owns, or how many miles must still be traveled before arriving in Gem along one's current course; but not the whereabouts of the Scarlet Empress, the true identity of Walker in Darkness, or which Sidereals are conspiring with Rakan Thulio.

Honorable Thief Spirit (•)

Resonance: Larceny

To the eyes of any criminal, the Sidereal seems to have the virtues and qualities that best qualify her for respect and admiration.

System: The Sidereal lowers the difficulty of all social interactions with criminals and outlaws by -1.

Mark of Exaltation (•)

Resonance: Occult

The Sidereal's caste mark glows with an otherworldly light which illuminates dematerialized beings and renders them tangible while touched by its radiance.

System: Use a swift or simple action to activate this Charm for the rest of the scene, making all dematerialized beings in the same zone as the Sidereal visible and tangible. By reflexively

spending 1 Mote, she can re-roll any social action directed at a god, elemental, demon, or ghost without using up her once-per-scene re-roll.

The Methodology of Secrets (•)

Resonance: Lore

The Sidereal becomes keenly sensitive to manipulation of the forces of destiny, prophecy, time, and chance, and may strike out such unauthorized alterations.

System: When the Sidereal encounters another supernatural manipulation of the forces of destiny (such as a Sidereal Astrology-crafted destiny another Sidereal unleashed, or an ongoing Getimian Charm), she may reflexively roll (Perception + Occult) against difficulty 6 to recognize the manipulation for what it is. Upon recognizing it, she may then spend 1 Mote and make a contested Essence roll against the effect's source. If she gains more successes, the destiny-manipulating effect is destroyed and the Sidereal gains one point of Paradox. She cannot use the Methodology of Secrets against her own Sidereal Astrology or Charms.

Name Pilfering Practices (•)

Resonance: Larceny

Quickly tugging on a string of fate, the Sidereal palms and pockets her target's name. Not only does she learn the individual's true name, but while she holds onto it no one save the Exalt can think or speak it.

System: The Sidereal's target must be within arm's reach. Use a simple action to roll (Dexterity + Larceny) against a difficulty of the target's Willpower rating. The Sidereal can keep hold of her target's name for (Essence rating) days per success.

Of Secrets Yet Untold (•)

Resonance: Lore

The Sidereal whispers in a hushed exhalation of Old Realm, imparting an ancient secret to an earth elemental or god of the land, which the spirit may never repeat. In exchange, the spirit must perform some favor for the Sidereal at a future date. The spirit knows the nature of the service it must perform, but the Exalt does not.

System: Use a simple action and spend 2 Motes while interacting with an appropriate spirit. Until the spirit has discharged its obligation, it must make a Willpower roll at difficulty 8 to initiate any hostile action against the Sidereal.

Research Assistant Invocation (•)

Resonance: Investigation

Clapping her hands, the Sidereal causes a plant to grow into the likeness of a helpful scholar and research assistant.

System: Use a swift or simple action and spend 1 Mote. The assistant has an Expertise pool of 7 dice, a Utility pool of 2, and Aptitudes in observation, investigation, academics, and research. It knows whatever languages the Sidereal does. In dangerous situations, such as combat, it panics and reverts to the form of a plant. Otherwise, it remains a loyal assistant for five days.

Subordinate Inspiration Technique (•)

Resonance: Stealth

The Sidereal may whisper into the mind of those unaware of her presence, and they hear her words as their own thoughts.

System: This Charm has no cost. It is only efficacious if the Sidereal is within one zone of the target character, and if they in turn aren't aware she's present. Usually this means the Sidereal is hiding by means of stealth, but it can also be used to, for example, whisper into the target's mind while disguised as a bird. Her whispers are not audible to others.

The target isn't forced to act on the thoughts the Sidereal feeds him, but he *does* believe them to be his own thoughts.

Systematic Understanding of Everything (•)

Resonance: Lore

Each night while the Sidereal sleeps, she dreams of what is, what was, and what might be. With practice, she learns to filter these visions down to a useful few which will guide her when she wakes.

System: Each day when the Sidereal awakens, she may assign a bonus dot to one of her Abilities. This may not raise an Ability above 5.

Terrestrial Circle Sorcery (•)

Resonance: Occult

The Sidereal has been initiated into the practice of sorcery. She can cast Terrestrial Circle spells and enact sorcerous workings. Purchase of this Charm grants one shaping ritual and one Terrestrial Circle spell.

System: See Chapter Seven for rules on playing a sorcerer.

Vibrations in the Spider's Web (•)

Resonance: Awareness, Investigation, Occult

Supernatural beings announce themselves as a trembling in the threads of fate around the Sidereal. In time, she may even learn to discern the warm vibrations of one of the sun's Chosen from the fraying whipsaw motions of a Second Circle demon plowing through destiny's design.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, the Sidereal becomes aware when she stands in the presence of any supernatural being, though she doesn't inherently know what *sort* of supernatural being it may be. She can try to puzzle it out by rolling Perception + (Awareness or Investigation) against difficulty 9, or difficulty 7 if she's encountered this sort of being in the past. If she also knows the Methodology of Secrets, then her Vibrations in the Spider's Web automatically identifies fate-manipulating supernatural beings without the need of a roll.

Celestial Circle Sorcery (••)

Resonance: Occult

The Sidereal has been initiated into the mighty workings of the Celestial Circle of sorcery. She can cast Celestial Circle spells. Purchase of this Charm grants one shaping ritual and one Celestial Circle spell.

System: See Chapter Seven for rules on playing a sorcerer.

A Sidereal must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Creation-Smuggling Procedures (••)

Resonance: Larceny

The Sidereal entwines herself in the solid and reliable weave of the mundane until it encases her like armor.

System: Whenever the character is the subject of any supernatural power that seeks to transform, infect, taint, transport, or control her body or spirit, or to alter her destiny or her place in the world (such as by magically altering her Backgrounds), she may reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Wits + Larceny) against difficulty 7. Success deflects the hostile magic, protecting the Sidereal completely, and immunizes her against repeated attempts to exert the same sort of influence for the rest of the scene.

Dream Confiscation Approach (••)

Resonance: Larceny

Casually bumping into her target or otherwise making light contact, the Sidereal adroitly pockets her victim's dreams.

System: Upon making physical contact with the target, reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Wits + Larceny) against difficulty 7. Success allows the Sidereal to steal the target's dreams, and to keep them for one day per success. This reveals to the Sidereal the target's Nature, his greatest aspiration, and his greatest fear. While a target's dreams are missing, he cannot regain Willpower from rest, fulfilling his Nature, or from promoting any Intimacy related to a grand ambition; and he feels listless and incomplete. The Sidereal can ransom a target's dreams back before this Charm concludes, if she wishes; the target doesn't inherently know that there's a time-limit on the Sidereal's custody of his dreams.

If used against one of the Fair Folk, this Charm forces them to roll Willpower to resist a one-time hazard with difficulty 7 and Aggravated damage (drained) equal to the successes rolled.

Embracing Life Method (••)

Resonance: Investigation

The Sidereal plucks a prayer strip from the air bearing the Scripture of That Old Thing. Impressing a question or curiosity upon it, she buries the prayer strip as though it were a seed. Over the course of the next five days, it sets down roots and grows into a small mulberry tree. Spirits of wood are drawn to visit it and leave beneath its branches small gifts and useful secrets.

System: Spend 3 Motes and roll (Charisma + Investigation) against difficulty 8. After five days, the Sidereal may return to harvest the tree's bounty. For each success rolled, she finds one gift and one bit of information useful in resolving her question or satisfying her curiosity. Gifts are generally small trinkets she will find interesting or pleasant, but may occasionally be truly useful objects. The spirits also generally leave a fair amount of useless gossip and gaudy baubles.

Marvelous Inclusion of Details (••)

Resonance: Investigation, Lore

The Sidereal devises and oversees an intensive training regimen for a small group of students in which she weaves a mystery into the skein of destiny. Those who come through the training are vastly empowered by her tutelage, wise in the ways of enigmas.

System: The Sidereal spends an entire night consulting the stars, and then an entire day weaving a customized mystery into the fabric of destiny, and spends 5 Motes, 1 Willpower. She must then, within the next seven days, touch each student she wishes to put through the training, spending 1 Mote per student. Students need not consent to this training or realize they are undergoing it. The Sidereal may train up to (Essence rating) students at a time. Once she has attached all the students she wishes to train to the destiny she's woven, the Charm takes effect.

If used to train antagonists, the Charm unfolds in a largely narrative fashion, usually occurring over the course of a week, at the end of which they may gain a new appropriate Aptitude chosen from among the following: Academics, crime, empathy, investigation, mysticism, observation, or stealth. Once every other story, if they are Exalted, they can gain a new power relating to one of those Aptitudes.

If used to train protagonists, this Charm either occurs during about a week of downtime, or consumes a session of gameplay, as the group prefers, during which they are drawn into some confounding mystery. If they overcome it, then the next time they spend experience, they may treat up to three of the following as Favored Attributes or Abilities (the Sidereal chooses which when she devises the regimen): Intelligence, Wits, Awareness, Empathy, Investigation, Larceny, Lore, Martial Arts, Occult, and Stealth. This discount applies both to buying Ability dots *and* to buying Charms. This Charm cannot provide any benefit again until a protagonist has spent experience points on *something*, and only provides a discount for one purchase (so if the player has enough normal experience points banked to buy an Ability dot, and enough supernal experience points banked to buy a Charm, she could only apply the discount to one or the other, not both).

This is a Fated Effect.

Of the Shape of the World (••)

Resonance: Larceny

Averting her eyes from a truth that is, the Sidereal creates a truth that she wishes to see, and weaves it into the flow of history.

System: The Sidereal spends an hour crafting a manufactured truth, spends 2 Motes, and weaves it into the fabric of destiny, rolling (Intelligence + Larceny) against difficulty 6 in the process. Until the next Calibration, anyone investigating the matter the Sidereal has falsified within the district where this Charm was used will invariably discover the Sidereal's crafted "truth" rather than the actual truth, unless their inquiry attempt or investigation generates more successes than she did when activating this Charm.

Sidereal Shell Games (••)

Resonance: Larceny

The Sidereal calls the weave of events to hand, then deftly crosses her wrists and steals power from another.

System: Select a target within line of sight, then use a swift or simple action to spend 1 Mote and roll (Wits + Larceny) against a difficulty of their Willpower. For each success, the Sidereal can steal one point of one of the following values from the target and add it to her own for the rest of the scene: one point of soak, one Block, one Dodge, one base damage, or dice from a specific pool (such as Dexterity + Archery). These values can be mixed and matched; for example, a Sidereal who rolled three successes could steal 2 Block and 1 (Dexterity + Melee) from a target. Only one instance of this Charm can be active at a time. If targeting an antagonist, dice must be stolen from specific Aptitudes. Only one instance of this Charm can be active at a time, and she cannot increase any rating by more than (Essence) dice.

Tell-Tale Symphony (••)

Resonance: Occult

Magic announces itself in the Sidereal's presence as a series of chimes and tones that only she can hear. With some practice, she can even learn to differentiate the sound of a sorcerous working from an activated Solar Charm.

System: The Sidereal can use a swift or simple action to roll (Perception + Occult) against difficulty 7 to survey the Essence of the world around her. Depending on the number of successes rolled and the presence of anything interesting to detect, she might uncover things like the radiance of a nearby Manse or Demesne, a subtle but active spell or sorcerous working, or the fact that a ferocious amount of Essence was spent in the area sometime recently. She can also discern particular tones and depths of Essence if she has encountered them before, and thus might use this Charm to track a missing Circlemate by the resonance of his passing.

Knowledge of this Charm also counts as a Means which adds +1 roll to sorcerous workings (see p. XX).

Transcendent Hatchet of Fate (••)

Resonance: Lore

The Sidereal draws forth a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Maiden in Terror, then watches it sink into her palm in a sickly hissing of green light, where it lurks as a portent of terrible certainty. Later, she shows her palm to a chosen victim, and there he glimpses the certainty of the future he most fears.

System: Reflexively spend 3 Motes. Upon showing her palm to someone, the Charm discharges. The Sidereal names a hideous fate which she realizes will befall the target, and he knows it to be true. Roll (Intelligence + Lore) against difficulty 9. The target loses a number of points of Willpower equal to the successes rolled.

While out-of-character, the Sidereal's player names her target's doom (subject to the Storyteller affirming that the doom is possible), within the fiction of the world the Sidereal simply names a foreordained doom that she has no authorship over herself. This Charm freezes the target's agency over his own destiny, so that his own efforts cannot save him from causality's funnel toward this monstrous ending, but the actions of others can still turn the world from its course and rescue him from this awful conclusion.

Blinding the Boar (•••)

Resonance: Stealth

The Sidereal enwraps herself in the interstice of a thousand potential futures, obscuring the truth of her existence. Though she remains clearly visible to all senses, it's impossible to pick out any of her features, understand what she's saying, or tell precisely what she's doing.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Manipulation + Stealth) against difficulty 9. Each success on this roll may be spent to add +1 to either the Sidereal's Defense or Dodge. This Charm lasts until the end of the scene or until she is next Staggered, whichever comes first.

Ceasing to Exist Approach (•••)

Resonance: Stealth

The Sidereal summons an emerald prayer strip marked with the Scripture of Absence, affixes it to her chest, and ceases to exist. She becomes a different person of her own devising, existing somewhere in the world. She reappears somewhere else, having become that new person, complete with a home, relationships, possessions, and a history to support her new existence.

System: Use a simple action and spend 5 Motes. The Sidereal vanishes and ceases to exist, and while she does not exist, no magic can identify her if it targets her through her identity rather than physical location.

The Sidereal's new life may be any manner of being: mortal, Exalt, ghost, or even a god or beast. She is transported through the weave of destiny to a place appropriate to begin her new existence. She has 15 dots of Backgrounds supporting her new life. Those around her develop memories and relationships to support the legitimacy of her existence. Thus, if she became an Abyssal serving the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears, the living and dead of the shadowland where she appears would recognize her and remember her; if she took the Allies Background, other deathknights would view her as a boon companion; and so forth. The Lover, in theory, would recognize her as a servant as well, but approaching her would be risky, as she is certainly a sufficiently potent supernatural being to possess defenses against having her perceptions and memories toyed with. The specifics of panoply-type Backgrounds are chosen by the Storyteller rather than the Sidereal. She may choose to bedeck herself with potent artifacts, but destiny decides which artifacts she manifests.

The Sidereal gains no new powers or abilities from her new life, but her existing Sidereal powers disguise themselves as whatever sort of powers the kind of being the Sidereal pretends to be ought to have. Those around her will ignore any inconsistencies in the Sidereal's existence if she offers up at least a flimsy excuse. Finally, the Sidereal's Arcane Fate doesn't obscure her new identity.

The Sidereal may end this Charm at any time, and it automatically terminates if her anima flares or after five days. When this Charm ends, the Sidereal is plucked out of her false life and returned back to a place appropriate for her true identity. Any panoply-type Backgrounds she conjured as part of her identity's cover story are subsumed back into the fabric of destiny.

Conning Chaos Technique (•••)

Resonance: Larceny

The Sidereal conjures forth a prayer strip scribed with the Scripture of the Savory Maiden and nails it to the air, where it periodically sheds a green light, then names a victim. The victim briefly glimpses the prayer strip as the Sidereal trades his destiny to the Wyld in exchange for a portion of Creation ceded back from the grip of chaos.

System: Name a target within 10 miles, then use a simple action to spend 3 Motes, 1 Willpower, and roll (Manipulation + Larceny) against difficulty 9. This Charm places a curse upon its victim for one month per success. He is constantly considered to occupy the bordermarches of the Wyld, whose effects can only intrude upon his own person, potentially twisting his mind or body. Fair Folk and other denizens of the Wyld instinctively recognize the target as having been marked for destruction by the grand processes of the Wyld, and are considered to be in the Wyld while working mischief or aggression upon him.

Once per month, the victim may make an (Intelligence + Lore) roll against difficulty 8 to research his curse, discovering particulars of its nature. One success causes him to realize that destroying the prayer strip he glimpsed at the beginning of his curse will free him; three successes leads him to realize that it was somewhere within 10 miles of his location when he saw it; and five successes tells him exactly where it is.

Once the curse expires or the Wyld destroys its victim, the deep processes of chaos dimly realize that they have been cheated; that Creation has gained more from this exchange than chaos has. The dreams of the tribes of madness henceforth feature the Sidereal as a great enemy, with increasing frequency and urgency the more often she uses this Charm.

This is a Fated Effect.

Of Horrors Best Unknown (•••)

Resonance: Lore

The Sidereal draws a net of Essence from within the weave of destiny, its strands thinner than the space between a man and his shadow. That which the Sidereal casts the net across becomes entangled in the skein of destiny, condemning it to a terrible misfortune of the Sidereal's devising.

System: Use a simple action to spend 2 Motes and roll (Dexterity + Thrown) against a difficulty of its target's Defense to cast the net. If it entangles its target — and the net is capable of snaring even ghosts and similarly dematerialized beings — then the Sidereal may name a certain circumstance or criteria, such as “so long as you continue to haunt this family” or “whenever you engage in battle.” Whenever that circumstance applies, *all* dice pools to oppose the target lower their difficulty –1, save for damage rolls. This Charm's effects last for the Sidereal's Essence rating in weeks.

This is Fated Effect.

Of Things Desired and Feared (•••)

Resonance: Lore

This terrible Charm allows the Sidereal to burn a calcified path of certainty across the course of destiny, forging many threads of causality into a blade that severs all other possibility — and usually slashes the hands of the one wielding it.

System: The character spends 5 Motes, 1 Willpower and three hours in meditation, sending her thoughts into the utmost depths of time and causality. She names a goal, and asks destiny by what means she might achieve it. In response, she sees a clear course to victory and learns its price, which might be anything from “a few bumps and bruises” to “the destruction of yourself,

of your Circle, of your legacy, of everything you hold dear, of everything that you see as good and worth fighting for in the world, and more besides.”

If the Sidereal chooses to pay this price, she automatically achieves her goal and suffers the consequences of her choice; it is narratively resolved amidst the workings of other stories.

The path laid out by this Charm’s prophecies is rarely optimal. It is often possible that the Sidereal might have triumphed at significantly less cost by relying upon her own efforts and risking uncertainty. Used to resolve minor matters, this Charm’s costs are usually inconvenient. Used to resolve the central struggles of a chronicle or an age, they are horrifyingly ruinous.

This Charm does have one substantial flaw: The Methodology of Secrets may sever its certainties. Several Sidereals may band together to enact *Of Things Desired and Feared* in unison to add together their Essence ratings as a form of insurance against such meddling, if they agree to do so.

Of Truths Best Unspoken (•••)

Resonance: Lore

Settling into meditation, the Sidereal casts her Essence deep into the annals of time and causality, letting her awareness wind deep, deep, deep into the darkest tangles of destiny’s weave, in search of those secrets the future knows but fears to acknowledge.

System: The character spends 5 Motes and three hours in meditation, casting through the threads of the future for knowledge she seeks. She may make one (Intelligence + Lore) roll against difficulty 6 to uncover some knowledge she desires as though consulting a comprehensive history of the world penned on the last night of the Second Age. For example, seeking to intuit the Mask of Winters’s next move, a Sidereal “researches” moments in the future where he is destined to openly act. Five successes might lead tell her exactly what he’s planning (to decimate Lookshy with millions of man-sized, flesh-eating flies hatched from the rotting hulk of Juggernaut), while one would merely reveal that it has something to do with the great aurochs-sized maggots feasting on the eternally rotting carcass of Juggernaut.

Use of this Charm deeply tangles the threads of destiny, and the Sidereal can employ it no more than once per story.

Trouble Multiplying Proof (•••)

Resonance: Lore

In her studies of the secret truths of destiny, the Sidereal discovers that misfortune arrives in pairs. By optimizing her movements and actions toward this tendency in the structure of the cosmos, she increases the burden of her foes’ suffering.

System: Upon Staggering a target with an attack, the Sidereal may reflexively spend 1 Mote and select one of the following effects:

- The target remains Staggered until the end of the *following* round rather than the end of the current round.
- When the target suffers a Wound as a result of being Staggered, he also immediately suffers a second instance of that same Wound.

Walking Outside Fate (•••)

Resonance: Stealth

The Sidereal steps outside of the remit of causality altogether. She moves stealthily through the world, not wholly a part of it. She may hide in the space between moments, the gap between a dog and its howl, the point where a man and his shadow are joined.

System: The character uses a simple action and gains 1 Paradox. She cannot be tracked without perfect supernatural means, nor detected by the senses of others who do not possess utterly flawless acuity. If she attempts to interact with something inside of fate, such as by stealing an object, those nearby may roll (Perception + Awareness) against difficulty 9; two successes allows them to glimpse the Sidereal for the rest of the scene. Should she enact violence or flare her anima, this Charm ends; otherwise, the Sidereal may walk outside of fate until she reflexively chooses to end this Charm.

Endings Charms

These Charms are focused upon trading value for desired outcomes, ending ongoing uncertainty, anticipating pain and problems, and dominance in physical conflict.

Death-Parrying Stroke (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

In the last possible moment, the Sidereal interposes mere steel between herself and the end of her life.

System: If an enemy's deliberate attack would leave the Sidereal incapacitated and her Block is currently 1 or more, she may reflexively set it to 0 and cause the attack to inflict no damage. Death-Parrying Stroke may be used even against unblockable attacks, though not unexpected attacks.

Forgotten Earth (•)

Resonance: Athletics

The Sidereal momentarily severs the connection between herself and the ground.

System: The Sidereal's jumping distance and height is tripled, lowering the difficulty of tricky jumps by -2. In combat, she can easily relocate to zones above her without recourse to complex movement. By spending 1 Mote and using a swift action, the Sidereal may leap into an adjacent sector without the need for a roll of any kind. If falling, the Sidereal may reflexively spend 1 Mote to cut away all connection points between herself and any future where the fall harms her, rendering her immune to falling damage until after she has finished falling.

Fortuitous Announcement (•)

Resonance: Occult

Upon making some grand prediction or announcement, the Sidereal makes a dramatic gesture, chopping through those threads of fate that enable doubt in her predictions.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Causality promptly produces some manner of highly-convincing omen such as a flock of screaming raitons, an ominous crash of thunder, or a random bystander being struck blind or cured of blindness to underscore the credibility of the Sidereal's pronouncement. The omen is always in line with the declaration; if she declares that a certain course of action is inauspicious, some dire fate befalls the first person to doubt her. If she

declares that it is timely to depart, then the clouds part and a row of sunbeams illuminate the road.

Hungry Touch (•)

Resonance: Athletics, Craft

The Sidereal touches an object and abridges its destiny, bringing about its conclusion.

System: The character touches an object no larger than a wagon with a simple action, spends 1 Mote, and rolls Intelligence + (Athletics or Craft) against difficulty 7. Success causes the object to age by years or decades in a matter of moments. The Sidereal chooses how much or how little time ravages the object. If she accumulates at least three successes, even very sturdy and enduring objects such as a steel vault door may be rotted into nothing more than dust or flakes of rust.

Inexorable Advance (•)

Resonance: Athletics

Eliding the moments of her own life between footsteps, the Sidereal may move without motion.

System: The Sidereal uses both her swift and simple actions, then rolls (Wits + Athletics) against difficulty 6. Success lets her instantly move up to one zone per success. This isn't teleportation *per se*; the Sidereal "merely" omits all of the moments between the beginning and end of her movement. As a result, she can go anywhere she *could* have reached through normal movement given sufficient time, but cannot, for example, blink from the inside of a prison cell to the hallway outside.

Peaceable Conclusion (•)

Resonance: Medicine

The Sidereal may sever those unnatural ties that allow death and life to commingle.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote upon striking an animated corpse and roll the Sidereal's Essence against its Essence rating, both at difficulty 6. If the Sidereal's successes equal or exceed those of the target, whatever force animates it ceases to have any power to do so. A possessing nemissary is forced from its body, while the magic that animates a spine chain or zombie loses all potency. If used against a group of walking dead, this Charm causes the underlying attack to inflict Aggravated damage (-3).

Precedent-Summoning Feit (•)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

While arguing a legal or other technical point, the Sidereal reaches into the pages of history and draws forth a precedent that supports her position. It may be very old, and it may be very obscure, but it is inevitably genuine and lends credence to her efforts.

System: The Sidereal may re-roll any failed Bureaucracy, Lore, or Socialize roll, so long as that roll is an attempt to take action (as opposed to looking up information in a library). This has no cost and does not count against her once-per-scene re-roll.

Prior Warning (•)

Resonance: Awareness

The Sidereal's awareness constantly probes the near future, warning her of impending danger.

System: Use a simple action to spend 1 Mote and roll (Perception + Awareness) against difficulty 6. This Charm lasts a number of hours equal to the Sidereal's Essence rating. For each success rolled, she gets one minute of advance warning when she is about to be in danger, as well as an awareness of the nature of the danger ("In three minutes, a demon is going to leap off of a roof and attempt to bite your throat out."). If no successes are rolled, the warning comes only a round in advance.

Smooth Transition (•)

Resonance: Medicine

With but a gentle touch, the Sidereal enables a peaceful and painless transition between life and death.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote while touching the Charm's subject. The Charm instantly and painlessly kills any Incapacitated or dying target, as well as anyone who wishes to die. If used on a corpse laying upon the naked ground, it sinks into the earth, quietly arranging for its own burial. No one slain by this Charm ever lingers as a ghost.

Terminate Illness (•)

Resonance: Medicine

The Sidereal makes the Lesser Sign of the Corpse against the spirit of an illness, bringing that disease to an end.

System: Use a simple action and spend 1 Mote while focusing upon someone in the same zone. The Sidereal's target is immediately cured of one disease or sickness.

Wise Choice (•)

Resonance: Awareness

When confronted by many choices, the Sidereal may evaluate the future to learn which is most immediately beneficial.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to learn which of an array of options will lead to the best short-term outcome. This Charm only evaluates the immediate future, not long-term or cumulative repercussions; for example, a Sidereal who uses it to win every game of chance in a casino is likely to be quickly kicked out of the building as the management comes to suspect her of cheating.

Blade of the Violet Bier (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The Sidereal cuts away the swift conclusion of her empowering by the workings of destiny.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Willpower when the Sidereal uses Excellence of the Starry Vault to add dice to an Ability. The Charm's activation lasts for the rest of the scene or until she is next Staggered, whichever comes first, rather than until the end of the round.

Burn Life (••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Sidereal burns hours from the ordained duration of her life to suffuse herself with short-term power.

System: The difficulty of feats of strength to lift or break something are lowered by -3. The Sidereal may reflexively spend 1 Mote to cause her unarmed attacks to gain a base damage of 6 and to increase her Soak and Stagger Threshold by +1 for the rest of the scene.

Conclusive Wisdom (••)

Resonance: Awareness, Stealth

The Sidereal protects herself with a shroud of inevitability to which she is quite accustomed, but which other beings shudder to confront. Whenever someone tries to supernaturally glean the Sidereal's secrets, such as by reading her mind or forecasting her future, they instead see only a prayer strip floating in the darkness before their eyes, which slowly blooms with pungent violet flowers, which in turn unfold into a terrible vision of the spy's ultimate demise.

System: The Sidereal may reflexively pay 1 Mote when she is subjected to scrying, mind-reading, soul scrutiny, and similar magic, and make a (Wits + Awareness) roll against a difficulty of the scrutinizer's Willpower rating. The spy is blocked from learning anything about the Sidereal, and loses one point of Willpower per success rolled as the prophecy of their final destruction shakes them to their core. Worse, as the vision-petals wilt and fall away, so too do all details of their foreseen death, leaving behind only a terrible feeling of hopelessness, but no details with which to work to avert it.

If the Sidereal knows Prior Warning, it will treat attempts to magically glean her secrets as a threat, giving her perfect knowledge of when to activate Conclusive Wisdom even if she is being spied upon by being she is unaware of. Otherwise, she must use context clues and her own discernment to decide when to activate this Charm.

End Debate (••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

The Sidereal calls forth a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Maiden's Promise and casts it to the ground, where it explodes in a burst of amethyst light. Silence falls in its wake as those who witness the eruption realizes that all has already been said, and that it is time for action.

System: Use a simple action and spend 2 Motes. This Charm instantly ends a debate, bringing it to whatever its natural conclusion would have been; the participants proceed to a vote or drop the matter as causality dictates. Alternately, this Charm may stop a bureaucratic process cold, severing all futures in which it moves forward so much as a single bit for the rest of the current story.

Expected Pain (••)

Resonance: Awareness

The Sidereal becomes acutely attuned to one form of misery, the better to safeguard herself against it.

System: Name one variety of misfortune upon learning this Charm, such as "being attacked," "being betrayed," "being poisoned," "suffering the death of a loved one," or "being humiliated." Whenever this misfortune is about to befall the Sidereal, she becomes supernaturally aware of

the fact with just enough time to prevent its occurrence by swift and decisive action — assuming she can immediately figure out what that action ought to be.

Metal Storm (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts, Melee

The Sidereal folds together memory, prophecy, and effort to strike a threefold blow against her enemy.

System: Upon attacking and damaging a foe with a Martial Arts or Melee attack, the Sidereal sets up a destined repetition. If she successfully strikes the same foe on her next turn, the attack inflicts Aggravated damage (–1). This rating increases by a further –1 on each subsequent attack until the Sidereal attacks someone else, attacks her target but fails to strike him, or simply does not attack for an entire round.

Icy Hand (••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy

The Sidereal crystallizes a narrow array of possible futures as she touches an officer of a bureaucracy or similarly formal organization, making it impossible for them to succumb to corruption or graft in the course of their duties.

System: Touch the target, reflexively spend 1 Mote, and roll (Charisma + Bureaucracy) against a difficulty of their Willpower rating. They are compelled to perform their duties honestly for one day per success rolled.

Invocation of the Storm-Following Silence (••)

Resonance: Medicine, Occult

The Sidereal may use death as a doorway to pass into the Underworld.

System: So long as the Sidereal is in the presence of a dead body, a grave, a memorial marker, a funeral procession, or some other worldly reminder of death, she may use a simple action to pay 1 Mote and roll (Wits + Medicine) against difficulty 7 to slip into the Underworld, transforming the anchor point into a cenote in the process (see Volume II, p. XX). Since the entire Underworld is a place of death, she can use this Charm anywhere in the Underworld to cross back into the land of the living. When she crosses over, she can bring as many willing passengers along with her as she pleases, so long as they're wearing mourning clothes, paying respects to the departed, weeping inconsolably, or otherwise making overt acknowledgement of death.

Natural Selection Glance (••)

Resonance: Awareness

The Sidereal flicks her eyes across the many potentialities of her foes' immediate future, then uses her own destiny as a white-hot blade to shear away all but the most likely of possibilities.

System: The Sidereal selects a target, uses a swift or simple action, spends 1 Mote, and suffers 1 Aggravated damage (drained). The target must then declare what actions he will take on his next turn, and abide by those declarations, even if, by the time his turn arrives, those actions are no longer useful or even possible.

To be clear, he must declare what he will do with his swift action, and what he will do with his simple action. He does not have to declare reflexive or reactive Charm uses (such as the Solar Charm: Excellent Strike), but he does have to declare any Charm he wishes to use that compel the use of a swift or simple action (such as the Solar Charm: Hypnotic Tongue Technique).

This is a Fated Effect.

Sorrowful Conclusion (••)

Resonance: Empathy

The Sidereal devises and oversees an intensive training regimen for a small group of students in which she weaves a terrible crisis into the fabric of destiny. Those who come through the training are vastly empowered by her tutelage, hardened by the need to pursue decisive action and rise to terrible necessity.

System: The Sidereal spends an entire night consulting the stars, and then an entire day weaving a crisis which must be promptly concluded into the fabric of destiny, and spends 5 Motes, 1 Willpower. She must then, within the next seven days, touch each student she wishes to put through the training, spending 1 Mote per student. Students need not consent to this training or realize they are undergoing it. The Sidereal may train up to (Essence rating) students at a time. Once she has attached all the students she wishes to train to the destiny she's woven, the Charm takes effect.

If used to train antagonists, the Charm unfolds in a largely narrative fashion, usually occurring over the course of a week, at the end of which they may gain a new appropriate Aptitude chosen from among the following: Athletic displays, bureaucracy, keen senses, empathy, martial arts, medicine, or mysticism. Once every other story, if they are Exalted, they can gain a new power relating to one of those Aptitudes.

If used to train protagonists, this Charm either occurs during about a week of downtime, or consumes a session of gameplay, as the group prefers, during which they are drawn into some harrowing disaster. If they overcome it, then the next time they spend experience, they may treat up to three of the following as Favored Attributes or Abilities (the Sidereal chooses which when she devises the regimen): Dexterity, Intelligence, Athletics, Awareness, Bureaucracy, Empathy, Martial Arts, Medicine, Occult, and Stealth. This discount applies both to buying Ability dots *and* to buying Charms. This Charm cannot provide any benefit again until a protagonist has spent experience points on *something*, and only provides a discount for one purchase (so if the player has enough normal experience points banked to buy an Ability dot, and enough supernal experience points banked to buy a Charm, she could only apply the discount to one or the other, not both).

This is a Fated Effect.

Underling Invisibility Practice (••)

Resonance: Stealth

It is the will of destiny that those who consider themselves above the process of fate shall become most vulnerable to it. The Sidereal wraps her destiny in threads of humble obscurity, making herself completely imperceptible to anyone who considers himself superior to the Sidereal, be it morally, personally, or hierarchically. They cannot even perceive the efforts of others to point out the Sidereal's presence or existence.

System: Use a simple action and spend 1 Mote to enjoy this Charm's effects for a scene. Its benefits cease to hide the Sidereal from someone if she physically interacts with them, and the Charm collapses altogether if her anima flares.

Conclusion-Pursuing Approach (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The Sidereal conjures forth a prayer strip scribed with the Scripture of the Expectant Maiden and affixes it to her weapon or fist, imbuing it with lethal power.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to affix the prayer strip. For the rest of the scene, the enchanted weapon is unbreakable and all successful attacks made with it increase their base damage by +3.

Earth and Sky Bargain (•••)

Resonance: Medicine, Occult

The Sidereal summons a violet prayer strip inscribed with the Scripture of the Maiden and the Road and buries it in the earth. An intuition steals over her, and leads her to a spirit of the earth or air that is, for whatever reason, on the verge of death. The Sidereal may offer it a bargain: bind itself to her for a time, and survive.

System: Use a simple action, spend 3 Motes, and roll Perception + (Medicine or Occult) against difficulty 9. Success will lead the Sidereal to an appropriate spirit. While the spirit is bound to her, she regenerates 1 damage per hour, increases her Soak by +2, and heals her Wounds at three times the normal rate. She can transfer the spirit to someone else if she desires, granting them its benefits, although she has no power to reclaim it. The spirit remains bound to service for one day per success rolled, after which it springs free, restored to its ordinary state of health. It may or may not feel indebted to the Sidereal, depending on how long it was bound and whether or not she had anything to do with its being on death's doorstep in the first place.

Inevitable Pursuit (•••)

Resonance: Awareness, Survival

The character's quarry can no more hide from her than from his own past. The Sidereal tracks her prey, not based on the physical signs of his passing, but on the impressions he leaves on the fate of the world and those he comes in contact with.

System: Once the character finds some evidence of a trail to follow, her player may reflexively spend 1 Mote to perfectly track the target for the next 24 hours. No roll is needed.

Invisible Motion (•••)

Resonance: Athletics

The Sidereal summons a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Maiden and the Dust, and wraps it around her neck or forehead. She now skips over the trivial moments of her life, moving like a flipbook drawing with pages stuck together, blinking from place to place and motion to motion.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes. For the rest of the scene, the Sidereal may move two zones rather than one when she uses a move action. Moreover, her armor has a Fatigue value of 0 and a base Dodge value of +1.

Life-Severing Blow (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts, Melee

The Sidereal winds the inevitability of death into her blows, ensuring that they strike mortal wounds into her enemies.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll Willpower against difficulty 7. For each success, the Sidereal may enhance one attack she makes during the current scene, granting that attack Piercing (-2). She assigns this enhancement immediately before rolling her damage dice, so that it is never wasted upon failed attacks.

Life-Severing Blow can only be activated once per scene.

Terminal Sanction (•••)

Resonance: Bureaucracy, Occult

The Sidereal calls upon an ancient sanction granting her the authority of Heaven to call even the gods themselves to answer her audit, and to destroy them if found wanting.

System: Target a spirit in the same zone as the Sidereal, then use a simple action to spend 2 Motes and roll (Intelligence + Bureaucracy) against a difficulty of (3 + the target's Essence rating). If the target is in dematerialized, it immediately manifests at no cost for the rest of the scene whether or not the Sidereal's roll succeeded. If the roll succeeded, then the Sidereal gains Terminal Sanction over the spirit. If she destroys it during the current scene, then she has the following options: She can obliterate the being utterly and permanently; suspend its destruction and imprison it within an object; suspend its destruction and demand it perform a single task; or suspend its destruction and instead compel its service for a year and a day.

Supernal Awareness (•••)

Resonance: Awareness

The Sidereal filters her awareness of the complex weave of destiny as the present cascades into the future around her. She may sweep the weave of fate for specific disturbances, denoting individuals or phenomena she wishes to locate.

System: Use a simple action to spend 1 Mote and roll (Perception + Awareness) against difficulty 6. The Sidereal's supernal sense extends out the entire district she occupies. The Sidereal sets this sense to sweep for the presence of whatever she specifies: ghosts, Solars, warding spells, Demesnes, daiklaves, corpses, murder scenes. If there's anything to detect, then the Sidereal gains a vague sense of what direction she should head in to locate the thing she seeks, although this Charm's of no further use once she arrives at her destination. She might know, upon arriving at a teahouse, that there is a Solar somewhere inside, but that doesn't tell her which person in the teahouse is the Solar... or even if there might be more than one Solar present.

Paradox Missions

So, from time to time, Sidereals receive missions from Heaven to go and resolve some snarl in the skein of destiny before it can become a serious problem. This is, in fact, a major way for them to reduce their own Paradox. Okay, cool, but what does that *mean*? What does a paradox mission *look like*?

Below are a number of example missions. They can be used either as inspiration, or as a random pick-a-mission chart for Storytellers who already have enough shit on their plate this week. To use these missions as inspiration, just read them. To use them as a random generator, start by rolling a single die. On a result of 1-4, roll again and run one of the corresponding missions from “Tangled Destinies.” On a result of 5-7, roll again and run one of the corresponding missions from “Opposed Destinies.” On a result of 8-9, roll again and run one of the corresponding missions from “Major Destinies.” On a result of 10, roll again and run one of the corresponding missions from “Legendary Destinies.”

Finally, if they fail, roll one last time and consult the Consequences chart to see what happens because of their failure.

Tangled Destinies (1-4)

These are minor snares in the tapestry of Fate, in which the Sidereals are unlikely to face opposition from anything but the situation itself, but even minor snares need to be resolved lest they snowball into larger problems later on. Roll a single die and pick a mission from the number it lands on.

If she resolves a tangled destiny, the Sidereal discards 1 Paradox.

Result The Sidereals must...

- 1 Aid a merchant in avoiding an ambush; *or* delay a person’s meeting with their lover; *or* ensure that a person is in their home at a certain time of a certain day.
- 2 Convince a Dynastic family to adopt an orphan; *or* make it rain over a drought-stricken landscape; *or* arrange for a man to wade into a certain river.
- 3 Ensure that an unimportant peasant family dies during a journey to a major city; *or* help an aged wealthy man to marry and conceive a child before he dies; *or* enact a transformation of a certain person’s gender.
- 4 Remove all but one copy of a certain text from a specific city; *or* frame an innocent soldier for murdering an officer and then help him escape; *or* ensure that no one who passes along a certain stretch of road during a certain hour goes to sleep that night on an empty stomach.
- 5 Steal seven rubies from a treasure house and hide them in a woodcutter’s cabin; *or* prevent onlookers from aiding a drowning man; *or* cause two city officials to get into a fistfight.
- 6 See that an important occult text is delivered to a particular Immaculate temple; *or* ensure the safety of a group of refugees hunted by mercenaries; *or* ensure that a certain person remains a virgin until the new moon has come and gone.
- 7 Evict a lesser god from Heaven to open up her position for replacement; *or* replace an ancient artifact belonging to a mortal with a fake; *or* make understood the contents of a letter to a certain illiterate person, without reading it to him.
- 8 See that a vote is rigged to produce a certain outcome; *or* convince a Dynast’s servant to plant incriminating evidence against his master in the hands of a rival; *or* see to it that a certain ship does not set sail on a certain day.

9 Force a homeless beggar to knock on the door of a peasant and sing a song; *or* cause a governor to miss an important meeting without ever touching him or speaking to him or letting him see any Sidereal; *or* prevent both participants of a duel from arriving on time.

10 Ensure that someone kidnaps a wealthy man's dog; *or* make sure that a broken temple bell rings 20 times when a procession leaves a certain house; *or* ensure that a corpse receives a proper burial and funeral.

Opposed Destinies (5-7)

These are also lesser complications in weave of the world, but Sidereals must operate within a framework of meaningful opposition in order to resolve them. Roll a single die and pick a mission from the number it lands on.

If she resolves an opposed destiny, the Sidereal discards 2 Paradox.

Result The Sidereals must...

1 Smuggle a pendant into a satrap's palace and hide it in a vase standing next to his throne; *or* kidnap a Dynastic household's seven children and leave them tied up in a particular town square by dawn; *or* retrieve a particular skull from a defiled graveyard crawling with hungry ghosts and burn it upon the altar of a certain temple.

2 Prevent a group of ghosts from establishing themselves in a living city; *or* see that every trooper in a field-deployed wing of an imperial legion is fed a hearty and nutritious meal; *or* ensure that a wedding becomes a riot which burns down at least one entire neighborhood.

3 Hide a new Exalt from the Wyld Hunt until the full moon has come and gone; *or* arrange the death of a Dynast's pregnant wife; *or* lead a Dragon-Blooded to discover a spy in her household.

4 Plant flower seeds on seemingly infertile ground and water them until they grow; *or* lure a Guild caravan into a raider ambush; *or* guide a man into a Lunar's cult.

5 Maintain the illusion that a murdered family is alive until a caravan leaves town; *or* steal all documents from an Immaculate temple; *or* burn down a Manse.

6 Recapture five criminals that escaped justice before they leave the city; *or* convince a satrap to give up his job and take up tailoring; *or* convince a prince to assassinate his wisest advisor.

7 Trick a minor god into leaving Heaven forever; *or* rebuild one of the ruined towers in Rathess; *or* retrieve a lost artifact from the bottom of the sea.

8 Convince the abbot of an Immaculate temple that he has Exalted; *or* kill the living servants of an Abyssal Exalt while they are on their way to a major city; *or* perfectly forge a duplicate of a letter written by the Scarlet Empress and deliver it to a certain satrap.

9 Help a child Exalt escape from a malevolent spirit; *or* destroy a silver mine that belongs to House Sesus, leaving no survivors; *or* ensure that a man is chosen to contribute to the making of a new Yennin.

10 Prevent an unforeseen attack by a second circle demon; *or* stop a Wyld Hunt from entering a shadowland through its eastern border; *or* stop a Fair Folk warband from reaching its destination.

Major Destinies (8-9)

These are serious errors in the structure of destiny, involving important figures, high stakes, and often substantial opposition. Roll a single die and pick a mission from the number it lands on.

If she resolves a major destiny, the Sidereal discards 3 Paradox.

Result The Sidereals must...

- 1 Provide a clandestine escort for a Dragon-Blooded through a Lunar dominion; *or* locate and detain a rebel Sidereal; *or* find a Liminal's severed head and affix it to a Dynast's body.
- 2 Pursue a settlement between two conflicting supernatural beings; *or* stage the murder of an influential couple without personally dealing the killing blows; *or* cause a god's high priest to turn against her.
- 3 Ensure that an assassination unfolds uninterrupted by meddling Fair Folk; *or* force a god to withdraw his support from a group of pirates; *or* cause 100 recruits to join a mercenary company before the end of the month.
- 4 Help a political refugee to establish a new identity while keeping his pursuers away; *or* free a group of prisoners held captive by an Abyssal; *or* arrange for a chancellor to be exiled.
- 5 Bring a spirit's rule to an end; *or* prevent the truth about a local myth from surfacing; *or* ensure a specific Dragon-Blooded wins a Gateway tournament.
- 6 Prevent someone from learning of the existence of the Sidereal Exalted; *or* shatter a cult without killing any of its members; *or* cause a Lunar to enter and win a town's eating contest.
- 7 Secretly switch a poor man's newborn baby for a Dynast's; *or* find a lost tomb and ensure that the secret held within falls into the hands of a certain scavenger lord; *or* cause an Abyssal to fall in love with a particular mortal.
- 8 Bring about the destruction of a famous and well-guarded library; *or* locate a magical poison and administer it to a sick man currently being healed by a powerful artifact; *or* reunite a Ghost-Blooded youth with both of her parents.
- 9 Lead a caravan astray for a certain period before leading it back to its proper destination; *or* participate in a Wyld Hunt and divert it from a newly Exalted Sidereal; *or* guide a feral Dragon King to reclaim his intelligence.
- 10 Prevent the excavation of an old Exalted grave; *or* convince a fisherman to try to resurrect his wife; *or* burn a contract and make sure no one who was present for its signing can ever speak of it again.

Legendary Destinies (10)

These are compound errors in the weave of destiny, usually the result of several lesser failures compounding. Roll a single die and pick a mission from the number it lands on.

If she resolves a legendary destiny, the Sidereal discards 4 Paradox.

Result The Sidereals must...

- 1-2 Strike back against a powerful faerie lord who is working with a secret Guild slave ring to empty out villages and cities at a principality's border. The lord must die, the fae must not

occupy the empty villages, and the Guild's involvement must be exposed, but the Sidereal may not spill a drop of blood herself.

3-4 Gather evidence that several major gods are guilty of treason and see them convicted by one of the Celestial Incarnae.

5-6 Find and destroy a free third circle demon.

7-8 Prevent a catastrophic battle from forming a new shadowland.

9-10 Prevent a Circle of Solars from assassinating a highly influential Dynast and plunging the Realm into civil war.

Paradox Manifestation

If the Sidereals fail in their mission, roll a die and consult the chart below to determine what happens. If they fail a tangled destiny mission, subtract -1 from the result. If they fail a legendary mission, add $+2$.

If there is a lingering modifier from a previous mission failure, then when the Sidereals successfully resolve a Paradox mission, each of them that chooses to give up their personal Paradox mitigation can instead remove a $+1$ from that lingering failure modifier.

Result Paradox

1-3 Future errors in destiny's weave compound in a more serious fashion, but there are no other immediate repercussions.

4-5 Minor paradox. The effects last for only a short period. A drinking party might result in a riot, even though no wine is present. A man drowns after being pulled safely from the water. The next time the Sidereals fail a Paradox mission, add $+1$ to the failure roll.

6-7 Serious paradox with substantial ongoing consequences. A politician gives a famous speech without being present. A fire is not extinguished in time and cannot be extinguished at all, continuing to spread for hours or days. The next time the Sidereals fail a Paradox mission, add $+2$ to the failure roll.

8 Disastrous paradox. The paradox is large and massively disruptive. A prince is assassinated and his nation falls into chaos despite that he still lives. A sorcerer banishes the rain and it never returns, turning a fertile land into a barren waste. The next time the Sidereals fail a Paradox mission, add $+3$ to the failure roll.

9 A serious or disastrous paradox, also accompanied by the escape of one or more second or third circle demons escaping from Hell. The next time the Sidereals fail a Paradox mission, add $+4$ to the failure roll.

10+ Fatal paradox. A sector of reality becomes so badly corrupted that the pattern spiders are forced to excise it. Roll another die. On a 1-6 result, a large Wyld zone forms where the excised sector used to be. On a 7+ result, the excision is relatively clean and Creation "merely" suffers the loss of part of its substance forever. In either case, minor paradoxes appear intermittently as the effects of the excision ripple out to affect those disrupted by the removal of important places or people from their particular causal dependencies. The Sidereals are sure to face formal censure.

Using Paradox Missions

Okay, Storyteller, let's talk. Generally speaking, Sidereals will appear in your chronicle in one of three capacities:

- You'll run a chronicle where all the players are Sidereals.
- You'll run a chronicle where only one or maybe two players are Sidereals in an otherwise mixed group.
- You'll run a chronicle where Sidereals only appear as antagonists who may either support or oppose the protagonists. Okay that's a weird sentence and the first time I've regretted not just using "PC" and "NPC" like every other game out there but you know what I mean.

In the first case, Paradox missions should feature pretty frequently and will often be stories unto themselves. You'll be balancing a mixture of giving the players time to work on their own agendas, pursue whatever the greater overarching concern of the chronicle is, and, yes, attend to the priority missions sent to them by the Bureau of Destiny, which they may often try to fold into their ongoing agendas or overarching chronicle concerns to increase efficiency. Players in this situation should expect a Paradox mission to show up every other story or so.

In the second case, Paradox missions should be less frequent, because they have the potential to derail the chronicle overall. This isn't a problem in a Sidereal-centric chronicle, because maintaining a work-life balance is a big part of the core themes of what Sidereals *are*, but that isn't true for Solars, Lunars, Abyssals, and so on, and if they have to drop everything to help the Sidereal get a farmer drunk enough to make out with a sheep every other story, they're going to get resentful sooner rather than later. As a result, you need to be more discerning with the Paradox missions you pick. You probably shouldn't toss in a big demanding mission more than once every few stories — no more often than any other character would get a "it's my time!" spotlight-hogging story, anyway. Generally, you'll want to pick lighter-weight Paradox missions that the Sidereal can try to double-up accomplishing while still doing wherever else it is the Circle is doing. If they're already going to infiltrate Mnemon's fancy dress ball, go ahead and give the Sidereal an extra bonus objective at the party as a Paradox mission, for example. This isn't even bending the rules or cheating the story; the nature of Sidereals as fate's troubleshooting agents means that serendipity naturally steers them toward growing weak spots in destiny, so it's very common for Paradox missions to "coincidentally" crop up nearby, or involve people or places the Sidereals were planning to seek out anyway.

The fun part of this is the Sidereal Great Curse, of course. With the resources of a full Circle of Exalted at her disposal, a Sidereal should be able to crush most Paradox missions with trivial ease... assuming she can bring herself to explain what she's doing and why she's doing it to the brutes, dullards, and wilting violets she herds around. Pretty frequently, she won't, necessitating that she either pursue her missions on the sly or needlessly manipulate her comrades into helping her without filling them in on any of the details.

In the third case, you don't really need to care about Paradox missions on any involved level, since you're not going to bother tracking the minutiae of an antagonist's Paradox pool, and since non-Sidereals can't really sense or interact with the deep currents of history and causality in any meaningful way, they have no reason to care about them or build stories around them. For you, Paradox missions are just a notional reality to keep in mind in order to justify Sidereals doing weird and inscrutable things that are genre-appropriate to enigmatic, possibly untrustworthy

kung-fu oracle-viziers. Paradox missions give you a reason to have Sidereal antagonists show up to pull the Circle out of trouble, or put them *in* trouble, or possibly both in the same story.

Chapter Seven: Martial Arts and Sorcery

It's the martial arts and sorcery chapter. That's the order we'll be handling things in: martial arts, and then sorcery. Let's get straight into it.

Martial Arts

We'll start with the basic rules and assumptions the **Exalted Demake** uses for what Martial Arts are and how they work, and then get to the styles themselves:

- Martial Arts runs off a simplified Third Edition-esque model, without differentiation between what used to be “Terrestrial” and “Celestial” styles.
- Martial Arts styles always run off the Martial Arts Ability. It's what you use to make your attack rolls whenever you've got a Martial Arts Charm in play. It's what you use to make your attack rolls whenever you are, within the fiction, kung-fu fighting.
- Martial Arts Charms are universal. **Any Exalt can use them**, though Alchemicals need a special Charm to do so.
- Martial Arts styles are somewhat linear. You must buy all the one-dot Charms, then all the two-dot Charms, then finally the three-dot Charm. You may buy Charms within a dot range in any order.
- Martial Arts styles have “style weapons.” These are the weapons that you can use the Martial Arts Ability to wield while using the Martial Arts style. If you're using a weapon that is not listed among a Martial Art's style weapons, you cannot use Charms from that style while doing so. A “[particular Martial Arts style] attack,” such as a Snake style attack, is any attack using the style weapons of that Martial Arts style. **If two Martial Arts styles share weapons, then an attack may be considered a style attack for both styles simultaneously.** This usually means unarmed attacks using a particular Attribute.
- Martial Arts Charms **can be freely combined with native Charms**. A Solar Tiger stylist can use Spine-Shattering Bite and Excellent Strike at the same time on the same attack with no problem.
- Martial Arts Charms **can be freely combined with other Martial Arts Charms** if you can get the armor restrictions and style weapons to line up.
- To sum up those last three points and make them completely explicit: a Dexterity-based unarmed attack can very easily be a Snake style attack, a Tiger style attack, a Fire Dragon style attack, and a Wood Dragon style attack all at the same time, and may simultaneously benefit from effects from all of those styles at once *plus native Charms* assuming the martial artist can get her Charms to line up and spend enough Motes.
- Martial Arts styles have armor restrictions. Many Martial Arts styles cannot be used while wearing certain kinds of armor, or any armor at all.
- Martial Arts styles also have other prerequisites before a character can begin purchasing their Charms.

- There are two special subsets of Martial Arts styles: the Immaculate styles and the Forbidden Arts. Their rules are a little bit different and will be detailed later. By default, most characters are not able to buy them.
- Some Martial Arts Charms mention “Celestial Exalted.” In rules terms, this means all Exalted who are *not* Dragon-Blooded, Liminals, or certain Exigents.
- If a character has taken Martial Arts as a Caste or Favored Ability, she may purchase Martial Arts Charms at a Caste/Favored discount.
- When purchasing Charms at character creation, dots of native Charms may be swapped out for Martial Arts Charms on a one-for-one basis.
- Every Martial Arts style has a “Form”-type Charm. A character can only have one such Charm active at a time. Activating a new Form while an old Form is still active cancels the old Form.
- Finally, each Martial Arts style has its own associated fighting style. When using style weapons appropriate to that Martial Arts style, you may *either* enjoy the benefits of the fighting style associated with that Martial Art, *or* the appropriate basic fighting style from Chapter One (for example, if fighting with section staves, the martial artist could *either* enjoy the benefit of two-handed fighting, *or* Snake style fighting.
- Once a martial artist has employed the benefit of any Martial Arts-based fighting style, she is locked out benefitting from basic fighting styles for the rest of the scene, and vice-versa. Thus, you can’t shuttle back and forth between treating yourself as fighting unarmed or using Tiger style from moment to moment as it best benefits you; you must lock into one or the other for the rest of the scene.
- Since many Martial Arts styles share style weapons, it’s important to declare which Martial Arts fighting style a character is using the benefits of. Once a specific Martial Arts fighting style’s benefit has been employed, the martial artist is “locked into” using that fighting style for the rest of the scene so long as she continues fighting with that style’s weapons. She can shift into using the benefits of a different Martial Arts fighting style only if it has no style weapons in common with a style she’s already used in the scene.
- This does also mean that multidisciplinary mastery can bring unexpected benefits, making it possible to employ, say, the fighting style benefits of Tiger style while attacking with Snake style Charms, so long as the martial artist is employing Dexterity-based unarmed attacks (the only style weapon the two share in common).

Crane Style

Crane is a powerful defensive style dating back to the late First Age, intended to allow diplomats to defend themselves from unreasonable aggression while talking down opponents it would be politically infeasible to beat to a pulp. The Spiral Academy and a number of expensive schools in the Coral Archipelago still teach Crane in this context, but throughout much of Creation in the modern day it is considered primarily a self-defense art for the upper class. It is particularly popular among women in the North, while mastery of its forms is considered a mark of social refinement in a number of Eastern nations neighboring Vaneha.

Form Weapons: Crane practitioners generally fight with a metal-reinforced war fan (Dexterity, damage 4, bruised or lacerated, nimble, counts as a shield for fighting style purposes) in one hand for defense and a hook sword (Dexterity, damage 5, lacerated) for disarming in the other.

Unarmed attacks are Dexterity-based and generally consist of short kicks, elbow strikes, slaps, and sweeping blows with the forearm or edge of the hand.

Armor: Crane style must be practiced unarmored.

Prerequisites: The traditional Crane curriculum requires Awareness •, Socialize •.

Crane fighting style: The martial artist increases her base Block value by +2.

Crossed Wings Denial (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist enacts a powerful defense, gathering the aggression of her foes to turn against them.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the end of the scene or until she is Staggered, whichever comes first, the martial artist's Block is increased by +1 and she may reflexively protect another character in the same zone, so long as neither leaves the other's side. While this Charm is active, when she invokes her Block to protect someone else, it is increased by +2 against that attack.

Beak Spears Frog (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist uses an efficient, sweeping strike to deprive a foe of the means of aggression.

System: Attempting to disarm someone with Crane style attacks costs 0 Willpower, and does not count as making an attack for the purpose of other Crane style Charms. If she disarms the opponent with at least three successes on the Crane style attack roll, she may hurl the disarmed weapon into an adjacent zone and increase her Block by +1.

Crane Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist uses broad, sweeping motions to defend herself and stymie her foes.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Crane Form for the rest of the scene. While under the effects of this Charm, she is considered to be employing the sword and board fighting style *in addition to* whatever other fighting style she is currently using (see p. XX). Additionally, she may choose to set her unarmored Soak value, before other modifiers, to 7 rather than the usual 5. While this Charm is active, if she knows Beak Spears Frog she may reflexively disarm (see p. XX) any opponent who attempts to attack her at close range but fails. Finally, if she has not launched an attack during the current or previous round, Crossed Wings Denial adds a further +1 to all uses of Block until the end of the round.

If the martial artist Blocks an attack and reduces it to 0 damage thereby, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Crane Form reflexively. Non-Celestial Exalted must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from oversteering their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Mournful Crane's Cry (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist sorrowfully resigns herself to the necessity of violence, striking down those who mean her ill.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene or until Staggered, whichever comes first, the Exalt may Dodge or Block one attack directed against her each round without spending Willpower. If this causes the attack to miss or inflict no damage, and the attacker is in range, then the martial artist reflexively strikes her aggressor with a Crane style attack that is considered to have hit with 0 successes, generating no threshold damage. These attacks can only inflict bruised or dazed Wounds, and cannot strike a target through a perfect defense. These are not considered attacks for the purpose of Crane Form.

Wisdom of the Celestial Crane (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist strictly limits her capacity for violence, the better to make foes into allies.

System: While Crane Form is active, anyone the martial artist incapacitates is not knocked unconscious, but instead rendered paralyzed but still fully aware, enabling her to speak with him. He is in all other respects considered both incapacitated and Staggered while in this state, which lasts for the rest of the scene. Additionally, counterattacks generated by Mournful Crane's Cry automatically strike their target with (Essence rating) successes for the purpose of threshold damage.

Heaven's Ladder

This unusual style's origins are obscure, but it is known to date back to at least the latter days of the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate. The Fire-Watchers were a group of highly-trained sentinels positioned in Karashelen (which is now Lord's Crossing), and then later Myion. They were the city's fire-fighting service; they were also formidable combatants who scouted ahead on those days when the shogun made procession through the city to inspect his people and holdings. By government decree, all fires were banked or extinguished on such days to avoid a repeat of a centuries-old attempt to assassinate a former Shogun by setting fire to the district he was inspecting. The Fire-Watchers climbed high ladders to look out for tell-tale signs of smoke, which were punishable by death; because it was also forbidden to bear weapons in the shogun's presence without express invitation, they also used their ladders as weapons.

The institution apparently made an impression on the Scarlet Empress when she was a young Dragon-Blooded officer, for she had the survivors of the Fire-Watchers installed in the Imperial City and there revived their order as the Exceptionally Watchful Wardens of Unchecked Flame, the official firefighting organization of the Realm's capital. A few of her satraps have emulated the practice, spreading this martial arts style out to a handful of Threshold satrapies.

Form Weapons: Heaven's Ladder uses short, powerful Strength-based unarmed strikes, as well as attacks with extensible ladders (Strength, 4 damage, bruised, nimble).

Armor: Heaven's Ladder may be practiced unarmored or in light armor.

Prerequisites: Heaven's Ladder stresses keen-eyed watchfulness and excellent balance. Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Athletics ••, Awareness ••.

Heaven's Ladder fighting style: The martial artist increases her Defense by +1 and her base Block value by +1.

Rapid Ascent Technique (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist may scramble up her ladder to position herself advantageously or to avoid danger.

System: So long as she has not been struck before her turn, the martial artist may use a swift action to scramble up her ladder, increasing her Defense by +1 while she remains there. The martial artist can also launch unarmed Heaven's Ladder attacks at others within the zone who are not also on the ladder, with such attacks gaining Overwhelming (-1). Other swift actions may be taken while on the ladder, but doing so is always complex movement; still, it is possible to hop around into different zones, get behind cover, or even ascend to vertical zones and then pull the ladder up behind the martial artist in this fashion. She can dismount the ladder reflexively at any time.

It is possible for a non-Heaven's Ladder style enemy to also climb up onto the ladder with the martial artist by using a swift action, although doing so is a form of complex movement. If they do not possess Rapid Ascent Technique, they enjoy none of the benefits the martial artist does while on her ladder.

Heaven's Ladder Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a rigid stance, feet firm, wrists loose, and draws power from her steps and the sway of her hips.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume Heaven's Ladder Form. While in this form, she may mount her ladder reflexively once per round without using a swift action, and movements while on the ladder are not complex movement. While on her ladder, she increases her Soak by +1. She may also reflexively extend her ladder when she strikes with it, attacking enemies up to one zone away. If she Staggers a combatant who has climbed onto her ladder to fight her, they fall off the ladder and are knocked prone (see p. XX).

If the martial artist is already on her ladder, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Heaven's Ladder Form reflexively. Non-Celestial Exalted must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from oversteering their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Rung Capture Gambit (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist snares her enemy in the rungs of her ladder, using it to control his movements, break his stance, or disarm him.

System: After successfully striking a target with her ladder, the martial artist may reflexively pay 1 Mote to entangle him in its rungs. If she entangles his head, she may either prevent him from using a swift action on his next two turns, or, if she extended the ladder with Heaven's

Ladder Form, reflexively draw him into the same zone she currently occupies. If she entangles a leg, she may reflexively end any Martial Arts Form-type Charm (or equivalent antagonist power) he has active, and also Stagger him without the need to inflict an accompanying Wound. If she entangled an arm, then she may declare him disarmed (see p. XX), causing his weapon to fall to the ground in the same zone he occupies. Whatever effect she declares, the attack still inflicts damage as normal.

Smoke-Quelling Strike (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist hurls herself from high atop her ladder, landing a devastating blow to those beneath her.

System: When mounted on her ladder, the martial artist may use both her simple and swift action to dismount into the zone the ladder occupies or a zone adjacent to that, where she delivers a powerful unarmed attack. This attack gains the bonuses associated with unarmed attacks made while mounted on her ladder from Rapid Ascent Technique, is Heavy, and also converts a number of dice of damage equal to her Athletics score into automatic successes. If her target is prone or Staggered, the damage roll also ignores the rule of 1s. If she damages an already-Staggered target with this Charm, he remains Staggered for one additional round.

Using this Charm prevents the character from reflexively re-mounting the ladder until the beginning of the next round if she has Heaven's Ladder Form active. Smoke-Quelling Strike can't be used in two consecutive rounds.

Tornado Clearance Technique (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist mounts her ladder upon her shoulders and whirls about, knocking down all who dare challenge her.

System: Spend 1 Mote and make a ladder-based Heaven's Ladder attack roll as a simple action. The martial artist rolls against the highest Defense rating in the zone she's in, and applies its result to every enemy present in it. This attack is Fierce. If it attack strikes a group, add the fighter's Martial Arts rating to her base damage against them. Additionally, the martial artist's Block is increased by +2 until the end of the round.

Mantis Style

Mantis style embodies the philosophy of offense-as-defense. It is a serious battlefield art, employing joint locks and deadly nerve strikes to bring down its opponents. Mantis style is seen mostly in the River Province and the West. Eastern Mantis, the larger branch of the school, emphasizes joint-locks and disabling strikes that allow the practitioner to talk the enemy into surrender, thereby saving his life. Western Mantis prefers to open and close aggressions with an instantly-fatal blow at the first opening, and is a favored style of Coral Archipelago assassins.

Form Weapons: Mantis stylists deploy crushing punches to the temple, neck, or behind the ear, while kicks are often aimed at the inside of the thigh, knee, or sometimes the liver; its signature unarmed technique requires the hands to be formed into a pair of claws. Eastern Mantis unarmed attacks are made with Strength, Western with Dexterity. This style is also compatible with the use of jitte (Dexterity, 4 damage, lacerated, nimble, counts as a shield for the purpose of fighting

styles) and nunchaku (Dexterity, 4 damage, bruised or dazed, nimble), with the latter being grasped in each fist and driven down on their ends to deliver the Mantis Death-Strike.

Armor: Mantis style must be practiced unarmored.

Prerequisites: Mantis requires a fit body, limbs well-seasoned to being used for powerful blocks, and a knowledge of the body's weak points. Thus, a Mantis stylist must possess Athletics •, Medicine •, and Resistance ••.

Mantis fighting style: The martial artist increases her Defense by +1 and her Mantis style attacks are Heavy.

Iron Arm Block (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist interposes a rigid block to stymie her opponents' efforts.

System: When invoking her Block while wielding Mantis style weapons, the martial artist may spend 1 Mote instead of 1 Willpower. If she nullifies all damage from an attack by Blocking it while using Mantis style weapons, then the first attack she launches against that attacker before the end of her next turn is Fierce.

Joint-Locking Technique (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist seizes her opponent's limb and agonizingly wrenches it.

System: This Charm can only be activated against an opponent who has already attacked the martial artist during the current round. Reflexively spend 1 Mote when directing a mantis strike at that foe. If it strikes the target, they cannot move out of the current zone so long as the martial artist also doesn't leave, and they suffer a climbing -1 Wound penalty at the end of every round in which they did not move. If the martial artist is Staggered, this Charm's effects are forcibly terminated, erasing her victim's elevated Wound penalties and freeing him to move again. She can also voluntarily end the Charm reflexively.

Mantis Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Wrists bent, fingers stiff, the martial artist assumes a posture of deadly stillness, exploding into violent motion with no warning.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Mantis Form. She gains the benefits of the sword and board fighting style in addition to any other fighting style she may be employing. The first time Iron Arm Block is activated each round, its cost becomes 0 Motes. When the martial artist Wounds an opponent she has locked up in Joint-Locking Technique, she needs pay 0 Willpower to make the Wound severe if she chooses disabled arm, disabled leg, or maimed as the severe Wound to inflict. She also gains the ability to spend Willpower to cut ahead and use re-rolls while Staggered.

If an attack launched against martial artist fails to damage her, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Mantis Form reflexively. Non-Celestial Exalted must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from oversteering their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Stillness Births Violence (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist erupts from serene readiness to a blur of violence with no warning, leaving behind only howling opponents clutching their broken limbs.

System: If the martial artist successfully uses a Mantis style attack to strike someone who attacked her before her turn during the current round, she gains an additional swift action and may reflexively use it immediately. When doing so, she acts as though she has not been struck before her turn. Additionally, when she uses a Mantis attack to Stagger an opponent and inflict a disabled arm, disabled leg, or maimed Wound, she may choose to gain +2 Block.

Mantis Death-Strike (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist strikes a deadly killing blow at an opponent's vital Essence clusters. Given only moments to live, he must choose between attempting a speedy victory or abject surrender.

System: Use a simple action to spend 2 Motes and make a Mantis style attack with Piercing (-2). If it Staggers the target, his Essence is fatally disjointed. By the time the target has taken (1 + the target's Essence rating) turns, he must do one of three things:

- Incapacitate the martial artist, thereby severing the residual hostile Essence-link within himself.
- Use a simple action to concentrate inward and roll at least two successes on a difficulty 9 (Stamina + Resistance) roll.
- As a simple action, drop his guard and release all muscle-tension in his body to allow his Essence to dispel the fatal buildup. This sets his Defense to 3, penalizes his Soak by -1 until his next turn, and causes him to become Staggered (but not to accrue a Wound). This option is not possible if he is under the effects of Joint-Locking Technique.

If none of these things occur, then after (1 + target's Essence rating turns) he suffers an Aggravated mauled Wound.

Righteous Devil Style

Righteous Devil is a rare and obscure style dating back to the late First Age. If its origins were ever recorded, those writings were lost hundreds of years ago in the fires of the Usurpation. Today there are no Righteous Devil schools. Its practitioners stay on the move, masters taking on one or two disciples at a time for direct tutelage.

Righteous Devil encompasses not just a combat art but an ethos. Its practitioners are much concerned with righteousness and correct action, but over centuries of diffusion the style's practitioners have developed very many different ideas of what those things mean. Some act as wandering heroes protecting the innocent from bandits and tyrants. Others are law-upholding marshals for various Threshold despots.

This style's practitioners are primarily found in the South, where firedust is harvested and refined. It's not a common style anywhere, but is vanishingly rare in the North and West, and is

nigh-unknown on the Blessed Isle, where its particular brand of independent justice is ill-tolerated.

Form Weapons: Righteous Devil exclusively utilizes flame-projection weapons. This primarily encompasses firewands and their artifact equivalents, dragon sigh wands, including attacks made using the barrel and stock (Dexterity, 4 damage, bruised). The style also uses smaller, hand-handed flame projection weapons in the form of flame pieces (Dexterity, 5 damage, burned, one zone range) and their artifact equivalents: heat cannons (Dexterity, 7 damage, burned, one zone range).

Armor: Righteous Devil style may be practiced unarmored or in light armor.

Prerequisites: Righteous Devil demands that its practitioners be keen judges of character as well as accurate marksmen. Intimidation is also an important skill. As a result, before practicing this style, a character must have Archery ••, Empathy •, and Presence •.

Righteous Devil fighting style: The martial artist gains Defense +1 and Soak +1 against anyone who attacks her before she has taken her turn during a round.

Blossom of Inevitable Demise (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist may pivot and aim with uncanny speed despite the bulk of her weapons, pivoting at the hips and maneuvering her elbows to always draw a tight bead on her foes. After avoiding their desperate attempts to strike her down, she treats them to smoke and flame.

System: When directing a Righteous Devil style attack against any opponent who already attacked her during the current round, the martial artist increases her base damage by +3.

Azure Abacus Meditation (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist spends a moment in meditative contemplation, considering those things which necessitate her foe's demise. Raising her weapon, she fires — not at the spot where her foe is, but where he will momentarily be.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to make an undodgeable Righteous Devil attack. If defeating her target would fulfill one of the martial artist's Intimacies, the attack increases its base damage by +2.

Cloud of Ebon Devils (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Firedust swirls in the martial artist's wake as she advances across the battlefield, soon blossoming into all-consuming flames.

System: When the martial artist moves into a new zone with a Righteous Devil weapon in her hands, she leaves behind a swirling cloud of firedust in the zone she just left. Should she then use a simple action to target the zone with a blast of flames, or to attack someone in that zone, the firedust ignites and everyone within that zone is subjected to a one-time bonfire hazard (see p. XX). Groups cannot Block this damage.

Righteous Devil Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a tall, ready stance, shadow stretching out long before her.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Righteous Devil Form for the rest of the scene. She enjoys a +1 bonus to her Defense. Her Righteous Devil style weapons become nimble weapons. Finally, she gains an additional +1 Defense bonus against any opponent with Willpower 6 or less.

If any opponent drops his weapon, attempts to flee, or otherwise surrenders to her without putting up a fight, the martial artist may spend 1 Mote to enter Righteous Devil Form reflexively. Non-Celestial Exalted must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from overstressing their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Caress of 1,000 Hells (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist wreathes her foe in burning flames. As they close about to consume him, his eyes meet her own in a timeless, frozen moment, where she offers him a simple choice: repent or burn.

System: Spend 1 Mote and make a Righteous Devil style attack as a simple action. If the attack damages the target, he is set on fire. In that moment, the martial artist may issue him an ultimatum: He must change his ways, embracing a form of righteousness that she dictates for him. If he accepts her dictate, the flames fade away with no further effect, and he forms an Intimacy toward the goal or philosophy she has imposed upon him that cannot be destroyed or abandoned until at least three stories have begun and ended.

If he rejects the martial artist's ultimatum, he burns. He is subjected to an environmental hazard (difficulty 8, damage 5 Aggravated, burned, penalty -1, one round) that lasts for the next (martial artist's Essence rating) rounds. These flames cannot be prematurely extinguished by any means. He chose this fate.

Single Point Shining into the Void Style

Single Point Shining into the Void is a blade-focused martial arts style built around mastery of a single technique: the art of drawing the blade and killing with one stroke, all in the same motion. The ancient scrolls of the style speak of its philosophy thus: "The blade in its sheath is the blade in silence, revealing nothing. This is the both the kindest and deadliest posture a swordsman may adopt, for he may keep his secrets while sending the undeserving away with only bruises as lessons. When finally the blade speaks, it should speak as thunder: a single word that shakes the world."

This battle art originates in the early First Age, developed by a Solar Exalted dubbed the Sword Priest. It fell into disrepute in the wake of the Usurpation and was largely lost, re-emerging three hundred years ago with the re-discovery of ancient manuals in the Eastern nation of Vaneha. There Single Point enjoyed a resurgence of popularity, spreading along the rivers of the Scavenger Lands to form schools throughout the River Province, the coastal North, and

eventually making its way back to the Blessed Isle where it first originated. Few now know of its pre-Vanehan history, even its practitioners.

Form Weapons: Single Point Shining into the Void exclusively uses single-edged slashing swords (Dexterity, 5 damage, lacerated) and their artifact equivalent, the reaper daiklave. Many of the style's techniques call for attacks made with the hilt of the sword or with the scabbard while it is still sheathed; such attacks, when they Wound, merely leave the opponent bruised. Sheathing the blade normally requires the use of a re-arm action.

Armor: Single Point Shining can be used unarmored or in light armor.

Prerequisites: Single Point is exclusively a sword style, and demands both a keen eye to observe the minutiae of an opponent's behavior and a very thorough understanding of the sword's interaction with other close-range weapons. Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Awareness •, Melee ••.

Single Point Shining into the Void fighting style: Whenever the martial artist spends a point of Willpower to re-roll a Single Point attack roll, or the damage roll produced by such an attack, it does not count against her once-per-scene limit.

Gathering Light Concentration (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The blade sleeps in its scabbard as the martial artist studies her opponent, discovering the flaws in his technique and the meeting of moment and angle that will split him in twain.

System: At the end of each round of combat in which the martial artist's Shining Point weapon remained readied but in its scabbard (i.e. not just sheathed on her back while she fights with some other weapon), and she did not attack with any weapon other than her sheathed blade, she gains one Void Point. Any unspent Void Points are lost when the battle ends. Any successful Single Point Shining into the Void attack she makes with her weapon still sheathed knocks her opponent off-guard and off-balance, causing his next simple action to suffer a -2 penalty.

Single Point Shining into the Void Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist grips her scabbard tightly, assuming a watchful and ready stance.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Single Point Shining into the Void Form. For the rest of the scene, so long as her only readied weapon is her Single Point blade, she gains +1 Defense, +1 Block, and may simultaneously enjoy the benefit of freehanding *and* Single Point fighting styles (see p. XX). While this Form is active, Staggering or incapacitating an opponent with a sheathed strike causes Gathering Light Concentration to award one Void Point; additionally, Gathering Light Concentration generates one additional Void Point at the end of any round in which the martial artist was the subject of an attack which failed to damage her. Finally, she may return her weapon to its sheath reflexively at any time.

If the martial artist opts to take her turn after all other combatants in a round, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Single Point Shining into the Void Form reflexively. Non-Celestial Exalted must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from overstressing their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Six-Point Scabbard Binding (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Weaving the hilt of her blade in an intricate and mystically resonant pattern, the martial artist forces hostile magic to manifest before her as a floating, burning mote of compacted Essence, and then with a draw-and-cut, strikes it in twain.

System: Whenever the character is the subject of any supernatural power that seeks to transform, infect, taint, transport, or control her body or spirit, or to alter her destiny or her place in the world (such as by magically altering her Backgrounds), if her sword is readied and sheathed and she has at least one Void Point available, she may reflexively roll (Perception + Martial Arts) against difficulty 8. Success coalesces the effect before her, allowing her to sacrifice all of her Void Points to destroy it with a draw-and-cut attack. Her sword is left unsheathed in the wake of using this Charm.

Void-Slicing Wind (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Having determined the perfect killing angle, the martial artist draws and cuts, delivering a blow capable of felling gods.

System: Use a simple action to spend 1 Mote and make a Single Point Shining into the Void attack. The martial artist's blade must be sheathed to use this Charm, which unsheathes it and strikes all in one motion. This attack may strike dematerialized opponents, if the martial artist is capable of perceiving them. Its base damage is increased by +2 per Void Point she has available, and all Void Points are lost in the course of striking this blow. If the damage inflicted by this attack exceeds her target's Stagger Threshold by two or more, she may cause the inflicted Wound to be mauled if she desires. Her sword is left unsheathed in the wake of using this Charm.

Blinding Nova Flare (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist perfects her drawing-and-cutting technique, making it transcendently deadly and inescapable.

System: If Void-Slicing Wind consumes at least three Void Points, it may target enemies up to one zone farther away than the martial artist otherwise could, striking them down with a cutting pressure wave (so if the Solar Charm Sandstorm Wind Attack were already active, she could strike an opponent up to two zones away). If it consumes at least five Void Points, it also becomes Heavy. If Void-Slicing Wind consumes at least seven Void Points, the attack's damage becomes Aggravated (-2).

Additionally, once per scene, the martial artist gains the ability to reflexively spend 2 Motes at the end of a round after all combatants have used their turn to activate Void-Slicing Wind and direct its attack against a Staggered foe. If it incapacitates its target, the martial artist's Void Points are not lost.

Snake Style

This ancient style stretches back thousands of years and has flourished into countless regional variants, including but not limited to Cobra style (a killing art found in the deep South and Southwest, from the Cinder Coast to Dajaz), Singing Asp style (a tournament style founded in Great Forks and practiced throughout the far East), Winding Adder style (a self-defense style much-seen along the coastal North), and Sea Serpent style (a style practiced in the Neck and several other portions of the West, believed to promote health and longevity). Likely its most popular variant is Rock Snake style, a battlefield art practiced throughout much of the coastal South, the Dreaming Sea region, and portions of the Blessed Isle. The various Snake styles are based on observation of nature, with practitioners imitating the darting strikes of a serpent. It is broadly favored by slim combatants who do not have a great deal of muscle mass to rely on, thanks to its focus on pressure point strikes and nimble dodging; in the West, it is considered a women's style, and not commonly taught to men.

Form Weapons: Snake uses Dexterity-based unarmed attacks, usually in the form of two-fingered 'fang' strikes to various pressure points. It also utilizes hook swords (Dexterity, 5 damage, lacerated) and section staves (Dexterity, 6 damage, bruised, two-handed, nimble).

Armor: Snake style can be used unarmored or in light armor.

Prerequisites: Snake stylists must be nimble, possessed of a sense of rhythm, and aware of the body's major nerve clusters. Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Athletics •, Medicine •, Performance •.

Snake fighting style: When the martial artist Staggers or incapacitates an opponent with a Snake style attack, she may choose to increase her Dodge by +2.

Striking Cobra Technique (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The serpent claims victory not from striking hardest, but from striking first.

System: When the martial artist directs a Snake style attack against an enemy who has not yet taken his turn this round, she may reflexively pay 1 Mote to increase its base damage by her Dexterity rating.

Armor-Penetrating Fang Strike (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist's blow rips through even the sturdiest armor to destroy vulnerable pressure points beneath.

System: The martial artist reflexively spends 1 Mote. For the rest of the round, all of her Snake style attacks inflict Aggravated damage (-1) and gain Piercing (-1).

Snake Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a swaying, hypnotic battle form, confounding her opponents.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Snake Form. For the rest of the scene she increases her Soak value by +1. Additionally, once per round, she may invoke her Dodge at a cost of 0 Willpower if attacked after she has already taken her turn. Finally, Armor-Penetrating Fang Strike's Aggravated damage penalty becomes -2.

If the martial artist attacks an opponent who has not yet taken his turn, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Snake Form reflexively. Non-Celestial Exalted must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from oversteering their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Snake Strikes the Heel (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Woe to those who attempt to grasp a serpent ready to strike, for they will feel only fangs and death.

System: Once per scene, when the martial artist has not yet taken her turn during a round, she may respond to an attack directed against her by cutting ahead of the attacker at no cost and directing a Snake style strike at him, which is resolved before he follows through on making his attack. This uses up the martial artist's simple and swift actions for the round, but if the attack inflicts damage, then the attacker loses a number of dice from his attack equal to the damage inflicted, and if it Staggers him, he loses his turn altogether.

If she completely avoids an attack by Dodging it, the martial artist may reset this Charm such that it can be used again. Snake Strikes the Heel cannot be used while Staggered.

Essence Venom Strike (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist injects a dose of crippling, poisonous Essence into her target, slowly and painfully killing him.

System: Spend 1 Mote and make a Snake style attack as a simple action. If it strikes, whether or not it inflicts damage, the target is afflicted with serpent venom (see p. XX); additionally, if the target is not immune to poison, then for the next (Essence rating) rounds, the target is forced to act last in the round, after all other characters have taken their turns, and if he is Staggered by that point, he must spend 1 Willpower to take a turn at all.

Stumbling Fist Style

This is not truly a single style, but a wide array of diverse styles united by a common idea: utilizing deceptive movements that cover up the martial artist's true intent as she defends, attacks, advances, and retreats, generally by mimicking a drunkard's stumbling motions.

Various branches of the style can be found in all five directions. It is especially popular in the West and East. While Stumbling Fist branches can be found on the Blessed Isle and the style enjoys dedicated practice even within the upper echelons of the Scarlet Dynasty, Dynasts generally consider it disreputable. Of course, Water Aspects are rarely dissuaded by something being disreputable.

Major styles within this family of martial arts include Falling Leaf, whose practitioners are famed for their exhibition matches during Eastern festivals; Drunken Mule, a style popular with caravan guards, Medoan janissaries, and mercenaries in the North; Orgiastic Fugitive, a heavily proscribed and greatly romanticized variant originating in the Dreaming Sea region; and Dancing

Flute, a style widely practiced along the Cinder Coast and, in the far West, associated with pirates.

Form Weapons: Stumbling Fist uses Dexterity-based unarmed attacks in the form of sucker punches, elbow strikes, knee lifts, short kicks, full-body-force headbutts, and straight-arm blows. Additionally, choose one of the following as a form weapon for the particular branch of the style the character practices: metal flute, metal-rimmed jug or reinforced gourd, iron cane, hookah or opium pipe, or improvised weapons (all have the traits of improvised weapons, save that all must be wielded with Dexterity).

Armor: Stumbling Fist styles are universally practiced unarmored.

Prerequisites: Stumbling Fist practitioners need a loose rhythm, a deceptive mind, and a resilient body to effectively hold the poses demanded by the style (and, in some branches, to fight effectively while intoxicated). Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Manipulation ••, Athletics •, Performance •, and Resistance •.

Stumbling Fist fighting style: The martial artist gains +1 Defense, +1 Soak, and +1 Dodge against attacks directed at her before she has taken her turn.

Drunken Sway (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist staggers and stumbles as though unaware she is even in a fight, her unpredictable movements throwing off her opponents.

System: Use a swift action to stumble around unpredictably. Until the martial artist's next turn, increase her Defense by +1 and her Dodge by +1.

Monk Finds His Sandal (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist reels away from her enemies, who overexpose themselves and then suffer a counterattack as the martial artist suddenly straightens up, delivering a headbutt to the chin, elbow to the gut, jug to the face, or kick directly in the solar plexus.

System: The first time each in each round that the character avoids an attack directed at her by an opponent in the same zone while Drunken Sway is active, she may immediately make a reflexive Stumbling Fist style attack at her unsuccessful attacker. She may also make such an attack against anyone in the same zone who Staggers her with a successful attack, even if she has already made a counterattack with this Charm during the same round.

Stumbling Fist Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a loose, reeling stance, unleashing dramatic force from her hips with each attack while confounding her opponents' expectations.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and a simple action to assume the Stumbling Fist Form. For the rest of the scene, all of her Stumbling Fist attacks increase their base damage by +2. She may choose to set her unarmored Soak value, before other modifiers, to 7 rather than the usual 5. Finally, if Drunken Sway is activated while in this Form, it lasts until the martial artist either exits the Form or is Staggered, rather than needing to be renewed every turn.

If someone attacks the martial artist and fails to strike her, or if she is intoxicated, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Stumbling Fist Form reflexively. Non-Celestial Exalted must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from oversteering their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Tip the Jug (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist strikes her opponent in the forehead with a stiff elbow, knee, or weapon from an unexpected angle.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene or until she is next Staggered, whichever comes first, anyone damaged by one of the martial artist's Stumbling Fist attacks suffers a -3 penalty on his next simple action as he is stunned by the impact, or -5 if the attack Staggers him. Staggering or incapacitating an opponent with a Stumbling Fist attack also gives the martial artist the option to gain +2 Dodge.

Burning Plume (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist swigs a mouthful of alcohol, then ignites it with her Essence as she blows it out in a burning stream.

System: Spend 1 Mote and roll a (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack as a simple action against an opponent up to one zone away. If it succeeds, it is considered a Stumbling Fist style attack, it has a base damage of 6 (or 8, if Stumbling Fist Form is active), and if it Wounds the target he is burned and set on fire. He is subjected to a bonfire environmental hazard until he either uses a simple action to automatically extinguish the flames, or uses a swift action to employ complex movement and make a successful reflexive (Wits + Athletics) roll against difficulty 9 to smother the flames.

Tiger Style

Another of the ancient animal styles, there are two major variants of Tiger style to be found in Creation. The "Striking Tiger" strongly emphasizes strength and armed combat, and is a battlefield art that is very common throughout the East and Southeast, particularly around the shores of the Dreaming Sea. The "Stalking Tiger" is rooted in the jungles of the Southwest, from An-Teng down to the Bay of Kings, and stresses footwork and bare-handed fighting as a means of self-defense. Both are broadly popular on the Blessed Isle and have schools spread throughout Creation.

Form Weapons: Striking Tiger uses Strength-based unarmed attacks, usually in the form of palm strikes and rigid finger-rakes. It also uses tiger claws and other claw-like weapons. Stalking Tiger shares these weapons, but wields them with Dexterity. Tiger strikes can always inflict lacerated Wounds thanks to its gruesome iron-hard finger rakes and muscle-separating wrenching attacks, if the attacker desires.

Armor: Tiger style must be practiced unarmored.

Prerequisites: Tiger demands powerful leg and back muscles to drive its attacks and movements, and an ability to blend into shadows. Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Athletics ••, Stealth •.

Tiger fighting style: The martial artist's Tiger style attacks gain Piercing (−1), and she may cut ahead without spending Willpower once per scene. This discount is reset each time she Staggers or incapacitates an opponent.

Crimson Leaping Cat Technique (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist advances in a ferocious rush, converting her momentum into a fearsome strike.

System: When the martial artist moves into a new zone and launches a Tiger strike at a target there in the same turn, her attack gains +2 base damage and her damage roll ignores the rule of 1s.

Leap from Cloaking Shadows (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist erupts from the shadows, striking down her enemies with a shattering blow that claims a great advantage.

System: When making an unexpected Tiger style attack, *or* when directing a Tiger style attack at an enemy who moved a zone away from her on his previous turn, *or* who is prone, the martial artist doubles up to (higher of Athletics or Stealth rating) successes on the attack roll when converting them to threshold damage dice. If the target is also crippled by Spine-Shattering Bite or is Staggered, the attack inflicts Aggravated damage (−2).

Spine-Shattering Bite (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist targets her enemy's bones, crippling him with a vicious strike.

System: When the martial artist Staggers a target with a Tiger style attack, she may reflexively spend 1 Mote and declare that the enemy is knocked prone, as well as crippled for the rest of the scene: If he uses any swift action other than hold steady, it counts as complex movement and becomes a simple action.

Tiger Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist tenses all of her muscles, gaining a stalking grace and ferocious power that translates directly from her legs to her fists.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Tiger Form. For the rest of the scene, she suffers no penalties for fighting while prone, and may move while prone as though she were standing up. Tiger attacks directed against a prone or Staggered opponent gain Overwhelming (−2). When the martial artist Staggers or incapacitates an opponent, she may use the shock of his spiraling body falling to the ground as a pretext to reflexively vanish into stealth, with a difficulty determined by the availability of nearby hiding places.

When the martial artist knocks someone prone or strikes them with an unexpected attack, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Tiger Form reflexively. Non-Celestial Exalted must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from oversteering their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Angry Predator Frenzy (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist enters a state of murderous flow when she assumes Tiger Form, relentlessly pursuing her foes while shrugging off their attacks.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when entering Tiger Form to add the following benefits while it is active:

- The martial artist can always move if she was struck before her turn, but if she is only able to do so thanks to this rule, she can only move toward the nearest opponent.
- The martial artist may choose to set her unarmored Soak value, before other modifiers, to 7 rather than the usual 5.
- The martial artist's Tiger style attacks gain Piercing (-2).

Immaculate Martial Arts Styles

The five elemental dragon styles were developed by the Sidereal Exalted in the wake of the Usurpation, specifically for practice by the Terrestrial Exalted. While anyone can technically learn these styles, they are intended to press the outer limits of Dragon-Blooded potential and, as such, require years of specialized instruction to initiate into them. The Realm's Cloister of Wisdom provides this training, as do specialized chaplains within the Seventh Legion. Prasad has no formal native school which initiates students into the practice of these styles, but a very few monks perform such tutelage on an informal and personal basis; most Prasadi who wish to study the Immaculate Dragon styles travel to the Cloister of Wisdom and spend years in study there to do so.

Before beginning formal instruction in one of the dragon styles, a Dragon-Blooded character must first learn a Charm of spiritual awakening. A number of such Charms have been developed over the millennia. Three are detailed below. None of these Charms have an elemental aspect, and so are not subject to the discounts of aspect affinity (see p. XX). Completing the initiation necessary for practice of the Immaculate styles also causes the character to be considered Celestial Exalted for the purpose of Martial Arts Charms that make such distinctions.

Learning a spiritual awakening Charm is the capstone of years of specialized training including adherence to particular dietary regimens, Essence-cultivating breathing practices, exacting muscle exercises, overcoming tailored challenges and ordeals, and so on. The training must be customized depending both upon the postulant's elemental aspect and that of the style she intends to practice.

As a result, this method of initiation presently only functions for Dragon-Blooded. While it is probably possible for Liminal Exalted and weaker Exigents to overcome their intrinsic limits in Martial Arts practice in a fashion similar to Dragon-Blooded, all existing regimens to unlock this

path to power were formulated especially for the Terrestrial Exalted and will not work for anyone else.

Iris Bulb Understanding of Secular and Profane Brokerage (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

This is the oldest surviving Charm of spiritual awakening by which a Dragon-Blooded might expand her spectrum-awareness of the nature of Essence. It was developed to facilitate off-the-record interactions with gods, ghosts, and demons during the First Age, and while sometimes used for under-the-table diplomacy, it was, sadly, more often deployed in soul brokerage with agents of the Yozis or black market dealings with criminal divinities.

In the Realm, its use has been replaced by the generally superior Spirit Walking Charm. Now, it is most likely to be found in First Age manuals of spiritual instruction, or to be taught by Gold Faction mentors who have no access to Spirit Walking.

System: Use a simple action and spend 1 Mote. A number of foot-wide black irises bloom around the Exalt's feet and burst into unraveling streams of black-purple Essence. For the rest of the scene, she may behold and physically interact with dematerialized beings, though she cannot see them clearly; she instead sees them as cut-outs in the world, through which she beholds an infinite field of blossoming irises. Spirits see her in the same way. A spirit who attempts to officially recount or record any words or actions exchanged with an Exalt using this Charm must succeed at a difficulty 9 Essence roll to do so; failure renders them incapable of doing so for a year and a day.

Spirit Walking (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist calibrates her internal energy into alignment with the greater flows of Creation, bringing her into harmony with the spirits that she might police their interactions with the mortals under her charge.

This Charm is taught at the Cloister of Wisdom, and forms the underpinning of the Realm's practice of Immaculate Martial Arts styles. It is considered a vital tool for treating with the little gods and, when necessary, putting them in their place. Exchange students from Prasad also generally learn this Charm.

System: The Exalt either reflexively spends 1 Mote, or else uses a simple action to align her chakras and make a (Perception + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 7. If she succeeds or spends the Mote, she gains the ability to see and interact with dematerialized beings for the rest of the scene.

Tiger-and-Bear Unity (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist physically connects herself to the great weave of Creation, channeling its power up from the ground through her legs and in from the air to fill her lungs, then unleashes it as a destructive blow.

Tiger-and-Bear Unity is a battlefield Charm dating back to the Shogunate, intended for front-line battle practice of the dragon styles and other powerful martial arts. It is still used in Lookshy to

this day. Unlike the other initiation Charms, it in no way aids in dealing with dematerialized beings.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an unarmed Martial Arts attack to add (Essence rating) to its base damage. If the attack is used within the grounds of a Manse or Demesne and it successfully strikes its target, the target is also Staggered regardless of whether the attack inflicts any damage, though they are not also Wounded unless they suffer damage equal to or greater than their Stagger Threshold.

Air Dragon Style

Air Dragon is an acrobatic style, emphasizing swift motion, stealth, and lightning-fast offensives. It is a killing art, designed for battle, particularly for hit-and-run fighting. Air Dragons use their motions and harnessed breathing patterns to sculpt the wind into a guiding path for their attacks.

All Air Dragon Charms are considered air-aspected, and are subject to the aspect affinity discount for Air Aspects (see p. XX).

Form Weapons: Air Dragon uses Dexterity-based unarmed attacks, focusing on closed-fist strikes and sweeping kicks. It also uses an array of weapons including section staves (Dexterity, 6 damage, bruised, two-handed, nimble), fighting chains (Dexterity, 4 damage, bruised, nimble), rope darts (Dexterity, 4 damage, lacerated, nimble), and chakrams.

Armor: Air Dragon style is practiced unarmored or wearing light armor.

Prerequisites: Air Dragon style emphasizes flexibility, agility, and gymnastic movement. Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Dexterity •••, Athletics •••, Stealth •, and Thrown •.

Air Dragon fighting style: The martial artist increases her base Dodge value by +2.

Shrouding the Body and Mind (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist wraps herself in a concealing and quickening gale, flickering in and out of visibility.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the end of the scene or until Staggered, whichever comes first, the martial artist may cut ahead without spending Willpower. Anyone who attacks her after she has already taken her turn treats her as invisible (see p. XX).

Air Dragon Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a nimble, graceful stance, stirring the winds with her least movement.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Air Dragon Form. For the rest of the scene, she calculates her Defense and Dodge values as though unarmored even if wearing light armor or light artifact armor. Air Dragon attacks made with chakrams may target foes up to two zones away. Finally, all of her unexpected attacks ignore the rule of 1s when rolling damage.

If the martial artist launches an unexpected attack, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Air Dragon Form reflexively. Even with advanced Martial Arts initiation, Dragon-Blooded must succeed at a

reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from overstressing their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Cloud Treading Method (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist steeps her Essence in her lungs before cycling it through the rest of her body, making herself light as air and swift as a gale.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the end of the scene or until Staggered, whichever comes first, the Exalt enjoys flawless balance, along with a –2 difficulty reduction to all rolls to jump gaps, pursue, or escape. She can move even if struck before her turn any number of times, and in each round may *either* move two zones when she uses a move action *or* increase the base damage of all Air Dragon attacks by +3.

Lightning Strike Prana (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

With a powerful exhalation, the martial artist causes Essence to leap from her body in the form of powerful, striking lightning.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an Air Dragon attack. The attack's base damage is increased by +3, it gains Piercing (–1), and the target is stunned by coursing electricity and must discard two successes from his next simple action. If this attack Staggers the target, he instead cannot use a simple action on his next turn at all.

Hurricane Combat Method (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist focuses the power of the gale into her limbs, moving like an unleashed hurricane.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes. At the end of each round, after all characters have taken their turns, make an extra Air Dragon attack. This Charm lasts until the end of the scene or until the character is Staggered, whichever comes first, and may only be used while Air Dragon Form is active.

If a Dragon-Blooded masters this Charm, she gains an aspect affinity (see p. XX) for the element of air, even if she herself is not an Air Aspect. If she is already an Air Aspect, then she no longer needs to make a successful roll to avoid damage when assuming Air Dragon Form, its activation cost drops to 0 Motes, and she gains the option to don the Form with a swift action.

Earth Dragon Style

Earth Dragon is a “strong” style, facilitating drastic manipulation of the element of earth by channeling Essence through the practitioner's muscles. It is not designed for tournaments or lone heroism. Like the earth itself, it supports the efforts of the martial artist's companions to build atop its humble base, and so it focuses on a mixture of defensive and disabling techniques.

All Earth Dragon Charms are considered earth-aspected, and are subject to the aspect affinity discount for Earth Aspects (see p. XX).

Form Weapons: Earth Dragon uses Strength-based unarmed attacks, focusing on direct blows with the fists, channeling strength up from legs firmly rooted upon the ground; and also uses tetsubos: eight-sided war clubs adorned with iron studs (Strength, 7 damage, lacerated, two-handed). Particularly renowned practitioners sometimes carry Earthquake Poles, an artifact equivalent made of jade (Strength, 9 damage, lacerated, two-handed).

Armor: Earth Dragon style can be practiced unarmored or in any sort of armor.

Prerequisites: Earth Dragon style places great demands on its practitioners' endurance and strength. Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Strength ••, Stamina ••, Resistance ••.

Earth Dragon fighting style: The martial artist increases her Stagger Threshold by +2.

Weapon-Breaking Defense Technique (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist catches a weapon between her hands, applying an enormous surge of Essence to wrench it out of an attacker's hands or to utterly destroy it.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when Blocking a hand-to-hand attack. If this reduces it to 0 damage, the martial artist catches the attacker's weapon and hurls it to the ground, disarming him (see p. XX).

If the martial artist's Block exceeds the attack's damage by two or more, the offending weapon is shattered and rendered useless if it is a mundane weapon, or forcibly de-attuned if it is an artifact, in addition to being disarmed.

If activated against an attack made with a natural weapon, this Charm lowers the attacker's Stagger Threshold by -1 until the end of the round. It does nothing against projectile attacks.

Earth Dragon Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a wide, rooted power stance, making herself one with the earth.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Earth Dragon Form. For the rest of the scene, increases her Soak by +1. If subjected to an attack that would move her out of her current zone or knock her prone, she may make a reflexive (Stamina + Resistance) roll against difficulty 8; success nullifies the effect. Finally, when using an Earth Dragon attack to strike an opponent who is, for whatever reason other than "already having taken his turn," unable to use the move action (such as being prone, caught in a grapple attack, or having already been struck prior to his turn that round), her damage rolls ignore the rule of 1s and gain Piercing (-1).

If someone attacks the martial artist and she takes no damage from the attack, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Earth Dragon Form reflexively. Even with advanced Martial Arts initiation, Dragon-Blooded must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from overstressing their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Hungry Earth Strike (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist slams a palm to the ground, sending ripples out through the earth, which is her true weapon. Moments later, the ground opens beneath an opponent's feet and swallows him.

System: Spend 1 Mote and use a simple action to make a (Strength + Martial Arts) attack roll against an enemy up to two zones away. Rather than inflicting damage, if it succeeds this attack causes the ground to partially swallow its target; they must reflexively roll (Dexterity + Athletics) against difficulty 8 and gain more successes than the martial artist did, or else be immobilized. While immobilized, they cannot take any swift actions, all attacks against them are considered undodgeable, and they suffer a –1 die penalty to launch attacks of their own. To extricate himself from the ground, the target must use a simple action to pull himself free by succeeding at a (Strength + Athletics) roll against difficulty 9.

Stillness of Stone (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist infuses the calcifying Essence of earth into her target with her strikes, slowly petrifying him.

System: Spend 1 Mote when making an Earth Dragon attack. If it succeeds, the target suffers a –1 die penalty to all actions for the rest of the scene, even if the attack inflicted no damage. This penalty mounts with successive attacks, and if it reaches a total of the target's (Essence rating + Stagger Threshold), he immediately perishes and hardens into solid stone.

Perfection of Earth Body (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist plunges her arms into the earth, connecting herself to the powerful flows of its Essence, and becomes one with them. Her skin hardens into craggy rock.

System: Reflexively spend 1 additional Mote when activating Earth Dragon Form. In addition to its normal effects, the increases her Soak by a further +1, and her unarmed attacks inflict +3 base damage. She also ignores a number of points of total Wound penalties equal to her Essence rating, and her Stagger Threshold is increased by +1.

If a Dragon-Blooded masters this Charm, she gains an aspect affinity (see p. XX) for the element of earth, even if she herself is not an Earth Aspect. If she is already an Earth Aspect, then she no longer needs to make a successful roll to assume Earth Dragon Form without suffering damage, its activation cost drops to 0 Motes, and she may don the Form by using a swift action.

Fire Dragon Style

Fire Dragon is a hybrid style, mixing internal Essence-refining practices with strong battle techniques. It is a style of rapid, violent attacks interspersed with moments of stillness in which the martial artist gathers her energy for the next offensive. Practice for initiation into the style is almost entirely done with real blades and in direct combat conditions; martial artists suffer a very great deal of injury in the course of developing the fundamentals of Fire Dragon style, and for this reason Exalted healers are always in great demand at the Cloister of Wisdom.

All Fire Dragon Charms are considered fire-pected, and are subject to the aspect affinity discount for Fire Aspects (see p. XX).

Form Weapons: Fire Dragon uses quick, vicious Dexterity-based unarmed attacks, including palm strikes, eye rakes, and savage kicks to the joints. It also employs knives and short swords, along with their artifact equivalents, short daiklaves.

Armor: Fire Dragon style is compatible with all armor.

Prerequisites: Fire Dragon style demands a great deal of ability to fight on in the face of injuries, along with lightning-fast offense and a familiarity with blade work. Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Dexterity •••, Melee •, Resistance ••.

Fire Dragon fighting style: The martial artist's Fire Dragon style attacks become Fierce and once per scene, she may re-roll the damage roll for such an attack without spending Willpower or using up her once-per-scene re-roll.

Searing Fist Attack (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist's blows seethe and crackle with red-hot Essence, impregnating wounds with burning pain.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the end of the scene or she is Staggered, whichever comes first, all of the martial artist's Fire Dragon attacks which strike their target cause him to suffer a –1 cumulative Wound penalty for the rest of the scene. If the target's Wound penalties equal or exceed the target's Stagger Threshold while he is under the effects of this Charm, then on each of his turns he may only take a swift *or* simple action, not both. While Staggered in this circumstance, he can take neither.

Breath of the Fire Dragon (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist ignites the very breath in her lungs, blowing out a roaring plume of flames.

System: Spend 1 Mote and, as a simple action, make a (Strength + Martial Arts) attack roll against an enemy up to two zones away with a base damage of 6. If this attack Staggers the target, he is set on fire. He is subjected to a bonfire environmental hazard until he either uses a simple action to automatically extinguish the flames, or uses a swift action to employ complex movement and make a successful (Wits + Athletics) roll against difficulty 8 to smother the flames. Striking the target with a Fire Dragon attack during the same round he extinguishes himself re-ignites the flames if the attack Staggers him.

Essence-Igniting Nerve Strike (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist delivers a forceful blow to a pressure point just below the enemy's throat, igniting his nervous system with blazing flames.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making a Fire Dragon attack. Its base damage enjoys a bonus equal to the target's current total Wound penalties. If any of those Wound penalties came from Searing Fist Attack, this attack's damage becomes Aggravated (–2).

Fire Dragon Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a rigid, one-legged stance, arms raised and ready to stab and strike.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Fire Dragon Form. For the rest of the scene, she is immune to Wound penalties, increases her Defense by +1, and her Fire Dragon attacks gain Piercing (–1).

If the martial artist strikes a target with a Fire Dragon attack and successfully inflicts damage, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Fire Dragon Form reflexively. Even with advanced Martial Arts initiation, Dragon-Blooded must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from overstressing their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Overwhelming Fire Majesty (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist takes in deep, cyclical breaths, pulsing out Essence in a white-hot corona that surrounds her body.

System: Reflexively spend 1 additional Mote when activating Fire Dragon Form. While that Form is active, if the martial artist is not a Fire Aspect, she gains the Fire Aspect anima power and anima flux. If she is already a Fire Aspect, her Fire Dragon style attacks inflict Aggravated damage (–1) to any target that is not immune to harm from heat and flames.

If a Dragon-Blooded masters this Charm, she gains an aspect affinity (see p. XX) for the element of fire, even if she herself is not a Fire Aspect. If she is already a Fire Aspect, then she no longer needs to make a successful roll to assume Fire Dragon Form without suffering damage, its activation cost drops to 0 Motes, and she may don the Form by using a swift action.

Water Dragon Style

Water Dragon is a reactive, counterattack-heavy style that studies its opponents and then disrupts their attack patterns, striking their limbs when they move to an aggressive posture and striking their organs when they seek to withdraw. It is regarded as one of the most fearsome and brutal martial arts of the Second Age.

All Water Dragon Charms are considered water-aspected, and are subject to the aspect affinity discount for Water Aspects (see p. XX).

Form Weapons: Water Dragon uses loose, fluid Dexterity-based unarmed attacks, focusing on rapid punch sequences, stopping kicks to the knees and shins, and sudden elbow strikes. It also employs tiger claws, and makes whirling attacks with spears and tridents (Dexterity, 5 damage, lacerated).

Armor: Water Dragon style can be used unarmored or in light armor.

Prerequisites: Water Dragon style requires its practitioners to be able to hold their breath for extended periods, to swim, and to have an instinctive awareness of how opponents will move. Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Athletics •, Awareness •, and Brawl ••.

Water Dragon fighting style: The martial artist may ignore the Overwhelming quality of any attacks directed against her, and when she attacks someone who already attacked her during the current round, her attacks are Heavy.

Flowing Water Defense (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist matches her defenses perfectly to her opponent's aggression, drawing him forward while remaining unscathed.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the end of the scene or until she is Staggered, whichever comes first, all attacks against the martial artist which roll any results of 1 must discard one success, in addition to any subtractions the rule of 1s would otherwise inflict. Furthermore, if an attack directed at the martial artist is normally immune to the rule of 1s, Flowing Water Defense reinstates it.

Drowning-in-Blood Technique (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist usurps the blood within an opponent's body with a strike, causing it to surge into his lungs, drowning him.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. All Water Dragon attacks the martial artist makes during the round cause internal bleeding if they inflict any damage to the target. Internal bleeding reduces the target's Stagger Threshold by -1 and inflicts a -3 dice drowning penalty on all actions as the victim's lungs fill with blood. In order to escape these penalties, at the end of each round he must reflexively make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll against difficulty 9 to attempt to clear his lungs by coughing up a great gout of blood. If he fails to do so within five rounds, he drowns in his own blood and perishes. The target needs only succeed at this roll once to eliminate all stacks of internal bleeding.

Flow Reversal Strike (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist returns the blows of those who move against her, checking their aggressions with broken bones.

System: When using a Water Dragon attack against an enemy who attacked the martial artist since her last turn, that attack's base damage is increased by +1. Increase this by another +1 for each of the following which is true:

- The martial artist currently has Flowing Water Defense active.
- The target's attack failed to damage the martial artist.
- The target's attack failed to strike the martial artist at all.

Additionally, if the target suffers from a drowning penalty (such as due to Drowning-in-Blood Technique, Drowning Embrace, or for any other reason), increase the attack's base damage by a further +3.

Water Dragon Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a flowing, rising and falling, fluid stance that rolls with blows directed against it.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Water Dragon Form. For the rest of the scene, her unarmed attacks increase their base damage by +2, or +3 against Staggered opponents or opponents with internal bleeding. She increases her Soak by +1. Additionally, all of her Water Dragon style weapons become nimble.

If the martial artist is struck by a blow which inflicts no damage, she may spend 1 Mote to enter Water Dragon Form reflexively. Even with advanced Martial Arts initiation, Dragon-Blooded must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from overstressing their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Bottomless Depths Defense (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Accepting a blow, the martial artist banishes its force into a sucking vortex of elemental water, suffering only a loss of vitality rather than a mortal wound.

System: After being struck by an attack but before damage is rolled, spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower and suffer 1 Aggravated damage (drained). All damage from the attack is then negated. Each subsequent use of the Charm in the same scene doubles the health cost from its last invocation (so 1 damage, then 2 damage, 4 damage, 8 damage, and so on).

If a Dragon-Blooded masters this Charm, she gains an aspect affinity (see p. XX) for the element of water, even if she herself is not a Water Aspect. If she is already a Water Aspect, then she no longer needs to make a successful roll to assume Water Dragon Form without suffering damage, its activation cost drops to 0 Motes, and she may don the Form with a swift action.

Wood Dragon Style

Wood Dragon is the most esoteric of the Immaculate styles, focusing on the flow of Essence as pure animating life-force. Initiation into the style features extensive meditation in Essence-rich environments while under the influence of powerful hallucinogenic and Essence-reactive drugs such as bright morning, on top of the usual regimens of combat practice and physical cultivation. Wood Dragon practitioners undergo ascetic regimens of starvation, oxygen-deprivation, and shallow live burial to bring themselves to the brink of death, the better to understand the soul and its relation to the living body. Outwardly, it seems the weakest of the Immaculate styles, relying on precise nerve-strikes, but masters of the style are inexhaustible in defense and tend to end conflicts with a single blow.

All Wood Dragon Charms are considered wood-ascpected, and are subject to the aspect affinity discount for Wood Aspects (see p. XX).

Form Weapons: Wood Dragon uses Dexterity-based unarmed attacks in the form of pressure point strikes with bunched fingertips, and attacks made with the staff and the bow.

Armor: Wood Dragon style may be practiced unarmored or in any sort of armor.

Prerequisites: Wood Dragon style requires an advanced understanding of the body, the soul, and the spirits of the world. Before practicing this Martial Arts style, a character must have Medicine • and Occult ••.

Wood Dragon fighting style: The martial artist may ignore the Piercing rule on any attacks directed against her, and increases her base Dodge value by +1.

Soul-Marking Strike (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist injects a tiny sliver of Essence into a key meridian of her opponent's body, guiding her further attacks.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote upon striking an opponent with a Wood Dragon attack. For the rest of the scene, the martial artist's Wood Dragon attacks against that target gain Overwhelming, Aggravated Damage, and Piercing, all at (-1). If the target is a spirit, he also suffers an increase of -1 to his total Wound penalties for the rest of the scene. Multiple uses of this Charm on the same target don't stack.

Death-Pattern Sensing Attitude (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist attunes herself to the subtle points where the flows of life and death touch against the strands of destiny. Dimly glimpsing intimations of her own demise, she bends all her training to guide herself away from danger.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. Until the end of the scene or until she is Staggered, whichever comes first, the martial artist increases her Defense and Dodge by +1. If she is attacked by someone she already tagged with Soul-Marking Strike, it costs 0 Willpower to invoke Dodge or Block against him.

Spirit-Wracking Method (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist strikes key chakras and Essence meridians, shattering the harmony of her target's vital energies.

System: When the martial artist strikes a Wood Dragon blow against someone she has marked with Soul-Marking Strike, its damage is Aggravated (-2).

Wood Dragon Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes an open, loose stance, maximizing the rejuvenating flow of Essence through her body.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote and uses a simple action to assume the Wood Dragon Form. For the rest of the scene, she heals one point of non-Aggravated damage at the beginning of each of her turns. If she is not Staggered, she may use a simple action to focus her vital energy inwards, rolling (Stamina + Martial Arts) against a variable difficulty to cure a non-Aggravated Wound: 6 for bruised or dazed; 7 for drained or lacerated; 8 for burned, blinded, disabled arm, or disabled leg; or 9 for maimed or mauled. Finally, she increases her Stagger Threshold by +1.

If the martial artist suffers an injury, she may immediately respond by spending 1 Mote to enter Wood Dragon Form reflexively. Even with advanced Martial Arts initiation, Dragon-Blooded must succeed at a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against difficulty 6 when activating this Charm, or suffer 1 damage (drained) from overstressing their body.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Soul Mastery (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist closes her fist around the ultimate secret of life and death, and then uses it to strike a blow that tears her target's soul apart. Her hand burns with livid green power while she holds this Charm within it.

System: Reflexively spend 2 Motes, 1 Willpower. The next unarmed Wood Dragon attack the martial artist lands inflicts Aggravated damage (-1), and its target, if successfully struck, must make a reflexive contested roll: the martial artist's (Willpower + Essence) against the target's (Willpower + Essence), both at difficulty 6. If the target ties or gains more successes, she throws off Soul Mastery without further consequence and the Charm is dispelled harmlessly. If the martial artist gains more successes, the target immediately dies, his soul torn from his body and cast aside. If Soul Mastery is successfully used to destroy a spirit with an Essence rating equal to or lower than that of the martial artist, it is slain forever, its Essence scattered to the winds.

At the end of each round in which the martial artist has *not* discharged Soul Mastery by striking an opponent, she suffers 1 Aggravated damage (drained). If (1 + Essence rating) rounds go by and she still has not discharged Soul Mastery's power, it discharges into her and she must resist its effects herself.

If a Dragon-Blooded masters this Charm, she gains an aspect affinity (see p. XX) for the element of wood, even if she herself is not a Wood Aspect. If she is already a Wood Aspect, then she no longer needs to make a successful roll to assume Wood Dragon Form without suffering damage, its activation cost drops to 0 Motes, and she may don the Form with a swift action.

Forbidden Martial Arts Styles

Few individuals aware that the Forbidden Arts exist, and fewer still grasp their true nature. Peasants and young martial artists spin tall tales of ancient martial arts styles of unimaginable power and esoteric nature, by which their practitioners might project the soul from the body, cause a man's heart to explode simply by striking his forehead with a finger, or freeze the breath in an opponent's lungs merely by concentrating killing intent upon him with a fierce glare. Experienced martial artists, who have lived the reality of daily hard work and the very real limitations of body and Essence, smile at such tales and dismiss them as fanciful exaggerations. Old masters who have been around and seen a great deal of the world's strangeness... say nothing unless deep in their cups. They harbor their suspicions that there is another world beyond the closed-fist brotherhood.

They are correct.

The Forbidden Arts are secret martial arts styles dating back to the First Age, created by the Sidereal Exalted based on their esoteric delving into the deepest secret truths of the constructed nature of reality. Where Snake and Tiger styles emulate the physical motions of deadly

predators, the Forbidden Arts step past the natural lessons in the world, beyond the parlor of allegory, and into the outermost fundamental principles of existence as they are understood by those who made the world and those who dwell in the madness beyond it. There is no “mundane” means of practicing the Forbidden Arts; they are, at their most fundamental level, supernatural arts focused upon manipulating the Essence of the body to provoke a powerful sympathetic response from the cosmos. In this manner, they stand at the crossroads of martial arts styles and sorcery.

The Sidereal Exalted are the natural masters (and creators) of these styles, for their Essence is more deeply woven into the phenomenal nature of Creation than that of any other Exalt. In recent centuries, the Maidens’ Chosen have been disturbed to discover that their Getimian counterparts are also adept at wielding the Forbidden Arts. Other Exalted practice the Forbidden Arts only with great difficulty if they are capable of grasping their lessons at all, and even then only under direct Sidereal or Getimian tutelage.

In rules terms, Forbidden Art practice breaks down as such:

- **Sidereal and Getimian Exalted:** These Chosen enjoy unrestricted practice of the Forbidden Arts. They alone are capable of tutoring other Chosen in these styles, and of creating new Forbidden Arts.
- **Solar and Abyssal Exalted:** These Chosen may purchase one-dot and two-dot Forbidden Arts Charms, and must receive direct tutelage from a Sidereal or Getimian to do so.
- **All other Celestial Exalted:** These Chosen may purchase only one-dot Forbidden Arts Charms, and must receive direct tutelage from a Sidereal or Getimian to do so.
- **Dragon-Blooded and Liminals:** Liminals and Dragon-Blooded have no facility with the Forbidden Arts and cannot learn them at all. Anys Syn, Chosen of Secrets, has been attempting for many centuries to devise a training regimen by which to shatter this limitation for the Terrestrial Exalted, but has yet to produce anything she is willing to describe as an unqualified success.
- Many Forbidden Arts Charms have minimum Essence ratings before mastery of that technique is possible.
- Characters cannot learn any “Form”-type Charm from the Forbidden Arts until after they have already mastered one entire standard Martial Arts style by purchasing all of its Charms.
- Characters cannot usually begin play with Forbidden Arts Charms. Characters made using “Elder” creation rules may use up to a number of dots of their starting Charm allocation equal to their Essence rating on Forbidden Arts Charms.
- Forbidden Arts otherwise follow the same rules as other Martial Arts Charms.

Charcoal March of Spiders Style

This is a battlefield style whose focus is simple combat superiority through disabling and destroying enemies. It has a number of applications for neophyte students, a potent Form, and several applications requiring advanced Essence.

This Forbidden Art encompasses mastery of the word CONSUMPTION.

Form Weapons: Charcoal March of Spiders uses nimble, Dexterity-based unarmed blows delivered with bunched fingertips or applying brutal nerve pinches. It also utilizes section staves (Dexterity, 6 damage, bruised, two-handed, nimble), which mimic the spider's legs, and knives, which mimic the spider's fangs. It also treats attacks made with the Essence-wires it generates as in-style attacks.

Armor: Charcoal March of Spiders style must be practiced unarmored.

Prerequisites: This style demands a knowledge of poison and Essence-flows. Lore •, Medicine ••, and Occult •• are necessary for its practice.

Charcoal March of Spiders fighting style: The martial artist's Charcoal March of Spiders style attacks are Fierce, and she increases her base Dodge value by +1.

Nest of Living Strands (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist spins forth the threads of her own destiny and stretches them in a skein across her surroundings, creating both a weapon for herself and an entangling hazard for those who would oppose her.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote to fill the sector the martial artist occupies with invisible threads for the rest of the scene. Anyone inside a thread-entangled zone who attempts to harm the martial artist suffers a –3 penalty on all attempts to do so. If anyone in such a zone attempts to strike the martial artist and fails, she may use a swift action on her next turn to twitch one of the threads, entangling his weapon and ripping it away, disarming him (see p. XX). The martial artist may scuttle on her invisible threads; while in an entangled zone, she may use move actions whether or not she has been struck before her turn, and may scurry from point to point across the threads and even stand on what appears to be thin air, employing normally impossible forms of movement that appear to consist of walking or climbing along nothing at all.

A character must have Essence 2+ to purchase this Charm.

Unnatural Many-Step Stride (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist grasps a passing thread of destiny and rides along for several moments, moving through causality as the pattern spiders do.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote at the beginning of the martial artist's turn. She dematerializes until the end of the round, may use a move action even if she was already struck before her turn, and if she does use a move action, may move up to three zones. Each subsequent use of this Charm within the same scene cumulatively increases its cost by 1 Mote.

A character must have Essence 2+ to purchase this Charm.

Cannibalistic Heritage Technique (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist lunges past her opponent with a horrific flickering motion. When she appears on the far side of him, she draws her fists together, causing a formerly-unseen net of cutting wires to draw tight and tear him apart.

System: This Charm may only be used against a target in a zone entangled by Nest of Living Strands or while Charcoal March of Spiders Form is active. Use the martial artist's swift and simple actions to spend 2 Motes and move up to two zones. This movement must be used to advance through and past a zone the martial artist's target occupies. At the end of the round, after all other characters have taken their turns, she rolls three Charcoal March of Spiders style attacks against the target. If all three attacks successfully strike him, the target is subjected to a one-time hazard (difficulty 8, damage 3, disabled arm or disabled leg) as the taut wires wound about his body seek to rip him limb from limb. If this final instance of damage successfully Wounds the target, one or more his limbs are amputated.

A character must have Essence 4+ to purchase this Charm.

Charcoal March of Spiders Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a hunched, sinister aspect, holding her elbows stiff and cocked, her hands in a cat's-cradle around nothing at all... or perhaps something. Some subtle gleaming when the light strikes just right.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote, 1 Willpower and uses a simple action to assume the Charcoal March of Spiders Form. The martial artist spins gleaming, razor-sharp wires of Essence from her fingertips. These may be used to make Dexterity-based Charcoal March of Spiders attacks against enemies up to two zones away, with a base damage of 5 (lacerated). An enemy who Staggered by an attack made with this weapon may be reflexively subjected to one of the following effects:

- He may be disarmed (see p. XX).
- He may be forcibly drawn one zone closer to the martial artist.
- He may be entangled. On his next turn he must either suffer a -2 penalty to whatever simple action he takes as he carefully disentangles himself from the razor-sharp wires, or else must resist a one-time hazard (difficulty 7, damage 3, lacerated).
- Rather than inflicting a lacerated Wound, the martial artist may inflict a disabled arm or disabled leg Wound for a cost of 0 Willpower.

When the martial artist spends Willpower to re-roll an attack made with her wires, the re-rolled attack gains Overwhelming (-1) as the wires become entirely invisible for a few moments.

Whenever the martial artist moves despite having already been struck before her turn, she may spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower to enter Charcoal March of Spiders Form reflexively.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

A character must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Maw of Dripping Venom (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist's blows rain down across her victim's body, poisoning his Essence so that it begins to dissolve his soul.

System: Spend 1 Mote and make a Charcoal March of Spiders attack as a simple action. If it strikes the target, then at the end of the round he must make a reflexive difficulty 9 (Stamina + Resistance) roll, and then must do so again on each of the two rounds following. If these three rolls do not cumulatively produce five or more successes, he loses all remaining Health and is incapacitated for the rest of the scene.

If the martial artist spends three consecutive simple actions laying her hand upon the comatose victim's body, she may draw out and consume his soul, instantly killing him and gaining 3 Motes. This permanently destroys spirits, and ensures that ensouled beings do not pass on to the Underworld, reincarnation, or any other outcome besides digestion by the martial artist.

A character must have Essence 4+ to purchase this Charm.

Pattern Spider Touch (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The master of this style learns the eight secret atemi of Asna Firstborn, first-forged of the pattern spiders, who dwells surrounded by her teeming young in a sanctum-web larger than the Blessed Isle. Utilizing the principle of these attacks, she may disjoint and rebuild a character's Essence and fundamental existence.

System: Spend 2 Motes, 1 Willpower and make a Charcoal March of Spiders style attack as a simple action. If it Staggers its target, he suffers one of the following effects:

- The character becomes a beast, stripped of his mind and his shape but not his supernatural powers.
- The character's body is transformed into a manifestation of one of the five elements, such as a gust of wind, a burst of fire that fades to ashes, a statue, or a tree. The target is still alive, but unless he is an elemental, he likely does not have the power to cause his body to take any sort of actions.
- The character becomes someone else of the martial artist's choosing, precisely as though he had used Ceasing to Exist Approach (see p. XX), save that the transformation is permanent and he completely forgets his original identity. This is useful for transforming enemies into allies or despots into obscure farmers, less useful for transforming farmers into lesser elemental dragons (unless for some reason the martial artist has some use for a lesser elemental dragon with the character sheet of a farmer).
- Unmake the target utterly if he fails a reflexive difficulty 6 Essence roll. In the unlikely event that a Primordial fails this roll or does not use a perfect defense, even it will be obliterated and descend to the Underworld as one of the Neverborn. Any lesser target unmade in this way does not pass on to any afterlife, but rather simply ceases to be.

With the exception of total unmaking, these transformations may be cured as though they were a mutation inflicted by the Wyld. In the case of a target dispersed into an elemental manifestation, it is *strongly* recommended that all of his substance be collected in one place before reversing the transformation.

A character must have Essence 5+ to purchase this Charm.

Citrine Poxes of Contagion Style

This is a corrosive style focused on disrupting the bodies, minds, and souls of its opponents through injections of disruptive Essence to create a number of powerful spiritual diseases. It is geared somewhat toward practice by younger Exalts, with a selection of useful techniques before the advanced practices of the style soar up to elder Essence.

This Forbidden Art encompasses mastery of the word DECAY.

Form Weapons: Citrine Poxes of Contagion uses powerful, disruptive Strength-based unarmed blows delivered with a closed fist to major chakras and Essence meridians, as well as strikes with staves, section staves (Dexterity, 6 damage, bruised, two-handed, nimble), and hammers.

Armor: Citrine Poxes of Contagion must be practiced unarmored.

Prerequisites: This style demands an exceedingly fine awareness of both Essence flows and anatomy, and as such cannot be practiced without Medicine •• and Occult •••.

Citrine Poxes of Contagion fighting style: The martial artist treats her total Wound penalties as 0 for the purpose of calculating her base Dodge Value.

Convulsive Displacement Infectious Atemi (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

With a precisely measured strike, the Exalt infects her victim with the spiritual contagion known as Jigsaw Organ Condition.

System: System: Spend 1 Mote and make a Citrine Poxes of Contagion attack as a simple action. If it strikes the target, he contracts the Jigsaw Organ Condition.

Jigsaw Organ Condition: This supernatural disease requires five successes on an extended difficulty 9 (Intelligence + Medicine) roll to treat, made at intervals of one day. After successful treatment, the victim must make a difficulty 8 (Stamina + Resistance) roll each day at sunrise, but only if his body is intact. Once this succeeds, he is free of the disease. Jigsaw Organ Condition can be communicated to others who help someone suffering from it solve a puzzle; make a difficulty 7 (Stamina + Resistance) roll to avoid infection.

While suffering from Jigsaw Organ Condition, the victim's body becomes disconnected from itself. Each time the victim suffers damage or botches a roll, a limb or organ of the Storyteller's choice (or the attacker's choice, if they're aware of the Jigsaw Organ Condition and seeking to exploit it) pops free or is expelled from the victim's body. The errant limb or organ is still mystically connected to the character's body, even at a distance, although he has no control over it while it is disconnected unless it is his entire head. For example, a separated heart continues to circulate his blood, and a severed head does not die and can still speak and perceive its surroundings. Luckily, restoring separated body parts is as simple as putting the limb back in place or swallowing the missing organ with a re-arm action. Unluckily, any damage done to a separated body part is experienced by the victim, and in the case of purloined organs, can have immediately fatal consequences. Wounds inflicted to vital organs are always maimed or mauled.

Disjointed Essence Infectious Atemi (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

With a precisely measured strike, the Exalt infects her victim with the spiritual contagion known as Drunken Moth Sickness.

System: Spend 1 Mote and make a Citrine Poxes of Contagion attack as a simple action. If it strikes the target, he contracts Drunken Moth Sickness.

Drunken Moth Sickness: This supernatural disease requires two successes on an extended difficulty 9 (Intelligence + Medicine) roll to treat, made at intervals of one day. After successful treatment, the victim must make a difficulty 8 (Stamina + Resistance) roll each day at sunrise. Once this succeeds, he is free of the disease. Drunken Moth Sickness is not infectious, but sometimes occurs in nature, generally when someone eats something into which a spirit has been bound.

While suffering from Drunken Moth Sickness, the victim must devote herself to a purpose defined by the martial artist at the moment of infection, such as “humiliate yourself,” “protect me,” or “kill your friends.” The disease can’t force a victim to violate his Nature, and it doesn’t compel him when there’s no obvious opportunity to fulfill its directive present, but otherwise the victim must either make a difficulty 9 Willpower roll each turn, or spend a point of Willpower to use his turn to do anything other than obey the disease’s imperative.

A character must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Feverish Essence Discharge Atemi (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

With a precisely measured strike, the Exalt infects her victim with the spiritual contagion known as White Sun Sickness.

System: Spend 1 Mote and make a Citrine Poxes of Contagion attack as a simple action. If it strikes the target, he contracts White Sun Sickness.

White Sun Sickness: This supernatural disease requires three successes on an extended difficulty 9 (Intelligence + Medicine) roll to treat, made at intervals of one day. After successful treatment, the victim must make a difficulty 8 (Stamina + Resistance) roll each day at sunrise. Once this succeeds, he is free of the disease. White Sun Sickness is not infectious, but sometimes occurs in nature, striking those who spend overmuch time meditating on the secrets of the Wyld, the mutability of Luna, the power of the Elemental Dragons, or the inspiring greatness of the Unconquered Sun.

Protagonists suffering from White Sun Sickness must spend an extra +1 Mote the first time each round they spend any Motes; this “Mote bleed” does not count toward their Mote-per-round limit. Antagonists who wish to spend Momentum must spend 1 extra Momentum in a like fashion. Additionally, characters with White Sun Sickness suffer a penalty to all of their actions equal to their own Essence rating as their very Essence roils with fever.

A character must have Essence 2+ to purchase this Charm.

Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The character surrounds herself with a miasma of spiritual sickness. The very air around her becomes a vector for mystical contagion, occasionally displaying an anima-like lattice of iron dripping with seawater and blood.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote, 1 Willpower and uses a simple action to assume the Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form. The martial artist is immune to all poison and diseases while this Charm is active. The air in the zone she occupies becomes virulent with Iphimedeia, the Revel Outside the Sealing of the Gates. She may exempt (Essence rating) allies from its effects at the beginning of each round; anyone else exposed to it must make a reflexive (Stamina + Resistance) roll against difficulty 9 or contract the disease.

When the martial artist infects someone with a supernatural disease, she may spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower to enter Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form reflexively.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

Iphimedeia, the Revel Outside the Sealing of the Gates: This supernatural disease requires five successes on an extended difficulty 9 (Intelligence + Medicine) roll to treat, made at intervals of one day. After successful treatment, the victim must make a difficulty 8 (Stamina + Resistance) roll each day at sunrise. Once this succeeds, he is free of the disease. Iphimedeia is not infectious, and may only be contracted in Hell at certain sites that were once holy to Isidoros.

A victim of Iphimedeia is subject to an ongoing hazard as his flesh twists and flows (difficulty 6, damage 2, drained, -2, one round). His Stagger Threshold is considered to be 1+ against this hazard, but while he harbors a drained Wound inflicted by it, he is no longer subject to its damage, only its penalty. Each turn, he must use his swift action to dance with abandon around some nearby person or object, or else transform any other use of his swift action into complex movement as he frantically incorporates his involuntary dancing into whatever sort of action he *wishes* to take. Water Aspects who contract this disease are occasionally left pregnant in its aftermath, as though they had held congress with another Water Aspect of similarly potent breeding to their own.

A character must have Essence 4+ to purchase this Charm.

Inner Dragon Unbinding (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist unleashes a potent series of forceful blows against a target's Essence flows, driving them into absolutely perfect alignment.

System: The martial artist spends 2 Motes and makes a Citrine Poxes of Contagion attack roll against a target as a simple action. Even if they do not resist, the difficulty cannot be lower than 6. This attack inflicts no damage; instead, each success on the damage roll is treated as one success on an extended roll to treat a mundane or supernatural disease. Alternately, two successes may be allocated to end an ongoing manipulation of the target's mind, such as Memory-Reweaving Discipline or Hypnotic Tongue Technique, or may cure a Derangement. Three successes may correct a lasting Wound or physical debility such as a missing limb, blindness, or a broken back. Four successes may remove a mutation or twisting of the body inflicted by sorcery, the Wyld, or some similar source; or may cause the character's body to conform with her fundamental self-image, such as by altering her sexual characteristics.

A character must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Essence-Shattering Typhoon (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Combining every malady at her command into a destructive anathema, the Exalt strikes at reality itself, shattering it into a blistering stream of white-hot fragments.

System: The martial artist spends 2 Motes and uses a simple action to begin striking at the air. A torrent of white-hot shrapnel blasts forth, destroying everything within a path encompassing four zones in whatever direction she is facing. Everyone in the attack's path who isn't already in cover must succeed at a difficulty 9 (Dexterity + Athletics) roll to *get* under cover, or else become subject to an ongoing hazard (difficulty 8, damage 6 Aggravated, maimed, -1, one round). Groups are subjected to one instance of this hazard for every zone where it and they overlap. Essence-Shattering Typhoon strikes even dematerialized beings caught in its blast.

Alternately, instead of suffering damage, the martial artist may choose to cause the blast wave to inflict a supernatural disease from one of this style's other techniques upon those caught in it.

If the martial artist continues to activate this Charm on subsequent turns, its cost drops to 1 Mote and its range doubles with each consecutive turn: four zones, then eight, 16, 32, and so on. Essence-Shattering Typhoon ends instantly if the martial artist is Staggered.

A character must have Essence 5+ to purchase this Charm.

Gentle Touch of the Wicked Hand (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Engaging in inventive wickedness, the martial artist studies terrible and obscure diseases and learns to create them with an infectious strike.

System: This Charm may be purchased repeatedly. Each time the martial artist does so, she becomes able to spend 1 Mote and make a Citrine Poxes of Contagion style attack as a simple action which, if it succeeds, infects its target with a new supernatural disease, in much the same fashion as Convulsive Displacement Infectious Atemi, Disjointed Essence Infectious Atemi, and Feverish Essence Discharge Atemi. She must first make a detailed field study of a particular supernatural disease before each purchase of this Charm, accumulating 20 successes on a difficulty 6-9 (depending on the disease's complexity and power) extended (Intelligence + Medicine) roll, made at one-month intervals.

A character must have Essence 4+ to purchase this Charm.

Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic Style

This horror is a style designed to attack its victims through vectors of ego, identity, and perception-of-self. It is considered advanced even among the Forbidden Arts, ill-suited for young martial artists: a style geared for grappling with esoteric entities and abstract foes. To deploy its higher techniques against a mere combatant is the very definition of cruelty. Chejop Kejak, leader of the Bronze Faction, is known to have mastered this style.

This Forbidden Art encompasses mastery of the word IDENTITY.

Form Weapons: Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic style uses Dexterity-based unarmed attacks, generally Essence-realigning strikes made with two stiffened fingertips.

Armor: Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic may only be practiced unarmored.

Prerequisites: This style calls for advanced understanding of others, of the self, and of the structural processes of identity, memory, and the world itself. Those who wish to practice it must possess Lore •••• and Empathy ••••.

Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic fighting style: Once per round, the martial artist may reflexively pay 1 Willpower to increase her Dodge value by +2.

Birth of the Perfect Ego Juggernaut (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Using a carefully calculated strike, the martial artist aligns her target's Essence flows into a momentary array of limitless perfection. Such perfection is an addictive trap that breaks the mind of he who embraces it.

System: Spend 3 Motes and make a Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic attack as a simple action. If it strikes the target, he takes no damage, but knows that his actions are now perfect. He may then spend a point of Willpower to reject perfection and escape this Charm's trap. If he embraces this knowledge instead, then his next action does indeed gain ten additional automatic successes. The action after that, however, is merely a standard action, as are all the actions that follow. The target gains a Derangement which convinces him that his actions are everlastingly perfect, that his every effort creates epic perfection: his every blow fells armies, his every song breaks hearts. His strength is limitless, his passion boundless. His faulty perceptions paper over disparities with reality as best they can; when the gap grows too big to deny, he hallucinates equally epic villains who are to blame for his shortcomings. Attempting to run tirelessly from Nexus to Lookshy, it is a sorcerous wind full of demons that holds him back, not his own exhaustion. When he strikes a sheer cliff face to shatter it into climbable stairs, his enemies cause an avalanche to ruin his works.

Even after overcoming this Charm's Derangement, it can be very difficult indeed for the target to return to a life where he is merely himself, and where the world is indifferent to his existence.

A character must have Essence 4+ to purchase this Charm.

Freeing the Father from the Child (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Delivering a potent knife-edge chop, the martial artist severs her target from his future.

System: Spend 3 Motes and make a Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic attack as a simple action. If it Staggers the target, then he loses the ability to form new memories. He remembers everything up to the point of being struck with this Charm, but henceforth at the end of each scene, he loses all of his memories of everything that transpired during that scene. His life is a gap of unknown duration stretching from the moment he was struck by this Charm up until, oh, a few minutes ago. This debility is permanent and can only be cured by magic, as though it were a Derangement.

A character must have Essence 5+ to purchase this Charm.

Impersonal Personal Denature Sting (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist strikes not merely at an opponent's body, but at his fundamental sense of self, shattering it and rebuilding it as she sees fit.

System: Spend 3 Motes and make a Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic attack as a simple action. It cannot inflict anything but non-Aggravated damage, and this damage cannot produce any non-bruised Wounds, but its final inflicted damage is doubled. If the attack incapacitates the target, and the martial artist spends the next five turns using simple actions to hold a hand to his brow and concentrating to realign his Essence, she may redefine his Intimacies and his Nature. He must make a difficulty 9 Willpower roll at the end of every subsequent story to attempt to revert these changes to their former state, one by one.

A character must have Essence 5+ to purchase this Charm.

Two Score Mirror Glance (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist mentally recoils from an opponent, then enacts that motion in reverse, delivering a disjointed strike that traps her foe within a cage of his own history. Though occasionally used as a teaching-tool, or a means of examining one's own history, most Sidereals consider it a torture device of unsurpassed cruelty.

System: Spend 2 Motes, 1 Willpower and make a Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic attack as a simple action. If it Staggers the target, then he stops moving and skips his next turn. His Defense drops to 3 and his Stagger Threshold to 1+ until the end of that skipped turn. Although in the real world only moments pass by, in the target's mind he is experiencing his entire life backwards, moment-by-moment, in real time, reliving everything that has ever happened to him with perfect clarity but in reverse. This shatters any illusions or memory-altering magic he may be suffering under, as he relives all of his memories with absolute objective clarity. This is of scant benefit, however, next to the fact that the victim spends decades (or in the case of elder Exalted and gods, centuries or potentially even millennia) caught hurtling inescapably backward along the track of his own history as a helpless observer, awaiting the moment before his birth and the annihilation of self that goes with it.

When that moment arrives, the target must make a reflexive Willpower roll against difficulty 9 and gain three successes. If he fails to do so, he gains a Derangement.

A character must have Essence 5+ to purchase this Charm.

Words Are Not Enough Infliction (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

Delivering a powerful palm strike, the martial artist shatters her target's ability to perceive or understand herself or others.

System: Spend 2 Motes and make a Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic attack as a simple action. If it Staggers its target, then he permanently loses his ability to speak or understand a single known language. If this Charm leaves the target with no languages, then he loses his ability to learn or understand any language, ever. These debilities can only be cured with magic, as though they were Derangements.

A character must have Essence 5+ to purchase this Charm.

Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic Form (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes a formless, ready stance that nonetheless intimidates all who see it with the imposing reality of her presence. White threads rise and waver through her anima if it is manifest.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote, 1 Willpower and uses a simple action to assume the Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic Form. When she touches someone while this form is active, she may make a contested (Willpower + Essence) roll against them (both at difficulty 6). If she gains more successes, she takes total control of the target's mind and body for the rest of the scene. She may command him to do anything that does not violate his Nature. If he is a protagonist, may spend his Willpower and Motes to activate his Charms and other powers. If he is an antagonist, she may spend Momentum to fuel his special abilities without needing the Storyteller's permission. Puppeteering someone else does not impede the martial artist's ability to act in any way. She may simultaneously control up to (Essence rating) other people.

When someone who does not know the martial artist asks her who she is, she may spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower to enter Kaleidoscopic Border of Logic Form reflexively.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

A character must have Essence 5+ to purchase this Charm.

Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Style

This is an atypical style encompassing four lesser Form-type Charms and one greater Form. It is often recommended to younger Sidereals, the better to take advantage of lesser styles while developing the breadth and depth of skill for advanced techniques.

This Forbidden Art encompasses mastery of the word ESSENCE.

Form Weapons: Prismatic Arrangement of Creation exclusively uses unarmed attacks, utilizing both Strength-based direct blows and Dexterity-based nerve strikes.

Armor: Prismatic Arrangement of Creation style may only be practiced unarmored.

Prerequisites: This style demands comprehensive study of the lore of the world and its subtle workings. Lore •••, and Occult ••• are necessary for its practice.

Prismatic Arrangement of Creation fighting style: The martial artist remains capable of spending Willpower while Staggered, and increases her Stagger Threshold by +1.

Spell-Shattering Palm (•)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist leaps forward, delivering a shattering palm strike that destroys the structure of a spell.

System: In the moment of a spell's unleashing, reflexively spend 1 Mote and roll (Strength + Martial Arts) against difficulty 6. If the martial artist rolls a sufficient number of successes, the spell is obliterated as it is cast, exploding into bright drifting sparks of Essence that flutter through the area in a luminous haze for minutes afterwards. It takes five successes to destroy a

Terrestrial Circle spell, seven to destroy a Celestial Circle spell, and nine to destroy a Solar Circle spell.

Alternately, the martial artist may spend 3 Motes, 1 Willpower to attempt to destroy an ongoing spell or sorcerous working. She makes the roll described above from the closest point she can find to the epicenter of the spell; in the case of some spells where this point is very non-obvious, such as a generalized curse upon a family's bloodline, she must perform research and make a successful difficulty 9 (Intelligence + Occult) roll. Destroying a spell requires three more successes than it would if smashing it in the moment of its casting. Destroying a working requires (Ambition x 4) successes.

A character must have Essence 2+ to purchase this Charm.

Demesne and Manse Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist roots her feet upon the earth and spreads her arms wide, making of her body a temple and channeling the Essence of the world into and through herself. A Hearthstone forms upon her brow, her caste mark gleaming in its depths.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote, 1 Willpower and uses a simple action to assume the Demesne and Manse Form for the rest of the scene. Every artifact to which she is attuned is considered to bear a Hearthstone whose rating is equal to her Essence within each of its empty sockets. She also reduces the attunement value of all attuned artifacts to 0, and gains a number of Motes equal to the combined normal attunement value of her attuned artifacts.

While the martial artist stands upon the grounds of a Demesne, she may spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower to enter Demesne and Manse Form reflexively.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

A character must have Essence 2+ to purchase this Charm.

Four Magical Materials Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist's body flickers and scintillates with transformative power, becoming unbreakable.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote, 1 Willpower and uses a simple action to assume the Four Magical Materials Form. For the rest of the scene, she gains the following benefits:

- **Deadly Starmetal Offensive:** The character's fingernails lengthen and become both razor-sharp and unbreakable. Her unarmed attacks inflict lacerated Wounds, and gain a base damage of 7.
- **Orichalcum Sheathing Stance:** The character increases her Soak rating by +2.
- **Flickering Moonsilver Approach:** The martial artist can always move regardless of whether she has been struck before her turn.
- **Five Jade Fury:** The martial artist's Stagger Threshold is increased by +1, and once per round she may invoke a Block or Dodge for 0 Willpower.

If the character is attuned to at least one artifact made of jade, moonsilver, orichalcum, or starmetal, she may spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower to enter Four Magical Materials Form reflexively.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

A character must have Essence 4+ to purchase this Charm.

Games of Divinity Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist assumes the infinitely baroque posture of the spirit courts, embodying the four powers of the mind: aspiration, effort, intention, and analysis. Though no imperfect being can perfectly express this Form, her movements still speak of a perfection in the universe, and hearts break to see it.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote, 1 Willpower and uses a simple action to assume the Games of Divinity Form. For the rest of the scene, any who attempts to strike her must first succeed at a successful reflexive difficulty 9 Willpower roll in each round or use his turn to do something else. Those who behold the Games of Divinity form must spend 1 Willpower point or else become addicted. Henceforth, an addict must succeed at a difficulty 9 Willpower roll to turn down any reasonable opportunity to see the Games of Divinity Form being practiced again. Only going cold turkey for a year and a day may break this addiction without recourse to magic.

When the martial artist receives a compliment of any sort from any enemy, she may spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower to enter Games of Divinity Form reflexively.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

A character must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Soul Fire Shaper Form (••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist's motions make her a causal nexus, channeling the Essence flows of Creation, Heaven, Hell, and the Underworld through her spirit and flesh. If her anima manifests while in this Form, it burns with a rippling, multihued radiance.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote, 1 Willpower and uses a simple action to assume the Soul Fire Shaper Form. For the rest of the scene, her Essence rating is considered to be 10. This does not allow her to spend experience points or supernal experience points on anything she normally could not, nor does it increase her maximum Mote capacity. In all other respects, however, she is considered to have an Essence rating of 10. If there are any active ongoing Charms with Essence-based effects, they are retroactively empowered as though the martial artist's Essence rating had been 10 at the time of their activation.

When the martial artist witnesses the casting of a spell, she may spend 1 Mote, 1 Willpower to enter Soul Fire Shaper Form reflexively.

This Charm cannot be used at the same time as another Martial Arts Form-type Charm.

A character must have Essence 3+ to purchase this Charm.

Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form (•••)

Resonance: Martial Arts

The martial artist momentarily vanishes, becoming one with every particle of Creation before reappearing, her limbs trailing stardust and her motions shaking reality with their perfection.

System: The martial artist spends 1 Mote, 1 Willpower and uses a simple action to assume the Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form for the rest of the scene. No attack against her is considered unexpected.

While this Form active, the martial artist is always considered to satisfy the reflexive activation requirements of all of this style's other Forms, and may assume any or all of those Forms at their normal cost, potentially having all of the style's Charms active at once.

Alternately, the martial artist may activate Form-type Charms from styles other than the Prismatic Arrangement of Creation, but doing so limits her to a maximum of two Forms in addition to Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form itself. Thus, she could potentially activate Charcoal March of Spiders and Tiger Form, or Snake Form and Crane Form, or Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form and Four Magical Materials Form.

Finally, while this Form is active, the style weapons of *any* other Form she has active are considered style weapons for *all* Charms of *all* Forms she has active. For example, by activating Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form, Snake Form, and Water Dragon Form, section staves, hook swords, tiger claws, spears, tridents, and both Strength and Dexterity-based unarmed attacks could be used as in-style attacks for all three styles.

When the martial artist regains a point of Willpower for performing an act that affirms her Nature, she may pay 1 Mote, 1 Willpower to enter Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form reflexively.

A character must have Essence 5+ to purchase this Charm.

Sorcery

We'll start with the basic rules and assumptions the **Exalted Demake** uses for what sorcery is and how it works, then handle the specific bits, then get to the shopping list:

- Sorcery is mostly inspired by the Third Edition model.
- Sorcery is universal. Everyone gets access to it, although some types of characters get access to it... *differently*.
- Sorcery contains three major elements: initiations, sorcerous workings, and spells.
- Initiations govern your introduction into sorcery and what kind of sorcerer you are.
- Sorcerous workings are big freeform magic rituals to do things that spells can't manage. They're very versatile and very powerful, but slow and imprecise and hard to control.
- Spells are prearranged works of magic embedded in the world, triggered by aligning the world's Essence according to the sorcerer's will. They're much faster and more direct and reliable than workings (but not as responsive as Charms).
- Sorcery is arranged into three tiers of power. In the First Age, these were known as the Terrestrial, Celestial, and Solar Circles, according to who was able to master their secrets. The Realm more commonly addresses them as the Emerald, Sapphire, and Adamant Circles, with the last spoken of mostly in legends. Sorcerers must always ascend through the three tiers in order,

generally by buying the appropriate Charm to unlock its power. Most Exalts are not able to advance all the way to the Solar Circle.

- “Sorcery” and “necromancy” are all contained within the same system. Necromancy is a series of unusual initiations, detailed in Volume II.
- The “Limits of Sorcery” sidebar from **EX3** is very much in effect. Sorcery can’t turn back time, it can’t truly return the dead to life, and it can’t give you immortality without some kind of a catch (though damn if people don’t keep trying to find a way to sneak around all those limitations).

Sorcerous Workings

Sorcerous workings are long-term or permanent enchantments, curses, or works of magic that change the world.

The first step in enacting a working is for the player to define what she wants: To return fertility to ruined fields; to raise a city into the sky; to create a vast dome of stable, breathable air at the bottom of the sea; or whatever. The Storyteller then assigns the miracle an Ambition, and the player decides whether she wants the result to be Rigid or Fluid. Finally, the player surveys the Means at her disposal.

A sorcerous working is an extended (Intelligence + Occult) roll whose difficulty, goal, and permitted number of rolls are determined by the working’s Rigid or Fluid status, Ambition, and Means. One Willpower point must be paid before making each roll.

By default, the roll has an interval of one day and a limit of only one permitted roll, but the sorcerer’s Means may change both of these parameters (notably granting extra rolls so that the extended action is properly extended).

Failure causes a mystic collapse. The gathered power disperses, leaving a temporary Essence haze in the region. The sorcerer cannot attempt another working during the same story. (The great sorcerous academies of the Realm, Lookshy, and Prasad harness substantial geomantic power to suppress the formation of such dead zones, given that failed workings are an expected part of their yearly curriculum.)

A botch immediately causes the violent termination of the working as the magic runs amok in some destructive and undesired way.

Succeeding at a sorcerous working immediately inducts it into reality, and lowers the size of the sorcerer’s Mote pool by its Ambition until a story has ended and a new story begun. (If that sounds like weird phrasing, it’s to keep workings enacted during the downtime between stories from being essentially “free.” If this sounds punitive, hey, at least it’s not Third Edition, where we charged you XP for doing these things. You’re changing the world forever! That’s heady stuff.) Sorcerers refer to this period of weakness by a number of technical terms, but the common jargon is simply “the cost of sorcery.” Sometimes the cost of sorcery only lingers for a day or two, sometimes it can weaken a sorcerer for weeks on end. The cost of sorcery is capricious and unpredictable, and only the very young or very foolish assume they’ll be able to quickly shrug off its burden according to their own timetable.

If the sorcerer doesn’t have a Mote pool big enough to cover the working — as will always be the case for mortal sorcerers, who have no Mote pool at all — then they suffer a –1 penalty to all actions for each Mote by which they are in arrears during the duration of the cost of sorcery. This

represents the balance of power being taken out of the sorcerer's personal Essence. In narrative terms, this penalty represents a combination of pain and exhaustion as the very fabric of the sorcerer's being is torn and reduced by the power she commands, and is frequently accompanied by days or weeks of blinding migraines, digestive difficulties, sharp pains when moving and steady aches while remaining still, shortness of breath, general lack of energy and difficulty sleeping. It's an incredibly miserable state to be in, even for the Chosen, who soon discover that Charms intended to banish pains of the body are ineffective in relieving this wound to the spirit (in game terms, the penalty is not considered a Wound penalty despite being narratively accompanied by a great deal of pain).

In the case of mortal sorcerers in particular, accruing a severe working penalty can be dangerous. At sunset each day for a number of days equal to the number of points of penalty in excess of her Stamina rating, a mortal sorcerer must make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll at difficulty 7 or suffer a drained Aggravated Wound. As a result, mortal sorcerers charge *very* steep prices for miracle-working on behalf of their clients.

Someone Else's Problem

The cost of sorcerous workings can be downright incapacitating, especially for Dragon-Blooded, who have very limited Mote pools to work with. So: can you get someone else to do workings for you instead, and have them eat all the penalties?

The short answer is yes. The longer answer is yes, but this tends to shift the burden around rather than obviating it. If you're hiring another sorcerer to do the work, they are likely to charge very steep (Resources 4-5) prices for even simple workings. Mortal sorcerers in particular are very resistant to spending weeks bedridden in constant pain, puking blood and experiencing seizures, and may demand the equivalent of being set up in luxury for life in exchange for workings past Ambition 3 or so. There's also the issue that if, say, a Twilight is hiring sorcerers to do her workings for her, the magicians she hires are probably much weaker than she is, and may fail outright to induct the desired miracles. Certainly, they'll need much more time and Means than she would have if she did the working herself.

If paying a sorcerer seems unappealing, there's always the option of enslaving one. A few spirits study sorcery. Gods can't easily be bound, and Summon Elemental isn't useful in this respect, as it makes a fresh elemental from scratch, and such individuals never come into existence as accomplished sorcerers, but there are a handful of known sorcerers among demons of the Second and Third Circles, and for necromancers, an abundance of ghostly sorcerers rattling around the Underworld. There are a few sorcerously-initiated First Circle demons as well, but Dragon-Blooded sorcerers guard their names and identities with the same ferocity as a fisherman guards his best fishing spots, and most of them are already summoned and bound at any given time, making the art deeply unappealing to the common denizens of Hell.

The primary problem of binding a spirit (aside from the potential to be using a weaker sorcerer than you are to get your workings done, particularly in the case of ghosts) is this: antagonists *always* perform fluid workings, and in the case of ghosts and demons in particular, produce workings tainted by deathly or infernal

influences. To the degree that this isn't a problem, sure, bind demons and put them to work. This was done in the First Age on a semi-regular basis, though the Exalted of that era resisted letting their enemies build *too* much of their key infrastructure for hopefully obvious reasons.

Ambition

Ambition is a trait rated from one to nine, and determines the goal for the extended roll to enact a sorcerous working. A sorcerer may attempt a working whose Ambition exceeds the scope of her circle of initiation, but this increases the Goal by 3 per Circle by which the sorcerer falls short. Ambition 9 workings are not available to those only initiated into the Terrestrial Circle.

Terrestrial Circle Workings: Workings of the Terrestrial Circle are generally rooted in transforming, enhancing, or weakening pre-existing elements of the natural world, rather than directly invoking supernatural forces. The more they are fundamentally aimed at dealing with mystical forces or beings, the more constrained their effects tend to be.

Emerald Circle workings are typically limited either in power or scope. An Emerald Circle working might enchant all the fields of a village, but only with a minor blessing: something that would still be a marvel to the inhabitants of the village, but augments the natural properties of that area or protects it against a mundane threat or nuisance, rather than completely overwriting the nature of that region through magic. Conversely, the most powerful workings of this circle are confined to the scope of a single chamber within a larger structure or the transformation of a single character. Even then, transformations of individuals tend to introduce minor uncanny alterations, rather than fundamental transformation of the self.

As a general rule, any sorcerous feat the Storyteller feels should be routine (not merely *possible*, but *routine*) for a Dragon-Blooded or mortal sorcerer should fall under this circle.

Ambition 1 (Terrestrial, 5 successes): Create or bind magical entities capable of performing mundane, household chores, but not much else, in service to a person, organization, or structure (the sorcerer-kings of Ysyx use such workings to bind the wee folk crafted by their faerie drudges). Enchant a path to prevent travelers from becoming lost or lead them to a particular location. Draw up a freshwater spring. Flatten a hill. Ward a neighborhood against a particular type of mundane nuisance, such as forest fires, crop-eating pests, or aggressive wild animals.

Ambition 2 (Terrestrial, 7 successes): Cross two different species of plant or animal to create a hybrid species with the best traits of both. Give a plant, animal, or object human-level intelligence. Ward a chamber against scrying, teleportation, or intrusion by a particular type of spirit. Grant one temporary Inheritance-style enchantment to oneself or a willing subject.

Ambition 3 (Terrestrial, 9 successes): Bless a region to enhance its natural properties, causing a field to always deliver a bountiful harvest or a stretch of a freshwater river to always run clean. Create a completely new but mundane form of life, or breed a specimen of an existing species with a minor supernatural power that augments its strongest traits. Place a curse on a small region that warps or blights its flora, fauna, or natural resources. Grant one permanent Inheritance-style enchantment to oneself or a willing subject. Create a room in which it is always a particular time of day.

Celestial Circle Workings: Workings of the Celestial Circle rewrite the laws of the world on a local scale, instill supernatural power into the mundane world, or significantly remake intelligent and even supernatural beings. They can affect entire towns or city districts. As a general rule,

this is the circle for sorcerous workings that the Storyteller feels established Lunar and Sidereal sorcerers, as well as accomplished Solar sorcerers, should be capable of achieving without excessive effort, or that an exceptionally potent Dragon- Blood or mortal might be capable of attaining with great dedication, skill, or risk.

Ambition 4 (Celestial, 11 successes): Create illusions that haunt a town. Transform a chamber so that its interior replicates the environment of any natural terrain within Creation. Ward a chamber or structure against *all* intruders with magical traps or barriers. Reweave one element of a person's physiology that they consider fundamental to their identity, such as removing a Derangement or birth defect, making someone ugly or beautiful, restoring or removing fertility, changing someone's sexual characteristics, or granting them an Uncanny Feature.

Ambition 5 (Celestial, 13 successes): Alter the weather of a town or hamlet over a long duration, extending the harvest season every year or making winters exceptionally harsh. Enchant fortifications with supernatural qualities. Grant a dot of Inheritance to a small group of people. Make alterations to the nature of a willing supernatural being, such as imbuing a fire elemental with the aspect of earth to turn it into a being of molten magma. Spread Uncanny Features throughout the mundane flora and fauna of a small forest. Remove a mutation inflicted by the Wyld from a person.

Ambition 6 (Celestial, 15 successes): Create a loyal minion with substantial supernatural powers. Enchant the architecture of an entire structure to grant it limited mobility, the capacity to rearrange itself, or intelligence. Open a tiny shadowland. Unleash a Wyld taint upon a region or temporarily suppress such a taint. Activate or complete a First Age wonder.

Solar Circle Workings: Solar Circle workings are the height of what can be accomplished by sorcery. They can rewrite the laws of reality, or write new ones into being. Their scale can be huge, encompassing entire cities at the low end or entire worlds at the upper boundary of potential. This is also the scale at which the limitations of sorcery may be challenged (though not necessarily overcome), such as attempting to gain immortality, cheat death, or violate causality. As long as the Storyteller feels that something should be possible through a sorcerous working, it can be attained through workings of the Adamant Circle.

Ambition 7 (Solar, 17 successes): Raise a rainforest in a desert. Dry up a lake. Enchant a small city to emulate the nature of another realm of existence. Purify a hundred miles of shadowland or Wyld. Extract the soul of a willing mortal from his body and transfer it into an automaton or manse. Restore someone's body to the prime of its youth. Ward an entire city against invasion with supernatural traps, barriers, or concealment. Activate or catalyze an exceptionally powerful First Age wonder.

Ambition 8 (Solar, 20 successes): Make a city float in the sky. Make a forest far larger on the inside than its borders would allow. Make time run at a different rate within a limited area. Lay a potent curse on a region or group of people that can only be broken when specific circumstances are met. Transform a demon into a god.

Ambition 9 (Solar, 25 successes): Make subtle alterations to the metaphysics of the entire cosmos (this was the means used to create the Initiation of the Five Trials). Create a supernatural being of a singular nature and considerable power. Cast a city-sized region into a different realm of existence, or outside of time and space altogether, with set conditions for when it returns or how it can be accessed. Transform a mortal into a god.

Rigid Workings

In a Rigid working, the player (and sorcerer) defines exactly how they want the working to operate, and if the Storyteller approves, that's exactly how things are.

If it looks like your Rigid working is going to run out of rolls without succeeding, you can decide to switch to Fluid to get easier difficulties to work with, but once you make this decision you can't change back.

A rigid working is difficulty 9.

Fluid Workings

In a Fluid working, the player (and sorcerer) defines what they want the working to accomplish in broad strokes ("I want to protect the city from attacking armies," "I want to restore his youth," "I want to bless the fields with abundant fecundity," and so on), but leaves the fine details up to the Storyteller.

The understanding here is that if you pick a Fluid working, your working is going to come out weird and complicated. The city will be protected because those slain trying to breach it rise as ghosts who are compelled to fight in its defense... but the ghosts don't just go away when the fighting's done, and their presence must be managed somehow. His youth is restored, but he requires a Resources 4 sacrifice of unworked jade during each Calibration or will revert to his true age. The fields are blessed with fecundity that is uncanny. In addition to growing crops, a drop of blood shed upon them will gestate into a child or animal by the end of the season, and the field-grown are obsessively protective of the field; in sufficient numbers, they will eventually refuse to let any other work its grounds, and then in time will refuse to let any other partake of its bounty.

The point is *never* to fuck up a working or twist it so bad that it negates the point of doing it in the first place, or leave the sorcerer worse off than they'd have been if they never did a working at all. A Fluid working is *not a botch*. A Fluid working means there's a *complication to manage* that could have been avoided with a Rigid working.

A fluid working is difficulty 7.

Means

As mentioned, a sorcerous working defaults to only giving you one roll to complete it, and the roll taking a day to enact. Means are additional favorable elements the sorcerer has stocked up to empower the working, which give her a greater chance to successfully complete it by turning a single roll into an extended roll, at one-day intervals.

Assistance (+1 Roll): The sorcerer gains the assistance of a supernatural being (usually a god, elemental, or demon, but sometimes a powerful ghost or faerie) whose nature and powers relate to the working. Alternately, she is assisted by a bevy of mortal mystics, a cult, or some other group of supporters who can feed power into her working.

Complementary Ability (+1 or 2 Rolls): The sorcerer has an Ability (*not* Occult) which bears directly on the nature or style of the working rated at 4+. If she's breeding together new lifeforms, Medicine or Survival might earn this bonus. If she's conjuring a magical song to befuddle those who pass through a valley, Performance would help. If she's transforming someone's body so that their body and self-image align, Medicine *and* Empathy could

potentially contribute (for expertise in anatomy and understanding the dysphoria the working will dispel). No more than two Abilities may be cited as Means in this fashion.

Complementary Spell (+1 Roll): If the sorcerer has a spell that strongly relates to the thesis of the working (if her working deals with demons, Demon of the First Circle is a clear asset; if she knows Death of Obsidian Butterflies, she might craft a working that sends swarms of obsidian butterflies to attack ships trying to navigate a certain waterway), she may claim it as a Means.

Complementary Supernatural Power (+1 Roll): If the sorcerer has at least three dots of Charms relating to the concept of the working, it can serve as a Means.

Exotic Components (+1 Roll each): The bones of a behemoth, the heart of a faerie lord, impossibilities forged from the depths of the Wyld: all of these things might be consumed in the course of a working to serve as a Means, each adding one additional roll. An exotic component is anything that is obviously rare, of intrinsic occult power, and a pain in the ass to obtain.

Infrastructure (+1 Roll): A dedicated ritual chamber or sorcerous laboratory counts as a Means. These are expensive and difficult even for the scions of the Realm to assemble, constituting a Resources 5 investment and usually at least a couple of adventures in search of particular rare texts, ritual materials, or precious building materials. They are coveted anyway, as they can be reused again and again for different workings. Recovering an intact First Age facility would be worth +2 rolls.

Time (+1 or more Rolls): Failing all else, the sorcerer can slow down and take extra time to enact the working. Changing the working's interval from one day to one week garners an extra roll. Going from a week to a month is worth two extra rolls. Going from a month to a cycle (3 months) is worth three extra rolls. Yearly intervals are worth four extra rolls, but are rarely seen for anything shy of Solar Circle workings where every last possible advantage is needed.

Undoing a Working

It isn't possible to cancel a working, only to try to counter it with another working. Even then, "I wish to undo this working" isn't a valid working. A counter-working jams up or counteracts an existing working. If a working turns an area into an impassable maze, a counter-working might create a mystic guide that leads people through the maze safely, or creates a strict series of silver roads that safely cut through the maze. The original working is always still *there*, which can make navigating counter-workings a rather strange experience.

Sorcerous Initiations

In terms of making a character, all you need to do to be a sorcerer is to buy the Charm: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery. That's not how it works in the fiction.

In the fiction, people become a sorcerer when their way of seeing the world changes. Their mind, their perceptions, their *soul* is fundamentally transformed, altering the way they interact with the universe around them. They can feel the underlying patterns and currents in the Essence that makes up everything, and can reach out with their will to alter those flows.

How does a person get to that point?

There are a lot of ways. You might bind your soul to a mighty demon, gaining occult power in exchange for servitude. You might have your soul remade by the Wyld. You might be kidnapped as a child by a god and forced to curate his undersea library your whole life, slowly soaking up the occult wisdom in those books until they awaken a power within you. You might have studied under mystical tutors at the Heptagram, the Realm's premiere academy of sorcery. You might have discovered a First Age artifact whose power changed your life.

When making a character, you decide how it is that your character became a sorcerer, and pick or design an initiation that fits. This grants you one *shaping ritual*, along with one free Terrestrial Circle spell.

When becoming a sorcerer during play, you *cannot* simply decide to buy the Terrestrial Circle Sorcery Charm because, hey, it sounds fun. You must first undergo a story of some kind that constitutes a sorcerous initiation; *then* you buy the Charm to catalyze the power. Again, this grants you one shaping ritual and one free spell.

Shaping rituals are usually particular means of employing the shape sorcery action (see p. XX) which grant the sorcerer some advantage. All initiations have several such rituals.

A number of example initiations follow.

Advanced Sorcerous Initiation

Picking up Celestial and Solar Circle Sorcery grants additional shaping rituals. What this *usually* means is that a sorcerer grabs more rituals from her initiation as she advances, but it's possible to encounter other mystic revelations in the course of one's sorcerous career. A character *can* gain a second or even third initiation in this fashion, allowing her to pick shaping rituals from outside of her original initiation.

If the events of the story make sense, it's also possible for a sorcerer to change her starting initiation. Perhaps she first learned sorcery through a demonic pact, but during the course of the game her patron is destroyed and she undergoes extensive tutelage under a Sidereal master to learn less impure ways of imposing her will upon Creation. It would be permissible for her to replace her "Demon Pact" initiation with "a Sorcerous Academy," in this case.

A Demon Pact

This initiation represents a sorcerer who gained power through some oath or compact which bound her to a mighty being of supernatural power. Probably a sketchy one. Probably a sketchy one who might not ultimately have her absolute best interests in mind. The classic version of this initiation is to a demon of the Second or Third Circle, but it's also entirely possible for the sorcerer's patron to be an illicit god, a lesser elemental dragon, a Deathlord, or something stranger. In any case, her patron awakened her power and now she owes him something. Decide what that is. This initiation is common for Abyssal, Infernal, and Getimian Exalted, as well as many Exigents.

It's often appropriate to represent the patron with the Mentor Background.

Shaping Ritual (Beseeching Prayer): The sorcerer may spend several intense minutes in fervent prayer to her patron, asking for a blessing of power. She makes a (Charisma +

Performance) roll against difficulty 6. She may bank all of her successes and apply them to a shape sorcery roll later in the same story. She can only keep one such (Charisma + Performance) result banked at a time. If this prayer isn't accompanied by an appropriate sacrifice (such as a fatted calf, haunch of smoking meat, or the blood of a virgin — whatever it is her patron's into) then she owes her patron a service of his choosing before this ritual will function again.

Shaping Ritual (Consecrated Fane): While standing within a temple dedicated to her patron, *or* surrounded by members of her patron's cult, *or* standing upon the grounds of a Demesne whose aspect resonates with her patron's nature, the sorcerer adds one bonus success to all shape sorcery actions.

Shaping Ritual (Frenzied Bloodletting): *Immediately* on her next turn after killing someone or something, the sorcerer may take a shape sorcery action and add a number of bonus successes depending on what it is she just killed, as she consecrates the death to her patron. An animal is worth one to two successes (a tyrant lizard is usually a more impressive offering than a goat, unless her patron is *super* into goats), a person is worth two successes, and a supernatural being is worth three successes. If the sacrifice was an enemy of her patron, add a bonus success.

Shaping Ritual (Offering of Life): By offering up her very own blood in her patron's honor, the sorcerer may increase the power of her mystic arts. During a shape sorcery action, the character may reflexively wound herself (possibly with a wavy ritual dagger), adding two successes to the roll per point of damage she inflicts on herself.

Shaping Ritual (The Power of His Name): When making a shape sorcery roll, the sorcerer may reflexively call upon her patron's name to add one bonus success. The only problems with this are that, one, the sorcerer does this aloud, verbally, at volume, which may draw censure in certain circles given the dubious nature of her patron; and two, doing so makes her patron aware of precisely where she is and what she's doing. (This is the classic Elric "Blood and souls for my Lord Arioch!" routine.)

Ecstatic Revelation

This initiation represents a sorcerer who has awakened her inner power through vision-questing, ingestion of spiritually active drugs such as bright morning, or congress with the spirits. It represents a shamanic sort of sorcerer, attuned to the Essence flows of the natural world and the spirits that tend it. Many sorcerers from margin-cultures gain power through this sort of initiation. It is common among Lunar Exalted, Revelers, Heart-Eaters, and Exigents.

Shaping Ritual (A Brighter World): While under the effects of powerful hallucinogenic, spiritually active drugs (which inflict a -2 penalty to all actions unless this narcotic effect is neutralized by some means), the sorcerer adds one bonus success to all shape sorcery actions.

Shaping Ritual (Fetish of Power): The spirits have granted the sorcerer a blessed item which empowers her sorcery when she draws upon it. Once per session, she may add three successes to a single shape sorcery action if she has the fetish in her possession.

Shaping Ritual (Ritual Taboo): The sorcerer observes some fairly significant taboo to honor the spirits and the Essence of the natural world, and in the process, cultivates her own power. Define this taboo, such as never using any clothing or tool she did not make herself, letting no one see her true face, or never bathing save when the rains choose to wash her clean. She gains one bonus success each time she proceeds from one sunset to the next without breaking her taboo, which she may at any time expend on a shaping action. She may bank up to twice her

Essence rating in successes in this fashion. If she breaks her taboo, she loses access to this ritual for the rest of the story, and must undertake some ritual apology to the spirits before observance of the taboo will regain its potency.

Shaping Ritual (Sacred Hunt): Upon personally hunting and slaying a mighty beast, the sorcerer may spend several minutes ritually consecrating the kill to the spirits. She makes a (Charisma + Performance) roll against difficulty 7. She may bank all of her successes and apply them to a shape sorcery roll later in the same story. She can only keep one such (Charisma + Performance) result banked at a time.

Shaping Ritual (Under Untouched Skies): When the sorcerer is in the wilderness, with no sign of human construction or habitation anywhere in sight, she adds one bonus success to all shape sorcery actions.

The Five Trials

At some unknown point in the past, a powerful sorcerer carved a path to initiation into the very substance of Creation with a mighty working. Anyone who fervently wishes to become a sorcerer will, by the workings of fate and the auspices of this powerful feat of magic, find herself faced with five trials. If she can overcome them, she will become a sorcerer.

One is the test of humility, in which the seeker must humble herself in her quest for enlightenment.

One is the test of tutelage, in which the seeker is offered wisdom from an unexpected source, and sees it for what it is.

One is the test of journey, in which the seeker wanders far and wide. When something occurs to make her realize that the events of her journey reveal something of the nature of the world, she has passed the test.

One is the test of fear, in which the seeker must overcome one of her heart's starkest terrors.

One is the test of sacrifice, in which the seeker must give up something precious in her search for power.

The origins of the Five Trials are hotly disputed. Some records speak of an academic clique of Solar sorcerers in the First Age. Others believe the Five Trials were created by the elders of the Silver Pact, that their kind could always find a path to power no matter how dire their persecution. There are other tales. The truth is difficult to discern.

This initiation is very common among the newly-returned Solar Exalted, the Lunar Exalted, Nightmares, Exigents, outcaste Dragon-Blooded, and some Sidereal Exalted whose mentors feel the Trials represent an opportunity to directly observe the workings of fate.

Shaping Ritual (Exalted Might): While her anima banner is flaring, the sorcerer has a pool of two bonus successes she may apply to a shape sorcery roll. Once expended, these do not reappear until her anima has dimmed and then reignited.

Shaping Ritual (Heritor of the Five Stations): When enacting a sorcerous working, once per story the sorcerer can cite her initiation through the Five Trials as a Means, adding +1 roll.

Shaping Ritual (Lessons Learned): Once per session, the sorcerer may use a stunt to recount some lesson she learned during the course of overcoming the five trials, giving herself two bonus successes on a single shape sorcery action.

Shaping Ritual (Scion of Sacrifice): Once per scene the sorcerer may reach beyond the limits of her wisdom for power, gaining +1 Limit and adding two bonus successes to a shape sorcery action. This shaping ritual is only available if the character has a Limit track.

Scarred by Nightmares

This initiation represents a sorcerer who was infected by the power of the Wyld, or scarred by the mind-blasting vistas of Things Man Was Not Meant to See. Perhaps she imbibed alchemical elixirs prepared in the heartlands of chaos. Perhaps she breached the celestial gateway in Ysyr and beheld that which now dwells within Zen-Mu. Perhaps she was caught in the path of a Wyld storm and empowered rather than consumed: one of the lucky few. Perhaps a faerie lord ate most of her soul and hid away a secret treasure of power in the hollow that was left behind, and the sorcerer has learned to wield that power.

This initiation is often coupled with the Inheritance or Uncanny Backgrounds. It is frequently seen among the Lunar, Liminal, and Getimian Exalted, Nightmares, and Heart-Eaters.

Shaping Ritual (Broken Mind, Shattered Dreams): The sorcerer suffers from a Derangement (see p. XX) as a result of the travails that awakened her power. If she incorporates this Derangement into a stunt while shaping a spell, she may add two bonus successes to one roll during its casting. If she incorporates it into the themes of a sorcerous working, she may cite it as a Means, adding +1 roll.

Shaping Ritual (Dream Eater): The sorcerer may draw the dreams out of others to power her sorcery. If she makes a shape sorcery roll in the presence of sleeping individuals, she gains one bonus success on her first roll for each person sleeping within one zone of her, up to a maximum of (Essence rating + 2) bonus successes. Those whose dreams are devoured by this shaping ritual do not regain Willpower upon awakening.

Shaping Ritual (Empty Soul Echoes): The sorcerer hollows herself out to make room for more power. Spend a simple action in concentration and roll (Wits + Empathy) against difficulty 7. Success allows the sorcerer to destroy an Intimacy that she has harbored for at least three stories. Until she allows a new permanent Intimacy to form to replace it, she adds one bonus success to all shape sorcery rolls.

Shaping Ritual (My Dreams are Nightmares, my Nightmares are Power): The sorcerer's sleep is tormented by awful nightmares. When she awakens, she may opt to forego regaining a point of Willpower to instead roll (Wits + Occult) against difficulty 7. She may bank all of her successes and apply them to a shape sorcery roll later. If not yet spent by then, the bonus successes are lost when she next sleeps.

Mix and Match

Initiations are suggestions, not rules graven in stone. Let's say your sorcerer saw the blasphemous horizon of Zen-Mu and the things which stride across it. That's "Scarred by Nightmares," surely. So for her first shaping ritual, you go with My Dreams are Nightmares, my Nightmares are Power. But during the course of the

chronicle, you describe the sorcerer communing with one of the blasphemous things of the forsaken Heaven, becoming corrupted by it, becoming its servant.

So: When you go up to Celestial Circle Sorcery, you want to grab the Beseeching Prayer from “a Demon Pact” instead of another “Scarred by Nightmares” shaping ritual. This is not only okay, it’s awesome. Let the story tell the rules where to go where initiations are concerned, not vice-versa.

A Sorcerous Academy

This initiation represents a sorcerer who has trained under a rigid curriculum of formal instruction in the mystic arts. It is the most common initiation bestowed by institutions such as the Realm’s Heptagram, or Lookshy’s Valkhawsen Academy. It can also represent intensive tutelage under a powerful master such as a Sidereal, an elder Lunar, or a Deathlord. As such, it is commonly seen among Dragon-Blooded, Sidereals, Solars taken under the wing of the Cult of the Illuminated, and Abyssals.

Shaping Ritual (Academic Discipline): If she has access to an occult library, the sorcerer may spend a scene studying its contents and roll (Intelligence + Lore) against difficulty 6. She may bank all of her successes and apply them to a shape sorcery roll later in the same story. She can only keep one such (Intelligence + Lore) result banked at a time.

Shaping Ritual (Conservation of Essence): The character learns to build shortcuts into her rituals utilizing the painstaking optimizations devised by generations of sorcerers before her. Once per story, after enacting a sorcerous working, the character may subtract one from the number of Motes lost from her Mote pool.

Shaping Ritual (Formal Sorcerous Education): When enacting a sorcerous working, once per story the sorcerer can cite her classical education in the mystic arts as a Means, adding +1 roll.

Shaping Ritual (Geomantic Wellspring): While standing upon the grounds of a Manse to which she is attuned, *or* a Demesne whether she is attuned to it or not, the sorcerer adds one bonus success to all shape sorcery actions as she draws up power from the land. She may also take a Hearthstone to hand and destroy it by devouring its power, gaining five bonus successes to apply to a shape sorcery roll during the same scene. (A destroyed Hearthstone is replaced in the Manse to which it belongs, taking form over the course of a month.)

Shaping Ritual (Painstaking Instruction): Once per session, the sorcerer may use a stunt to recount some lesson bestowed by one of her tutors or by her mentor, giving herself two bonus successes on a single shape sorcery action.

Shaping Ritual (Ritual Reinforcement): The sorcerer may spend an hour drawing mandalas of power in chalk, blood, paint, or lines of salt, aligning small ritual implements around a room, and otherwise preparing a location to serve as the site of an act of sorcery. She must then roll (Intelligence + Occult) against difficulty 7. While within her prepared ritual location, she gains a number of bonus successes to draw upon for her shape sorcery actions equal to the successes rolled. Once all bonus successes have been used, the area has lost its power and a new ritual area must be consecrated.

Shaping Ritual (Will to Power): Training under an exhaustive regimen that pushed her to the very limits of her endurance taught the sorcerer to renew herself on the spilled dregs of power.

When she exceeds the required successes on her final shape sorcery action by three successes or more, she may reclaim one point of Willpower spent to fuel the spell.

Wisdom of the Deep

This initiation represents a sorcerer who was transformed by knowledge of, exposure to, or immersion in the power of the deep waters. Perhaps she was blessed with power by Ocean Father. Perhaps she heard the Voice from the Trench. Perhaps she was taught the secrets of Kimbery, the Sea that Marched Against the Flame. Perhaps she was bound to tend a sea-god's library. Perhaps she was held for a year and a day in a court of the Fair Folk at the bottom of the sea, and took something of the sea into herself to enact her escape. Perhaps she is the daughter of a nymph, and has found enlightenment in the power within her veins. Perhaps she drowned, and was resuscitated, and came back *changed*. This initiation is only frequently seen among the Liminal and Infernal Exalted; it is otherwise the unusual provenance of whosoever deals with deep waters.

Shaping Ritual (Consecrated Currents): Whenever the sorcerer is wet, even if simply because she upended a bucket over herself or dunked her head in a horse trough, she adds one bonus success to all shape sorcery actions.

Shaping Ritual (Drowning Deeps): When she is completely immersed in liquid and there is not the least trace of light around her which originates above its surface, the sorcerer may spend a simple action contemplating the abyss and roll (Intelligence + Lore) against difficulty 6. She may bank all of her successes and apply them to a shape sorcery roll later in the same story. She can only keep one such (Intelligence + Lore) result banked at a time.

Shaping Ritual (Miracles of the Waters): While shaping any spell that primarily deals with water or manifests water, the sorcerer adds one bonus success to each shape sorcery roll.

Shaping Ritual (Offering to the Trench): By offering up something of who she is to the darkness of the abyssal depths, the sorcerer may draw forth significant power. Spend a simple action in concentration and roll (Wits + Empathy) against difficulty 7. Success allows the sorcerer to destroy an Intimacy that she has harbored for at least three stories, feeding it to the depths in exchange for ten bonus successes which she may use on shape sorcery actions throughout the remainder of the current story.

Shaping Ritual (Rising Tide): In any scene in which the sorcerer is immersed in water, rises out of the water, or strides through pouring rain, she gains four bonus successes which she may apply to any shape sorcery action. These bonus successes are lost at the end of the scene if not yet spent.

Shaping Ritual (What the Deep Demands): The sorcerer may give up pieces of herself to the hungry abyss in exchange for power. Once per spell, when taking a shape sorcery action, she may ask the Storyteller what the depths demand. The Storyteller cites one of the character's memories, picking as they will. If she chooses to lose the cited memory forever, she may add three bonus successes to her shape sorcery roll. Sometimes the demand will be trivial. Sometimes it will be profound.

Exploitable

“So, what if I take Consecrated Currents and use a sorcerous working to make a tiny raincloud follow me everywhere I go and rain on me so that I am always, *always wet?*”

Well, then you are this weird motherfucker who is constantly dripping wet anywhere and everywhere he goes. Congratulations! In the course of minmaxing the shit out of your shaping ritual, you’ve created a sorcerer who looks like a character out of *The Black Company*. They probably call you the Drowned Man or something. This is the kind of thing some sorcerers *do* and it’s why they have a reputation as creepy weirdos. What must that guy *smell* like? Do *you* want to invite Drippy the Sorcerer to *your* Dynastic salon-slash-orgy? His social life probably sucks, but hey, he *does* always get his bonus successes.

Spells

Spells are mystical expressions of power encoded into the foundations of reality. Some were scarred into the sub-strata of Creation by its makers at the dawn of time. A few are much older secrets underlying even the great truths of the Wyld. Many were deliberately incorporated into the design of the cosmos by the Chosen — creating a new spell in this fashion is an Ambition 8 sorcerous working.

Shape Sorcery

Spells aren’t miracles conjured forth from an Exalt’s Essence in the same fashion that Charms are (though Motes can certainly be spent to help cast them, usually with an “Excellence”-type Charm). Instead, by aligning local Essence flows into a configuration that empowers a sleeping pattern of power, a sorcerer may briefly awaken a spell and create a powerful supernatural result. This is accomplished through a *shape sorcery* action.

Shaping a spell is an unobtrusive act, during which the sorcerer gesticulates dramatically and intones resonant poems and prayers in Old Realm. The wind howls and swirls around her, and the anima of Creation itself coalesces and burns in subtle hues if her own anima banner is not flaring, a dazzling display reminiscent of the polar lights. It is, in short, impossible *not* to realize someone is casting a spell if you’ve seen it done before, and even if you haven’t... it *looks* like what you’d think a sorcerer casting a spell would look like.

Shape sorcery is an extended (Intelligence + Occult) simple action at difficulty 6, made at intervals of one turn unless otherwise specified. Nearly every spell has a *goal number*: a number of successes which must be accumulated to cast the spell. In the moment that this goal number is met, the spell is cast, meaning that a sufficiently potent sorcerer might begin shaping a spell, complete it, and unleash it all in a single turn.

Some complex and powerful spells take extended periods to shape and unleash. Rather than tracking a slow progression of shaping actions against a protracted interval, such shaping efforts are simply assumed to be successful, and the spell’s goal is listed as *Ritual*.

Casting spells is demanding of a sorcerer’s concentration. **Whenever a sorcerer takes a shape sorcery action, her Defense is penalized by –1 until her next turn.**

Shaping Costs

Shaping a spell does not require an investiture of Motes (although most Exalted sorcerers will draw upon the power of their “Excellence”-type Charm if they’re in a hurry to get a spell out to speed along their shaping actions). It does, however, require ferocious concentration to conjure the extremely complex and subtle Essence pattern of the spell and to recreate it precisely. As a result, all spells have an associated Willpower cost.

Terrestrial Circle spells cost 1 Willpower.

Celestial Circle spells cost 2 Willpower.

Solar Circle spells cost 3 Willpower.

This cost is paid when the first shape sorcery action to cast a spell begins.

Interruption

A sorcerer may continue to move and defend herself while casting a spell, but usually can’t do anything else as she uses up her simple action each turn on shape sorcery actions. If it becomes imperative that she do something else, this is possible, but each turn in which she turns aside from an incomplete spell to do something else, she loses three accumulated successes toward casting it. If this loss reduces her success total to 0, the spell collapses and the Willpower spent to catalyze it is simply wasted.

A sorcerer may also choose to abandon an unfinished spell if the casting of it is no longer necessary. She may either reflexively dismiss the spell and immediately begin doing something else (such as casting a different spell, firing arrows at an enemy, etc), in which case the Willpower spent to catalyze it is lost; or she may spend a simple action unwinding the power she’s already gathered and returning it carefully to the Essence flows around her, in which case she reclaims the Willpower points she’d spent to catalyze the spell.

A botch at any point causes the gathered energy to run wild. Spent Willpower is lost, the spell is ruined, and the effects for everyone standing in the same zone as the sorcerer are usually highly unpleasant.

Countermagic

By utilizing a special type of shape sorcery action, a sorcerer can interfere with or destroy another sorcerer’s attempt to cast a spell. Countermagic uses a standard shape sorcery roll, save that it is used in response to another sorcerer no more than one zone away attempting to cast a spell. Each success rolled removes one accumulated success from the other sorcerer’s shaping attempt. If this reduces the attempt to zero successes, the spell collapses completely, the Willpower is wasted, and a mystic backlash ensures that the thwarted sorcerer’s next action cannot be to try to shape a spell.

Countermagic does not require the expenditure of Willpower points, since the sorcerer is simply tearing apart someone else’s work rather than trying to craft a precision work of her own. A sorcerer cannot use countermagic against a spell of a circle she is not initiated into.

Distortion

Once a spell has been successfully cast, its power can no longer be revoked or canceled, but it *can* still be attacked. This is a special form of shape sorcery roll, requiring the sorcerer to attain a total of 15 successes to distort the target spell, warping, deflecting, or creating a flaw in its power. The results of successful distortion are noted in each spell it can be done to. Generally,

spells which create an instant effect or which summon a being into the world aren't vulnerable to distortion.

Distortion *does* require the expenditure of Willpower points, as though the sorcerer were casting a spell of the circle she's distorting. As with countermagic, a sorcerer cannot distort a spell from a circle she's not initiated into.

Control Spells

Every sorcerer discovers at least one spell for which she has an especial affinity — a spell that is signature to her, whose pattern resonates with her very soul. Some spells enjoy additional benefits when selected as a sorcerer's control spell, while others simply convey certain transformative changes upon the sorcerer.

The sorcerer may know one control spell of the Terrestrial Circle, one of the Celestial Circle, and one of the Solar Circle. She can select her control spells at any time, either before or during play, but each selection is irrevocable once made.

Spell Types

The spells described below are either *universal* or *sorcery-only*. Any sorcerer made using the rules in this chapter will be able to cast all of them. Certain exotic initiations detailed in Volume II and Volume III are unable to cast sorcery-only spells, while all initiations can cast universal spells.

Spell Costs

If a character resonates with the Charm they use to access sorcery, then they purchase spells at the Favored cost listed on page XX. Generally, this means that Occult or Intelligence is Caste or Favored.

Terrestrial Circle Spells

The following spells belong to the Terrestrial Circle, commonly known in the Realm as the Emerald Circle. It is the lowest tier of sorcerous power, which does not mean it is not extremely mighty.

Cirrus Skiff

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: 13 successes

The sorcerer calls down a small cloud from the heavens to ride upon. Once it arrives, it waits patiently for her to embark. The cloud can hold up to six people, and once the sorcerer signals it to depart, it flies up into the sky and carries her to a destination she decides upon while casting the spell. The cloud travels at 20 miles per hour once it ascends high enough that obstacles like trees and towns are no longer a concern. It provides no protection from the winds, cold, or rarefied air of particularly high altitudes, though it is capable of climbing to an unlimited degree. The Cirrus Skiff will follow whatever instructions the sorcerer gives it until she disembarks, at which point it returns to the heavens.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Cirrus Skiff provides a loyal companion that never leaves the sorcerer's service. At any time, she can call her cloud down, and it will arrive upon her next turn. It will follow simple instructions even when she's not riding it.

Distortion: When distorted, Cirrus Skiff slowly drops to the ground and is unable to gain altitude for the rest of the scene, finally crawling along upon the land's surface.

Corrupted Words

Type: Universal

Goal: 17 successes

The sorcerer places a curse of binding upon someone else. She selects a target and names a topic they are forbidden to speak about (this may be as specific as "the murder you saw me commit" or as broad as "the existence of the Sidereal Exalted"), then makes a contested roll of (Intelligence + Occult) against the target's Willpower, both at difficulty 6. If the sorcerer gains more successes, then a rushing white-and-emerald surge of Essence swirls around the target and forces itself down his throat. Henceforth, whenever the target tries to violate his communications ban (by any means, including writing, telepathy, or deliberate pantomime), he is briefly incapacitated as he violently vomits up a tide of writhing maggots.

This curse can only be lifted if the sorcerer dies or voluntarily cancels it by reaching down the victim's throat and drawing out a squirming sac full of larvae: the embodiment of the curse.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Corrupted Words produces no outward dramatic display of power while being shaped, and when it takes hold as a curse, the only indication is a subtle emerald gleam in the sorcerer's eyes.

Distortion: When distorted, Corrupted Words is weakened for a scene, allowing the victim to communicate via flowery language, allusion, and metaphor without immediately triggering the curse. Coming at the topic head-on still triggers the tide of maggots.

Dance of the Smoke Cobras

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: 25 successes

The sorcerer recites an ancient chant in a prehuman language, even as her fingers form the symbols which follow after fire and treachery. A number of man-sized cobras made of writhing smoke equal to the sorcerer's Essence rating appear around her and attack her enemies. Anyone killed by smoke cobra venom dies in writhing agony as their blood turns to smoke and pours out of their body, leaving behind a desiccated corpse frozen in a horrifying death-rictus. The cobras continue to exist for (sorcerer's Willpower rating) minutes or until the target they have been summoned to kill is dead, whichever comes first.

Control Spell: The sorcerer's anima is surmounted by trails of smoke which sometimes twine into serpents. When she suffers a Wound, she may reflexively spend 1 Willpower to cause a streamer of smoke to pour from her injury and become a smoke cobra.

Smoke Cobras

Aptitudes: Biting, perception, evasion

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 1

Base Damage: 5 (mauled)
Defense: 6; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 3
Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 4
Health: 5; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

Smoke Cobra Venom (passive): Each time a character suffers damage from or is Wounded by a smoke cobra, they are also dosed with snake venom (see p. XX).

Death of Obsidian Butterflies

Type: Universal

Goal: 20 successes

The sorcerer unleashes a whirling storm of razor-edged obsidian butterflies that flenses and pulverizes everything in its path. The butterflies shred everything within four zones in whatever direction the sorcerer aims them, subjecting everyone in their path that isn't behind total cover to a Fierce one-time hazard with difficulty 8, damage equal to the sorcerer's (Essence + Occult) rating, inflicting lacerated Wounds. For groups, this hazard is unblockable as well.

There are two slight drawbacks to this spell. First, it will kill enemies, allies, and innocent bystanders indiscriminately. Second, in its aftermath it leaves the targeted zones littered with fragments of obsidian butterflies, forcing anyone navigating those zones to use complex movement to carefully pick through the shrapnel, or else suffer a one-time hazard (difficulty 6, damage 3, lacerated) each time they use a swift action that is *not* complex movement in an afflicted zone, as they opt to simply plow through the razor-edged glass. Characters wearing heavy armor or artifact armor can ignore this hazard.

Control Spell: The sorcerer's anima sometimes dances with obsidian butterflies which lift her a few inches off the ground, enabling her to float above difficult terrain such as the shrapnel left behind by this spell. At will, she can harden her fingernails into volcanic glass, giving her unarmed attacks base damage 4 and the option to inflict "lacerated" wounds. Additionally, she can bend the course of the butterflies to ensure that they avoid harming a number of objects or individuals in their attack area equal to the sorcerer's Essence rating.

Demon of the First Circle

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: Ritual

The sorcerer enacts an elaborate ritual from sundown to midnight in which she prepares a ritual circle and conjures into it one of the least denizens of Hell: a First Circle demon. She must then win a contested roll of (Willpower + Essence), both against difficulty 6. The sorcerer may spend Motes on a one-for-one basis, ignoring her normal Mote-per-round limitations, to strip dice away from the demon's dice pool. If the sorcerer wins, the demon is broken and bound to her will. She may either command its unfailing loyalty for a year and a day, or else assign it one task which it will carry out to completion before returning to Hell.

If the demon wins, then the sorcerer must succeed at a (Wits + Occult) roll against a difficulty of the demon's Willpower to banish it, or else it breaks free of the circle, uncontrolled and likely angry about the sorcerer's attempt to enslave it.

Demons bound with this spell will endeavor to obey both the letter and the spirit of the sorcerer's commands to the best of their understanding, but cannot be compelled to violate their Nature. Generally speaking, if a demon's writeup describes some compulsive or ritualistic activity as core to the demon's identity (such as Zsofika's ritual hunt, or the way that Tomescu cry out at sunrise and sunset) then that is part of a demon's Nature and cannot be abrogated, though it might be aimed (the sorcerer cannot stop Zsofika from performing her hunt, but he *can* assign her a quarry).

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Demon of the First Circle grants the sorcerer the ability to permanently bind a demon to herself as a familiar by purchasing dots of the Familiar Background. A First Circle demon costs three Familiar Points.

Flight of the Brilliant Raptor

Type: Universal

Goal: 17 successes

The sorcerer conjures forth flames of ruby and diamond and shapes them into a majestic firebird, which streaks forth and explodes among her foes. Roll (Perception + Occult) as an attack against a target up to four zones away. If the spell strikes home, it has a base damage of 9 and inflicts burned Wounds, and if it Staggers its target it erupts into an inferno that covers the entire zone in flames until the end of the scene, creating a bonfire hazard (see p. XX).

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, the bird will swoop around for a second pass if it fails to strike its target initially, making a second attack roll at the end of the round after all other characters have acted. This does not count as using up the character's once-per-scene re-roll. Additionally, the sorcerer's reflection in any surface save for water always seems to be swathed in flames.

Impenetrable Frost Barrier

Type: Universal

Goal: 13 successes

The sorcerer conjures a freezing fog to protect herself and her companions, lasting for the rest of the scene. All ranged attacks directed into the zone where this spell is cast treat their target's Defense as +2 higher than they would otherwise be, as a thick rime of frost drags them off-target. Anyone in the zone who invokes Dodge against a projectile attack originating outside the fog does not need to pay Willpower to do so. Projectiles made of flame or some form of coherent energy ignore this spell's protection. This fog remains where it is summoned and does not move with the sorcerer.

Control Spell: The fog *does* move with the sorcerer. Additionally, the sorcerer's skin is always chill to the touch, and her breath plumes in the air. She may freeze the surface of any relatively chill water she steps on for the rest of the scene if she pays 1 Willpower, allowing her to walk on water.

Distortion: When distorted, the spell's cold drastically intensifies, forcing all those within its bounds to deal with a freezing cold environmental hazard (see p. XX).

Impervious Sphere of Water

Type: Universal

Goal: 10 successes

The sorcerer speaks the forgotten name of the original Ocean Father and whispers a prayer in a language lost to time. A sphere of churning water appears and engulfs her, filling her current zone and protecting her from harm for so long as she maintains it. The sorcerer needs not breathe while protected by the sphere, and cannot be harmed by water in any way. The water pushes out anyone else inside of it when the spell goes off; anyone resisting being expelled from within the sphere, or attempting to push into it, must succeed at a reflexive (Strength + Athletics) roll at difficulty 9 each round. All swift actions within the sphere are complex movement. The sorcerer must use a swift and simple action every turn to maintain the sphere, and it will persist so long as she continues to maintain it in this fashion. It adds +2 to her Soak rating while active, as well as to the Soak rating of anyone standing inside of or behind it who must be attacked through it. The sphere has Block 5, invokes its Block automatically at no cost against any attack directed against the sorcerer, and ceases to exist when it reaches Block 0.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Impervious Sphere of Water allows the sorcerer to slowly move along while maintaining it, using only a simple action each turn to maintain it. She is also permanently able to breathe underwater, is immune to the crushing pressure of deep water, and doesn't treat swimming as complex movement.

Distortion: When distorted, the sorcerer's need to breathe while sustaining the spell is reinstated. If she can't breathe water or obtain air from somewhere else, she will drown after (Stamina rating) rounds unless she relinquishes the spell.

Infallible Messenger

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: 15 successes

The sorcerer conjures up a tiny messenger-spirit known as a cherub: a blue-skinned, six-winged being. She relays a brief message to it, then tells it who to deliver the message to. The cherub vanishes. Moments later, it reappears at the shoulder of the message's recipient, wherever he might be, and whispers the sorcerer's message in his ear, using her voice. Cherubs may be used to convey social influence actions, but not speech-based Charms. A cherub cannot deliver a message to someone in another realm of existence such as the Underworld or Hell, with the singular exception of being able to deliver messages between Creation and Yu-Shan.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, the sorcerer may pay a point of Willpower to project her senses through the cherub's own as it delivers its message, allowing her to use Awareness and Investigation Charms. Having this spell as her control will also cause a number of tells to begin manifesting in the sorcerer's vicinity, even when the spell has not been cast. The cherub may appear in murals or paintings that she owns, carved amongst the gargoyles of her residence, or briefly fluttering in the periphery of a mirror's reflection.

Invulnerable Skin of Bronze

Type: Universal

Goal: 20 successes

The sorcerer transforms her flesh into living bronze, granting her +2 Soak and +2 Stagger Threshold. Her unarmed attacks gain +1 base damage. This transformation lasts until sunset. The

character is advised to beware of water, as she weighs several hundred pounds more than usual and is not buoyant in this form.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, this spell increases Stagger Threshold by +3. Her eyes become the color of polished bronze.

Distortion: When distorted, the magic that allows the sorcerer to ignore her enormous weight and move with her usual freedom is disrupted. All of her movement becomes complex movement for the rest of the scene. Her Dodge suffers a -3 penalty, and she gains +2 to her Fatigue value.

Mirror of Bending Light

Type: Universal

Goal: 15 successes

The sorcerer weaves her Essence into the world around her, forming an effective disguise by which to confound those trying to detect her presence. For the next hour, whenever the sorcerer stops moving for at least a full round, she becomes cloaked in an illusion which causes her to appear as some object that one might expect to find in the current environment. In an old mansion, she might appear as a painting, statue, or furnishing. In a forest she might become a bush, sapling, or rotting log. So long as the character makes no more than very minor movements (pulling something out of a pocket, drawing a knife, slowly taking just one step back or forward) the illusion remains intact.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Mirror of Bending Light extends its benefit to all allies of the sorcerer who are within the same zone, up to a limit of a Size 1 group. The sorcerer's anima banner swims with phantasmal images of nearby objects when it manifests.

Distortion: When distorted, the sorcerer's disguise is always out of place for her environment (such as a tree in the middle of a Dynast's library, or a bookshelf in a forest).

Mists of Eventide

Type: Universal

Goal: 15 successes

The sorcerer summons an opalescent cloud in any zone she can see, which spreads to fill that zone and every zone adjacent to it for the next (Essence rating) hours. Those caught in the cloud must roll (Stamina + Resistance) against difficulty 7 at the end of each round or else fall asleep. Those put to sleep by this spell are unbothered by loud noises, at least for the first fifteen minutes or so of their slumber, but can still be roused by being physically jostled.

Control Spell: The sorcerer may dictate what those put to sleep by the Mists of Eventide dream of. If she gathers 25 successes before unleashing the spell, she may even cause them to sleepwalk and pantomime their dreams, potentially causing them to get up and fight their friends. Taking any injury at all awakens a sleepwalker, as will being violently seized and shaken.

Distortion: When distorted, the cloud merely makes those who succumb to it drowsy, inflicting a -2 dice penalty to all actions.

Open the Spirit Door

Type: Universal

Goal: 15 successes

Performing a formal incantation, the sorcerer attunes herself and up to a dozen companions to a spirit sanctum within the same zone. Upon the spell's conclusion, the doorway becomes visible and tangible to all affected characters, and if the spirit's Essence rating is not higher than the sorcerer's, opens to admit them. When targeting a higher-ranking spirit's sanctum, the entrance becomes visible but will only open if the sanctum's owner wills it.

This spell may also be used to activate one of the ancient gateways scattered across Creation which lead to the celestial city of Yu-Shan, though most sorcerers will not have the authority to accomplish anything more than being turned back by the trio of celestial lions guarding the other end of the gateway. See Volume II, page XX, for more information on entering Heaven.

Control Spell: If she took Open the Spirit Door as a control spell, the sorcerer is *always* able to see and identify spirit sanctums, and this spell will open them regardless of the owner's Essence rating.

Distortion: Distorting this spell lowers the sorcerer's effective Essence rating for the purpose of opening sanctums by -3.

Peacock Shadow Eyes

Type: Universal

Goal: 15 successes

The sorcerer conjures into herself the ancient shadows and glammers by which logic is sublimated before desire. Her eyes burn with smokeless flame and ripple with colorful shadows, entrancing the first person to meet her gaze. They must make a contested Willpower roll against the sorcerer (both at difficulty 6). If the sorcerer gains more successes, then the victim falls into a light trance and will be intensely susceptible to suggestion. The target will believe anything and everything the caster tells him over a period of five minutes. At the end of that time, the victim snaps out of his trance with no memory of what has happened to him. He will think he was engaged in normal conversation with the sorcerer and will continue to believe what was told to him during his trance, even when faced with evidence to the contrary. It will take someone providing irrefutable evidence to the contrary (and a successful Intelligence + Presence roll against a difficulty of 4 + the sorcerer's Essence) to convince the victim of Peacock Shadow Eyes that he has been duped.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Peacock Shadow Eyes produces no outward dramatic display of power while being shaped or after it is cast. The only indication that it is active is that the sorcerer's eyes are clearly visible in the dark.

Distortion: When distorted, the smokeless flames of this spell blind the sorcerer. See page XX for the effects of blindness.

Silent Words of Dreams and Nightmares

Type: Universal

Goal: Ritual

The sorcerer stands before a reflective surface such as a mirror or still pool and brandishes a symbolic link to her target such as a lock of his hair, a cherished possession, or an article of

clothing. This ritual allows the sorcerer to craft a particular dream which she sends to the target to experience when he next sleeps. This dream may be crafted to constitute a social influence action of the sorcerer's choice, which cannot be enhanced with any Charms other than the sorcerer's "Excellence"-type Charm. Because the target is asleep and not on guard against his own dreams, his Willpower is treated as being one lower than normal.

The sorcerous link dissolves into fine white ash when the dreamer awakens, forcing the sorcerer to acquire another link before she can use the spell again.

Control Spell: The sorcerer can cast Silent Words of Dreams and Nightmares without a sorcerous link, so long as she has interacted with him socially in person in the past. After doing so, she must interact with him again before she can cast the spell in this fashion again.

Stormwind Rider

Type: Universal

Goal: 16 successes

The sorcerer conjures a miniature tempest and uses it as a steed, racing along just off the ground. While embarked upon this spell, the sorcerer enjoys the advantages of mounted combat, substituting Occult for Ride. The Stormwind Rider can travel at speeds of up to 50 miles per hour and can carry up to (1 + Essence rating) passengers. Finally, the spell counts as partial cover (see p. XX). It lasts until the sorcerer chooses to disembark or until the sun crosses the horizon.

This spell is tremendously disruptive in any sort of urban area, battering pedestrians around, slinging dust and dirt and debris everywhere, and generally making a mess of things. It also buffets the sorcerer with its potent vortex when she attempts to interact with anything outside of it, causing her to suffer a -2 penalty on all such rolls, including attacks. As a result, it is generally employed as a pure travel spell despite its significant defensive utility.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, the sorcerer is buffeted by powerful winds whenever she is in the grip of a strong emotion. Once per scene, she can call upon a burst of wind to leap up to a zone above her reflexively without the need of a swift action, or to arrest her momentum when falling just before hitting the ground.

Distortion: When distorted, the Stormwind Rider attempts to go out of control, and is treated as a wild and unruly mount, substituting Occult for Ride.

Summon Elemental

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: Ritual

Once per day, the sorcerer may enact a four hour ritual to call together elemental Essence and bind it together to create a living servant: an elemental of up to Essence 3 or her own Essence rating, whichever is higher. She must then win a contested roll of (Willpower + Essence), both against difficulty 6. The sorcerer may spend Motes on a one-for-one basis to strip dice away from the elemental's dice pool, ignoring her normal Mote-per-round limit. If the sorcerer wins, the elemental is broken and bound to her will. She may either command its unfailing loyalty for a year and a day, or else assign it one task which it will carry out to completion. This binding

works the same way as that of Demon of the First Circle with regard to the elemental's loyalty and the intrinsic limitations of its Nature.

If the binding fails, the elemental dissipates back into raw Essence. This also usually happens at the end of its term of service, unless it develops a fully-formed personality and sapience during its binding. In that case, the elemental retains its solvency and persists beyond the end of its binding.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Summon Elemental grants the sorcerer the ability to permanently bind an elemental to herself as a familiar by purchasing dots of the Familiar Background. An elemental costs three Familiar Points.

Wood Dragon's Claw

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: 10 successes

The sorcerer plunges her hands into the earth and draws them forth again transformed into massive gnarled claws made of jagged hardwood. Her unarmed attacks inflict 7 base damage and cause lacerated Wounds. This spell lasts until the sorcerer again thrusts her hands into the earth with a re-arm action to dismiss it. The difficulty of all actions requiring precise manipulation are increased by +2.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Wood Dragon's Claw may strike dematerialized beings, and also causes the sorcerer's body to develop scales of bark armor, increasing her Soak rating by +1.

Distortion: When distorted, Wood Dragon's Claw becomes wildly overgrown, restricting the sorcerer's movements. She suffers a -2 penalty to all simple actions involving her hands, including attacks with her claws.

Celestial Circle Spells

The following spells belong to the Celestial Circle, commonly known in the Realm as the Sapphire Circle. It is a fearsome and exclusive collection of miracles, utilized by the Celestial Exalted and very mighty gods.

Cantata of Empty Voices

Type: Universal

Goal: 30 successes

A choir of silvery figures materializes around the sorcerer, singing a keening song that causes all who hear it other than their summoner to bleed from the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, until all the blood has run out of them. At first this spell only affects those in the same zone as the sorcerer, subjecting them to an ongoing environmental hazard with difficulty 9, damage 3 (drained), penalty -1, one round; but each round the sorcerer may use a simple action to extend the spell's duration and range, causing it to encompass one additional zone in all directions, until it spreads out to maximum radius of one mile around her. The Cantata continues until the sorcerer ceases to sustain it.

Control Spell: The sorcerer's voice becomes a killing weapon. Once per scene, she may roll (Charisma + Occult) as a simple action to unleash a harrowing sonic scream with a maximum range of one zone and a base damage of 7 (bruised).

Distortion: Distorting the Cantata neutralizes its killing power, causing it to inflict only bruised Wounds and to cease inflicting to anyone who is incapacitated.

Demon of the Second Circle

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: Ritual

This spell is largely identical to Demon of the First Circle, save that it must be cast on the second night of the new moon or one of the five nights of Calibration, and that it summons a much mightier being from the depths of Hell: a Second Circle demon, one of the seven souls of a demon even mightier yet.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Demon of the Second Circle causes the sorcerer's anima to pulse with veins of green flame. She may walk aimlessly into any barren wasteland inhospitable to life, such as an open tundra, the Great Southern Desert, or a despoiled shadowland. If she walks for five days uninterrupted and without any other goal, she will find herself standing upon the silver grains of the desert Cecelyne, at the border of Hell. She may return to Creation by crossing Cecelyne in the same fashion.

Impenetrable Veil of Night

Type: Universal

Goal: 30 successes

A knot of squirming shadow forms between the sorcerer's hands. At the spell's conclusion, she casts it into the air, where it becomes a vast web of darkness that spins out into a black pillar (Essence rating) miles across and stretching up into the heavens themselves. Light becomes exceedingly weak within the pillar, barely illuminating anything at all. Everyone within suffers a -2 penalty to all sight-based actions. Groups must immediately check for rout at difficulty 7. The interior of the spell is metaphysically considered to be night, allowing hungry ghosts to prowl freely and the dead to manifest if cast within a shadowland.

Control Spell: The sorcerer's voice echoes with otherworldly distortions. Shadows cling to her. She lowers the difficulty of all Stealth rolls by -1, but suffers a -1 Wound penalty when in direct sunlight if not covered in heavy, concealing clothing.

Distortion: When distorted, Impenetrable Veil of Night inflicts only a -1 penalty as the darkness loses its oppressive power, and it is no longer considered to constitute an artificial night.

Incomparable Body Arsenal

Type: Universal

Goal: 25 successes

The sorcerer transforms her body into a hulking figure of black iron for the rest of the scene. While in this form, she is immune to poison and disease, does not need to breathe, and is considered to be wearing heavy artifact armor with a base Soak of 9, replacing any armor she might actually be wearing. She can reflexively manifest any manner of mundane weapon from

her body, extending knives from her fists or blades from the back of her arms, firing chakrams from her mouth, and so on, and these weapons cannot be disarmed. Her damage rolls made with these weapons do not suffer from the rule of 1s. The sorcerer also gains +3 Temporary Health upon casting this spell.

Control Spell: The sorcerer's anima is streaked with rust, and hardens before blows, granting her +1 Stagger Threshold while it is flaring.

Distortion: Distorting this spell turns the sorcerer's arsenal inwards, subjecting her to a one-time hazard (difficulty 8, damage 5, lacerated). Additionally, her joints rust into place, turning all of her swift actions into complex movement.

Ivory Orchid Pavilion

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: Ritual

As the sorcerer paces the borders of this spell, an ivory spire rises from the ground like the calyx of an immense flower. Once she completes the circuit, it unfurls its petals to reveal a splendid mansion. Ornate furniture, silk curtains, and fine beddings adorn the chambers of the palace, and the pleasant scent of fresh orchids is everywhere. Feasting-tables within the mansion are weighed with seemingly endless meats, fruits, and wine. A day later, the mansion folds back into the ground, safely depositing all guests outside. For five years after the casting of the spell, white orchids grow from the ground where it was cast.

Control Spell: Wheresoever the sorcerer sleeps, white orchids grow up around her. While she remains within the palace, it may persist indefinitely.

Distortion: Distorting this spell spoils the feasts, rends the tapestries, backs up the plumbing, causes the fireplaces to spew ash and smoke, and generally makes the palace a miserable place to be.

Magma Kraken

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: 30 successes

The sorcerer rends space and dimensions, drawing forth malevolence from the depths of the cosmos and wedding it to impossible heat drawn from deep beneath Creation. Tentacles of molten lava erupt from the ground and lash at her foes. (Essence x 2) writhing tentacles burst from the ground up to three zones away from the sorcerer, striking at her foes for the rest of the scene. The Magma Kraken always acts after all other characters that are not sorcerous constructs, taking its turns back-to-back.

Control Spell: Flames flare around the sorcerer in response to her moods. She may use stunts to light objects on fire, or intensify her attacks by +2 base damage once per scene.

Distortion: Distorting the Magma Kraken forces it to use its utility rather than expertise pool.

Magma Tentacle

Aptitudes: Burning lash, writhing evasion

Expertise: 8; **Utility:** 1

Base Damage: 7 (burned)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 10

Health: 8; **Stagger Threshold:** 5

Powers

Magmatic Tentacle (passive): The magma tentacle cannot use swift actions, and can attack targets up to one zone away. Anyone in the same zone as one or more magma tentacles must use complex movement when using a move action, or be subject to a lava environmental hazard from the veins of magma spreading around its roots. Each time a magma tentacle attacks a target, it lowers his Defense by –1 against all other tentacles for the rest of the round. Finally, magma tentacles are mindless and are immune to social influence.

Shadows of the Ancient Past

Type: Universal

Goal: 15 successes

The sorcerer calls up phantoms of the past to reenact history. She chooses a specific time she wishes to view, such as “Ten years ago on this day,” or a subjective time that relates to something in the scene, such as “When this corpse died.” The spell creates illusions that fill the room or area and display the events of the specified point in time. The sorcerer may pause the action for detailed examination, or accelerate the flow of time within the illusion so that up to an entire day passes by in minutes. Events from over five centuries ago conjure blurred, fragmentary phantasms. Recent events, within the past year, have yet to form substantial echoes and produce only faint figments.

Control Spell: The sorcerer may, at will, replay any imagery she has ever caused to manifest with this spell within her anima.

Distortion: Distorting Shadows of the Ancient Past allows the distorting sorcerer to falsify the displayed images, introducing fictions of her making into them.

Summoning the Heavenly Portal

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: 35 successes

Performing an auspicious augury, the sorcerer divines the current location of the wandering Calibration Gate and discovers that it is... right here. When she looks up from her calculations, an ancient portal stands before her, activated and ready to admit anyone who passes through into Yu-Shan. The Calibration Gate will remain wherever it is conjured for one full day, and then vanish and travel elsewhere, assuming no one else casts this spell to move it before then. This spell only works in Creation, and universally ceases to function for thirty minutes after the Calibration Gate is conjured. Characters in Heaven have no way to control the Calibration Gate’s current location. See Volume II, page XX, for more information on entering Heaven.

Sidereals make extremely frequent use of this spell to traverse Creation by entering Heaven through the Calibration Gate, quickly traveling to whatever other gateway is closest to their destination, and then re-entering Creation at that point.

Control Spell: If she took Summoning the Heavenly Portal as a control spell, the sorcerer spend a simple action in concentration to learn the Calibration Gate's present location and how long ago it was last moved.

Distortion: Distorting this spell causes the Calibration Gate to deactivate and prevents it from being summoned elsewhere for three hours.

Travel Without Distance

Type: Universal

Goal: 15 successes

The sorcerer is enfolded in ribbons of glowing light and then vanishes, reappearing at a point up to (Essence x 10) miles away that she has either previously visited or seen with scrying magic. Upon arrival, the sorcerer is severely disoriented, suffering a -6 penalty to all actions. This penalty abates at a rate of one point per hour. Until it has completely dispersed, she cannot cast this spell again.

Control Spell: The sorcerer may transport up to (Essence + 1) consenting allies with her.

Solar Circle Spells

The following spells belong to the Solar Circle, named by the Realm in awed and fearful whispers as the Adamant Circle. Its world-shaking miracles are available only to a very select few.

Benediction of Archgenesis

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: Ritual

Chanting from one sunrise to the next, the sorcerer conjures forth a taproot from the Pole of Wood and hurls it to the ground, where it sinks into the earth. This spell provokes incredible fecundity from the land for dozens of miles around, transforming a barren desert into fertile and abundant farmland or hardscrabble stone into a verdant forest. If cast upon an already-fertile land, the spell drives it berserk: plant growth runs amok, producing a choked nightmare of overgrowth that blocks out nearly all light and leeches the ground of nutrients, ruining the area for decades.

This spell may only be cast once per year.

Control Spell: This spell may be cast once per story.

Distortion: Distorting this spell causes all plants within a mile of the distorting sorcerer to wither and die over the course of the next week.

Chariot of the Blazing Sun

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: 45 successes

This spell may only be cast between sunrise and sunset. The sorcerer closes his eyes and chants, and a triple helix of red, gold and white Essence rises about him into the sky, toward the sun. Where they disappear from sight, a flame flares, and out of it rides the chariot of the Unconquered Sun, drawn by five fiery steeds. The chariot will hold the sorcerer and up to 2,000 pounds of creatures or cargo, though it only has enough room for five other people.

The sorcerer must steer the chariot, which will carry him to whatever destination he desires, ascending high into the sky and burning toward its destination dragging a massive fiery contrail; to those on the ground, it appears to be a great blazing comet. The chariot flies at a rate of 750 miles per hour and can be directed as the sorcerer desires. It can even ascend into the uttermost depths of the sky, emerging eventually from the clouds of Heaven, if the sorcerer desires. All passengers in the chariot are protected from all environmental hazards, including the mutating power of the Wyld and the raw fury of the elemental poles, not to mention the thin, unbreathable air at the incredible heights where the chariot flies.

Whatever zone the chariot moves through is consumed in a bonfire hazard while it is passing through, though this dies away once it lands at its destination, and its passengers are of course immune to the chariot's flames.

The Chariot of the Blazing Sun remains until the sorcerer dismisses it or until sunset, whichever comes first. As the sun touches the horizon, the chariot attempts to spiral down to a safe landing. If the sorcerer bids it continue anyway, then at the moment the sun finishes setting, the chariot becomes intangible and dumps all passengers and cargo out of itself as it climbs back up into the starry vault from whence it came, usually resulting in a messy death from terminal velocity falling damage.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, the Chariot of the Blazing Sun can be cast at any time, rather than only during the day. Also, when the sorcerer runs for more than a few seconds at a time (in combat, when she uses move actions on two or more consecutive turns), her footfalls leave behind a trail of fire, mimicking the "trail of flames" aspect of the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Bellows-Pumping Stride (see p. XX).

Distortion: Distorting this spell causes slows the chariot down to a "mere" 100 miles per hour and forces it to descend and fly at a height of only a few feet above the surface of Creation.

Death Ray

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: 35 successes

The sorcerer turns her hand into a channel for the concentrated Essence of destruction itself, and emits a crimson beam from her palm that burns and cuts through nearly anything it touches. If desired, make an (Intelligence + Occult) roll as an attack against a single target the sorcerer can perceive within five zones. This attack has a base damage of 15 (Aggravated -2, mauled) and is unblockable. Death Ray is narrow where it emerges from the sorcerer's hand, but quickly widens into an annihilating torrent. Everyone in every zone along the straight-line path the Exalt aims the spell down is subjected to an unblockable one-time hazard (difficulty 9, damage 7, Aggravated, mauled), *except* for those in the zone of Death Ray's origin and the spell's primary target. Death Ray doesn't necessarily need a clear line of fire, and can usually cleave through zones separated by even solid rock, as it burns through all but the most powerfully enchanted surfaces in a matter of heartbeats. Any ground it slashes across is reduced to molten slag, forcing

anyone trying to navigate the zone for the rest of the scene to deal with a lava hazard (see p. XX). Groups must contend with its hazard in each zone where the group and the spell intersect one another.

The sorcerer may sustain the Death Ray by continuing to make shape sorcery rolls, so long as she accumulates at least seven successes each turn. This turns its one-time hazard into an ongoing environmental hazard with a one round interval; she cannot select a primary target for this sustained beam. Each subsequent turn of sustainment allows her to adjust the aim of the Death Ray and extends its total reach by one zone, up to a maximum of ten zones, though this ongoing . Directed against scenery, Death Ray can easily burn holes in fortress walls and slice ships in half.

Control Spell: Incapacitating someone with Death Ray or causing a group to lose a point of Size allows the sorcerer to add three successes to her next shape sorcery roll to sustain it.

Distortion: When distorted, Death Ray's beam scatters and diffuses, setting random fires in nearby zones but attenuating its hazard so that it only inflicts damage 4 (non-Aggravated) and burned Wounds.

Demon of the Third Circle

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: Ritual

This spell is similar to Demon of the Second Circle, save that it must be cast on one of the five nights of Calibration, and that it summons one of the penultimate lords of Hell: a Third Circle demon, one of the very souls of the Yozi themselves.

Control Spell: Taken as a control spell, Demon of the Third Circle grants the sorcerer the ability to manifest a green crown of roaring flames for the rest of the scene by reflexively paying a point of Willpower. If she issues an order to a First Circle demon while displaying this crown that would not violate its Nature or force it to violate a sorcerous binding, it must spend 2 Willpower to disobey her.

Rain of Doom

Type: Sorcery-only

Goal: Ritual

This spell must be cast precisely at the moment the sun first touches the horizon; from that moment, dark clouds begin to gather. The sorcerer has from then until the sun completely vanishes—about an hour—to navigate a circuit around the area she wishes to destroy, returning to her starting point without crossing back over her own trail. She may proceed on a mount or on foot, but cannot fly or teleport; she must actually traverse the ground to mark the boundary of the doomed area.

From the point the circuit is completed until sunrise, the clouds open and disgorge a rain of boiling, poisonous acid upon the circuited area. The rain pits stone, melts metal, and causes wood to burst into orange flames. Characters caught in the rain are subjected to a vicious environmental hazard with difficulty 9, damage 4, Aggravated, burned, one round. Additionally, they suffer one dose of alchemical poison (see p. XX) per minute of exposure, even after escaping the rain, until they can strip off drenched clothing.

The rain remains venomous and corrosive until touched by the light of the sun, and in places where it has run deep into cave systems may retain its hideous potency for decades. Nothing will grow in an area scoured by the Rain of Doom for years.

Control Spell: The sorcerer is immune to her own rain, and may spend 1 Willpower to call down a bolt of green or purple lightning from the storm's depths which strikes with sufficient force to blast apart stone, blowing holes in sturdy walls or smashing holes in temple roofs. The lightning is not accurate enough to use as a weapon against individual targets. It might be deployed against groups, but any group caught in the spell is surely doomed anyway.

Distortion: Distorting this spell reduces it to "only" an extremely violent storm, neutralizing its acidic and poisonous qualities.

Chapter Eight: Antagonists

Hello, brave soul. So, you've decided to be your group's Storyteller. Here's the bad news: You've got a couple more rules to learn than everyone else at your table.

Here's the *good* news: One of the primary goals of **EXD** is to make your job easier than in any other version of Exalted by giving you less shit to keep track of, and as big a box of ready-made guys to use as I could arm you with.

Let's get right down to it. You've got two new lumps of rules to digest here: antagonists and groups.

Rules for Antagonists

Antagonists are every character that isn't being directly controlled by one of the other players. Brave Storyteller, I *strongly* recommend that you run *all* of your characters as antagonists. You *can* go to the trouble of assembling your most very important Storyteller characters as protagonists, if you want... but frankly antagonists will be way less hassle and will work just as well in almost every case.

Antagonist General Traits and Ratings

Antagonists do not have Attributes or Abilities like protagonists do! They instead have *dice pools*. Generally, antagonists will have two dice pools: an *Expertise* dice pool, and a *Utility* dice pool.

An antagonist's **Expertise** pool determines how many dice they roll when they're doing something they're *notably good at*. This is a mighty warrior's attack pool.

An antagonist's **Utility** pool determines how many dice they roll when they're doing anything they're *not* notably good at. This is a mighty warrior's pool for engaging in a poetry recital.

Many Expertise and/or Utility pools list a parenthetical value after their main value, such as Expertise 7 (14). The parenthetical number indicates a boosted value that may be made available by one of the antagonist's powers.

Antagonists will also have **Aptitudes**. These are a few short words or phrases describing the things they're good at. If an antagonist is doing something and it seems like one of those phrases applies to the action, use their Expertise pool. If it doesn't seem like any of their Aptitudes are relevant to the roll, use their Utility pool.

Antagonists also have a **Willpower** trait, but this works a bit differently than it does for protagonists.

Antagonists have a small bundle of **combat traits**: Base Damage, Defense, Soak, Stagger Threshold, and Resolve. These are explained later.

Antagonists have **Health** and take injury as protagonists do.

Finally, every Antagonist has an **Essence rating**. It is used to resist some Charms, and to determine the strength of certain antagonist powers.

The Incompetent Pool

There will be occasions when it simply makes no sense for a given antagonist to be as good at something as their Utility pool indicates. A giant dinosaur, for example, is probably not going to be able to hide from someone searching for it very well despite its great power and keen instincts granting it an otherwise-respectable Utility pool of four or five dice. Giving it that many dice to solve the puzzle-lock sealing a temple is ludicrous. In such cases, it's always appropriate to drop an antagonist's pool down to one or two dice, or to simply declare that an action automatically fails, when it would make sense to do so.

Antagonist Dice Pools and Actions

Antagonists roll and read dice pools exactly like protagonists do, including being vulnerable to botches and the rule of 1s.

If an Aptitude is written in *italics*, rolls using it are treated as though the antagonist is applying a Caste Ability, conveying immunity to the rule of 1s.

Antagonists set the difficulty of their actions in exactly the same fashion as protagonists. If they are supernatural beings or particularly heroic mortals, they may use stunts to style their way through flashy actions.

Antagonist Resources and Momentum

Antagonists do not have or spend Motes, nor Willpower points. As such, they cannot spend Willpower to do things like re-roll dice pools, cut ahead, or use Block or Dodge.

Instead, *all* antagonists within a scene share a common resource called Momentum, detailed in the next section.

Antagonist Combat Traits and Ratings

Antagonists use significantly simplified combat rules compared to protagonists.

The Pace of Battle

Antagonists use the same rules as protagonists do for determining when they act. Antagonists cannot cut in line unless they possess a special power allowing them to do so.

Making Attacks

When an antagonist makes an attack, they use either their Expertise or Utility pool, as indicated by their Aptitudes. The difficulty of this roll is the Defense rating of their target.

Inflicting Damage

Antagonists have a trait called **Base Damage**, consisting of a number and, in parentheses, what sort of Wounds their attacks inflict. When they make an attack, this value is added to their successes on the attack roll to form a dice pool, which is then rolled at a difficulty of their target's Soak in order to inflict damage exactly as with protagonists.

Resisting Attacks

All antagonists have a **Defense** value, which determines the difficulty to strike them with attacks. They also have a **Soak** rating, which determines the difficulty of damage rolls made against them.

In addition, antagonists have a trait called **Resolve**, which can be invoked in response to an attack as though it were either a Dodge *or* a Block, as the Storyteller desires. In most respects, Resolve works like Dodge and Block: it is reduced by –1 each time it is used to protect the antagonist, increased by +1 when they Stagger or incapacitate a foe, and so on. It cannot be used as a Dodge against undodgeable attacks, or as a Block against unblockable attacks.

Antagonists can spend 1 Momentum (see p. XX) to invoke their Resolve, and can only do so once per round per antagonist unless some special power or rule says otherwise.

Health and Injury

Antagonists have a Health rating and Stagger Threshold just like protagonists. They mark damage and are Staggered, Wounded, and heal from injury in the same way.

Space and Movement

Antagonists use the same movement rules as protagonists do. If an antagonist is capable of making ranged attacks, it will be noted as a power.

Other Combat Actions

Antagonists use the same rules for other combat actions that protagonists do with the following exception: they cannot stall.

If an antagonist is riding a mount, they and their mount are usually treated as one creature using a single stat block.

Equipment

Within the fiction of the game world, antagonists definitely wear armor and wield weapons. They do not use the equipment rules that protagonists do, however. Their weaponry and armor are already baked into their Base Damage, Defense, Soak, Stagger Threshold, and Resolve traits. They do not use fighting styles.

When an antagonist is disarmed, reduce his base damage by half (round up), unless in the fiction he is fighting unarmed, in which case he cannot be disarmed.

Momentum

When a conflict breaks out, the Storyteller generates a shared resource pool for their antagonists to use called Momentum. Momentum is spent to activate antagonist powers, much as protagonists spend Motes and Willpower to trigger their various Charms and special rules. Unlike Motes and Willpower, Momentum doesn't belong to any specific antagonist; it's a pool of points shared by *all* antagonists within the scene. It is entirely possible and normal for Momentum generated by the actions of one antagonist to then be spent by a different antagonist.

These are the rules governing Momentum:

- When a conflict begins, **each antagonist generates Momentum equal to (his Essence rating – 1)** and adds it to the pool. As a result, Essence 1 antagonists generally don't generate any Momentum when a fight begins.
- Add +1 Momentum to the pool whenever an antagonist Staggers or incapacitates a protagonist.
- Add +1 Momentum to the pool whenever an antagonist is incapacitated, killed, or otherwise decisively defeated and removed from the scene as an active participant.

- The Storyteller decides how and where to spend Momentum to activate antagonists' various powers or to trigger their Resolve to let them Block or Dodge.
- The Storyteller cannot spend more Momentum on a single antagonist in a single round than that antagonist's Essence rating, unless some special power says otherwise.
- Some antagonists have special powers that can generate additional Momentum at the beginning of a conflict. Some antagonists have special powers that can generate additional Momentum during a scene in other ways not outlined in this section.
- Any unspent Momentum vanishes at the end of the scene.

As a final note, *these rules apply to **all** antagonists*, even those who are helping the protagonists. Generally speaking, this means that bound demons, protagonist-led armies, and so on will increase the amount of Momentum present in battles where they show up, and the Storyteller is free to use that Momentum as they see fit; they are not obligated to reserve its use for the protagonists' allies (though it's generally not fun or good storytelling to starve allied antagonists and hog all the Momentum for the opposition).

Antagonist Social Traits and Ratings

Antagonists use a simplified form of the same social influence rules that protagonists do.

Nature

Every antagonist has a Nature, but this usually doesn't matter unless the protagonists start talking to them. Most antagonists to be found in this book do not have a Nature listed unless they are unique beings, as every soldier marching in the legions of the Realm can hardly be expected to share the same Nature.

Intimacies

Like Nature, every protagonist has three Intimacies, and these are defined much the same way a protagonist's would be. Also like Nature, these generally aren't listed except for unique beings. If a random guard's Nature and Intimacies suddenly matter, simply make them up on the spot.

Willpower

Antagonists have a Willpower rating, but not Willpower points. When an antagonist would need to spend Willpower points to resist social influence or Charms, or would be forced to lose Willpower points by a special rule, they instead reduce their Willpower rating by an equivalent amount for the rest of the current story. When a special rule causes them to gain Willpower points, increase their Willpower rating for the rest of the current story instead. Antagonists cannot "spend" or "lose" Willpower below a rating of zero, nor can they "spend" Willpower to trigger any of the other various Willpower-based advantages that protagonists have access to, such as re-rolls, disarming attacks, or invoking Block or Dodge.

Using Social Influence

Antagonists use social influence the same way protagonists do, rolling either their Expertise or Utility dice pool as dictated by their Aptitudes. They can use persuade and inspire actions, and can even read intentions.

Resisting Social Influence

Antagonists use the same rules as protagonists do, as outlined in chapter one (see p. XX), save that instead of spending Willpower points to reject influence, they lower their Willpower rating for the rest of the current story.

When an antagonist is asked to perform an **inconvenience** that aligns with their Nature or one of their Intimacies, lower their Willpower by -2.

Generally speaking, antagonists aren't meant to be a brutal ordeal to sway with social influence, and most of the time shouldn't spend Willpower to reject influence unless accepting it would conflict with an Intimacy or the Storyteller decides they're particularly difficult to win over.

Antagonists and Backgrounds

Like Nature and Intimacies, antagonists notionally have Backgrounds, but these generally aren't listed in an antagonist's writeup and are instead left to the Storyteller to eyeball. A wealthy merchant, for example, clearly has high Resources, likely substantial Connections, and may have Followers or Command (if she has bodyguards) or Backing (if she's a member of the Guild).

Antagonist Powers

Finally, most antagonists have one or more *powers*. Powers are special rules the antagonist follows, often representing superhuman powers. Powers are either **passive** or **limited**. Passive powers are always in effect, while an antagonist can only use a single one of its limited powers during any round; or, outside of combat, when time is not tracked so strictly, can only use one limited power "at a time," for whatever value of *at a time* makes sense contextually. For example, two limited social powers couldn't be used to enhance the same persuade action.

Common powers are detailed throughout this chapter. It's worth noting that despite the name, powers aren't always beneficial. A faerie lord's vulnerability to cold iron is one of his "powers."

Antagonist Rules Interoperability

Rules in **EXD** are largely written to be player-facing, but are generally easy to use with antagonists as well. For example, a Charm may say for the user and target to both make a contested (Strength + Athletics) roll. Antagonists don't have Strength or Athletics ratings, so just use either the Expertise or Utility pool, based on whether the antagonist has something that seems (Strength + Athletics)-ish, like "feats of strength" or "wrestling." Alternately, sometimes a Charm directly references the target's rating in some Attribute or Ability, such as the Lunar Charm Lessons in the Blood, which steals Ability dots but cannot raise the user's rating higher than the target's. In these cases, the Storyteller simply makes an on-the-spot ruling as to what the antagonist's rating in Athletics or Stamina or whatever ought to be.

Designing Antagonists

Designing an antagonist is more art than science, and involves a lot of eyeballing. You can eventually freestyle antagonist creation as you get a better feel for playing the game. Broadly, however, these are the basic guidelines you should follow when you're getting started:

Essence Rating

An antagonist's Essence rating describes their supernatural might, just as it does for protagonists. Mortal antagonists always have Essence 1, while most supernatural antagonists range from Essence 1-3. Highly formidable threats may have Essence 4-6, while incredibly powerful beings have Essence 7-10.

Dice Pools

In order to settle on a dice pool for an antagonist, consult the chart below and plug in the most appropriate numbers.

Dice Pool Description

1-2 Abysmal. This is the Utility rating of uneducated peasants, vagabonds, children, and small animals.

3 This is about where the Utility pool of most folk of Creation of any accomplishment sits. Alternately, it might be the Expertise pool of a young child.

4-5 This is the Expertise pool of most professional adults in the Second Age, reflecting a rating of 2-3 in an Ability and a rating of 2-3 in an Attribute. As a Utility pool, it indicates far-ranging knowledge of many things and a great deal of worldly experience, or else a superior nature or potent basic aptitudes (as evidenced by many spirits and some powerful beasts).

6-8 This is the Expertise pool of an expert or gifted prodigy. It indicates that the character is markedly better than the majority of people who perform this activity for a living, *significantly* so at the upper bounds of the rating, either due to superior natural gifts or superior training. As a Utility pool, it is normally the province of very old or very potent supernatural beings.

9-10 Anyone with an Expertise pool in this range is at the peak of human potential. They're not just excellent, they're in contention to be the greatest in the world at whatever it is they do. If you find yourself facing an antagonist with a Utility pool this high, please remember to be polite to the Unconquered Sun. There aren't many other beings in the setting who can claim tertiary competence at this level.

11+ An Expertise pool in this range indicates an astonishingly potent beast or, more likely, a powerful spirit. This is also the Expertise range of the Fair Folk, who craft themselves from dreams of superhuman splendor. A smattering of behemoths and First Age constructs had Utility pools at this level; otherwise, they don't normally get this high.

Aptitudes

Think of a few words that describe what the antagonist *does*, and write them down. Examples can be found throughout this chapter. If the antagonist is supernaturally blessed at a certain Aptitude (this is mostly the province of Fair Folk and the Exalted), write it in italics. Most antagonists will only have a single italicized Aptitude, if any.

Many Charms ask for their target to make a specific Attribute + Ability roll. As antagonists do not have these traits, simply survey an antagonist's Aptitudes to see if they have anything similar. If so, roll with Expertise. If not, roll with Utility. For example, a Charm might demand that its target roll Stamina + Resistance. Heavy infantry have an Aptitude for "toughness," which

seems to apply. Bandits, on the other hand, can “prepare an ambush,” “extort,” and “fight.” They probably roll Utility.

Base Damage

An antagonist’s Base Damage rating describes how dangerous it is to be the target of their aggressions during a round. This is their “resting threat level,” the level of danger output they can sustain across a fight. If they have a limited-use special attack that is of exceptional potency compared to the rest of what they can do, model that as its own power.

Base Damage is mostly determined by the antagonist’s choice of weapon, though if they’re freakishly strong you might bump the value up by one. Base Damage also lists what type of Wounds the antagonist’s attacks inflict in parentheses.

Base Damage Description

- 1-2 This is the rating of small animals that don’t pose a particular threat to human beings.
- 3 This is the rating of most unarmed fighters and of animals that can hurt but not seriously threaten people, like an angry cat.
- 4-5 This is the rating of most armed combatants, along with dangerous predators like wolves and claw striders.
- 6-7 This is the rating of fighters with heavy weapons or artifact weapons, along with martial spirits and major predators like river dragons.
- 8-9 This is the rating of heavy artifact weapons, superpredators like tyrant lizards and siaka, lesser elemental dragons, and small behemoths.
- 10+ At this rating, the antagonist is equipped with a First Age weapon that is probably more dangerous than its wielder, or is a mighty behemoth, war god, or the like.

Occasionally, Base Damage may also be marked as Aggravated, Overwhelming, or Piercing (see Chapter One, pp. XX-XX). This is usually the result of powers, but exceptionally powerful antagonists might simply possess such features natively.

Defense

Defense determines how hard it is to successfully strike and an antagonist. This is mostly a function of their combat prowess.

Defense Description

- 3 The antagonist is not a combatant and has no real way to defend himself if attacked.
- 4-5 The antagonist is a poor combatant, but is at least armed and theoretically dangerous, or is competent but ill-equipped. Alternately, they’re a noncombatant that has gotten ahold of a shield or is unusually agile. This is also the value of large, slow beasts.
- 6 This is the difficulty to hit a professional soldier outfitted for battle, or most animals trying not to die.
- 7 This is the difficulty to hit a highly skilled or impeccably equipped fighter, or dangerous predator such as a tiger.

8 This is the difficulty to hit a master swordsman or martial artist, or to strike a potent supernatural being such as a martial spirit. Battle-ready Exalted tend to sit at this level.

9 This is a difficulty significantly above “master swordsman.” This is the rating of war gods, powerful battle demons, and very strong Exalted.

Soak

An antagonist’s Soak rating details how hard it is to hurt him when you do hit him. Soak is dictated by how heavily armored or intrinsically tough the antagonist is.

Soak	Description
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5	The antagonist is unarmored.
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6	The antagonist is lightly armored, or is a tough critter, or low-end supernatural being.
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7	The antagonist is heavily armored, has a scaly hide, or is a martial supernatural being.
---	--

8	The antagonist is wearing magical armor, is an extremely rugged creature, or is tough even by the standards of supernatural beings.
---	---

9+	The antagonist has a body made of jade or stone, is some kind of super-tough behemoth, or the like.
----	---

Resolve

Resolve is what antagonists use to Dodge and Block, and reflects how physically fit and adept at fighting they are.

Resolve	Description
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1	The antagonist is unfit or unsuited for defending himself.
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2	The antagonist is of average health and ability.
---	--

3	The antagonist is a competent combatant.
---	--

4	The antagonist is a skilled combatant.
---	--

5	The antagonist is a world-class combatant.
---	--

6+	The antagonist is probably a powerful god, faerie, or behemoth.
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Health

Antagonists often have the usual complement of 7 Health, but this may vary substantially. Smaller or narratively unimportant beings may have less Health, while larger beasts and powerful supernatural beings may have more.

Stagger Threshold

This trait determines how brutal of a hit it takes to seriously injure an antagonist, and is primarily a reflection of how heavily armored they are.

Rating	Description
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1+	Any harm at all can seriously injure the antagonist.
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- 2+ The antagonist is unarmored and of mortal constitution.
- 3+ The antagonist is wearing light armor or is tougher than a human being.
- 4+ The antagonist is wearing heavy armor or MUCH tougher than a human being.
- 5+ The antagonist is wearing artifact armor, is some kind of megafauna, or is a powerful spirit.
- 6+ The antagonist is probably a behemoth of some sort.

Social Traits and Willpower

Assign Nature and one to three Intimacies if you expect players to try to influence the antagonist. Otherwise, just assign Willpower according to the chart below.

Willpower	Description
1	Spineless.
2	Weak-willed.
3	Of average will. Most of the folk of Creation have Willpower 3.
4	Solid. The antagonist is sterner than the norm, but not really steeled. This is the rating of margin-folk and those who fight for a living, who must have steady nerves to get by.
5	Certain. The antagonist has convictions, though they don't always uphold them. This is the lowest rating you should see on one of the Exalted.
6	Confident. When pushed, this antagonist's instinct is to push back. The average Willpower of supernatural beings.
7	Determined. This antagonist is stubborn and suspicious. They didn't get where they are by letting others dictate to them.
8	Iron-willed. This antagonist doesn't change their mind once it's set. They have their ideas about the world and aren't interested in hearing otherwise.
9	Implacable. "No," this antagonist tells the world, " <i>you</i> move."

Powers

Example powers are given throughout this chapter, but generally, if there's something you very specifically want an antagonist to be able to do or *not* to do, write it as a power. Despite the name, powers are really just special rules, so they don't have to be beneficial.

Groups

Okay, so, 3,000 words later you know how antagonists work and how to make them. Killer. Hey, you know what sucks? Having to keep track of 15 antagonists at once. You know what sucks even harder? Having to keep track of *one thousand*. In original First Edition **Exalted**, before the **Players Guide**, we had these things called Extras. They used the same rules as regular characters but they only had three health levels, they were supposed to be like all the little jobber Foot Clan ninjas who run out and get their shit kicked in by the Ninja Turtles in one or two hits, or the idiots who make a run at Bruce Lee and get their teeth nunchucked out of their heads because they didn't pay attention to what happened to the last eight guys who tried that. If you wanted to treat yourself to the spectacle of a Dawn Caste mowing down an entire army, you did it by

systematically slaughtering hundreds of these things until the Storyteller said fuck it and declared the rest broke and ran. If you got good at splitting your dice pools, a Circle of decent fighters could mow down about 30 per round. People really played this way. Honest to God.

We're not going to do that. What we're going to do is, instead of having you track 2,500 guys with spears who showed up with the Wyld Hunt, we're going to track one guy. That's what groups do.

When to Use a Group

Use a group whenever you've got a group (hey!) of guys who are fundamentally similar to one another, and there are enough of them that representing them individually seems annoying. By fundamentally similar, I mean "a bunch of soldiers," "eight blood-apes," "a bar full of rowdy drunks," "an army of mercenaries," or "a ravaging pack of hobgoblins." That sort of thing. The point where keeping track of them starts to seem like a pain in the ass is up to you, but groups can be used for gatherings as small as three guys or as big as *thousands*.

Fundamentally, a group is just the antagonist traits of the basic guy the group is made of, but with slightly altered rules. So, fundamentally, an army of mercenaries is one soldier, but with a modified stat block.

Here's the modifications.

Group Traits

Groups use a few special traits that separate them from antagonists. These are Size, Drill, and coherence and magnitude.

Size

Size acts as a modifier for several of a group's other traits. It's determined by just *how big* the group is.

Size can go from 1 to 5. The bigger a group is, the tougher it is. **Size is directly added to a group's Expertise dice pool, Base Damage, and Soak value, and is part of its Coherence calculation** (we'll get to that in a minute). Big groups hit *very* hard and can soak up a *lot* of damage.

Size	Description
------	-------------

1	Anywhere from a dozen to a few dozen combatants. A handful of thugs in an alley, a fang to a scale of Realm legionaries, a bar brawl, a Dune Folk ambush, a lynch mob, a Harborhead raiding crew.
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2	100+ fighters. A mercenary company, a talon of Realm legionaries, a sweeping riot, a faerie raiding band.
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3	Several hundred fighters. A mercenary army, a wing of Realm legionaries, an entire Delzahn clan rallied to war, a whole town resurrected as zombies.
---	--

4	1,000+ fighters. A couple of dragons of Realm legionaries, an army of Wyld mutants, a war-host of the Fair Folk.
---	--

5	5,000+ fighters. A Realm legion, a Lookshy field force, a Wyld horde. +3 Base Damage.
---	---

If the number of combatants significantly exceeds Size 5 — like, “well into Size 4+” exceeds — then make additional groups.

Drill

While the basic traits of the antagonists who comprise a group determine its fundamental strength, how well they can leverage that strength depends on how well the group can work together toward a common goal, respond to leadership, and coordinate with itself. Drill determines the difficulty for its leaders to issue orders to the group. It also provides the dice pool for rout checks and modifies a group’s Defense; a big part of fighting together as a cohesive unit is protecting the guys next to you. Finally, when something tells you to use Willpower and you’re dealing with a group, use Drill instead.

Drill	Description/Effects
--------------	----------------------------

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Members of the group are actively expecting treachery from the rest of the group at any moment. –3 Defense. Orders issued to this group automatically fail. |
| 2 | The group is actively acrimonious, probably made up of hostile individuals temporarily working together. –3 Defense. Orders issued at difficulty 9. |
| 3 | Not only uncoordinated, but actively divided or disharmonious. –2 Defense. Orders issued at difficulty 9. |
| 4 | Uncoordinated. The group has no idea how to work together, and little notion that it should even be doing so. United only by a more or less shared goal. This is the Drill of riots and zombie hordes. –1 Defense. Orders issued at difficulty 8. |
| 5 | Independent. The group has the notion that it should work together to accomplish its goals, but no practice or plan for doing so. This is the Drill of green conscripts. –1 Defense. Orders issued at difficulty 7. |
| 6 | Drilled. The group has at least some practice in working together. Most village militias, which gather once a week on the practice yard, have this level of drill. Orders issued at difficulty 6. |
| 7 | Disciplined. The group has practiced maneuvers and is accustomed to taking orders, at least in theoretical situations. This is the Drill of professional soldiers and blooded warrior groups from raiding cultures. Orders issued at difficulty 5. The group can use its Resolve to Block. |
| 8 | Crack. The group knows how its members will move and act without needing to see them do so. This is the Drill of seasoned campaign troops and bloodsworn reavers. +1 Defense. Orders issued at difficulty 4. The group can use its Resolve to Block. Momentum +1. |
| 9 | Elite. The group knows what its orders will be and how to carry them out smoothly before they’re even issued. This is the Drill of Creation’s most elite military forces, such as the Realm’s heavy infantry and the Brides of Ahlat. +2 Defense. Orders issued at difficulty 3. The group can use its Resolve to Block. Momentum +2. |

Coherence

Groups don’t have Health. Instead, they have a similar trait called *Coherence*. A group’s Coherence is equal to the Health of the average individual making up the group, plus the group’s

current Size. Thus, a Size 2 group of bandits (who have Health 7 as individuals) would have Coherence 9.

Damage, Rout, and Dissolution

When a group suffers damage, it loses Coherence in the same way an individual would lose Health. Unlike an individual, **groups do not have a Stagger Threshold and cannot suffer Wounds.**

Coherence damage represents members of the group being killed or wounded to the point of inability to continue fighting. It *also* represents flagging morale as the group suffers casualties, and fighters who have ceased to contribute effectively either because they're just trying to stay alive or because they've broken away from the front line in fear of their life. When the unit is tested to the breaking point, represented by suffering damage that reduces its Coherence to 0, the group erases all damage from its coherence track, reduces its Size by one, becomes Staggered, and must make a *rout check*.

If this process reduces a group to Size 0, no rout check is necessary; the group is reduced to dead or unconscious bodies and survivors attempting to flee in a panic, and ceases to exist.

Rout Checks

The group rolls its Drill against difficulty 6 (subject to some modifiers outlined below). If this roll succeeds, the group stabilizes and gains a fresh Coherence rating calculated according to its new Size. If it took more damage than it had Coherence remaining, it then applies any remaining "rollover" damage to this new Coherence rating. It may now continue fighting, assuming the rollover damage isn't enough to immediately Stagger it and provoke *another* rout check.

If the rout check fails, the group is *breaking*. It begins to dissolve and to enter full retreat. When it takes its next turn, it must *dissolve* unless a protagonist or antagonist leader is able to make a rally action on its behalf (see p. XX) before that point. When a group dissolves, it has ceased to exist as a force that can take meaningful actions on the battlefield. All of its members are either injured, slain, or running for their lives, and cannot be returned to the battlefield during the current scene.

If new damage or rollover damage provokes another rout check while a group is already *breaking*, it dissolves immediately.

As mentioned, rout checks are made against difficulty 6 by default, but a number of factors can modify this:

- If the group is being led by one of the Exalted or a similarly puissant supernatural hero, reduce the difficulty of the rout check by -1.
- If another allied group has already suffered dissolution during the fight, increase the difficulty by +1.
- If one or more of the group's leaders or heroes has been incapacitated or killed during the battle, increase the difficulty by +1.
- Increase the difficulty by +1 for each rout check made by the group during the same battle after the first.

- If the rout check was caused by a devastating area-of-effect attack such as the spell Death of Obsidian Butterflies, increase the difficulty by +1.

Dissolution

A dissolved group is not necessarily all dead. In most cases, a substantial number of its “casualties” represent individuals who have fled from battle, or been dragged away injured. As such, it is not unusual for a dissolved group to reform and reappear at some later date, either at diminished Size or after having replenished its numbers with fresh recruits.

Dissolution is considered to be equivalent to incapacitation for the purpose of any special rules which trigger when an opponent is incapacitated.

Groups and Combat

Groups *mostly* work the same way antagonists do, with a few extra complexities.

The Pace of Battle

Groups always act *after* any allied heroes or leaders.

Making Attacks

Rather than targeting individuals, when a group attacks it targets one entire zone and launches an attack against every enemy in it.

Space and Movement

A group can spread itself across a number of connected zones equal to twice its Size. When it selects a zone to attack, it can target any zone it occupies. If the group is capable of ranged attacks, it can launch them into zones connected to any part of the space it occupies.

What would be swift actions for individuals are simple actions for groups; it takes a lot of work for a group to move into a zone.

When a group uses what would normally be a swift action (such as a move action to expand into or withdraw from a zone), it can still launch an attack as part of that action, but this attack can only target one enemy in the selected zone rather than all enemies.

Striking a group with an attack before its turn does *not* prevent it using any action that would normally be a swift action, unless the attacking force is another group.

Resolve

Groups cannot use their Resolve to Dodge, only to Block. They’re simply too massive to effectively get out of the way of attacks as a whole.

That being said, groups can only use their Resolve to Block if they have Drill 7+. Less disciplined forces can’t coordinate to protect themselves in an organized fashion, and instead fight with only rudimentary unity. As with individuals, using Resolve costs 1 Momentum.

Momentum

At the beginning of a conflict, a group contributes Momentum equal to the Essence rating of the stat block the group is based on + the group’s Size. Groups with very high Drill can also contribute bonus Momentum.

Social Influence

The difficulty to use social influence against a Group is equal to its Drill.

Groups generally don't have a Nature, and their only Intimacy is to do whatever it is they're currently doing at the moment (usually trying to win a battle, though in the case of smaller groups this might be "rob these guys" or something else.)

It is impossible to attempt persuasion (see p. XX) upon a group larger than Size 2 without specialized Charms to enable it.

Special Effects and Groups

Charms and spells can do a *lot* of things other than dealing damage, and it's up to Storytellers to determine whether those effects are applicable to groups on a case-by-case basis. A Charm that makes an Exalt's attacks inflict a Wound penalty due to agonizing nerve strikes might be fair game — she hasn't actually struck the entire group, but it gets a -1 penalty as soldiers react to seeing their comrades writhing in agony around them with fear and hesitation, sure. A big attack that knocks its target down could probably also leave a group prone, as soldiers tangle up around fallen comrades. Soul Mastery, which kills its target outright by tearing his soul from his body... uh, probably doesn't make sense to outright slay 1,200 men from a single application, or even as a handful of rapid applications, and would have no effect upon a group. Likewise, an assassin strike that poisons the target is not going to poison a meaningful number of fighters in the targeted group and probably does nothing.

Storytellers, don't feel constrained to an inflexible yes-or-no approach here. You might approve a -1 penalty for the nerve attacks as described above, but then not let additional attacks stack the penalty even higher, for example, even if that's how the Charm normally works, since you're only offering the initial penalty to model morale impact to begin with, out of a spirit of not wanting to totally defang the player's cool Charm.

Bring Your Own Army: Group Conflicts

Bringing an army of your own to a fight against a large group is a very good idea. When two (or more) hostile groups come into contact with one another, they automatically tie up most of their strength clashing with one another. This produces the following effects:

- At the end of each round, a group suffers automatic, unblockable damage for each hostile group in striking range of it. For each hostile group of lesser or equal Size, suffer one damage. For each of greater Size, suffer two damage.
- When a group selects a zone and targets everyone within it with an attack, subtract the Size of all hostile groups in contact with it from the group's effective Size when rolling the attack and determining its damage. This can't reduce a modifier to less than +0; a group is always at least as effective as a single one of its constituent fighters.
- Each hostile group of equal or greater size in contact with a group reduces its Size for the purpose of modifying soak by -1. This also can't reduce a modifier to less than +0.

The sum consequence of these rules in most cases is that if protagonists bring an army of their own, they can largely neutralize the terrifying damage output capabilities of a high-Size group, greatly increasing their chances of defeating it. Of course, if the enemy has any supernatural champions of their own, the same is true for the protagonists' group, rendering it vulnerable to serious damage.

In the absence of powerful heroes, parking two armies nose-to-nose tends to produce a very slow, grinding loss of a few points of Coherence per round. It's *strongly* suggested that if protagonists aren't directly involved in a conflict, the Storyteller simply decide the outcome of such a conflict rather than rolling through fifteen to twenty rounds of combat while the other players fuck around on their phones.

Group Powers

Groups generally use whatever powers the antagonist trait they're built up from use, unless the result would be blatantly nonsensical. There are two powers that are exclusive to groups, however.

Mounted Cavalry (passive): The group consists of mounted riders (or something similar, like a herd of Wyld-mutated carnivorous horses). When it uses a move action to expand into a new zone, it can still launch an attack against every enemy in the zone if it targets.

Perfect Morale (passive): The group is incapable of knowing fear. Normally this Power is seen on groups of mindless undead, but it might also apply to First Age war constructs or those blessed with powerful battlefield magic. A group with Perfect Morale cannot fail rout checks and will not retreat unless ordered to do so. It enjoys +2 Coherence, but cannot benefit from the rally for numbers action (see p. XX) because all of the group's losses represent fighters killed or injured too badly to continue, rather than combatants who have lost heart and might be induced to resume fighting.

Battle Commands

Often a group will be accompanied by an independent character who is leading it. This might even be a protagonist! Such leaders can use (Charisma or Appearance) + War to give their group specific commands. A few particularly important commands are highlighted below.

Rally

An independent character leading a group which is *breaking* but which has not yet dissolved can use a simple action to issue it a command to rally. This is a (Charisma or Appearance) + War roll against a difficulty dictated by the unit's Drill. If successful, the unit may re-roll its failed rout check, this time with the difficulty lowered by the number of successes on the rally roll.

Rally for Numbers

An independent character leading a group can attempt to shore up its losses by inspiring its fighters, threatening retreating combatants and pushing them back into the line of battle, cycling out tired front-line fighters for fresh reinforcements, or otherwise turning worthless troops back into worthwhile ones. This is a (Charisma or Appearance) + War roll against a difficulty dictated by the unit's Drill. The unit "heals" an amount of damage to its Coherence equal to the successes rolled. This action can only be used on a group once per scene, but the opportunity resets if the group succeeds at a rout check.

Fighting Groups

Large groups — Size 3, 4, and especially 5 — can be *very* deadly. They hit *very* hard and they don't care whether their targets are expert combatants or not. If an entire Circle clumps up in a single zone in the face of a large group, the less-capable combatants are probably going to get creamed.

The best weapon to bring to a fight against a full-blown army is another army. Groups tend to cancel one another's advantages out, letting Exalted protagonists deploy their powers without focusing totally on sheer survival.

All that being said, it is possible for a Circle of Exalts to kill an army by themselves, but it's a very significant accomplishment. Perfect defenses, layered ongoing defensive magic, and extremely powerful offensive blitzes are recommended, along with relocating out of the group's immediate threat zone to let less-damaged companions take the heat for a round if things get hairy.

Mortal Antagonists

The most common opposition encountered in the Age of Sorrows are mortals, although one hesitates to describe some of them as "ordinary people." The sample antagonists that follow are the meat and potatoes of most games. These are the traits you'll reach for again and again for alley toughs, for professional soldiers, for Realm legionaries, for elite mercenary squads, and much more.

The following Powers are often found on mortal antagonists. Feel free to add them to any of the templates below when it seems appropriate.

Archery (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to two zones away.

Champion (passive): If this antagonist is fighting alongside a friendly group, that group acts as though its Size were one higher than it truly is when attacking anyone who has attacked this antagonist since the group's last action.

Commander (passive): If this antagonist is within the same zone as a friendly group, apply the group's Size as a dice penalty to all attacks directed against the antagonist.

Mounted Fighter (passive): The antagonist can also use a swift action to move after using his simple action, rather than only before.

Slinger (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to one zone away.

Scruffy Bandit

This trait block is appropriate for the average band of mountain bandits, highwaymen, pirates, or the like. A few variant Aptitudes are given for the sake of flexibility.

Aptitudes (Bandit): Prepare an ambush, extort, fight

Aptitudes (Hired Thug): Intimidate, fight, look out for danger, toughness

Aptitudes (Pirate): Carouse, fight, gamble, crew a ship, alertness (unless drunk)

Expertise: 4; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 5; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 2

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 4

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Hamstring (1 Momentum): Robbery is easier when victims can't run away. When the antagonist inflicts a Wound, he can choose to make it a disabled leg Wound.

Margin Raider

This trait block is appropriate for those the Realm dismisses as “barbarians.” These are folk from raiding cultures, often dwelling on the harsh margins of the Threshold. Lunars tend to cultivate such fighters in their war dominions.

Aptitudes: Fighting, riding, surprise assault, wilderness survival, alertness, toughness

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 5; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

Counting Coup (passive): When the antagonist inflicts a Wound, he can choose to make it a dazed Wound.

Green Troops

This trait block appropriate for village militiamen, new recruits, and those pressed into warfare with good gear but perhaps inadequate training.

Aptitudes: March in formation, fight, carry out orders

Expertise: 4; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 5; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 2

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 3

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Professional Soldier

This is the trait block appropriate to a career soldier in most of Creation's militaries.

Aptitudes: Fight, march, follow orders, scout, toughness, stand guard, pursue

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Elite Troops

This trait block is appropriate for Creation's most feared and respected professional military forces, such as the Realm's veteran legions or the Brides of Ahlat.

Aptitudes: Battlefield survival and maneuvers, fight, retreat under good discipline, alertness, toughness, stand guard, pursue

Expertise: 7; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Disarming Blow (1 Momentum): When the antagonist inflicts a Wound, he can also disarm the target.

Tiger Warriors

This trait block represents mortals who have undergone extensive drilling under the guidance of the Solar Charm Tiger Warrior Training Technique, honing their skills to the utmost.

Aptitudes: Battlefield survival and maneuvers, fight, retreat under good discipline, alertness, toughness, pursuit, stand guard

Expertise: 9; **Utility:** 4

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 8; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 6

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Tactical Damage (passive): Once per scene, when the antagonist inflicts a Wound, he can choose to make it a dazed, disabled leg, or disabled arm Wound.

Light Cavalry

This trait block is appropriate for professional mounted combatants with a hit-and-run fighting style, such as Delzahn raiders and Marukani horse-lords.

Aptitudes: Mounted combat, archery, fighting, riding, evasive maneuvers, alertness

Expertise: 6; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 4

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Archery (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to two zones away.

Mounted Fighter (passive): The antagonist can also use a swift action to move after using his simple action, rather than only before.

Heavy Infantry

This trait block is appropriate for elaborately armored shock infantry. Such fighters are uncommon in the Age of Sorrows, and are primarily fielded by the Realm, whose deadly heavy infantry fights with tower shields and axes.

Aptitudes: Fighting, moving in formation, following orders, intimidation, toughness

Expertise: 6; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 4

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Heavy Cavalry

This trait block is appropriate for heavily trained and heavily armored mounted combatants tasked with making line-breaking charges of devastating force.

Aptitudes: Mounted combat, fighting, riding, toughness

Expertise: 6; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 4

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Cavalry (passive): In the round that the antagonist moves into a new zone and attacks someone there, his attacks gain the Overwhelming (-1) quality.

Mounted Fighter (passive): The antagonist can also use a swift action to move after using his simple action, rather than only before.

Merchant Prince

This trait block represents a merchant prince of the Guild or a similarly affluent trader.

Aptitudes: Bargaining, organization, evaluating deals, noticing details, being charming

Expertise: 8; **Utility:** 4

Base Damage: 3 (bruised)

Defense: 4; **Soak:** 5; **Resolve:** 1

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 7

Health: 7; Stagger Threshold: 2+

Powers

Fabulous Wealth (passive): The merchant prince is exceedingly wealthy and has Resources 4 or 5. Though he does not object to bribes, it takes something truly impressive to rouse his interest.

Yennin Champion

The heroes of Volivat are called the Yennin, which means “Children of Ten Fathers.” Created by ancient rites discovered in the central citadel of Volivat, they carry the best traits of their eleven parents, and are able to rival the Dragon-Blooded in sheer power.

Aptitudes: Battle, athletics, keen senses, toughness, quick wits

Expertise: 10 (15); **Utility:** 5

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 8; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 8

Health: 8; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Battlefield Presence (passive): The Yennin generates an extra +2 Momentum at the beginning of a conflict.

Iron Will (passive): Once per scene, the Yennin may spend 1 Willpower to utterly reject any effect that would alter or control his behavior, thoughts, or emotions.

Unbound Potential (passive): The Yennin may move even if struck before his turn, and may reflexively move an extra zone if he successfully strikes an opponent with an attack. Once every other round, he may cut ahead for free.

Wyld-Shunning Resilience (passive): When targeted by magic that controls, taints, or transforms his body, soul, or destiny, the Yennin may reflexively roll Expertise against difficulty 9 to defend himself.

Culture Hero Stance (1 Momentum, reflexive): The Yennin increases his Base Damage, Defense, and Soak values by +1 for the rest of the scene or until he is Staggered.

Supremacy (1 Momentum, reflexive): Until the end of the current round, the Yennin adds five dice to his Expertise pool, employing the value in parentheses, and ignores Wound penalties.

Child of One Hundred Fathers

Volivat’s mystics have labored to increase the number of fathers participating in the conception of its champions, but the progeny of such experiments proved abnormal and unstable. Their most ambitious effort, the so-called Hundred Fathers, were born as abominations and banished to subterranean dwellings. There they breed in darkness, occasionally emerging to feed on human flesh and wreak wanton violence against their jailers.

Aptitudes: Battle, athletics, pursuit, stalking, keen senses, toughness, problem-solving

Expertise: 15 (20); **Utility:** 5

Base Damage: 8 (lacerated, Overwhelming -1)

Defense: 9; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 10

Health: 12; **Stagger Threshold:** 5+

Powers

Battlefield Dominance (passive): The Hundred Fathers generates an extra +2 Momentum at the beginning of a conflict.

Boundless Fury (passive): Once the Hundred Fathers has suffered a Wound, may inflict maimed or mauled Wounds.

Clambering Horror (passive): The Hundred Fathers may climb walls without the need for complex movement.

Limitless Might (passive): The Hundred Fathers may move even if struck before his turn, and may reflexively move an extra zone if he successfully strikes an opponent with an attack. He may cut ahead for free every round.

Power Throw (passive): If the Hundred Fathers successfully strikes an opponent with two or more attacks in a single round, then at the end of the round, after all characters have taken their turns, he also picks her up and hurls her into an adjacent zone, knocking her prone and producing a one-time impact hazard (difficulty 6, damage 3, bruised).

Uncontrollable (passive): So long as his Willpower is at 5+, the Hundred Fathers is immune to any effect that would alter or control his behavior, thoughts, or emotions.

Wyld-Shunning Resilience (passive): When targeted by magic that controls, taints, or transforms his body, soul, or destiny, the Hundred Fathers may reflexively roll Expertise against difficulty 8 to defend himself.

Culture Horror Stance (1 Momentum, reflexive): The Hundred Fathers increases his Base Damage, Defense, and Soak values by +1 for the rest of the scene.

Extra Arms (1 Momentum, reflexive): The Hundred Fathers can make three extra attacks at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Supremacy (1 Momentum, reflexive): Until the end of the scene or until Staggered, whichever comes first, the Hundred Fathers adds five dice to his Expertise pool, employing the value in parentheses, and ignores Wound penalties.

Sorcery

Sorcerer antagonists usually have only a few relevant spells at their disposal.

The following permanently active power defines a sorcerer:

Sorcerer (passive): The antagonist is a sorcerer. To cast a spell, he spends an appropriate amount of Willpower, then rolls his Expertise pool against difficulty 6 as an extended simple action. Once he meets the goal of the spell he's trying to cast, it goes off. The antagonist can also perform sorcerous workings with his Expertise pool.

Past that, sorcerers use the same spells that protagonists do.

Pyromancer

This trait block represents a mortal sorcerer adept in fire magic.

Aptitudes: Sorcery, spirit lore, minor enchantment, awareness

Expertise: 7; **Utility:** 4

Base Damage: 4 (lacerated)

Defense: 5; **Soak:** 5; **Resolve:** 2

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 8

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

Control Spell (passive): Flight of the Brilliant Raptor is this antagonist's control spell. The bird will swoop around for a second pass if it fails to strike its target initially, making a second attack roll at the end of the round after all other characters have acted. Additionally, the sorcerer's reflection in any surface save for water always seems to be swathed in flames.

Sorcerer (passive): The antagonist is a sorcerer. To cast a spell, he spends an appropriate amount of Willpower, then rolls his Expertise pool against difficulty 6 as an extended simple action. Once he meets the goal of the spell he's trying to cast, it goes off. The antagonist can also perform sorcerous workings with his Expertise pool.

Walkaways (passive): Thanks to the bevy of talismans he has enchanted to protect himself, the first time in a scene the antagonist is Staggered, whatever sort of Wound he should have suffered instead becomes bruised.

Flight of the Brilliant Raptor (goal 17): The sorcerer conjures forth flames of ruby and diamond and shapes them into a majestic firebird, which streaks forth and explodes among his foes. Roll Expertise as an attack against a target up to four zones away. If the spell strikes home, it has a base damage of 9 and inflicts burned Wounds, and if it Staggers its target it erupts into an inferno that covers the entire zone in flames until the end of the scene, creating a bonfire hazard (see p. XX).

Invulnerable Skin of Bronze (goal 20): The sorcerer transforms his flesh into living bronze, granting him +2 Soak and +1 Stagger Threshold. If disarmed, his attacks would gain +1 Base Damage. This transformation lasts until sunset.

The Wyld-Touched

The touch of the Wyld corrupts men and beasts alike, transforming those tribes who dwell within its shadow into something not quite strictly human. Wyld tribes frequently raid into more stable neighboring lands in search of food, plunder, slaves, and offerings to their Fair Folk masters.

The Uncanny features found in Chapter Two on pages XX-XX are all suitable for use on Wyld mutants, save for extra limbs and natural weapons. Wyld mutants instead use the version below:

Extra Limbs (1 Momentum, reflexive): The mutant can make one extra attack at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Natural Weapons (passive): If disarmed, the antagonist's Base Damage merely drops to 4.

Wyld Mutant Raider

This trait block is appropriate for those the folk of stable lands decry as "Wyld barbarians." Fundamentally, this is the trait block of the Margin Raider, with a variety of potential mutations appended to represent different Wyld tribes.

Aptitudes: Hit and run tactics, surprise assaults, wilderness survival, riding, fighting, toughness

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 5; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

Extra Limbs (1 Momentum, reflexive): The mutant can make one extra attack at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Slinger (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to one zone away.

Wolf Tribe Skirmisher

This trait block represents a Lunar-descended member of a beast tribe, with wolf-like features. Because of her superhumanly acute senses, her awareness aptitude is italicized.

Aptitudes: Combat, tracking, *awareness*, wilderness survival, toughness

Expertise: 6; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 5; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

Feral Instincts (passive): At the beginning of a conflict, this antagonist contributes +1 Momentum.

Natural Weapons (passive): If disarmed, the antagonist's Base Damage merely drops to 4.

Abacasteri

Golden cats made of living metal, abacasteri feed on corpses. Their saliva is highly acidic and their blood is molten metal. Alas, when killed they tend to fade into golden dust. The only way to preserve an abacasteri's corpse as a statue of solid gold is to drain the blood out of it so that it perishes as the last drop leaves its body, leaving behind a cadaver worth Resources 5. This is difficult to accomplish and not widely known.

Aptitudes: Fight back, stalk, escape, avoid, keen senses, gravedigging

Expertise: 7; Utility: 1

Base Damage: 6 (burned, Aggravated -2)

Defense: 7; Soak: 7; Resolve: 3

Essence: 1; Willpower: 4

Health: 8; Stagger Threshold: 4+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the abacasteri may cut ahead for free. At the beginning of a conflict, it contributes +1 Momentum unless it was ambushed.

Boiling Blood (passive): Anyone who strikes the abacasteri with a close-quarters attack using anything but unarmed attacks must deal with a one-time lava hazard (see p. XX).

Swift Killer (passive): Once per battle, when the abacasteri uses a move action it may move two zones.

Buck-Ogre

These two-headed terrors haunt the forests of the north and northeast, often working alongside Wyld tribes in exchange for weaponry and human flesh.

Aptitudes: Hit and run tactics, surprise assaults, wilderness survival, riding, fighting, awareness, toughness

Expertise: 6; Utility: 3

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated, Overwhelming -1)

Defense: 7; Soak: 7; Resolve: 3

Essence: 1; Willpower: 6

Health: 7; Stagger Threshold: 3+

Powers

Two Heads (passive): Each round, the buck-ogre may either cut ahead or launch an extra attack after all other characters have acted. If a protagonist Wounds the buck-ogre and inflicts a maimed Wound, she may cut one of its heads off, permanently disabling this Power.

Bonebreaker (1 Momentum, reflexive): When it inflicts a Wound, the buck-ogre may make it a “disabled arm” or “disabled leg” Wound.

Gargoyle

Gargoyles are intelligent statues brought to life by the Wyld and given a taste for meat. When struck by direct sunlight, they become simple stone again, but at nightfall may once more move and think.

Aptitudes: Rend and devour, fly, stalk, toughness, blend in, stone-carving, fight back

Expertise: 6; Utility: 3

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; Soak: 9; Resolve: 3

Essence: 1; Willpower: 4

Health: 7; Stagger Threshold: 2+

Powers

Wings (passive): The gargoyle can fly.

Gryphon

The Fair Folk prize these ferocious beasts as both steeds and weapons, riding them on the hunt or unleashing them to break enemy lines as weapons of war.

Aptitudes: Strike, swoop, fly, fight, sharp senses, toughness

Expertise: 8; Utility: 2

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; Soak: 7; Resolve: 4

Essence: 1; Willpower: 8

Health: 9; Stagger Threshold: 3+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the gryphon may cut ahead for free. At the beginning of a conflict, it contributes +1 Momentum unless it was ambushed.

Shock Strike (passive): When the gryphon moves into a new zone and attacks a target there, it gains +3 Base Damage.

Swift Killer (passive): Once per battle, when the gryphon uses a move action it may move two zones.

Wings (passive): The gryphon can fly.

Manticore

When a lion devours a mortal who has been slain by a scorpion's sting, the Wyld sometimes transforms it into one of these nightmares: a beast with the body of a lion, the fanged head of a human, and a scorpion's tail.

Aptitudes: Hunt, attack, stalk, sharp senses, toughness

Expertise: 7; Utility: 1

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 8; Soak: 6; Resolve: 4

Essence: 1; Willpower: 8

Health: 8; Stagger Threshold: 2+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the manticore may cut ahead for free. At the beginning of a conflict, it contributes +1 Momentum unless it was ambushed.

Manticore Venom (1 Momentum, reflexive): When the manticore damages a target with an attack, it may also dose that target with demon venom (see p. XX). If the manticore suffers a maiming Wound, its tail may be severed, permanently disabling this Power.

Swift Killer (passive): Once per battle, when the manticore uses a move action it may move two zones.

Wee Folk

These diminutive beings are the least minions of the Fair Folk, who craft them from leftover dreams and twists of glamour. The typical wee folk are tiny men in tiny armor, or diminutive servants in colorful livery. Wee folk in the North are often animate winds, statues of unmelting ice, or little winged people. In the East, they are animate wooden statues, small monkeys, humanoid lizards, or child-shaped plants. In the South, they take the form of creatures of living fire, carved gemstones figures, and tiny lions or lion-headed beings. In the West, Wee Folk are formed of living water, or are humanoid fish or bipedal frogs.

Aptitudes: Attack with Wyld-shot, entertain, perform chores

Expertise: 4; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 4 (lacerated)

Defense: 5; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 2

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 2

Health: 5; **Stagger Threshold:** 1+

Powers

Slinger (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to one zone away.

Carnivorous Moth

With wingspans of almost a dozen feet, carnivorous moths can threaten an entire Guild caravan when the insects gather in great feeding flocks. Although their shining wings appear to be made from beautiful paper-thin slabs of translucent ice, the moths are as horrific as they are dangerous. Their heads are bleached human skulls surmounted by cabbage-sized compound eyes. Even worse, their teeth are all several inches long and as sharp as a Cataphract's glass blade. These beasts have unnaturally flexible necks and can open their mouths wide enough to swallow a human head. Like their smaller kin, they have six legs, but each leg ends in a skeletal human hand with two-inch-long claws. While they are occasionally solitary hunters, carnivorous moths most often travel in packs of between half a dozen and 20.

Aptitudes: Devour, fly, awareness, evasion

Expertise: 9; **Utility:** 1

Base Damage: 6 (mauled)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 4

Health: 8; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

The following powers are permanently active:

Vorpall Fangs (1 Momentum, reflexive): When the carnivorous moth inflicts a Wound, it may make it into a disabled arm, disabled leg, or maimed Wound, severing the affected body part.

Wings (passive): The carnivorous moth can fly.

Spirits

Spirits broadly divide into four distinct branches: gods, elementals, demons, and ghosts.

Gods

Gods represent distinct facets of the world. The oldest date back to the dawn of Creation and were fashioned by those who shaped the world. Others are newer, having arisen from the needs of Creation in response to conceptual gaps in its evolution.

A god is closely tied to her domain. If it is mighty, so is she. Gods are custodians, recorders, and overseers. While a god may be harmed by injuring her domain, the converse is not true. To slay the river god is not to slay the river.

In theory, gods are supposed to document the state of their domain, do basic maintenance to ensure that it functions according to its purpose in the world, and nothing more unless extraordinary labor is demanded of them by Heaven. In practice, no one has enforced the laws of divinity since the end of the First Age. Gods are covetous of worship, for it empowers them and gives them great pleasure, and so most gods are petty and greedy beings who extort mortals for ceaseless veneration unless some other, more fearsome supernatural force checks their ambitions, such as a more powerful god or a monastery of Immaculate monks.

Most gods have a *sanctum*, a special dimensional pocket carved into the substance of the world. Only dematerialized beings and those employing certain forms of specialized magic can perceive the entrance to a spirit sanctum. Beyond that entry-point, a sanctum is generally a lavish home or splendid natural landscape reflecting its owner's nature. A river-god might have a sumptuously appointed underwater cavern, while a murder-god's sanctum would be a killer's lair decorated with grisly trophies.

The following Powers are often found on divine antagonists:

Immaterial (passive): The god is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The god makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its sanctum at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene.

Domain Manipulation Scenario (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The god makes an Expertise roll to evoke a natural miracle from its domain; the difficulty is based upon the outlandishness of the desired miracle. Natural miracles are things that it would make sense for the domain to do. If the domain is a river, then it might flood its banks or offer up an abundance of fish. If the domain is a field, it might become free of pests or offer a bountiful harvest. If the domain is a city, all the shops might be closed, but the city could not be made invisible or commanded to fly, for that is not the way of cities.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Willpower, simple action): The god can sense Essence, identifying it by flavor and intensity of power. It can roll Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. This power always has a particular method to it — it's never as simple as just looking at someone. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against a variable difficulty, 6 for the vast majority of spirits. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Death and Gods

Gods are immortal. Their existence is sustained by their incorporation into the Celestial Bureaucracy of Heaven. Some weeks or months after being slain, a god reforms within her sanctum or her Heavenly residence, often drastically weakened by the experience. Certain dread miracles of the Chosen may permanently slay gods, and gods are capable of slaying one another permanently by devouring the Essence of a fallen divinity. A deiphage grows slightly stronger through such blasphemous, cannibal repasts.

Field Guardian

These stolid divinities dwell within farmlands, and are often the only representative of the supernatural world a peasant will ever encounter.

A field guardian's sanctum is always located in a corner of the field that is left unharvested in its honor. The interior is made of the field's product, with walls of woven wheat or fine endless rows of maize.

Aptitudes: Give agricultural advice, protect the fields, awareness, hardiness

Expertise: 7; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (bruised or lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 6

Health: 9; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Good Earth Resilience (passive): When standing upon the land of its field, the god's soak increases by +1.

Immaterial (passive): The god is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Domain Manipulation Scenario (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The god makes an Expertise roll to manipulate the fecundity and state of health of its fields. A difficulty 9 roll that generates three successes allows the god to bring in a full harvest with a day's labor all by itself, but field guardians are loathe to perform this particular miracle.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The god makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its sanctum at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Willpower, simple action): The god can sense the Essence of anyone whose blood falls upon the soil of its fields, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Principle of Motion (1 Momentum, reflexive): The god can make one extra attack at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Storm Mother

These bitter, hideous gods of turbulent seas have done a very great deal to define the realities of sailing in Creation.

Storm mothers dwell in modest, otherworldly estates located in wrecked ships at the bottom of the sea.

Aptitudes: Make demands, issue threats, scrutinize interlopers, toughness, swim, do battle

Expertise: 8; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 8

Health: 10; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Divine Ban (passive): When acting against a woman with red hair, the god must always roll Utility rather than Expertise. None of her Charms can be used to directly target a woman with red hair.

Immaterial (passive): The god is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Domain Manipulation Scenario (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The god makes an Expertise roll to manipulate tides, currents, and the weather at sea. Storm mothers find

it much easier to stir up violent storms (difficulty 6) than to calm violent weather (difficulty 8). The storm mother can call down lightning as an attack with this Power against anyone within four zones, so long as they're under an open, storming sky; its Base Damage is 9 and it can inflict dazed or burned Wounds.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The god makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its sanctum at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Willpower, simple action): The god can sense the Essence of anyone whose shadow falls upon her waters, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Ahlat, Southern God of War and Cattle

The principal god of Harborhead is also the premiere war-god of the South, and thus one of Creation's most fearsome combatants.

Ahlat has no sanctum, and instead lives in a palatial feasting-hall in Heaven.

Aptitudes: Battle, battlefield leadership, tactics and strategy, animal husbandry, force of personality, divine etiquette, awareness, resilience

Expertise: 15; **Utility:** 5

Base Damage: 10 (lacerated, Piercing -1)

Defense: 9; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 7

Essence: 7; **Willpower:** 10

Health: 30; **Stagger Threshold:** 5+

Powers

Appetite for Battle (passive): Whenever Ahlat is Staggered, generate +1 Momentum.

Boundless Stride (passive): So long as he is not Staggered, at the end of each of his turns, the god may reflexively move into an adjacent zone, even if he was struck before his turn or has already used a move action.

Exquisite Fighter (passive): Once per scene, the war god may inflict one of the following Wounds at no cost rather than lacerated: blinded, dazed, disabled arm, disabled leg, or maimed. When he has 15 or fewer Health remaining, mauled also becomes available. This power resets and can be used again each time the god is Staggered.

Immaterial (passive): The god is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It

may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Limitless Might (passive): No grapple-type effect, such as Dragon Coil Technique, can affect Ahlat for more than a single round.

Sovereign Principle of Motion (passive): The god always acts first in each round unless Staggered or pre-empted by another power that provides right of first action, such as Thunderclap Rush Attack. Each time the god is Staggered or incapacitates a worthy foe, he gains an additional turn per round for the rest of the scene, providing him with an extra swift action and simple action. Ahlat only considers the Exalted, non-Exalted supernatural beings with Essence 3+, or armies of at least Size 3 to be worthy foes.

War God's Valor (passive): The god is unconditionally immune to any magical effect that would cause him to feel fear.

All-Out Effort (1 Momentum, reflexive): The god's attacks this round gain Overwhelming (-1). This power is only available when Ahlat has already suffered a Wound during the scene.

Blazing Spear (1 Momentum, reflexive): The god's attacks this round inflict Aggravated damage (-2).

Blessing of War (2 Momentum, reflexive): The god may bless a group with perfect morale for the rest of the scene, so long as they follow him in battle.

Divine Prowess (1 Momentum, reflexive): The god ignores the rule of 1s on all Expertise rolls until he is next staggered.

Domain Manipulation Scenario (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The god uses an Expertise action to manipulate the health and behavior of cattle or the events of a conflict or war within the South.

Horizon Toss (1 Momentum, simple action): The god uses an action to make an attack with +2 Base Damage. If it succeeds, the target is picked up and hurled up to three zones away where she lands prone. If this attack Staggers the target, she is also disarmed in the course of the attack, her weapon left at Ahlat's feet.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The god makes a difficulty 9 Expertise action to teleport to his estate in Yu-Shan at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene.

Mantle of War (1 Momentum, reflexive): The god increases his base damage and soak by +2 until he is next staggered.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Willpower, simple action): The god can sense the Essence of anyone who does battle with him or anyone fighting in his name, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 8. Success causes

Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Mighty Guard (1 Momentum, reflexive): The god may remove one of the following qualities from all attacks directed against him for the rest of the round: Overwhelming, Aggravated, or Piercing. Mighty Guard can be activated more than once per round to increase its coverage, if Ahlat has the Momentum to spare.

Power Strike (1 Momentum, reflexive): Anyone damaged by one or more of the god's attacks this round suffers a -3 penalty all actions he takes on his next turn as his body reels from the terrible impact of Ahlat's blow.

Sovereign Defense (2 Momentum, reflexive): Once per scene, Ahlat may cause a single attack of which he is aware to do no more than one point of damage to him. This power resets and becomes available again each time he is Staggered.

War God's Rage (2 Momentum, reflexive): The god may instantly end the Staggered state upon himself without waiting for it to expire normally.

War God's Spear (1 Momentum, simple action): The god hurls his spear at a foe up to 10 zones away. If it strikes true, the attack increases its Base Damage by +5 and knocks its target prone. This reduces the Base Damage of the rest of the god's attacks for the rest of the round to 6 (bruised) as he is forced to lay about with his fists. The spear infallibly returns to his grip at the beginning of the next round, returning his Base Damage to its normal rating.

Elementals

Ancient representatives of the raw matter of Creation itself, elementals arise from the natural processes of the world and are meant to act as its menial custodians. They cycle elemental Essence through Creation to ensure that physical existence remains in balanced equilibrium. Where the elementals become lax or disordered, natural disasters soon follow due to scarcity or overabundance of different flows of elemental Essence.

Elementals are physical beings who live within the world. They are the coarsest of spirits, and while some are as sophisticated as any god, many are quite animalistic. An elemental who survives and thrives over a span of centuries may eventually grow powerful enough to assume the dragon-shape, the only form capable of expressing the splendor of truly immense elemental power. While gods treat lesser elementals as menial drudges, they accord those who begin to embody the dragon-form with a degree of respect; to do otherwise is exceedingly unwise, for such elementals are almost unfailingly very mighty in battle.

The following Powers are often found on elemental antagonists.

Elemental Mastery (passive): The elemental is immune to damaging manifestations of its governing element. It may also move through manifestations of that element without recourse to complex movement. Finally, the elemental may exercise limited control of manifestations of its native element by using a simple action and making an Expertise roll whose difficulty is set by the complexity and unnaturalness of what it wants its element to do. Making water flow in a certain way or fire spread energetically to a new surface is difficulty 6, but creating sculptures out of either substance would be difficulty 8.

Measure the Wind (1 Willpower, simple action): The elemental can sense Essence, identifying it by flavor and intensity of power. It can roll Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-

user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. This power always has a particular method to it — it's never as simple as just looking at someone. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against a variable difficulty, 6 in the case of most spirits. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Dematerialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the elemental becomes invisible, inaudible, and intangible. It remains dematerialized until it reflexively chooses to materialize once again, which it does at the end of the round.

Death and Elementals

Elementals are ageless, but mortal. If slain, their Essence disperses back into the natural flows of the world, and eventually gives rise to new elementals.

Huraka

These bear-like elementals serve the Wind Masters. The Wind Masters become wroth and vengeful against those who abuse their servants or allow them to come to harm.

Aptitudes: Fighting, feats of strength, carrying out orders, toughness, flight

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 10; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Elemental Mastery (passive): The elemental is immune to damaging manifestations of its governing element. It may also move through manifestations of that element without recourse to complex movement. Finally, the elemental may exercise limited control of manifestations of its native element by using a simple action and making an Expertise roll whose difficulty is set by the complexity and unnaturalness of what it wants its element to do. Making water flow in a certain way or fire spread energetically to a new surface is difficulty 6, but creating sculptures out of either substance would be difficulty 8.

Flight (passive): By stirring the winds, the huraka can fly.

Breath of the Huraka (1 Willpower, simple action): Anyone the huraka breathes upon becomes incapable of intentional deceit for the rest of the scene, either by lying, presenting themselves as something they are not, or concealment. A huraka's breath captured in a jar and looked through will reveal illusions and similar disguises (such as a Sidereal's Resplendent Destiny) for what they are.

Dematerialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the elemental becomes invisible, inaudible, and intangible. It remains dematerialized until it reflexively chooses to materialize once again, which it does at the end of the round.

Elemental Aegis (1 Momentum, reflexive): The elemental hardens the air around itself, increasing its soak by +2 for the rest of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Willpower, simple action): The elemental can sense the Essence of anyone who attempts to lie to it, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Principle of Motion (1 Momentum, reflexive): The elemental can make one extra attack at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Jokun

Stolid, granite-boned warriors and bodyguards of the earth elemental courts.

Aptitudes: Battle, etiquette, ethics, feats of strength, toughness, standing guard

Expertise: 7; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 8 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 4

Health: 12; **Stagger Threshold:** 5+

Powers

Elemental Mastery (passive): The elemental is immune to damaging manifestations of its governing element. It may also move through manifestations of that element without recourse to complex movement. Finally, the elemental may exercise limited control of manifestations of its native element by using a simple action and making an Expertise roll whose difficulty is set by the complexity and unnaturalness of what it wants its element to do. Making water flow in a certain way or fire spread energetically to a new surface is difficulty 6, but creating sculptures out of either substance would be difficulty 8.

Elemental Rejuvenation (passive): While in contact with bare earth or stone, the elemental heals one non-aggravated damage per turn.

Granite Bones (passive): The jokun is immune to Piercing effects.

Dematerialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the elemental becomes invisible, inaudible, and intangible. It remains dematerialized until it reflexively chooses to materialize once again, which it does at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Willpower, simple action): The elemental can sense the Essence of anyone it defends from harm with a protect action, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success causes

Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Mud Form (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The jokun can transform into an oozing shape made of muddy oil and squeeze through any soil that isn't solid rock at the speed of a galloping horse. In this state the jokun has an Expertise pool of 2, a Base Damage of 3, Defense 9, Soak 9, and cannot Block. It takes several hours to return to its normal form.

Stalwart Guardian (1 Momentum, reflexive): The jokun reflexively protects another character in the same zone this round.

Wood Spider

Malicious tricksters who delight in leading humans to their doom.

Aptitudes: Lies, climbing, stealth, awareness, reading intentions

Expertise: 6; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 4 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 2

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 9; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Elemental Mastery (passive): The elemental is immune to damaging manifestations of its governing element. It may also move through manifestations of that element without recourse to complex movement. Finally, the elemental may exercise limited control of manifestations of its native element by using a simple action and making an Expertise roll whose difficulty is set by the complexity and unnaturalness of what it wants its element to do. Making water flow in a certain way or fire spread energetically to a new surface is difficulty 6, but creating sculptures out of either substance would be difficulty 8.

Enshroud (passive): The wood spider adds +2 dice to its stealth pool when hiding in a wooded area or a place mostly made of wood.

Envenomed Words (passive): The wood spider spins deceptions that are exceedingly difficult to detect. Characters attempting to read its motives must discard the first two successes they roll; if such an attempt fails, the wood spider seems highly trustworthy.

Scuttling (passive): The wood spider may climb sheer surfaces and even cling to ceilings without complex movement.

Dematerialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the elemental becomes invisible, inaudible, and intangible. It remains dematerialized until it reflexively chooses to materialize once again, which it does at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Willpower, simple action): The elemental can sense the Essence of anyone who spends one hour or more in conversation with it, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be

something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Soul Venom (1 Momentum, reflexive): When the elemental damages an opponent, it may also dose them with arrow frog poison (see p. XX).

Demons

Many and manifold are the denizens of Hell, forming the ranks of demonkind. The least of their number are the servant-children of the Demon Princes who comprise and rule over the substance of Hell, while the potentates above them are dread pantheons expressing the complex and multifaceted souls of the Yozis themselves.

The following Powers are often found on Demon antagonists:

Immaterial (passive): The demon is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The demon makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its summoner's side at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene, and only while the demon is bound to a summoner.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Willpower, simple action): The demon can sense Essence, identifying it by flavor and intensity of power. The demon can roll Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. This power always has a particular method to it — it's never as simple as just looking at someone. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against a variable difficulty, 6 in the case of most spirits. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Death and Demons

Second and Third Circle demons reform in Hell at some point after their demise, much as with gods. Demons of the First Circle usually perish forever when slain, their Essence slowly dissipating into the currents of Creation or the digestive processes of the Demon City, unless sustained by the worship of a cult, which is sufficient to draw them back together after death.

Agata, the Beauteous Wasp

A First Circle demon. Jeweled, mercurial, beautiful, deadly. These demons are summoned to serve as flying steeds for sorcerers.

Aptitudes: Battle, senses, evasion, fly, express emotion, dazzle with beauty

Expertise: 7; Utility: 4

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; Soak: 6; Resolve: 4

Essence: 2; Willpower: 6

Health: 9; Stagger Threshold: 3+

Powers

Flight (passive): The demon is capable of moving by flight.

Heartrending Beauty (passive): Anyone who slays an agata must make a Willpower roll at difficulty 9 or else gain the megrims Derangement (see p. XX) for the rest of the story.

Immaterial (passive): The demon is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Mounted Fighter (passive): The antagonist can also use a swift action to move after using his simple action, rather than only before, as can anyone riding into battle upon it. A sorcerer riding upon a bound agata may command its movements. The demon can carry up to two riders.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The demon makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its summoner's side at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene, and only while the demon is bound to a summoner.

Jeweled Flash (1 Momentum): During the current round, the wasp may use any manner of swift action even if it or its rider are struck before its turn, and may move two range bands rather than one if it uses a move action.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): A scintillating flash of rainbow light coalesces into the form of a glittering, beautiful insect. At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Momentum or Willpower, simple action): The demon can sense the Essence of anyone who climbs upon its back, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Principle of Motion (1 Momentum, reflexive): The demon can make one extra attack at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Erymanthus, the Blood-Ape

A First Circle demon. Violent, brutish, dumb, and hungry. These are the preferred demonic muscle of sorcerers the world over.

Aptitudes: Kill, climb, chase, resist harm, awareness, feats of strength

Expertise: 8; Utility: 4

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; Soak: 6; Resolve: 4

Essence: 2; Willpower: 4

Health: 11; Stagger Threshold: 3+

Powers

Immaterial (passive): The demon is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Demonic Resilience (1 Momentum, reflexive): The demon fortifies itself with Essence, increasing its soak by +2 until the end of the round.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The demon makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its summoner's side at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene, and only while the demon is bound to a summoner.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): Bloody, stinking ropes of meat lash themselves together into a physical body. At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The demon can sense the Essence of anyone whose blood it tastes, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Principle of Motion (1 Momentum, reflexive): The demon can make one extra attack at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Shattering Roar (1 Momentum, simple action): The blood-ape unleashes a supernaturally powerful roar, shattering the bones of its target. Roll Expertise as an attack against a target up to one zone away, with a base damage of 10 (lacerated). This attack is Overwhelming (-1) and Piercing (-1).

Neomah, the Maker of Flesh

A First Circle demon. The courtesans of the Demon City conduct their trade in exchange for the flesh of their clients. When they have gathered enough material — their preferred payment is in the seed of men and menses of women — they ascend to the top of their nautilus-horn tower, where a mystic fire hangs in the air, and there forge an infant the likes of which the world has not seen before.

Aptitudes: Sensual amusements, negotiations, awareness, social influence, weave flesh

Expertise: 8; Utility: 4

Base Damage: 3 (lacerated)

Defense: 5; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 2

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 6

Health: 10; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

Create Tower (passive): Upon arriving in an area, the neomah breathes brass and fire, spinning it into a great nautilus-horn tower. Within the Demon City, it is customary to lick a nugget of tin before spinning the doors and windows; only tin keeps the passion morays out. The demon conducts its business within this tower; when it has woven a child, it unpacks the tower back into its throat and moves on.

Expressive (passive): The demon can always conduct negotiations with a client through physical contact and emotive body language, regardless of language barriers.

Flesh Weaving (passive): The neomah may weave the collected flesh that it gathers from its clients into new life, casting the collected material into a hanging fire within its tower and thence creating an infant of many parents and uncanny nature: a unique being the likes of which has never existed before. Alternately, under special commission or when bound by a sorcerer, the neomah may be induced to craft a baby to meet a specific commission. Most often this is used as a means for infertile or same-sex couples within the Scarlet Dynasty to conceive children and meet their social obligations, but neomah introduce many possibilities: for incorporating sorcerers into royal bloodlines despite anatomical challenges; for inducting the blood of the dragons or of divinities (or demons) into a mortal lineage; and many other potentialities besides. Most Dragon-Blooded believe that demonic interference in childbearing reduces the likelihood of Exaltation and so frown on the practice, but empirical research on the topic has never been conducted to rigorous standards.

Immaterial (passive): The demon is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Universal Sexual Appeal (passive): The neomah may reshape its flesh to appeal to any manner of sexual appetite. The demon is always identifiable as a neomah, but may reflect a client or summoner's desire by adopting whatever sexual characteristics they consider ideal.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The demon makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its summoner's side at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene, and only while the demon is bound to a summoner.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): A dancing, unfolding flame resolves into the long limbs and sinuous beauty of the neomah. At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The demon can sense the Essence of anyone it sexually services, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed

the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 6. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Spit Flames (1 Momentum, simple action): The antagonist can target an enemy up to two zones away. This attack is made with the demon's Expertise pool, has Base Damage 6, and inflicts burned Wounds.

Alveua, Keeper of the Forge of Night

Expressive soul of That Which Calls to Shadows. A Second Circle demon. Alveua is detailed on pages 95-96 of **Games of Divinity**.

Aptitudes: Battle, expression, forging, detecting things in darkness, hardiness

Expertise: 13; **Utility:** 5

Base Damage: 9 (mauled)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 7; **Willpower:** 9

Health: 18; **Stagger Threshold:** 5+

Powers

Beloved of Night (passive): Alveua can see in the dark and never takes any penalties for working in darkness. When exposed to the direct light of the sun or moon, Alveua uses her Utility pool for forging rather than her Expertise.

Forge of Souls (passive): Alveua may forge a willing sacrifice into a splendid work of metal. Whatever she creates in some way serves the sacrifice's purpose and desires, granting it a strange destiny that impels it toward the completion of the dreams of the soul forged into it. This grants no distinct mechanical advantages, but destiny bends strangely around such objects in a fashion similar to Sidereal Astrology.

Iron Soul (passive): Whenever Alveua suffers a Wound, she becomes immune to any further damage until the end of the round in which she was Wounded.

Immaterial (passive): The demon is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Soulcraft (passive): Alveua serves as a powerful Means (granting two additional rolls) toward any sorcerous working that would benefit from the assistance of a demon able to forge peerlessly excellent works of metal, particularly from souls. She may also greatly assist in artifact-crafting and Manse-construction projects which would benefit from such expertise, particularly when working with soulsteel.

Vengeful Crickets (passive): Anyone who harms Alveua is beset by insects for a year and a day after. They do not flock from far and wide to exact revenge, thankfully, but any insects who happen to encounter the assailant instinctively hate him and will go out of their way to sting or bite him.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The demon makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its summoner's side at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene, and only while the demon is bound to a summoner.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): A ringing of iron-on-steel resounds in the air as, in several pulses, white-hot iron appears and rapidly cools into the flesh and blood and armor of Alveua. Alveua cannot use this power in the direct light of the sun or moon. At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The demon can sense the Essence of anyone who agrees to lay upon her forge, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 7. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Superior Principle of Motion (1 Mote, reflexive): The demon can make two extra attacks at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted. This power can't be used two rounds in a row.

Lucien, the Guardian of Sleep

Expressive soul of the End of All Wisdom. A Second Circle demon. Lucien is detailed on page 101 of **Games of Divinity**.

Aptitudes: Battle, intrigue, awareness, observation, tracking, stealth, pursuit, hardiness, nimbleness

Expertise: 13; **Utility:** 7

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 8; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 6

Essence: 6; **Willpower:** 10

Health: 16; **Stagger Threshold:** 5+

Powers

Guardian of Sleep (passive): When targeted by any magic *other* than the spell: Demon of the Second Circle that would transform, forcibly transport, control, mutilate, or instantly obliterate the demon's mind, body, spirit, or place in the world, Lucien may reflexively make a difficulty 8 Essence roll. Success negates the effect and renders Lucien immune to it for the rest of the story. Standard attacks and social interaction cannot trigger this power. Additionally, whenever Lucien Staggers or incapacitates someone disturbing the rest of the mighty, he generates +1 additional Momentum.

Harrow the Mind (passive): The demon may use a simple action to craft harrowing illusions depicting the ill omens and dooms that will befall those who persist in disturbing the mighty by

rolling his Expertise against difficulty 5. In order to realize these are illusions, a character must roll more successes than Lucien on a difficulty 6 Willpower roll.

Immaterial (passive): The demon is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Ivory Blades (passive): Other characters may wield Lucien's knives. They are Melee weapons (Dexterity, base damage 7, lacerated, nimble) and with each attack the Phantom Blade or String-Severing Blade powers may be used, but upon making each attack, any wielder other than Lucien must first make a reflexive Essence roll against difficulty 8. If the roll fails, the knife turns in her hand and the attack she makes is directed against herself.

Lucien's Resolve (passive): While Lucien is Staggered, no attack may inflict more than a single level of damage against him. Once per scene, when Lucien Wounds a target, he may inflict a mauled Wound.

Shapeshifter (passive): The demon may wear any face or any form to spy upon or draw close to those who might disturb the rest of the great and the mighty. It always returns to its own form when it approaches with intent to kill.

Throwing Blades (passive): The demon may attack opponents up to one zone away.

Unerring Pursuit (passive): If someone's actions disturb the rest of the mighty, or if the one who has bound Lucien commands him to locate a person, he may track them infallibly. If they are impossible to track, then the two powers cancel one another out and he must track them using his merely superlative rather than transcendently perfect tracking skills.

Fade Like Dreams (1 Momentum, reflexive): Until the end of the scene or he is next Staggered, whichever comes first, Lucien gains +2 Defense, and once per turn he may respond to an attack directed against him, after it resolves, by reflexively moving into an adjacent zone.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The demon makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its summoner's side at the end of the round, or else to a random point within a mile of someone he knows to be troubling the rest of the mighty. This power can only be used once per scene, and only while the demon is bound to a summoner.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): One of any number of fell omens makes itself known, a fell wind blows, and Lucien winds into being from its depths. At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The demon can sense the Essence of anyone whose actions disturb some great and powerful being, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 8. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Phantom Blade (1 Momentum, reflexive): Lucien's attacks this round inflict Aggravated damage (-2), and also gain Overwhelming (-1). Used by a protagonist, this power costs 1 Mote or 1 Willpower.

String-Severing Blade (1 Momentum, reflexive): One of Lucien's attacks this round does not inflict damage. Instead, if it strikes, it cuts away the target's place in the world. He loses one dot of a social Background, or else someone of Lucien's choosing ceases to harbor a positive Intimacy toward him, wherever they might be; or a smattering of random people in places where the target often visits or where he is known by reputation develop a negative Intimacy toward him. Used by a protagonist, this power costs 1 Mote or 1 Willpower.

Urgent Principle of Motion (1 Momentum, reflexive): The demon can make two extra attacks at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted. If fighting someone who is disturbing the rest of the mighty, he can make three extra attacks instead.

Octavian, the Living Tower

Defining soul of the Ravine of Whispers. A Second Circle demon. Octavian is detailed on pages 103-104 of **Games of Divinity**.

Aptitudes: Battle, strategy, athletics, hardiness, quick wits, detecting ambushes, wasp riding

Expertise: 14 (19); **Utility:** 6

Base Damage: 10 (Overwhelming -1)

Defense: 9; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 6

Essence: 7; **Willpower:** 10

Health: 25; **Stagger Threshold:** 7+

Powers

Command the Beasts (passive): Octavian may command any ordinary four-legged beast which walks upon the ground or burrows beneath it, and it will obey him.

Damaskenos (passive): When summoned forth from Hell, Octavian is always accompanied by an unusually large agata (see p. XX) named Damaskenos, which he rides into battle. If he is bound to a sorcerer's will, so too is Damaskenos.

Despised of the Earth (passive): Octavian's touch disgusts and despoils the land. Where he treads, the ground issues forth small pebbles the color of tears. Earth elementals, gods closely associated with the earth and the soil, and Earth Aspect Dragon-Blooded develop a temporary Intimacy of loathing toward him that lasts only while in his immediate presence.

Immaterial (passive): The demon is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Infernal Principle of Motion (passive): The demon always acts first unless pre-empted by another power that provides right of first action. He takes five full turns every round. Each time Octavian is Staggered, the number of turns he takes each round for the rest of the scene is reduced by one, to a minimum of one.

Obliterating Blow (passive): When striking a Staggered opponent, Octavian inflicts Aggravated damage (-3).

True Power (passive): The first time in a scene Octavian suffers a Wound, he gains +7 Temporary Health and his next use of Wrath of the Living Tower costs 0 Momentum.

Wasp-Mounted Fighter (passive): When mounted on Damaskenos, Octavian can also use a swift action to move after using his simple action, rather than only before.

Ear Cuff (1 Momentum, simple action): The demon delivers a bare-handed blow to an opponent's ear with one of its attacks, fist dripping with accursed black oil. This attack's Base Damage is 6 (dazed), and if it strikes the target, they are deafened for one day.

Eye Punch (1 Momentum, simple action): The demon delivers a bare-handed blow to an opponent's eye with one of its attacks, fist dripping with accursed black oil. This attack's Base Damage is 6 (blinded), and if it strikes its target, they suffer a -3 penalty to their next simple action which depends on sight.

Forehead Strike (1 Momentum, simple action): The demon delivers a bare-handed blow to an opponent's forehead with one of its attacks, fist dripping with accursed black oil. This attack's base damage is 6 (bruised or dazed), and if it strikes the target, they lose all of their memories of the last day.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The demon makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its summoner's side at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene, and only while the demon is bound to a summoner.

Infernal Power (1 Momentum, reflexive): The demon may use the Expertise pool listed in parentheses until the end of the scene or until Staggered, whichever comes first.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): Black oil bubbles up from the weeping earth, and from its foul depths rises the Living Tower. At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The demon can sense the Essence of anyone who accepts his formal challenge to battle, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 7. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Might of the Living Tower (1 Momentum, reflexive): Octavian's soak increases by +2 during the current round. This power does not function while Staggered.

Unleashed Fury of the Quarter-Prince (1 Momentum, reflexive): During the current round, Octavian's Infernal Principle of Motion grants one more turn than it normally would. This power does not function while Staggered.

Wrath of the Living Tower (1 Momentum, reflexive): During the current round, Octavian's attacks gain Overwhelming (-2) and Piercing (-1).

Munaxes, the Ravine of Whispers

Fourth soul of She Who Lives in Her Name. A Third Circle demon. Munaxes is detailed on page 94 of **Games of Divinity**.

Aptitudes: Secrets, intrigue, resolve, resilience, awareness, socializing, swallowing enemies

Expertise: 18; **Utility:** 8

Base Damage: 9 (Overwhelming –1)

Defense: 9; **Soak:** 9; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 8; **Willpower:** 10

Health: 36; **Stagger Threshold:** 7+

Powers

Crawling Chasm (passive): Munaxes moves very slowly. She is effectively immobile in combat, and may only move at a rate of fifteen miles per day.

Demon Chasm (passive): Munaxes is a rift in the earth five zones wide, composing an entire sector unto herself. This rift is infinitely deep. Anything that falls into her will fall forever. Her central fissure is surrounded by a vast chasm a mile across, and comprises a full district. She may only be fought from the edge of her central rift, or within the rift itself; all other attacks simply strike at the fractured earth without harming Munaxes. Even while materialized, she must be targeted with attacks capable of harming dematerialized beings, or else only dirt and stone are disturbed, and the fundamental substance of Munaxes is left unharmed. No matter what sort of Wound an attack would normally inflict, Munaxes can only suffer “dazed” wounds.

Immaterial (passive): The demon is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. It is invisible, inaudible, and intangible in this state. It may enter spirit sanctums freely while dematerialized. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Retrieve Whispers (passive): The demon hears and remembers every ill-spoken word ever uttered, and may cause them to echo from her depths in response to a summoner’s command.

Swallow Malice (passive): When targeted by any magic *other* than the spell: Demon of the Third Circle that would transform, forcibly transport, control, mutilate, or instantly obliterate the demon’s mind, body, spirit, or place in the world, she may reflexively make a difficulty 7 Essence roll. Success negates the effect and conjures the attacker to the precipice of Munaxes’s maw. Standard attacks and social interaction cannot trigger this power.

Transcendental Principle of Motion (passive): The demon can attack everyone within a mile of its location in the same fashion that a group attacks everyone within a targeted zone, causing spears of stone to emerge from the buckling earth, cracks to open and snap shut on the unwary, and rolling stones to knock targets about. When directed at a group, her attacks double their Base Damage. Munaxes may exempt anyone she chooses from these attacks.

Approximate Knowledge of Everything (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): Munaxes may target anyone within or above her infinite depths and may either spit him out unharmed onto the edge of her central ravine, or else implant into his mind every piece of information that has ever been whispered or declared under ill-starred circumstances in the

history of the cosmos. If she subjects him to the latter treatment, the target must make a Willpower roll against difficulty 9 and generate at least three successes. If he fails to do so, he gains a Derangement that renders him permanently unable to think about anything other than the indecipherable secrets of Munaxes, inflicting a –3 dice penalty on all actions unrelated to futile attempts to share or unravel this Gordian Knot of useless and accursed wisdom.

Draw In (1 Momentum, reflexive): Anyone struck by one of the demon's attacks this round is drawn two zones toward its central rift and knocked prone. Twenty zones encompass the span between the border of the chasm around Munaxes and her central rift. Anyone knocked over the edge of the rift must succeed at a difficulty 9 (Dexterity + Athletics) roll to grab hold of something in order to avoid going over the edge.

Hurry Home (limited): The demon makes a difficulty 9 Expertise roll to teleport to its summoner's side at the end of the round. This power can only be used once per scene, and only while the demon is bound to a summoner.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): The earth cracks and shatters, forming a titanic chasm a mile wide. This chasm is Munaxes, the Ravine of Whispers. At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round.

Measure the Wind (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The demon can sense the Essence of anyone who peers into her depths, or who speaks iniquitous words, rolling Expertise to determine if the subject is an Essence-user, and if so, what sort of being he is. The more successes gained, the more detailed the information will be. If the target is utilizing a supernatural disguise such as a Resplendent Destiny or the Solar Charm Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise to pretend to be something they are not, they must make an Essence roll against difficulty 8. Success causes Measure the Wind to report that they are what they are pretending to be, rather than what they truly are.

Stifle Speech (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The demon may enchant a particular piece of gossip or slander so that anywhere it is uttered, it is heard not: she instantly swallows the accursed words, making them impossible to speak. This enchantment lasts for as long as the demon wishes it to. She is not free to enshroud any speech she pleases: only statements that would hurt a particular being's reputation or social standing or relationships. Munaxes is utterly disinterested in using this capability for anyone's benefit, and will only do so if commanded by her summoner.

World Whale Keening (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The demon makes an Expertise roll against difficulty 7 and issues a horrendous, ear-splitting, bone-cracking, sky-shredding scream. Everyone at the edge of her central ravine is subjected to a one-time hazard at difficulty 8, damage (successes rolled), mauled, aggravated. Everyone within a mile beyond is subject to the same hazard, but its damage is not aggravated. Beyond that point, everyone within three miles is subjected to the hazard, but with its damage cut in half (round up). This power is equally effective against materialized and dematerialized targets.

The Unquiet

The restless dead are a sadly common threat to the living of Creation, from hungry ghosts to flesh-devouring zombies.

The following Powers are often found on Unquiet antagonists.

Apparition (passive): Nearly all ghosts have this power. They may become visible and audible within Creation for a few minutes, but not tangible. It may only do so a number of times per day equal to its Essence rating.

Archery (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to two zones away.

Immaterial (passive): The ghost is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. In a shadowland, they materialize whenever they are not touched by the light of the sun. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Ghost (passive): The antagonist cannot cross a line of salt or germinated grain. If they have Essence 3+, they may spend 1 Willpower to force a crossing, suffering great pain in the process (-2 Wound penalty for the rest of the scene). If killed, some time later they will reform at the site of their grave or a place of great personal importance.

Mounted Fighter (passive): The antagonist can also use a swift action to move after using his simple action, rather than only before.

Perfect Morale (passive): The group is incapable of knowing fear. Normally this Power is seen on groups of mindless undead, but it might also apply to First Age war constructs or those blessed with powerful battlefield magic. A group with Perfect Morale cannot fail rout checks and will not retreat unless ordered to do so. It enjoys +2 Coherence, but cannot benefit from the rally for numbers action (see p. XX) because all of the group's losses represent fighters killed or injured too badly to continue, rather than combatants who have lost heart and might be induced to resume fighting.

Slinger (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to one zone away.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Death and the Dead

When ghosts are slain, they disincorporate and roll their Essence rating against difficulty 6. Success allows them to re-incorporate later at their grave or at some place in the Underworld to which they are ritually bound. Failure means they are drawn onwards to whatever awaits beyond death. A botch means their soul tumbles into one of oblivion's waterways.

Zombie

Raised by dark magic and driven by a hunger for living flesh, zombies are the shock troops of necromancers.

Aptitudes: Devour the living, follow simple orders, resist harm

Expertise: 4; **Utility:** 1

Base Damage: 4 (lacerated)

Defense: 5; **Soak:** 5; **Resolve:** 1

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 10

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

Diseased (passive): At the end of any scene where a character suffered damage or received a Wound from a zombie, she must succeed at a difficulty 6 (Stamina + Resistance) roll or contract some manner of disease (see p. XX-XX).

Mindless Corpse (passive): Zombies are immune to social influence, only responding to commands from those with supernatural control over them. It also does not naturally heal its damage or Wounds, and instead must be deliberately repaired by a necromancer.

Robust (passive): Upon being incapacitated, the zombie makes a reflexive Expertise roll against difficulty 9. If it succeeds, then at the end of the round after all other characters have acted it returns to 1 Health stands back up.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Spine Chain

This hideous necromantic war machine is made of several dozen torsos cleaved at midriff and sewn chest-to-chest, scurrying along on a multitude of arms and guided by one lead head (with all other heads buried in the torso of the next corpse up the line). Their fingers are often adorned with sharp iron, their undersides studded with thousands of metal hooks.

Aptitudes: Attack, form a bridge, act as a ladder, give chase, resist harm

Expertise: 6; **Utility:** 1

Base Damage: 9 (lacerated)

Defense: 5; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 2

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 10

Health: 18; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Clambering Horror (passive): The spine chain may climb walls without the need for complex movement.

Crumbling (passive): Each time the spine chain suffers a Wound, its Base Damage drops by –1 until it is repaired.

Elongated Horror (passive): The spine chain stretches across two zones at a time. It gets to take two simple actions on its turn each round, and can use them to launching one attack in each zone (but not two attacks in one zone). It can still only take a swift action per round.

Mindless Corpse (passive): Spine chains are immune to social influence, only responding to commands from those with supernatural control over them. It also does not naturally heal its damage or Wounds, and instead must be deliberately repaired by a necromancer.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Hungry Ghost

Upon a person's death her higher soul departs for whatever waits beyond life, taking her memories and personality with it. Her lower soul, containing her worldly spiritual power and her base instincts, is left behind with the corpse. Hungry ghosts are the restless and violent lower souls of those who have not been given a respectful burial, cremation, or other ceremony to inter their body and lay their soul to rest. Hungry ghosts may also arise in response to the defiling of a tomb or the desecration of a properly interred corpse. They attack the living with mindless viciousness, devouring their flesh and drinking their blood. This is the profile of the average hungry ghost.

Aptitudes: Track the scent of living blood, defend the remains, attack ferociously, sharp senses, resistance

Expertise: 6; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 8; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Corpse Sense (passive): A hungry ghost instinctively knows when its corpse is being defiled or disturbed. Unless already attacking someone, it will always dissolve into smoke and emerge from its remains within a minute or two of sensing such a disturbance.

Ghost (passive): The antagonist cannot cross a line of salt or germinated grain. If they have Essence 3+, they may spend 1 Willpower to force a crossing, suffering great pain in the process (–2 Wound penalty for the rest of the scene). If killed, some time later they will reform at the site of their corpse.

Grave-Wrath (passive): The hungry ghost always acts first in a round if there is a trespasser within the same zone as its remains.

Laid to Rest (passive): A hungry ghost whose body is given proper funeral rites returns to its corpse and slumbers there until, after decades or centuries, it disperses back into the fabric of Creation.

Nightside (passive): Hungry ghosts become as solid as the living by night. They must hide in corpses during the day, for the touch of sunlight is a hazard to them (difficulty 9, damage 1, burned, one round). After an hour of hiding within a corpse by day, a hungry ghost ventures into the Underworld through a spatial crack known as a nihil, where it prowls whatever area it finds itself in until sunset.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Ancient Hungry Ghost

This is the trait profile of an enraged First Age Exalt's lower soul, leaping forth to set upon those who have come to defile its tomb.

Aptitudes: Track the scent of living blood, defend the remains, attack ferociously, sharp senses, resistance

Expertise: 12; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 8 (lacerated, Overwhelming –1)

Defense: 9; **Soak:** 9; **Resolve:** 6

Essence: 5; **Willpower:** 9

Health: 16; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Ambush Flicker-Flash (passive): By using a swift action, the hungry ghost may reflexively teleport anywhere within its tomb. If Staggered, it reflexively vanishes and teleports to some other point nearby, automatically concealing itself in ambush with 5 successes.

Corpse Sense (passive): A hungry ghost instinctively knows when its corpse is being defiled or disturbed. Unless already attacking someone, it will always dissolve into smoke and emerge from its remains within a minute or two of sensing such a disturbance.

Ghost (passive): The antagonist cannot cross a line of salt or germinated grain. If they have Essence 3+, they may spend 1 Willpower to force a crossing, suffering great pain in the process (–2 Wound penalty for the rest of the scene). If killed, some time later they will reform at the site of their corpse.

Grave-Wrath (passive): The hungry ghost always acts first in a round if there is a trespasser within the same zone as its remains.

Laid to Rest (passive): A hungry ghost whose body is given proper funeral rites returns to its corpse and slumbers there until its body is disturbed. The lower souls of extremely powerful beings such as elder Exalts may linger for hundreds or even thousands of years without dispersing.

Nemesis Shade (passive): Attacks the ancient hungry ghost directs against Staggered opponents inflict Aggravated damage (–3).

Nightside (passive): Hungry ghosts become as solid as the living by night. They must hide in corpses during the day, for the touch of sunlight is a hazard to them (difficulty 9, damage 1, burned, one round). After an hour of hiding within a corpse by day, a hungry ghost ventures into the Underworld through a spatial crack known as a nihil, where it prowls whatever area it finds itself in until sunset.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Howling Assault (1 Momentum, reflexive): The ancient hungry ghost may take three full turns during the current round, including a swift action and a simple action on each turn.

Rapacious Shade Talons (1 Momentum, reflexive): Until the end of the round the ancient hungry ghost's attack rolls ignore the rule of 1s, its attacks gains Piercing (–2), and it increases its Soak and Stagger Threshold by +2.

Ghost Template

Common ghosts can be assembled using any of the mortal templates (or simply made from scratch) and then applying one or two of the following ghost powers, along with Apparition, Ghost, Immaterial, and Unquiet.

Animate Armor (passive): The ghost may inhabit and animate a suit of armor and a weapon, using them to fight in Creation. An animated weapon and armor has 7 Health, and becomes unsuitable for further animation once incapacitated. Incapacitating a weapon and armor inflicts a dazed Wound on the ghost controlling piloting it. The ghost otherwise suffers no harm herself unless targeted with attacks capable of harming dematerialized beings.

Nemissary's Ride (passive): The ghost may crawl into a corpse and animate it. While they do so, the corpse's rate of decay is greatly slowed, but not entirely suspended. An animated corpse has 7 Health, and becomes unsuitable for further animation once incapacitated. Incapacitating a corpse inflicts a dazed Wound on the ghost controlling piloting it. The ghost otherwise suffers no harm herself unless targeted with attacks capable of harming dematerialized beings.

Ghostly Touch (1 Willpower, simple action): The ghost moves an object despite being dematerialized. It rolls only a single die to do so, and may not use this Power in direct sunlight.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The ghost makes an Expertise roll against difficulty 9. Success causes them to vanish at the end of the round, reappearing at the site of its grave or at the side of someone or something that was of great importance to them in life.

Materialize (2 Willpower, simple action): At the end of the round, the spirit becomes fully visible and tangible. It remains materialized until it reflexively chooses to dematerialize once again, doing so at the end of the round. Only very powerful ghosts tends to manifest this power.

Phantasmagoria (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The ghost may cause some ghastly and frightening display to manifest, such as letters written in blood, writhing maggots, or a rotting reflection in a mirror.

Possession (1 Momentum or 1 Willpower, simple action): The ghost may roll Expertise against a target's Willpower (+ Essence, if the target is Exalted), both at difficulty 8. The ghost may roll against difficulty 6 if the target is asleep. If the ghost gains more successes, they take control of the target's body for a number of scenes equal to the successes by which the ghost won the contest.

War Ghost

War ghosts are the restless souls of soldiers who have learned certain ghostly arts that allow them either to manifest in the land of the living, or else to possess weapons and armor and animate them upon the battlefield.

Aptitudes: Fight, obey orders, toughness, stand guard, intimidate

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 8; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Animate Armor (passive): The ghost may inhabit and animate a suit of armor and a weapon, using them to fight in Creation. An animated weapon and armor has 7 Health, and becomes unsuitable for further animation once incapacitated. Incapacitating a weapon and armor inflicts a dazed Wound on the ghost controlling piloting it. The ghost otherwise suffers no harm herself unless targeted with attacks capable of harming dematerialized beings.

Apparition (passive): The ghost may become visible and audible within Creation for a few minutes, but not tangible. It may only do so a number of times per day equal to its Essence rating.

Ghost (passive): The antagonist cannot cross a line of salt or germinated grain. If they have Essence 3+, they may spend 1 Willpower to force a crossing, suffering great pain in the process (–2 Wound penalty for the rest of the scene). If killed, some time later they will reform at the site of their grave or a place of great personal importance.

Immaterial (passive): The ghost is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. In a shadowland, they materialize whenever they are not touched by the light of the sun. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Materialize (passive): If given an offering of human blood (enough to inflict a drained Wound on the donor), the ghost may materialize in Creation for one scene. During the day, this materialization lasts for only a minute instead.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Nemissary

Nemissaries are those ghosts who have learned to possess bodies and use them to walk among the living.

Aptitudes: Varies. Some nemissaries are combatants, like the war ghost. Others are diplomats, or simply common ghosts motivated by their own passions.

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 8; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Apparition (passive): The ghost may become visible and audible within Creation for a few minutes, but not tangible. It may only do so a number of times per day equal to its Essence rating.

Ghost (passive): The antagonist cannot cross a line of salt or germinated grain. If they have Essence 3+, they may spend 1 Willpower to force a crossing, suffering great pain in the process (–2 Wound penalty for the rest of the scene). If killed, some time later they will reform at the site of their grave or a place of great personal importance.

Immaterial (passive): The ghost is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. In a shadowland, they materialize whenever they are not touched by the light of the sun. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Nemissary's Ride (passive): The ghost may crawl into a corpse and animate it. While they do so, the corpse's rate of decay is greatly slowed, but not entirely suspended. An animated corpse has 7 Health, and becomes unsuitable for further animation once incapacitated. Incapacitating a corpse inflicts a dazed Wound on the ghost controlling piloting it. The ghost otherwise suffers no harm herself unless targeted with attacks capable of harming dematerialized beings.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Mortwright

Mortwrights are ghosts who have been tainted by oblivion's waters, or who have listened to the whispers of the Neverborn and allowed them to infest their souls. They grow lean and barbed and mad, and lurk in the Underworld's lower depths when not sent forth on missions by more powerful spectres.

Aptitudes: Hunt, express hopelessness, worship, resist harm, kill.

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Black Breath (passive): While the mortwright is Wounded, it leaks a cold black fog that fills the zone around it and imposes a -1 visibility penalty on all non-spectres in the zone for the rest of the scene. A Solar anima flare will burn off the fog immediately.

Immaterial (passive): The ghost is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. In a shadowland, they materialize whenever they are not touched by the light of the sun. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Spectre (passive): The antagonist cannot cross a line of salt or germinated grain. If they have Essence 3+, they may spend 1 Willpower to force a crossing, suffering great pain in the process (-2 Wound penalty for the rest of the scene). If killed, their soul decays to nothing and is claimed by oblivion. Their attacks can inflict drained Wounds as they rip away the target's vitality.

Time-Step Stutter (passive): As soon as the mortwright suffers damage, it gains the ability to cut ahead at no cost for the rest of the scene.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Nihilistic Fervor (1 aggravated damage, reflexive): Once per round, the mortwight can suffer 1 aggravated damage to re-roll a single roll as though it had spent Willpower.

Nephwrack

Nephwracks are the prophets of the Neverborn, living vessels for the whispers of oblivion. They have endured centuries in the service of nothingness and have grown mighty on the least scraps of their dead gods' power. They often carry relic artifacts into battle, and wield the dread arts of necromancy.

Aptitudes: *Battle*, scheme, worship, sacrifice, resilience, *sorcery*.

Expertise: 9; **Utility:** 4

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 5; **Willpower:** 9

Health: 12; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Immaterial (passive): The ghost is naturally dematerialized while in Creation. In a shadowland, they materialize whenever they are not touched by the light of the sun. It may return to its natural immaterial state by spending a simple action in concentration, dematerializing at the end of the next round.

Lord of Oblivion (passive): The nephwrack may take a number of turns equal to the number of enemies confronting him. Each turn includes both a swift action and a simple action. A group counts as a number of enemies equal to its Size.

Rotting Ride (passive): The nephwrack may crawl into a corpse and animate it. While they do so, the corpse's rate of decay is substantially accelerated by the taint of oblivion, ensuring the body falls apart and is no longer useable after three days of possession. An animated corpse has 7 Health, and becomes unsuitable for further animation once incapacitated. Incapacitating a corpse inflicts a dazed Wound on the ghost controlling piloting it. The ghost otherwise suffers no harm herself unless targeted with attacks capable of harming dematerialized beings.

Sorcerer (passive): The antagonist is a sorcerer. To cast a spell, he spends an appropriate amount of Willpower, then rolls his Expertise pool against difficulty 6 as an extended simple action. Once he meets the goal of the spell he's trying to cast, it goes off. The antagonist can also perform sorcerous workings with his Expertise pool.

Soul Destruction (passive): If the nemissary kills someone, their soul is permanently destroyed and fed to the Neverborn. The nemissary may generate +2 extra Momentum when this occurs.

Spectre (passive): The antagonist cannot cross a line of salt or germinated grain. If they have Essence 3+, they may spend 1 Willpower to force a crossing, suffering great pain in the process (-2 Wound penalty for the rest of the scene). If killed, their soul decays to nothing and is claimed by oblivion. Their attacks can inflict drained Wounds as they rip away the target's vitality.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Black Heart's Call (1 Momentum, simple action): The Nephwrack can peer at a character and make a read intentions roll with its Expertise. If it succeeds, it sees into her heart and learns of a negative Intimacy or painful memory.

Broken Mirror Deflection (1 Momentum, reflexive): For the entirety of the current round, the nephwrack's Defense increases by +2.

Hurry Home (2 Momentum, simple action): The Nephwrack makes an Expertise roll against difficulty 9. Success causes it to vanish at the end of the round, reappearing in the fane of its Neverborn master's temple.

Leaden Weight of Truth (1 Momentum, reflexive): The Nephwrack reflexively unleashes its Essence as a rolling wave of absolute despair at the beginning of the round. All characters within the same or an adjacent zone must succeed at a reflexive difficulty 8 Willpower roll or forfeit their turn as absolute despair at the futility of existence drowns their heart.

Spell: Ivory Razor Forest (goal 25): The necromancer gestures toward that which she wishes destruction upon, and a ripple passes in that direction. In its wake, a forest of razor-sharp bones erupts from the ground, filling five continuous zones in the direction the necromancer indicated, including the one she stands in, although anyone standing immediately next to or behind her is spared. Everyone else inside the afflicted is subjected to a hazard (difficulty 9, damage 5, lacerated) as a one-time hazard and then again whenever they use a swift action within an afflicted zone. The Ivory Razor Forest is difficult terrain, requiring complex movement to navigate.

Thousand Deaths Curse (1 Momentum, simple action): The Nephwrack makes a contested Essence roll against another character within one zone. If the Nephwrack wins, it taints the target's Essence with entropy. They no longer gain any protection from the rule of 1s from any special rules while within two zones of the Nephwrack, and any of their rolls which fail while in that proximity automatically botch. Only the Nephwrack's death or powerful magic capable of curing Wyld mutations, such as Order-Affirming Blow, will lift this curse.

Vessel of Oblivion (1 Momentum, reflexive): When the nephwrack suffers damage, it may use this Power to reflexively pass all but one point of that damage off to another character with the Spectre power (or group made up of Spectres) within one zone. This Power cannot be used to reassign aggravated damage.

The Alienated

This template describes a Liminal who has completely retreated into Alienation until the spark of her humanity and Exaltation have collapsed into a dark, sucking void from which there is no return. It is now a dead thing that lurks in the remote corners of the world, tearing the limbs from intruders and adding them to its ghastly mass.

Aptitudes: *Killing*, dismemberment, stealth, alertness, toughness

Expertise: 8 (13); **Utility:** 3 (6)

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 8; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 7

Health: 15; Stagger Threshold: 4+

Powers

Anima Banner (passive): The Alienated may at any time reflexively flare its anima banner for the rest of the scene. This causes it to lose its “stealth” Aptitude, but it increases the amount of Momentum it can spend per round by +1.

Eternal (passive): The Alienated comes back to life sometime after being killed unless it is drowned or its body is completely burned to ashes.

Extra Limbs (passive): The Alienated can make three extra attacks at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Robust (passive): Upon being incapacitated, the Alienated makes a reflexive Expertise roll against difficulty 9. If it succeeds, then at the end of the round after all other characters have acted it returns to 1 Health stands back up. It cannot do this, while it is incapacitated, its brain is destroyed, or if it dies while immersed in water.

Scuttling Reflexes (passive): The Alienated increases its Defense by +1 against anyone who acts after it in the round.

Unquiet (passive): The antagonist is immune to poison and disease, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe.

Corpse Gathering (1 Momentum, simple action): The Alienated tears pieces off of a corpse and add them to its mass. It heals 4 non-aggravated damage, gains 4 Temporary Health, or heals one non-aggravated Wound.

Dead Rush (1 damage, simple action): The Alienated suffers one level of damage to move one extra zone when it moves.

Excellence (1 Momentum, reflexive): The Alienated uses the values in parentheses for its dice pools until the end of the round.

Flesh Like Loam (1 Momentum, reflexive): The Alienated gains +1 Soak until the end of the round.

Limb Toss (1 damage, simple action): The Alienated suffers one damage to pull one of its stolen limbs off and hurl them at an enemy up to two zones away, an attack with Base Damage 5 (bruised).

Shattering Blow (2 damage, reflexive): The Alienated suffers two damage when it attacks, increasing its Base Damage by +4.

Exalted Antagonists

Broadly speaking, Exalted antagonists are constructed using the same basic rules as any other antagonist, but have a few special considerations due to their importance to the game and how familiar players will be with how they should “feel,” given that they are Exalted themselves.

Antagonist Exalts can use the same Charms as protagonist Exalted, substituting Momentum in place of Mote costs. Past that, broadly, Exalts usually have three to twelve powers on top of the powers that all Exalts of their type possess, with higher numbers accompanying higher Essence ratings.

Common Exalted powers include:

Anima Banner (passive): The Exalt may at any time reflexively flare his anima banner for the rest of the scene. This causes him to lose any stealthy Aptitudes, but he can spend +1 more Momentum per round than he would otherwise be able to.

Archery (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to two zones away.

Champion (passive): If this antagonist is fighting alongside a friendly group, that group acts as though its Size were one higher than it truly is when attacking anyone who has attacked this antagonist since the group's last action.

Commander (passive): If this antagonist is within the same zone as a friendly group, apply the group's Size as a dice penalty to all attacks directed against the antagonist.

Mounted Fighter (passive): The antagonist can also use a swift action to move after using his simple action, rather than only before.

Slinger (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to one zone away.

Excellence (1 Momentum, reflexive): The antagonist uses an Expertise value listed in parentheses until the end of the current round. For example, a Solar's Expertise pool might be listed as 10 (20). She would roll 20 dice for her Expertise pool until staggered upon activating this power.

Dragon-Blooded Antagonists

Dragon-Blooded antagonists have a number of special powers used when making them, detailed below:

General Powers

The following powers define the character's basic features as an Exalt. All Dragon-Blooded have Anima Banner, Anima Flux, and the Anima Power corresponding to their Aspect. Most have Excellence and many have at least one dose of Ox-Body Technique.

Anima Banner (passive): The Exalt may at any time reflexively flare his anima banner for the rest of the scene. This causes him to lose any stealthy Aptitudes, but he can spend +1 more Momentum per round than he would otherwise be able to.

Anima Flux (passive): While a Dragon-Blood's anima is flaring, she benefits from the anima flux rules on page XX.

Anima Power: Air (passive): Air Aspects ignore damage and Wounds from falling from great heights, may always reflexively land on their feet when falling, and once per scene may use a swift action to jump a daunting gap between zones or sectors without rolling, or to leap up to (Essence rating) zones vertically. They may also move despite being struck before their turn once per scene.

Anima Power: Earth (passive): Earth Aspects add +1 to their Stagger Threshold over and above what it should be otherwise.

Anima Power: Fire (passive): Fire Aspects are immune to damage from heat and flames. Additionally, when a Fire Aspect's anima flares, it does so as real rather than spiritual flames (see p. XX for anima flux rules).

Anima Power: Water (passive): Water Aspects may breathe underwater and swim without it counting as complex movement. They are immune to the crushing pressure of deep water, and are strong enough swimmers to easily rise or sink as they please even when wearing heavy armor. Once per scene, when they move to an adjacent zone by swimming, they may instead move two zones.

Anima Power: Wood (passive): Wood Aspects are immune to poison. While her anima flares, a Wood Aspect becomes poisonous to the touch; anyone making skin-to-skin contact with her is dosed with “plant toxin” poison (see p. XX).

Ox-Body Technique (passive): This power isn’t listed on an antagonist’s sheet, but each time it is notionally taken, increase the antagonist’s Health by +2.

Excellence (1 Momentum, reflexive): The antagonist uses an Expertise value listed in parentheses until the end of the current round. When a Dragon-Blooded uses Excellence, she adds +5 dice to her Expertise pool.

Air Aspect Dragonlord

This Dragon-Blooded is a military commander, focused more on commanding his troops than on direct front-line combat.

Aptitudes: Battle, keen senses, avoiding harm, *strategy, issuing orders*

Expertise: 9 (14); **Utility:** 4

Base Damage: 7L

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 8

Health: 9; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Anima Banner (passive): The Exalt may at any time reflexively flare his anima banner for the rest of the scene. This causes him to lose any stealthy Aptitudes, but he can spend +1 more Momentum per round than he would otherwise be able to.

Anima Flux (passive): While a Dragon-Blood’s anima is flaring, she benefits from the anima flux rules on page XX.

Anima Power: Air (passive): Air Aspects ignore damage and Wounds from falling from great heights, may always reflexively land on their feet when falling, and once per scene may use a swift action to jump a daunting gap between zones or sectors without rolling, or to leap up to (Essence rating) zones vertically. They may also move despite being struck before their turn once per scene.

Commander (passive): If this antagonist is within the same zone as a friendly group, subtract the group’s Size in success from all attacks directed against the antagonist.

Horizon-Spanning Arc (passive): The Exalt may launch an Archery, Thrown, or ranged Martial Arts attack against a target one zone farther away than the normal maximum range of her weapon. This Charm may be used a number of times per scene equal to her Essence rating.

Slinger (passive): The antagonist can target an enemy up to one zone away.

Command: Hold Fast (1 Momentum, simple action): The Exalt makes an Expertise roll against the difficulty to issue orders to a group she leads (see Drill, p. XX). If it succeeds, the group increases its Soak value by +2.

Command: Seize the Moment (1 Momentum, simple action): The Exalt makes an Expertise roll against the difficulty to issue orders to a group she leads (see Drill, p. XX). If it succeeds, the group's next attack inflicts aggravated damage (-1).

Elusive Cyclone Defense (1 Momentum, reflexive): Until she is Staggered or the end of the scene, whichever comes first, the Exalt does not need to spend Momentum to Dodge ranged attacks.

Excellence (1 Momentum, reflexive): The antagonist uses an Expertise value listed in parentheses until the end of the current round. When a Dragon-Blooded uses Excellence, she adds +5 dice to her Expertise pool.

Surging Tide Offensive (1 Momentum, reflexive): The Exalt may cut ahead during this round.

Earth Aspect Bruiser

This Dragon-Blooded is a bloody bare-knuckle brawler, unarmored but tough as nails nonetheless.

Aptitudes: Battle, *keen senses, toughness*

Expertise: 8 (13); **Utility:** 4

Base Damage: 3 (bruised)

Defense: 8; **Soak:** 5; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 9

Health: 13; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Anima Banner (passive): The Exalt may at any time reflexively flare his anima banner for the rest of the scene. This causes him to lose any stealthy Aptitudes, but he can spend +1 more Momentum per round than he would otherwise be able to.

Anima Flux (passive): While a Dragon-Blood's anima is flaring, she benefits from the anima flux rules on page XX.

Anima Power: Earth (passive): Earth Aspects add +1 to their Stagger Threshold over and above what it should be otherwise.

Chaos-Warding Prana (passive): When targeted by magic that controls, taints, or transforms her body, soul, or destiny, the Exalt may reflexively roll Expertise against difficulty 9 to defend himself.

Dragon-Graced Assault: Earth (1 Momentum, reflexive): Until the Exalt is Staggered or the end of the scene, whichever comes first, all attacks the Exalt makes are studded with jagged protrusions of stone and crystal. Add +3 to their Base Damage, and if they damage their target he is momentarily stunned; his next action suffers a -2 dice penalty.

Excellence (1 Momentum, reflexive): The antagonist uses an Expertise value listed in parentheses until the end of the current round. When a Dragon-Blooded uses Excellence, she adds +5 dice to her Expertise pool.

Impervious Skin of Stone Meditation (1 Momentum, reflexive): The Exalt adds +1 to her Soak value and Stagger Threshold until she is Staggered or until the end of the scene, whichever comes first.

Unflagging Vengeance Meditation (1 Momentum, reflexive): Ignore all Wound penalties until the end of the scene or the character is next Staggered, whichever comes first. If the Dragon-Blooded is acting in direct support of her Nature or an Intimacy, this Charm cannot be ended by Staggering her.

Solar Antagonists

Solar antagonists have a number of special powers used when making them, detailed below:

General Powers

The following powers define the character's basic features as an Exalt. All Solars have Anima Banner and the Anima Power corresponding to their caste. Most have Excellence and many have at least one dose of Ox-Body Technique.

Anima Banner (passive): The Exalt may at any time reflexively flare his anima banner for the rest of the scene. This causes him to lose any stealthy Aptitudes, but he can spend +1 more Momentum per round than he would otherwise be able to.

Anima Power: Dawn (permanent): Once per scene, the Dawn can reflexively lower the difficulty of an attack or damage roll by -1. When the character's anima is flaring, the rule of 1s does not apply to her damage rolls.

Anima Power: Eclipse (passive): The Eclipse may use a simple action and spend 1 Momentum or 1 Willpower to sanctify any oath she personally witnesses, scribing the words of the pact on the air with Essence. Any who should break this oath suffers the wrath of Heaven and is afflicted with a potent curse of the Storyteller's devising, which may be subtle or obvious as seems appropriate. Additionally, if the Eclipse approaches beings of the Wyld, Hell, or the Underworld on legitimate business and they offer her or her companions unprovoked violence, then any roll made by the offending beings during the course of that violence which produces even a single 1 become an automatic botch.

Anima Power: Night (permanent): For one round per scene, the Night may treat her Momentum-per-round limit as though she were flaring her anima when she isn't. Additionally, when her anima *does* flare, she may shroud herself in it like an obscuring cloak, making her impossible to recognize. Anyone in the scene that has already recognized her must roll Willpower against difficulty 8 or forget the blazing stranger's identity, if the Night would rather they didn't remember who she is. When she invokes her Dodge against anyone who does not know who she is under the anima haze, it is increased by +1.

Anima Power: Twilight (permanent): By using a simple action, the Twilight may disincorporate herself into the geomancy of the world, reforming some hours later at the boundary of a nearby place of power such as a Demesne or spirit sanctum. When her anima flares, she may, at will and as she desires, cause dematerialized beings touched by the light of her anima to become visible and audible in the physical world, and by reflexively paying 1 Momentum may enable anyone to

interact with them physically so long as they remain illuminated. Generally, a Solar's anima strongly illuminates the entire sector she occupies, barring solid walls and the like blocking its light.

Anima Power: Zenith (permanent): By touching an inanimate corpse with a simple action and succeeding at a difficulty 6 Essence roll, the Zenith can burn it to ashes and send its soul onward from this world. This will immediately banish and lay to rest any ghost associated with the body. When her anima is flaring, she gains Defense +1 against creatures of darkness, and any action taken by a creature of darkness which aims to oppose, attack, or otherwise thwart the Zenith suffers a dice penalty equal to her Essence rating. Thus, if she had Essence 3, a ghost trying to intimidate her would suffer a -3 penalty to do so.

Ox-Body Technique (passive): This power isn't listed on an antagonist's sheet, but each time it is notionally taken, increase the antagonist's Health by +3.

Excellence (1 Momentum, reflexive): The antagonist uses an Expertise value listed in parentheses until the end of the current round. When a Solar uses Excellence, she adds +10 dice to her Expertise pool.

Prince of the Earth (passive): When conflict begins, increase the amount of Momentum generated by +2.

Exalt-on-the-Run

This Solar is freshly Exalted and trying to figure out what has happened to him and who he can turn to. This template is designed to be used as prey for a group of Dragon-Blooded attempting to hunt him, or a panicked, fleeing objective for a Circle of friendly Exalts trying to corner and talk to him.

Aptitudes: Fighting back, avoiding harm, awareness, *emotional appeals*, running like hell, vanishing into the countryside

Expertise: 8 (18); **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 3 (bruised)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 6

Health: 9; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

Anima Banner (passive): The Exalt may at any time reflexively flare his anima banner for the rest of the scene. This causes him to lose any stealthy Aptitudes, but he can spend +1 more Momentum per round than he would otherwise be able to.

Anima Power: Zenith (permanent): By touching an inanimate corpse with a simple action and succeeding at a difficulty 6 Essence roll, the Zenith can burn it to ashes and send its soul onward from this world. This will immediately banish and lay to rest any ghost associated with the body. When her anima is flaring, she gains Defense +1 against creatures of darkness, and any action taken by a creature of darkness which aims to oppose, attack, or otherwise thwart the Zenith suffers a dice penalty equal to her Essence rating. Thus, if she had Essence 3, a ghost trying to intimidate her would suffer a -3 penalty to do so.

Prince of the Earth (passive): When conflict begins, increase the amount of Momentum generated by +2.

Startled Swallow's Flight (passive): After the end of the opening round of any battle he did not start, the Solar may always cut ahead after one enemy has acted. His Defense increases by +1 against anyone who acts after him in the round so long as he is overall trying to escape.

Excellence (1 Momentum, reflexive): The antagonist uses an Expertise value listed in parentheses until the end of the current round. When a Solar uses Excellence, she adds +10 dice to her Expertise pool.

Leaping Dodge Method (1 Momentum, reflexive): For the rest of the scene or until Staggered, whichever comes first, the Solar may reflexively move to an adjacent zone each time an attack fails to strike her. She can use this to get away from a rapid flurry of extra action attacks, or disentangle herself from a pile of enemies.

Fivefold Bulwark Stance (1 Momentum, reflexive): Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Solar does not have to spend Willpower to Block attacks until the end of the scene, until she is next Staggered, or until her Block value drops to 0, whichever comes first.

Heaven Thunder Hammer (1 Momentum, simple action): The Solar makes an attack. If it strikes its target it knocks him into an adjacent zone, knocks him prone, and Staggers him, even if the attack's damage does not meet his Stagger Threshold. If his Stagger Threshold is not met, the target is not Wounded when Staggered by this feature of the Charm. If Heaven Thunder Hammer inflicts damage equal to or in excess of the target's Stagger Threshold, he is Staggered and Wounded as normal, as well as hurled into an adjacent *sector* and knocked prone. The Solar can choose for Wound inflicted to be a dazed Wound if she desires.

Invincible Sword Princess

This trait block represents a Solar who has grown into the maturity of their power and specialized in the art of battle, and is armed with a daiklave or other magical weapon.

Aptitudes: *Combat*, force of personality, acrobatics, *resilience*, awareness

Expertise: 10 (20); **Utility:** 3

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 8; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 2; **Willpower:** 8

Health: 9; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

The following powers are permanently active:

Anima Banner (passive): The Exalt may at any time reflexively flare his anima banner for the rest of the scene. This causes him to lose any stealthy Aptitudes, but he can spend +1 more Momentum per round than he would otherwise be able to.

Anima Power: Dawn (permanent): Once per scene, the Dawn can reflexively lower the difficulty of an attack or damage roll by -1. When the character's anima is flaring, the rule of 1s does not apply to her damage rolls.

Champion (passive): If this antagonist is fighting alongside a friendly group, that group acts as though its Size were one higher than it truly is when attacking anyone who has attacked this antagonist since the group's last action.

Commander (passive): If this antagonist is within the same zone as a friendly group, apply the group's Size as a dice penalty to all attacks directed against the antagonist.

Graceful Crane Stance (passive): The character needs never roll to maintain her balance, no matter how precarious her footing, and may stand or run upon even the weakest or most insubstantial of surfaces, such as falling leaves, individual threads, drops of rain, or even the surface of water. Reflexively spending 1 Momentum allows her to run and stand upon walls or even to cling to ceilings for the rest of the scene.

Lightning Speed (passive): The difficulty of all actions to run someone down, get somewhere quickly, or jump a difficult gap are permanently lowered by -2. By reflexively spending 1 Momentum, the Solar may move two zones at a time with her move actions.

Prince of the Earth (passive): When conflict begins, increase the amount of Momentum generated by +2.

Excellence (1 Momentum, reflexive): The antagonist uses an Expertise value listed in parentheses until the end of the current round. When a Solar uses Excellence, she adds +10 dice to her Expertise pool.

Fire and Stones Strike (1 Momentum, reflexive): For the rest of the round, all of her attacks increase their base damage by +5.

Fifefold Bulwark Stance (1 Momentum, reflexive): Reflexively spend 1 Mote. The Solar does not have to spend Willpower to Block attacks until the end of the scene, until she is next Staggered, or until her Block value drops to 0, whichever comes first.

Heavenly Guardian Defense (3 Momentum, reflexive): The Solar Blocks an attack, momentarily setting her Block value to an arbitrarily high number of her choosing, guaranteeing that the attack inflicts 0 damage. After Heavenly Guardian Defense protects the Solar, her Resolve returns to its previous value and is reduced by -1. This Charm cannot be invoked against unexpected attacks, or if the Solar's Resolve value is 0 or less. When invoked, this Charm is considered a perfect defense.

Lightning Strikes Twice (2 Momentum, reflexive): Activate this Power upon Staggering a target. After all other characters have acted, the Solar may launch an additional attack at that same target. If this attack Staggers the target again, then the Solar may instantly launch another attack by reflexively paying 1 Momentum. Up to (Essence rating) 1 Momentum attacks can be launched per round with this Power. If an opponent is incapacitated by an attack generated by Lightning Strikes Twice, the Solar may choose to increase her Resolve by +2.

Thunderclap Rush Attack (1 Momentum, reflexive): For the rest of the scene, the Solar may act first even when her opponents initiate violence against her, causing the fight's pace of battle to play out as though she and her allies had initiated violence. She can also cut ahead 5 times during the scene.

Beasts

Creation abounds with dangerous natural animals.

Austrech

A flightless, scaled bird standing seven feet high. This swift, vicious carnivore is hand-raised from birth and used as a mount by certain tribes of Southern and Southeastern raiders.

Aptitudes: Attack, pursue, swift movement, sharp senses

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 5; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 4

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

Mount (passive): The beast may potentially serve as a mount, and may move before or after attacking.

Swift Killer (passive): Once per battle, the austrech may move two zones with a move action.

Bear

If it's brown, lay down. If it's black, fight back. If it's white, say goodnight.

Aptitudes: Attack, climb, toughness, senses, feats of strength

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 6 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 4

Health: 8; **Stagger Threshold:** 3+

Powers

The following powers are permanently active:

Bestial Instincts: Every other turn, the beast may cut ahead.

Terrible Grasp: Once per scene, the beast may prevent someone it targets with an attack from moving for the rest of the current *and* the following round, so long as it also doesn't move.

Dog

Man's best friend, unless it's chewing a thief's face off after he comes in over the wall of a merchant prince's estate.

Aptitudes: Attack, sharp senses, toughness, tracking

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 5; Soak: 5; Resolve: 3

Essence: 1; Willpower: 2

Health: 6; Stagger Threshold: 2+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the beast may cut ahead.

Swift Killer (passive): Once per battle, the beast may move two zones with a move action.

Giant Spider

Oh god, oh shit, oh fuck, the Divine Revolution was completely justified.

Aptitudes: Pounce, climb, evasion

Expertise: 6; Utility: 1

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; Soak: 5; Resolve: 3

Essence: 1; Willpower: 3

Health: 5; Stagger Threshold: 2+

Powers

Giant Wolf Spider (passive): Once per scene, the spider may either leap up to a vertically adjacent zone it would otherwise have no means of reaching, move two zones with a move action, or cut ahead. If the spider has this power, it does not have webbing or venomous.

Venomous (passive): The beast's damaging attacks also dose the target with snake venom (see p. XX).

Wall Crawler (passive): The beast can climb up and cling to walls without the need of a roll, and without treating the wall-climbing as complex movement.

Webbing (passive): The beast can project a sticky substance such as webbing or a slimy glue, with a range up to one zone away. Roll Expertise to aim this projectile. Anyone struck by it suffers a -2 die penalty to all actions per coating until they use a simple action to roll (Strength + Athletics) against difficulty 7 to disentangle themselves. Webbed or otherwise "stuck" victims also cannot leave their current zone until they free themselves.

Great Cat

Saber-toothed murder machine.

Aptitudes: Attack, sharp senses, agility, climbing

Expertise: 7; Utility: 2

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; Soak: 5; Resolve: 3

Essence: 1; Willpower: 5

Health: 7; Stagger Threshold: 2+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the beast may cut ahead.

Pounce (passive): If the beast moves into a new zone and immediately attacks someone there, lower the attack's difficulty by -1.

Swift Killer (passive): Once per battle, the beast may move two zones with a move action.

Horse

These traits are given in the event that you want to kill someone's horse out from under them; they don't usually stick around to fight on their own.

Aptitudes: Gallop, trample, evade

Expertise: 4; **Utility:** 1

Base Damage: 5 (bruised)

Defense: 5; **Soak:** 5; **Resolve:** 2

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 3

Health: 7; **Stagger Threshold:** 2+

Powers

Mount (passive): The beast may potentially serve as a mount, and may move before or after attacking.

Hellboar

Enormous omnivorous, territorial, many-tusked pigs equally willing to devour roughage, carrion, livestock, or men.

Aptitudes: Attack, pursue, hardiness, sharp sense of smell

Expertise: 5; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 6

Health: 13; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the beast may cut ahead.

Charge (passive): When the beast inflicts 2+ damage, its target is knocked prone.

Devour (passive): When the beast attacks a prone target, its base damage becomes 12 (lacerated).

Hybroc

A titanic scaled bird with a 50-75 foot wingspan.

Aptitudes: Swoop, fly, sharp senses, tough

Expertise: 7; Utility: 1

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; Soak: 5; Resolve: 3

Essence: 1; Willpower: 6

Health: 13; Stagger Threshold: 3+

Powers

Flight (passive): The beast can fly.

Seize (passive): If the beast Staggars with an attack, it can grasp and carry away a target up to the size of a horse. To break free, a seized target must use a simple action to make a contested roll of (Strength + Athletics) against difficulty 6 against the hybroc's Expertise pool (difficulty 5) and gain more successes.

Mammoth

These hairy elephants are strongly associated with the Icewalker tribes who follow their herds.

Aptitudes: Trample, manipulate simple objects, *feats of strength*, toughness, animal cleverness

Expertise: 6; Utility: 3

Base Damage: 7 (bruised)

Defense: 6; Soak: 7; Resolve: 3

Essence: 1; Willpower: 5

Health: 18; Stagger Threshold: 5+

Powers

Charge (passive): When the beast inflicts 2+ damage, its target is knocked prone.

Incredible Strength (passive): 10s on feats of strength count as two successes.

Rat

This profile is also useful for vermin of all sorts. Rats pose no threat individually, but in desperate groups can tear a man down to the bone in moments.

Aptitudes: Swarm, evade, climb, sharp senses, hide

Expertise: 3; Utility: 1

Base Damage: 3 (bruised)

Defense: 6; Soak: 4; Resolve: 1

Essence: 1; Willpower: 2

Health: 3; Stagger Threshold: 1+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the beast may cut ahead.

River Dragon

Marine reptiles that live at the mouths of rivers and in estuaries, sometimes reaching lengths of up to 40 feet.

Aptitudes: Attack, swim, hardiness

Expertise: 6; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 7 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 6

Health: 17; **Stagger Threshold:** 5+

Powers

The following powers are permanently active:

Death Roll (passive): When making a successful attack that rolls at least three successes, the river dragon's attack gains a base damage of 10 (lacerated) and knocks the opponent prone.

Fins (passive): The beast doesn't treat swimming as complex movement, and while in the water can use a swift action to move before *or* after using its simple action, but treats all movement on dry land as complex movement.

Siaka

A 40-foot shark capable of swallowing a man in one bite.

Aptitudes: Attack, swim, hardiness, scent blood

Expertise: 8; **Utility:** 1

Base Damage: 9 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 7; **Resolve:** 3

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 7

Health: 21; **Stagger Threshold:** 6+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the beast may cut ahead.

Deadly Bite (passive): Once per scene, when this beast Wounds its target, it may inflict a disabled arm, disabled leg, or mauled Wound.

Fins (passive): The beast doesn't treat swimming as complex movement, and while in the water can use its swift action to move before or after attacking, but treats all movement on dry land as complex movement.

Superpredator (passive): The beast's attacks have Overwhelming (-1).

Squid

The sailor's bane: a cephalopod with an 80-foot reach.

Aptitudes: Attack, swim, stealth

Expertise: 7; **Utility:** 1

Base Damage: 8 (lacerated)

Defense: 7; **Soak:** 6; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 5

Health: 23; **Stagger Threshold:** 4+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the beast may cut ahead.

Enormous Reach (passive): The beast can make attacks against targets up to two zones away.

Fins (passive): The beast doesn't treat swimming as complex movement, and while in the water can use its swift action to move before or after attacking, but treats all movement on dry land as complex movement.

Many Arms (passive): The beast can make an extra attack at the end of the round, after all other characters have acted.

Tyrant Lizard

The undisputed king of all landbound predators.

Aptitudes: Attack, pursue, hardiness, tracking

Expertise: 7; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 9 (lacerated)

Defense: 8; **Soak:** 8; **Resolve:** 5

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 7

Health: 20; **Stagger Threshold:** 6+

Powers

Bestial Instincts (passive): Every other turn, the beast may cut ahead.

Charge (passive): When the beast inflicts 2+ damage, its target is knocked prone.

Deadly Bite (passive): Once per scene, when this beast Wounds its target, it may inflict a disabled arm, disabled leg, or mauled Wound.

Devour (passive): When the beast attacks a prone target, its base damage becomes 12 (lacerated) and gains Piercing (-2).

Mount (passive): The beast may potentially serve as a mount, and may move before or after attacking.

Superpredator (passive): The beast's attacks have Overwhelming (-1).

Swift Killer (passive): Once per battle, the beast may move two zones with a move action.

Yeddim

Enormous, shaggy, and docile, these are the preferred pack animals of caravans the world over.

Aptitudes: Trample, feats of strength, haul loads

Expertise: 6; Utility: 2

Base Damage: 6 (bruised)

Defense: 5; Soak: 8; Resolve: 1

Essence: 1; Willpower: 3

Health: 14; Stagger Threshold: 5+

Powers

Charge (passive): When the beast inflicts two levels of damage after soak, its target is knocked prone.

Mount (passive): The beast may potentially serve as a mount, and may move before or after attacking.

Incredible Strength (passive): 10s on feats of strength or attempts to haul loads count as two successes.

Wolf

The gritty prequel to mankind's best friend.

Aptitudes: Attack, sharp senses, tracking, maneuver

Expertise: 6; Utility: 2

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; Soak: 5; Resolve: 3

Essence: 1; Willpower: 4

Health: 6; Stagger Threshold: 2+

Powers

Pack Tactics (passive): The beast gains Overwhelming with a value equal to the number of wolves that have already attacked the target this round. In the case of a group of wolves, Overwhelming's value is equal to the group's Size.

Swift Killer (passive): Once per battle, the beast may move an extra zone when it moves.

Chapter Nine: A Wondrous Panoply

This chapter covers magical equipment and property: Demesnes, Manses, Hearthstones, and Artifacts.

None of these topics are covered as comprehensively as in other editions of the game, because quite frankly there isn't time or room to do so. You *should* be able to effectively import Artifacts from your favorite edition without too much trouble, though.

Attunement

Nearly all Essence-users can benefit from magical items and geomancy, but in order to do so they must generally be attuned to the location or artifact. Artifacts which do not require attunement are rarely of any substantial power.

Geomantic Attunement

Attuning to an unclaimed Demesne requires six hours of meditation within its grounds. Once attunement is established, that character becomes the site's *owner*. The owner of a Demesne can reflexively sense all attempts to attune to the Demesne while she is within its confines, and may automatically block them, permit them as sub-attunements which grant attunement benefits without bestowing ownership, or may even allow ownership to be taken by another character. She can also sever any existing attunements with a simple action and a contested (Wits + Occult) roll against difficulty 7 (no more than one such attempt per day per sub-attunement). While the owner remains attuned but *not* present, she may remotely sense attempts to attune to the demesne, but may not block them; they automatically succeed as sub-attunements.

Attunement to (and ownership of) a Demesne fades (character's Essence) weeks after leaving its boundaries.

Attunement to a Manse functions in the same fashion, save that it takes (character's Essence) months for attunement to lapse, and attunement will *never* lapse if the character is carrying the manse's Hearthstone. Sub-attunements may be accomplished remotely if the site's owner allows others to handle its Hearthstone.

Stealing a Manse or Demesne

There exist a few specialized spells and artifacts designed to help shatter geomantic attunements, but without them, there are only three ways to steal a Manse or Demesne. The first is to strongarm the owner into transferring ownership of the site. The second is to chase the owner away, then wait for their attunement to naturally break. (If they ran away with the site's Hearthstone, it will either need to be retrieved or else the Manse will need to be damaged enough to disrupt its power, then repaired — a very costly and difficult process.) If none of those options seem appealing, the only other way to speed up the breaking of an attunement is to kill the site's current owner, which severs attunement and frees up ownership immediately.

Artifact Attunement

Attuning to an artifact requires several minutes of handling and examining the item while communing with its Essence to bring Exalt and wonder into alignment with one another.

Instantaneous attunement is possible, but rather than creating a harmonious accord, this is a forceful process of overmastering the artifact. To attune to an artifact upon merely touching it, make a reflexive Essence roll against difficulty (4 + artifact's rating, or 2 + artifact's rating if the Exalt has successfully attuned to it in the past). Success forces the artifact to submit immediately to the Exalt's will. Failure creates a violent disharmony between object and would-be wielder, and means attunement cannot be attempted again during the current scene.

An attuned artifact remains attuned until its owner has gone (Essence rating) days without touching it.

Someone handling an already-attuned artifact may attempt to break and overwrite its attunement with their own. This requires a contested (Wits + Occult) roll against difficulty 7, and may be attempted no more than once per scene. If attempting fast attunement, this roll must be made in addition to the original reflexive attunement roll.

Attuning to an artifact reduces a character's maximum Mote pool by a total of 0, 1, or 2, as indicated by the artifact. A character can be simultaneously attuned to a number of artifacts equal to her (Essence rating + 1).

Resonance

Artifacts are almost uniformly made of one of the magical materials. Orichalcum, moonsilver, starmetal, jade, and soulsteel are by far the most well-known, but others exist, such as adamant. Different sorts of supernatural beings are said to be *resonant* with various different magical materials.

While anyone can attune to any artifact, attuning to an artifact made of a resonant substance carries particular advantages, referred to as a *resonance bonus*. The most frequent resonance bonus is the ability to utilize a magical weapon or armor's Evocation.

Evocations

Evocations are special powers locked inside of artifact weapons or armor. They either act as a special Charm that can be used while a Hearthstone is set into one of the artifact's sockets, or act as a permanent modification to a Charm that the wielder knows while a Hearthstone is socketed into the item.

Crafting

Broadly speaking, at the basic level, there are three ways to handle crafting. I am going to recommend, strongly, that you pick which one to use *not* based on *what is being made*, but rather *what kind of story is being told about the thing being made*.

The first, and simplest, is **crafting for result**. When you're crafting for result, you're trying to solve a problem, like "I need to get out to the little islet in the middle of that lake, but it's full of really bitey fish." The question here is whether or not you can make a thing that does what you need, in this case a raft that gets you there and back without coming apart or having gaps that get your ass bitten or whatever.

This is the simplest crafting scenario. You just make an (Attribute) + Craft roll against a difficulty set by the prevailing circumstances (how hard the thing is to make, how suitable the

materials you have to hand are, whether or not you have suitable tools, and so on), and the more successes you rack up, the better the thing you made works.

The second way to handle crafting is **crafting against a deadline**, which is done by using an extended roll to see *how long it takes to make a thing*. In this case, you're trying to get your raft put together before the Circle of Abyssals pursuing you catches up to you, or whatever. This is done by rolling (Attribute) + Craft as an extended roll.

Now, there doesn't have to be an *actual* deadline, the circumstances don't have to be life-or-death, there doesn't even need to be a terminus for this extended roll. There just has to be an urgency to be done with the project that is of greater importance than anything else, even if only because you're impatient and want to be on to the next thing.

Unfortunately, the Craft ability is used to make things, and "things" is a *tremendously* large category encompassing objects that reasonably take a few minutes to put together as well as objects and structures that take months or years of work to assemble. It makes chopsticks and it also makes houses. As a result, the interval period between rolls is going to be very much up to Storyteller discretion, possibly assisted by a bit of Googling to figure out, hey, how long *does* it take to make a horseshoe anyway?

(The whole process from iron bar stock to shod horse is 4-5 hours, if you're curious. And just because it's going to be the most common thing y'all have to Google, making a sword takes an extremely variable amount of time, anywhere from about two days of work for a basic man-sticker to several months for a really excellent masterwork blade.)

Actually, that whole aside points out a fundamental complexity of crafting, and a point where you need to get comfortable with abstraction. In this system, the more successes you roll, the better the outcome of the action. Does that mean that if you roll five successes to make a sword, you make a masterpiece and thus bloat the crafting time out to way more than what you were expecting? Or does it mean that you somehow jam out a masterpiece in the time it would normally take to grind out a basic sidearm? Probably the latter, which isn't *realistic*, but, again, this is the game where helms don't have stats do you don't have to cover up your cool haircut to survive in battle.

Anyway, that brings us to the third scenario: **crafting for quality**. This is a situation where the objective is to produce the *best* thing you can. Like the first scenario, crafting for result, you just make a straight (Attribute) + Craft roll against a difficulty set by how hard the thing is to make. I have to abandon the raft example here because it doesn't make any sense; this is the kind of situation where you're looking to get a favor out of the Despot of Gem so you've painted a portrait of him, and you want to jam out as many successes as possible so that he's super duper impressed by how good it is.

Okay, that's 700 thoughtful words on the basic-ass use of an Ability. Why have I gone to the trouble of laying that out for you? Because "crafting guy" is one of the archetypes people who play **Exalted** like to build around, and the rabbit hole gets a *lot* deeper than crafting for result, crafting against a deadline, and crafting for quality, but that's always at the base of any crafting endeavor. That trinity forms the ground floor of the craftsman's identity.

From these humble origins rises a mighty pillar of Exalted power, which once held up the First Age of Man and the Realm of the Solar Exalted.

Word to Your Storyteller

Hi, Storyteller, I'm speaking directly to you for a moment. Listen.

If someone at your table has decided to be Craft Dude, you've got a little bit of extra work to do to make them happy. You have two jobs in this respect.

The first is to portray the setting of Creation in the Second Age of Man with integrity. That doesn't mean you're the fun police, it means you're the fun facilitator. *That* in turn doesn't mean it's your job to just give the player whatever they want. It's your job to throw interesting complications and challenges into their character's life: challenges that can be best overcome by *making something cool*. That being said, the player *will*, all on their own, conceive ambitions to make neat shit. When that happens, your job is, once again, to throw interesting complications and challenges at the character: material shortages, jealous professional rivals, unscrupulous suppliers, a need for rare materials: whatever.

Just sitting down in an empty Manse and grinding out 10 intervals of an extended roll with no garnish or storytelling around it is fucking boring. Don't do that to your table. Don't do that to yourself. Don't do that to the player! If they want to make something cool, it will only be cool if the act of its creation was, itself, a story, even if just a very small and simple one where they had to browbeat some asshole into selling them a roll of silk at a reasonable price, or the first tree they found with the right kind of wood for the thing they wanted to build had a big old fuckin' hornet nest in it, or whatever.

That leads to your second job. Your second job is to *make sure the player gets to be a crafter*. If he wants to make a whole goddamn warstrider (see the Appendix to this volume), sit down and talk about the scale of that undertaking and what kinds of stories it's going to involve. If he's making a daiklave and he starts summoning metodies from Hell to speed up the process of melting down and refining the impurities out of the jade-steel mix, understand his objective in doing so and reward him for doing something proactive and clever. At the end of the day, you want memorable things to happen and for him to have his daiklave. That's the ultimate goal, not to make sure that a specific table with crafting time roll intervals gets followed.

So, on the one hand, you need to preserve the integrity of the setting, which is *not* a place where people just casually crap out powerful artifact weapons, but on the other hand, this player showed up with a hankering to make some cool artifact weapons and their character *is* an Exalted crafter. Make it make sense.

Ultimately, artifact-crafting and Manse-raising are their own beasts, discusses on pages XX and XX, but these fundamental principles of wrangling crafters and craft-stories are universal.

The Problem of Craftsmen

An "artifact" in **Exalted** is a lasting work of magical craftsmanship, a mighty supernatural object which permanently or semi-permanently enriches the world by its presence. Making an artifact is a laborious, difficult, demanding process, even by the standards of the Chosen, and is discussed on page XX.

There's an intrinsic tension between the integrity of depicting the setting — the reward of achieving something with a lot of friction associated with it — and the *very fundamental* desire of almost every player I've ever seen show up and eagerly slap down 5 dots into Craft, which is to make sick-ass magic swords and enchanted boats and shit.

The **Exalted Demake** is very focused on *feel*, on *authenticity of feeling* with regards to the game's setting. Which is to say, making artifacts is slow and difficult and any shortcuts around those two facts are generally not easy to repeat or re-use. So, characters generally can't just slam out daiklave after daiklave, or whip up a warstrider in a story or two. *If your story is so fast-paced that stories only last for a few in-game days each, I am not going to give you a work-around to let you do artifact crafting on that timescale.* If that's what you want, you need to talk to your Storyteller about expanding the time-scope of the chronicle, or else ignore me, say fuck setting integrity, and houserule your way to happiness.

However, I also don't want to leave you, the player who eagerly jammed Craft up to 5 and wants to play The Twilight Who Makes Extremely Cool Shit, just the options of "make a regular-ass raft with one dice roll" and "spend four whole stories making a flying carpet as a narrative conceit" and nothing in-between.

And so, we come to the matter of Splendors.

Splendors

Splendors are items created as vessels for transitory enchantments. A splendor's maker is inevitably a craftsman capable of some manner of Essence manipulation, who has used that facility to incorporate a small miracle into his creation in a process not unlike the workings of sorcerers (see p. XX).

Splendors, it should be noted, are *not* artifacts. These are the fundamental qualities governing a splendor:

- A splendor's enchantment is finite. It will eventually exhaust the Essence woven into it, either through use, damage disrupting the enchantment, or the simple passage of undoing the potency of its blessings.
- A splendor is, fundamentally, a mundane object underneath the magics woven into it. The physical substance of a splendor is not imperishable or unbreakable, and unless its enchantment focuses on increasing its direct performance as a tool, it is often no better at doing whatever it is that it does than any other mundane tool of its sort would be.
- A splendor's enchantment is always singular. A splendor does one particular uncanny thing. Splendors are never multi-faceted and versatile in the fashion that powerful artifacts can be.
- A splendor's function always follows its form. If a splendor is a hammer, then it probably does whatever magical thing it does when you hit things with it. It's very unlikely that an enchanted sword hypnotizes people, unless *maybe* it has an extraordinary gem embedded into its hilt that victims need to stare into.

Making a Splendor

Splendors are relatively easy to make, at least compared to artifacts. In order to make a Splendor, the following criteria must first be fulfilled:

- Everyone who directly contributes to the construction of a splendor (that is to say, the project lead and anyone whose efforts would provide a teamwork bonus as defined on p. XX) *must* be capable of manipulating Essence in some way. Nearly all sorts of supernatural beings qualify, as do mortal sorcerers.

- The project lead must have at least Craft ••, Occult ••, and Mystic (Enchantment) ••. The project lead is considered to be the character making the rolls to create the thing.
- A splendor must be crafted from conception with the intent and purpose that it should bear a particular enchantment. An object already under construction cannot be adapted mid-process to become a splendor.
- A splendor must be hand-crafted, not the output of some automated industrial process or sorcerous working.

With all these criteria fulfilled, making a splendor consists of spending 1 Willpower and making an extended (Dexterity or Intelligence, whichever seems more appropriate) + Craft roll. If the roll's goal is met, the splendor is successfully created.

The interval of this roll is dictated by the Storyteller, depending on what sort of mundane object the splendor is. A sword or set of boots might have six-hour intervals, while an enchanted merchantman might require one-week intervals for its rolls, and so on. Because making splendors is fundamentally a crafting endeavor, Charms that speed up Craft projects work on them as normal.

The difficulty of all of these rolls is based on the splendor's **aim**, again detailed below.

Finally, the goal of this extended roll is determined by the splendor's **ambition**, as detailed below.

A splendor does not intrinsically have a terminus in the fashion that a sorcerous working does, although some outside factor might limit the amount of time (and thus number of rolls) available for the crafting.

Aim

Decide which of the following best describes the splendor you want to make:

- **Crude:** The splendor's enchantments are woven into an object that can be best described as a rush-job: it will work, but probably not terribly well and probably not for long. **The difficulty to make the splendor is 7.**
- **Functional:** The splendor's enchantments are woven into an object that is functional and solidly-made. **The difficulty to make the splendor is 8.**
- **Masterwork:** The splendor's enchantments are woven into an exceptionally well-crafted item. **The difficulty to make the splendor is 9.**

Splendors are, alas, not artifacts. Mundane objects are poor vessels for active Essence, and so their enchantments bleed out of them or are quickly expended.

A **crude** splendor can only be used (creator's Essence rating) times if its enchantment is actively wielded (a sword that inflicts aggravated damage, a skeleton key that opens any lock), or give its benefit for a (creator's Essence rating) days if its enchantment is passive (a rope that always happens to be exactly as long as you need it to be, a mirror that always reflects the room where it was constructed). If not used up, active enchantments lose their potency after a month. If a crude splendor is ever within the same sector as an instance of sorcerous countermagic or distortion its enchantments are immediately destroyed.

A **functional** splendor with an active effect be used (creator's Essence rating x 2) times, while one with a passive enchantment remains enchanted for (creator's Essence rating) months. If not used up, active enchantments lose their potency after a cycle (three months). If a functional splendor is ever adjacent to or within the same zone as an instance of sorcerous countermagic or distortion (either the sorcerer invoking it or the magic it's being targeted against), its enchantments are immediately destroyed.

A **masterwork** splendor with an active effect be used (creator's Essence rating x 3) times, while one with a passive enchantment remains enchanted for (creator's Essence rating) years. If not used up, active enchantments lose their potency after a year. If a masterwork splendor is ever in the same zone as an instance of sorcerous countermagic or distortion (either the sorcerer invoking it or the magic it's being targeted against), its enchantments are immediately destroyed.

Ambition

Ambition describes how powerful and elaborate the enchantment woven into a splendor can be. Describe the magic you want to imbue into the splendor and then consult the list below to see which best matches it.

- **Ambition 1 (5 successes):** The splendor simply performs its mundane function with uncommon convenience or resilience: boots that don't get scuffed or muddy; a sword that sharpens itself when sheathed; a rope that always lands in a neat coil when you throw it down; a rug that resists stains.
- **Ambition 2 (7 successes):** The splendor can be imbued with "luck" as an active enchantment, such that an action undertaken with it can be re-rolled without spending Willpower or using up a protagonist's once-per-scene re-roll. Alternately, it may be granted a passive enchantment that is not useful, but is amusing or enjoyable, such as a pleasant odor, a soothing texture, a wonderful taste, or a contrail of bright harmless sparks when it is waved through the air.
- **Ambition 3 (9 successes):** The splendor can do one minor but useful impossible thing, like flying into your hand from a few feet away when called, changing between two appearances on command (a red cloak becoming a black cloak), or igniting a small fire on whatever point it is struck against.
- **Ambition 4 (12 successes):** The splendor has an impossible quality that could fairly be described as impressive, such as a skeleton key that will open any nonmagical lock, a ship that can sail on lava without being burned or melted, a rope that always happens to be exactly as long as you need it to be, or a parasol that creates so much drag that someone holding it can gently drift down to the ground without suffering falling damage. A weapon with this degree of enchantment can manifest *one* of the following rules: Aggravated damage (-1), Overwhelming (-1), or Piercing (-1).
- **Ambition 5 (15 successes):** The splendor can do something very impressive. This is the domain of masks that let their wearer breathe underwater, mirrors that will always reflect the room where they were constructed, coffins that dematerialized beings can't pass through, or a parasol that can carry you up into the air and away like a dandelion seed if you blow into it. A weapon with this degree of enchantment can manifest any of the same rules at Ambition 4, but at -2.

While it is certainly possible to create consumable splendors, splendor-making and alchemy are two separate arts. Cooked and brewed splendors generally cap out at Ambition 2; anything more miraculous than that is the province of the mystic art of alchemy, as detailed on page XX.

Creating Artifacts

Unlike splendors, artifacts are permanent or semi-permanent items of wondrous power, whose might runs the gamut from “magical convenience” to “earth-shaking miracle.” They represent the apex of Exalted creative potential, and acted as the foundation upon which the First Age Realm was raised.

Creating artifacts is a matter of combining three elements: time, expertise, and mystically empowered raw materials.

Making an artifact is a painstaking process, requiring months of labor at the lowest end and decades or centuries of work for the most ambitious constructions of Exalted power. The physical vessel itself must be perfectly shaped and crafted, with hair-fine etchings by which Essence might be properly channeled. Elaborate decorations produce the correct resonance within the Essence it channels. The magical materials themselves are highly difficult to work with, requiring forges stoked to ferocious temperatures or particular mystic conditions to be met in order for them to be properly shaped.

The crafting process is more than a crafting process, as well. More than half of the time spent making an artifact consists of efficacious prayers, rituals to cleanse the workshop and materials, rituals to prepare the materials, rituals to empower the materials, and rituals to bind the other rituals together.

This leads to the matter of expertise. Making an artifact requires, at minimum, Craft 4+, Occult 3+, and either the ability to channel Essence, initiation into sorcery, or assistance from some sort of supernaturally empowered facility. Such workshops are rare to the point of nonexistence since the fall of the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate, at least in Creation; they abound in Autochthonia.

Finally, artifacts must be made using materials of great intrinsic power. At the very least, this means using one of the classical magical materials (jade, orichalcum, moonsilver, starmetal, adamant, and soulsteel) to bind active Essence into the design of the item. For anything above Artifact •, another item of mystic power must be incorporated for each dot of its Artifact rating. Examples include the bones of behemoths, the heart of a faerie lord, tears of regret shed by a demon in the first and only moment it ever knows remorse, or a stable impossibility seized from the depths of the Wyld. In the First Age, Twilights could send their Circlemates and retainers out to find and acquire wonders on their behalf, but in the Time of Tumult the aspiring artificer must generally go adventuring for her raw materials herself.

This is usually the point in an **Exalted** crafting system where you’d get some dice rolls. Roll something + Craft if you like, but really, making artifacts is about the story of gathering their components, and telling tales about the labor and love poured into them. Does anyone really want to do all that and then watch the whole labor fall apart because of a random botched roll? Reducing it to an extended roll just makes the process into watching a clock.

Fuck it. You know the game doesn't want you cranking out artifacts by the dozen. Systems are just a fig leaf to make doing so feel justified when someone finds enough mechanics to smash together to create a reliable workaround. This is a storytelling game. Tell stories.

The Artificer's Cheat Sheet

In short, to create an artifact, you must:

- Have Craft 4+, Occult 3+, and some way to bend Essence to your will.
- Have a secure, prepared space to perform the work. Describe the space. If you don't have such a space, build or otherwise acquire it.
- Have a supply of one of the magical materials, plus one additional wonder to incorporate into the artifact's construction for each dot of its rating past the first. Describe these wonders, and how you came by them; or tell stories of seeking them out. The wonders chosen *matter*, as artificing is all about bending resonant magic into miraculous items. If you want a powerbow that freezes people solid when you shoot them with it, you need to find some prodigies that are related to snow, ice, winter, and the like.
- Spend an enormous amount of time laboring to create the item. Weave your months or years of seclusion into the story, or start telling stories about how you're going to get the work done faster.
- Tell a story about the crafting itself. That isn't a game-time proscription, you don't have to literally focus a story arc on the crafting, but at least tell the other players at the table about the prayers and rituals your character is performing as they labor at their forge. Describe the anvil you made out of an abandoned altar to the Unconquered Sun and how the folk of the village down below your mountain workshop can hear it ringing through the night from winter's beginning to winter's end. Talk about the hawk-like fire elementals that perch on your workshop's roof as you sing magic hymns to stoke the flames to impossible temperatures. Make it memorable. If the act of creation sucks, the artifact sucks, and then you're the Twilight who churns out artifacts that suck. Nobody wants that.

Storytelling Artifact Creation (the Real Crafting System)

Broadly speaking, artifact creation is extremely difficult for Dragon-Blooded, and a major drain of time and resources for Solars. These are largely story considerations, rather than game-mechanics barriers, because the system isn't granular enough to track minutiae at the level we're about to discuss, but these considerations are still meaningful when depicting the setting.

All wonder-forgers face significant hardships in that their work is creatively challenging, highly complex, difficult to execute, and requires an incredible amount of painstaking labor and magic. I didn't stutter up above when I said that the weakest artifacts take *months of work*, and that the most impressive ones are the labor of *decades or centuries*.

That being said, most games don't have downtime spanning decades or centuries, and the Chosen are impatient. So: the diligent artificer learns to cheat in as many ways as possible. The First Age looked the way it did because the Exalted spent thousands of years building cheats and shortcuts to enable even bigger cheats and shortcuts.

Telling stories about making artifacts isn't a matter of grinding out long extended rolls while your friends fuck around on their phones. It's a matter of looking for new ways to make your

character's labors more effective. That means building, renting, or stealing minor artifacts designed to facilitate the building of artifacts. It means constructing or seizing or stocking a workshop, which is not a matter of checking off a box and going "job's done." Artificers constantly scour the markets and rumor-mills of Creation for new reagents, tools, machinery, and techniques that they might employ. It means cultivating highly skilled assistants and inducing them to come work for you. It was *very* common in the First Age for Solar workshops to be staffed around the clock, with squadrons of mortal journeymen performing efficacious prayers to empower forge-gods or bound demons to attend to the gruntwork of meticulously carving one hundred million hair-thin runes on the behemoth-leather strips that would be wound around a daiklave's hilt, the Solar herself only putting in an appearance once or twice a week to attend to some especially crucial aspect of the labor. *The more hands and tools at your disposal, the faster the work goes.* Putting in this kind of effort can be the difference between knocking out an Artifact 5 wonder in a couple of years versus taking eighty for the Solar to do it completely on her own backed up with nothing but Craftsman Needs No Tools.

At the low end of the process, Dragon-Blooded possess the ability to sense and manipulate Essence, but it's weaker than in their Celestial peers, and they lack Charms to significantly speed up their crafting endeavors. This means they always work at the slower, worst-case end of the scale. This means that they rarely attempt to produce top-shelf artifacts at all, and when they do, it is either their life's work *or* they rely upon a vast web of infrastructure to make the project practical. The latter, clearly, is a much more attractive prospect, but there are significantly fewer dedicated manse-workshops stocked with competent staff and bountiful stockpiles of ready-to-forge magical materials than there are Dragon-Blooded who would like to pursue such projects. Competition for such priceless workspaces and resources is incredibly fierce and often pre-booked decades in advance.

These are not impediments, not really. These are *stories*: of striving, of frustration, of wheeling and dealing, of exploration and theft and inspiration and triumph.

Designing Manses

Manse design is an extremely difficult and demanding profession. Demesnes are wellsprings of incredible geomantic power, and the purpose of a Manse is to channel, concentrate, and contain that power. Any mistake during the course of that process is apt to produce catastrophic results. A shoddily-built house may leak when it rains, or fall down during a windstorm. A badly built Manse represents a fortune invested into a structure that either doesn't function (if the architect is lucky), or which incorrectly stores titanic quantities of Essence until it explodes like a bomb, potentially leveling an entire city district (if they're not). Dragon-Blooded study for years at the Heptagram, Cloister of Wisdom, Spiral Academy, or one of a number of other more specialized finishing schools focused on architecture to learn the finer points of Manse design and the underlying principles of geomancy.

To even attempt to design a Manse with a prayer of success, a character needs Craft, Lore, and Occult all rated at 4+. Beyond that, as with designing artifacts, the **Exalted Demake** largely chooses to eschew the usual extended design roll rigamarole. You can still do it, if you like; (Intelligence + Craft), increasingly lavish totals necessary for higher dot ratings, yada yada, but if you're qualified to design a Manse, you can design a Manse. Instead, we recommend (Intelligence + Craft) rolls to satisfy *unusual* Manse design projects: capping a particularly powerful (level 4 or 5) Demesne without wasting any of its power; designing a superlative

Manse that will please a client more than competing bids; designing a Manse more fabulous than the one your architectural rival designed last year — things like that. Those are all a lot more interesting at the table than just grinding out 45 successes at one-month intervals.

Actually constructing a Manse is a gigantic project involving dozens to thousands of laborers and, generally, a fortune in raw materials. Even the rudest level 1 Manse generally takes about a year to construct. Level 3 Manses can take well over a decade, while building a level 5 Manse is a generational project taking anywhere from fifty to two hundred years. It's *very* common to outlay even more funds to hire sorcerers to summon labor-oriented elementals or demons (such as hopping puppeteers) to speed up this process, cutting construction times down from decades to years, or years to months. The major obstacle is generally a combination of funds and logistics: beyond a certain point that arrives very rapidly, demon labor requires overseers to keep them on-track and to curb undesired behavior such as kidnapping local children. The overseers may or may not be demons themselves, and may need direct sorcerous oversight. In any case, sorcerers generally expect to be well-compensated for all this work.

Storytelling Manse Design and Creation

There's a moment in *The Empire Strikes Back* where Han Solo flies into an asteroid field to evade Imperial pursuit, and C-3PO blurts out "The chances of successfully navigating an asteroid field are approximately 3,720 to 1!" Now, if you're designing a *Star Wars* roleplaying game, and you've been commissioned to do the asteroid field navigation rules, if you try to make it so that players only have about a 3,720:1 chance of succeeding, you have fucked up. It should probably be more like 80% because the entire point of flying into an asteroid field is showing off what a cool hotshot pilot their character is, despite narratively high odds.

I say this because, within the setting of **Exalted**, successfully harnessing the geomancy of level 4 or 5 Demesnes is considered *incredibly* challenging, even by the Exalted. The amount of Essence involved is mind-boggling and the complexity of its flow-patterns is orders of magnitude greater than in weaker Demesnes. Figuring out how to channel all that power through the symbolic resonance of concrete, marble, and wood arranged into a structure without blowing the walls out or aging everyone inside at triple the normal rate demands the architect work out sprawling equations that can easily cover the floor of a ballroom, combining trigonometry with geological assaying and geomantic insight. Successfully harnessing all that power is something that only Celestial Exalts have ever been able to reliably do. That's not to say Dragon-Blooded *can't* do it; just that the Terrestrial architects who prove that they *can* may be counted without running out of fingers.

If you're playing a Manse-builder, you probably want to be one of those guys. Assuming you've got the relevant Abilities at 5 dots, it's best to just go ahead and agree that yes, you are a wunderkind prodigy, and then start telling stories about that, rather than boxing you in behind a 35-to-50 success extended roll at difficulty 9.

I say all this to make you aware that, if we were going to bore you by rolling dice until all the corners got worn off, that's the kind of thing you'd be chewing your way through. We're not, though. We're going to reduce it to a matter of storytelling, and you're going to keep in mind that the thing the system is letting you do, gratis, is in fact considered nigh-impossibly difficult *even by Exalts* and that it doesn't proliferate across the setting because almost nobody can do it without ruining an eye-wateringly expensive project and possibly creating a city-leveling geomantic bomb.

There are two kinds of Manse design stories: tales of *architecture* and *logistics*.

Architectural stories are political stories. One of the Realm's central holy figures was a builder. Many Dragon-Blooded decide to pursue a career in architecture. There are *many* more allegedly-qualified geomantic architects (or individuals trying to pass themselves off as such) than pristine Demesnes on the Blessed Isle, and so most Manse work there involves retrofitting old Manses or tearing them down and replacing them with a new edifice that better suits its owner's needs. As a result, most geomantic work of the sort that the Chosen *want*, the kind of work that can establish a reputation and that is most creatively fulfilling and politically and financially rewarding, is to be found out in the Threshold, where uncapped Demesnes are abundant. Since that's where the work is, that's also where the competition is. It's quite uncommon for a geomancer to be able to simply walk up to a palace, say "I heard you're looking for some blueprints," and secure a job. Sabotage, espionage, competitive bids, favor-currying, character assassination, and literal assassination are all standard challenges a qualified geomancer has to deal with in plying her trade, even before the challenge of designing an adequate Manse.

Logistical stories are stories of Manse construction. Manse construction takes absolutely forever if a bloody-minded Exalt does it all herself. Only Lunars designing "natural" Manses really even attempt this. Everyone else hires laborers and oversees their efforts, often supplemented with demon or elemental summoning, as detailed above. In addition to needing to secure, feed, house, and pay laborers (or to pay overseers if using human or supernatural slave labor), Manses require a ferocious amount of raw materials in the form of brick, plaster, cut stone, wood, more expensive decorative materials such as marble or bloodstone or gems with very particular properties, and, very frequently, exotic sorcerous reagents, small amounts of the magical materials (or *not so small amounts* in the case of Manses with powerful magical features), and sometimes even uncanny wonders of the same sort required to build artifacts. If the Manse isn't situated right in the middle of an urban center, roads will be necessary to get supplies in and out, and a small service industry will probably pop up to support the needs of the project's labor pool. This increases security concerns.

This is all horrifyingly expensive, even by the standards of the rulers of the Great Houses of the Realm.

Manse architects are generally expected to remain on-call or at least available to travel to the site on short notice during a Manse's construction, as the need for mid-project adjustments are very common due to either material shortages, minor flaws in the original blueprints that need smoothing out as the work continues, unexpected behavior of underlying geomancy once other adjustments occur, and, of course, the simple reality that one's rivals will probably attempt to sabotage an unattended project to ruin an architect's reputation.

If an Exalt is constructing a Manse for her own benefit, she also assumes the nightmare responsibility of financing it. *Many* Manses end up taking years or even decades longer to construct than would have been strictly necessary because the funds for them dry up and new sources of revenue must be secured before work can continue. If a project needs exotic materials, the Exalt must source them herself.

These are all the standard impediments of simply raising a standard 2 or 3-dot Manse. Increase them by an order of magnitude of complexity and intensity for more powerful Manses. Crank the pressure up tenfold if the character is attempting to build a First Age-style project. Nobody tries to make prodigies like flying Manses or semi-automated artificing workshops anymore because

it's simply too difficult and demands too much infrastructure, but if anyone is going to prove to be the singular exception, you're probably playing that person. Just keep in mind that your achievement will feel hollow and cheap if your story doesn't reflect the incredible investment made and the daunting challenges overcome along the way. Creation is full of amazing ultra-badass experts and none of them have been able to successfully do this thing in centuries; if you treat *your* success like it ain't no thang, then the entire setting looks like a bunch of chumps, and you look like the guy preening because he beat a bunch of chumps. Respect the difficulty and investment when constructing your narrative, and reap the rewards in the end.

Demesnes

Demesnes are places of great geomantic power. They are rated according to the scope of that power, on a one to five-dot scale which also matches up to the Manse Background.

A character who is attuned to a Demesne is able to draw a vast bounty of power from it while standing upon its grounds. While within an attuned Demesne, a character replenishes Motes at a rate determined by the Demesne's rating:

- 1 Mote every 12 hours.
- 1 Mote every 6 hours.
- 1 Mote every 3 hours.
- 1 Mote every hour.
- 1 Mote every 15 minutes.

Demesnes have an *aspect*. Normally, this matches one of the five elements, but some rare Demesnes (particularly but not limited to those in Heaven) are attuned to more refined powers such as the sun, the moon, or the stars. Demesnes in the Underworld and in some shadowlands are attuned to the power of death, while Demesnes in Malfeas are attuned to the emanations of Hell.

The owner of a Demesne can also sense the active use of Essence within its confines with a reflexive (Perception + Occult) roll against difficulty 8.

Manses

A Manse is a magical structure constructed on the grounds of a Demesne which harnesses the site's enormous geomantic energy, often so that an Exalt or other supernatural being can live in magical splendor. While a few Manses are constructed for other reasons, such as to be information relays, listening posts, or fortresses, the majority are either private estates or civic offices. The most notable potential use for a Manse is the focusing of geomantic power into a Hearthstone, as detailed below.

Like Demesnes, Manses are rated from one to five dots, and purchased with the Background of the same name. While a Demesne's dot rating determines the maximum rating of a Manse that might be raised on its grounds, it is very possible for a Manse to be rated lower than the Demesne it harnesses due to lack of sufficient skill in its architect to harness the full power of the site.

An attuned character on the grounds of a Manse enjoys the same Mote replenishment benefits as she would a Demesne of the Manse's rating. If she is its owner, she may also sense Essence expenditures in the same fashion as she could in an owned Demesne.

An Exalt attuned to a Manse that resonates with her Exaltation (a Solar attuned to a sun Demesne, a Fire Aspect attuned to a fire Demesne, etc) may draw one extra Mote from the site during a replenishment period once every 24 hours while she is on its grounds, or if she has its Hearthstone set into an attunement socket.

Designing a Manse

Manses aren't just four walls and a plinth that a Hearthstone accretes upon. They're wondrous structures channeling enormous amounts of mystical power. As such, in any chronicle where characters are likely to actually interact with a Manse (rather than just carrying around its Hearthstone while the site remains notional), the following system allows for Manses to be fleshed out and embellished with wondrous features.

Some features are marked as Advanced. These features were widespread in the First Age, but are generally beyond the skills or resources of modern Dragon-Blooded architects to replicate. The Advanced tag has no hard and fast rules attached, but is an important storytelling guideline, and a good place for high-difficulty (Intelligence + Craft) rolls where the number of successes determine how much trouble getting the feature working as-intended is going to be.

All Manses are designed with a number of Manse Points. **A Manse may have features totaling up to (1 + its rating) in Manse Points.**

Realities of Manse Design

Very nearly every Manse in the Age of Sorrows possesses the Features: Comfortable and Hearthstone Chamber, only adding additional features once those bare minimums are taken care of. Hearthstones are considered of paramount importance both for maintenance of site security (as otherwise attunement will eventually lapse when the owner travels abroad) and for their magical benefits (granting accelerated Mote recovery off-site, unlocking Evocations, and empowering complex artifacts). Comfort... well, Manses are first and foremost places for the wealthiest and most powerful people in Creation to live. Clockwork guardians are very nice on the night when an assassin tries to sneak in, but mosquito-repelling wards make life tolerable *every single day* if the Demesne you were able to claim is in the middle of a swamp.

Essence Vents are also exceedingly common, both for the aesthetic delight of "impossible" artistic installations and because they are by far the easiest way to discharge the geomantic power of a Demesne. Most Manse architects simply do not have the technical expertise to design advanced Manse features, and so use Essence Vents to safely dissipate the power of 4 or 5-dot Demesnes.

Magical Conveniences are the next most sought-after feature after Comfortable and Hearthstone Chamber, but relatively few Manse architects are capable of designing them, as they amount to bolting a minor artifact-crafting commission on top of the Manse design itself. As such, they are considered *very* prestigious and those capable of designing them may name nearly any price for their services.

After these matters are taken care of, most Manses, in descending order of commonality, focus on the aesthetic pleasure and convenience of their occupants; the security of their occupants; facilitating the magical works of their occupants (workshop-manses and ritual manses); and in very distant last place are other utility-manses designed to do things like form geomantic networks. Such sites were extremely widespread in the First Age, but nearly all infrastructure-Manses were destroyed or disrupted by the end of the Wyld Crusade, and those that have risen to replace them are the individual property of mighty Chosen lacking the unity of purpose (never mind expertise) to recreate anything like the war Manses of old.

One Point Features

Archive: The Manse contains an expansive library. Name the library's topic. All rolls which would benefit from exhaustive information about that topic reduce their difficulty by -2.

Bound Servants: The Manse contains several powerful servants obligated to serve its master, such as clockwork automatons or First Circle demons.

Comfortable: The Manse channels Essence to produce a pleasant environment within its walls. If it is set in the depths of the Southern desert, its halls are cool and airy. If it is perched upon a snowy mountain peak, it features heated floors and ever-burning fireplaces. Its gardens are heavy with sweet natural perfumes, its luxuries abundant. This is one of the most common Manse features. Its absence speaks of either a purpose-built Manse, a Manse of such little power that it can afford no frivolities, or an owner of an ascetic bent.

Communication Relay: The Manse allows for visual and auditory remote communication with another Manse with this feature within the same Node Network.

Data Relay (Advanced): The Manse allows for the sending and receiving of archival data (from the Archive feature) from other Manses with this feature within the same Node Network, as well as the transmission of command protocols for Manse functions. If the site has an Essence Reservoir, then Motes from it can also be transferred to other Essence Reservoir-equipped sites within the Node Network.

Deadly Traps: The Manse has powerful traps and intruder countermeasures. These traps are difficulty 7, damage 6,, and inflict bruised, lacerated, or burned Wounds.

Elemental Inundation: An increasingly-obsolete variation of Essence Vents, this Manse feature focuses the Manse's aspect into a palpable Essence-field that inundates those dwelling within. These Manses were common during the Shogunate, where they were believed to increase the likelihood of "pure-blooded" Exaltation (read: Exaltation in a lineage powerfully biased toward a single aspect). Belief in the efficacy of such Manses is on the wane in the Realm, though Prasad still situates most of its primary schools in such Manses. Otherwise, Elemental Inundation provides a modest difficulty reduction to meditative exercises for beings who match its aspect, and that's about it.

Essence Siphon (Advanced): This feature can only be included in a Manse that also has an Essence Reservoir. The Manse contains an infusion chamber which can be flooded with Essence by command of the Manse's owner. An Exalt or other Essence-user in the chamber must roll (Stamina + Resistance) against difficulty 8. They suffer (10 - successes) levels of damage

(inflicting drained Wounds) from the Essence bombardment, also absorbing a number of Motes from the Manse's Essence vault equal to the successes rolled.

Essence Vents: The Manse expels excess Essence in flamboyant and entertaining displays such as fountains of leaping flames, standing walls made of flowing water (possibly complete with small fish), or levitating statuary. These impressive displays generally indicate that either the Manse's architect was not sufficiently skilled to harness some amount of the underlying Demesne's power toward a useful result, or that they were specifically commissioned to install these artistic displays by the building's owner.

Exotic Environment: The Manse's interior replicates some radically unusual climate or terrain, such as being a palace whose interior is a wide sandy desert valley or verdant rainforest, or filled with water without being sunk into an ocean or river.

Fertility Manse: The Manse increases the likelihood of conception within its boundaries. Manse architects constantly devise new theories on how to optimize this feature, and the Realm hosts a number of "honeymoon resort" Manses where couples pay a premium to visit under the promise that children conceived within will be more likely to be blessed with Exaltation. While heightened overall fertility is certainly a possible and efficacious Manse feature, the ability of geomancy to have any impact upon likelihood of Exaltation remains questionable.

Geomantic Subtlety: The Manse doesn't obviously look like a Manse, though Essence-users can still sense the power radiating from it. Its design is nonstandard, confounding efforts to determine its aspect without hours of painstaking inspection from within its grounds.

Hearthstone Chamber: The Manse features a central chamber that focuses the lion's share of its geomantic power into a single point, where a mystic jewel eventually appears. Without this feature, the Manse does not produce a Hearthstone. Nearly all Manses are built around this feature, unless they're being specifically built to serve some other purpose such as being a sorcerous ritual space and archive, or being a relay point in a node network.

Hidden Entrances: The Manse has no obvious entrances or exits, and may only be accessed by some obscure and secret means.

Hidden Passages: The Manse has a number of secret fast-movement routes within its walls, which generally only respond to either its owner or someone who knows the secret of navigating the passages.

Magical Conveniences (Advanced): The Manse features a number of magical conveniences equal to its rating, controlled by its owner. Examples include: Candles that light whenever anyone enters a room; doors that open when approached; special sheaths and racks in the armory that keep weapons eternally sharpened and free of rust; a kitchen that automatically assembles feasts when stocked with sufficient ingredients; hallways that conduct people from place to place without walking; Essence-driven lifts; a training room that conjures phantom training partners; a library that self-sorts and dispenses volumes upon requests.

Maze: Anyone not granted the run of the Manse by its owner must make a (Wits + Survival) roll against difficulty 9 to successfully navigate its labyrinthine layout, or else become hopelessly lost.

Network Node: The Manse is geomantically linked to one or more other Manses in a network. This feature does nothing in and of itself, but other Manse features can draw upon it to facilitate communication, data transfer, and other miracles.

Orrery: The Manse contains a dedicated chamber replicating the movement of the stars and planets across the night sky. This feature can be substituted for a night of stargazing for the purposes of Sidereal Astrology (see p. XX) or standard astrology (see p. XX). Indeed, it lowers the difficulty of all aforementioned astrological rolls by -1 due to the clarity and lack of atmospheric haze.

Self-Destruct Sequence (Advanced): The Manse is designed to respond to a certain command from its owner by accumulating a deadly Essence buildup. After thirty minutes, if the self-destruct command isn't rescinded, the Manse violently explodes.

Spy Manse: The Manse is designed to channel all sound within its halls into a secret chamber, where the Manse's master can sit and eavesdrop on all that occurs within. Baffles can be closed to selectively muffle sounds from certain chambers in order to focus on desired conversations without being them being drowned out by, say, the racket of pots and pans from the kitchen.

Two Point Features

Armored: The Manse is exceptionally sturdy, and laughs off damage from anything short of battlefield sorcery. Even siege weaponry will have a tough time damaging the Manse.

Atelier-Manse (Advanced): The Manse is an automated factory, designed to resonate with the prowess of its master. The Manse's master undertakes some mundane act of construction to attune the Manse, and afterwards, so long as it is sufficiently supplied with raw materials, the Manse automatically replicates her feat of craftsmanship again and again. An Atelier-Manse can't produce artifacts, although it can produce high-quality components later *used* in artificing, such as precisely-ground crystal lenses or leather straps stitched with tiny, intricate prayers in thread-of-silver. In addition to keeping the factory supplied with raw materials, it also consumes 1 Mote per hour of operation, which must be supplied either by someone holding the Manse's Hearthstone or from an Essence Reservoir, generally necessitating a rotation of bound spirits to oversee the Manse's operation.

Chasm of the Material (Advanced): The Manse compresses reality's facets within its halls, causing all dematerialized beings who enter it to become visible and tangible while within its zone of influence.

Dragon Channel (Advanced): The Manse redirects a massive amount of its power to another specific Manse within the same Node Network. That Manse gains the Manse Points that this feature cost. This feature is almost never used in the Second Age; Demesnes which are the focus of even a single Dragon Channel are extremely difficult to cap safely, while the number of living architects capable of capping a Demesne with several Dragon Channels aimed at it can be counted on one hand. In the First Age, Dragon Channels were used to empower Manses with legendary features, such as acting as nodes for a Creation-wide teleportation network with variable destination switching, or enabling them to fly and travel away from their home Demesne while still remaining connected to its power. It is still the foundation of the Creation-wide network of War Manses which make up the backbone of the Realm Defense Grid.

Essence Reservoir (Advanced): The Manse bleeds off Essence from the geomancy of Creation and stores it in reinforced vaults, adding one Mote to the vault every 12 hours. The vault has a

capacity of 20 Motes. If this feature is utilized more than once, each additional Essence Reservoir increases the vault capacity by 20 Motes, but does nothing to increase the accumulation rate, as the site's geomantic power flows at a constant value. Stored Motes can be used to power other Manse features, and are generally not accessible for the direct use of the Manse's owner.

Guidance of Power: The Manse channels its geomancy into an empowering resonance that makes certain endeavors easier. Select one Ability. Everyone on the grounds of the Manse who is attuned to it reduce the difficulty of all rolls using that Ability by -1 . This is most frequently applied to Occult, War, and Craft, but the Blessed Isle has Manses famed as houses of performance or sites for masters to duel. House Cynis is, of course, reputed to have at least one Manse built to facilitate the skills of the bedroom.

Hostile Environment Sealing: The Manse is designed to facilitate survival in an otherwise-hostile environment, such as at the bottom of a lake or within the caldera of a volcano. It will *usually* also have a secure means of entering and leaving the Manse, though some high-security facilities deliberately lack safe paths in and out so that access is restricted to those with the proper miracles or artifacts.

Hidden Fortress (Advanced): The Manse is literally invisible, or protected by a veil of illusion that makes it almost impossible to locate if someone doesn't already know where it is.

Hyperfecundity: The Manse's grounds and immediate surroundings are absurdly fertile, almost effortlessly bringing forth bountiful crops or lavish gardens. In environments or Manse aspects where this shouldn't be possible, this feature instead makes cultivation easy and practical, producing satisfactory but not extravagant yields from snowfields or subterranean mushroom-caverns.

Impossible Architecture (Advanced): The Manse is bigger on the inside than it should be, or otherwise defies the limitations of space in some way.

Inescapable Traps: The Manse is an absolute deathtrap. Its traps are difficulty 8, damage 8 (mauled).

Limited Mobility (Advanced): The Manse is able to move within the bounds of its Demesne in some way, such as by rising up or lowering down on a pillar, spinning in place, or moving along a track. Moving a Manse in this fashion consumes 3 Motes, which must be provided either by its Hearthstone-bearer or drawn from an Essence Reservoir.

Magical Workshop: The Manse contains a fully-stocked artificer's workshop, allowing for efficient creation of artifacts.

Natural Manse (Advanced): Rather than being a standard construction of bricks and planks and heavy masonry, the Manse is a carefully-arranged work of natural geomancy: an enchanted grove, magic grotto, or the like. It is difficult to realize that the Manse is in fact a Manse at all, and not merely an uncultivated Demesne. Designing a Manse in this fashion is much more challenging than using traditional architecture, but saves a fortune in construction materials. This style of Manses is popular with the Lunar Exalted.

Resonance of Growth: The Manse is designed to facilitate the growth of a certain skill or aptitude. Those who undertake training in a specific Ability in the Manse find it easier to grasp the lessons the facility was designed to teach. If used to train antagonists over at least a year of

intensive drilling and instruction, they gain a specific Aptitude encoded into the Manse, and add one die to their Expertise pool, up to a maximum of (2 + Manse's rating). Protagonists who spend the downtime between stories training intensively at the Manse may treat its specific resonant Ability as though it were a Favored Ability when they next spend experience points. This feature cannot provide any benefit again until a protagonist has spent experience points on *something*, and only provides a discount for one purchase (so if the player has enough normal experience points banked to buy two Ability dots, she could only apply the discount to the first dot).

Ritual Space: The Manse contains a dedicated sorcerous ritual space that acts as a +1 Means for sorcerous workings.

Shadowland (Advanced): This feature only works in death-aspected Manses. The Manse's interior is considered to be a shadowland.

Slave Node (Advanced): The Manse is subordinate to another Manse within the same Node Network. This "master Manse" takes command priority over the "slave Manse," such that the master Manse's owner is considered to have attunement to and ownership of the slave Manse, even without ever having set foot upon its premises, and even if the Slave Node location already has an attuned master in possession of its Hearthstone. Thus, a Manse with Slave Node, Data Relays, and Bound Servants could have its guardians remotely commanded to permit certain visitors to enter the slave Manse unmolested.

Soul Prison (Advanced): This feature only works in death-aspected Manses. Anyone who dies on the grounds of the Manse is guaranteed to linger as a ghost.

Temple Manse: The Manse's very architecture is consecrated to the worship of a particular being. The difficulty of all prayers (see p. XX) directed at that being from within the Manse are reduced by -2, but moreover, the being finds the very existence of the Manse immensely gratifying, flattering, and pleasing to its sensibilities. While within the Temple Manse, the object of its reverence is considered to have a Cult rating one dot higher than normal. If it rests within the Manse, it regains 2 Willpower upon awakening, and is likely favorably inclined toward whoever is responsible for causing the Manse to exist, so long as it is well-kept to the being's standards.

Uninhabitable: The Manse cannot be dwelt within because it is not designed for it. The interior may be utterly hostile to life (filled with molten lava, for example), or there may not *be* an interior at all, such as in the case of a vast statue whose Hearthstone accretes upon its brow.

Wyld Invulnerability: The Manse and its inhabitants are immune to the corrosive influence of the Wyld.

Three Point Features

Fane of Industry: A Manse must have the Magical Workshop feature to be a Fane of Industry. The Manse is designed specifically to enable the birth of a singular artifact. It both counts as a wondrous ingredient for the creation of that artifact, and speeds up work to create the artifact tenfold. A Fane of Industry cannot be reconsecrated into a different feature once construction is complete; the entire Manse must be ritually disassembled down to its foundations and replaced with a new Manse if the site's owner wishes to harness the site's geomantic power for a new purpose. Most warstriders are forged in Manses with this feature.

Force Amplification (Advanced): Purchasing this feature once upgrades a War Manse's armaments to the equivalent of a Celestial Circle spell, such as Magma Kraken. Purchasing this feature twice — impossible without using Dragon Channels — upgrades the War Manse's armament to Solar Circle equivalency, opening the door to horrors equivalent to Death Ray, Total Annihilation, or even Rain of Doom.

Force Projection (Advanced): Each purchase of this feature upgrades a War Manse's armaments, adding (Manse rating x 10) miles to their effective range.

Geomantic Entanglement (Advanced): The Manse is spatially connected to another specific Manse with this feature within the same Node Network. Both share a personal-scale door — known in the First Age as a Transit Portal — which allows a character to walk between the two freely, although they may be hundreds or even thousands of miles apart. Powering a Transit Portal requires an investment of 10 Motes per minute of activity, usually drawn from an Essence Reservoir, although an Exalt attuned to the Manse *can* power the Gate with her own Essence.

Impossibility Forge (Advanced): The Manse bends its harnessed Essence into a certain ready form that can be coaxed into coalescence by either the labor of a small army of highly-trained crafters or a cadre of exactly skilled mystics. In short, the Manse may manufacture a certain particular wondrous object such as a frozen flame, solid sunbeam, or barrel of completely frictionless water. Depending on the level of skill, number of personnel brought to bear, and potency of the wonder, this might take anywhere from several hours to several weeks for each miraculous output. Very few Manses with this feature still exist, though they were once a staple of the artifact-crafting infrastructure of the First Age.

Otherworldly Gate (Advanced): The Manse contains a mystical portal leading into Heaven, Hell, the Underworld, or some other strange vista such as the lost and despoiled First Horizon of Zen-Mu.

Four Point Features

Colocation (Advanced): The Manse's architect has created a foundational cradle at another distant Demesne, and at the bidding of the Manse's owner, it may translate itself from its current location to its sister-Demesne, slowly fading from reality over the course of ten minutes before reappearing at its destination. This can only be done once per month, and severely disrupts the Manse's other features such as Magical Conveniences for days after transit. It is, in theory, possible to assign a Manse this feature more than once, giving it multiple potential sites to transit between, but even the basic version of this feature is beyond the capabilities of modern Dragon-Blooded, and implementing additional sites would expand the complexity of the necessary design by orders of magnitude. Also, if a Demesne's receiving cradle is damaged, it is not possible to translate the Manse to it.

Mobile Manse (Advanced): The Manse's is capable of functional movement over either land or water, while remaining remotely connected to its geomantic power source. This extremely advanced feature, rare even in the First Age, always requires the construction of a "cradle" at the Manse's home site to collect and transmit geomantic power, which remains vulnerable to potential sabotage while the rest of the Manse is traveling. The Manse consumes 5 Motes per hour while moving, which must be provided either by a pilot in possession of its Hearthstone or drawn from an Essence Reservoir.

Transit Network (Advanced): This feature, when attached to a Node Network featuring multiple Slave Node Manses with Geomantic Entanglement, allows the network controller to realign which Transit Portals are entangled with one another. Realigning the network costs 100 Motes, regardless of the number of reconfigurations undertaken at once.

War Manse (Advanced): The Manse's owner can command the Manse to project the equivalent of a Terrestrial Circle battle spell from prepared emplacements, such as Flight of the Brilliant Raptor or Death of Obsidian Butterflies. A War Manse can fire once per scene; any subsequent attacks within the same scene require an Essence Reservoir and drain 10 Motes per shot. If the Manse has the Force Amplification feature, this increases to 15 or 20 Motes per shot for one or two installations, respectively.

Five Point Features

Factory-Cathedral (Advanced): The Manse is optimized to streamline and facilitate the large-scale, industrial production of complex artifacts which do not exhibit Evocations, such as ashigaru armor. Artificing undertaken in a Factory-Cathedral Manse running at full capacity occurs at fifty times its normal speed. However, this feature in and of itself does nothing to provide the necessary raw materials in terms of magical materials, wondrous objects, bound or cooperating spirits, or armies of skilled and consecrated mortal workers; it only amplifies their efficacy once brought together.

Flying Manse (Advanced): An even more advanced version of Mobile Manse, this Manse is capable of geomantically-powered flight. It requires the same transmission cradle as a Mobile Manse, and this feature was considered so difficult (and dangerous) to implement that even at the apex of the First Age, no more than thirty such Manses ever existed at one time. Keeping a Manse aloft consumes 5 Motes per hour of passive levitation and 10 Motes per hour of active movement, provided either by its Hearthstone's bearer or drawn from an Essence Reservoir.

Gate of Auspicious Passage (Advanced): The Manse is spatially connected to another specific Manse with this feature within the same Node Network, as with a Geomantic Entanglement. Unlike a Geomantic Entanglement, this portal is large enough to march an army through, warstriders and all; or to admit cargo ships, if the Manse is upon the water. These massive portals are known as Gates of Auspicious Passage. Powering a Gate of Auspicious Passage costs 40 Motes per minute of operation. They represented the apex of First Age geomantic power, and at the time of the Usurpation, no Manse feature yet existed to reconfigure Gates within a Node Network. No Gates of Auspicious Passage are known to have survived to the modern day, having long ago either broken down or, much more commonly, having been scavenged for parts, the immense power used to fuel them rerouted to other uses.

Hearthstones

If a Manse generates a Hearthstone, then bearing that Hearthstone in a socket allows the character to draw power from the Manse remotely as though she were on its grounds (save that she does not receive the matching-resonance bonus Mote). Hearthstones are also used to power certain mighty Artifacts, and to unlock Evocations.

Generally, a Hearthstone being used to unlock an Evocation still *also* provides its bonus Motes. **A character bearing multiple socketed Hearthstones gains bonus Motes only from the most powerful Hearthstone.**

Hearthstone Theft!

Stealing a Hearthstone out of its socket is difficult. Magic holds the stone in place very firmly against all circumstances other than its owner willfully removing it. Attempting to filch it without the owner noticing is a difficulty 9 (Dexterity + Larceny) action, reflexively contested by a difficulty 6 (Perception + Awareness) roll — it takes a lot of torque to get it out of the socket without jostling the owner. Conversely, trying to simply tear it loose by force requires a dedicated Brawl attack intended only to seize the Hearthstone, which must generate at least five successes if the Hearthstone is socketed in armor or a decoration of some sort, or eight successes if it is mounted in a weapon. The bearer may then choose to use his next simple action to contest the theft if he desires, producing a contested roll of Strength + (Athletics or Brawl), with the thief rolling at difficulty 7 and the target at difficulty 6.

This sort of roll may not be possible at all if the Hearthstone socket is in an inaccessible location, such as those of warstriders, which are inside of the cockpit.

Most standard “automatic pickpocketing”-type Charms cannot remove a Hearthstone from its socket. The binding magic of attunement holds it too firmly.

Artifacts

Artifacts are rated from one to five dots, with one-dot artifacts being extremely limited, specific, or weak miracles and five dots being items of truly terrifying, legendary power, which might be stronger than the individual bearing them.

Hearthstone Sockets

Some artifacts have one or more Hearthstone sockets in them. There are three types of Hearthstone sockets:

- **Evocation Socket:** *Unlocks an Evocation.* In this case, the Hearthstone also provides access the flow of bonus Motes associated with its Manse, though an Exalt can only benefit from the Motes of the most powerful Hearthstone she has socketed.
- **Power Socket:** *Provides power to the artifact directly.* This may modify its functions, awaken intrinsic powers, or allow it to function at all in the case of certain large and sophisticated First Age wonders. A power-socketed Hearthstone also provides a flow of bonus Motes from its Manse, though an Exalt can only benefit from the Motes of the most powerful Hearthstone she has socketed.
- **Attunement Socket:** *Provides dedicated access to a flow of bonus Motes from the socketed Hearthstone’s Manse, without unlocking any additional powers or Evocations.* In the case of an attunement socket, the character gains the extra Mote recovery from the Manse associated with the Hearthstone in the socket *as though she were standing on its grounds*, including a bonus Mote if her Essence resonates with that of the Manse (see p. XX). Additionally, this Hearthstone’s bonus Motes remain available whether or not she has other Hearthstones slotted in other Evocation, or power, or attunement sockets, regardless of their ratings.

Artifact Weapons

With that out of the way, before we get to the wild and wacky world of flying carpets and lightning ballistae and all that fun stuff, let's start by handling the thing you actually turned to this page for: *Daiklaves* and *artifact armor*.

(I don't care if you're actually using a goremaul or direlance, all artifact weapons are daiklaves in the same manner that all vampires are Draculas. Shut up.)

Stats for artifact weapons and armor are on pages XX-XX way back in Chapter One. I'll reprint them here simply because this is a PDF and I don't have to care about space economy, and it's nice and convenient to have the table here since you're already here to build the rest of your magic whatever:

One-Handed Artifact Weapons

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Grimcleaver/Reaver Daiklave	S	Melee	7	Lacerated
Razor Claws/Slayer Katar*	S/D	Brawl/MA	6	Lacerated
Short Daiklave*	D	Melee	6	Lacerated
Goremaul	S	Melee	7	Lacerated
Wrackstaff*	D	MA	6	Bruised
Longfang/Reaper Daiklave	D	Melee	7	Lacerated
Daiklave	S/D	Melee	7	Lacerated
Smashfists**	S/D	Brawl/MA	5	Bruised
Direlash*	D	Melee/MA	6	Lacerated

* Weapons marked with one asterisk are considered nimble weapons. When wielding only nimble weapons, the first attack that strikes the character each round does not prevent her from using a move action. Only after being struck twice before her turn is she prohibited from using a move action.

** Nimble. Can be wielded with the unarmed fighting style, despite not being a natural weapon.

Two-Handed Artifact Weapons

These weapons require two hands to wield effectively due to their sheer weight and size.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Direlance/Grand Grimscythe	D	Melee	9	Lacerated
Grand Daiklave	S/D	Melee	9	Lacerated
Grand Grimcleaver	S	Melee	9	Lacerated
Grand Goremaul	S	Melee	9	Lacerated

Ranged Artifact Weapons

These weapons can be used to attack characters in other zones. **Thrown** weapons can attack characters in directly adjacent zones. Most **Archery** weapons can attack up to two zones away

and use the two-handed fighting style. Archery made against enemies in the same zone suffer a – 3 dice penalty.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Infinite Chakram/Skycutter**	D	Thrown	6	Lacerated
Powerbow/Siege Crossbow	D	Archery	7	Lacerated
Dragon Sigh Wand***	D	Archery	8	Burned

** Returns when thrown, also nimble

***Dragon sigh wands must be wielded with two hands, can only attack one zone away, and do not suffer a penalty for attacks against targets in the same zone. Each time they are fired, it is a Resources 2 expenditure.

Artifact Armor Traits

Class	Defense	Dodge	Soak	Stagger	Fatigue
Light	+0	–1	7	4+	+2
Heavy	–1	–2	8	5+	+3

Weapons, Armor, and Evocations

“Standard” artifact weapons are rated Artifact ••. “Standard” two-handed and Archery-based artifact weapons are rated Artifact •••. “Standard” light artifact armor is rated Artifact ••, “standard” heavy artifact armor is Artifact •••.

All “standard” artifact weapons and armor have an attunement cost of 1. “Standard” light artifact armor has an attunement cost of 0.

All of the items described above come standard with a single Evocation socket, in which sleeps a singular Evocation.

More powerful weaponry and armor exists, with concurrently higher Artifact ratings. You can find them in various supplements across the three editions. More powerful war kit is denoted by unique powers (such as Flying Silver Dream’s ability to fight on its own), by bearing additional Hearthstone sockets of various sorts, or by a combination of the above.

Evocations

Evocations are powers drawn forth from communion between artifact and wielder. Many artifacts, especially those of comparably humble design, shape their miracles to the hand that masters them, while those with more defined, bellicose spirits will simply withhold their blessings from an incompatible soul. Or, in mechanical terms, the higher an artifact’s dot rating, the more likely it is to have a fixed set of powers regardless of who interacts with it, while a simpler artifact may slightly adapt itself to its current owner (an Artifact •• red jade daiklave, for example, might exhibit Erupting Burst Offensive in the hands of its original Dragon-Blooded master, but when taken from his corpse by a Solar warrior, might then grant her Edge of Killing Heat instead).

Evocations are primarily associated with artifacts that are personally used or worn, such as weapons, armor, and clothing such as belts, cloaks, and jewelry. Many “utility” artifacts, such as

the Collar of Dawn's Cleansing Light, do not exhibit Evocations, instead being designed to engender a fixed, singular miracle; and a number of the most powerful artifact weapons also do not exhibit them, instead being painstakingly crafted to express specific and aggressively potent war-magic.

Most "standard" artifact weapons and armor harbor only one Evocation, while artifacts of uncommon power may harbor additional Hearthstone sockets and war-miracles sleeping within them. Evocations can generally only be used by an Exalt who is resonant with an artifact.

Evocations are unlocked by slotting a Hearthstone into the artifact's Hearthstone socket. If an item has more than one Evocation, it will also have more than one socket, with each socket corresponding to a specific Evocation, and that Evocation can only be accessed if a Hearthstone is in its associated socket.

Evocations come in two varieties: **active** and **passive**.

Active Evocations are almost universally found on artifact weapons (or, very rarely, on other sorts of artifacts which are used in a directed manner), and are closely tied to the artifact's use. An active Evocation which grants its wielder access to a Charm, for example, would only permit that Charm to be channeled through the artifact.

Passive Evocations are generally found on artifacts that are worn, such as armor or jewelry, and provide their benefit to the user so long as she's wearing the artifact and has the Evocation awakened with a socketed Hearthstone.

Below are a variety of sample Evocations that might be found on various weaponry and armor. This list is *not* exhaustive and is meant to act as a starting-point to design your own Evocations from.

Evocations and System

Evocations are something of an artificial category within the rules of the **Exalted Demake** to assist in designing and customizing artifacts, particularly artifacts which are likely to otherwise be "repeated" across a Circle, such as the basic daiklave. Within the world of **Exalted**, characters are unlikely to draw fine distinctions between the innate powers of artifacts and their Evocations. The terrible daiklave Soul Mirror, for example, may be empowered by embedding Hearthstones in its sockets, but its powers are not articulated as Evocations because they would be inappropriate outside of the specific full design of Soul Mirror; nonetheless, it would not be unusual for a character to regard the weapon's soul-drinking properties as Evocations.

That is to say, sometimes artifacts have Hearthstone sockets which simply exist to facilitate accessing the Hearthstone's bonus Motes; sometimes artifacts have intrinsic powers that are not Evocations; and sometimes artifacts have powerful functions that are triggered by socketing a Hearthstone in them which are not Evocations. Once in a *very* great while, an artifact might even break other fundamental "rules" such as granting Evocations to those who don't resonate with its primary magical material. Artifact design is fluid, and becomes increasingly free-form as artifacts rise in power. The higher an artifact's rating, the more design "space" it has to make tradeoffs which are exceptions to the general rules its more humble brethren usually follow.

Evocations of Adamant

All-Conquering Blade (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Fire and Stones Strike, reducing its cost to 0 Motes if the Solar attacks before anyone else acts in a round.

Blessing of Diamond (Passive): (Essence rating) times per scene, when the character suffers only 1 damage from an attack, she suffers 0 damage instead.

Impervious Psychic Crown (Passive): Clothing and armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Guarded Thoughts Meditation, reducing its activation cost to 0 Motes. Artifacts with this Evocation always at least partially cover the head.

Light-Dancing Mail (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Dust Motes Whirling, granting one extra use per scene.

Luminous Flight (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Bonfire Anima Wings, reducing its costs by 1 Mote.

Racing Light Armor (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Lightning Speed, reducing its cost to 0 Motes once per scene.

Shame Reflecting Mirror (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Asp Bites its Tail, reducing the cost of its first use per scene to 0 Motes.

Shattering Light (Active or Passive): Artifacts with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Ready in Eight Directions Stance, increasing the difficulty of its hazard to 9. Generally Active and found on weapons, this Evocation may rarely be found in Passive form on helms which heighten the Exalt's sensory awareness or the like.

Evocations of Jade

Blessing of Comfort (Passive): Armor with this Evocation has Fatigue +0. It is comfortable enough to sleep in. This is a very common Evocation on jade armor, and has done a great deal to shape Dragon-Blooded culture. It is not considered remarkable for a Dynast to wear her armor to the dinner table, and a number of Dragon-Blooded sleep in their armor.

Deadly Dragon Claw (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Dragon-Graced Assault when it is channeled through them, such that the Charm is not terminated when its wielder is Staggered.

Elemental Glory Manifestation (Passive): Armor or clothing with this Evocation causes the character wearing it to be considered to be standing in a powerful manifestation of the element corresponding to the color of jade used in its construction, i.e. wearing blue jade armor with this Evocation would count as standing on a mountain peak amidst gale-force winds. This Evocation is also sometimes worked into decorative trinkets or empowered versions of more specialized worn artifacts.

Enduring Protection of the Elements (Passive): The Dragon-Blooded Charm: (Element)-Protection Form which corresponds to the primary hue of jade in armor bearing this Evocation reduces its cost to 0 Motes, allowing it to be sustained indefinitely. This Evocation is only found on artifacts which cover a substantial portion of the user's body. It is generally imbued into weak armor designed to be passed down to younger Dragon-Blooded scions, since at Essence 4+ (Element)-Protection Form obsolesces this Evocation.

Howling Dragon Blade (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Dragon-Graced Assault, causing it to grant an additional +1 base damage in addition to its other effects.

Manifestation of Elemental Power (Active): Many jade weapons allow their user to wield the version of Dragon-Graced Assault (see p. XX) corresponding to the primary hue of jade used in the weapon's design, even if the user isn't Dragon-Blooded.

Mantle of Elemental Protection (Passive): Armor with this Evocation provides +1 Soak against damage from the element corresponding to its primary color. Black jade would provide damage against corrosive liquids or crushing wave action, blue jade would provide protection against cold and electricity, green jade would provide protection against damage from wooden weapons and plant-based toxins, red jade would provide extra soak against fire damage, and white jade against damage from stone weapons or avalanches.

Evocations of Black Jade

Ancient Mariner's Rite (Passive): Clothing or armor with this Evocation grants its user the Solar Charm: Salty Dog Method, even if they are not a Solar.

Blessing of the Depths (Passive): Armor with this Evocation provides the ability to breathe underwater and to survive even the crushing pressure of abyssal trenches.

Drowning Steps (Passive): Armor with this Evocation reduces the activation cost of the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Soundless Action Prana to 0 Motes.

Blessing of the Faceless Hero (Passive): Armor with this Evocation always includes a face-obscuring helmet. While it is worn, the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Sun on Water Deceit always employs its more powerful mode at no additional cost.

Bloodletting Technique (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Peony Blossom Technique. If one of its extra attacks kills its target, the target's blood gushes out in a torrent, creating a slick puddle that all of the character's enemies must employ complex movement to move across when traversing the zone. They must also make a difficulty 8 (Dexterity + Athletics) roll when doing so; failure causes them to slip and fall prone. Weapons which kill without opening the body, such as dragon sigh wands, cannot bear this Evocation.

Festering Edge (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Dread Infection Strike, causing its effects to continue to block the target's ability to heal until he has succeeded at the roll it demands (Essence rating) times. Successful rolls do not create new Wounds.

Fluid Grace (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Flow Past Defenses, reducing the cost of its first activation in each scene to 0 Motes.

Riptide Blade (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Lightning Strikes Twice, producing a cutting contrail of water in the wake of its extra attack which grants the attack Aggravated damage (-1).

Trickling Memory Insertion (Passive): Clothing and armor with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Fluid Recollection Insinuation, allowing its activation roll to be made twice, keeping the preferred result.

Truth-Shrouding Shawl (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Sun on Water Deceit, increasing the power of its passive benefit to +3. The character must still spend 1 Mote to lower the difficulty of her Manipulation rolls.

Ultimate Seaman Garb (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation grants its user the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Dragon Mariner Method, even if they are not Dragon-Blooded. This Evocation is always found on full-body artifact outfits.

Evocations of Blue Jade

Canny Linguist's Blessing (Passive): An artifact with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Language-Learning Ritual, lowering its cost to 0 Motes.

Lightfoot Grace (Passive): Armor with this Evocation makes its wearer immune to falling damage.

Mighty Crosswind Tempest (Active): Weapons with this Evocation reduce the cost of the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Crosswind Gale Offensive to 0 motes.

Precise Wind-Index Learning (Passive): An artifact with this Evocation modifies the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Gale-Force Research Technique such that its use exhibits no destructive side-effects.

Smoke-and-Zephyr Passions (Passive): Clothing and armor with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Passion-Attuning Attitude. Select one particular passion upon obtaining this Evocation. The cost to activate Passion-Attuning Attitude may be lowered to 0, but if used in this fashion it can *only* detect the passion specific to this Evocation.

Spoken From the Mountain (Passive): An artifact with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Haunting Words Infliction, lowering its cost to 0 Motes if the bearer is an Air Aspect, or causing them to treat Haunting Words Infliction as though it were a Charm of their native aspect if they are of one of the other four aspects. If the bearer is not Dragon-Blooded at all, then they gain the Charm: Haunting Words Infliction.

Steadfast Messenger's Voice (Passive): An artifact with this Evocation lowers the cost of using the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Wind-Carried Words Technique in its more potent mode to 0 Motes.

Wind-Cutting Blade (Active): Weapons with this Evocation reduce the cost of the Solar Charm: Sandstorm Wind Attack to 0 motes.

Wind-Guided Missile (Active): Archery or Thrown weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Accuracy Without Distance by guiding the projectile even more unerringly into its target. The Solar may roll the attack twice and keep the better result.

Zephyr's Grace (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Horizon-Spanning Arc, granting it one extra zone of range.

Evocations of Green Jade

Acquaintances Well Renewed (Passive): Clothing and armor with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Auspicious First Meeting Attitude, allowing it to be used even on previous acquaintances, so long as the Dragon-Blooded has not been in their presence for several months.

Dripping Venom Cadence (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Poisoned Tongue Technique, increasing the difficulty to detect its tampering to 9.

Emerald Assassin Mantle (Passive): Clothing and armor with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Blossom Hides Thorns, reducing its cost to 0 Motes.

Forester's Bounty (Active): Artifacts with this Evocation counts as a wooden object for Dragon-Blooded Charms such as Harvest of the Hunter. Unusually for an Active Evocation, Forester's Bounty is normally found on armor.

Forester's Panoply (Active): Artifacts with this Evocation count as a wooden object for Dragon-Blooded Charms such as Life-Swelling Sap Strike.

Plentiful Sniper's Opportunity (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Horizon-Spanning Arc, granting it one extra use per scene.

Predator's Mantle (Passive): Armor with this Evocation lowers the difficulty of rolls to hide in trees, underbrush, or other forested settings by -2.

Root and Knotwork Missive (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Hidden Petal Aria Method, reducing its cost to 0 Motes.

Tangled Thorn Defense (Active or Passive): Artifacts with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Virtuous Negation Defense and the Solar Charm: War Lion Stance. If someone attacks the user's ward and they use their next simple action to attack that aggressor, the attack gains Overwhelming (-1).

Wind Shakes the Thorn Tree (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Crosswind Gale Offensive. Upon making a successful ranged attack with the Charm, the Exalt may reflexively cause the weapon to sprout jagged thorns to catch the target, increasing its base damage by +2 and dragging the opponent into the same zone as the weapon's master. After the weapon returns, the Charm is canceled.

Evocations of Red Jade

Ash and Embers Dream (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Warm-Faced Seduction Style so that, when used by a Fire Aspect, its cost drops to 0. For Terrestrials of other aspects, Warm-Faced Seduction Style is treated as though it were a Charm of their native element. Non-Dragon-Blooded users gain the Charm: Warm-Faced Seduction Style.

Blessing of the Long March (Passive): Armor with this Evocation lowers the starting difficulty of the (Stamina + Resistance) roll associated with the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Tireless Footfalls Technique to 4.

Edge of Killing Heat (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Sandstorm Wind Attack, causing it to throw a burning wave of flames that inflict +2 base damage (burning).

Erupting Burst Offensive (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Vengeful Gust Strike, causing it to knock targets back one additional zone.

Essence-Stoking Heat (Passive): Armor with this Evocation lowers the difficulty of all of its wearer's Athletics rolls by -1.

Heroic Martinet Cadence (Passive): Clothing and armor with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Tireless Footfalls Technique, extending its roll intervals to every ten hours.

Ghost-Fire Panoply (Passive): Artifacts with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Ghost-Fire Arsenal, reducing its cost to 0 Motes.

Impassioned Orator's Stole (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation grants the user the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Loquacious Courtier Technique, even if she is not Dragon-Blooded.

Purifying Sun-Fire (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Edge of Morning Sunlight. When the weapon inflicts Aggravated damage to a creature of darkness, that creature of darkness is set on fire and must resist a bonfire hazard until they use a simple action to extinguish the flames (by jumping into water, smothering themselves with a cloak, rolling in the dirt, etc).

Sevenfold Ordained Robe (Passive): Artifacts with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Smoke Ascends to Heaven, reducing its difficulties by -1.

Evocations of White Jade

Agony-Banishing Balm (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Unflagging Vengeance Meditation so that, when used by an Earth Aspect, its cost drops to 0 if the character has not received a wound in the last 24 hours. For Terrestrials of other aspects, Unflagging Vengeance Meditation is treated as though it were a Charm of their native element.

Blessing of Stability (Passive): Armor with this Evocation protects its wearer against Wyld mutation. This Evocation also frequently appears on other forms of protective clothing and adornments.

Bastion of Self (Passive): Armor with this Evocation lowers the difficulty of the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Chaos-Warding Prana and the Solar Charm: Chaos-Repelling Pattern by -2. This Evocation is also likely to be found on other forms of protective clothing and jewelry.

Crater-Making Impact (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Heaven Thunder Hammer. When it knocks a target prone, they must make a reflexive (Strength + Athletics) roll against difficulty 7 to use a rise action to pick themselves up from the crater it leaves them in; otherwise, they are unable to rise from prone until their next turn and suffer a -2 dice penalty to all actions and -1 to Defense until they stand.

Crushing Disapproval (Passive): An artifact with this Evocation empowers a user who knows the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Earth Dragon's Stony Glare. They may re-roll intimidation attempts at a cost of 0 Willpower.

Earth Magistrate's Authority (Passive): An artifact with this Evocation empowers the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Virtuous Mountain's Shadow, lowering its difficulties by -1.

Ironclad Resilience (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Perfected Scales of the Dragon, granting +1 Temporary Health upon its activation. This Evocation is exclusively found on armor.

Magma Hell Impact (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Magma Hell Upheaval. The Charm may be reflexively triggered upon striking an opponent who is prone or standing on the ground rather than forcing the character to strike the ground directly.

Shell of Certitude (Passive): An artifact with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Granite Curtain of Serenity, extending its duration to (Essence rating) hours.

Shockwave Cancellation (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Whirlwind Shield Form. The Exalt may reflexively cancel the Charm to release a shockwave that knocks everyone in the same zone prone unless they succeed at a difficulty 9 (Stamina + Resistance) roll.

Somnolent Weave (Passive): An artifact with this Evocation enhances the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Entombed Mind Technique, rendering it useable after only a minute of stillness.

Evocations of Moonsilver

Absolute Guardian Blade (Passive): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Divine Executioner Stance, allowing her to dedicate the weapon to one particular positive Intimacy toward an individual at the time of attunement. It never costs a Mote to activate the Charm to protect that Intimacy, and the Solar may do so once per session rather than once per story. However, should the Solar ever betray or abandon that Intimacy, her attunement to the weapon breaks and cannot ever be restored by any means.

Blessing of Fluidity (Passive): Armor with this Evocation modifies its base Dodge adjustment by +1.

Blood-Awakened Ferocity (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Lunar Charm: Armor-Rending Claw Fist. If an attack enhanced by that Charm kills an opponent, then the Charm's effect is extended through the end of the following round

Feral Blade (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Lightning Strikes Twice, granting its extra attacks a +2 bonus to base damage.

Gleaming Moonsilver Carapace (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Lunar Charm: Hide-Toughening Practice, granting it +2 Temporary Health.

Graceful Dancing Barrier (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Lunar Charm: Heron Sheds Rain, so that its first activation per scene costs 0 Motes.

Greed-Tuning Calculus (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Irresistible Salesman Spirit, allowing the character to make its activation roll twice and keep the preferred result.

Heartfire Oratory (Passive): Clothing or armor with this Evocation enhances the Lunar Charm: Crowd-Inciting Method, allowing the user to make its activation roll twice and keep the preferred result.

Hundred Mazy Threads (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Lunar Charm: Mirror Sight Dismay. When activated successfully, add two additional bonus successes to its result.

Insidious Killing Slivers (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Lunar Charm: Deadly Assassin's Claw, allowing it to be used with the weapon.

Ironbound Heart (Passive): Clothing or armor with this Evocation enhances the Lunar Charm: Life Without Chains, lowering its Mote cost by -1. Used reactively for Limit, its cost remains unchanged.

Loyal Plate (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Hauberk-Summoning Gesture. The armor can always be summoned reflexively at a cost of 0 Motes. This Evocation remains active so long as the character is attuned to the artifact, even if she is nowhere near it.

Murder Instinct Awakening (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Lunar Charm: Eagle Eye Advantage, allowing its simple action benefit to be triggered with a swift action once per scene.

Naked Magistrate Raiment (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Lunar Charm: River Reflects Desire, lowering the difficulty of the user's roll to activate it (but not the target's roll to resist) by -1.

Nimble Edge (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Empty Palm Technique or the Lunar Charm: Weapon-Snatching Coils, granting them unlimited uses per scene.

Slow-Falling Cape (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Lunar Charm: Predator Grace Method. Its 1 Mote effect is always active at no cost. Despite the name, this Evocation is not restricted to clothing with capes.

Snake Eye Weave (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Lunar Charm: Emotion-Shaping Technique, making its first activation per day cost 0 Motes. This Evocation resets at sunset.

Evocations of Orichalcum

Armor of Ancient Kings (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Majestic Radiant Presence, reducing its cost to 1 Mote.

Blessing of Power (Passive): Armor with this Evocation increases its Soak by +1 once per scene.

Burning Words of Glory (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: You Can Be More, reducing its activation cost by -1 Mote.

Darkness-Banishing Blade (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Edge of Morning Sunlight, allowing it to be activated for a cost of 0 Motes a number of times per scene equal to the Solar's Essence rating.

Effortless Defense (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Dipping Swallow Defense, reducing the cost of its first use per scene to 0 Motes.

Erupting Blast (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Heaven Thunder Hammer, reducing the cost of its first use per scene to 0 Motes.

God-King's Decree (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Hypnotic Tongue Technique, reducing its activation cost by -1 Mote.

Golden Semaphore Display (Passive): Armor or clothing with this Evocation grants access to the Solar Charm: Phantom-Conjuring Performance.

Invincible Edge (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Heavenly Guardian Defense, reducing the decay of the first Block enhanced with it per scene by one.

Iron Body Discipline (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Iron Kettle Body. During the first round of its activation in a scene, the Solar has +3 Temporary Health.

Peerless Strike (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Excellent Strike, granting an additional Overwhelming (-1).

Power Edge Assault (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Sandstorm Wind Attack, extending its range by one additional zone.

Raiment of Kings (Passive): Artifacts with this Evocation, which are not necessarily worn and are frequently weapons, do not count toward the Exalt's attunement limit.

Riveting Oratory Robes (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Respect Commanding Attitude, allowing the character to make its activation roll twice and keep the preferred result.

Unbreakable Plate (Passive): Armor with this Evocation increases its Stagger Threshold by +1.

Unimpeachable Virtuous Bearing (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Indecent Proposal Method, lowering its cost to 0 Motes.

Unstoppable Force (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Accuracy Without Distance, making an attack enhanced by that Charm also unblockable.

Voice of Royalty (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Listener-Swaying Argument, allowing it to be activated for 0 Motes (Essence rating) times per story.

War-God's Panoply (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Immortal Armory of the Sun, reducing its cost to 0 Motes.

Evocations of Starmetal

Abominable Edge (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Sidereal Charm: Horrific Wreath, preventing it from ending when the Sidereal is Staggered.

Agony-Dispersing Plate (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Ruin-Abasing Shrug. A portion of the Solar's suffering is diffused into the workings of destiny, passed on to someone else; the Charm passively negates one point of cumulative Wound penalties.

Blessing of Certainty (Passive): Once per scene, the character can ignore the Aggravated damage quality of an attack directed at her.

Blue Carnal Vestments (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Sidereal Charm: Hot-Eyed Snake Whispering. Select one of the Abilities mentioned within it when this Evocation is obtained. The cost of the Hot-Eyed Snake Whispering drops to 0 Motes when used with that Ability.

Celestial Inquisitor's Robes (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Irresistible Questioning Technique, allowing the character to make its activation roll twice and keep the preferred result.

Consequence-Shedding Weave (Passive): Clothing or armor with this Evocation enhances the Sidereal Charm: Life Without Compunction, reducing its activation cost to 0 Motes once per scene. If the character does not know Life Without Compunction, then instead of the aforementioned benefit, this Evocation provides the Charm, even if the user is not a Sidereal.

Destiny-Cheating Steel (Passive): Armor with this Evocation may be used in conjunction with the Sidereal Charm: Optimistic Security Practice.

Fortuitous Protection (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Iron Kettle Body. The Solar enjoys its protection during one round of her choosing per scene even when it is not active.

Hardened Second Chance Armor (Passive): Once per scene, the character may re-roll a Willpower roll and keep the preferred result.

Hasty Preparation Dishabille (Passive): Armor with this Evocation grants its wearer the Sidereal Charm: Sudden Martial Dishabille, even if they are not a Sidereal.

Inevitable Strike (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Accuracy Without Distance, allowing it to be activated once per scene for 0 Motes.

Living Statue Armor (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Sidereal Charm: Heartless Maiden Trance, granting +1 Soak whenever that Charm has been active for more than one full day.

Love-Concealing Sleeves (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Sidereal Charm: Shun the Smiling Lady, reducing its activation cost by -1 Mote.

Name-Securing Pocket (Passive): An artifact with this Evocation enhances the Sidereal Charm: Name Pilfering Practices, extending its duration to *one month* per success, although it can only enchant one stolen name in this fashion at a time.

Nine Omens Armor (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Sidereal Charm: Duck Fate. Upon the forging of an armor with this Evocation, name a particular sort of danger such as "natural disasters," "a weapon in the hand of a hero who believes his cause righteous," "the claws and fangs of a great beast," or "battle-sorcery capable of felling many men." When using Duck Fate to defend against this danger, its activation roll automatically succeeds.

Opportune Steel (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Sidereal Charm: Opportune Shot, allowing it to be activated at a cost of 0 Motes immediately after Staggering or incapacitating a foe.

Riot of Destined Blades (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Sidereal Charm: Metal Storm, causing it to grant Piercing (-1) while active. This rating does not increase with repetition.

Shadow Edge Feint (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Sidereal Charm: Willful Weapon Method, allowing it to be activated to attempt to cut a target up to one zone away with the weapon's shadow directly. This works as with a normal activation, but does not remove the weapon from the character's hand if the attack succeeds.

Wearing White to a Wedding (Passive): Armor or clothing with this Evocation grants the user the Sidereal Charm: Wearing Red to a Wedding, even if they are not a Sidereal.

World-Walker's Plate (Passive): Armor with this Evocation enhances the Sidereal Charm: Flight of Mercury, granting one extra use per scene.

Evocations of Soulsteel

Assassin's Edge (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Falling Icicle Strike, reducing its cost to 0 Motes.

Blessing of Terror (Passive): The character lowers the difficulty of all intimidation attempts by -1 while wearing armor with this Evocation.

Death Chain Technique (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Lightning Strikes Twice. All activations in a round after the first cost 0 Motes.

Death Deflection (Active): Weapons with this Evocation grant +1 base Block value.

Death Edge (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Hungry Tiger Technique. If an attack enhanced with that Charm Staggers or incapacitates an enemy, the Solar regains the Mote spent to activate it.

Devouring Edge (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Ghost-Eating Technique, causing it to grant one extra Mote.

Ghost Edge (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Sandstorm Wind Attack. The Charm throws phantasmal cuts which pass through solid objects, enabling her to attack enemies behind walls and other total cover, though if she cannot see her target she suffers penalties as though fighting an invisible opponent (see p. XX). These attacks ignore any benefits of partial cover the target may have, as well.

Ghost-Making Blow (Active): Weapons with this Evocation enhance the Solar Charm: Fire and Stones Strike, adding +1 to the base damage of attacks enhanced with the Charm.

Sun Smiles at Night (Passive): Clothing with this Evocation enhances the Solar Charm: Rose-Lipped Seduction Style, reducing its cost to 0 Motes so long as it is nighttime.

Assorted Artifacts

Below are an assortment of artifacts from various editions of the game, updated to the **Exalted Demake**.

Collar of Dawn's Cleansing Light (Artifact •)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: None

This orichalcum adornment takes the form of a collar, torc, or circlet. Its wearer is always perfectly groomed, no matter what she's just been through. Mud, blood, snow — nothing sullies her or her clothing while wearing one of these artifacts. The Exalt could fight through an army of rotting zombies in the depths of a malarial swamp in the midst of a howling rainstorm, and still emerge ready to walk into a high-society ball.

If the wearer resonates with orichalcum, then this artifact does not count toward her (Essence + 1) attunement limit.

Gill Cloak (Artifact •)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: None

This diaphanous cloak billows out behind the wearer when submerged in water, filtering out oxygen and infusing it directly into the Exalt's bloodstream, allowing her to breathe underwater.

Hearthstone Amulet (Artifact •)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: One attunement *or* Evocation socket

Decorative settings formed of one of the five magical materials, Hearthstone amulets are little more than a socket in which a Hearthstone may be empowered. Most Hearthstone amulets contain an attunement socket, but some are designed with an Evocation socket which always bequeaths a passive Evocation. Despite the name, this sort of artifact is not restricted to amulet form, and may take the form of a bangle, collar, or tiara.

Lordly Raiment (Artifact •)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: One Evocation socket

Lordly raiments are tailored clothes woven with threads of one of the magical materials, bearing a Hearthstone socket somewhere upon them in which a passive social Evocation sleeps. Lordly raiments will very slightly resize themselves to fit their attuned wearer comfortably (save for moonsilver raiments, which can smoothly accommodate drastic changes in size and build), and depending on the design of a specific artifact, may be designed to look like mundane clothing of high quality, or may openly display their magical material inclusions.

Silent Chain (Artifact •)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: One power socket

This blue jade chain contains a single Hearthstone socket. If a Hearthstone is placed in this socket, it distorts and displaces the sounds the chain's bearer makes, so that all rolls to detect her by sound lose two successes for each 1 rolled, or reinstate the rule of 1s if it would normally not apply.

If the wearer resonates with blue jade, then this artifact does not count toward her (Essence + 1) attunement limit.

Street Prince Bracers (Artifact •)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: One Evocation socket

These diverse artifacts most frequently take the form of a set of bracers, bangles, or vambraces, but occasionally are also created as complex cloth fist-wraps densely woven with one of the magical materials. Street prince bracers always come as a set, one of which bears a single Hearthstone socket harboring an active Evocation. This Evocation can be employed to benefit

bare-handed Brawl or Martial Arts attacks, if the user resonates with the magical material used in its construction.

Wind-Capturing Cord (Artifact •-•••)

Attunement Cost: None. This artifact does not require attunement.

Hearthstone Sockets: None

This magical rope threaded with trceries of blue jade may be tied into a particular sort of knot. Doing so causes the wind to cease blowing, effectively capturing it within the rope. The artifact possesses enough length for a number of knots equal to (2 + its rating). Untying a knot unleashes the wind. Most independent merchant captains would readily steal or murder to possess one of these treasures, though they are mostly found aboard Realm naval vessels or as the property of seafaring sorcerers.

Winterbreath Jar (Artifact •)

Attunement Cost: None. This artifact does not require attunement.

Hearthstone Sockets: None

This magical urn is inlaid with trceries of blue jade. Its interior is kept at the temperature of a winter day, hovering just above freezing, enabling it to chill wines and preserve meat and vegetables for a very long time. Most winterbreath jars can't hold more than a couple of bottles of wine or perhaps a watermelon at once.

Audient Brush (Artifact ••)

Attunement Cost: None. This artifact does not require attunement.

Hearthstone Sockets: None

This magical brush produces its own supply of ink in a color appropriate to the anima-resonance of the one who activates it (so blue for an Air Aspect, gold for a Solar, and so on; mortals produce black ink, while Abyssals cause the artifact to write in blood). It is activated by tapping it against a thin plate of blue jade along the edge of its storage case. For the rest of the scene, it will transcribe the words of the one who activated the brush. Feeding the brush a Mote enables it to transcribe every word spoken in its presence, instead.

Chalcedony Flutes (Artifact ••)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: None

These elegant drinking glasses of chrysoprase — green chalcedony — neutralize all poisons within them, but only for the character attuned to them. They come in sets of two. A character may attune herself to one or both glasses as she desires; either option counts as only a single artifact attunement.

Jade Saddle (Artifact ••)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: One attunement socket

This jade-inlaid saddle harmonizes an attuned Dragon-Blooded rider's anima with the Essence profile of her mount, shielding it from her anima flux.

Thunderbolt Shield (Artifact ••)

Attunement Cost: 1 Mote

Hearthstone Sockets: One Evocation socket

These artifact shields are made of one of the magical materials, possess a single Hearthstone socket, and are capable of expressing defensive Evocations. They increase their wielder's base Block value by +1 (in addition to the standard +1 for using the sword and board fighting style). Used as a weapon, it uses Strength, is wielded with Melee, and inflicts a base damage of 5 (bruised).

Traveler's Staff (Artifact ••)

Attunement Cost: None. This artifact does not require attunement.

Hearthstone Sockets: None

This gnarled staff is an enchanted branch from an ancient tree found in a mighty wood-aspected Demesne. It can be used as a mundane staff in combat, but this is not its intended purpose. At sunset, the user may plant the staff into the earth and feed it 1 Mote. The branch then grows into a fruit tree — usually apple, but a few peach tree traveler's staves are known — and sprouts enough wondrous fruit to feed the owner and several others for the evening. If she needs firewood, the owner can use the tree's branches to provide it; wood gathered this way burns readily. Come morning, she can cut off a large branch to replace the original staff. The tree then dies and rapidly rots away.

Wave-Stepping Boots (Artifact ••)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: None

These boots have soles of black jade. An attuned character wearing them treats water as a solid with her entire body, and so may walk upon the waves, lay down on water, or even suffer falling damage from tumbling into it from too great a height. This artifact has also been observed in the form of black jade amulets which provide the same enchantment to attuned wearers.

If the wearer resonates with black jade, then this artifact does not count toward her (Essence + 1) attunement limit.

Bracers of Universal Endeavor (Artifact •••)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: None

These bracers are carved from green and white jade. Once activated with a simple action, they create temporary projections of Essence that can act as both tools and extra hands. For the rest of the scene, the character adds four dice to all rolls involving fine manipulation, such as picking locks, surgery, calligraphy, cooking, embroidery, making jewelry, repairing complex devices, or any other careful task where precision matters more than strength. The spectral tools and other manipulators created by these bracers vanish the instant they are not needed. The character can

control them as easily as she her own hands. In addition to being compatible with all craft-enhancing Charms, these bracers negate the need for any additional tools and eliminate all penalties for performing an action without proper tools.

Elemental Lens (Artifact •••)

Attunement Cost: 1 Mote

Hearthstone Sockets: One attunement or Evocation socket

These complex artifacts are made of flexible, articulated jade frameworks around crystalline lenses that fit around the hand and cover the palm. It contains a single Hearthstone socket, located on the back of the hand, which may be an attunement or Evocation socket bearing an active Evocation. When the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Elemental Bolt Attack is focused through an elemental lens, its base damage is increased by +3.

Silk Armor (Artifact •••)

Attunement Cost: 1 Mote

Hearthstone Sockets: Varies

Silk armor can be designed in a wide variety of fashions, woven from various wondrous textiles and empowered by extremely fine threads of one or more of the magical materials. Despite its thin profile and pleasant texture, silk armor has an armor profile of Defense +1, Dodge -0, Soak 6, Stagger Threshold 2+, and Fatigue +0. Most crucially, it has two additional features. First, despite becoming rigid as steel when struck forcefully and highly resistant to heat, it looks like fine but otherwise ordinary clothing, concealing the fact that the character is armored at all. Second, and much more importantly, a character wearing silk armor is considered unarmored for all rules purposes, including practicing martial arts.

Silk armor also carries one of the following benefits, depending on its design:

- The armor has no Hearthstone sockets, and its Stagger Threshold is 3+.
- It possesses a single Evocation socket, bearing a passive Evocation. Silk armor is equally likely to exhibit defensive or social Evocations.
- It possesses a single attunement socket.

It is possible to wear traditional armor over silk armor, but doing so negates all of silk armor's benefits, including deactivating its Hearthstone sockets so long as it is constrained and smothered in this fashion.

Spell-Capturing Cord (Artifact •••-•••••)

Attunement Cost: 1 Mote

Hearthstone Sockets: None

This artifact takes the form of a rope woven from threads of jade (Artifact 3), spliced moonsilver, starmetal, and adamant (Artifact 4), or pure orichalcum (artifact 5). In response to the shaping or unleashing of a spell in the owner's presence, she may spend a point of Willpower and reflexively tie a knot in the rope, capturing the spell within. At a later time of her choosing, she may use a turn to untie the cord, unleashing the spell as though she had cast it herself. The cord

can only hold one spell at a time. Artifact 3 cords can only hold Terrestrial Circle spells; Artifact 4 cords can hold up to Celestial Circle spells; and Artifact 5 cords can capture any spell at all.

Perfected Kata Bracers (Artifact ••••)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: One Evocation or attunement socket

These bracers take the form of wound prayer strips made of one of the magical materials, inlaid with martial prayers in starmetal (save for starmetal bracers, which are inlaid with orichalcum). One bracer contains a single Hearthstone socket, which is either an attunement socket or an Evocation socket bearing a passive, defensive Evocation. While wearing bracers with which she resonates, all Form-type Martial Arts Charms the character knows reduce their cost by 1 Mote. By waiving the 1 Mote discount, the character may *always* reflexively activate a Form-type Charm even without fulfilling its special activation condition. Finally, Dragon-Blooded utilizing jade bracers do not need to make a (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll when assuming a Form-type Charm.

Shattering Aegis (Artifact ••••)

Attunement Cost: 1 Mote

Hearthstone Sockets: Two Evocation sockets

This orichalcum thunderbolt shield all the normal qualities of a thunderbolt shield (see p. XX), and also has two Evocation sockets. For a wielder who resonates with orichalcum, the left socket unlocks the Evocation: Blessing of Power (see p. XX), the right Effortless Defense (see p. XX). If both sockets are filled, then the shield also grants anyone attuned to it an automatic reflexive countermagic attempt against any spell woven with the intent of injuring her. This countermagic is not rolled, instead automatically generating three successes per “roll.”

Quagmire Perimeter Mine (Artifact ••••)

Attunement Cost: 0 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: One power socket

These First Age defensive weapons are still occasionally produced by Lookshy; in theory, the Realm possesses the same capability, but relies on its remaining stockpiles dating back to the Shogunate era, preferring to focus its artificers’ efforts either on personal-use artifacts or else upon the maintenance of grand war-weapons such as artifact ships or ship-mounted weaponry.

Quagmire perimeter mines are crystal-studded spheres of white jade and complex First Age alloys. Before being buried by an attuned wielder, they can be extensively customized with threat-profiling commands, allowing them to exempt from their effects specific individuals, classes of individuals (usually including anything outside a certain weight range so as not to trigger against small animals or wandering tyrant lizards), or particular areas within their effect radius, creating secret safe paths.

A buried quagmire mine enchants every zone within a quarter-mile of its location. Each time someone moves into an afflicted zone who hasn’t been threat-filtered out by the artifact’s settings, they must make a difficulty 9 (Dexterity + Resistance) roll to avoid the ground opening up, drawing them in up to the neck, and then sealing them in place. Digging oneself out without

assistance is an extended (Strength + Athletics) action at difficulty 9, made at thirty minute intervals and requiring ten successes.

Quagmire perimeter mines must be fed Motes in advance of their burial. They can hold up to 25, and expend 1 Mote each time they attempt to trap someone. Alternately, placing a Hearthstone in the artifact's single socket grants it a limitless power source, allowing it to remain active indefinitely.

Wings of the Raptor (Artifact ••••)

Attunement Cost: 1 Mote

Hearthstone Sockets: None

These artifacts appear as elegantly decorated floor-length capes with a clasp of one of the magical materials. At the attuned wearer's mental command, the cape reflexively transforms into a pair of wings, enabling flight as a form of complex movement. If the user resonates with the magical material of the artifact's clasp, it also bestows another marvelous blessing:

Jade wings may continue to operate effortlessly, even in the user's sleep, facilitating long-distance flight.

Orichalcum wings glow with a glorious halo of golden light, reducing the difficulty of Appearance rolls by -1.

Moonsilver wings reshape and resize themselves in response to shapeshifting, and grant the vision of a bird of prey, reducing the difficulty of vision-based Perception rolls by -1.

Starmetal wings are as silent and subtle as those of an owl, reducing the difficulty of Stealth rolls by -1.

Soulsteel wings possess a razor-edged internal skeleton, like the wings of a bat, and while activated may be wielded as a Dexterity-based Melee weapon with a base damage of 5 (lacerated).

Adamant wings become a shifting, multihued corona of light in the shape of butterfly wings, and are capable of extremely precise flight; their flight is not considered complex movement.

The Crown of Thunders (Artifact •••••)

Attunement Cost: 2 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: Three power sockets

This beautiful orichalcum crown was forged by the Unconquered Sun and bequeathed to a legendary Solar general at the conclusion of the Divine Revolution. The difficulty of War rolls for anyone attuned to the artifact are lowered by -2. It possesses three Hearthstone sockets. If one socket is filled and the wearer resonates with orichalcum, then they gain a +2 bonus to Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina. If two sockets are filled and the wearer resonates with orichalcum, then their Charisma and Appearance rolls lower their difficulty by -1, and the Exalt may always consider her anima to be flaring for the purpose of her anima powers expressing themselves, if she desires it to be so. If all three sockets bear a Hearthstone and the user resonates with orichalcum, the cost of the Solar Charm: Majestic Radiant Presence drops to 0 Motes. If the wearer resonates with orichalcum but is not a Solar, they instead gain the Solar Charm: Majestic Radiant Presence.

Hawthorn Blessing (Artifact ●●●●)

Attunement Cost: 1 Mote

Hearthstone Sockets: One power socket

This band of green jade and orichalcum resembles sculpted branches and is worn around the bicep. It possesses a single Hearthstone socket. If a Hearthstone is placed in this socket, it provides no bonus Motes to the Blessing's wearer. Instead, it grants her immortality. She becomes immune to sickness and aging, and if slain by misadventure or violence, heals as though she were resting until she springs back to life. Despite its miraculous properties, only a few of these wondrous artifacts exist, for the Chosen have long distrusted their drawback: should the artifact's attunement ever be broken, or should the inset Hearthstone be removed or lose its power (such as if its home Manse is destroyed), then the user is instantly and unavoidably slain.

Soul Mirror (Artifact ●●●●)

Attunement Cost: 2 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: Four power sockets

This horrifying soulsteel grand daiklave was forged by the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears and given to her nemissary champion several centuries ago. Alas, he was defeated by two Dragon-Blooded heroes, who managed to hide this dread artifact before the Lover took her vengeance upon them. Its whereabouts remain unknown to this day.

Soul Mirror possesses four Hearthstone sockets. When it slays someone, it consumes their soul, trapping it within the blade; it can hold up to seven such souls at a time, plus two per Hearthstone socketed into it. Once per scene, when its wielder would suffer damage that would reduce them to 0 Health, she may draw upon Soul Mirror's power reflexively. She suffers no damage at all; one of its captive souls is destroyed instead.

At any time, if the attuned wielder resonates with soulsteel, she may reflexively cause the blade to devour one captive soul, increasing its base damage by +2 for seven days, up to a maximum simultaneous bonus of +8.

Volcano Cutter (Artifact ●●●●)

Attunement Cost: 2 Motes

Hearthstone Sockets: Two Evocation sockets

The grand daiklave known as Volcano Cutter sleeps within a hidden temple-manse, attended by a bound spirit of earth and flame named Javarajati, who tests those who would seek to claim the blade and returns it to its resting place whenever its newest owner falls in battle. Forged in the middle of the First Age, it is a jade weapon of immense destructive power. Volcano Cutter's hilt features a core of polished white jade striped with orichalcum bands, while the massive red jade blade itself is single-edged, tapering to a curved point, with a second grip mounted at the back of the blade for better control when stabbing or slashing in close-quarters, or to more easily plunge the daiklave into the earth and draw it back out. It has two hearthstone sockets, one mounted on each of its grips.

Anyone attuned to the blade who resonates with red or white jade gains the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Magma Hell Upheaval, even if they are not Dragon-Blooded. Slotting a Hearthstone into its lower socket unlocks the Evocation: Magma Hell Impact (see p. XX). Slotting a Hearthstone

into its upper socket unlocks an Evocation named Quickening Eruption, which causes Magma Hell Upheaval to trigger immediately rather than on the wielder's next turn. If both sockets contain a Hearthstone, then channeling Magma Hell Upheaval through Volcano Cutter causes it to produce an eruption in every zone directly adjacent to the target zone as well, and also causes Magma Hell Upheaval to resonate with the elements of both earth and fire for the purpose of aspect affinity (see p. XX).

Appendix I: Warstriders

A once-human horde howls at the walls, clashing poisonous blades against hide shields from atop the backs of massive, carnivorous boars, goaded to frenzy by their fae masters. They number in the thousands. The gates of the city grind open before them, silhouetting a humanoid figure as tall as three strong men. Its face is a cold mask of shining jade, eyes burning with barely-restrained Essence. It draws a blade the size of a young pine from its back, producing a cold rasp that silences the host. The pilot urges his warstrider forward, its metal footfalls shaking the earth, and the Fair Folk know that this day marks the end of their advance.

Warstriders are arguably the greatest personal-scale war artifacts ever created by the Exalted: walking colossi cast in roughly human form, clad in several tons of magical armor, and bearing weapons so mighty that few Exalts could lift them unassisted, much less wield them in battle. This would be impressive enough of itself, but warstriders are no mere automatons. A warstrider's torso contains a control harness intended to accept an Exalted pilot: a webwork of leather straps and Essence-reactive, articulated plates which allows the warstrider to mimic its pilot's motions. The warstrider is constructed to effectively channel an attuned pilot's fighting prowess and martial Charms, acting in many ways like a suit of incomparably powerful armor.

And yet, to describe a warstrider as mere armor is to understate its power. Each warstrider's Essence is stirred to wakefulness during its creation, granting it a spiritual bond with its pilot. This bond allows pilot and warstrider to move as one in a way that transcends mere mechanism, and grants the bearer access to the ineffable lore of the warstrider's nature. Together, pilot and artifact may manifest miracles comparable to the magic of a war god.

Warstriders were designed to slay behemoths, conduct sieges, destroy the armies of chaos, and end anything else that dared rise up to threaten the Realm of the Solar Exalted. In the end, they were turned against their creators, and most were lost to time... but some few survive, and when they are unleashed in battle, Creation trembles before their fury.

A Short History

The first warstriders are believed to have been conceived in the century following the end of the Divine Revolution. Creation was a bloody and primal place in that time: Rogue divinities carved out debased kingdoms in the distant hinterlands, and the monstrous spawn of the enemies of the gods still roamed abroad in the world, pouring villages into their gullets and crushing hills beneath their talons. The most ambitious Solars of the Twilight Caste set themselves to the task of creating weapons capable of matching such threats strength for strength, but this was a labor of many generations.

The earliest credible reports of warstriders being deployed in battle don't appear until centuries later, during war against the Niobran League. They proved enormously effective, and warstrider design flourished throughout the remainder of the First Age. The incredible difficulty and monstrous expense involved in their creation ensured that warstriders became not only apex weapons in the arsenal of the Exalted, but enormous status symbols for those who piloted or created them.

When the Solar capital was relocated to Mount Meru, five warstriders were commissioned to stand watch upon the shrine-roads leading to the peak of the holy mountain. These Mountain Watchers remained in constant service for over two thousand years, four piloted by scions of the most prestigious Dragon-Blooded gentes, while control of the final — Gavel the Peak Guardian — was an honor jealously competed for among the Lunar Exalted. Many ancient

tapestries and carvings intended to depict the glory of the old Realm include the iconography of five massive guardians standing watch, reflecting the sheer impact of warstriders upon the consciousness of the era.

As the Solars progressively tamed and then expanded the borders of Creation according to their whim, more and more warstriders were created upon or relocated to either the Blessed Isle or the developed provinces along the border of the Inland Sea. During the age of the Shadow Deliberative, these became an implicit threat directed toward those who would dissent against the rule of the Deliberative. In the era of reform that followed, many warstriders were once again dispatched toward Creation's borders, where they later vanished into the personal armories of Solar splinter dominions.

In the end, warstriders played a significant role in the first strikes of the Usurpation, as over a dozen Dragon-Blooded warstriders stood watch as an honor guard outside the hall of the Calibration Banquet in Meru. Their unmatched physical strength and devastating Essence weapons breached the hall's nigh-imperishable jade walls and toppled its roof in the first minutes of the Solars' betrayal.

That night marked the decline of warstriders in Creation. Numerous warstriders were destroyed or severely damaged in the battles against the Solars and their Lunar guardians; moreover, with the Solar artificers slain, none remained who possessed even half their understanding of warstrider creation. The Dragon-Blooded captured what warstriders they could as they consolidated their rule over Creation, often breaking into skirmishes or even warfare over possession of the metal giants. As Terrestrial daimyos became embroiled in wars against the Fair Folk, the Lunar Exalted, and one another, warstriders were fielded with increasing frequency. Battle damage began to take its toll, and the repairs the Dragon-Blooded were able to effect were often inadequate, sapping the mighty artifacts of their strength year by year. Lunars targeted them for sabotage with a special zeal.

The last glory days of warstriders came during the Contagion, when the Fair Folk invaded *en masse*. The daimyos of the crumbling Shogunate fielded every warstrider at their disposal, throwing them into the teeth of the oncoming fae host. Glorious and terrible was the carnage, but eventually the Essence and stamina of the warstriders' pilots flagged. One by one, they were overrun, destroyed, or simply swallowed up by the Wyld. Countless warstriders vanished during these battles, many never to be seen again. Others, discovered as wreckage in some overgrown field or half-collapsed cave, would have their shining bones picked clean by scavengers in the following years.

Now only a bare handful of these wondrous war machines remain in Creation. The Realm controls the majority of them, but rarely deploys them. They're considered an emergency weapon of incalculable value, and are more often seen marching in parade order to overawe subject states than deployed in battle. Lookshy also controls a small handful of warstriders, most of them ancient weapons dating back to the days of the Seventh Legion, though it has managed to create one new vanguard warstrider since the days of the Contagion. Elsewhere in Creation, warstriders are largely rumors and legends. Those vanishingly few Threshold powers that claim a single warstrider in their arsenals possess a treasure beyond value, a weapon against which few foes indeed could hope to stand — but which countless other powers, from rival princes to ambitious outcastes, would kill to possess.

Warstrider Burial

Possibly the greatest honor ever granted the heroes of the First Age was the rare practice of warstrider burial. Normally bestowed only upon the most legendary

warriors of the Dawn Caste, warstrider burial was also known to be granted to one of the Lunar Exalted, two Exigents, and three Dragon-Blooded during the span of the First Age.

In practice, warstrider burial was an entombment either accompanied by the Exalt's warstrider, to serve as a guardian into the afterlife, or — in several known cases — interment *within* the control cockpit of the warstrider, with the divine war machine itself serving simultaneously as guardian effigy, monument, and sarcophagus. Most such tombs were located in the Valley of the Ancients, but a few were situated in the homelands of those so highly honored.

Because warstriders were among the most valuable artifacts known in the First Age, warstrider burial generally only occurred after unanimous vote by the Solar Deliberative, or — on two memorable occasions — after one of the Celestial Incarnae engaged in public mourning of the deceased hero.

Warstrider Classes

Warstriders share a common foundational design: an enormous humanoid chassis armored in the five magical materials, with a control-web cockpit located behind the heaviest section of the torso plates. Beyond this, they vary dramatically in aesthetics, capability, and power. There was never any drive to standardize warstriders during the First Age. Each 'strider stood as both a unique testament to its maker's craft and a singular relic of dramatic power. However, warstriders did break down into three broad classes of power and design, marked by certain foundational similarities.

Vanguard

Most warstriders designed during the First Age, and nearly all of them constructed since its end, belong to the vanguard class. Vanguard warstriders stand 15 to 20 feet in height, and are clad in the same sort of alloys of steel and the magical materials that are used to make artifact armor. They incorporate cast steel, bronze, and specially-grown crystals into certain elements of their delicate inner workings, and their control web is normally made of brass, hardened wood, and cured leather. Vanguard warstriders are terrors on the battlefield by any standards, but their movements are slow and cumbersome in comparison to their more powerful noble and royal counterparts, and their armored enormity restricts the pilot's senses; tons of armor muffle sound, and vision is achieved through a series of lenses and mirrors leading down to a viewing scope mounted in the control pit.

Most surviving warstriders are vanguards, and the majority of vanguards were made primarily of jade or jade alloys, intended for use by the Dragon-Blooded.

Noble

Few noble warstriders still exist, and few of those that do have been deployed during the last Age. Most sleep away the centuries in forgotten or closely-guarded maintenance cathedrals, or gather a coat of silt at the bottom of the sea. In truth, the power of these warstriders is outstripped by their rarity and value, and it takes a truly earth-shaking disaster (or a truly foolhardy owner) to warrant fielding one of these walking war gods, and risking damage to its complex workings and ancient sorceries.

Noble warstriders stand 18 to 22 feet tall on average, and incorporate purer alloys of magical materials to ritually-sanctified steel in their armoring. Their inner workings are powerfully enchanted, with key pieces cast in the magical materials, and the rest scribed with efficacious wards and war-prayers. A noble warstrider's control web is less wearisome on the pilot and more

responsive in battle. Enchantments funnel sound and light through the war machine's inner workings to give the pilot relatively unimpeded awareness of his surroundings; rather than a small viewing slot, noble warstriders mount a viewing plate on the inside of the main torso armor which relays the sights glimpsed by the armor's crystalline eyes.

A few noble warstriders were cast in jade during height of the First Age, but more were made in the other magical materials. Most of the tiny handful of starmetal warstriders ever constructed were noble, as were the majority of moonsilver warstriders designed for the guardians and spouses of the Solar Exalted.

Royal

None in Creation are willing to admit to owning a royal warstrider. Rumors place one in the possession of the Scarlet Empress, the Seventh Legion, the Lunar forces of the Caul, the sealed and warded vaults of Ysyr, and the panoply of Mars herself. If any of these rumors are true, then their owners have either never deployed one of these ultimate weapons, or when they did, they left no loose-tongued survivors in the wake of the operation. Anyone coming into possession of a royal warstrider would own a weapon capable of razing nations and scattering armies like dust — and would become the target of every would-be conqueror in Creation.

Royal warstriders tower 20 to 25 feet into the air. Their armor is forged of absolutely pure slabs of the magical materials, shaped by tools that are themselves formidable artifacts, and invincibly hardened with sorcery. Their inner workings are entirely of magical material alloys, and their control webs are nigh-immune to wear and tear, inscribed with efficacious spells on every strap and gauntlet-plate. They move almost as fluidly as the Exalt's own body. A royal warstrider's control pit seemingly vanishes when in operation, its walled confines hidden by a waking dream shared between pilot and warstrider which grant her unimpeded awareness of her surroundings. The warstrider's eyes are, effectively, her own, and each sound which strikes its titanic armor, she hears with crystal clarity. Most royal warstriders enjoy integrated magic that sharpens their sensory bond with the pilot beyond human limits, granting easy long-range targeting and threat-selective sound filtering.

Royal warstriders were almost invariably the personal possessions of the Solar Exalted, and were cast in all five of the magical materials according to the tastes of those who built or commissioned them, though orichalcum was by far the most common.

Casting a God of War

The casting of a warstrider is one of the most demanding undertakings known to the Exalted. The demands in skill, time, manpower, and materials are already staggering, but even these pale into insignificance next to the sheer puissance of mystical power necessary. Warstriders require not only tons of the magical materials, but as many other significant occult forces as may be brought to bear. As a result, the commission of a warstrider generally becomes a holy rite of war as much as a construction project.

To design a warstrider is to enact something very much like Exaltation, bringing an immortal force of divine might into the world: an engine of power possessed of its own awakened spirit, intended to share a bond with one of the Chosen as close as that of any familiar. Thus, warstriders can only be successfully designed by those burning with creative fervor, whether riding high at the peak of their craft or clawing their way back from spirit-shattering revelations or reversals.

The actual construction of a warstrider is generally undertaken on a day of mystical significance such as the summer solstice, vernal equinox, first day of Calibration, founding day of the nation

the warstrider is being constructed to defend, birthday of the Exalt destined to pilot it, or potent conjunction of the stars and other celestial bodies; in the First Age, it was unthinkable to begin work without the occasion being confirmed as auspicious by one of the Chosen of Mars. Completion of the great artifact is nearly impossible without a dedicated forge-manse or similarly appointed ritual space. Spirits are often sought out to grant their blessings to the components of the great war-engine as they are completed and brought together, and the materials are generally harvested only from potent demesnes where at all possible. Tools are ritually purified at the beginning of each day of work. In short, creating a warstrider is not only the forging of an artifact, it is the birth of a war-god. It cannot succeed without being accorded the mystical reverence due to such an act.

In game terms, creating a warstrider requires not merely a single legendary artificing project, but several: the construction of each of a warstrider’s major systems (chassis, control web, armaments and armor, and so on) is an ordeal unto itself. These constituent artifact systems must then be brought together and catalyzed with an Ambition 7 sorcerous working. Vanguard warstriders require one such working to unify and catalyze their components, noble warstriders require five, and royal warstriders require eight in total.

Warstrider Rules

Warstriders are enormously powerful and complex artifacts, but their rules ultimately boil down to a few simple considerations. In general, piloting a warstrider is like wearing a suit of armor: the character can take the same actions she normally does, with the same dice pools, and the warstrider moves accordingly. In particular, a warstrider differs from any other magical armor in the following ways:

Great Strength

Unbreakable mystical “bones” and sorcerously-reinforced mechanisms of musculature grant warstriders fantastic strength. A warstrider adds a “power bonus” to dice pools for feats of strength. Vanguard warstriders have a power bonus of +5, noble warstriders have +7, and royal warstriders have +10.

In addition to this power bonus, Warstriders can still benefit from strength-enhancing Charms and similar magic, such as Ten-Ox Meditation, enabling truly legendary feats of strength.

Enormous Stride

Because of their long, powerful legs, a warstrider can run much, much faster than a normal human being. Effectively, a character fighting in a warstrider enjoys the same bonuses as she would if she were mounted, save that she does not make use of Ride. If trying to outrun or run down a target, warstriders lower the difficulty to do so by –2.

Invincible Armor

Warstriders are massively armored; vanguard models are frighteningly tough, while royal warstriders were nigh-immune to all but the strongest attacks. Each warstrider has traits like a suit of magical armor, including an attunement cost of 2 Motes. Warstriders count as heavy armor for the purpose of martial arts restrictions.

Class	Defense	Dodge	Soak	Stagger	Fatigue
Light	+0	–1	7	4+	+2
Heavy	–1	–2	8	5+	+3
Class	Defense	Dodge	Soak	Stagger	Fatigue

Vanguard	-1	-2	9	5+	+3
Noble	+0	-1	10	6+	+2
Royal	+0	-1	12	6+	+1

Boundless Endurance

Although warstriders are fatiguing to operate, their enormous limbs can be locked into any given position indefinitely. The great engines of war themselves never tire, and a warstrider never needs to roll to continue maintaining a feat of strength, such as holding up a bridge. Noble and royal warstriders can also continue to perform certain repetitious motions in response to the will of their pilot without requiring ongoing motion or exertion on her part, such as walking.

Environmental Sealing

Warstriders are designed to fight in any hostile environment they should encounter. All warstriders can environmentally seal themselves when necessary; their pilots need not immediately fear drowning, nor exposure to toxic gasses, and the great machines themselves are of course immune to poison and disease. A vanguard warstrider can keep its internal air supply fresh up to two hours, noble warstriders can maintain theirs for a day, and royal warstriders can maintain a livable environment for up to a week.

In addition, warstriders are formidably hardened against the power of the Wyld, and extend this protection to their pilots. Warstriders are immune to any intensity of Wyld corruption weaker than the middlemarches, and can safely weather exposure to the far shoals for up to a day for vanguards, a week for nobles, or a month for royals. The middlemarches require ten times the exposure of the far shoals to begin to erode a warstrider's defenses.

Some warstriders are designed with more powerful environmental hazard shielding. It's not normally safe to take a warstrider wading in lava, but Amalexa the Infinite Flame was designed to endure such rigors. Nor can most warstriders keep their pilots alive indefinitely in the freezing wastes of the uttermost North, but the vanguard warstrider Hysperia the Lance of Heaven, a pure-white juggernaut of shining jade, was designed for just such circumstances. Legend has it that the abandoned warstrider slumbers somewhere within the Pole of Air to this day.

Charm Use

In general, a warstrider's pilot retains full access to her Charms. Warstriders are designed to act as extensions of their pilot, and so a warstrider could benefit from its pilot's Heaven Thunder Hammer as though the warstrider's fists were the pilot's own. Likewise, a warstrider dodging attacks may benefit from Reed in the Wind, while one leaping across the battlefield could be sent soaring through the air with Soaring Crane Leap.

The few exceptions are generally matters of common sense, with one item of particular note: Warstriders are *not* considered armor for the purpose of Charms that help banish, conjure, shatter, or quickly don armor. They're considered heavy armor for the practice of martial arts styles.

God-Weapons

Many warstriders were designed with an array of integrated weapon systems such as arm-mounted blades, shoulder-braced Essence cannons, and other destructive prodigies. At the very least, all warstriders can lay about with their nigh-invincible fists, and many warstriders in the Age of Sorrows have been reduced to these formidable, built-in weapons. But in ages past, warstriders were often constructed alongside weapons scaled to their use: titanic mauls and blades, spears the size of trees, axes capable of cleaving a behemoth's skull. A number of

warstriders even had daiklaves or similar artifact weapons cast in scale for their use. The lightest of such prodigies — warstrider-scaled short blades, whips, and the like — required one Mote attunements, but the majority were superheavy weapons demanding two Mote attunement. Superheavy weapons require at least Strength 10 to use; for any lesser degree of might, they are dangerous for their weight alone, and might be mounted on a cart as a ram, or pushed off a rampart, but otherwise can't be wielded in battle. Even with Strength 10+, all warstrider weapons impose a –4 dice penalty to attack with them if used by beings of merely human size, as even superhuman strength cannot fully compensate for the unwieldiness of a weapon designed to be wielded by a giant.

One-Handed Warstrider Weapons

Warstriders can use these weapons with one hand. They count as two-handed weapons when used by humans.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Axe/Chopping Sword	S	Melee	8	Lacerated
Club*	S	Melee	7	Bruised
Improvised Weapon*	S/D	Brawl/MA	7	Varies
Katar/Tiger Claws*	S/D	Brawl/MA	7	Lacerated
Knife*	D	Melee	7	Lacerated
Mace/Hammer	S	Melee	8	Lacerated
Shield Bash*	S	Melee/MA	7	Bruised
Staff*	D	MA	7	Bruised
Slashing Sword/Spear	D	Melee	8	Lacerated
Straight Sword	S/D	Melee	8	Lacerated
Warstrider Fists*	S/D	Brawl/MA	6	Bruised
Whip*	D	Melee/MA	7	Bruised

* Weapons marked with one asterisk are considered nimble weapons. When wielding only nimble weapons, the first attack that strikes the character each round does not prevent her from using a move action. Only after being struck twice before her turn is she prohibited from using a move action.

Two-Handed Warstrider Weapons

Even warstriders require both hands to wield these weapons. Humans cannot use them at all without Strength 10+.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Great Sword	S/D	Melee	10	Lacerated
Lance	D	Melee	10	Lacerated
Polearm/Halberd/Great Axe	S	Melee	10	Lacerated
Sledgehammer	S	Melee	10	Lacerated

Warstrider Ranged Weapons

These weapons can be used to attack characters in other zones. Warstrider **Thrown** weapons can attack characters up to two zones away. Most warstrider **Archery** weapons can attack up to three zones away. Archery attacks made against enemies in the same zone suffer a –3 dice penalty.

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Boulder*	S/D	Thrown	6	Bruised
Boomerang**	D	Thrown	6	Bruised
Bow/Crossbow	D	Archery	7	Lacerated
Chakram/Knife/Shuriken*	D	Thrown	6	Lacerated
Flame projector***	D	Archery	8	Burned
Hatchet	S	Thrown	7	Lacerated
Javelin****	D	Thrown	7	Lacerated

* Weapons marked with one asterisk are considered nimble weapons. When wielding only nimble weapons, the first attack that strikes the character each round does not prevent her from using a move action. Only after being struck twice before her turn is she prohibited from using a move action.

** Returns when thrown, also nimble

*** Warstrider flame projectors are generally shoulder-mounted or arm-integrated, can only attack two zones away, and do not suffer a penalty for attacks against targets in the same zone. Each time they are fired, it is a Resources 3 expenditure.

**** Javelins use the rules of an Archery weapon, save that they can be wielded with one hand.

One-Handed Warstrider Artifact Weapons

One-Handed Artifact Weapons

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Grimcleaver/Reaver Daiklave	S	Melee	10	Lacerated
Razor Claws/Slayer Katar*	S/D	Brawl/MA	9	Lacerated
Short Daiklave*	D	Melee	9	Lacerated
Goremaul	S	Melee	10	Lacerated
Wrackstaff*	D	MA	9	Bruised
Longfang/Reaper Daiklave	D	Melee	10	Lacerated
Daiklave	S/D	Melee	10	Lacerated
Direlash*	D	Melee/MA	9	Lacerated

* Weapons marked with one asterisk are considered nimble weapons. When wielding only nimble weapons, the first attack that strikes the character each round does not prevent her from using a move action. Only after being struck twice before her turn is she prohibited from using a move action.

** Nimble. Can be wielded with the unarmed fighting style, despite not being a natural weapon.

Two-Handed Artifact Weapons

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Direlance/Grand Grimscythe	D	Melee	12	Lacerated
Grand Daiklave	S/D	Melee	12	Lacerated
Grand Grimcleaver	S	Melee	12	Lacerated
Grand Goremaul	S	Melee	12	Lacerated

Ranged Artifact Weapons

Name	Attribute	Ability	Damage	Wound
Infinite Chakram/Skycutter*	D	Thrown	8	Lacerated
Essence Cannon	D	Archery	8	Bruised
Powerbow/Siege Crossbow	D	Archery	9	Lacerated
Inferno Projector***	D	Archery	10	Burned

* Returns when thrown, also nimble

** Warstrider inferno projectors are generally shoulder-mounted or arm-integrated, can only attack two zones away, and do not suffer a penalty for attacks against targets in the same zone. Each time they are fired, it is a Resources 3 expenditure.

Structure

A warstrider is designed both to destroy its enemies and to protect its user. As such, a warstrider has its own Health trait, called an Structure. Structure functions identically to Health with the following exceptions:

- When a warstrider is Staggered, rather than suffering a Wound, it suffers a Debility (see p. XX). System Damage often carries associated Debility penalties. These function in all respects like Wound penalties, but are not negated by effects that negate or mitigate Wound penalties.
- A warstrider rendered incapacitated is immobilized and nonfunctional rather than “dead,” and it may be possible to repair it. See “Warstrider Damage,” below.
- Effects that would heal a living person or mend an inanimate object fail to restore lost Structure. A warstrider is neither truly a living body, nor an object simple enough to benefit from such crude mending.
- Any Charm that would give its target Temporary Health has no effect on the warstrider’s Structure.
- Warstriders do not naturally heal damage they sustain to their Structure. See “Maintenance and Repair,” below.

Class	Structure
Vanguard	16
Noble	19
Royal	22

Essence Burden

Warstriders require an enormous amount of Essence to remain operational. In addition to their significant attunement cost, all warstriders have several Hearthstone sockets mounted inside of

their control pit. A vanguard warstrider requires any Hearthstone inserted into its main power socket in order to function, while a noble or royal warstrider requires a Hearthstone from a level 4+ Manse. A Hearthstone dedicated to powering a warstrider doesn't provide increased Essence respiration; that function is consumed in powering the warstrider.

Evocations and Warstrider Charms

Warstriders possess a number of additional Hearthstone sockets arrayed around the central power sockets. Each socket activates one or more Evocations — which function the same as any other Evocation — and/or special Charms unique to the Warstrider, which may only be used by the pilot while she is attuned to and controlling the machine.

Ultimate Power

When a Hearthstone empowers every socket in a warstrider's control chassis, its ultimate power becomes available: an incredibly devastating war-miracle which is best only deployed in extreme circumstances. After deploying a warstrider's ultimate power, its systems must be re-aligned to empower the ultimate power again as though repairing a Debility (see p. XX).

Drawbacks

For all their enormous size and power, warstriders carry a number of drawbacks. They suffer a –3 penalty to all Stealth and nimble Athletics actions, as well as to all attempts at fine manipulation: a warstrider's massive hands aren't made for gentle work, and truly delicate acts, such as picking a lock, are impossible. For most warstriders, vanishing during battle is likewise impossible. While an ambush from concealment is possible, a warstrider is simply too large and conspicuous to lose track of during most fights. Finally, vanguard warstriders impose a –3 penalty on all (Perception + Awareness) rolls.

Warstrider Damage

Though their potent armor and interwoven miracles render them incredibly resistant to damage and degradation, warstriders remain incredibly complex works of precision craftsmanship, and as such are ultimately vulnerable to lasting damage and degradation of their ability to function — or even outright destruction. Such accumulated damage and dysfunction are known as “Debilities,” and can ultimately cripple a warstrider to the point of near-nonfunctionality. Over half of the warstriders in the possession of the Realm and Lookshy suffer at least one Debility, for it taxes the outermost limits of the expertise of the Terrestrial Exalted to correct such damage.

In game terms, whenever a warstrider is Staggered, roll a single die. On a result of 1-3, the warstrider gains a Debility; on a result of 4-10, no debility appears. Should the warstrider suffer a Debility, roll on the chart below to determine the nature of its Debility. If an inapplicable result appears (such as a destroyed weapon when the warstrider either has no such systems, or all weapons have already been disabled) then the warstrider instead treats the result as though it had been a “10.”

Result Effect

- 1 Catastrophic damage. Roll twice on this chart. If 1s appear again when doing so, ignore and re-roll them.
- 2 Damage to leg joints. All of the warstrider's movement becomes complex movement.
- 3 Damaged hip assembly. The warstrider loses its “Enormous Stride” bonus.
- 4 Destroyed weapon. One of the warstrider's integrated weapons, if it possesses any, is rendered nonfunctional until repaired. This Debility can occur as many times as the warstrider has integrated weapons, though it will never disable the warstrider's fists.

5 Damaged optics. The warstrider's sensory link to its pilot is impaired, inflicting a -2 penalty to all Awareness rolls.

6 Damage to hand assemblies. The warstrider can no longer grasp or manipulate objects with one of its limbs, and is reduced to using it as a smashing implement. This Debility can occur a number of times up to the number of manipulating limbs the warstrider possesses.

7-8 Damage to armor mountings. The warstrider loses a point of its Soak as gaps and weaknesses appear in its once-inviolable hull. This Debility stacks with itself.

9 Damaged chassis. The warstrider suffers a -2 Debility penalty to all actions. This Debility stacks with itself.

10 Damaged chassis. The warstrider suffers a -1 Debility penalty to all actions. This Debility stacks with itself.

When a warstrider is incapacitated, roll a d10. On a result of 7-10, the warstrider is disabled but suffers no further damage, and can potentially be repaired. On a result of 4-6, the warstrider is disabled as above, but also suffers a Debility; roll on the debility chart, above. On a 1-3, the warstrider is destroyed beyond the possibility of repair. Its ferocious war-spirit gutters like a candle in the wind, and an ageless miracle is lost to Creation.

Maintenance

Warstriders require regular maintenance and upkeep to function in peak condition, and this maintenance demands the combined skills of an engineer, priest, and mystic. Their control web must be oiled and mended, their reservoirs of alchemical lubricants replaced, and any minor damage to their armored plates must be mended at great expense before small imperfections become larger systemic problems. Additionally, the efficacious war-prayers and carved battle-hymns that decorate the 'strider's various systems need periodic renewal, a ritual consuming several hours of singing and incense-burning, while the entire artifact must undergo periodic ritual cleansing to avoid turbulent Essence build-up within its systems.

In short, maintaining a warstrider takes specialized ingredients and tools that take up a medium-sized workshop or two-horse cart, can only be readily obtained in a major city, and require at least Resources ••• to keep in constant supply. The great war-engine requires a full day of maintenance after any story in which it is significantly active (such as marching from place to place, helping to build a bridge, and so on), as well as after any battle. Once the warstrider engages in activity that would obligate it to a day of maintenance while already in arrears by at least one maintenance day, roll a die and subtract one from the result for each outstanding maintenance-day beyond the first. On a result of 7-10, the warstrider suffers no ill results... for now. On a result of 3-6, the warstrider suffers a Debility. On a result of 1-2, the warstrider suffers a Debility *and* suffers 1 damage.

Maintaining a warstrider requires at least Occult ••• and Craft ••••. For those unable to perform such maintenance themselves or to acquire the services of a qualified sorcerer or Outcaste, the most common solution is the summoning and binding of First Circle demons known as tihamer, the dreaming masks. The tihamer are born with an innate talent for understanding and maintaining complex systems, and as such are often summoned as librarians and auditors, but can perform adequate basic warstrider maintenance in a pinch. They are unwholesome beings, though, appearing as ragged figures wrapped in leathery robes topped with a dozen pale hands holding up an expressionless porcelain mask. When they sleep — and unlike most spirits, they must sleep, doing so promptly when the moon rises — vines of iron with brass leaves grow throughout their surroundings, eventually choking out all other plant life.

Repairs

Unlike many other works of First Age artifice, warstriders were constructed with the expectation that they would suffer damage in battle and would require routine repair, presumably by Dragon-Blooded sorcerer-engineers.

Repairing a single point of damage to a warstrider's Structure is an extended (Intelligence + Craft) action against difficulty 8, with one-week intervals for each roll and a goal of 15. If the warstrider is incapacitated, restoring it to basic functionality so that other repairs can begin (assuming that it has not been destroyed beyond the hope of repair) requires three months of work per roll and 30 successes.

Repairing an ongoing Debility is a trickier proposal, as it involves essentially rebuilding select portions of the warstrider without disrupting the harmony of its design, requiring an extended difficulty 9 (Intelligence + Craft) project with intervals of one month and a goal number of 30 successes.

Botching any warstrider repair attempt inflicts a fresh Debility on the warstrider, while failure inflicts a 1 damage to its Structure.

To Pilot a Giant

Attuning to a warstrider for the first time is quite unlike any other artifact. The Exalt does not simply send her Essence into a waiting matrix of occult channels and mystical metal. She climbs into the central control web, seals herself inside the massive device, and pours out her Essence in all directions — and is, herself, drawn out with it into the spirit of the warstrider.

This first attunement is like a kind of sacred vision or waking dream, in which the Exalt tumbles through the artifact's spirit and memories. Ancient battlefields flash past in rapid yet earth-shaking succession, while the mind-nature of the warstrider itself suffuses her, learning as much about its new pilot as the Exalt does of the weapon she has chosen to command. This process can feel like an hours-long odyssey into the domain of a mighty war-god, but generally only takes several minutes of real time. Subsequent attunements are much quicker, taking only moments; they feel like ascending a mountain, and like coming home.

To pilot a warstrider is not merely to twist and gesture within a webwork of leather, metal, and wooden straps. At all times the Exalt feels the enormous presence of the warstrider's spirit around herself. Its rage heats her skin as she guides it into battle. Its alarm prickles the nape of her neck as threats appear. Its exultation lifts her own spirits high as, together, they triumph over her enemies. The link is at least as intimate as that shared between a hero and her familiar, and may grow to be as close as the bond between lovers.

Those Who Shake the Earth

Each warstrider is a legend unto itself, but most of those legends have long since passed from Creation. The Mountain Watchers vanished into the fires of the Usurpation, though rumors continue to circulate that one of their number survives in salvageable form somewhere on the vastness of the Imperial Mountain. Of the 100 warstriders once linked to the response-matrix of the Realm Defense Grid, all but four have long since been looted from their hidden launching chapels or lost to the Wyld, and the remaining quartet now wait in locations so remote and

hostile that the Scarlet Empress was never able to mount a successful salvage mission to retrieve them.

And yet, some few remain. A selection of their number are detailed below.

Other Warstriders

The warstriders detailed here are only a small sampling of the many fantastic engines of destruction crafted during the First Age. Others include:

- **Stave the Colossus** is a vanguard warstrider cast in daunting quantities of white jade mined from the roots of the Imperial Mountain. Its vambrace-plates are oversized shields with sharpened leading edges, hardened to resist a direct attack from the spell Death Ray, and its feet take the form of enormous hooked talons which can root themselves immovably to the earth. It is currently in the possession of the Seventh Legion.

- **Jinline the Arrow of Dawn** is a blue jade vanguard warstrider salvaged from the bay of Gloam in RY 399 by House Cley, and seized by House Cathak upon Cley's dissolution in RY 525. Both of its forearms mount integrated retractable lightning katars, but the blade on the left arm can no longer exit its housing thanks to ancient battle damage the Realm has never been able to successfully repair. The warstrider mounts a light implosion bow on its left shoulder, which can be aimed and fired by reaching up and taking hold of an enormous stock fitted for the warstrider's left hand.

- **Concellatia the Stellar Fulcrum** is one of only nine noble warstriders ever cast in starmetal. Its armet features a smooth plate with no optic features of any sort. Instead, the cockpit features a powerful and all-encompassing projection of the night sky, allowing Concellatia's Sidereal pilot to guide and battle the machine while operating entirely through enhanced precognition. It is sealed away in the seventh vault of the Crimson Panoply of Victory, and may only be deployed by written assent of at least four elder Sidereals.

Alkalest the Sea Devil (Vanguard Warstrider, Artifact N/A)

Attunement Cost: 3 Motes

Alkalest numbers among the oldest surviving warstriders in Creation. It was completed during the ancient war against the Niobran League, designed to spearhead a counter-offensive against the League's feared VII Storm Dragoons and the city of Kalipso, beneath the Yrinee Reef. It survived the war with an exemplary service record and went on to see over two thousand years of periodic use dealing with various crises in the West and Southwest, but was lost in the first century of the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate when a Wyld storm sunk the transport ship carrying it from the Bay of Kings to Wu-Jian, and now lies forgotten but undamaged in a tomb of silt.

Alkalest stands 15 feet high and nearly as wide in the shoulders, with a rounded dome pierced by two crimson optic lenses rather than a distinct head, and a massive, curved glacis plate of deep black jade. Its arms are long and flexible rather than traditionally jointed, and end in enormous blue-jade claws, while a small propulsion chapel dominates the warstrider's back and curves over its flanged shoulders, carved with thousands of tiny prayers to Daana'd. Alkalest possesses a cunning and patient spirit well-suited to ambushes and long pursuit of elusive quarry, and has found its centuries of slumber at the bottom of the sea peaceful. Yet it tires now of its enforced idleness, and will welcome discovery of a pilot willing to guide it into battle against the enemies of Creation once again.

Systems

The Sea Devil was designed for amphibious battle, and as such, is permanently environment-sealed and capable of sustaining a breathable atmosphere so long as it remains powered and attuned. Its armored chassis contains a cunning array of Essence-powered pumps and baffles capable of venting any water that makes it into the control pit and sealing over all but the most grievous damage to avoid the risk of the pilot drowning.

Though ponderous on land (where all movement counts as complex), Alkalest is graceful as a killer whale in the water, able to ascend, descend, and accelerate by channeling water through its propulsion chapel. In game terms, aquatic movement isn't complex movement, it can move one range band in any direction while submerged regardless of currents or conditions, and it enjoys its full Enormous Stride underwater.

Since it often has to operate in poor-visibility conditions or even the sub-light zone of the deep sea, Alkalest's viewing scope is enchanted with powerful night-vision magic, and two pearl-like beacons on its hips periodically send out echolocation pulses which the warstrider's spirit interprets and feeds to its pilot as an instinctive awareness of the location of unseen threats or geographic features. In total, the Sea Devil's pilot suffers no Awareness penalties due to poor visibility underwater.

The warstrider's arms end in enormous blue jade claws, which are treated as artifact razor claws, giving it a total attunement cost of 3. The Sea Devil suffers an additional -2 penalty to attempts to perform fine manipulation with these massive talons, above and beyond normal warstrider penalties. Its claws cannot be disabled with a "weapon destroyed" Debility result — instead, such results disable the warstrider's propulsion chapel, reducing it to walking along the seabed when submerged.

Hearthstone Slots: One primary power socket, three additional warfare sockets

Warfare Socket One

If the pilot resonates with blue jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: Lightning Claws and the Evocation: Electric Violence Posture.

Lightning Claws

The Sea Devil bears down under the dictates of its pilot's killing intent, feeding her Essence into its great blue jade talons, which erupt with crackling lightning.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote when making an attack with Alkalest's claws to add +3 to the attack's base damage. If attacking underwater, everyone else in the same zone must also resist a one-time hazard (difficulty 6, damage 3, dazed).

Electric Violence Posture

Once per scene, a single Charm used in tandem with Lightning Claws which enhances an attack's damage may set its cost to 0 Motes.

Warfare Socket Two

If the pilot resonates with black jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: Lurking Devil of the Deeps and the Evocations: Wavestrider Mastery and Sea Ambush Exultation.

Lurking Devil of the Deeps

Finding a moment of calm among the deep vastness of the waves, the Sea Devil lets its spirit suffuse the waters around it, stirring them into a concealing cloud.

System: To use this Charm, Alkalest must rest unmoving on some manner of underwater surface: the bottom of a lake; the wreckage of a sunken ship; the arch of a coral reef. Spend 1 Mote as a simple action. Silt and murk gather upon its great surface, blurring its outline and rendering it an unobtrusive part of the underwater environment. Roll (Wits + Stealth) against difficulty 5 to vanish.

Wavestrider Mastery

The warstrider may walk on the surface of any body of water.

Sea Ambush Exultation

Every Charm that enhances an unexpected attack launched from concealment by Lurking Devil of the Deeps drops its cost to 0 Motes.

Warfare Socket Three

If the pilot resonates with black jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: War Hymn Ascension and the Evocation: Storm Tide Surge.

War Hymn Ascension

In a moment of divine communion, Alkalest swallows its pilot's anima and uses it to supercharge its propulsion chapel in a burst of anima-colored radiance.

System: There is a great underwater shockwave and a blast that propels the warstrider upwards five zones or until it strikes the water's surface, whichever occurs first. Everything within the same zone of the shockwave produced when this Charm is activated loses its swift action during the current round if it hasn't acted yet, as turbulence churns the water into sheer foaming chaos. Anything directly above the warstrider is subjected to a (Strength + Brawl)-based attack (base damage 8, mauled). If War Hymn Ascension is used beneath a ship, it is most likely holed unless its hull is of First Age materials.

Storm Tide Surge

When using a Charm that allows the Exalt to move an additional zone, she may instead move two additional zones if underwater.

Ultimate Power: Tidal Cataclysm

If the pilot resonates with both black and blue jade, then this war miracle becomes accessible when all of Alkalest's warfare sockets are filled.

Alkalest's spirit erupts out across the battlefield, becoming one with the waves and calling all available water to support it. This can drag a tidal wave onto land in the warstrider's wake, siphon a rainstorm into a great compressed sphere of water ten zones wide that the pilot's opponents must do battle within, pull ships beneath the waves to the warstrider's location, produce precision riptide currents that allow the Sea Devil to move two zones per turn for the rest of the scene, or perform other terrible miracles of aquatic destruction at the discretion of the player and Storyteller. A tidal wave is treated as a one-time hazard with difficulty 9, damage 7 (bruised), striking everything within an area roughly the size of a city.

Vologard the Emerald Fangs (Vanguard Warstrider, Artifact N/A)

Attunement Cost: 2 Motes

Vologard was consecrated during the early Shogunate period in the forge-conurbations south of mighty Zarlath. Designed for interdiction patrols against the then-aggressive incursions of the Eastern Fair Folk, it was almost immediately co-opted into the private wars of Gens Miralu, which sponsored its creation. It was lost during the intense fighting of the Wyld Crusade and now slumbers deep in the trackless forests near the Pole of Wood, completely overgrown by a braid of enormous trees whose trunks completely enclose all but one of Vologard's grasping hands.

Vologard stands 18 feet high. Constructed primarily from green jade, its head is cast as a stylized helm with exaggerated fangs and spreading antlers. It has no integrated weaponry and no dedicated weapons were forged for its use, but its fingers end in wickedly hooked talons (its unarmed attacks inflict lacerated Wounds). Vologard's most striking features are its two enormous pauldrons, which together make up nearly a fifth of the warstrider's mass. They are elaborately, exquisitely carved into a mosaic of hundreds of coursing wolves leaping, snapping, crouching, running, tumbling, and bracing, all flowing over and across one another.

Vologard's spirit is alert and insightful, ever on the lookout for danger and ever seeking advantage from the terrain around it and the potential enemies it perceives. It has spent the last seven centuries dreaming the green dream, the forest-dream, and has become quite a wild thing: willful, violent, and requiring a resolute pilot to break the warstrider to her will.

Systems

The Emerald Fangs was built for long-range reconnaissance and disruption strikes, intended to detect and disorder mass invasions of Creation to buy time for a more thoroughly organized military response. As a result, it was not designed to be environment-sealed, passing scents and wind direction to its pilot by siphoning them through purifying baffles within the armor and replicating them within the cockpit; it is, however, capable of comprehensively filtering out all poisons and similar hazards. Its primary environmental shortcoming is that it cannot seal in the event of full immersion in water.

When left idle for more than a few moments, the warstrider bends light and shadow around its silhouette to blend into its surroundings, enjoying the benefits of the camouflage Uncanny feature (reduce the difficulty of Stealth attempts by -2 when the warstrider remains still in the wilderness). The warstrider's pilot also never needs to roll at higher than difficulty 6 to detect anything in densely wooded environments thanks to advanced environment-mapping and threat-selective visual filtering. Finally, the warstrider and its pilot are unconditionally immune to mutation by the Wyld.

Hearthstone Slots: One primary power socket, three additional warfare sockets

Warfare Socket One

If the pilot resonates with green jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: Emerald Eruption and the Evocation: Hunter's Strike.

Emerald Eruption

The Emerald Fangs vents a catalyzing blast of Essence into the environment around itself, stirring all nearby plants into a spurt of violent, constrictive growth.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote on the pilot's turn. For the rest of the scene, all zones with substantial plant life in them within whatever sector the warstrider occupies experience a radical, violent growth surge. Everyone other than the pilot within those zones must use complex movement to get around in them, and are always considered to have been struck before their turn

unless they use a simple rather than swift action to utilize any action that would normally be disabled thereby.

Hunter's Strike

The cost of all Charms used to attack a target that has not moved during the current or previous round is reduced by -1, to a maximum of a -2 Mote reduction per turn.

Warfare Socket Two

If the pilot resonates with green jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Evocations: Forest Stride and Crawling Fangs.

Crawling Fangs

Any enemy within the same zone as the warstrider who employs complex movement to move to another zone must deal with a one-time hazard (difficulty 7, damage 3, lacerated) as thorns spring forth from every surface around them and tear at their flesh.

Forest Stride

If not attacked before her turn and within a heavily wooded environment, the warstrider's pilot may move one additional zone when she uses a move action. She then gains +1 Defense against anyone attacking her for the rest of the round.

Warfare Socket Three

If the pilot resonates with green jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: Shattering Howl and the Evocation: Threat Awareness Rhythm.

Shattering Howl

The pilot may emit a scream or war-cry into a brass receiver built into the cockpit, which the warstrider echoes as an impossibly loud, deeply-distorted war horn that deafens and disorients its prey.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote on the pilot's turn. All enemies within the same sector must succeed at a difficulty 9 Willpower roll or else forfeit all non-reflexive actions on their next turn. Groups instead roll their Drill, and do not forfeit their turn, but instead lose all benefits of Size when they next act.

Threat Awareness Rhythm

The Dragon-Blooded Charm: Flickering Candle Meditation provides its benefit whether or not the pilot meets any of the Charm's qualifying criteria. The Solar Charm: Fivefold Bulwark Stance reduces its cost to 0 Motes.

Ultimate Power: One Thousand Wolves

If the pilot resonates with green jade, then this war miracle becomes accessible when all of Vologard's warfare sockets are filled.

The warstrider's massive pauldrons shift, shudder... and break apart into a massive army of green jade wolves, which surge and attack in accordance with the pilot's will. For the rest of the scene, the pilot commands a Size 5, Drill 9 group of jade wolves.

Casualties are not destroyed, but instead dissolve into Essence and reform on Vologard's shoulders. At the end of the scene, all undefeated wolves climb back onto the warstrider and freeze back into place as armored pauldrons.

Green Jade Wolves

Aptitudes: *Attack*, evade. sharp senses, tracking

Expertise: 7; **Utility:** 2

Base Damage: 5 (lacerated)

Defense: 6; **Soak:** 9; **Resolve:** 4

Essence: 1; **Drill:** 9

Coherence: 9 + Size

Powers

Pack Tactics (passive): The beast gains Overwhelming with a value equal to the number of wolves that have already attacked the target this round. In the case of a group of wolves, Overwhelming's value is equal to the group's Size.

Perfect Morale (passive): The group is incapable of knowing fear. A group with Perfect Morale cannot fail rout checks and will not retreat unless ordered to do so. It enjoys three extra Magnitude boxes, but cannot benefit from the rally for numbers action (see p. XX) because all of the group's losses represent fighters killed or injured too badly to continue, rather than combatants who have lost heart and might be induced to resume fighting.

Swift Killer (passive): Once per battle, the beast may move an extra zone when it moves.

Amalexa the Infinite Flame (Noble Warstrider, Artifact N/A)

Attunement Cost: 2 Motes

Terror of the Southern Wyld. Immortal Guardian of the South. Breaker of the Concord of Herons. The warstrider Amalexa carried these titles and more during its 1,400 years of service along the ever-expanding bordermarches of the southern Solar Realm.

Care and maintenance of the Infinite Flame was the holy duty of Gens Megido, a small, predominantly Fire Aspected family. The right to pilot the warstrider was a sacred privilege hotly competed over through highly ritualized duels within the Gens. Despite their close identification with the ancient artifact, the Megido were expected to bow immediately to the wishes of any of their Solar patrons who chose to pilot Amalexa into battle personally, an event known to have occurred at least six times.

Amalexa lay idle in its launching cathedral through the Usurpation, as the patrons of Gens Megido were caught out at the faraway Calibration Banquet in Meru. It then became a key weapon of the Shogunate, turned as often against rival Dragon-Blooded families as the burgeoning threat of the Fair Folk. Gens Megido was effectively wiped out as an institution during the Great Contagion and the Wyld Crusade that followed, their Manses dissolved into chaos. Their holy charge now lies lost in the red-hot sands of the Southern desert near to the current location of the Pole of Fire, the bones of its final Dragon-Blooded pilot still resting within its control pit.

Amalexa stands 20 feet tall, cast in red jade with orichalcum tracteries. A beautifully androgynous face the size of a strong man's torso peers out from the center of a head crafted to resemble a hawk-beaked helm. Its great pauldrons are intricately carved to resemble a shifting cascade of jade feathers, allowing maximum mobility in the shoulder joints while still providing excellent, overlapping protection. The warstrider's most striking feature is the great circular mandala of absolutely pure red jade mounted to its back, held in place by elemental Essence

fields rather than physical fixtures, which acts as the fulcrum of its powerful war-Charms and Evocations.

The Infinite Flame houses within it a proud and aggressive spirit, but a canny one as well. Amalexa will brook but one form of delay, and that is a moment reserved to take stock of the enemy and marshal its Essence to assault them; this led to the bestowal of its final honorific during the Shogunate, the Fist of Hesiesh. The warstrider has grown enraged by its forgotten centuries of disuse in the blowing sands of the South, while it knows its enemies prowl abroad in the world. Any who salvages and attunes to the Infinite Flame will be immediately buffeted by its overwhelming desire to launch a great crusade against all those who threaten the South.

The Immortal Guardians

Over the course of the First Age there developed an informal brotherhood of four warstriders, designed independently of one another but united in popular imagination through the songs and stories of a Waxing Moon poet named Ripples Upon the Lake. Each was a warstrider stationed in one of the outer directions, each cast of elemental jade corresponding to its direction, and each — at least in the wake of the Waxing Moon's ballads — given the title of Immortal Guardian. These were:

- Amalexa the Infinite Flame, Immortal Guardian of the South. Amalexa was the oldest and first of the Immortal Guardians constructed, and the only one to carry that title before the poetry of Ripples Upon the Lake.
- Cheiron the Thousand Coils, Immortal Guardian of the East. Stationed in the miraculous arboreal city-network of Agartha, it was the youngest of the Four Guardians. Cheiron vanished along with Agartha in the second century of the Shogunate.
- Banok the Ferocious Gale, Immortal Guardian of the North. Banok was the central weapon of the Northern Aerial Strike Regiment, kept at constant battle-readiness in the workshop-gullet of the flying whale Yringandr. No records remain detailing the ultimate fate of the Ferocious Gale or Yringandr.
- Xyphon the Torrent, Immortal Guardian of the West. One of the most heavily-armored warstriders ever fielded, Xyphon was the sole royal warstrider among the four Immortals; all of its ostensible brethren were of noble rank. This armor rendered the Torrent sluggish in aquatic battles, an unusual trait for a Western warstrider, but allowed it to survive the sheer elemental devastation unleashed by its monstrous Charms and Evocations. Its deployment shifted repeatedly throughout the First Age, including at different times Xenet, Luthe, and Amphion. Xyphon is presumed lost and sunk during the Wyld Crusade. The Bodhisattva Anointed by Dark Water has dispatched one of his deathknights to investigate its current whereabouts.

Systems

The Infinite Flame was designed for battle in the absolute extremes of the elemental South. Like all of the Immortal Guardians, it is an engine of elemental jade taken to its logical design conclusion: a terrible agent of flame and devastation.

Amalexa's hull is designed to withstand any conceivable extreme of high temperature; it can and has deployed into the Pole of Fire itself without sustaining damage. The warstrider is immune to environmental damage from flames and heat, and its pilot never needs fear overheating while

within its control pit. Direct damage from flame-based attacks cannot inflict more than 1 damage in a round.

Like many noble warstriders, Amalexa enjoys sensory-boosting enchantments, effectively nullifying any penalties due to smoke, steam, or heat-shimmer. Furthermore its optic lenses may be fed a trickle of Essence from its empowering Hearthstone, causing them to glow with an unearthly crimson light for a scene and permitting the warstrider to see in the dark.

Amalexa once carried a red jade warstrider daiklave named Burning Brand, but that miraculous weapon was lost in the battle during the final century of the Shogunate and swallowed by the Wyld. A replacement sheathe has been affixed to its hip, which now carries a warstrider-scaled bastard sword of alchemically-hardened but otherwise non-magical steel. The Infinite Flame's left arm mounts a retractable, integrated whip housed in a massive armored bracer. Its total attunement cost is 2.

Hearthstone Slots: One primary power socket, four additional warfare sockets

Warfare Socket One

If the pilot resonates with red jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: Burning Lash Punishes the Wicked and the Evocation: Shattering Magma Concentration.

Burning Lash Punishes the Wicked

Amalexa's pilot feeds a surge of Essence into the warstrider's integrated whip, causing it to break apart into composite red-jade links held together by streamers of elemental flame.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene or until the warstrider or its pilot are Staggered, whichever comes first, all attacks made with the warstrider's whip may target enemies up to two zones away.

Shattering Magma Concentration

The Solar Charm: Fire and Stones Strike and the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Dragon-Graced Assault increase the amount they add to an attack's base damage by +2.

Warfare Socket Two

If the pilot resonates with red jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Evocations: Hardened Bark of the Char-Tree and Red Iron Aegis.

Hardened Bark of the Char-Tree

When activating the Solar Charm: Iron Skin Concentration or the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Impervious Skin of Stone Meditation, increase the amount of Soak granted by +1.

Red Iron Aegis

The cost of the Solar Charm: Iron Kettle Body is reduced to 0 Motes. The cost of the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Impervious Skin of Stone Meditation is also reduced to 0 Motes, and Amalexa counts as a source of stone for the purposes of the Charm.

Warfare Socket Three

If the pilot resonates with red jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: Hymn of Legions Cremated by Flame and the Evocation: Rising Sparks Spirit

Hymn of Legions Cremated by Flame

Finding a moment of calm in the midst of battle, the warstrider pilot achieves perfect communion with Amalexa. Their Essence surges as one, empowering the warstrider with the vigor of

absolute flame. The mandala wheel on Amalexa's back begins to spin rapidly, crackling with raw elemental Essence, which spreads across the warstrider's entire frame.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. For the rest of the scene, or until the warstrider or its pilot are Staggered, whichever comes first, the warstrider's chassis surges and erupts with flames, with the result that everything within the same zone is subjected to a bonfire hazard. Additionally, the warstrider adds two dice to all movement, attack, and damage rolls.

Rising Sparks Spirit

The Solar Charm: Ruin-Abasing Shrug and the Dragon-Blooded Charm: Unflagging Vengeance Meditation may be used to ignore that Warstrider's Debility penalties as well as the character's own Wound penalties.

Warfare Socket Four

If the pilot resonates with red jade, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: Heaven and Earth Consigned to Ash and the Evocation: Magma Lash Summons.

Heaven and Earth Consigned to Ash

Finding a further moment of perfect control in the midst of the warstrider's raging spirit, its pilot may compel the Infinite Flame to concentrate its burning power into the mandala ring on its back, transforming it into a surging weapon of unimaginable power,

System: This Charm is only available while under the effects of Hymn of Legions Cremated by Flame. The character may use a simple action to draw forth the mandala and cast it forth using a (Dexterity + Thrown) attack. This cancels Hymn of Legions Cremated by Flame to create an attack that is applied to everything within five zones in whatever direction the attack is hurled. This attack is unblockable. It has a base damage of 20. At the end of the attack, Amalexa's mandala flies back and re-affixes itself to the warstrider's back. Everything in the path of the attack is left consumed in flames; treat as zone-spanning bonfires.

Magma Lash Summons

Once per scene, the pilot may use a simple action to consume and cancel the power of Hymn of Legions Cremated by Flame in order to immediately pay the full success cost of the spell Magma Kraken (see p. XX), if its pilot knows that spell.

Ultimate Power: Pyroclastic Holocaust Mandala

If the pilot resonates with red jade, then this war miracle becomes accessible when all of Amalexa's warfare sockets are filled.

Amalexa's spirit surges into its flame mandala, causing the great wheel to detach from the warstrider's back and lift into the sky, emitting a blazing torrent of flames to rain down across the entire battlefield. Everything within the sector the warstrider occupies at the time of this power's activation (and to an elevation three zones high) is engulfed in a firestorm that does no harm to Amalexa, but subjects everything else caught in it to an environmental hazard (difficulty 9, damage 7, burned, penalty -1, one round). This persists for (3 + Essence) rounds, during which time the warstrider is free to move and act within the firestorm.

Mu the Redeemer (Royal Warstrider, Artifact N/A)

Attunement Cost: 3 Motes

Mu was a Twilight Era warstrider, the final product of an age of destructive Solar experiments with constructed timelines and the very fabric of the cosmos. One hundred thousand years of

wars that were never fought are bound indelibly into its gleaming orichalcum plates, and the prayers and hopes of a thousand thousand civilizations that never graced Creation swirl within its noble spirit.

The Redeemer was the personal weapon of a Zenith Caste political reformer whose name has been lost to all but the Maiden of Secrets herself. He was one of the few survivors of the initial strike the night of the Calibration Banquet. Badly injured, he was able to drag himself to the warstrider's sorcerously-concealed maintenance chapel, where he took Mu into battle against the Dragon-Blooded forces still rampaging through the crumbling streets of Meru. The battle between the warstrider and the erstwhile army of the Solar Realm leveled three of the holy city's districts and triggered a massive landslide which left the warstrider and its dying pilot buried at the base of the Imperial Mountain. There the great artifact lay for centuries, until thirty years ago a court of earth elementals discovered it. Recognizing the sheer power emanating from the warstrider but failing to grasp its nature, they began to worship it as an icon of divine favor, and have set about excavating a subterranean shrine around Mu.

The Redeemer stands 24 feet tall and is cast in the guise of a gleaming suit of stylized full plate armor. Intricately articulated plates provide full defense of all of its joints while barely hindering mobility to any part of the warstrider. It is forged primarily from orichalcum refined out of prayers to the Unconquered Sun and stored at the peak of Mount Meru for five centuries before being consecrated for use in the warstrider's construction; as a result, its chassis gleams in tones ranging from deep gold to nearly pure white, particularly when struck by the sun. An articulated 'cape' of interlocking orichalcum frames and crystals cultured in a dream Gaia once bequeathed to the Solar Exalted protects the warstrider's back, affixed at the base of its spiked pauldrons.

Mu's animating spirit is proud and severe. It seeks to protect that which is precious to its pilot, and to raze all threats to dust and Essence. It revels in sophistication and civilization, and will become consumed by deep melancholy when it learns of the fallen state of Creation.

Systems

The Redeemer grants its pilot powerful sensory-enhancing blessings, effectively replicating the Uncanny features Keen Sight and Keen Hearing.

Mu mounts a retractable orichalcum blade in each forearm, effectively acting as a pair of short daiklaves. It once carried a white jade warstrider direlance named Golgahest, but this weapon was salvaged during the Usurpation and is currently carried by a vanguard warstrider in the possession of House Sesus, Entelech the Diving Shrike. The total cost to attune to Mu is 3 Motes.

Mu's chassis and control web are suffused with the otherworldly power of its construction, permitting its pilot to perceive spirit sanctum entrances at all times, and to attempt to interact with them through a difficulty 5 (Intelligence + Occult) roll. The Redeemer may always strike immaterial beings, but has no inherent ability to reveal them to its pilot.

Hearthstone Slots: One primary power socket, three additional warfare sockets

Warfare Socket One

If the pilot resonates with orichalcum, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: World-Shifting Anima Flux and the Evocation: War God Posture.

World-Shifting Anima Flux

Mu senses its pilot's need to protect those close to her and reaches out with its power to enact her will, drawing those it battles to protect momentarily into the intangible flux of its anima field.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote. All characters within the same zone the pilot wishes to protect to become intangible until her next turn, so long as they do not move away from the warstrider. Even dematerialized beings may not interact with those drawn into the Redeemer's anima flux, but neither can immaterial characters interact with anything but one another and the warstrider.

War God Posture

Mu's pilot may stack up to two activations of War Lion Stance (see p. XX) to protect two characters at the same time.

Warfare Socket Two

If the pilot resonates with orichalcum, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: Prismatic Wings of the Sun and the Evocations: Darting Sunbeam Blade and Mounting Retribution.

Prismatic Wings of the Sun

Shunting the pilot's anima into its brilliant cloak of orichalcum and crystal, Mu erupts with radiant prismatic light which streams across the battlefield.

System: Reflexively spend 1 Mote while the pilot's anima is flaring. For the rest of the scene, this radiance grants incredible clarity to the Redeemer's allies (-2 difficulty to all Awareness rolls based on sight), while blinding its enemies with a kaleidoscopic array of shattered and fragmentary shapes and colors, imposing a -3 penalty to all their actions depending on sight. The light is actively painful to creatures of darkness, increasing their cumulative Wound penalties by -1 while they stand within its dazzling array. This light is effective throughout the sector the warstrider stands in unless blocked by solid walls.

Darting Sunbeam Blade

The cost of the Solar Charm: Sandstorm Wind Attack drops to 0 Motes.

Mounting Retribution

While Prismatic Wings of the Sun is active, the cost of the Solar Charm: Dipping Swallow Defense drops to 0 Motes.

Warfare Socket Three

If the pilot resonates with orichalcum, then slotting a Hearthstone into this socket unlocks the Charm: All Returns to Nothing and the Evocation: Thousand-Edged Killing Light.

All Returns to Nothing

The absolute destructive will of pilot and warstrider suffuse the gleaming curtain of Prismatic Wings of the Sun, transforming light into pure obliterating Essence. The pilot's allies are safe from this terrible attack, but all else within range of Prismatic Wings of the Sun faces absolute destruction as the glittering kaleidoscopic display shifts to pure, blinding white, and rends apart mote from mote.

System: Reflexively spending 1 Mote to activate this Charm cancels Prismatic Wings of the Sun and prevents it from being reactivated within the same scene, converting it instead into a one-time environmental damage effect (difficulty 9, 10 damage, mauld, aggravated). This Charm generally leaves the warstrider and any allies standing in the midst of a smooth, featureless crater.

Thousand-Edged Killing Light

While Prismatic Wings of the Sun is active, the Solar Charm: Ready in Eight Directions Stance (see p. XX) can strike back against *every* enemy touched by its light, *each* time the Charm is triggered. The entire battlefield erupts into a furious array of sudden deadly cuts as the light itself carves into enemies, structures, objects: everything but the Exalt's allies, in short.

Ultimate Power: World-Cleansing Chromospheric Flight

If the pilot resonates with orichalcum, then this war miracle becomes accessible when all of Mu's warfare sockets are filled.

Mu's prismatic cape splits into two enormous, rainbow wings which trail off into killing white light as described in All Returns to Nothing. The warstrider becomes capable of flight and may move three zones per turn, or one hundred miles per hour for long-distance flight. Anything and everything within two *sectors* to either side of the warstrider or its flight path is annihilated by the beating of its vast, terrible wings, being subject to damage as described in All Returns to Nothing, save that rather than being a one-time effect, the damage gains an interval of once per round for those exposed to it. This power lasts for the remainder of the scene, unless distance flight mode is activated without any deviation from a straight-forward flight path, in which case this power lasts until the warstrider deviates from that flight path or lands. In this event, the destructive zone of the ultimate power slowly grows over the course of the first hour of flight until everything within (pilot's Essence rating) miles on either side of Mu is obliterated with each beat of its mighty wings.