

# THE INK MONKEYS

COLLECTED EXALTED MATERIAL FROM  
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COMPILATION AND LAYOUT BY PLAGUE OF HATS

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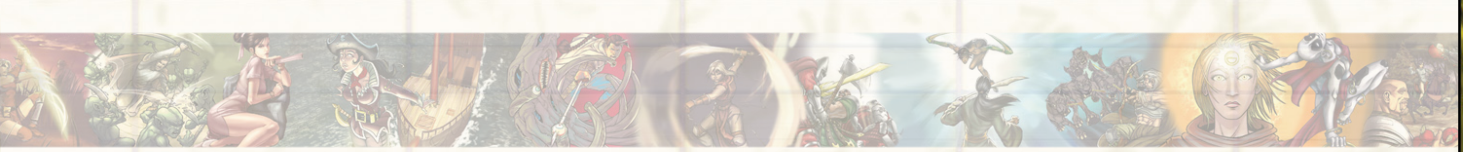
**Filip Cerovecki (Clone Artist):** "To all the Dragon-Bloods out there, thanks for keeping our butts safe from puppy eating solar anathema."

**Plague of Hats:** "I can't apologize enough for the lateness of this edition, or to J. E. Betz for excluding from a previous release both his name and one of the excellent comics he sent me."

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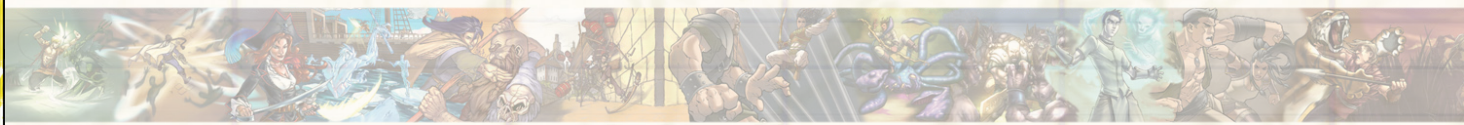




# THE INK MONKEYS

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# INTRODUCTION

## WELCOME TO A FAN COMPILATION

This is a fan compilation of official material for Exalted. This material is freely available on the weberbutts and you should not have paid any money for it. It's just out there thanks to the generosity of White Wolf and the authors, amongst which I am not included.

You can turn this PDF into a more printer-friendly, black-and-white version by turning some layers off. There are some handy buttons on the previous pages for doing just that.

—Plague of Hats

## THANKS

I'd like to take the opportunity here, with my immense authority as the Unquestionable of this PDF, to say a little something about Exalted and its fans. When I really got into Exalted and started visiting the forums I was not a nice person, and there were a lot of people like me. The White Wolf forums had acquired a reputation as a rude and insular place and none deserved such labels more than the Exalted forum. It was hor-

rible. I was horrible. There's no denying that mean and wicked people can be right about things, or even intensely and vitally creative. Lots of us were. But so were the polite people who stuck around, surely drawing on reserves of patience I can hardly imagine.

I won't say that my transformation into slightly less of a dick was spurred by some kind of epiphany or touching, foggy-lensed admonishment from a wise old man or disappointed matron. I just grew disinterested in the exercise, and this allowed me to better evaluate what I and others had been doing. I was sorely disappointed in myself.

I also can't claim that I led some crusade to clean up the forums. I don't often admonish people for their manners. There was a sea change that involved greater moderation on both the part of actual moderators and on the part of posters. I do not know why.

What we have today is a community that puts forth the same kind of creativity and wonder we had years ago, but we have more than that, too. I do not think that the Exalted community of six years ago would have even allowed me to find the people I needed to populate this book with some beautiful art. These



artists donated time and effort for their love of the game, and none of them had to call anyone a “douchebag” or deride the quality of art and artist for some work that they simply did not care for. A fan called and fans answered, all for their love of the game. Exalted is a beautiful, wondrous part of the hobby, warts and all, and with fans like these it can only get better.

Thank you, Beachfox, Greg, Filip, Korvus, Liz, Quinn and Todd. You aren't just what makes Exalted great, you're what makes being an Exalted fan great. You are the vitality of our slice of the hobby.

Oh, also: Apologies for the lateness and layout. I just couldn't find enough art, so I didn't get it as pretty or on time as it should have been. I hope this doesn't detract too much from the great work of the artists.

—Plague of Hats

## NEW RULES

Don't forget to check out White Wolf's [Scroll of Errata](#) for other rules that might come up in this document.

—Plague of Hats

## NEW KEYWORDS

**Dawn:** Solars of the Dawn Caste may buy Charms with this Keyword for eight experience points, even if they do not Favor the Ability the Charm is located in.

**Enhanced:** This Charm denotes 'hero style' Charms which grant an enhanced benefit when used by the Exalt type they belong to (for example, Solar Hero style Charms used by a Solar).

**Form-Enhancing:** These Permanent Charms add additional powers to a Form-type Charm they build upon. Unless stated otherwise, each Form-Enhancing Charm adds one mote to the cost of activating the appropriate Form. The surcharge only applies once per Charm, regardless of how many times the Infernal purchased that Charm. Exceptions to these rules note their surcharge in parentheses beside the keyword. Once-learned, a Form-Enhancing Charm always improves all activations of its Form by forcing the surcharge. This is not optional.

**Martial:** Charms with this Keyword may also be used with or applied to the listed Abilities when the Solar's rating in those Abilities meets the Charm's minimum Ability rating.

**Martial-ready:** This Keyword replicates all the effects of the Martial keyword. In addition, the Solar may use the Charm with or apply its benefits to any of the listed Abilities that he has as a Caste or Favored Ability, even if their ratings are lower than the Charm's minimum Ability requirement.

**Merged:** Charms with this Keyword exist in more than one Ability. Buying this Charm in any of the Abilities it exists in means the character also has that Charm in all other Abilities it exists in.

**Monstrous:** This keyword serves as a referent tag on some Infernal Monster Style Charms and Primordial Charms that inflict fear through unnatural mental influence. Whenever a victim pays one or more Willpower points to resist a Monstrous effect, she deducts this total from the number of Willpower points required to resist any Monstrous effect within the next day. Discounts from separate resistance expenditures stack, resetting the clock to 25 hours whenever Willpower is spent. Only after the character has gone a full day without spending Willpower to resist a Monstrous effect does the discount drop back to zero. Even if resistance costs no Willpower, the victim

can only resist when the Charm permits Willpower to be spent resisting it. The total number of “windows of opportunity” in which resistance is possible does not increase. All Monstrous Charms also have the Emotion keyword.

**Mount (Any):** This Charm may only be applied to living beings (or, in the case of Abyssal Charms, living beings and ghostly animals), not automatons or vehicles operated with the Ride ability, such as Warbirds.

**Mount (Mundane):** This Charm may only be applied to living mounts (or, in the case of Abyssal Charms, living mounts and ghostly animals) which are not Essence-users.

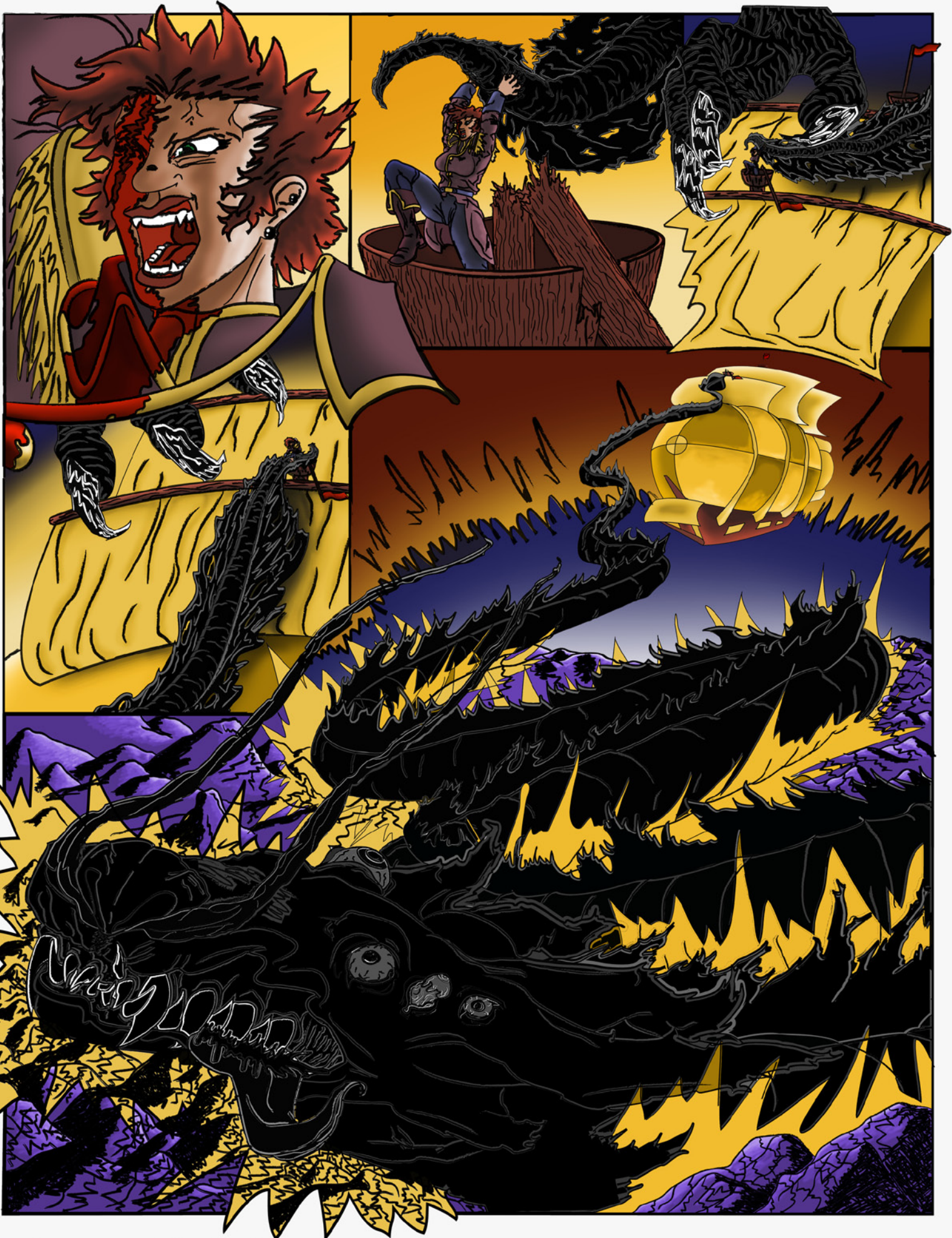
**Native:** Powers like the Eclipse, Moonshadow and Fiend anima do not allow acquisition of Native Charms. Only natural wielders can learn Native charms. Exalted Charms and hero-style expansions are natural to the appropriate type of Chosen. Spirit Charms are natural to gods, elementals, demons and akuma. Arcanoi are natural to ghosts. Raksha Charms are natural to Fair Folk. Primordial Charms are natural to Primordials, Green Sun Princes and Exalted akuma. The God-Blooded children of natural wielders cannot learn their parents' Native Charms. Martial Arts Charms that are not Hero Style expansions cannot have the Native keyword.

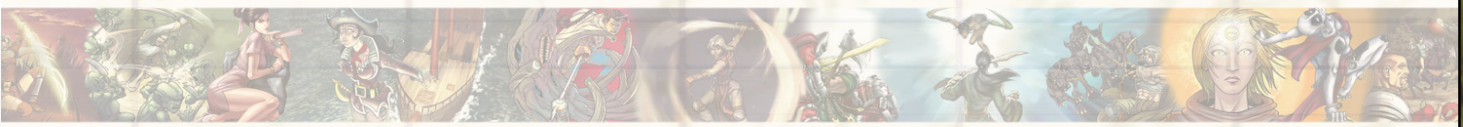
**Overdrive:** Charms with this Keyword create a temporary pool of Peripheral Essence, which can only be filled by terms outlined in the text of the Charm. Motes in these pools may only be used to activate offensive Charms with a duration of One action or less. Charms whose mote cost are paid for entirely from a character's Overdrive pool do not count as Charm activations. Other restrictions may be present in the text of the Charm. Motes gathered into the pools created by Overdrive Charms dissipate at the end of the scene, barring additional Charms to prolong their existence. Temporary mote pools created by the Overdrive keyword share their motes and stack together to determine the storage capacity of the overall pool. This Overdrive pool may store no more than 25 motes, regardless of the size of the pool generated by individual Charms with the Overdrive keyword.

**Rage:** Charms with this keyword impose a state of enchanted fury duplicating all effects of the Charm Retribution Will Follow (i.e. berserk rampage, immunity to pain, mental defense and Limit reduction). Inducing Rage is a form of unnatural mental influence with the Compulsion and Emotion keywords. Characters attacked with a Rage effect instantly succumb to the berserk fury unless they pay one Willpower to remain calm.

Victims in the grip of Rage cannot abort their rampage by spending Willpower to calm down, but their madness does make them invalid targets for all other Rage effects for as long as it lasts. Characters who pay Willpower to resist Rage also become immune to all Rage effects for one day. Since victims of Rage aren't valid targets for other Rage effects, they can't abort their madness by deliberately exposing themselves to other Rage magic for a new chance to resist. Retribution Will Follow retroactively gains the Rage keyword. In the spirit of this keyword, that Charm also adds the line “The martial artist can't voluntarily terminate or reactivate this Charm before its Duration.”

**Reactor:** No combination of effects including any Charm carrying this Keyword may cause the character to gain more than 20 motes during the course of a single action. Stunt rewards explicitly do not count toward this limit.





## CHAPTER ONE

# SOLAR EXALTED

## DAWN CASTE

### ARCHERY

#### STORM-GATHERING PRACTICE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** There Is No Wind

The Solar's heart is a storm that gathers power in the idle moments between life and death. This Charm creates an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, it fills at a rate of one offensive mote per action, to a maximum of five, when the Solar is outside the engagement range (p. 20) of all of his enemies. The Solar must be in battle to gain this benefit.

Once the storm has rolled in and vented its wrath, it moves back out to sea to fill its quiver with new lightning. The Solar may renew this Charm's Overdrive benefit by moving into the engagement range of at least one opponent and remaining

there for a full action. While there, he must make at least one attack against that or any other opponent rolled into combat. Doing so will reestablish the offensive mote drip as soon as the Lawgiver moves out of the engagement range of all opponents. This practice may be repeated an unlimited number of times throughout the course of battle.

#### THRUST SHOT EVASION

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

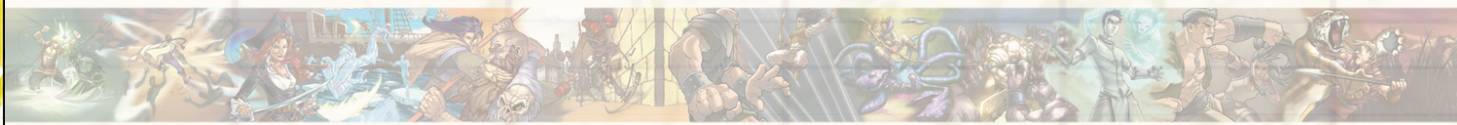
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Forceful Arrow

A Solar's mastery of archery extends beyond bow and string and arrow, making her entire body part of the momentum of the shot and the art of the kill. This Charm permits the character to channel her shot's momentum into her own body. It may only be activated on a tick during which the Solar makes an Archery attack; at the end of the tick, the Solar flits up to (Archery x 3) yards backwards relative to the direction she fired her last shot during that tick.





## FLASHING SUNSPOT ATTACK

**Cost:** 1-3m; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Native

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Master archers have been known to snuff out candles with a shot from their bow. But the skill of the Lawgivers is such as to smother bonfires with a single arrow. This Charm has two uses. The one mote version enhances an Archery attack, preventing any peripheral motes spent on the attack from adding to the character's anima banner. In addition, if the attack does health levels of damage to the target, that target's anima display rises by a number of motes commensurate to the peripheral motes spent on the attack. Because the Solar is shooting out her own anima, this Charm expressly allows her to tag non-Exalted opponents with anima displays. All targets struck with Flashing Sunspot Attack suffer the same Stealth deficiencies as characters flaring their anima banners (see **Exalted**, p. 114).

The second use of this Charm folds into the first use: the character may spend one mote to activate this Charm. However, instead of attacking a particular opponent, she may fire her anima into the scenery in an attempt to uncover hidden opponents. As above, any additional peripheral motes she spends on this activation are voided. Upon making this shot, her current anima display automatically drops down a level. Where her arrow lands, it creates a heatless bonfire of Solar anima 50 yards in diameter, breaking all concealment magic in the area and making stealth in the vicinity of the flare impossible. A Solar in the 8-10 range of anima display may choose instead to pay two motes to make this shot, dropping her down two full levels and creating a bonfire 100 yards in diameter. By paying a third mote, the Solar can void an 11-15 mote display, creating a bonfire 200 yards in diameter. Characters who use this Charm to drop their anima into the 1-3 range are considered to have spent only a single mote of peripheral Essence for the purposes of rebuilding their anima banner.

At Essence 4+, the Solar may use the one mote version of this Charm to move bonfires she has created by shooting through them. The blaze is snuffed out by the arrow's passage, and reappears wherever the arrow lands. At Essence 5+, this Charm reveals the presence of dematerialized spirits and demons within the area of the bonfire. In addition, the Lawgiver may shoot out the anima of other characters, using the same mote costs to downgrade their anima as she would to void her own display. In this instance, the Lawgiver's shot need not hit the character in question; merely passing close by is enough to puff out someone's Essence candle. Her arrow snuffs her target's anima display and deposits it wherever the shot lands, creating a bonfire as if she were shooting out her own anima.

Characters wishing to defend against having their anima snuffed may cut the arrow from its course with a successful parry, or may move their anima from its course through a successful dodge. If either their parry or their dodge fails, they do not take damage, but the arrow succeeds in stripping their anima and embedding it elsewhere in the scenery. This use of Flashing Sunspot Attack does not allow the Solar to downgrade her own anima, choosing instead to snuff out someone else's, but may allow her to exploit an opponent's flaring anima to reveal a retinue of guardian demons or a Throne Shadow assassin nearby. Bonfires created by this Charm last the entire scene before guttering out.

## MARTIAL ARTS

### BREAK THE STORM

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Knockout Blow

A Solar's intercepting fist may even split a bolt of lightning. By paying five motes, the Solar may interrupt an attack made against him with one of his own. This Charm must be activated in step 2. The character rolls a standard unarmed Martial Arts counterattack in Step 6, subtracting her successes from any remaining successes the attacker may have accumulated after comparing his attack to the Solar's DV. The Solar then applies the rolled counterattack to her opponent in Step 9, doing damage as normal if it lands successfully. This counterattack may be used to respond to lethal and ranged attacks, but may not strike an opponent who is out of range, nor may it be used to respond to an unblockable or unexpected attack. An attack negated with this Charm is considered to have been stopped by the Solar's Parry DV.

### CHAINED THUNDER STRIKE

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Break the Storm

Even in chains a Solar may bring an enemy to his knees. This Charm is identical to Break the Storm, but for the following exceptions: the character may only activate this Charm when he is in a clinch he does not control; this attack is unexpected, and may only be made against opponents who are attempting to attack the Lawgiver while he is being grappled. This Charm guarantees the primacy of this strike; even if all his limbs are bound, the Solar will get a limb momentarily free, or otherwise land a crushing headbutt. This attack does not allow him to escape the clinch; he remains under the control of the clinching opponent until he can win control of the grapple. This Charm has a special interaction with Heaven Thunder Hammer. If the target uses a perfect soak effect to block the damage from a combo in which Chained Thunder Strike and Heaven Thunder Hammer have been triggered simultaneously, the force of the Solar's attack is redirected back through his body at the opponent who is holding him, applying its raw damage to the controlling clincher. If this unexpected attack does damage, both the Lawgiver and the foe clinching him are hurled backwards per the effects of Heaven Thunder Hammer. If they collide with a solid surface, only the Solar's opponent takes any damage from the collision. Chained Thunder Strike is incompatible with Lightning Strikes Twice.

### HEWER-SHARPENED FIST

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Martial-ready

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Fists of Iron Technique





The idea that he can be harmed exhilarates the Solar Hero, honing his attacks with renewed will to win. This Charm may enhance a Martial Arts attack, adding the Solar's current wound penalty in dice to the attack's Accuracy rating. This bonus does not count as dice added by a Charm. If Solar Hero Form is active, Hwer-Sharpener Fist does not count as a Charm activation.

The Abyssal Exalted are eager to share their agony with the world, and subsequently possess an identical Charm called Agony's Crucible Strike, which does not count as a Charm activation while Dark Messiah Form is active. Its prerequisite is Ravaging Blow.

*Martial-ready:* Archery, Melee, Thrown.

### STANCE BREAKER INSTINCT

**Cost:** —(5m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Fists of Iron Technique

The killer instinct of the Solar Hero is sufficient to break an opponent's strategy. Whenever the Solar uses a Martial Arts attack to do at least three lethal or aggravated or six bashing health levels of damage to his opponent, he may pay five motes to remove that damage from the attack. This may reduce levels of damage inflicted on his opponent to 0. Instead of taking the full damage of the Solar's attack, his victim's Form is broken; that is, if his opponent had a Form-type Martial Arts Charm active, a successful application of Stance Breaker Instinct removes it from the target. Victims of this attack may still find themselves injured or killed by the attack. As a point of clarification, if the attack on the damage does more than three lethal or six bashing levels, the remaining health levels of damage still apply.

Furthermore, the Exalt may not knock the same Martial Arts Form-type Charm off her target more than once in ten actions. Having knocked her opponent out of form, she may attack different Form-types her opponent assumes before ten actions have been completed, but doing so resets the ten action count for all Form-type Charms she has knocked off her opponent in the current battle. For example, the Lawgiver may punch her opponent hard enough to knock him out of Tiger Form; five actions later, she knocks him out of Snake Form; she may not remove either Tiger or Snake Form from her opponent for another ten actions. As a further point of clarity, two or more Solars attacking a single opponent with this Charm track these actions separately.

### BLOODIED KING REBUKE

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Martial-ready

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Hwer-Sharpener Fist

The idea that he might actually die invigorates the Solar Hero, turning his fading life into renewed strength with which to strike down his enemies. This Charm supplements a Martial Arts attack, adding twice the Solar's current wound penalty to the attack's raw damage. If Solar Hero Form is active, Bloodied King Rebuke does not count as a Charm activation.

A deathknight who remembers the pain of life is most suited to inflict it on others. Abyssals known a similar Charm called Ragged Shade's Revenge, which does not count as a Charm activation while Dark Messiah Form is active, but is otherwise identical to Bloodied King Rebuke. Its prerequisite is Agony's Crucible Strike.

*Martial-ready:* Archery, Melee, Thrown.

### HELLRAISER'S INSTINCT

**Cost:** —(6m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Sledgehammer Fist Punch

This Charm allows the Lawgiver to deliver an ironic comeuppance to his enemy. Whenever the Solar uses a throw to ram his opponent into scenery, or a Charm which causes such an impact directly (such as Heaven Thunder Hammer), he may pay six motes to trigger this Charm's effects:

- When the opponent impacts with a solid surface, the impact causes extreme damage to the structure in question. To determine how much damage is done, use the Lawgiver's ratings to roll a (Dexterity + Martial Arts + Essence) dice attack against the structure in question. Treat this attack as one being enhanced by Sledgehammer Fist Punch (see Exalted, p. 242), doubling the pre-soak damage of the attack.

- When the target takes health levels of damage from such an impact, the Exalt's player may choose to defer a number of health levels from the victim and transfer them into the structure his victim has impacted with. Each health level deferred in this way translates to five automatic levels of damage done to the structure in question. If the attack would have been sufficient to kill the opponent, and accrued more than seven successes on the damage roll, the damage done to the structure is automatically sufficient to destroy it.

- If the opponent takes any health levels of damage upon impact, he is dazed by the collision and takes a -5 internal penalty as a Crippling effect for one action. This effect applies even if the Lawgiver uses this Charm to reduce the health levels of damage his victim receives to 0.

At Essence 4+ this Charm expressly allows the Solar to destroy magical objects or structures, but does not allow him to destroy imperishable objects or structures (such as daiklaves or the Imperial Manse). In addition, victims of this Charm may never be used to destroy magical objects or structures they do not own (see Exalted, p. 238). Therefore, hurling a peasant at his master's manse will only make a mess, rather than destroy the manse.

### BREAK THROUGH THE WORLD

**Cost:** 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

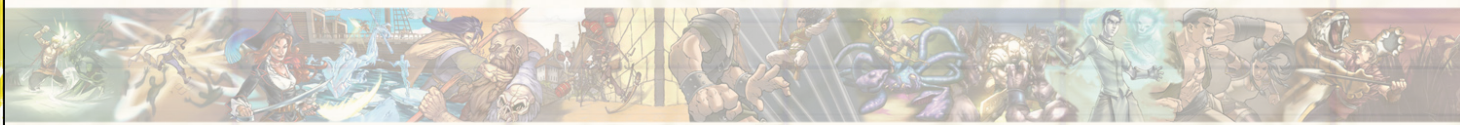
**Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Native, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Sledgehammer Fist Punch

The loftiest works of men, gods, and Primordials alike are as dust before the fury of the Solar Exalted. This Charm supplements an unarmed Martial Arts attack directed against a non-magical structure. The Solar ignores the structure's soak, hardness, and health levels, and automatically destroys a volume of the structure encompassing (Essence x 10) yards from the



point of the attack's impact, distributed as the player sees fit. At Martial Arts 6+, Essence 6+ this Charm may be activated for a cost of ten motes, one Willpower to encompass a volume of (Essence x 50) yards. This tends to cause palaces to collapse, city walls to crumble, and the sides of mountains to cave in. At Martial Arts 7+, Essence 7+ this Charm may also be applied to non-imperishable magical structures.

### STUNNING DEATHBLOW EVASION

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** One action

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dragon Coil Technique

As the Yozis well know, the Lawgivers have a way of turning certain death into a crushing victory. When in a clinch, the Solar may use this Charm in response to an attack being made against her from outside the grapple. Doing so forces the clinching opponent to suffer all incoming attacks for the rest of the action as though those attacks had been directed at him. This Charm may manifest in a number of ways: the Lawgiver is seen to twist out of the path of a daiklave at the last instant, causing it to shear through her captor; the Exalt exerts superior leverage to drag her opponent into a volley of arrows, using him as a shield. In any case, the Solar clearly demonstrates to her foes why they should not touch what they cannot hold.

If used in response to an area-of-effect attack encompassing the Solar and the one grappling her, such as Death of Obsidian Butterflies or a supernatural ice storm, the Solar reduces the effect's raw damage by half (round up) and adds this amount to the raw damage inflicted on the character clinching her.

This Charm offers no benefits if the Solar is not in a clinch.

### SHADOW FOOT TRAP

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Martial, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dragon Coil Technique

Before the Solar Exalted, light could only chase shadow; due to the Lawgivers, it may capture it as well. This Charm may enhance a Martial Arts attack. The character lashes out at his target's shadow, pinning it to the ground, a wall, a tree or other immobile scenery; this attack is unblockable and undodgeable without the use of magic. When pinned in such a way, the victim is trapped within a yard of his shadow until he is able to pull it free, a feat requiring a miscellaneous (Strength + Athletics) roll at a difficulty of the Solar's (Martial Arts rating x 2). The successes gained on multiple attempts to pull free are added together cumulatively, but the target may make only one such attempt per action. While rooted, the target may not be moved by knockback effects; if knocked back, such as by Heaven Thunder Hammer, the target is considered to strike a hard surface after traveling only one yard.

*Martial:* Archery, Melee, Thrown

### TITAN-STRAIGHTENING METHOD

**Cost:** 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dragon Coil Technique

To be caught in the grip of an enraged Solar is a terrifying prospect, for their mighty hands may rend even the makers of the universe. The Solar may activate this Charm to enhance a crush action when she has control of a clinch. No matter how large the opponent, the Lawgiver's strain pulls her foe into the air over her head, where she may shake it violently, causing its bones, organs, limbs—or souls—to smash together, colliding repeatedly as the Solar thrashes her victim like a ragdoll. The Solar re-applies steps 7-10 of attack resolution (Essence + 1) times, repeatedly damaging her victim.

If the target is warstrider-sized or larger, double the raw damage from these attacks. If the target is a landscape-scale or larger (such as Mount Mostath), multiply the raw damage by five. Used against such enormous targets, the Charm becomes Obvious.

### HERO'S FATAL RESOLVE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Solar Hero Form

The Solar Hero's lot is to stand against the forces of evil. All of them. Often a Solar cannot pick where or when these battles must be fought. This Charm creates a new Essence pool capable of storing up to ten motes of Peripheral Essence for the Solar, in accordance with the Overdrive Keyword. Whenever an opponent rolls Join Battle, the Solar experiences a surge of adrenaline which adds a number of motes equal to (half the opponent's Essence, rounded up) to this temporary pool.

### DAUNTING THE FALSE SAVIOR

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** One action

**Prerequisite Charms:** Solar Hero Form

Solars of the Dawn Caste are the greatest of all warriors, capable of feeling the truth of a foe's conviction in the spirit of his attacks. A hand that lies has no strength over the Lawgiver, and only the truest salvos may strike the Solar Hero. A character activating this Charm modifies his opponent's attacks. For one action, all attacks against the Exalt suffer an internal penalty equal to the difference between the Ability being used and the lowest of the attacker's Archery, Martial Arts, Melee and Thrown ratings. Daunting the False Savior must be activated while the character is using a Form-type Charm and may expressly enhance any Form-type Charm the character knows. The Sidereal Exalted employ an identical Charm called Eyes Toward an Ending, whose prerequisite is Throne Shadow Form.





### SUN-SUFFUSING SLAG

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Crippling, Martial, Obvious, Stackable

**Duration:** One action

**Prerequisite Charms:** Solar Hero Form

It is within the skill of the Solar Exalted to sear the souls of their lessers with a taste of true power. Those so enlightened are rarely ever the same again. This Charm supplements all Martial Arts attacks the Solar makes while it is active. On a successful strike, the character's anima irradiates the target, suffusing her Essence pathways with a constricting flow of overwhelming Solar Essence. Every time the target is struck with this Charm, the activation cost of her next Charm rises by two motes to a maximum surcharge of the Solar's Essence rating. In addition, the next Charm with a Flaw of Invulnerability that the target wishes to activate costs an additional one Willpower. If two or more Solars strike the same target with Sun-Suffusing Slag, the mote surcharge on her Charms may only be increased to the rating of the highest-Essence Solar to strike her; individual lower-Essence Solars may not exceed their own Essence maximums for the purpose of stacking this surcharge. Furthermore, the Willpower surcharge to Charms possessing a Flaw of Invulnerability incurred by this Charm is never stackable. Exalts other than Solar Exalted who are continually struck with Sun-Suffusing Slag begin to exhibit Solar anima bleeding through their own anima displays as they continue to expend Essence in order to expel the Solar's irradiating influence.

*Martial:* Archery, Melee, Thrown

### DOVE-SHATTERING SMITE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Heaven Thunder Hammer

The Solar's might is such as to knock a star from the sky or place one into orbit. This Charm permanently enhances its prerequisite, adding an additional (Essence x 5) yards to the distance a target can be launched on a successful hit, as well as allowing the character to use Heaven Thunder Hammer to launch a foe straight up. The rules for targets impacting with solid objects as a result of this Charm remain otherwise unchanged, though it is worth noting that what goes up must come down; it is entirely possible an opponent might be smashed into a high ceiling and then have to contend with falling damage.

### LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

**Cost:** —(2m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 4;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Martial, Native, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dome-Shattering Smite

This Charm offers a permanent upgrade to Heaven Thunder Hammer and Crashing Wave Throw. On a successful knockback or throw using either of those Charms, while the target is still hurtling towards its doom but before they have collided with a solid object, the Solar may pay two motes and one Willpower, activating Lightning Strikes Twice to make a second at-

tack against his opponent. Doing so cancels the collision effect of those Charms, but allows the Solar to make an unexpected attack against the target, taking advantage of its helpless flight. The Solar flashes instantly across the distance from the ground to his hurtling foe, appearing alongside his opponent to make this attack, automatically intercepting his target on the last instant before any collision with scenery or natural termination of the target's flight could possibly occur. When using Archery or Thrown to make this unexpected attack, the Solar need not personally follow the target. Instead, his ranged attack flashes into position beside the target before completing the attack, ignoring the weapon's Range value. Lightning Strikes Twice may not be triggered more than once on a single tick against a single target.

*Martial:* Archery, Melee, Thrown

### SPLIT THE CHASE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Lightning Strikes Twice

This Charm permanently enhances its prerequisite. Upon an activation of Lightning Strikes Twice, the Solar's Charm use for that action is reset. That is, he still makes an unexpected attack, but he may choose to activate a new Charm or Combo to enhance that unexpected attack in order to further devastate his target. Split the Chase also expressly allows the Solar to activate Lightning Strikes Twice a second time against a single target on a single tick, provided he uses the chase effect of Lightning Strikes Twice to make a second Martial Arts attack, as opposed to an attack using another combat Ability. Split the Chase may not be triggered more than one time on a single tick against a single target.

### FLICKER-FADE RECURSION

**Cost:** —(+2m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Split the Chase

Save for its activation cost, this Charm is identical to Split the Chase, permitting the Solar to pay two motes to reset his Charm use again during his second Lightning Strikes Twice, and follow it up with a third Lightning Strikes Twice if Martial Arts is used to make an unexpected attack. Flicker-Fade Recursion may not be triggered more than one time on a single tick against a single target.

### STORM BURST EXPLOSION

**Cost:** —(6m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

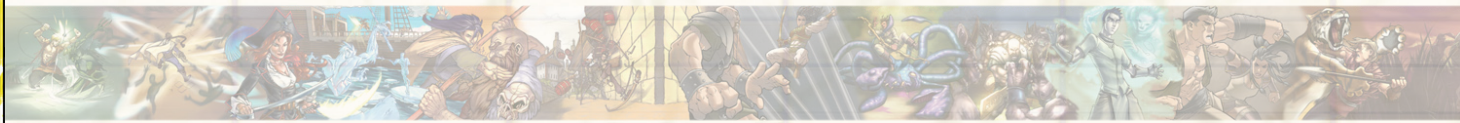
**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Martial-ready, Native, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Lightning Strikes Twice, Pounding Hammer of Devastation

This Charm upgrades its prerequisites, allowing the Solar to pay six motes, one Willpower to activate Lightning Strikes Twice against multiple opponents simultaneously. The Solar may make a single unexpected attack against (Dexterity + 3) targets, with the same rules and limitations as Lightning Strikes Twice. During this time he is seen to blur across the sky in every



direction, flashing from target to target, striking blows against each while his anima flares and strobes like the violent concatenation of a lightning storm. Using Storm Burst Explosion counts as an activation of Lightning Strikes Twice, preventing the Solar from re-using that Charm unless he has Split the Chase. Should the character use Heaven Thunder Hammer and Split the Chase to reactivate Lightning Strikes Twice against multiple opponents through the use of this Charm, the arc of flashing recursions is seen to crawl ever outward from the center of impact, leaving blazing jags across the sky and flashing at each point of impact. This attack may be driven through a third iteration through the application of Flicker-Fade Recursion.

As with Lightning Strikes Twice, the character may opt not to follow his opponents, choosing instead to make an unexpected ranged attack against each of them. This attack follows the same rules as those in Lightning Strikes Twice, except that the Exalt splits this attack amongst multiple opponents. When using Storm Burst Explosion, the character may select which valid targets to strike and may choose to ignore valid targets, allowing them to collide with scenery per the rules of Heaven Thunder Hammer.

*Martial-ready:* Archery, Melee, Thrown

### SECOND IMPACT FLOURISH

**Cost:** —(3m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Heaven Thunder Hammer

This Charm enhances both Crashing Wave Throw and Heaven Thunder Hammer. The character may pay three additional motes when activating either of those Charms. Calculate the damage on impact as normal. However, as the tremendous force of the Solar's attack vibrates through the world at the point of impact, a shockwave flings the opponent back towards the Solar, allowing the Exalt to apply a finishing move which deals (Essence) automatic levels of damage to the victim in step 10, to a maximum of five health levels of damage. The finishing move is not a second attack roll but rather a second visual consequence of the first attack. If the character takes no health levels of damage from a collision with scenery caused by Crashing Wave Throw or Heaven Thunder Hammer, he is unaffected by the shockwave and Second Impact Flourish automatically fails.

For this Charm, distance is important: the Solar must be in range in order to add this damage to his enemy. To determine range, use the yards the victim would have flown on impact to determine how far he is flung back toward the Exalt. If the Solar is in range, the victim is seen to be catapulted back into the Lawgiver's finishing move. Finishing moves may take a form defined by the player. Example finishing moves include a flying uppercut that blows the opponent's falling body out of the air, or leaping backwards to catch the target in a flying backflip suplex that leaves a crater in the street.

### WORLD-RUPTURING BLOW

**Cost:** —(1m per yard); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Heaven Thunder Hammer

The Solar's might is like a black hole, having gravity sufficient to crush worlds with his fist. This Charm permanently enhances its prerequisite. On a successful strike with Heaven Thunder Hammer, the character may choose to spend up to his Strength rating in motes for the purpose of subtracting yards from the distance his target would have flown, to a minimum of zero yards. This creates a well of force which sucks the victim in, preventing him from being launched away as the Solar visibly strains against his own might, gathering a terrible force which spills out into the surrounding landscape, shattering scenery and fracturing air at the motonic level. This moment of devastating collision cannot last. A blast tears through his victim as the Solar completes his attack. The target is ripped away with the force of a hurricane and hurled across the landscape. Multiply the number of reduced yards by three and convert them into automatic damage. Add (Essence) to the number of yards which remain from the effects of Heaven Thunder Hammer for calculating the total distance the target will fly after breaking the Solar's inertia. These extra yards are treated exactly as those accumulated by this Charm's prerequisite. The target suffers any impact with scenery as per the rules of Heaven Thunder Hammer.

### TEAHOUSE-SHATTERING SYMPHONY

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 3;

**Type:** Extra Action

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Hammer on Iron Technique

To provoke the ire of a Lawgiver is to bring down the thunder. Upon paying the activation cost of this Charm, the Solar may make up to (Dexterity x 2) attacks against a single opponent or (Dexterity ÷ 2, round up) attacks against all opponents within (Dexterity) yards, contingent on the following factors: the Solar must make each attack with a different improvised weapon; the Solar seizes and swings a different object with each attack; each improvised weapon may not be reused during the tick these attacks occur on; the Solar may only use objects within (Dexterity) yards; and only objects the Storyteller deems the Solar can lift and swing may be employed. Upon a successful hit, every character struck with this Charm must roll (Dexterity + Athletics) at difficulty 2 or suffer knockdown. In addition, suitably large objects (such as banquet hall tables, wooden beams, or temple pillars, subject to the Storyteller's discretion) may be used to strike all opponents within (Dexterity) yards, even when the character has chosen only one target for this Charm; if he has chosen multiple targets, this attack does not reduce the number of attacks he may make against each target singly. Lastly, if the Storyteller deems there are no objects for the Solar to wield, this Charm may not be used, and if the Solar runs out of appropriate props to attack with, the Charm ends prematurely. All objects wielded with this Charm are considered to have accuracy +1 in spite of their improvised status. The first unwitting victim of this Charm was a Lunar stalker who offended a Solar in an emporium of musical instruments.



### SOLAR COMBINATION

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Extra Action

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Stackable

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Hammer on Iron Technique

Moving with incomparable speed, the Solar may snap out multiple strikes in a single motion, defying all notions of having any peer. Though Solar Combination is an Extra Action Charm, the Solar makes only a single Martial Arts attack roll. On a successful strike, the Solar is seen to strike his foe (Essence) times. For each of these blows, the target suffers a -1 internal penalty until the Solar's next action. This attack ignores armor and natural soak, but may be soaked with magic. While the target only takes damage from a single attack roll, any Charms used in conjunction with Solar Combination which cause stunning (see *Exalted*, p. 153) have their effects applied to each strike incurred by this Charm. The character pays the activation cost of such Charms only once to benefit from Solar Combination's modifier, as if they were applying it to a single attack, rather than an Extra Action effect. At Essence 7+ Solar Combination may be used as a Supplemental Charm.

### ONE WITH THE WAVE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Crashing Wave Throw

In a moment of pristine stillness, the Solar's inner eye opens. Caught between calm and storm, she becomes the channel through which all forces flow, and that which would tear her asunder is cast aside. When the character is struck by a close-range attack, she may activate this Charm to make an unarmed Martial Arts counterattack against her opponent—specifically, a clinch attempt. If successful, the Lawgiver melds the course of her opponent's attack into a throw to the ground or a solid surface within up to (Martial Arts x 5) yards, inflicting the pre-soak damage of the attack which triggered this Charm upon the unlucky opponent.

Alternately, the Lawgiver may choose to hurl her victim at another foe within range of the throw. This is modeled as a second (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack with a base damage equal to the raw damage of the attack which triggered One With the Wave.

At Essence 4+, the Solar may use One With the Wave to respond to successful ranged attacks using physical projectiles. In this case she appears to be scathed by the missile, curling along the angle of the shot to pluck it from the air and whip it back at her opponent. This (Dexterity + Martial Arts) counterattack has a range of the Solar's line of sight and a base damage equal to the attack's raw damage against her. At Essence 5+, the Solar may use One With the Wave to answer energy-based attacks, channeling them directly through her body and back at her enemies.

### CANCEL THE APOCALYPSE

**Cost:** —(+5m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Crashing Wave Throw

This Charm offers a permanent upgrade to Crashing Wave Throw, allowing the Charm to throw victims an additional (Martial Arts x 10) yards upward and (Martial Arts x 20) yards horizontally. In addition to this benefit, by paying an additional five motes upon activating Crashing Wave Throw, the character may further enhance the effect of the Charm. The Solar violently swings his victim through the air until they blaze like the aura of a re-entry. Charged by the Solar's wrathful judgment, the victim is turned into a missile upon release, and may be aimed at further targets of the Lawgiver's animosity. In addition to the normal effects of Crashing Wave Throw, where the victim lands, the blazing Essence of the Solar's wrath detonates like a bomb: the victim and all other unfortunates within (Solar's Essence x 2) yards are subjected to a one-time environmental damage effect with Damage 10L, Trauma 3. This damage is multiplied by five against objects and structures. The Solar's killing intent fuels this Charm's explosive effect, and so it may not be used to turn willing allies with perfect soak effects into impromptu artillery, nor may it be used on objects or inanimate corpses. It also may not be used on extras.

### CAST DOWN STARS CONDEMNATION

**Cost:** —(+10m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Cancel the Apocalypse

A Lawgiver who suffers the works of the wicked is not patient, only busy. Cast Down Stars Condemnation makes a Solar's feelings known—in the form of absolute destruction unleashed. This Charm permanently enhances its prerequisite; upon activating it, the Solar may pay an additional ten motes, one Willpower for the following benefits: First, double the raw damage the target suffers from colliding with an object. Next, increase the base environmental damage produced by the victim's impact detonation to 20L. Finally, upon impact the victim plows through scenery like a falling star, shattering the landscape and creating a massive explosion while his body digs a gigantic trench in the earth or bowls through towers, devastating a skyline. In addition to the enhanced base damage of Cancel the Apocalypse, all non-artifact scenery within (Solar's Essence x 100) yards of the victim's point of impact takes an arbitrary amount of damage sufficient to destroy it. The Storyteller may describe this destruction as multiple explosions that level a city, massive shockwaves that flatten a forest, terrifying implosions that leave a mountainside a smoking crater, and so forth. This Charm may not be used if the hurled opponent's Essence rating is lower than 4.





## SKY BREAKER THROW

**Cost:** 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Horizon-Hurling Tactic (Crack the Sky, *The Manual of Exalted Power—Infernals*, p. 162-163), One With the Wave

For the most part, the Solar Hero is a picture of gentility. However, the ill-timed flailing of an assassin or a Yozi with poor table manners may catch a Lawgiver in the worst of moods. The Solar may activate this Charm to make an unarmed Martial Arts counterattack in response to a successful close range attack. On a successful counterattack, rather than inflicting damage, the Solar automatically throws his opponent 100 yards for every die of pre-soak damage on the attack that triggered Sky Breaker Throw, inflicting appropriate falling damage on impact. If the attack exceeds 20 pre-soak dice, Sky Breaker Throw hurls the opponent ten miles. If the Solar uses Sky Breaker Throw to respond to an attack inflicting 30+ pre-soak damage, the Solar may fling his opponent from his position half the distance across Creation.

Against an attack of 50+ raw damage, the range of the throw becomes infinite, allowing the character to designate a fitting location for his foe to touch down. For example, the Solar may choose to bounce his victim off the tip of the Imperial Mountain, in which case the target is catapulted to one of the far ends of Creation. Alternately, the character may express his displeasure by hurling his victim into the heart of the sun. If the Solar is particularly wroth however, he may fling his foe out into the stars, where his victim smashes through an unseen layer of Creation and comes screaming down over the brass skyline of Malfeas to leave a crater in the street. Any impact triggered by a throw of 20 or more pre-soak dice carries a penalty of arbitrarily high damage, sufficient to kill on impact. Due to a peculiarity in the distance between Creation and the Demon City, if the Lawgiver's victim survives being slammed into Malfeas, he will be unable to move from his crater of impact for five days, until time has caught up with him. Being targeted with a social or physical attack causes time to catch up with the character, allowing him to rise and act as normal. The player and Storyteller may work together to come up with additional interesting results for a throw of this magnitude. Note that Sky Breaker Throw requires that the victim be hurled into a specific location; the player may not choose to throw his victim into a limitless vacuum of empty space or send them infinitely sailing across the Wyld.

When used in realms other than Creation, Sky Breaker Throw may not be used to throw opponents into Creation save through stable passage points (such as a shadowland during the day, or an open portal between Creation and Autochthonia; under no circumstances may a Yozi be hurled out of Malfeas). Players should work with their Storyteller to define new and interesting parameters for a victim's landing inside of their current realm. Possibilities include, while fighting in the Underworld, banking the First and Forsaken Lion off the well of Stygia and into the maw of Oblivion; or while in Malfeas, throwing Ligier down Isidoros's throat.

This Charm's magic will not function without the Solar channeling his retributive fury into it; as such, it may never be used for the purpose of intentionally facilitating rapid transportation, rather than acting as a weapon.

## MELEE

### PERFECTED BATTLE ARRAY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Mirror (Blades Well-Blooded), Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Capable of mastering all forms of combat, a Solar need not limit herself to a single weapon. This Charm represents the Lawgiver's mastery of and kinship with all forms of tactile artifact weaponry. When attuning multiple artifact weapons, the Solar commits Essence to the weapon with the highest attunement cost. All additional artifact weapons cost only a single mote to attune. The Solar may attune artifacts up to double the mote cost of the initial attunement. For example, she pays an attunement cost of five motes to attune a daiklave, and may now attune five additional weapons, each for a single mote, provided each weapon has a commitment cost equal to or less than five motes. If she attempts to add a weapon to her array which has a higher commitment cost than the most expensive of her current weapons, the original highest-cost weapon in her current panoply of attuned weapons transfers all but one mote to the new highest-cost weapon and the Solar attunes the new weapon by paying the difference.

The Lawgiver may expressly use this Charm to reduce the attunement cost of artifact weapons for use with combat abilities other than Melee, however it does not reduce the cost to attune armor, N/A-rated artifacts or non-weapon artifacts.

At Essence 4+, once the Solar has attuned enough weapons to double the commitment cost of the highest-cost weapon in her array, all additional artifact weapons have an attunement cost of zero motes. At Essence 5+, the power of her attunement expands further: the Lawgiver may reach the threshold of zero mote attunement after increasing her total commitment by only 50%, rounded up. For example, at Essence 5+ the Solar attunes a daiklave for five motes. The next three weapons she attunes will each cost a single mote, and all weapons beyond that will cost zero motes.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Blades Well-Blooded (**Prerequisites:** None). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart, permitting Abyssals to easily carry the tools of their grim trade forth into Creation.

### CROSS-FANG MAELSTROM

**Cost:** 1m, 3+ free reflexive attacks; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Extra Action

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Iron Whirlwind Attack

Turning inward, drawing down, the Cross-Fang Maelstrom is a phantom storm birthed in the heart of the righteous. The character must have at least three stocked free reflexive attacks in order to channel this attack against her target. The Solar expends up to (Dexterity + 3) free reflexive attacks upon activation, allowing the character to create a flurry consisting of an equal number of Melee attacks against a single opponent. All attacks in this flurry are made at the Solar's full dice pool, and the flurry has a total DV penalty equal to the highest penalty on any single attack in the flurry. Upon activation, the player decides how many attacks to launch against the target, but may

unleash no fewer than three attacks. Treat each of the attacks as if they were the result of a coordinated attack effort (see **Exalted**, p. 144), with each attack lowering the target's DV by an equal number. This effect stacks with the successes from coordinating an attack, but only the Exalt's attacks benefit from the increased target DV reduction caused by this Charm. If the target flees the Solar's flurry through the use of Charms such as Leaping Dodge Method, the Solar regains a number of free reflexive attacks equal to the number of attacks remaining when the opponent moved out of range.

### STORM-SLAYING ATTITUDE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Iron Whirlwind Attack

The Solar controls the pace of battle and is exhilarated by her enemy's retreat. Whenever the character forces her opponent to use a movement-based evasion Charm such as Leaping Dodge Method (see **Exalted**, p. 227) to escape a close-range attack, the Exalt regains one point of Willpower. Characters may not gain more than one Willpower point per action through this Charm's effect.

### THOUSAND ARMS PRANA

**Cost:** —(1m); **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Summoning the Loyal Steel

Never again shall a Lawgiver suffer being apart from her blades. A character with this Charm may pay one mote to indefinitely store (Essence x 2) weapons Elsewhere, including close- and long-range weapons. This Charm also expressly permits the storage of shields. Thousand Arms Prana is Stackable; the Solar may reflexively store as many weapons as she wishes Elsewhere, at a rate of one mote per (Essence x 2) weapons. In order to retrieve a weapon stored in this manner, the Solar must concentrate on that weapon and pay an additional mote, causing the weapon to fall to the ground at her feet. The character may also use Charms such as Elegant Dance of Bow and Blade to draw her weapons from Elsewhere.

As long as the Solar maintains an Essence commitment to this Charm, she may sheath weapons in Elsewhere without cost, up to her storage limit. Releasing the motes committed to storing her weapons in Elsewhere causes them to fall to the ground around the character in a circle ([Essence x 2] x [number of committed motes released]) yards in diameter. Her weapons do not become immediately tangible, but rather they glow with ghostly blue-white flames, and though they appear to be embedded all throughout the scenery, they can neither be grasped nor moved by anyone but the Lawgiver for one hour, after which the flames disperse and the weaponry rejoins existence. Should she commit motes back to Thousand Arms Prana before the hour's end, she may instantly banish her emblazoned weaponry with a thought if she so chooses, or may otherwise place new weaponry into Elsewhere for the duration of this commitment. If the Solar grasps an emblazoned weapon at any point before the hour ends, the weapon immediately re-enters existence and becomes tangible to characters other than the Solar. Should a Lawgiver die while using this

Charm, her weapons do not spring from Elsewhere, but rather float through the pocket-space of not-here, individual weapons falling into Creation and other realms of existence across (Essence) months from the character's death.

Finally, purchasing this Charm grants the Solar an experience point refund for the cost of its prerequisite.

### SUN-SWORD CONCENTRATION

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Mirror (All Blades Cry for Blood)

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Glorious Solar Saber

An exhausting regimen of training and meditation allows the Solar to distill that part of her spirit which responds to the sun-metal orichalcum, radiating its power into every weapon she ever wields. Any weapon wielded by the Solar using her Melee Ability enjoys a +1 bonus to its Accuracy, Defense and Rate. This bonus stacks with standard magical material bonuses.

**New Abyssal Charm:** All Blades Cry for Blood (**Prerequisite:** Resplendent Shadow Blade). An Abyssal who has learned this Charm fills her hands with a constant cold yearning for life. Any weapon she wields using her Melee Ability enjoys a +2 bonus to its Accuracy, and drains a number of motes equal to the Abyssal's Essence whenever it hits a target and inflicts at least one health level of damage. The Abyssal does not gain these motes; they simply vanish from the world. This Charm's Accuracy bonus stacks with standard magical material bonuses, save that its mote-drain does not double the yield granted by soulsteel weapons; instead it adds one to the number of motes drained.

### MOLTEN SUN-BLADE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Glorious Solar Saber, Hungry Tiger Technique

This Charm permanently enhances all of the weapons the character is capable of creating with Glorious Solar Saber. When striking with such a weapon, the Solar may use Hungry Tiger Technique without it being considered a Charm activation.

### EDGE OF MORNING SUNLIGHT

**Cost:** 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 3, DV -0)

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Crippling, Holy, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

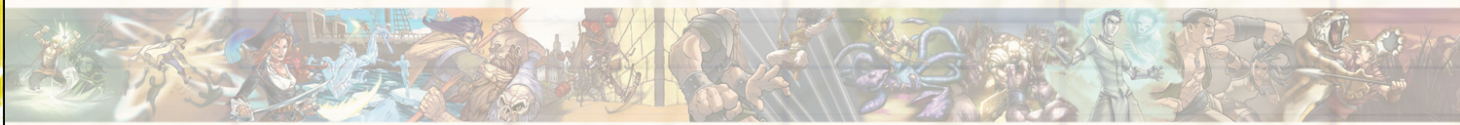
**Prerequisite Charms:** Iron Raptor Technique

With a flash from his blade, the Solar sears a burning image into the mind of his enemy. A character who activates this Charm unleashes a glint of perfect light, caught in the motion of his weapon.

This Charm creates a ranged Melee attack against a single target up to (Essence x 10) yards away. A flash of light, accompanied by a hollow, glassy pop, stuns the victim. This attack is guaranteed to land; it will strike the target with a threshold of at least zero successes. However, Edge of Morning Sunlight does not inflict health level damage. Instead it blinds and dazes the target, inflicting a -1 internal penalty to the target's combat actions for every health level of damage it would have inflicted.







This debilitating condition lasts for (Essence x 2) ticks. When placed in a Combo, any attack which includes Edge of Morning Sunlight inflicts no damage. Finally, Edge of Morning Sunlight is not Stackable, and may only be used against the same target once every five actions.

If used to target a creature of darkness, the Solar adds his Essence to the attack's accuracy.

### CORONA OF RADIANCE

**Cost:** —(5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 5;

**Type:** Permanent (Reflexive [Step 1])

**Keywords:** Holy, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Blazing Solar Bolt, Edge of Morning Sunlight

The holy wrath of an enraged Lawgiver is a thing to behold. Channeling his martial skill into a burning aura of killing force that blazes bright red in his anima, the Solar increases the power of this Charm's prerequisites. The Solar may pay an additional five motes, one Willpower when using either of those Charms to activate Corona of Radiance. Doing so repeats the damage application (Step 10) of those Charms (Essence + 3) times against a single target. Alternately, the Solar may use this Charm to launch Blazing Solar Bolt or Edge of Morning Sunlight against (Essence + 3) opponents simultaneously (making a different roll against each target). A repurchase of this Charm at Essence 7+ allows the Solar to pay a seven mote, one Willpower surcharge to split this attack against (Essence + 3) opponents and resolve damage against each of them (Essence + 3) times.

When enhanced by Corona of Radiance, Edge of Morning Sunlight gains the Stackable Keyword.

### GRASS-CUTTING STRIKE

**Cost:** —(+4m); **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Iron Raptor Technique, Peony Blossom Attack

The wind blows, the grass sways; a shadow passes over the sun. In a moment frozen in time, the Solar calls weapon to hand, birthing a gale to silence a legion. Grass-Cutting Strike upgrades the Solar's Peony Blossom Attack, permitting the character to pay a four mote surcharge to apply its attack to all enemies within (Melee x 8) yards.

### ARROW PENNANT AEGIS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Lawgiver's skill with a shield may even guard her against a bolt from the blue. When the character uses a shield to respond to ranged attacks from outside her engagement range she gains the following benefits:

- Her Melee-derived Parry DV is increased by one; this bonus does not count as dice added by a Charm and ignores maximum DV limitations.
- Melee Charms used to block such attacks cost one mote less, to a minimum of 0 motes.

### FINAL SUNSET STANCE

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Martial-ready, Native

**Duration:** One tick

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dipping Swallow Defense

The Bronze Tigers stand as a warning to the enemies of Creation: those who sow the wind reap the whirlwind. Using this Charm raises the character's Melee-derived Parry DV by 1 for one tick. This bonus does not count as dice added by a Charm and ignores maximum DV limitations. Furthermore, any time a character using Final Sunset Stance successfully parries an attack with this DV, she stocks a free reflexive attack which she may withhold or unleash at a moment of her choosing. Free reflexive attacks may not be accrued with the aid of Charms bearing a Flaw of Invulnerability. Unused stocked attacks vanish from the Solar's arsenal when the scene ends. A Solar may stock no more than (Dexterity + 3) attacks in this fashion through any combination of any Charms which stock free reflexive attacks, such as Shrike Saving Discretion (see p. 19).

*Martial-ready:* Martial Arts

### FADING LIGHT QUICKENING

**Cost:** —(1m); **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Final Sunset Stance

In the darkness before the dawn, the Lawgiver is armed in moments; her every breath a promise of tomorrow. This Charm creates a peripheral Essence pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, the character may fill it by paying one mote and converting stocked attacks into offensive motes. The Solar is seen to strike across her center with fist or blade, severing as many attacks as she chooses from her gamut of potential actions. Each attack converted in this manner instantly becomes two offensive motes. The Solar may not use an offensive mote to power this Charm.

### DAWN'S PARABLE DEFENSE

**Cost:** 1m per defense; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Martial-ready

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Final Sunset Stance

During the Primordial War, members of the Dawn Caste became famous for throwing themselves into the hewer and refusing to bow. Never running away, never surrendering, inexorable; their unwavering valor even earned them the respect of the titans. If the Yozis learned little else from their defeat, they learned this: you cannot stop the rising sun. A character invokes this Charm in response to attack flurries or multiple reflexive attacks made against her during a single tick. This Charm may not aid a defense against single attacks, save for instant reflexive attacks (such as those created by Final Sunset Stance). However, against the first in a string of attacks, increase the character's Melee-derived Parry DV by one against that attack. If her parry succeeds, the entire string of attacks is instantly broken. If her defense fails, she may reactivate this Charm on the second attack, increasing her Parry DV by two against that attack. As before, if she successfully parries the strike, she defeats the entire attack; her opponent's attack is



broken, her Essence dispersed by the Solar's definitive rebuff. The Solar may continue to activate this Charm, boosting her DV by a number equal to the number of current iterations in the attack string, until the attack ends or she successfully disrupts her foe's onslaught. Bonuses granted by this Charm do not count as dice added by a Charm and ignore maximum DV limitations. This Charm may not be assisted by Charms with a Flaw of Invulnerability; reverting to a perfect parry defense does not break the string of attacks and prevents the character's Parry DV from increasing on the next attack. Bonuses gained from this Charm diminish immediately as the attack ends.

*Martial-ready:* Martial Arts

### PERFECT BLADE AEGIS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent  
**Keywords:** Martial-ready, Mirror (Death Well-Remembered), Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Bulwark Stance

Like a diamond that knows its edges, the Solar is aware of all angles which affect the symmetry of perfect form. A Lawgiver with this Charm has honed his defensive skills to a superhuman degree; he knows the limits and reach of his weapons as if they were but extensions of his will. The character's Melee-derived Parry DV is permanently raised by 2; this bonus counts as dice added by a Charm.

*Martial-ready:* Martial Arts

**New Abyssal Charm:** Death Well-Remembered (**Prerequisites:** Elegant Flowing Deflection, Five-Shadow Feint). Having stood at death's doorway once before, the Abyssal Exalted are well acquainted with all paths which lead there, and may easily avoid them. This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

### BLADE LAIR DISCIPLINE

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Mirror (Coiled Shadow Attitude), Native

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Perfect Blade Aegis

The Solar Exalted are living weapons; as they evolve into this role, they begin to manifest the very threat they pose to their enemies, until no angle of attack seems safe. Attacking a Lawgiver with this Charm is dangerous at best, for her very gestures, mannerisms, and glances carry all the import and possibility of a daiklave's edge. This Charm imposes a -1 external penalty on all attacks made against the Solar.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Coiled Shadow Attitude (**Prerequisite:** Death Well-Remembered). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

### INEXORABLE SWORDSMAN SPIRIT

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent  
**Keywords:** Martial-ready, Mirror (Entropic Blade Nature), Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Blade Lair Discipline

The terrifying battle prowess of the Solar Exalted leads their foes to contemplate extinction. A Solar with this Charm bleeds her unmitigated talent for killing into the air, making her kill-

er's nature known. The Lawgiver's attacks render her targets hopeless to defend against them, reducing targeted DVs by two on all attacks the Solar makes with her Melee dice pool.

*Martial-ready:* Archery, Martial Arts, Thrown

**New Abyssal Charm:** Entropic Blade Nature (**Prerequisites:** Coiled Shadow Attitude). The hands of the Abyssal are steeped in the Essence of destruction; against them, even the mightiest defense may only delay the inevitable. This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

### GUARDIAN SUNFIRE CATECHISM

**Cost:** —(+3m or +3m, 1wp); **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Mirror (Death's Knight Stance)

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Heavenly Guardian Defense

A Lawgiver's skill in combat evolves into an unshakeable truth with all the conviction of a religion. When her resolve is challenged, her holy blade becomes the answer to all her enemy's questions. This Charm enhances its prerequisite. The Solar may opt to pay a three mote surcharge when activating Heavenly Guardian Defense, extending its duration to One tick. Solars with Essence 5+ may extend the duration of Heavenly Guardian Defense to One action by paying a three mote, one Willpower surcharge. The Exalt's weapon is seen to leave burning golden-orange streaks in the air as it flashes out to meet all attacks. When using this Charm in conjunction with Defend Other, the Solar must activate this Charm multiple times to cover multiple allies, paying the Charm's activation cost and surcharge separately for each target she wishes to defend for One tick or One action. This Charm may not enhance activations of Heavenly Guardian Defense pre-loaded through Protection of Celestial Bliss.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Death's Knight Stance (**Prerequisite:** Death-Deflecting Technique). Save for the shadowy afterimages that trail the Abyssal's weapon, this Charm is identical to Guardian Sunfire Catechism.

### BLIND IMPULSE STRIKE

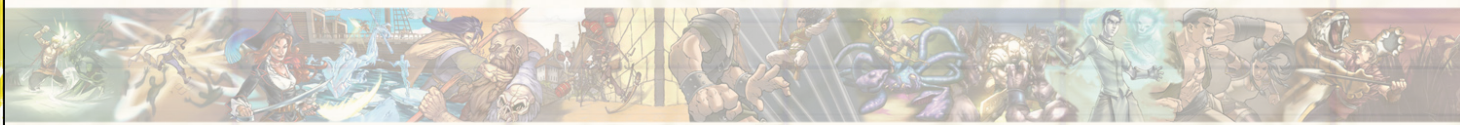
**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack, Martial-ready

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Iron Raptor Technique, Solar Counterattack

Sensing the pulse of Essence along which an attack was fired, a Lawgiver may send a strike back at his opponent with perfect form and blazing speed. This Charm allows the Solar to respond to an attack with a Melee attack of his own. This attack has infinite range, ignores cover, and may be made even if the Solar is unable to see his target. If assailed by a ranged weapon, the source of the attack is rent by a razor-edged heat shimmer of Essence at his location. At Essence 6+ the Solar may use Blind Impulse Strike in response to social attacks he is aware of, so long as they occur within the same realm of existence. At Essence 7+ the Solar may use this Charm to respond to all social attacks, regardless of where the perpetrator is. Blind Impulse Strike may only be activated once in response to a written social attack, no matter how many times the Solar re-reads it.

*Martial-ready:* Martial Arts



### FLAWLESS MIRROR TRANCE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 7, DV -0)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack, Martial-ready

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Ready in Eight Directions Stance

In every battle there is a perfect moment to strike; in the stillness of inaction-becoming-action, a fight may be decided by a mere speck in time: a choice to move or not move. The Solar knows these moments like brothers and summons them to hand like hawks, making all her choices perfect. Until her next action, a character under the effects of Flawless Mirror Trance gains the following benefits: she adds her Essence to her Melee-derived Parry DV; whenever she uses her Melee-derived Parry DV against an attack, she may make a Melee-based counterattack with (Essence) dice added to her regular attack pool in step 9; and she may use her Melee-based parry DV to parry unblockable attacks.

*Martial-ready:* Martial Arts

## THROWN

### ANGLE-TRACING EDGE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Permanent (Reflexive [Step 2])

**Keywords:** Mirror (Stalking the Striker's Hand)

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

A Solar may learn to master all angles, trajectories, and speeds of attack—even those of his enemy. This Charm takes effect when the Solar is targeted by an attack, telling him the exact range and position of the character that made the attack. This does not allow the Solar to see his opponent; instead, his superior throwing skills allow him to calculate the angle of attack, making a perfect estimation of his assailant's position. At Essence 3+, the Solar gains a taste for the Essence signature of his attacker; when faced with more than one opponent whom he cannot see, the Exalt may tell the difference between them, even if they are constantly changing positions. This does not confer information about the identity of his attackers; he simply knows them by their attacks, making it possible to hone in on a particular opponent under changing conditions.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Stalking the Striker's Hand (**Prerequisites:** None). Abyssals are able to keenly sense killing intent when directed at them. This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

### FLASHING DRAW MASTERY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Martial-ready

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

When challenged, the breathtaking speed with which a Lawgiver calls blade to hand is often the last miracle her opponent witnesses. This Charm represents the unhesitating, blinding speed of a Solar's genius hands, honed by a lifetime of practice. Add one success to the character's Join Battle rolls. In addition to this benefit, the character may also reflexively draw or ready a Thrown weapon upon rolling Join Battle, without the need

for a miscellaneous action. Finally, all Thrown attacks made during the first tick on which the character acts after rolling Join Battle have a Speed of three.

*Martial-ready:* Archery, Martial Arts, Melee

### SWARM-CULLING INSTINCT

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Martial-ready

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Flashing Draw Mastery

Sometimes outgunned, rarely outdrawn, a Lawgiver answers the call of battle with a swarm of deadly steel. This Charm permanently enhances the Lawgiver's ability to manage greater numbers of opponents. Upon rolling Join Battle for the first time in a scene, the character may make a reflexive Thrown attack against any opponent whose Join Battle result is less than her own. Additionally, where others would grow desperate at the sight of enemy reinforcements, the Lawgiver is invigorated. For the duration of combat, the character may make a Thrown attack against all opponents who roll Join Battle after the initial Join Battle roll that began the fight, unless that character is doing so because they have cast a spell (generally representing new characters appearing and entering the fray). This Charm will only allow the Solar to make attacks against opponents whose engagement range she is within.

*Martial-ready:* Archery, Martial Arts, Melee

### SHRIKE SAVING DISCRETION

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Martial-ready, Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Swarm-Culling Instinct

A Lawgiver may grow to become an old hand at killing. When greatly outnumbered, it may not do to break his cover at the first opportunity. This Charm permanently enhances its prerequisite. The Solar may opt to withhold free reflexive attacks accrued against opponents as outlined by the rules of Swarm-Culling Instinct, choosing instead to stock these attacks until a tactical opportunity presents itself. Free reflexive attacks stocked in this fashion vanish at the end of the scene. Until then, the Solar may unleash as many attacks as he has stocked on targets of his choice. For example, a character with five stocked attacks may choose to unleash five attacks on one target, or he may launch a single attack against five different targets, or he may attack one target three times and withdraw, retaining two free reflexive attacks until the scene ends. A Solar may stock up to (Dexterity + 3) attacks in this fashion.

*Martial-ready:* Archery, Martial Arts, Melee

### STEEL FANG REBUKE

**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Martial

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Swarm-Culling Instinct

The enemies of the Solar Exalted soon learn to kiss the ground. Prudence suggests that they stay there. When an opponent attempts to rise from a prone position, the Solar may activate this Charm to reflexively make a standard Thrown attack against the target. This attack is automatically unexpected.

*Martial:* Archery, Martial Arts, Melee



## WHALE-MARKING ATTACK

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Crippling, Martial-ready  
**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Call the Blade

Even should his prey dive below the waves or tunnel underground, the Solar may track its progress. This Charm supplements a Thrown-based attack. If the attack inflicts damage, the projectile sticks in the victim, rendering the weapon inapplicable for any Charms which summon weaponry. So long as the Solar's weapon remains embedded in his victim, the Lawgiver feels its presence calling out to him, and may track the movements of his opponent up to (Essence x 100) yards. The Solar enjoys three automatic successes on all Awareness rolls to detect marked enemies within this range. The Lawgiver must own the weapon used to make this attack (see *Exalted*, p. 238), and it may not be an artifact (missile weapons form an exception; for example, a sling of deadly prowess may be used so long as the Solar is hurling mundane bullets) or part of the character's body. Any attempts to remove the weapon cause it to break off in the wound, destroying the weapon. This does not terminate the Charm's effects. Removing this fragment requires a (Dexterity + Medicine) roll at difficulty 4.

*Martial-ready:* Archery, Martial Arts, Melee

## WAR

### ELEGANT DANCE OF BOW AND BLADE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent  
**Keywords:** Mirror (Ever-Ready Killer's Tools)  
**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

There is no such thing as an unprepared Solar warrior. Effortlessly changing tactics to suit the shifting battlefield, the Lawgiver easily keeps pace with the desperate stratagems of his opponents. The Solar may reflexively change which weapon he has readied without the need of a miscellaneous Draw/Ready Weapon action. For example, the Lawgiver could hurl a readied throwing knife into one opponent, reflexively ready his bow, shoot a second opponent, and then pay one mote to reflexively switch to a slashing sword to finish off a third opponent, all in the span of a single flurry. Each shift per action after the first costs one mote.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Ever-Ready Killer's Tools. (**Prerequisite:** None). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

### DAWN KING'S STRIFE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent  
**Keywords:** Mirror (Ash Child's Requiem), Native  
**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Elegant Dance of Bow and Blade

Locked away in the insane prison of their King's body, the Yozis dream, and their sleep is troubled with nightmares of the Bronze Tigers. All too well, they remember the futility of opposing the blades of the Unconquered Sun, and they know that there is nothing—in Creation or beyond—that is not a weapon in the hands of the Dawn Caste. The character may cross-apply his Archery, Martial Arts, Melee, Thrown and War Excellencies. For example, the Solar might use his First War Excellency to organize a coordinated attack upon an Abyssal Exalt, and

then in the very next tick use that Excellency to boost his Melee Parry DV against the deathknight's attack. This benefit also applies to the character's Infinite (Ability) Mastery, (Ability) Essence Flow, and Supreme Perfection of (Ability) Charms for the aforementioned Abilities. It is specifically incompatible with Divine Transcendence of (Ability).

**New Abyssal Charm:** Ash Child's Requiem (**Prerequisite:** Ever-Ready Killer's Tools). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart, save that it is incompatible with Apocalyptic Evolution of (Ability).

### SUPREME MARTIAL INSTINCT

**Cost:** —(1m, 1wp); **Mins:** War 4, Essence 3;  
**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Mirror (Manifold Murder Arts), Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Elegant Dance of Bow and Blade

Solars of the Dawn Caste are the ultimate warriors, allowing an uncanny instinct for battle to inform their every action. Infusing his battle arts with Essence, the Solar's comprehension of combat becomes holistic; his knowledge of an arrow's proper trajectory may guide the path of his sword, and the instinct that turns his fist into a deadly weapon will continue to serve him when guiding knives into the vitals of his enemies. By paying one mote and one Willpower, the Solar raises his ratings in Archery, Martial Arts, Melee, Thrown and War to the value of the highest rating among any of those five Abilities until his DV refreshes. This is considered a natural increase—for example, if the Solar had Dexterity 5, Melee 5, and Archery 1, he would be considered to have Archery 5, and would be able to add up to ten dice to his Dexterity + Archery dice pools. Moreover, the Solar may use the First, Second, or Third Excellencies of his highest-rated Ability to enhance any of those five Abilities until his DV refreshes.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Manifold Murder Arts (**Prerequisite:** Ever-Ready Killer's Tools). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

### STRIFE-DRAWING TACTIC

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK

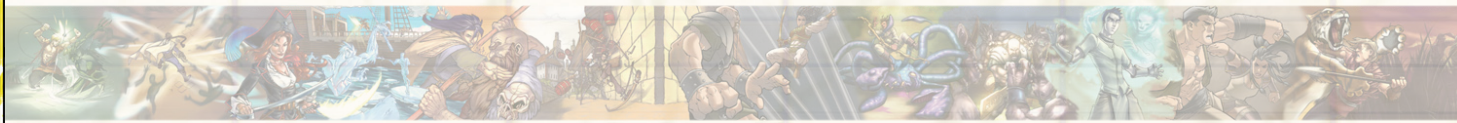
**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Elegant Dance of Bow and Blade

The Bronze Tigers are cued to the very Essence of combat. Using a preternatural comprehension of all the modes and methods of battle, a Solar may force his opponent into a fatal showdown. A character who activates this Charm is so attuned with the movements of combat that he becomes difficult to attack from a distance. To compensate for this strain, all opponents in combat outside the character's engagement range must pay an extra one mote surcharge on any offensive Charms they wish to launch against the Solar. In addition, all attacks made against the Lawgiver from outside his engagement range suffer a -1 external penalty.

### CHARM CONCEPT: ENGAGEMENT RANGE

A character's engagement range is equal to (the maximum Range of the highest-Range weapon the character has used during the scene + the distance she may travel during her action with a Dash), as modified by any Charms or other magic with a duration greater than One action. In short, any opponent she could dash toward and attack on her next action are within her engagement range.



### CERTAIN VICTORY FORMULATION

**Cost:** 0m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Two actions

**Prerequisite Charms:** Heroism-Encouraging Presence

In the heat of battle, giving a Solar time to consider his strategy may be a fatal error. As the Lawgiver formulates a method by which his opponent may be dispatched, he experiences a surge of Essence to compensate his battle strategy. This Charm grants the character a ten-mote Overdrive pool. An activation of this Charm allows the character to gather one offensive mote per tick, to a maximum of ten motes, with which to fill this pool. If the Solar takes any damage to his health track or uses a Charm with one of the Four Flaws of Invulnerability (see *Exalted*, p. 194) during this time, his concentration is interrupted; the mote gain ceases and the character must repay the activation cost of the Charm if he wishes to resume the effect. The Solar must be in combat and inside a hostile enemy's engagement range in order to use Certain Victory Formulation.

### COVER SHROUDING MOVEMENT

**Cost:** 3m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, War

**Duration:** One action

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

During the Primordial War, Solar generals often found themselves marching armies against foes whose very shoulders buffeted the skies. From such a vantage, all manner of horrors might be hurled on the heads of the Lawgivers' forces. Only the peerless tactics of the Solar Exalted saved the Celestial Host from such a fate. By paying three motes and activating this Charm, the Solar becomes impossible to target for all opponents outside of his engagement range. Alternately, the Solar may pay an additional one Willpower when activating this Charm to protect a complementary unit he leads.

This Charm is accomplished by use of terrain; the character uses brilliant combat maneuvers to position himself in a locus of absolute tactical advantage. For one action, the Solar may continue to move himself and his army toward or away from his foe without reprisal. However, any opponent in combat who moves into the Solar's engagement range may target and attack the Exalt. Cover-Shrouding Movement may not be used if the Storyteller determines that there is no possible cover for the Solar to employ. Note, however, that possible does not necessarily mean reasonable—a famous Solar general hid his army in the shadow of Mardukth as he moved his forces in for the kill.

### VANISHING MARCH MANEUVER

**Cost:** 5m or 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, War

**Duration:** One tick

**Prerequisite Charms:** Cover Shrouding Movement

The Solars used this Charm to sow confusion amongst enemy forces and control the tenor of battle. Upon paying five motes to activate this Charm, the Solar makes a critical combat maneuver which completely obscures him to all opponents in combat, rendering him impossible to target. By paying an additional point of Willpower, the Lawgiver may extend this benefit

to a complementary unit he leads. The effect of this maneuver is perfect: it does not require cover. At the beginning of the next tick, when the Solar emerges from cover, all opponents within (Essence x 20) yards are considered to have made a Join Battle roll. Vanishing March Maneuver may not be activated if there are any opponents within 30 yards of the Solar, nor may it be re-used after activation until the character's DV has refreshed five times.

## ZENITH CASTE

### INTEGRITY

#### RIGHTEOUS AVENGER'S ASPECT

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Dawn, Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Righteous Lion Defense

For a Solar, defeat is only a marker in the chapters of existence, rather than the end of the book. Upon learning this Charm, the Exalt gains an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, he may fill it when confronting an opponent who has defeated the Solar in his present incarnation or any of his past lives. Defeat in this context means physical combat; defeating the Solar in social combat does not qualify, nor does beating him at Gateway or other contests. This Charm does not grant the Exalt special knowledge of defeats that occurred in past lives—the Solar must come by this information by any valid means of doing so.

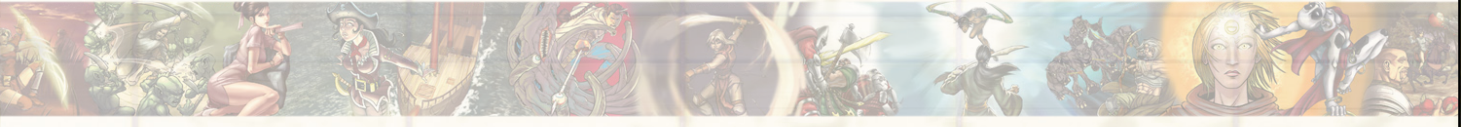
The Lawgiver gains (Essence + 2) offensive motes upon activation, and one additional mote each time his DV refreshes for the rest of the scene. The Solar may only activate this Charm once per scene, and only in battle against one who has defeated him. If the fight concludes with the Exalt's victory, he has avenged himself, and can no longer activate this Charm against his vanquished opponent. Otherwise, the Solar may continue to assume Righteous Avenger's Aspect until he has avenged himself.

An inconclusive battle is not sufficient to release a character from the Solar's vengeance. If an earthquake splits the street between the Solar and his enemy, razing the city and carrying the two halves so far apart continued battle becomes impossible, the Solar does not lose his ability to activate this Charm against that opponent. Nor does fleeing the Solar release the target from his vengeance.

At Essence 3+, the Solar may activate this Charm on behalf of a person or group of people he has a positive Intimacy toward. In this case, the Solar needs only evidence of physical harm to activate this Charm. Seeing a man strike his wife would be sufficient to channel the Lawgiver's wrath into Overdrive, as would watching his personally-trained horsemen scathed by a hail of arrows from a deathknight's bow.

This Charm requires that the Solar is aware he faces an opponent who has defeated him or wronged the subject of one of his positive Intimacies. The Solar's opponent must actually have done so—the Charm will not function if the Lawgiver is mistaken, or if he is not aware of what his opponent has done. The Solar may always activate this Charm on behalf of his Lunar mate, even at Essence 2.





## PRESENCE

### LISTENER-SWAYING ARGUMENT

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion, Social

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Presence Excellency

Locked in debate, the Solar's words fall so sweetly upon the ears of listeners that those of her opponent become harsh and discordant in comparison; such tonal inflections render the content of the conversation irrelevant. While this Charm is active, third-party observers to any debate the Solar engages in believe the Lawgiver to have decisively won the argument, regardless of the merit of her words (or lack thereof). Where possible, this is achieved by subtle introduction of bias. The observer glosses over the Solar's flaws and strictly judges his opponent's words and delivery. Against more rational opponents or those using objective criteria, Listener-Swaying Argument induces outright hallucinations—whatever is necessary for the witness to believe in the Solar's victory.

The unnatural mental influence imposed by Listener-Swaying Argument affects all observers with a Dodge MDV lower than the Solar's ([higher of Charisma or Appearance] + Essence), and costs 2wp to resist at the time of activation. Characters can also correct memories clouded by this Charm, but only with external prompting to remember the debate or a personally compelling reason approved by the Storyteller. The victim must pay three Willpower to fix each scene of damaged memory.

## RESISTANCE

### INVINCIBLE ESSENCE REINFORCEMENT

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Undertaking a grueling regimen of endurance training, the Solar folds Essence into his body until his skin becomes hard enough to turn aside blades. The Lawgiver's natural lethal and bashing soak calculations become (Stamina + 3). This Charm may be purchased up to a total of (Resistance) times; each purchase after the first adds 3 to the character's natural lethal and bashing soak.

With Essence 4+, the Solar also gains natural lethal and bashing hardness equal to the number of times he has purchased this Charm.

### SOUL FIRE RESURGENCE

**Cost:** —(1wp); **Mins:** Resistance 2, Essence 2;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Dawn, Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Sealed for fifteen centuries in a cage of jade, the Lawgiver reborn has known death and darkness. Never again shall she yield. The player of a character with this Charm may pay one Willpower to roll (Valor) dice, healing a number of health levels equal to the successes on the roll.

Moreover, the resilience of the Solar Exalted is only equaled by their courage; a Lawgiver using this Charm reverses even the most grievous of wounds, canceling them out by denying their existence through force of will. Characters who wish to substitute another Virtue for the purposes of this Charm may do so if dramatically appropriate. This Charm may not be used to heal damage from self-inflicted wounds, including damage incurred as part of the activation cost of a Charm. A character may not use Soul Fire Resurgence more than once per action. This Charm's Virtue roll may not be enhanced by other Charms or magic; Virtues enhanced by Epic Zeal of (Virtue) are never applicable for this Charm's effects.

### RED DAWN ASCENDING

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Dawn, Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Iron Skin Concentration

Until the day he dies, the Solar will not stop fighting. He will sell his final light dearly. This Charm grants an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, the pool gains motes each time the Solar's wound penalty increases. Add a number of offensive motes equal to twice the wound penalty's value to the Solar's Overdrive pool. In addition, if the Solar has a wound penalty of -2, reduce the cost of all offensive Charms paid through Overdrive by one mote. This may reduce the activation cost of a Charm to zero motes, but the Solar may only enhance a single attack per tick with Charms costing zero motes. He may continue to benefit from the price reduction across additional attacks on a single tick, but consecutive attacks may not drop the cost of Charms below one mote. If the Solar's wound penalty is -4 or higher, reduce the cost of offensive Charms paid through Overdrive by three motes. At -4 or higher, the Solar may enhance two attacks per tick with Charms costing zero motes to activate.

### UNABATING FURY FOCUS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native

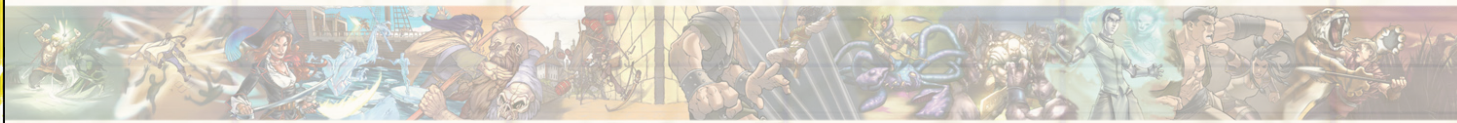
**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence-Gathering Temper

The righteous ardor of the Solar Exalted drives them to the ends of the world in pursuit of their enemies. Unabating Fury Focus ensures the Lawgiver's potency is not diminished by the chase. This Charm permanently enhances the character, allowing him to retain offensive motes stored in his Overdrive pool until he sleeps.

### CHARM CONCEPT: OVERDRIVE

Overdrive Charms which have a mote-regain limit imposed in the Charm's text expand this cap to meet the total size of the character's Overdrive pool based on their collective Overdrive Charms, up to a cap of 25 motes. For example, a character with a 25-mote collective Overdrive pool may use Essence-Gathering Temper to stock 25 motes in this pool, even though Essence-Gathering Temper itself only produces a ten-mote Overdrive pool. The same is true of Certain Victory Formulation and other Overdrive Charms.



## SURGING ESSENCE REACTOR

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence-Gathering Temper

Like the sun they emulate, the Solar Exalted draw unlimited power by their very existence. This Charm creates an interaction between all Charms possessing the keywords Overdrive and Reactor. A character who has Surging Essence Reactor as well as Overdrive and Reactor Charms gains the following benefits: whenever the character generates more than twenty motes by use of a Reactor effect, the overflow motes go instantly into the character's Overdrive mote pool; additionally, if the Solar's regular mote pools are full upon using a Reactor effect, overflow motes go into her Overdrive mote pool.

## TWILIGHT CASTE

### INVESTIGATION

#### VIRTUE-DISCERNING SIGHT

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Social

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Courtier's Eye Technique

Solar Exalted appraise the righteousness of others with a glance. A Lawgiver using this Charm gains the following powers:

- Whenever another character the Solar can perceive channels a Virtue or one of her Virtues affects her MDV in social combat, the Lawgiver's player learns the rating of the Virtue in question.

- The Lawgiver adds +2 bonus successes to all efforts to read the Motivation of another character, provided he discerned one or more of her Virtue ratings using this Charm earlier in the scene.

- Characters suffer an MDV penalty of -4 instead of -2 whenever the Solar makes a social attack exploiting one of their Virtues. This benefit only applies if the Lawgiver discerned the exploited Virtue rating using this Charm earlier in the scene, and only if the social attack has exactly one target.

## NIGHT CASTE

### ATHLETICS

#### GLORIOUS TEMPLE BODY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Mirror (Superior Weapon Body)

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Increasing Strength Exercise, Monkey Leap Technique, Lightning Speed

The power of her Essence speaks through the medium of her body as the Lawgiver's majesty is made manifest in her every motion. This Charm confers the following permanent benefits, none of which are considered to be dice added by a Charm:

- The character adds (Essence) to her Strength + Athletics total for the purpose of feats of strength.

- The character adds (Essence) in yards to her base movement and dash distances.

- The character adds (Essence) in yards to the distance she may jump vertically, and (Essence x 2) to the distance she may jump horizontally.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Superior Weapon Body (**Prerequisites:** Corpse-Might Surge, Shadow Races the Light, Spider Pounce Technique). The Abyssal Mirror to Glorious Temple Body is identical to its Solar counterpart.

## AWARENESS

### PANOPTIC FUSION DISCIPLINE

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Dawn

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Awareness Excellency

The Solar's supernal senses expand and his mind speeds up to process a thousand myriad details in a split second. Opponents attempting to strike a Lawgiver using this Charm appear to be moving in slow motion. All of the character's attacks are enhanced as though he had just spent three ticks accumulating dice with an Aim action (as a result, the character may not normally benefit from a true Aim action while this Charm is active), and his DVs are raised by 1 against all physical attacks of which he is aware. None of these bonuses count as dice added by a Charm.

With Essence 3+, each tick the lawgiver spends Aiming while Panoptic Fusion Discipline is active converts one die provided by this Charm into an automatic success; his opponents seem to slow even more, until their anticipated actions are outlined in golden contrails before the eyes of the Lawgiver.

## DODGE

### REED IN THE WIND

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Dodge 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Solar Exalted understand the humble wisdom of the reed and the willow. The greater the force directed against them, the more nimble they become to avoid harm. Whenever the Lawgiver uses his Dodge DV to avoid a physical attack, he adds a bonus equal to half the attacker's Essence, rounded up. This bonus counts as dice added by a Charm.

### LIGHTSPEED BODY DYNAMICS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Reactor

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Shadow Over Water

The body and soul of the Solar Exalted are as one, transcending all limits in emulation of the light from which they were born. A Lawgiver who has purchased this Charm has perfected his body at the motonic level through a mastery of Dodge techniques, allowing him to accrue ambient motes as a matter of course. Whenever the Solar successfully avoids an attack by applying his Dodge DV, he gains (attacker's Essence



÷ 2, round up) motes in step 10. This Charm is subject to the following limitations:

- The attack must be made with intent to injure the Lawgiver, and must also be capable of harming him. For example, this Charm would offer no benefit if the character were attacked with a firewand while carrying a hearthstone which rendered him immune to fire.
- The Charm offers no benefit if the Solar defends himself with a Charm carrying a Flaw of Invulnerability.
- Lightspeed Body Dynamics is incompatible with any other Charm which grants the character motes of Essence.

### NIGHT'S AVENGER LUNGE

**Cost:** 3m or 5m, 1wp or 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Counterattack, Dawn

**Duration:** One tick

**Prerequisite Charms:** Shadow Over Water

Bearing knives like lupine fangs, the Iron Wolves know that the best defense is a good offense. A character invokes this Charm after using her Dodge DV to defend against an attack. The Exalt flashes out of existence, dodging toward her opponent in an effort to gain the advantage of surprise. The character moves up to  $(10 + [\text{Strength} \times \text{Dodge}] \times 3)$  yards toward her opponent in a blur of untraceable speed, reappearing immediately on the next tick, rendering her an invalid target for this Charm's duration. This Charm's effects take place in step 10 after resolving the attack that provoked it. The character may use this Charm to pass through solid structures, but she may not use it against an opponent who is inside her engagement range, nor may she enhance the distance this Charm will carry her through the use of hearthstones, artifacts, sorcery, or other Charms. This Charm may not be used to move away from an opponent.

If the Lawgiver must close the gap now, she may pay five motes, one Willpower to flash forward up to 300 yards. If her opponent is inside this range, he finds the Lawgiver suddenly at his neck, making a counterattack with the Ability of her choice, turning this Charm's duration to Instant. If her target is not in range, the Lawgiver may not activate this version of Night's Avenger Lunge.

At Essence 5+, the character may use Night's Avenger Lunge to counter attacks made against her from up to 100 miles away by paying ten motes, one Willpower. This also provides a counterattack and turns the duration of this Charm to Instant.

## LARCENY

### REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack, Mirror (Death Claims All)

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Stealing from Plain Sight Spirit

Unfortunate times require such a defense as this. A Lawgiver may use this Charm to respond to any attempt to steal from him. By paying five motes, the character not only becomes aware of all items capable of being stolen from the target, but is also able to perfectly steal one item—potentially the one being

stolen from him. At Essence 4+, the Lawgiver may use this Charm in response to attacks. This Charm has the same restrictions on objects which may be stolen as Stealing from Plain Sight Spirit, with the exception of an item being actively stolen from the Solar.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Death Claims All (**Prerequisite:** Reality-Subverting Gesture). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

## ECLIPSE CASTE

### BUREAUCRACY

#### SERVANT-REWARDING BENEVOLENCE

**Cost:** 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One month

**Prerequisite Charms:** Speed the Wheels

Essence flows through bureaucracies and hierarchies just as it does through the geomancy of Creation or the anatomy of a living body. As a geomancer might change the landscape to create a demesne, or an acupuncturist use needles to correct a patient's essence meridians, so too can the Solar shape the essence of a business with holidays and rewards.

Servant-Rewarding Benevolence is a dramatic action to provide benefit to the members of a social and/or mass combat unit. If the Solar is not the unit's leader, the unit's rank-and-file must officially recognize the Lawgiver's authority to provide the benefits in question. The action can be anything that would logically make unit members happier. Examples include offering one-time bonus pay, offering a state holiday off work or taking a legion out for a wild night on the town.

For a month following the enchanted special occasion, the Charm provides the following benefits:

- All members add +1 bonus success on any non-combat action they take to advance the group's Policy. Heroic members add +2 successes instead.
- Mass social units add +2 to their MDVs against any effect that targets the group through one of its members instead of its leader.
- The unit adds +1 Morale in mass combat.
- Whenever the unit's leader channels Valor to enhance a unit action during mass combat, he adds +2 bonus successes in addition to the usual dice.

## RIDE

### IMMORTAL RIDER'S ADVANTAGES

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Mirror (Fell Rider's Advantages), Mount (Mundane), Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Master Horseman's Techniques

The Solars reinvent that which defines their legends. A character who purchases this Charm gains the following benefits: Ride Charms no longer count as Charm activations, and Ride Charms may be activated to enhance a mount the Solar is not presently riding, so long as he can perceive that animal or it is within one mile. In addition to these advantages, the Solar







## A SNOWBOUND MYSTERY

The mountains surrounding Diamond Hearth conceal a particular curiosity: in a crag tucked between two mountains, a boneyard stretches for nearly half a mile. Filled with the gigantic femurs, spines, and bristle-toothed skulls of tyrant lizards, the place—known to history as Tyrant’s Grave—has puzzled savants for centuries. What could induce a cold-blooded creature to wander so far into the wastes of the frozen north, where it would almost certainly die? Was this the proof of some sort of instinctual death ritual, leading the tyrant lizards to a place somehow hallowed to their senses? And if so, why has there never been a sighting of a tyrant lizard trekking north across the snowy plains?

The truth is not nearly so remarkable.

During the middle First Age, a hedonistic Exalt established a luxurious palace on the snowy slopes of the mountains near Diamond Hearth. Open year-round as a pleasure house to the ranks of the Exalted, this palace played host to numerous spectacles, including a particular sport invented by bored Lawgivers: lizard slaloms. It was a simple game: the Solars would ride tyrant lizards down the slopes of the mountain, sledding them down a treacherous path of boulders, trees and ramps. If that wasn’t exciting enough, their Lunar mates would drop obstacles onto the course, and if that still wasn’t enough challenge, they might also toss raksha captives or other enemies of the Realm onto the course to be seized and eaten as a kind of challenge objective. Unfortunately, as much as the Solars loved to ride their tyrant lizards off ramps built at the edge of gigantic cliffs, few beasts could last long under such treatment.

Perhaps to the eyes of history this game seems to be little more than another issue of Solar barbarism, but at Tyrant’s Grave the bones of those long-dead mounts have been carefully arranged, their skulls ordered by their number of victories on the slopes, with notches on their femurs to indicate the number of felons which each great beast devoured in his or her triumphs on the course.

Ride Charms such as Horse Skids Trick and Draft Horse Measure were used to great effect in lizard slaloms.

gains an auxiliary peripheral mote pool containing (Essence + Ride + 5) motes. The Solar may only use this pool to pay for Charms of the Ride ability. When this pool runs out, the character may then use her personal and peripheral mote pools to pay for Ride Charm activations. This mote pool refills by normal means, including stunts. A repurchase of Immortal Rider’s Advantages at Essence 4+ doubles this mote pool. Another purchase at Essence 5+ doubles it once more.

This Charm only applies under the following conditions:

- The mount must be a living being (i.e. not a Windblade or other accouterment which incidentally use the Ride ability).
- The mount must belong to the Solar (see **Exalted**, p. 238) or be the character’s Familiar. Exalts, gods, and other powerful NPCs never qualify.
- Phantom Steed is expressly permitted to benefit from Immortal Rider’s Advantages.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Fell Rider’s Advantages (**Prerequisites:** Soul Reins). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart, save for allowing ghostly animal mounts.

## HORSE SKIDS TRICK

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Mount (Mundane)

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Master Horseman’s Techniques

If a mount is only as good as its rider, a Lawgiver’s mount defies all convention. By activating this Charm and paying three motes, for the next action the character’s mount’s capacity for movement-based stunts is increased a hundredfold. It may skid along the ground without losing speed, maintaining velocity without moving its legs, allowing it to drift, draft, and grind. It may spin, turn, twist, whirl, and even skate backwards at full speed. While taking these skid actions, the Solar’s mount may not be directly targeted by any attack.

## HERO RIDES AWAY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Emotion

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Master Horseman’s Techniques

In ancient times, Solars chasing sundown represented something both tragic and awe-inspiring; their efforts redoubled at the fading of the day as a nod to their patron, his symbolic death leaving them to fill the void. This Charm captures a Lawgiver’s breathtaking iconicity and his otherworldly there-and-gone nature, turning it into a renewed intent to bring the story to its conclusion.

When this Charm takes effect, the Solar’s player chooses a Virtue and rolls the Lawgiver’s Conviction. The Exalt regains one spent channel for the chosen Virtue and Willpower points equal to (number of successes + 1). To gain this benefit, the Solar must leave a Magnitude 3+ social unit that he has helped in the past day, and must do so by making a dramatic exit on his mount, blazing his unforgettable image into their minds as he departs. Examples of a dramatic exit include riding off into the sunset, pausing to cut an iconic figure on the horizon, rearing one’s steed so it can churn the air before galloping away, or departing at the height of a raging thunderstorm.

This help must be intrinsically heroic and known to all members of the social unit, the sort of deeds that draw Solar Essences to Exalt mortals. Examples include driving off a ruthless band of brigands, killing a monster, curing a plague, feeding the hungry in a time of famine, improving the local infrastructure, healing the lame, etc. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of what constitutes acceptable help. Barring something unusually awe-inspiring, such help must have taken at least one full scene to provide.

If the Solar ends a story with such a departure, he loses a point of Limit, and all members of the community gain a posi-





tive Intimacy toward the Solar with an emotional context defined by the Lawgiver (generally respect, love, gratitude or reverence). Resisting this unnatural Emotion effect costs (Solar's Essence, max 5) Willpower. Similarly, the unit's leader must spend (Solar's Essence, max 5) Loyalty or the Intimacy becomes part of the unit's Policy. For example, if the Solar saves a small town from hobgoblins and chooses an Intimacy of gratitude, all citizens feel thankful to him and incorporate that appreciation into their local culture. As a result, the people as a whole won't betray the Solar when the Wyld Hunt comes looking and only the most determinedly ungrateful individuals can bring themselves to such heinous treachery.

### ONE MAN CAVALRY

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, War  
**Duration:** Instant  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Hero Rides Away

When a hero rides away, he may be headed toward battle. Formation lines break and the wicked scatter at the Solar's terrifying battle charge. A Solar may use this Charm when emerging from a position of cover, such as smashing in through a window or leaping down from an overland pass; the Charm may also always enhance a mounted Join Battle roll. The Solar's player makes a (Charisma + Ride) roll, opposed by his opponents' MDVs. Each opponent whose MDV fails to protect her is awestruck by the Lawgiver's emergence onto the battlefield, and suffers a -3 internal penalty to all attacks directed at the Solar or her mount, and a -1 internal penalty to all attacks against the Solar's allies. This unnatural mental influence costs (6 - target's Valor) points of Willpower to resist, producing immunity to any further uses by the same Solar for the rest of the scene.

Used in mass combat, this Charm may enhance a charge by the Lawgiver, causing it to count as a rout condition. Only the Solar need be mounted for this Charm to be activated, but if she is leading a cavalry charge by a mounted complementary unit, then the rout check is made at +1 difficulty. One Man Cavalry may not be activated more than once per action in this fashion.

### THUNDER-HOOF METHOD

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Holy  
**Duration:** Instant  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Sometimes Horses Fly Approach

Sometimes riding down a foe is just not good enough. Points are best when made soundly. The Solar may pay five motes and one Willpower to concentrate all the incredible speed of his mount into a single instance of acceleration. For the space of a heartbeat, the Solar 'draws back the reins,' holding his mount in place as a surge of withheld speed gathers in its legs like a storm, briefly drawing the world around horse and rider into the vacuum so created. When the Lawgiver lets go, all that force is unleashed in one tremendous shockwave that tears loose from the point of launch, ripping away at the ground with a sonic boom that inflicts automatic knockdown on all individuals within (Solar's Essence x 5) yards, while the mount is propelled forward (Essence x 10) yards in an instant. Creatures of darkness may not rise from prone until their DV has refreshed twice. This Charm may not be used more than once per action.

For a point of reference, this Charm simply causes a sonic boom in the air, while in loose dirt or mud it may cause the added abuse of showering foes with muck; used over water, such as at dockside, it creates a small tsunami to achieve this effect.

### SAIL

#### IMMORTAL CAPTAIN'S ADVANTAGES

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent  
**Keywords:** Mirror (Fell Captain's Advantages), Native  
**Duration:** Permanent  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Perfect Reckoning Technique

A man of the sea is a legendary thing to behold. A character who purchases this Charm gains the following benefits: Sail Charms no longer count as Charm activations, and Sail Charms may be activated to enhance a ship the Solar is not presently aboard, so long as he can perceive that vessel or it is within one mile. In addition to these advantages, the Lawgiver gains an auxiliary peripheral mote pool of ([Essence + Sail + 5] x 2) motes. The Solar may only use this pool to pay for Charms of the Sail ability. When this pool is depleted, the character may use his personal and peripheral mote pools to pay for Sail Charm activations. This mote pool refills by normal means, including stunts. A repurchase of Immortal Captain's Advantages at Essence 4+ doubles this mote pool; a repurchase at Essence 5+ doubles it again.

This Charm only applies under the following conditions:

- The character must own the ship (see **Exalted**, p. 238).
- Characters who are admiral to a fleet of ships may apply this effect to various ships under their command, even ones they do not own.
- The character may apply Perfect Reckoning Technique to every ship he commands with a single activation.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Fell Captain's Advantages (**Prerequisites:** Dark Water Odyssey). This Charm permits the Abyssal to apply Dark Water Odyssey to every ship he commands with a single activation, but is otherwise identical to its Solar counterpart.

#### FLAG OF ALL NATIONS METHOD

**Cost:** 7m; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion, Mirror (Treacherous Flag Display) Obvious  
**Duration:** Indefinite  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Ship-Claiming Stance

The authority of the Lawgivers transcends boundaries. All nations are their nations; all people are their people. Standing at the center of a vessel she owns, the Solar releases her Essence into the ship, veiling it from hostile eyes and hostile intent. All observers who witness the ship see it as a friendly vessel, if possible—its sails display friendly colors, and its sailors seem to be of the proper origin and nationality. Pirates and other nautical predators instead see a ship that is too poor to bother assaulting, or too formidable to consider boarding. This unnatural mental influence costs four points of Willpower to see through. The disguise has one major flaw—the ship's reflection upon the waves shows its true nature. Solars are thus advised not to sail too close to other vessels when relying upon this Charm.

**New Abyssal Charm:** Treacherous Flag Display (**Prerequisites:** Unhallowed Ghost Ship). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.



### MARINER'S PARABLE DEFENSE

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, Illusion

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Ship-Claiming Stance

The Solar's vessel shouts his legend into the world. This Charm may only be used aboard a ship the Solar owns. The identity of the vessel's owner becomes Obvious to all characters who perceive it. Should they be unaware of the Solar by reputation or personal association, Mariner's Parable Defense makes it clear—the Exalt is a legendary man of the sea: a hero who sinks pirates, rescues damsels in distress, puts storm gods in their place, braves hurricanes and defies the Yozis; or a peerless

pirate who ransacks port towns, evades capture with a laugh, and steals comely lads or lasses with as much ease and abandon as casks of jade. Should the Solar's ship put into port while this Charm is in effect, this aura follows the character wherever he should go, up to (Essence) miles from the ship.

Common folk marvel at the Solar's heroism or cringe before his rapacity—he raises his Appearance and MDVs by three with regard to all characters struck by this aura. Additionally, fear of the Solar's prowess imposes a -1 external penalty to all attacks directed at his person or his ship. This unnatural mental influence costs two Willpower to resist for a scene.

Additionally, the Solar gains one temporary dot of Influence while this Charm is active.





## CHAPTER TWO

# LUNAR EXALTED

## SHIFTING KNACKS

### BEAST-POWER CONCENTRATION

**Prerequisites:** Deadly Beastman Transformation, Essence 2, Appearance 3

Certain Stewards, whether due to vanity or subtlety, prefer to enter battle without outwardly displaying the beast within. This Knack assists in such endeavors, refining the Lunar's Essence until she is able to concentrate the power of her Deadly Beastman Transformation into her human form. This Knack modifies the character's war form, allowing her to activate that form while retaining her natural human shape, if desired. While using Beast-Power Concentration, the Lunar enjoys the benefits of Deadly Beastman Transformation's Bonus Attributes, enhanced healing, and use of Gift Charms, but does not manifest any of that Form's mutations. The Lunar's Tell becomes more prominent while this power is active, reducing the base MDV needed to see it to 8.

## CHARMS

### STRENGTH

#### BEAST SPIRIT DEFENSE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Strength 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

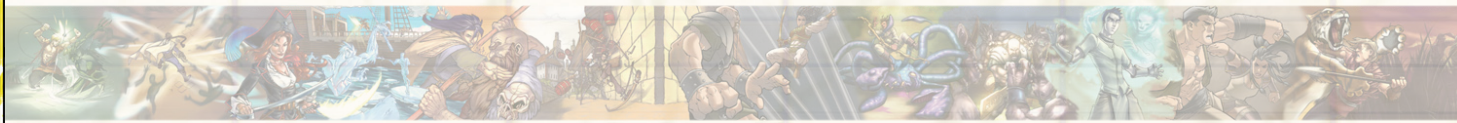
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Ferocious Biting Tooth, Impressions of Strength

Disdaining finesse, Luna's Chosen may defend themselves with raw power. The Lunar moves forward to meet an oncoming attack, striking it with her mightiest blow. A great surge of Essence erupts before her limb or weapon, taking the form of her spirit shape; this Essence-icon catches the attack and dissipates in the act of throwing it aside.

This Charm acts as a perfect parry which may block any attack of which the Lunar is aware, even if that attack is unblockable. This Charm has one of the Four Flaws of Invulnerability (see *Exalted*, p. 194).



## LION'S ROAR REBUKE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Strength 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 4, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Crippling

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Strength Excellency

Filling his lungs with thunder, the Lunar throws back his head and roars with a voice to shake the stars from the firmament. All characters within (Essence x 10) yards must roll Stamina + Resistance against a difficulty of the Lunar's Strength. Should this roll fail, the target is rendered temporarily deaf. He automatically fails all auditory Perception rolls, and suffers a -3 internal penalty to all Perception rolls that might be aided by hearing, such as noticing someone attempting to sneak up on him with Stealth. This deafness persists for (Lunar's Strength + Essence) hours. The target is also generally disoriented in the wake of the roar, suffering a -1 external penalty on all actions until his DV has refreshed twice.

## DEXTERITY

### ESSENTIAL MOONSILVER AFFINITY

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Dexterity 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Gift, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Dexterity Excellency

Suffusing her body with a distillation of her protean Essence, the Lunar's body becomes more flexible, better able to stretch and bend as needed. All of the Lunar's attacks gain the R tag (see *Exalted*, p. 373), and she reduces the mobility penalty of any worn armor by 2. Finally, any non-combat roll which would be aided by such flexibility adds one automatic success.

When the Lunar uses Deadly Beastman Transformation, she may commit one mote to infuse this protean Essence into her war form.

### SENSING THE DEADLY FLOW

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dexterity 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Fury-OK

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Wary Swallow Method, Wind-Dancing Method

The Lunar Exalted are long-accustomed to living on the edge. This finely attuned instinct for danger may be honed into a preternatural battle insight, allowing canny Stewards to stay one step ahead of their attackers. While this Charm is active the Lunar subtracts half of her Dexterity rating (round up) from any onslaught or coordinated attack penalties she suffers.

Activated with Relentless Lunar Fury, this Charm reduces all onslaught and coordinated attack penalties by half (round down) or by the Lunar's (Dexterity ÷ 2, round up) for the duration, whichever would provide the lesser benefit.

## STAMINA

### LIMB-SHIELDING GROWTH

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Stamina 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Gift, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Armor-Forming Technique

The Lunar extrudes a wide, flexible, bony carapace over the back of one of her arms, stretching from shoulder to wrist. This shield provides a +3 DV cover bonus against all attacks without any associated fatigue or mobility penalties, and does not restrict the use of the Lunar's hands. Unexpected attacks bypass this protection. The Lunar may also apply this shield as a costless Step 2 perfect parry without an associated Flaw of Invulnerability, even against unblockable attacks; doing so over-stresses the shield, however, causing it to shatter. A shield which is broken in this manner may not be reactivated for the rest of the scene. At Essence 5+, the Lunar may apply this parry up to three times within the course of a scene before the shield shatters.

When the Lunar uses Deadly Beastman Transformation, she may commit two motes to add a shield to her war form. If the shield should shatter, she must wait a scene before she may re-assume the war form to reactivate Limb-Shielding Growth as a Gift.

### WEAPON-TRAPPING BODY DOMINION

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Stamina 4, Essence 4;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack, Obvious, Stackable

**Duration:** Instant (One scene)

**Prerequisite Charms:** Armor-Forming Technique

Lunars are the absolute masters of their territory, and no territory is more sacred than a Steward's own body. This Charm may be activated in response to any attack that successfully rolls damage against the Lunar, provided that attack is made with a weapon not possessing the N tag. The character makes an unblockable (Stamina + Athletics + levels of damage inflicted by the attack) counterattack, opposed by the original attacker's Dodge DV. Success traps the offending weapon within or against the Lunar's body; her blood congeals into a powerful bonding agent at the point of impact even as her body extrudes a sturdy cage of bone to hold the weapon in place. The weapon remains trapped as long as the Lunar commits Essence to this Charm, up to a maximum duration of one scene.

Reclaiming a captured weapon requires a miscellaneous Speed 5, DV -2 action in which the attacker rolls (Strength + Athletics) against a difficulty of the Lunar's Stamina. Should the attacker release her weapon while the Lunar holds it, a barehanded Martial Arts attack roll may be necessary to grasp it again in order to attempt to draw it out. The Lunar may hold up to (Essence) weapons with her body at once, but each held weapon imposes a -1 mobility penalty (as though from armor).





## CHARISMA

### FERAL SMILE TACTIC

**Cost:** 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Charisma 3, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Compulsion, Emotion, Social

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Charisma Excellency

The Lunar lets the world catch a glimpse of the beast within—her features take on a feral and angular cast, and her body language is that of a predator ready to strike. Her player rolls ([Higher of Charisma or Appearance] + Presence). All characters whose Dodge MDV is lower than the Lunar's successes become incapable of launching any social attack at the Lunar intended to change her mind or demand action from her, unless the purpose of such social efforts is to beg her not to harm them. Should a character under the influence of this Charm attempt to attack the Lunar, his Join Battle dice pool is automatically set to 0 if he is the one to initiate hostilities. This unnatural mental influence may be overcome for one action by spending a point of Willpower, and characters become immune to it for the rest of the day once they have spent a total of three points of Willpower. Characters with an Intimacy of fear toward the Lunar may not spend Willpower to overcome this Charm so long as that Intimacy endures.

### LION'S VOICE COMMAND

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Charisma 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, War

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Charisma Excellency

The Lunar's voice rolls forth with the authority of the king of beasts, carried by every natural feature of the world. The wind conducts his words, walls will not bar his voice, and every leaf and blade of grass reflect his utterances back into the world. While this Charm is in effect, the Lunar's voice may be clearly heard up to a mile away, unless the Lunar wishes it not to be. In mass combat, this Charm allows the Lunar Exalted to stock the ranks of their armies with heroes and sorcerers they have inspired, trained or sired. The character needs no relays when leading a complementary unit of up to Magnitude (Lunar's Essence).

### SILVER AND GOLD SPAN THE HEAVENS

**Cost:** 1m per dot of Bond; **Mins:** Charisma 3, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Native, Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Sacred Guardian Renewal

Focusing her will through the bond built into her Exaltation, the Lunar repurposes that connection, pledging herself to the support of one of the Solar Exalted—not because she must, but because she wishes it so. This Charm only requires a brief touch (during which its effects are Obvious to the Solar being targeted, but not to any observers), although in the First Age it was common for it to be incorporated into formal oaths of fealty, pledges of brotherhood, or marriage vows. For each mote the Lunar commits to the Charm, she establishes one dot of Solar Bond with the Solar she is touching. This Charm may only be used to maintain a bond with one Solar at a time, and

in no way obviates the Lunar's existing bond; indeed, if the subject of her original bond is present in the scene, the force of that original bond rises up and mutes out Silver and Gold Span the Heavens, rendering the Charm ineffective until the Lunar's original mate is no longer present.

The bond established by this Charm is mechanically considered a true Solar-Lunar bond in all ways (including the creation of an unbreakable positive Intimacy), save for the Knack Golden Widow Method (see **Glories of the Most High: Luna**, p. 35). The Lunar must pay one Willpower to voluntarily end this Charm; doing so does not erase the Intimacy created by her temporary bond, but the Intimacy may now be eroded normally.

This Charm's bond pool is self-contained; that is to say, it refreshes at the end of the story. For example, Lilith uses the Charm to create a three point bond to Dace, and then channels all six dice. The next day she cancels Silver and Gold Span the Heavens and creates a five-point bond to Panther. Because she already spent six of her bond dice from this Charm, she only has four left to use to assist Panther. After spending them, she cancels the Charm and bonds herself to Arianna, committing five motes. Now she has no dice left to spend to help Arianna until the beginning of the next story, when her Solar Bond dice pool refreshes. Lilith also has Solar Bond 3 toward Swan, her original mate; she still has six bond dice to channel to assist him, as that pool is separate from the one created by Silver and Gold Span the Heavens.

If used to target an Abyssal or Infernal Exalt, this Charm's cost gains a one Willpower surcharge.

## MANIPULATION

### ANY-TRINKET ALLURE

**Cost:** 3m (+ 1wp); **Mins:** Manipulation 3, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Treasure as Trash Misdirection

Noble Stewards are able to exploit the covetousness and greed of others, even if they have nothing to work with but a few rocks and sticks. Taking an object in her hand, the Lunar reflexively rolls (Manipulation + [higher of Craft or Occult] + Essence). All observers whose Dodge MDV is lower than the Lunar's successes see the object as something else, as determined by the Steward. An object can be disguised as anything else within the following limitations: the illusion must be of roughly the same size and shape as the object, and it must be within two Resources dots of the original object's value. This unnatural mental influence costs two points of Willpower to resist. Any-Trinket Allure will disguise an object for a week by default, or for one season for a one Willpower surcharge.

### SILVER COIN BARGAIN

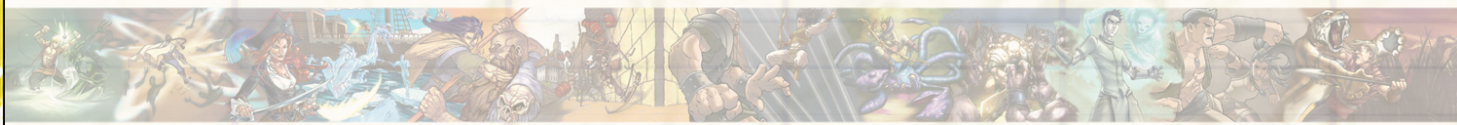
**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Manipulation 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple (Speed 6 in long ticks)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, Servitude, Social

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any-Trinket Allure

The Lunar weaves an illusion into a gift, imbuing it with greater symbolic significance. Even if the present itself is mean-



ingless, it seems so important and meaningful that it cannot help but demand obligation from whomever the Lunar gives it to. Using this Charm requires the Lunar to offer an object she owns to the Charm's target. The recipient must accept the gift or the Charm automatically fails, so prior persuasion may be needed to ensure cooperation. Provided that the gift is accepted, the Lunar's player rolls (Manipulation + Presence) as an undodgeable social attack, adding bonus successes equal to the gifts's Resources value. Artifacts have a Resources value of (Artifact rating + 2, maximum 5). If the target is convinced the gift is worth more than its actual value, the bonus uses apparent value instead.

If the social attack succeeds, Silver Coin Bargain infuses the recipient with a strong sense of gratitude and obligation towards the Lunar. This unnatural Emotion/Servitude effect lingers deep in the target's psyche, attached by the metaphysical link of owning and retaining access to the gift. Should he lose ownership or access to the item for any reason, his latent gratitude fades at the end of the scene. Consequently, durable gifts provide durable indebtedness, while an extravagant meal only creates gratitude for the scene of the meal itself. The target may not voluntarily rid himself of the gift to break its hold on him unless he pays four Willpower. Gifts may be gotten rid of without paying Willpower in accordance with their intended function, such as eating a meal or spending a gift of money. The Storyteller remains final arbiter of what functions qualify for this exemption.

The Lunar can draw upon the feelings imposed by Silver Coin Bargain to request any single task as a form of repayment. No new social attack is required; communication of desire is sufficient. From that moment on, the target's sense of obligation clouds his judgment and causes him to spend at least 10 hours per day working toward the assigned task by the best means available to him until he completes it. At any point, he can pay four Willpower to get rid of the gift as mentioned. The same cost also allows him to remember that gifts do not demand repayment, breaking the specific present's hold on his soul.

### SCENT OF ALL NATIONS ATTITUDE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Manipulation 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion  
**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Perfection of the Mockingbird

The Lunar Exalted are most at home when walking abroad. Gathering Essence from the four winds and the earth below, the Lunar becomes a citizen of the world. Though her outward appearance does not change, there is something familiar about her to all that meet her. To a Haltan, she seems like a Haltan; to a Delzahn nomad, she seems a fellow rider of the sands; to a Dynast, she seems a native of the Realm. Observers simply overlook any differences in language, appearance, dress or mannerisms that would violate this impression. This Charm constitutes a form of unnatural mental influence costing three points of Willpower to resist for one week.

Alternately, the Lunar may select a particular nationality upon activating this Charm, and all she meets will believe this is her place of origin; for example, she might decide to present herself as a Haltan, and this is how she would seem to the Haltan, the Delzahn, and the Dynast.

## PERCEPTION

### OUTLAND-NAVIGATING GUILF

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Perception 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent  
**Keywords:** None  
**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Wyld-Sensing Instincts

The Wyld is merely a training ground for even stranger and more hostile frontiers. This Charm permanently refines its prerequisite, allowing it to be applied with regard to the Underworld, Malfeas, Yu-Shan, and even Autochthonia. The Lunar may sense the proximity of entry points (and exits) to such realms, navigate their dangers, investigate their oddities, and lead groups through them in relative safety.

### WORRY THE BONE

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Perception 4, Essence 3;  
**Type:** Reflexive  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Perception Excellency

Woe to those who would take what a Lunar chooses to hold. Grasping an object, which can include a weapon or artifact (attuned or unattuned), the Lunar activates this Charm, claiming temporary ownership of the item. So long as she commits Essence to this Charm, the object metaphysically belongs to the Lunar. Furthermore, attempts to steal the item from her suffer at a -4 external penalty. In addition to this effect, she may make a free counterattack in step 9 of attack resolution against any individual who attempts to take the object from her.

### EYES AS MOONBEAMS METHOD

**Cost:** 8m; **Mins:** Perception 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious  
**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Eyes of the Cat, Keen Sight Technique

Condensing her anima into her eyes, the Lunar reveals all hidden things with her gaze. The character's eyes become two burning silver lamps, throwing out foot-wide beams of illumination that stretch for (Essence x 100) yards. These lunar lamps have a number of effects, all of which are as visible to onlookers as they are to the Exalt using this Charm. Any dematerialized being caught in their light becomes visible so long as the Lunar continues to gaze upon them (imposing a -2 internal penalty to the Lunar if they are engaged in combat with any other characters); invisible characters are likewise revealed if this Charm wins roll-off against whatever magic hides them. Magical objects and structures sparkle and scintillate with a nacreous sheen when touched by the light of this Charm, while works of raksha glamour become wan and ephemeral, almost transparent. Objects originating in the underworld radiate a dark miasma, while those tainted with infernal Essence are enmeshed in a greenish, sickly haze. Finally, the Lunar may bend these moonbeams at sharp angles if she desires, allowing her to see around corners or off down narrow and twisting tunnels.



## INTELLIGENCE

### ARGENT MUSE APPROACH

**Cost:** 3m per die; **Mins:** Intelligence 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Intelligence Excellency

Lunars inspire others to make their dreams real. The meager are encouraged to be more than they thought possible; the mighty are illuminated by the unorthodox methods of the Stewards. To activate this Charm, the Lunar concentrates on a project being undertaken by another character, and offers instinctive commentary on the character's method of approach. Inspiration strikes in the mind of the subject, igniting new creative ideas and methods. The Lunar may add one die per three notes to all rolls the target takes in pursuit of a certain project, so long as those rolls are based on a mental Attribute and the project is inherently creative in some way. The Lunar may bestow no more than (her Intelligence) dice to a single subject, and these count as dice added by a Charm.

If the character is acting as muse to her Solar mate, Argent Muse Approach's bonus does not count as dice added by a Charm.

### MANDATE OF THE HUNGRY MOUSE

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Intelligence 3, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (One dramatic action)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Lunar seats herself in the lotus position and spends an hour entering a dreamlike meditative state, in which she considers a particular structured organization or group she has had dealings with in the past month. The character's player rolls (Intelligence + Occult), subtracting an external penalty equal to half the targeted organization's Magnitude.

If any successes are accumulated, then the Lunar's anima banner appears around her as a dim, shimmering haze, barely visible; at the conclusion of the Charm's use, hundreds upon hundreds of ephemeral vermin coalesce and scamper out into the world—mice and rats, hornets and serpents, centipedes and pigeons. Henceforth these phantom animals plague the efforts of the target organization: mice eat a bureau's paperwork, rats spoil the grain allocated to feed a legion's soldiers, snakes startle the horses of couriers along the road carrying urgent messages for the organization. All of the target organization's endeavors take twice as long to execute as they properly should, and all rolls made to further their plans suffer a -1 external penalty. Only by beefing up security and tightening organizational standards may this Charm be effectively countered; the target organization's leaders must take an extended series of dramatic (Intelligence + Bureaucracy) actions, each requiring a month of effort, in order to oppose Mandate of the Hungry Mouse. Once the leadership has accumulated a number of successes equal to (the Lunar's activation successes times her Essence), the effects of this Charm cease, and the organization becomes immune to all uses of Mandate of the Hungry Mouse for one year.

### WASP OF THE LABYRINTH TRICK

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Int 3, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 4, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Stackable

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Intelligence Excellency

Having slain a foe, the Lunar may make use of her victim's body. Upon using this Charm, a six-inch stinger emerges from the corpse, she drives this spike into her target's body, releasing her Essence into the cadaver and catalyzing the necrotic power there to form thousands of Essence-born parasites which spread throughout it. The parasitic larvae attach themselves to its bones and organs, while vastly slowing down its natural decay. The parasites animate the corpse on the Lunar's next action, turning it into an automaton which is completely obedient to the her (use the traits for a zombie found on page 314 of *Exalted*).

The Lunar may expressly use this Charm on zombies to gain control of them with a successful Dexterity + Martial Arts attack; if the zombie is already under another being's command, the Lunar must make an Intelligence + Occult roll at a difficulty of the current master's Essence to wrest away control of it. Should the Lunar drop the mote committed to this Charm, the parasites dissolve and the corpse rapidly decays on the spot. If the undead was animated by previous forms of magic, it simply resumes its normal functions. The Lunar may animate or control as many undead as she cares to commit Essence to sustain.

### MOON AND EARTH BLESSING

**Cost:** 15m; **Mins:** Intelligence 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (One dramatic action)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

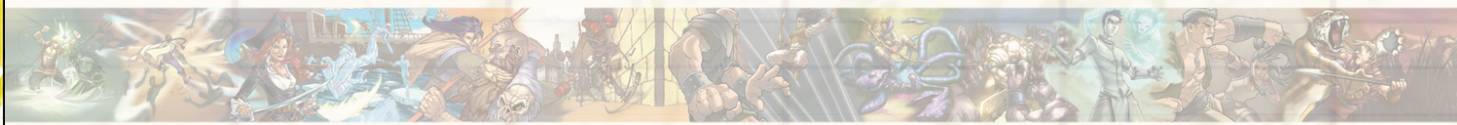
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

A favorite Charm of the Wardens of Gaia, Moon and Earth Blessing instills a land with supernatural fecundity and fertility. The Lunar paces out the limits of the land she wishes to bless, stopping frequently to blaze marks into trees or stones, or to scuff patterns into the dirt that she believes will be pleasing to the Argent Madonna and the Emerald Mother. A single use of this Charm may bless a landscape up to (Essence) miles across. Once the Lunar's circuit is finished, her nocturnal Essence suffuses the land. Even the most barren tundra, harshest desert or vilest swamp soon becomes fertile and abundant: new growth appears, the soil readily accepts crops, and small animals are drawn to the region. This area is marked with the strangeness of Luna's blessing in minor ways; one pumpkin out of a patch might contain small glowing lights that drift away into the air rather than seeds, for example, while night-blooming flowers are likely to proliferate, and owls flock to the regions more than any other birds. All Survival rolls in the area reduce their difficulty to 1. This blessing lasts for a year and a day, after which the area's fecundity may increase or disperse according to local weather and the persistence or lack thereof of efforts to cultivate the land (it is easier to keep a land fertile in the East than on a glacier in the far North, for example).

If used within a territory the Lunar owns, this Charm's blessing lasts until the Lunar no longer owns the territory.







### PHANTOM CROSSFIRE FEINT

**Cost:** —(+5m); **Mins:** Intelligence 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Celestial Circle Sorcery

The Lunar Exalted claim to be Creation's premiere battlesorcerers; thanks to Charms such as Phantom Crossfire Feint, this is no idle boast. The Lunar may reflexively pay a five mote surcharge when taking a Shape Sorcery action. She blurs and fades from vision, reappearing at a random point somewhere within one hundred yards...along with a number of Essence-sculpted duplicates equal to her Essence. This relocation never takes the Lunar or any doubles outside of the targeting range or placement necessary for her spell to strike its intended target(s). These doubles all mimic the Lunar's every action, going through the motions of shaping a spell as she does; they are indistinguishable from the Lunar through mundane scrutiny. Opponents wishing to attack the Lunar must succeed at a miscellaneous Speed 5, DV -1 (Perception + Occult) roll at a difficulty of the number of duplicates produced in order to determine which Lunar is real, or else strike at random and hope to injure the true Steward. (It may help for the Storyteller to number the Lunar's duplicates in order to keep track of them.) These duplicates vanish when the spell is cast or interrupted.

## WITS

### COLD BREATH OF THE MOON

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Wits 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Sickness

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Luna protects Creation from the terrors beyond its borders, but she also uses her light to lure those horrors into the world, that they might be her prey. The Lunar is able to share a portion of those horrors which walk by the light of the moon with a target, afflicting them with night terrors. To use this Charm, the Lunar must crouch above a sleeping individual and spend a moment studying the rising Essence of their dreams. Seizing upon a momentary instability, the Lunar breathes a nightmare into the target's lungs. The Lunar must roll (Wits + Occult) against a difficulty of the target's ([Perception + Awareness] / 2); success infects her with night terrors for a number of nights equal to the Lunar's Essence, while failure causes the target to prematurely awaken.

The nightmares created by this Charm are harrowing, nonsensical, and often feature the world inexplicably and relentlessly changing around the target, melting into ever more distressing forms, filled with terrible monsters. Upon awakening from such a nightmare, the character rolls Conviction as normal. Success indicates that the character simply gains no Willpower. Failure leaves the character disoriented throughout the remainder of the day, suffering a -1 internal penalty to all actions as vague recollections of awful sights and the cold, merciless light of the moon prey on her thoughts. A botch causes the character to suffer a -1 internal penalty, as described above, and to lose a point of Willpower. This Charm may not be used on a target again until the original night terrors have run their course.

### MOTH-TO-FLAMES DEFENSE

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Wits 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Like a moth to a flame, a Lunar may be drawn to the weaving of a spell. With this Charm, she may feed on the shaping sorcery's Essence, breaking the spell before it can be cast. By paying six motes, the Lunar enhances an unarmed physical attack against a target taking a Shape Sorcery action, her attacking limb swirling with silver streamers of raw chaos. Should the Lunar roll damage against the target, the target suffers automatic knockdown, increasing the difficulty of the (Wits + Occult) roll to maintain her Shape Sorcery action to 4. If the casting is successfully broken, the Lunar draws in five motes of Essence, streamers of energy from the broken spell flowing into her body as the magic dissipates. This Charm is equally effective against Shape Necromancy and Weave Protocol actions.

### THOUSANDFOLD WASP DANCE

**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Wits 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Lunar takes a moment to gather all the aggression, frustration, and stress flitting through her mind and spirit. Infusing these irritants with Essence, the Exalt releases them into the world, where they bedevil her foes. The Lunar breathes out a swarm of irritating, biting insects, which fill an area with a diameter of (Essence x 10) yards, centered somewhere within (Wits x 30) yards. All characters inside of this swarm that the Lunar does not selectively decide to spare the swarm's wrath are subjected to an environmental damage effect (Damage 1B/ action, trauma 3) and suffer a -1 external environmental penalty. The swarm shrinks at a rate of one yard per tick if exposed to an appropriate environmental hazard, at the Storyteller's discretion, such as a burning building or a Terrestrial Exalt's iconic anima banner. Likewise, the swarm may be destroyed by sufficiently destructive area-of-effect attacks such as Total Annihilation, again at the Storyteller's discretion.

At Essence 4+ the Lunar may use a miscellaneous action once per action tick to control the swarm, causing it to move according to her will. The swarm drifts at a rate of five yards per tick when subjected to such control.

### WALKING ON MOONLIGHT

**Cost:** 10m; **Mins:** Wits 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Secure Den Prana

The Lunar's anima condenses into a shimmering path of pure moonlight that arches up and into the air, stretching far away into the distance before her. This path, which quickly levels out and runs a mile above the ground, is shorter than it appears, spanning the hidden gaps in the night sky that only Luna knows, and will speed a Steward's trip between her territories.

The character may only activate this Charm at night within the boundaries of a territory she owns, and she may only use it to travel directly toward another territory that she owns (see





Exalted, p. 238). The Lunar doubles the amount of ground she covers while she proceeds along this moonbeam path, after the effects of all other Charms or magic. This Charm automatically ends when the sun rises; Lunars are thus advised to take to the ground before dawn, lest they suddenly find themselves bereft of road while a mile up in the air. The Lunar may activate this Charm at the next sunset to resume her journey if she has not diverted more than two miles from the course to her destination during the day, despite being outside of an owned territory.





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## CHAPTER THREE

# SIDEREAL EXALTED

## ENDINGS

### MARTIAL ARTS

#### SECRET LESSON REVELATION

**Cost:** —(2wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Training

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Throne Shadow Form

Sidereal sifus convey their teachings through parables and secret meanings, giving their students strange lessons whose purpose is only revealed when they are completed. To utilize this Charm, the vizier spends a scene in the company of a pupil and then explains how the events of the scene taught a particular Martial Arts Charm the Sidereal knows. The student may not be in experience debt and must be capable of learning the Charm in question (i.e. possesses all prerequisites, trait requirements, etc.). If the Charm is beyond the understanding of the

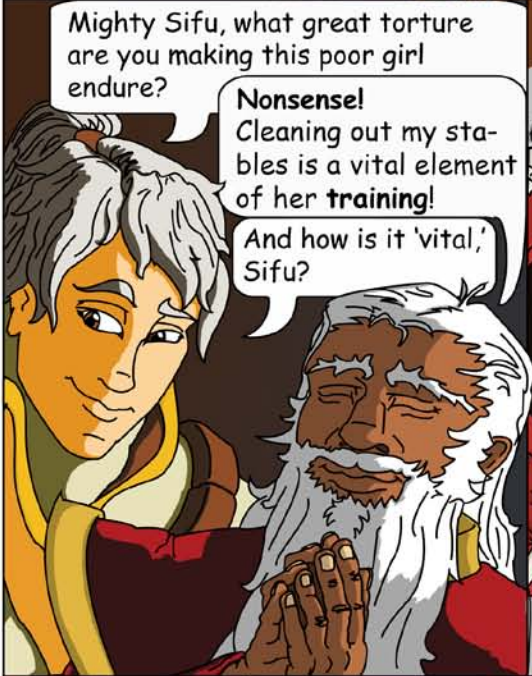
student, it cannot be taught, so Dragon-Blooded cannot learn Celestial Martial Arts without unless they have undergone appropriate enlightenment and can't learn Sidereal styles at all. Only the willing mind can learn, so students who reject the lesson gain nothing from it.

A sifu's explanations can be direct and obvious or convoluted and contrived, but the Storyteller must approve the lesson. For instance, having the student punch boards until his knuckles bleed is a clear way to teach Fists of Iron Technique. More abstractly, the sifu could watch the student dancing with her beloved and remark how the formalized grip of the waltz taught her Dragon Coil Technique. Once the Storyteller approves the explanation, the Sidereal pays two Willpower and the student instantly learns the Charm in question as a Training effect.

With Martial Arts 6+, Secret Lesson Revelation becomes more potent. The sifu can teach Martial Arts Charms he does not personally know to his shadow fingers, provided he has seen the Charm used on at least five separate scenes to become familiar with its precepts.



Our heroine faces her next task: The cleaning of **The Best Stables**, populated by the shameful offspring of Ahlat. These God-Blooded tyrant lizards possess fury almost as legendary as the eccentricity of their owner, the great Sifu August Best.



Mighty Sifu, what great torture are you making this poor girl endure?

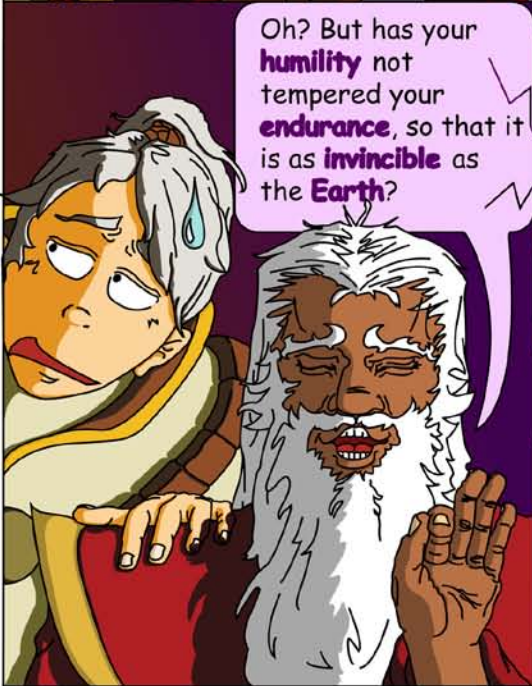
**Nonsense!**  
Cleaning out my stables is a vital element of her **training!**  
And how is it 'vital,' Sifu?



I would like to know, as I'm sick of these beasts trying to eat me...



...while I shovel their smelly  
**CENSORED.**



Oh? But has your **humility** not tempered your **endurance**, so that it is as **invincible** as the **Earth**?



Hmmm... Of course...

Perfection of Earth Body!  
I! Am! Enlightened!



You are very cruel to your pet Solars, Sifu. I know.

I think I shall have her clean the manse's septic system next. Yes.

Do you now wish you'd joined the Gold Faction, Shepherd?



## CHAPTER FOUR

# THE DRAGON-BLOODED

## FIRE ASPECT

### SOCIALIZE

#### AUSPICIOUS MERRYMAKING TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)

**Keywords:** Compulsion, Emotion

**Duration:** One social event

**Prerequisite Charms:** Sweeten-the-Tap Method

Salons, parties, and celebrations are the lifeblood of high society in the Realm. Such social occasions are a hotbed of whispered secrets, shifting alliances and sordid intrigues, requiring great care to ensure they don't erupt into violence or scandal. This Charm is a dramatic action to plan or cater for a social event, requiring at least an hour. These preparations imbue the party with the essence of politeness and harmony, with the following effects:

- All social attacks made at the event add +1 bonus success unless intended to result in harm to someone at the event. Planning future harm against attendees benefits from the success, so long as the plot doesn't interrupt the event itself.

- Characters that wish to start a fight suffer an unnatural Compulsion that forbids this, forcing them to pay two Willpower to roll Join Battle. Once a character does so, other characters need not resist to join the fight. Celestial Exalted and Essence 6+ beings are immune to this Compulsion.

- So long as the occasion is not spoiled by a brawl, grave faux pas, or similar interruption, all characters that spend at least a scene at the party gain a single positive Intimacy chosen by the Dragon-Blood at the time of activation. The Intimacy must somehow be appropriate to the atmosphere of the event, as approved by the Storyteller. Celestial Exalted and Essence 6+ beings can resist the Intimacy for free, but others must spend two Willpower.



## WATER ASPECT

### LARCENY

#### INVESTIGATION-DEFLECTING CURRENT

**Cost:** —(+5m); **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Illusion

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Trackless Walk Style

To leave no trace of oneself at the scene of a crime is the work of children. Master criminals and espionage agents among the Terrestrial Exalted may instead misdirect investigations toward their enemies. This Charm modifies its prerequisite; by activating Trackless Walk Style with a five mote surcharge, the Dragon-Blood may not only leave no trace of himself at a crime scene, but will also arrange the scene to leave subtle clues pointing toward the presence of another character of his choice. Any failed Investigation roll to gather clues at the scene of the crime where this Charm was used will provide a false positive response, indicating the presence and culpability of the selected individual. This unnatural Illusion costs one point of Willpower to see through, but characters normally do not attempt to do so unless presented with contradictory evidence, such as an airtight alibi.



GEM BURNS LIKE AN OFFERING TO THE DEAD GODS. AN INVITATION...

DEMON PRINCES FILE INTO THE CITY'S SODDEN MINES.

ENTROPIC PUNCTUATIONS..

THEY DIG TIRELESSLY INTO THE DEEP, AND CULL BURNT ORES TO DRIVE THEIR VIRIDIAN ENGINE. MALFEAS' MOST HULKING BROOD BORE INTO THE EVER MORE FRIGID VEINS.

THE RHYTHMIC DRONE OF EMPYREAL MARCHES CARRYING THE THRONG TO VICTORY, UNLESS...

THEY HEARD SOMETHING...

PICK

PICK

...SOMEWHERE...

PICK

PICK!

...IN THE DARK.

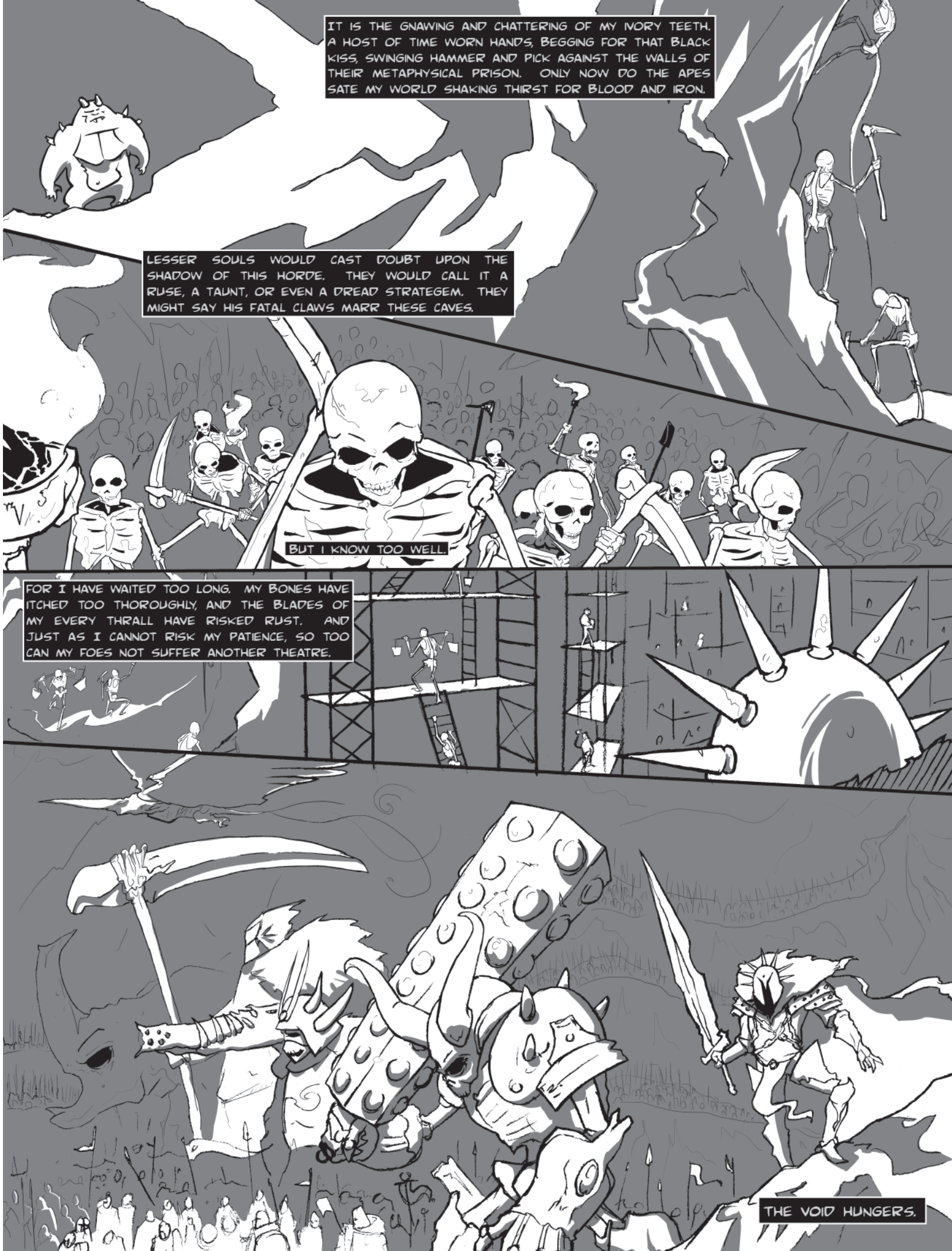
IT IS THE GNAWING AND CHATTERING OF MY VORY TEETH, A HOST OF TIME WORN HANDS, BEGGING FOR THAT BLACK KISS, SWINGING HAMMER AND PICK AGAINST THE WALLS OF THEIR METAPHYSICAL PRISON. ONLY NOW DO THE APES SATE MY WORLD SHAKING THIRST FOR BLOOD AND IRON.

LESSER SOULS WOULD CAST DOUBT UPON THE SHADOW OF THIS HORDE. THEY WOULD CALL IT A RUSE, A TAUNT, OR EVEN A DREAD STRATEGEM. THEY MIGHT SAY HIS FATAL CLAWS MARR THESE CAVES.

BUT I KNOW TOO WELL.

FOR I HAVE WAITED TOO LONG. MY BONES HAVE ITCHED TOO THOROUGHLY, AND THE BLADES OF MY EVERY THRALL HAVE RISKED RUST. AND JUST AS I CANNOT RISK MY PATIENCE, SO TOO CAN MY FOES NOT SUFFER ANOTHER THEATRE.

THE VOID HUNGERS.





# CHAPTER FIVE ABYSSAL EXALTED

## DUSK CASTE MARTIAL ARTS

### IRON MAIDEN'S EMBRACE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Crippling, Mirror (Armor-Shattering Strike), Obvious, Stackable

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dark Messiah Form

The prospective victims of the Abyssal Exalted wrap themselves in steel and hope it will save them. Rather than prying enemies out of this flimsy shell, it amuses the Chosen of the Neverborn to instead turn protection to torment. This Charm may enhance an unarmed martial arts attack, causing it to damage an opponent's armor such that buckles and plates are driven into the target's flesh. Should the attack successfully strike the target, then the target's armor raises its mobility penalty by one point and loses three points of bashing and lethal soak, and the attack inflicts one additional level of automatic,

unsoakable lethal damage in step 10. The target may not remove her damaged armor without a difficulty 3 Dexterity + Medicine roll to extract the damaged portions from her flesh. Alternately, she may accept two additional levels of lethal damage as she rips the crumpled armor free. This is a Crippling effect.

Mundane armor is permanently damaged by this Charm (unless manually repaired), but magical armor realigns itself one scene after it has been successfully removed, sustaining no lasting damage. Iron Maiden's Embrace is ineffective against unarmored opponents.

## MELEE

### PINNED MOTH TACTIC

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Crippling, Martial, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Savage Shade Style

Some Abyssals are amused when their prey attempts to flee, and savor the chase. Others find such exertions tedious, and use this Charm accordingly. This Charm enhances an attack

made with a weapon that inflicts lethal or aggravated damage; if the attack successfully inflicts even a single level of damage, the Abyssal's weapon skewers the victim's body, pinning them to the ground, a wall, a headstone or some other piece of immobile scenery. The Abyssal may withdraw their weapon if they wish; their anima leaves behind an Essence-forged duplicate, holding the victim in place, which vanishes once they are freed by any means.

When pinned in this fashion, the victim is trapped in place and may not take any action to move away. Pulling free requires a miscellaneous (Strength + Athletics) roll at a difficulty of the Abyssal's (Strength + 2). The successes gained on multiple attempts to pull free are added together cumulatively, but the target may only make one such attempt per action, and each attempt inflicts one automatic level of lethal damage. If the victim is subjected to a knockback attack while rooted, this tears them free of the pinning shadow, but inflicts an automatic three levels of lethal damage as the weapon rips through their flesh. All secondary damage inflicted by Pinned Moth Tactic ignores armor-based Hardness.

*Martial:* Archery, Martial Arts, Thrown.

### INSTANT MURDER FLASH

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Extra Action

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Martial, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Time-Scything Technique

The Ash Child hones his blade into the vector of a thousand little deaths. The skill of his attacks may hold his victims in thrall. This Charm allows the Abyssal to create a flurry of attacks at his full dice pool directed at multiple opponents, with a total Speed and DV penalty equal to the highest values for any one attack. This attack ignores Rate. To activate this Charm, there must be one target within (Essence x 5) yards of the Abyssal, and a second target within that same distance from the first. The Abyssal vanishes into a black blur, scything through the body of his first target before moving on to the next. He may attack up to (Dexterity + 3) times in this fashion, moving up to (Essence x 5) yards between each attack to reach a new victim. Each attack must be directed at a separate target.

Whenever the Abyssal inflicts at least one health level of damage with one of these attacks, the target's soul is caught in an icy vacuum of relentless death, their life held in abeyance for the duration of the attack. The victim becomes temporarily Inactive for the duration of the tick on which he was struck, during which time he is completely helpless to defend himself. (This Inactive state has no Speed value and does not hasten or delay the victim's next action tick.)

The victim experiences a sensation much like dying; he sees only darkness, and feels nothing but the terror of an impending doom. This "moment of death" is reversed on the next tick: the character regains his consciousness and may resume acting. Note that his recovery is not a predestined byproduct of this Charm; his return to consciousness is fully dependent on him not being slaughtered on the tick in which he goes inactive.

Instant Murder Flash holds victims on the precipice of death by exposing them to the limitless scope of the deathknight's talent for killing. This thrall lasts only as long as the attack continues. If the Abyssal ends this attack prematurely, each

victim immediately recovers from Inactive status. The Abyssal may not re-apply his damage via Charms or use free reflexive attacks on opponents made Inactive by Instant Murder Flash. Interrupting Instant Murder Flash for any reason terminates all suspension of its victims. This does not, however, prevent the Abyssal's allies from annihilating Inactive victims.

*Martial:* Martial Arts

### BLOOD PRESS GUILLOTINE

**Cost:** —(2m, 1wp); **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Martial, Obvious, Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Instant Murder Flash

The deathknight's killing arts are such that he may bring on death little by little, or all at once. When the Abyssal has set three or more opponents to Inactive with Instant Murder Flash, he may pay two motes, one Willpower at the end of the flurry to unleash the Blood Press Guillotine. There is a momentary surge of nightmare forces, a flash like white lightning, and the deathknight vanishes, surging across the field in all directions to make a horrific simultaneous attack against each Inactive opponent. This attack is made at the deathknight's full dice pool and applied to all Inactive targets. It ignores range and carries (Essence) automatic successes. The Abyssal may enhance Blood Press Guillotine with offensive Charms fueled by Overdrive.

*Martial:* Martial Arts

### ELEGANT BLOODLETTING ART

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Mirror (Golden Destruction Cut)

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Savage Shade Style

The controlled, elegant blows of the Abyssal Exalted bring forth great sheets of blood from their victims, transforming battlefields into impromptu artistic performances. This Charm acts as a permanent upgrade to its prerequisite, allowing the Abyssal's player to count extra successes on the attack roll three times rather than twice for the purpose of determining raw damage. A second purchase, at Melee 6+, allows extra successes to be counted four times rather than three, while a third purchase at Melee 8+ allows extra successes to be counted five times. A fourth and final purchase at Melee 9+ causes each extra success to be counted ten times for the purpose of determining raw damage.

## WAR

### VERMILLION PLAGUE CONSCRIPTION

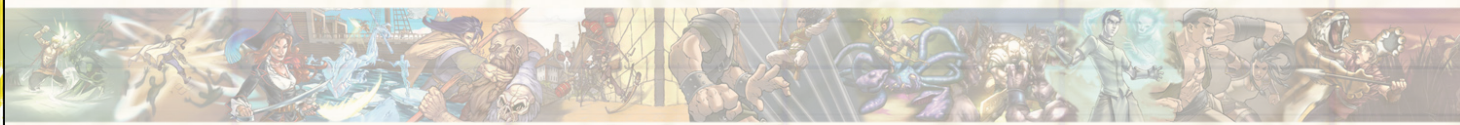
**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Arise and Slaughter

The cause of death must be championed, whatever the cost. Where support flags amongst the living, the Abyssal general wields the power to change a mortal's perspective. Upon activating Vermillion Plague Conscription, the Abyssal may begin to rectify this situation. A haze of bright murder tinges the Abyssal's anima with the ruby specks of a blood splatter. For the



rest of the scene, whenever the deathknight slays a living mortal, that mortal immediately rises as a loyal zombie and begins to follow the deathknight's orders. The Abyssal may create up to (Essence x 5) zombies in this manner within the course of a scene. Zombies created in this fashion retain their animation and their loyalty to the deathknight even after the motes committed to Vermillion Plague Conscriptio have been released. At Essence 5+, the character may purchase this Charm a second time to increase the number of zombies he may create to (Essence x 10).

## MIDNIGHT CASTE

### INTEGRITY

#### SOULSTEEL REAPER SPIRIT

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Integrity 1, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Dusk

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Wielding the power of soulsteel, a deathknight may draw Essence from his victims. This Charm enhances that proclivity. If the Exalt has an Overdrive pool, he may select to divert soulsteel-drained motes to his Overdrive pool. If the deathknight selects to place all the motes reaped from a single attack into his Overdrive pool, he gains an additional offensive mote.

#### DARK VISIONARY DEFENSE

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Integrity 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Mirror (Staring at the Sun), Social

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Filling her heart and mind with the glories of death, the Abyssal becomes briefly inured to the beauty of the world around her. The red lips of a paramour, the divine authority of a shining Exalt—how could such trifles compare to the black majesty of the grave and what lies beyond? Activating this Charm in response to a social attack, the Abyssal becomes immune to any penalties that might be imposed by the attacker's Appearance rating. At Essence 3+ this Charm's duration becomes one action.

**New Solar Charm:** Staring at the Sun. Solars avoid being dazzled by the world around them by contemplating their own magnificence, or that of their divine patron, who is without equal and whose blessing they carry. This Charm is otherwise identical to its Abyssal counterpart.

#### BRIGHT DAYS PAINTED BLACK

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Dusk, Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Five Hearts Hatred

When the Dragon-Blooded stormed the Calibration Banquet, unleashing blood and burning hell upon the stunned Lawgivers, the Sidereals thought they were saving Creation. But they may have created their worst enemy. The beast of the Usurpation stalks Creation, twisted by the murder that was done to him. All his memories of those halcyon days have been rent by the savage claws of a rough beast, transforming him into a living nightmare of Creation's past. This Charm grants the

character an Overdrive pool with a capacity of fifteen motes. Initially empty, it may be filled under the following circumstances:

- If the Abyssal encounters the reincarnation of a Sidereal who participated in the Usurpation—
- If the Abyssal encounters a Sidereal who participated in the Usurpation—
- If the Abyssal encounters a Lunar who survived the Usurpation—
- If the Abyssal encounters his Lunar mate—
- If the Abyssal encounters a Solar or Infernal who was a member of his circle in a past life—

—if any of these chance meetings should occur, roll the Abyssal's Willpower, regardless of whether the Exalt is aware of his past relationships to any of these characters. For every success on this roll, the Abyssal gains two offensive motes. For a gain of four motes or less, the Abyssal feels a welling up of terrible forces urging him to kill the character that has triggered his Overdrive. This may be accompanied by flashes of his death at the Usurpation braced by images of happier times, bloodstained and darkened by contrast.

This compulsion is not strong enough to force the deathknight's hand. However, if he gains six or more motes from this roll, the Abyssal's player must immediately roll Join Battle, as the Abyssal goes into a frenzy of relentless attack against the character that triggered his Overdrive. He may not retreat, nor may he resist attacking the target character. Once he has accepted six or more offensive motes from this Charm, either the deathknight or his victim's fate is sealed. The Abyssal gains one offensive mote per action under the effects of this Overdrive, and will not cease attacking until his target is dead or has fled the scene beyond his ability to follow. If the target escapes the Abyssal, the deathknight's murderous trance terminates at the end of the scene.

The roll for this Charm occurs the first time in any scene where the Exalt encounters a valid target. It may not be rolled more than once per scene. It will, however, trigger each and every time the Abyssal encounters the same valid target across multiple scenes.

The only way for the Abyssal to resist this Charm is to pay two Willpower before rolling. Doing so prevents the player from making the Willpower roll against a single trigger character for one week. However, if that character is present when the Abyssal's player rolls Join Battle for any reason, the Abyssal's player must also make the roll for this Overdrive, and if he accrues eight or more motes, the beast of the Usurpation is reborn, and the onslaught begins. During this time, the Abyssal may attack any other character but the one he wishes to spare, until all other opponents are incapacitated. For lack of any other targets, the Abyssal will invariably turn his attack upon the target of his Overdrive.

#### SUNLIGHT BLEEDING AWAY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Dusk, Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Eternal Enmity Approach

With each sunset the Abyssal is renewed, catalyzed by the symbolic dying of the Unconquered Sun. This Charm grants an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty,



it gains five motes whenever the sun sets while the Abyssal is in the engagement range of one or more enemy, regardless of whether he is rolled into battle. This power is conferred by more than just the actual dying of the light; each time a non-extra opponent incurs a larger wound penalty as a direct result of the deathknight's actions, the Abyssal gains a number of offensive motes equal to twice the wound penalty's value. For example, a character being driven down to a -4 wound penalty would grant eight offensive motes.

## PRESENCE

### BARROW KING'S AUTHORITY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Mirror (Shining on Dark Realms)

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dread Lord's Demeanor

Abyssals are the rightful kings of the dead and masters of the realm below. Those that recognize this fact may shelter in the deathknight's shadow, protected by his fell majesty. Any ghost with an Intimacy of loyalty toward an Abyssal who knows this Charm is immune to being summoned and bound through necromancy or sorcery by any individual other than the Abyssal himself. Furthermore, any attempts to mentally influence such a ghost to betray the Abyssal or abandon her Intimacy suffer a -1 external penalty.

**New Solar Charm:** Shining on Dark Realms (**Prerequisite:** Majestic Radiant Presence). The Solar Exalted are a light that may shine even in the darkest of realms, providing protection and hope to those that call the Underworld home. This Charm is identical to its Abyssal counterpart.

### HUNGRY DARKNESS PRANA

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dread Lord's Demeanor

The Abyssal's presence devours light. Drawing in the very light of day, her Essence bleeds out into the world, smothering all illumination. Flames gutter, animas dim, and even sunlight dwindles within (Essence x 100) yards of the deathknight. All visibility within this range is reduced to "No moon, grass or leafless forest." (See *Exalted*, p. 135) It is cold within this field of darkness; living visitors are assaulted with the chill of the grave (treat as an environmental hazard with damage 1B/minute, trauma 1). A susurrus of ghostly prayer may be faintly heard, carried on winds from the Underworld. Individuals within the Abyssal's shroud of darkness suffer a -1 external penalty on all hearing-based Awareness rolls due to this distraction. Finally, this blighted zone is considered to count as being surrounded by the trappings of death for the purpose of protecting the Abyssal from exposure to Creation. The Abyssal is immune to all negative effects of her Charm. Sunlight originating from a Holy source cuts cleanly through Hungry Darkness Prana.

### LIGHT-DEVOURING LABYRINTH

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Illusion, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Hungry Darkness Prana

This Charm permanently upgrades its prerequisite. The Abyssal's black shroud confuses the senses of those within; insubstantial touches propel visitors inward. No matter what direction a character seems to be heading in, he will find himself moving toward the center of the field of darkness—the Abyssal herself. Attempting to move away from the Abyssal or leave the shroud of darkness requires a reflexive (Wits + Awareness) roll once per action, at a difficulty of the Abyssal's Essence; success permits a character to move as he wills, while failure confuses him and draws him toward the Abyssal. Alternately, the victim may spend two points of Willpower to ignore this Charm's unnatural mental influence for one day.

## RESISTANCE

### HOPE-SLAYING RESILIENCE

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Spirit-Hardened Frame

The invincibility of the Abyssal Exalted is sufficient to drive heroes to despair. While this Charm is active, whenever an opponent strikes the Abyssal but fails to successfully roll any damage against him they are automatically subjected to an unnatural Emotion effect which fills them with a sense of utter hopelessness. This lassitude inflicts a -3 internal penalty to all aggressive actions directed against the Abyssal for the rest of the scene. Opponents may resist this despair for a scene by paying three points of Willpower.

As a point of clarification, in order for this Charm to trigger, opponents must roll at least one die of damage and gain no successes—this Charm will not trigger if the Abyssal uses a Charm to reduce damage to 0 or to ensure that no damage could possibly be inflicted, such as with Wounds Mean Nothing.

If the Abyssal has Essence 4+, opponents who fail to damage her a second time while already suffering from despair inflicted by Hope-Slaying Resilience automatically gain an Intimacy of fear against the deathknight. This unnatural mental influence may be resisted by paying one point of Willpower.

## SURVIVAL

### CANNIBALISTIC EMPOWERMENT UNDERSTANDING

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Survival 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

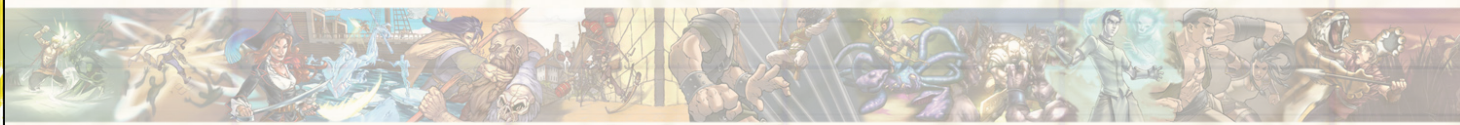
**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Though some of their brethren might find such practices distasteful, practical Abyssals may learn to renew themselves from even the crudest aspects of death. This Charm permanently alters the Abyssal's feeding capabilities (see *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Abyssals*, p. 95), permitting the deathknight to gain Essence by devouring inanimate human corpses. Devouring a single mote's worth of flesh requires a Speed 5, DV -2 miscellaneous action; only one such action may be placed in a flurry. Once the character has gained her (Stamina + Essence) motes in this manner she must wait a full day to digest before this limit resets and she may feed again. A relatively intact, adult cadaver is worth three motes of Essence, and usually runs dry of Essence long before the deathknight has consumed all of its flesh; as a result, most cadavers are still suitable for reanimation even after serving as fodder through this Charm.





### POMEGRANATES FULL AND FINE

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5 in long ticks)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, Mirror (Food-Gathering Exercise)

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Survival Excellency

The viands of the dead and the meat of spectral beasts do little to sustain living mortals, though the Abyssal Exalted and other Essence-users have no difficulty surviving on such pale repast. Still, it is unseemly for a deathknight's guests to starve to death because of their host's ill-preparedness. This Charm constitutes an attempt to forage for food in the Underworld, automatically accumulating enough food to sustain a unit with a magnitude no greater than the Abyssal's Essence for a day. Alternately, it may be activated to prepare a meal of already-located food, in which case the Charm's type becomes Simple (One dramatic action), encompassing the meal's preparation time. This Charm may only be used in the Underworld and in shadowlands; it will not function in Creation, nor on food originating in Creation.

Food located or prepared with this Charm is fully nourishing to both the living and the dead. Moreover, each meal of such food counts as a scene spent building an Intimacy of fascination toward the Underworld and a second Intimacy toward the Abyssal who provided the repast. This Intimacy may be of awe, fear, or respect—whichever is most appropriate to the situation. Should characters who partake of a meal possess conflicting Intimacies, the meal counts as a scene of work toward eroding those Intimacies. Should the Abyssal consume his own prepared meals, he gains no Intimacies; the food is simply more enjoyable, flavored with a bittersweet mixture of life and death in perfect equilibrium.

With Essence 3+, the Abyssal's repast becomes more potent. This enhancement is non-optional. Mortals who spend a fortnight eating nothing but the food of the dead enchanted by this Charm become permanently able to consume the fare of the Underworld... and just as permanently unable to draw sustenance from any food originating in the living world, save for human flesh (food originating in shadowlands counts as food of the underworld for this purpose). This change is a Shaping effect, and attempts to reverse the condition treat it as a Wyld mutation.

### WISP LIGHT SUMMONS

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Compulsion, Mirror (Guiding Light Shines On; see **Lords of Creation** [with errata], p. 67), Obvious

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dark Paths Found

The cold fires of the Underworld fascinate even as they terrify. Flaring his anima into a vast constellation of cold, winking blue flames that surges a mile into the air, the light of the Abyssal's display shines through all obstructions and may be dimly glimpsed from up to (Essence) miles away, or up to (Essence

x 5) miles away by a certain class of individuals the Abyssal defines at the time of this Charm's activation. Possible examples might include "Tya," "Yozi cultists," "citizens of Nexus," "Lookshy helots," or "the wealthy," with the last example being articulated by the Abyssal in those terms, and by the Abyssal's player as "characters with Resources rated four or higher."

The Abyssal's player rolls (Manipulation + Survival + Essence). Those who see the Abyssal's beacon and whose Dodge MDVs are lower than her successes suffer an unnatural Compulsion to seek out the source of the light, which may be resisted by paying two points of Willpower. Those who see the lights and attempt to navigate toward them automatically succeed, regardless of whether they are compelled to do so.

At Survival 6+, Essence 6+ the Charm may be activated for a cost of ten motes to send the beacon burning even higher into the sky, extending the range of its visibility for those specified to (Essence x 50) miles.

Astrology used within the range of the lights returns only the message "THE VOID HUNGERS."

## DAYBREAK CASTE

### MEDICINE

#### CANDLE LEFT BURNING

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Medicine 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Stackable, Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pestilence-Bearing Touch

Death lurks in all mortal beings like a seed waiting to germinate. An Abyssal master of disease who does not wish to inadvertently slay useful pawns or valued allies with the horrors he unleashes may spare them with this Charm. Leaning close, the Abyssal breathes in a small fraction of the potential for death within a living being; this requires mouth-to-body contact, and is generally accomplished either through a bite or a kiss. So long as the Abyssal commits Essence to this Charm, the target becomes fully immune to one disease the Abyssal is capable of bestowing with Pestilence-Bearing Touch. An individual may be targeted by multiple activations of this Charm to immunize her to different diseases, and the Abyssal may also sustain the Charm's effects on multiple individuals at once, if he desires. Using this Charm on any living individual whose continued existence is not of direct material benefit to the Abyssal inflicts one point of Resonance.

Alternately, the Abyssal may activate this Charm on a character already harboring a disease he has inflicted with Pestilence-Bearing Touch. This immunizes the target against the disease's symptoms—they will not suffer or die from the ailment—but leaves them fully infected and contagious, capable of spreading their disease to the living while appearing hale and healthy. Attempts to diagnose a target whose symptoms have been devoured in this manner suffer a -3 external penalty. When the Abyssal releases the motes committed to the Charm, the victim's symptoms will return in full. Using the Charm in this manner never grants Resonance.



## THE RISEN HUNGER

**Cost:** — (+2m); **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 3;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Cannibalistic Renewal Incitement, Life-Mocking Assembly

This Charm permits the Abyssal to pay a two-mote surcharge when animating a zombie with Life-Mocking Assembly. The walking dead enhanced in this fashion are infectious and possessed of a great hunger for the flesh of the living (though they still obey the Abyssal's orders, including orders not to indulge this craving). Any living individual slain by the zombie will rise again within 1-10 minutes as a non-infectious zombie extra. These extras are also possessed of the risen hunger, but are neither infectious nor under the Abyssal's control. Extras lose their animation after one day has passed during which they are unable to consume the flesh of the living.

At Essence 4+ and again at each subsequent Essence rating, the Abyssal may enhance the Charm with one of the following options:

- Zombie extras rise under the Abyssal's control, obeying orders as though created through Life-Mocking Assembly
- Zombie extras are infectious, as though enhanced with The Risen Hunger. All of their victims, and the victims of their victims, and so on, also rise as infectious undead if the Abyssal has Essence 6+; otherwise, the victims of the second wave of zombies are not infectious.
- Zombie extras may persist for an additional day without feeding before they lose their animation. This option may be selected multiple times as the Abyssal rises in Essence.

## BLACK HEART'S VENOM

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Poison, Taint

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Life-Mocking Assembly, Venom-Bleeding Agony

Drawing upon his refined understanding of poisons and the destruction they may wreak upon the living body, the Abyssal transforms himself into a font of lethal venom. His heart pumps out blood in a shade closer to black than red, which is slightly sticky and tends to coat surfaces it strikes rather than dripping off—and this blood is lethally toxic. The Abyssal's blood becomes a poison with the following traits: (7L/hour, 3, —/—, -2), which must be ingested or introduced into an open wound or other vulnerable portions of the body (such as the eyes) to take effect. Due to its viscosity, the Abyssal may open a small wound upon his body (inflicting one level of lethal damage) and use his blood to coat one weapon, or up to his Stamina rating in arrows or tiny throwing weapons such as shuriken. Any living being slain with this poison in his system rises one hour later as a zombie identical to those created through Life-Mocking Assembly.

Alternately, the Abyssal may learn this Charm as a Taint. This makes all of his bodily fluids permanently poisonous—par-amours beware.

## DEATH'S BLACK TEETH

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 4;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Poison

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Black Heart's Venom

The Abyssal's heart-venom overflows into all his works as a reanimator. Every zombie the Abyssal personally raises (whether through Life-Mocking Assembly, Vermillion Plague Conscriptio, necromancy, or any other means) gains a poisonous bite. The bite of the walking dead delivers a toxin identical to that of Black Heart Venom, save that it does not automatically reanimate those slain by it; that final horror is left to other Charms, such as The Risen Hunger or Vermillion Plague Conscriptio.

The traits given for a zombie's punch on page 314 of *Exalted* are also used to model its bite.

## OCCULT

### DANCING ON THE GRAVES OF GIANTS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Occult 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** God-Slaying Torment

As dead things locked in a perpetual stasis of eternal torment, the Neverborn cannot truly be said to enjoy anything. It does, however, almost please them when their servants emulate the greatest trick of the Solar Exalted on their behalf—slaying that which believed itself too mighty to be destroyed.

Whenever the Abyssal permanently slays a living being with Essence 4+, she loses one point of Resonance (since many spirits normally reconstitute themselves after death, this generally requires execution with God-Slaying Torment). If the being possessed Essence 6+, the Abyssal loses an additional point of Resonance. If the being was a non-Abyssal Exalt, an additional point is lost. Sorcerously bound spirits grant no Resonance loss when executed.

### BLACK PARIAH'S CURSE

**Cost:** 1m or 3m; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Shaping, Touch

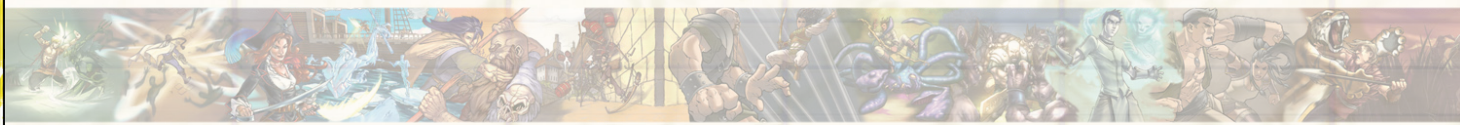
**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Corpus-Rending Blow

The Abyssal Exalted stand as gatekeepers between Creation and the Underworld. The deathknight can call upon this authority to make the living witnesses to the plight of the dead. To use this Charm on a character, the Abyssal must touch them. Cursed characters become attuned to the spiritual reality of the Underworld as a Shaping effect. They are capable of perceiving and interacting with dematerialized ghosts as though the dead were material—but by the same token, ghosts need not materialize to physically interact with them. In effect, the victim is simultaneously materialized and dematerialized, but only dematerialized with regard to ghosts and other things native to the Underworld (such as relic walls and weapons).







Repeated activations of this Charm can tag multiple targets, costing three motes per target (one mote per extra).

Ghosts can perceive the curse on the pariah as an Obvious aura, realizing that he is capable of interacting with them. Whether they seek him out to beg favors, demand offerings or torment him ruthlessly depends on their temperament. Ghosts with an Intimacy towards the cursed character sense the curse going into effect and remain aware that the effects is in place on the specific target across all distance and realms of existence. This gives them a chance to plan a reunion with a lost love or vendetta on an old enemy. The Abyssal can use this Charm on himself if he wishes; it is only a curse for those he wishes to torment.

Repurchasing this Charm at Essence 4+ allows the deathknight to tag ghosts and other plasmic creatures of the Underworld for an increased cost of six motes. This doesn't function on ghosts with higher Essence than the Abyssal, such as the Deathlords. Touching the space such entities occupy is sufficient to deliver the curse when actual physical interaction is impossible (usually due to the ghost being incorporeal). Tagged ghosts exist simultaneously as materialized and dematerialized in all realms of existence, allowing them to perceive and physically interact with everything regardless of its material state. Ghosts matter less to the universe, and so they do not broadcast the curse's presence via the Intimacies of others. However, anyone who perceives them can sense the tag's effects as an Obvious effect.

## DAY CASTE

### LARCENY

#### MALICIOUS PARODY IMPOSTER

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion, Obvious, Shaping, Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Face-Drinking Bite, Unjust Appropriation Method

Sometimes the most instructive perspectives in life come from outside one's self. A deathknight may demonstrate the folly of a person's ways by showing her target the way in which the world sees him. The Abyssal must have a head-sized object carved with an effigy-face, such as a gourd or a pumpkin, and must have it to hand (prepared with a miscellaneous Draw/Ready weapon action) in order to use this Charm. The character makes a (Dexterity + Larceny) roll, opposed by the target's highest DV (Essence-users impose a -3 external penalty on this roll); should this attack succeed, the Abyssal quickly steals the target's head, replacing it with the prepared replacement. This does not kill the target. Instead, the victim may now see himself as the Abyssal does.

The effigy head of the victim becomes animate, capable of the simplest phrases and mannerisms. It knows all of the victim's Intimacies and has full control of the victim's body. Its Motivation is to subtly murder the target's positive Intimacies, starting with family and friends, by means of baroque betrayals, staged accidents, and the like, typically beginning with helpless loyalties such as pets. It does these things through seemingly oblique acts of cruelty extending from parodies of the victim's own shortcomings, like leaving a dangerous object at the top of

the stairs where someone will likely trip and fall, or by placing sharp bones in a beloved pet's repast. Should the effigy work through all of the victim's Intimacies, or should the victim have no positive Intimacies to begin with, the thing moves off into the world to seek victims at random, with a preference for the weak and the unwitting. If confronted, the effigy attempts to flee rather than fight. The effigy is unable to make use of any of the victim's Essence-based powers, but uses their dice pools otherwise. Destroying the effigy-head renders the body comatose until its head is returned.

While in this condition, the victim's head may witness all the actions the effigy takes, and even speak to and be answered by the Abyssal, but no one else may hear him. The victim's severed head may use any Charms that might be beneficial in his reduced state (generally meaning social magic, Awareness Charms, and soak-boosting effects), and may make social attacks against the Abyssal, but can take no other actions of real consequence. Meanwhile, the effigy controlling his body appears to all who see it to be the victim. This unnatural Illusion is treated as a social attack accumulating ten automatic successes, which costs three points of Willpower to see through.

Unlike most Charms, the Abyssal may not voluntarily drop the mote commitment that sustains Malicious Parody Imposter so long as the victim's head is separated from his body. The Charm may end only when the Abyssal returns the victim's head to his body, or when the victim dies. Other characters may not return the victim's head to his body while the Abyssal lives; they must coerce or convince the deathknight to end his cruel lesson. If the Abyssal is dead, the victim's head may be reattached by any character who puts it back in its proper place.

#### DEATH DEALER'S CHANCE

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (One dramatic action)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Face-Drinking Bite

This Charm allows the Abyssal to disguise his subject as a ghost. This disguise includes a forged identity with Underworld-based Influence equal to the Abyssal's Essence. Characters using Charms to examine a subject under the effect of Death Dealer's Chance conclude that he is a ghost (add the Abyssal's Larceny in extra dice to the roll-off). For most intents and purposes, the subject is a ghost: he respire Essence as a creature of death, is immaterial in Creation, tangible at night in shadowlands, and so forth. The target does not become a creature of darkness, nor are they subject to any effects that specifically act upon ghosts, such as the necromancy spell "Summon Ghost." The subject gains no Arcanoi and may continue to use his own Essence-based powers, should he have any.

The subject must freely agree to have this Charm used upon him and may not be magically coerced into giving consent. Upon activation, the Abyssal begins a signature game of chance with the subject. Sometimes this Charm takes the form of a card game; other Abyssals prefer a series of riddles; others still roll dice, draw stones, or engage in challenges stranger still. The process varies from Exalt to Exalt, but always concludes in three stages. The subject rolls (Wits + a relevant Ability determined by the Storyteller) against a climbing difficulty in each game: difficulty 1 for the first game, 2 for the second, and



3 for the third. The Abyssal may not aid or hinder these rolls in any way. With each successive victory, the target feels himself changing. First his body grows numb and cold. Second, he begins to see the shadowy vapors of the dead (if ghosts are present) and hears the whispers of the Neverborn. Finally he is remade as a ghost and, if in Creation, dematerializes instantly. If, however, the target fails at any of these rolls, the results may be tragic: Exalts take (Abyssal's Essence) levels of unsoakable lethal damage, while mortals immediately perish. If the subject's nerve breaks and he abandons the games before the third roll is complete, he merely forfeits all Willpower. Should the Abyssal depart with the games unfinished, he instead suffers this fate.

The subject may end this disguise at any time by spending a point of Willpower and using a Speed 5, DV -2 miscellaneous action to tear away the gauzy Essence enshrouding him. The disguise otherwise dissipates at the rising of the next full moon, when Luna smiles to uncover the ruses of ghost and shadow. This occurs wherever the character may be.

## STEALTH

### SHADE WALKER PRANA

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Stealth 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Shadow Cloak Technique

The Abyssal Exalted almost pity those who huddle in the light, believing themselves safe while failing to notice the darkness always trailing at their heels. This Charm may only be activated while the Abyssal is concealed from the notice of all present beings. Unseen, he steps onto the shadow of another character and spend four motes to sink into its depths.

So long as the Abyssal commits motes to this Charm, he may ride along inside of a character's shadow, watching the world while remaining utterly unseen. In this manner a deathknight may infiltrate the most secure fortresses in Creation, or even breach Heaven itself, carried in the shadow of those who have every right to be there. If the Abyssal chooses to terminate his concealment by launching an unexpected attack at the character whose shadow he is riding, he adds three automatic successes to his attack roll. If the Abyssal is spotted hiding within a shadow by some means, he may be targeted normally by striking at the shadow.

A second purchase of this Charm permits the Abyssal to take small, surreptitious actions while riding in a shadow. Directly attacking other characters or doing anything so loud or overtly obvious as to draw notice breaks the Charm, but Larceny actions to pick pockets or steal small objects are usually valid, as might be other stealthy actions at the Storyteller's discretion (such as tipping a drop of poison into a drinking cup). The Abyssal temporarily hijacks his host's shadow while performing such actions; all characters present may make a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll against a difficulty of the Abyssal's Stealth rating to notice the unnatural movements of the ridden shadow.

## MOONSHADOW CASTE

### SOCIALIZE

#### SCRIBING THE OLD LAWS

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 6 long ticks)

**Keywords:** Avatar (1), Combo-OK, Compulsion, Mirror (Taboo-Inflicting Diatribe)

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Acting with the authority of the murdered architects of the universe, the Abyssal hands down binding commandments that a society must follow. These are the Old Laws, small excerpts of an infinite litany of denial which rolls through the black dreams of the Neverborn. This Charm is similar to Taboo-Inflicting Diatribe (see *Exalted*, p. 238), save that it does not create a taboo or fad, but a law. The Abyssal's Socialize roll suffers a -1 external penalty if the majority of the targeted social group's members are alive, and a separate -3 external penalty if the Old Law he hands down has nothing to do with death or the dead.

#### KEEPER OF THE OLD LAWS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Avatar (2)

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Scribing the Old Laws

The Abyssal becomes a warden of the Old Laws, gaining an infallible sense that informs him when an individual breaks an Old Law he has laid down with this Charm's prerequisite. He knows when and where the law has been broken, but not by whom. He enjoys one automatic success on all attempts to investigate the violation and determine the identity of the lawbreaker.

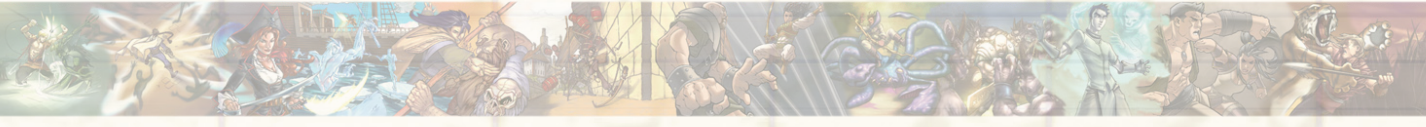
Should the Abyssal successfully uncover the lawbreaker and punish her, he loses one point of Resonance. Fitting punishment includes execution, destruction of a ghost's Fetters or the subject of one of its Passions, or sacrifice of a living individual's property to the dead sufficient to drop the individual a Resources dot (for example, if a wealthy merchant worth Resources 4 violated one of the Old Laws, the Abyssal might turn his fine home into a burnt offering to the merchant's ancestors, reducing the lawbreaker to Resources 3 and setting him off on the road with only his wagon and goods to attempt to rebuild his fortune).

## STORYTELLING ABYSSALS

Blood runs down the jagged bars of a soulsteel cage. A Solar's screams echo through the depths of a haunted citadel. Soon he will break, and a new monster will be born.

A young genius dies in the muddy street of a plague-town, body ravaged by disease. To live another day—to live until the end of days—he casts away his name, and rises as something dark and glorious.

A lone swordsman laments what he has become. He sets his blade against his former master and walks the night alone, for as long as he can. Perhaps he will find the light again—or perhaps his defiance only serves the will of dead gods.



These are the stories of the Abyssal Exalted, as laid out in the Storytelling chapter of *The Manual of Exalted Power*—The Abyssals. They're fine stories, representative of the majority of deathknights, but they are only the tip of the iceberg.

## CHAMPIONS OF THE DEAD: INDEPENDENT ABYSSALS

The Deathlords gain their servants from two sources. Most are hand-picked for Exaltation at the moment of death. A few are converted Solars, tortured or duped into becoming agents of the Neverborn.

There is a third origin for the Abyssal Exalted. There shouldn't be. The Deathlords and the Neverborn never intended for it to happen. But it does.

Abyssals have been abroad in Creation and the Underworld for five years. Some of them have already broken faith with the Deathlords, and these renegades sometimes let the shattered wreckage of their Monstrance announce their departure. Sometimes these wayward deathknights perish. Their erstwhile master's rebuke may prove fatal, or the renegade Abyssal may meet his end in an unrelated manner. In other cases, Deathlords attempt to sabotage the Monstrances of their rivals' deathknights, so that they might seduce the Abyssals into their own service without fear of necromantic reprisal.

In any event, Abyssals have died without a Monstrance for their Exaltation to return to. Recapturing a loose Exaltation is difficult, expensive and time-consuming (see *The Manual of Exalted Power*—*The Abyssals*, p. 117)—and Deathlords do not always have the luxury of time. A loose Exaltation hurries across Creation on a dogleg course, attempting to act according to its original nature, yet hampered by the modifications the Deathlords have inflicted upon it. The sun's clean light sears the Exaltation, burning off the dross of Abyssal memories, and so it hides away in corpses through the day. By night it seeks a host, a hero, a character worthy of Solar Exaltation... but it may not bond with her. The Abyssal Exaltation is a thing of death, and only at death's doorway may it bestow its dark blessing.

### A MATTER OF MEMORIES

The Celestial Exalted have excess memories pruned back between lives by Lytek, the god of Exaltation. Abyssal Exaltations never return to Heaven and are never handled by Lytek. Instead, the dross of their memories is torn free as the Exaltation enters and leaves its Monstrance of Celestial Portion, squeezing through the artifact's jagged bars and roosting in its barbed trap.

But a free Abyssal Exaltation does not return to a Monstrance between lives. It is still subject to burning by the sun, and this may serve to sufficiently cleanse residual memories; but it is possible the Exaltation may travel primarily through the Underworld, or may be exceptionally successful in avoiding the light of the sun. If the Storyteller wishes, she may permit the players of free Abyssals to purchase the Past Lives Background (see *The Manual of Exalted Power*—*The Infernals*, pp. 77-78) to represent this lack of memory-cleansing, though certainly to no higher than one dot; the Abyssals are very new, and only the mightiest among them have had the opportunity to leave strong impressions on their Exaltations.

And yet many Solar Exalts draw the Second Breath in life-threatening or even impossible circumstances: making a suicide charge to protect their village, in the midst of a pirate raid, or while navigating the death-traps of a First Age ruin. Without Exaltation's sudden might to help them carry the day, they may instead arrive at a heroic but untimely death.

This is when the Abyssal Exaltation acts. Inarticulate compared to a Deathlord, it makes no elegant speeches, presents no phantasmal visions. It communicates its offer urgently, subliminally: cast aside name and destiny, embrace death as its immortal champion, and gain the power of Exaltation.

To save those they love, to destroy those they hate, many would accept.

### TO WALK ALONE IN DARKNESS

An Abyssal who draws the Last Breath courtesy of a free Exaltation does so without any guidance. The Deathlords are unable to sense her Exaltation; the Neverborn may howl silently in their tombs, but if she can hear them at all, it's only as whispers at the back of her mind, or in her dreams. She knows only that she can feel the living Essence of the world reject her, that she senses the Essence of death and craves its trap-pings. Her path may eventually lead her to the shadowlands, and from there into the Underworld.

The Deathlords may learn of her at this point. If they take her to be the agent of another Deathlord, they are likely to react with guarded or open hostility. If they realize what she is, their first priority will be to try to recruit her.

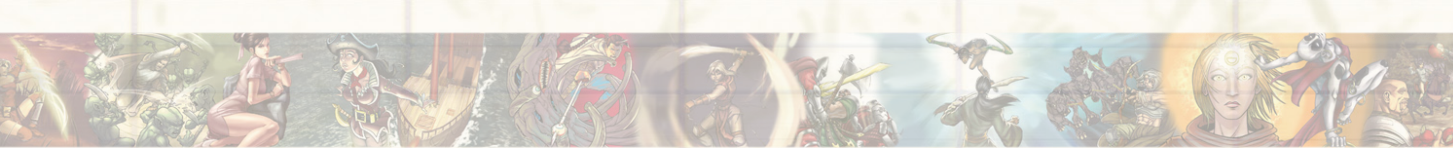
For converted Solars, the Deathlords are figures of tremendous power and authority—either the Solar was a willing servant of one of those ancient ghosts, or their will was broken utterly by a Deathlord's necromantic torture. Traditional Abyssals all owe their continued existence to a Deathlord—their first meeting is likely the moment when the Deathlord steps in and prevents the Exalt's certain death. Deathlords loom large in the minds of both sorts of Abyssals. They are sources of power and authority, the cause for the deathknight's present condition.

Independent deathknights may feel differently. For an independent Abyssal who grew up in a shadowland, the local Deathlord is a probably distant figure of dread and terror (unless they have taken some pains to cultivate good relations with the living, as the Silver Prince has). Or an independent may walk into the Underworld with no knowledge of the Deathlords, encountering them first as whispered rumors and dire tales.

In general, ghosts have little good to say about the Deathlords. The necromantic kings and queens of the Underworld are cruel and terrifying. They deal with the mad things of the Labyrinth. They enslave and destroy ancient ghostly kingdoms at will. They forge ghosts into soulsteel and corrupt the ancestor cult for their own twisted purposes. They are, in short, regarded as terrible villains. An independent Abyssal may be on guard by the time a Deathlord discovers her, prepared for tempting lies and nihilistic sermons.

If she will not bend knee, an expedient Deathlord may try to slay the young rogue and capture her Exaltation. This is, of course, easier said than done. Trained or not, the independent is Exalted.





## THINGS TO DO IN THE UNDERWORLD WHEN YOU'RE NOT DEAD

While the Deathlords are forces to be reckoned with, they are no more central to an independent Abyssal's life than, say, the Wyld Hunt is to an independent Solar. Independents pursue their own motivations, in Creation and the land of the dead.

Creation feels wrong to an independent Abyssal. The sun is too bright, the air thin. She must surround herself with the trappings of death or feel the constant weight of the living world's rejection. She cannot easily replenish her Essence in Creation without victimizing the living, and her rapidly changing appearance—into an alabaster beauty or rotten horror—makes her stand out. The shadowlands are better, but many are already claimed by the Deathlords and their agents. The Underworld beckons to independent Abyssals: vast, open, alluring. It feels disturbingly like home.

The Underworld is not as Creation is. It is a place of extremes: dark and bright, still and swift, elegant and terrible. It has little room for the median or the mediocre. The waters of the Underworld are a flat and perfect black, or an eerie silver. Its sands are the white of bone or chalk. Its sky is a leaden curtain by day; by night the clouds roll back, exposing a jet sheet adorned with scattered diamonds. The ornaments of the dead are spectacular: glittering blood-rubies shout out their color, demanding the eye's attention; silver crowns gleam in the pale blue light of torches that never consume themselves; ivory masks show only what their owners wish to display. Fine food weighs down the banquet tables of the dead. Grain grows straight and high like rows of spears in the Underworld's fields.

Exploration reveals that the Underworld contains countless cultures forgotten by the living world, the echoes of ancient treasures of the First Age, and the blasphemous secrets of the slain Primordials.

And in some ways, the Underworld is kinder than Creation. An Abyssal may observe an old man creaking his way down the streets of Nexus, frail of body, weak of constitution, squinting at the world through gathering cataract-clouds. A year later, the deathknight encounters the same man in the Underworld as a ghost. The ghost wears an elder's snowy beard and his eyes gleam with years of accumulated wisdom, but his step is swift and sure, his limbs strong, his gaze keen with the clarity of the dead. He will keep this visage and this strength forever. He may be reunited with his own father, and with his father's father. These are the blessings of death.

But the Underworld is a troubled place. Mortwrights and Nephwracks gather in the mad tunnels of the Labyrinth. Hekatonkhires stalk remote wastes. The empires of the dead war upon one another, each demanding eternal authority over the same small patch of land. Immaculate monks and greedy gods attack the ancestor cult, cutting the dead off from living relatives. Necromancers enslave or destroy unlucky ghosts. The Deathlords spread their nihilistic dogma across the Underworld's kingdoms, corrupt its cultures, and soulforge its people.

The Underworld is beautiful. It is a place of deep passions, of cherished memories, of worship and veneration. It is a place where love and hate hold sway. It labors under the tread of tyrants and the schemes of dead titans. The dead cry out for heroes. The Abyssal Exalted may be the ones to answer.

## RESONANCE

Independent Abyssals have never made a personal covenant with the Neverborn. Regardless, they quickly discover that the dead Primordials consider all Abyssals beholden to them, and are disinterested in the independent's opinion. Worse, they have some capability to express this would-be ownership.

This marks the Neverborn as an independent's enemies, not his masters. If he is to stay free and alive for long, he must discover some way to deal with the doom that comes along with his Exaltation.

Some independents learn through painful trial and error how to exercise their dark power without rousing the ire of the Neverborn. This pleases the dead and dreaming titans, to the extent that they may be pleased; so long as the independent blazes a path of murder across Creation, he serves their purpose, whether he slays the righteous or the wicked.

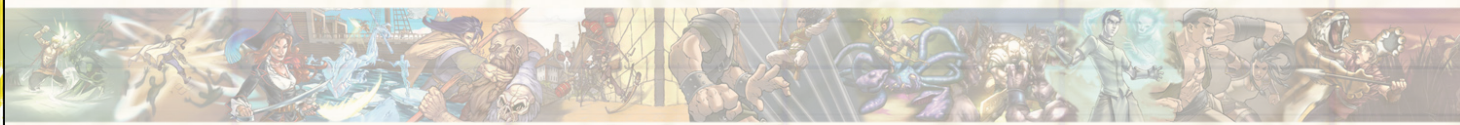
But the Neverborn are distant, mad, slumbering things. They communicate only in sudden manifestations of Dark Fate, and in incoherent whispers. Their vision of the world beyond their tombs is myopic, at best. Playing their game is unsatisfying, and so some independents learn to change the rules. Using Charms such as Faithful Killer's Reprieve (see *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Abyssals*, p. 140) and Keeper of the Old Laws (p. 50), these deathknights find ways to fool or placate the Neverborn without directly advancing their agenda. This allows them to oppose the Deathlords, avoid the chains that bind their brethren, and act as champions of the dead.

## THREE STORIES FOR INDEPENDENT ABYSSALS

- **Restoring the Ancestor Cult:** A small principality in the frigid North, located atop ancient First Age ruins, is itself caught between the Realm and the Haslanti League. Both seek to expand into the region, eager to claim any ancient wonders that might be hidden in the frozen earth. Both attempt to entice the people to side with them without resorting to war, flooding the region with missionaries. Immaculate monks decry the principality's traditional ancestor cult, preaching the virtues of favorable reincarnation and the rightness of the Immaculate Philosophy. Spies and propagandists of the Haslanti League extol the virtues of the Haslanti gods, interpret dreams (with a bias toward joining the League), and demonstrate the power of Haslanti technology.

Things are dire in the Underworld. The prayers of the living slow to a trickle. The dead of the region are wealthy, but not mighty, and have long paid tribute to the mighty Icewalker ghost tribes, who only tolerate their presence because they can be harvested for burnt offerings again and again. With the stream of offerings and grave goods drying up, the dead fear they'll be driven away from their living descendents altogether, swept out of the region by Icewalker dead with no further reason to tolerate them.

- **To Rule Among the Dead:** One hundred years ago in the far East, the mighty Priest-King Khan Zu was buried in the tomb he labored his whole life to prepare. Hundreds of wood-and-horn soldiers line the parapets of that mighty ziggurat, and their effigies serve as his army in the Underworld. He has waged war since the day of his death, conquering a vast swath of territory south of Karroth Vlan. It's not enough. Khan Zu believes it's his destiny to unite the whole of the Underworld under his banner. Then he will forge all of the dead into a single



army with which to overthrow Heaven, and all worship in the world of the living and the dead will be directed to him. He fills his court with astrologers willing to tell him the stars of the Underworld confirm this destiny.

The size of Xhan Zu's army and the power of his grave goods make him a terrible threat to his neighbors, a series of cyclical monarchies and tribal dynasties. These disparate groups have recently banded together in a coalition called the Black Trees Alliance, intent on opposing the mad tyrant. It may be too little, too late; rumor has it the Priest-King sups with the Walker in Darkness, and is forging terms for a military alliance. If this is true, the Black Trees Alliance is surely doomed unless they can produce a champion of their own.

- **The Ghost's Daughter:** Influential ghosts vanish, one after another, from the necropolis of Fallen Lotus (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. IV—The Underworld**, pp. 80-82). Ahwa, leader of the necropolis's "peacekeepers," seeks allies to help get to the bottom of the disappearances. But some preliminary investigation reveals the culprit to be, not an Abyssal, but a ghost-blooded youth named Samitra. She claims to be searching for her father, whose name she does not know; her mother said only that he was a wealthy and ancient ghost of Fallen Lotus. Samitra has been passing the summoned ghosts to her mentor for interrogation: a crooked thing in body-concealing robes known as Final Memory. She is surprised to learn that the ghosts have not been heard from since. What sort of creature is Final Memory? Why did it teach the girl necromancy, rather than using its own magic? And what is it doing with the ghosts of Fallen Lotus?



## FOUR ABYSSAL CHARACTERS YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY

The necrosurgeon hums as he selects the right bonesaw for the task, trying to tune out the screams coming from the dissection table. It's irritating, and undignified. She should be honored to be raw material for the masterpiece he will forge. Besides, he hasn't even started cutting.

There are a series of audible hisses, eight of them, as the black arms of the swordsman's Caste mark appear upon his brow. His grand daiklave sweeps through the mass of panicking soldiers, scattering limbs and torsos in a grotesque tangle. The master's hungry ghosts howl at his back, but they'll go unsatisfied tonight. Can he kill everyone before they claim a single victim? He makes a game of it.

The pale man retrieves his arrows from the bandits' corpses. The folk of the caravan hang back, afraid to thank him, afraid his business with them is not finished. He mounts his ghostly stallion, rides off without a word. It's better this way. He's not doing it for their thanks. He made a terrible mistake that must be set right. It's nothing to do with them.

These are the characters Exalted players and Storytellers think of when they hear the word "Abyssal." Here are four you might not have seen before:

### THE SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD

He lives in a cave high on the mountain, overlooking the shadowland. One day every week he meditates in the graveyard, watching the living venerate the dead. Those whose offerings are meager he investigates. If he finds them misers, he makes them into the paupers their offerings suggest them to be. If they are too poor to properly venerate their ancestors, he helps increase their fortunes in the world as best he can.

When Immaculate monks came to ward shut the shadowland with prayers and salt and road-shrines to greedy gods, he scattered them with his fists. When he found a child wandering lost on the north road, he led her home. When an agent of the Deathlords arrived, preaching the doctrine of Oblivion, he sent that man to experience his black apotheosis firsthand.

He walks among the dead by night, settling disputes among households top-heavy with elders. He distills the wisdom of the ancestors into words that ring true to those too young or alive to heed those who came before. He punishes those ghosts that grow fat on worship without guiding or assisting the living.

He wears a mask of beautiful ivory and robes of the finest silk. No one has ever seen his face. Maggots writhe in his footprints. He speaks for the dead. Pity those who will not listen.

### THE WRATH OF HEAVEN

The Lunar cast auguries for her mate and found the stars silent. But she didn't give up. She finally found him on the road leading away from Chiaroscuro, riding a black horse, devoid of purpose, another ghost blowing across the desert.

Now their love gives them both meaning. She is Chosen of the Argent Madonna, the clever eyes and fingers of Heaven. He is her blade. Descending into the Underworld, they destroyed a column of the Legion Sanguinary. Returning to the living world, they laid siege to a blasphemous ziggurat amidst silver sands. When the Wyld Hunt sent its assassins, he stood





strong and protected her. When her mentor told her this was not as her mate should be, she laughed.

They go up and down the length of the desert, the black rider and the little bat flying ahead of him. Their legend spreads. The wicked fear their coming. The just doubt they are real. The dead search for them both. Ten thousand terrible things lurk among the sands of two worlds. None of them are safe.

### THE PALE EVANGELIST

To all suffering, he says, there is an answer.

All who've seen the pale evangelist remember him. His lips are red as blood. His skin is alabaster. He wears carnations in his hair. He is finer and more beautiful than the world through which he moves. He awes the dead and disquiets the living.

The evangelist walks the lands of the living to spread the good news of the grave. There is a joy in him as he describes the beauty of the Underworld, the passion of the dead, the magnificence of eternity. A paper shirt burned in honor of the dead, he says, will become a fine silk tunic, a tiny wooden sword a mighty blade. The dead do not starve. They do not freeze. So long as the living honor them, they want for nothing.

Ancestor cults spring up in his wake. He assists suicides, smiling as he guides those with the courage to heed his words into a new existence, free of the indignities of flesh. The pale evangelist believes it is better to be dead than to be alive, and many find his testimony convincing.

Of course, preaching anything inconvenient to the powers of the world has its dangers. The Wyld Hunt seeks his whereabouts. Gods confront him, incensed by his accusations of venal extortion. At these times he summons up the corpses of the departed to fight on his behalf; it amuses him to make the detritus of life serve the cause of death.

### THE BLADE OF VENGEANCE

The dead have grievances. She settles them.

She frequently targets the Guild, leading some to believe she took the Last Breath in chains. Her blades strike down tyrannical ghosts, reunites murderers with their victims, permanently still the tongues of necromancers.

She shrouds herself in dark winding-cloth and carries a short daiklave on each hip. Rumor has it she is beautiful beneath her shrouds, but no one can claim to have seen anything but her red eyes. She rarely speaks, and then only to set terms and demand payment. Her prices vary: five thousand obols to slay a wicked king; a relic dagger to burn down a Guildsman's manor; a gold brooch to slay a father who drowned his five daughters.

She will not act as the agent of those with power enough to take their own revenge. Those who attempt to deceive her regret it—briefly. She believes Creation unjust and the Underworld a house of suffering. Whenever she helps a ghost pass on to Lethe, its business fulfilled, she feels the rage burning in her own heart cool ever so slightly. Perhaps that fire will never go out. It matters little. The Underworld is vast.



## CHAPTER SIX

# INFERNAL EXALTED

## MALFEAS

### BY RAGE RECAST

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Desecration, Obvious, Shaping

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** By Pain Reforged

Once Malfeas was the Primordial King, his power and glory unconstrained by the crude limits of a body. Now, mutilated and caged in the prison of form, his cosmic might and boundless fury can only twist him toward more harmful expressions of his majesty. An Infernal who learns this Charm selects a package of (Essence x 10) points of temporary positive mutations as a “library” of options. She must allocate all of these points at the time of purchase, even if that means choosing mutations she doesn’t really want as filler.

Once allocated, the library remains fixed. However, raising Essence allows the Infernal to re-allocate all (Essence x 10) mutation points from scratch as though she just acquired the Charm. At Essence 10, the warlock may reallocate her muta-

tions by spending one full day in either isolated meditation or a series of ancient, ecstatic dances.

Whenever the warlock’s anima banner reaches the 11+ mote level of expression, she reflexively gains eight points of mutations selected from her library as a temporary Desecration. Horns may curl from the warlock’s forehead, leathery wings unfold from her back, or fanged maws open upon her body—whatever demonic features best express the Chosen’s fury. She may not gain mutually-exclusive mutations at the same time. This transformation is not optional. In the unlikely event the Infernal cannot express a full eight points without going over (such as by only purchasing Abominations at Essence 3), she must get as close as possible. Once her anima subsides below the 11+ level, the mutations fade back into her body.

By Rage Recast explicitly ignores the normal limit on how many positive temporary mutations a Desecration effect may bestow (see *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Infernals*, p. 103). Mutation points gained from the Charm do count toward the usual mutation point limit other temporary Desecration effects can bestow.



If the character knows the Charm Fealty-Acknowledging Audience (**The Manual of Exalted Power—The Infernals**, p. 116), then she may pay a surcharge of +5m when invoking that Charm to gift those who swear fealty to her with up to eight points of mutations she is capable of manifesting with By Rage Recast. This gift is a permanent Desecration.

With Essence 3+, the Infernal may choose to retain her current mutations when her anima banner recedes. She may dismiss these mutations at any time her anima is below the 11-15 mote level of display with a diceless miscellaneous action, but must flare her anima anew to restore her mutations or change them out for a new suite of grotesqueries.

### DEVIL-TYRANT AVATAR SHINTAI

**Cost:** 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Desecration, Form-type, Obvious, Shaping

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** By Rage Recast

When the gods turned Malfeas inside-out and gave him form, they exposed his inner monstrosity for all to see. Denied Creation, the Demon City must satisfy himself with dominion over his hateful flesh. If he must suffer the humiliation of physical existence, then the parameters of that body will be defined by the raging whim of the onetime Primordial King—and none other.

The Infernal spreads his arms and collapses his anima banner into his flesh, producing a brief, blinding cataclysm of emerald flame. This explosion acts as a one-time environmental damage effect (Damage 3L, Trauma 1) to everything within three yards. When the smoke clears, the Exalt stands transformed, his demonic nature stamped unmistakably into his flesh.

Devil-Tyrant Avatar Shintai has the following effects:

- The warlock simultaneously manifests all (Essence x 10) points of mutations provided by this Charm's prerequisite. Devil-Tyrant Avatar Shintai explicitly ignores the normal restrictions on the number of positive mutations a Desecration effect may provide and does not count toward the mutation limit of other such effects. If By Rage Recast supplies mutations that are mutually exclusive to one another, he chooses which to manifest and which to keep inert within him. Mutual exclusivity is the only basis for a mutation not manifesting.

- All Shaping effects which would transform the warlock's body become Obvious to his senses. He may reflexively reject any unwanted changes, even while unconscious or otherwise inactive.

- The concentrated force of the Infernal's empyrean fury hardens his skin, adding (Essence) to his natural lethal and bashing soak.

- The warlock adds (Essence) yards to his base movement and dashing distances.

- Finally, the demonic power thrumming through his body increases the warlock's Strength by (Essence) for the purpose of feats of strength and attacking inanimate objects.

### KNEEL OR BE KNELT

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** By Pain Reforged

The onetime King of the Primordials will not tolerate those who would stride past without stopping to show respect for his majesty, forcing them to kiss the ground if they will not do so of their own accord. This Charm may be activated whenever another character seeks to pass by the Infernal within (Essence) yards (the target must attempt to pass the Infernal; simply walking up, attacking, and then moving back would not suffice, nor may the Charm be activated if the Infernal is passing another character that is not attempting to bypass him); complementary units are never valid targets for this Charm. The warlock lashes out with a sudden lightning-fast attack in response; a favored method among Slayers is to slam an iron-hard arm into a target's throat, while Malfeas himself buckles the surface of his streets and slams the doors of his buildings into the faces of those who offend him. This is treated as a standard counterattack at full dice pool using a combat ability of the Infernal's choice. Ranged attacks are still limited to striking those who pass within the prohibited radius. Regardless of whether the attack inflicts any damage, a successful hit automatically knocks the target prone. Only one such counterattack may be directed at a single target per action. The Infernal adds three automatic successes to all attacks directed at characters knocked prone by this Charm.

At Essence 3+ this Charm gains the Knockback keyword, and the warlock gains the option of knocking opponents back up to (Essence x 2) yards rather than simply knocking them down, if desired. Opponents who strike unyielding surfaces take dice of bashing (or lethal, for sharp surfaces) damage equal to half the number of yards they would have continued to travel if not brought up short, rounded up.

### TRIUMPH OF THE WILL

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Nightmare Fugue Vigilance

Malfeas will tolerate nothing which stands between him and the execution of his will. Those who attempt to do so rarely survive to make the effort again. This Charm may enhance any attack directed at a character being protected by a Defend Other action. If the Infernal successfully strikes his original target, all of the attack roll's remaining successes are counted twice for the purpose of determining damage. If the warlock aborts to strike his target's defender instead, then he counts his Strength and remaining successes twice for the purpose of determining damage.

At Essence 5+, attacks redirected against a defender count Strength and remaining successes three times rather than twice. At Essence 7+ this becomes a fourfold increase.

A second purchase of this Charm grants the Infernal the option to pay a two mote surcharge in step 7 to knock the character he hits back on a successful strike. In addition to the Charm's usual effects, the unfortunate is hurled ([Charisma + Presence] x 5) yards, and if he strikes any unyielding surface, he takes dice of bashing damage equal to the number of remaining yards he did not travel (or lethal damage at the Storyteller's discretion, depending on the surface in question).





## THE KING STILL STANDS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** By Agony Empowered

Malfeas is invincible, immortal, and incomparable. Those who would dare offer evidence to the contrary will be ground to a paste between his layers as a lesson to others. This Charm grants an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, it gains motes under the following circumstances: The first time in a scene that the Infernal marks off his incapacitated health box with a certain type of damage (bashing, lethal, or aggravated), he gains ten offensive motes. This gain is cumulative—if the Infernal filled his Incapacitated health box with bashing damage, and then later in the same scene with lethal damage, he would gain a total of 20 motes. However, if he healed himself and then marked off the box with lethal damage again during that scene, he would gain no motes.

## DRIVEN BEYOND DEATH

**Cost:** —(1m, 1wp); **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** First Malfeas Excellency, The King Still Stands

Though it is true that, at one time, a being known as the Empyrean Chaos was forced to admit defeat, none can say the same of the Yozi called Malfeas. It seems unthinkable that one should ever vanquish the Demon City... yet the same was said of King of All Kings in the Time of Glory. Should the Infernal fall in battle with any offensive motes in his Overdrive pool, he may pay one mote, one Willpower as his final health level is checked off in step 10 and he becomes incapacitated. He falls, almost to a knee, or slouches to one side as if to topple, but stops himself. Suddenly his anima roars to the 16+ level of display as a local earthquake rips through the area for five miles. This tremor comes from within the warlock and sends emerald and crimson-tinged cracks racing across his skin to congregate around his blazing caste mark, while his eyes shine with all the furies there ever were. The legend of the Empyrean Chaos wreathes his chest, biceps and thighs and bounds his forehead like a crown. For the next action, the warlock is perfectly immune to all attacks and harm, but may not act, save to activate any one shintai he knows. If no shintai is activated, the Infernal effectively remains Inactive for that one action. When this action ends, the blaze dies down, and the Infernal's final horrific onslaught can begin.

The Infernal's Overdrive pool immediately gains 10 motes. From that point forward, the Infernal will remain active, attacking, and unable to retreat until his Overdrive pool reaches zero. He may regain Overdrive motes during this time, but his pool empties at a rate of three offensive motes per action. During this time, the Infernal may not benefit from any magic which heals damage. Attacks which strike him during this time, which do not accrue more than (Infernal's Essence x 3) dice of post-soak damage fail to even register—he suffers no damage from them. Only attacks which cripple or dismember the outraged Slayer have a prayer of slowing him down.

Finally, offensive Charms fueled by his Overdrive are reduced in cost by one mote, to a minimum of zero motes. The Infernal

may not apply more than one zero mote Charm to any given attack, but he may stack any reduced-cost offensive Charms he can afford so long as they cost at least one mote.

When the frenzy ends, the Infernal rolls (Stamina + Essence) against difficulty 5. Failure leaves the Infernal incapacitated; success restores the Infernal's incapacitated health level, although he may not activate Driven Beyond Death again within the scene. As a point of clarification, this Charm may only be triggered when the Infernal is truly incapacitated—for instance, marking off the Infernal's final health box with lethal damage would not permit him to trigger Driven Beyond Death if he had By Agony Empowered active.

## RAGE-STOKED INFERNO SOUL

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Green Sun Nimbus Flare, Sun-Heart Furnace Soul

The volatile fury at the heart of the Demon City is a flame of such intensity that it can never be contained. An Infernal who learns this Charm gains an Overdrive pool with a capacity of fifteen motes. Initially empty, the warlock may begin to fill it by activating this Charm. From that point onward, each time one of the Infernal's attacks are successfully parried or dodged, he gains a single offensive mote. As the warlock's inner fires burn hotter, his Overdrive pool becomes unstable. If the Exalt gains five or more offensive motes in a single action, make a difficulty 1 (Stamina + Resistance) roll to stabilize the Infernal's awesome power. For each mote over five, increase the difficulty of this roll by 1. If the Infernal succeeds on this roll, add an additional three motes to his Overdrive pool. If he fails, five of his Overdrive motes detonate in a torrent of emerald flames which erupt up from the vicinity of his ribcage, doing one unsoakable lethal health level of damage as it rips through his body.

The Exalt may not gain offensive motes from this Overdrive if his attacks are not designed to kill his target. If he holds back one iota, Rage-Stoked Inferno Soul fails.

## SCREAMS AS PRAYERS REMINDER

**Cost:** 0m or 4m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Crippling

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Magnanimous Warning Glyph

Sometimes inferiors forget their place. Sometimes the conquered don't know when to stay down. They can be taught. To activate this Charm, the Infernal chooses an individual he has previously marked with Magnanimous Warning Glyph. The Charm costs zero motes if the target is an extra and four motes otherwise. The power of Screams as Prayers Reminder is inescapable, reaching across any distance or realm of existence through the arcane link of that mark. Wherever the victim is, her brand suddenly becomes visible to normal senses and remains so until Screams as Prayers Reminder ends, subverting her stealth as per a 4-7 mote Infernal caste mark display. The smoldering brand also hurts like a fresh vitriol burn, adding the warlock's Essence rating to the victim's current wound penalties. Whenever a victim suffering from an inflamed brand attacks the warlock, he becomes aware of the attack (precluding it from being unexpected). The Infernal may then choose to let the brand ignite as normal or persist in its inflamed state to

prolong the victim's agony. Although this Charm isn't stackable, it may be separately activated to simultaneously torture multiple victims. Brands from different warlocks do not stack their wound penalty increase; only the worst applies.

With Essence 5+, the cost to target mortals and natural animals also drops to zero motes.

### EMBER GIFT REVOCATION

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Sorcerous

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Gifts of Invisible Flame

It is fortunate that the Unconquered Sun took Creation from Malfegas, rather than forcing him to give it to the gods. Otherwise, all might burn to ash. To activate this Charm, the Infernal focuses his wrath on some non-magical object or structure that he once owned and deliberately gave to another individual. Wherever that object is in any realm of existence, it chars in a flash of emerald fire, leaving only a hardened statue of coal roughly half the size of the item and only vaguely shaped in its likeness. The statue crumbles with the lightest force (Soak 0B/0L; 1 level of damage needed to obliterate it to black dust). If the target belongs to a Celestial Exalt, the Infernal must make a Willpower roll at a difficulty of the owner's Essence to destroy the object; failure permanently immunizes the gift against the warlock's wrath. Malfegas long ago destroyed all in Creation that he could burn with this Charm. All that remains is beyond his power to touch.

The fire unleashed by this Charm does not harm anything other than the intended target, so a sword burnt to ash does not sear the hand that holds it. The blast is an unblockable and undodgeable attack against the bearer of the target item and can be defended against as such.

With Essence 5+, the Infernal may destroy magical items he gave to others, but only if he created those items himself or oversaw the team of workers that built them (as in the case of most manses).

A repurchase at Essence 6+ allows the Infernal to obliterate any number of valid targets of this Charm within a 10 mile radius, setting the epicenter up to (Essence x 10) miles away.

## CECELYNE

### WAYWARD SERF REMONSTRATIONS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Demonic Primacy of Essence

There is one crime Cecelyne cannot forgive—any demon which raises a claw against its creators must experience the full fury of the Endless Desert. This Charm grants an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, it gains motes under the following circumstances: Whenever the Infernal rolls Join Battle against one or more demons, she gains a number of offensive motes equal to the highest Essence rating among the demons opposing her. Afterwards, so long as she remains in battle against at least one demon, she gains one offensive mote on each of her action ticks.

### SPECKS BEFORE INFINITY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Wayward Serf Remonstrations

Though the laws of the Endless Desert are ultimately arbitrary, there is one rule she holds sacred—the strong shall dominate the weak. This Charm grants an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, it gains motes under the following circumstances: On any tick during which the Infernal is attacked by an individual of lower Essence, she gains one offensive mote. Her own bound spirits do not count for this purpose, nor any other being she has commanded to attack her. The Infernal also loses one offensive mote on any tick during which she attacks a being of higher Essence; this loss cannot take her below zero offensive motes.

### DUST DEVIL FEINT

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack, Obvious, Shaping

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Transcendent Desert Creature

For all that Cecelyne is an all-pervasive prisoner of Hell, she flatters herself that she may not be captured or detained if such treatment does not suit her. This Charm may be activated in response to any attack directed at the Infernal, regardless of whether it strikes the character. The Infernal dissolves into a whirling eddy of dust and sand, which is carried away from the attacker on the prayers of her followers, reforming within ([Cult x 5] + Essence) yards. This Charm cannot move through any barrier which would prove impermeable to a trickle of sand. Dust Devil Feint may relocate the warlock to places she could not otherwise reach, such as to a higher perch.

### FALSE IDOLS CAST DOWN

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Cult 2, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Knockback, Messianic, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dust Devil Feint

The Endless Desert especially loathes opponents with pretensions toward their own divinity. Her scorn transforms the Essence of their unworthy prayers into a vessel for her outrage. This Charm permanently enhances its prerequisite, so that the Infernal erupts into a massive, shrieking dust cloud when it is activated in a place of desolation. In addition to its usual effects, the sandblast knocks her attacker back (5 + [attacker's Cult x 3]) yards if he fails a reflexive (Stamina + Resistance) roll at a difficulty of the Infernal's Cult rating. This is effective even against bowmen and other long-range attackers, hurling them with extruded wisps of grinding particulate force.

### SWALLOWED IN ETERNITY

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

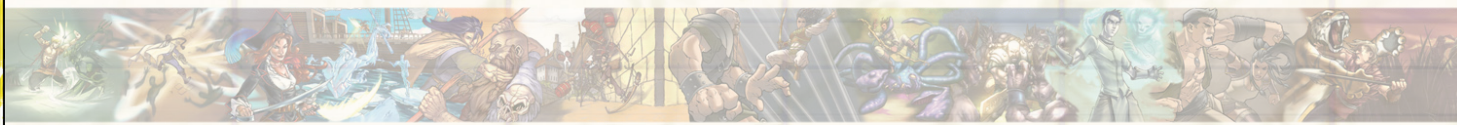
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Shaping

**Duration:** One action

**Prerequisite Charms:** Sand-Slip Trick

Though savants marvel that Cecelyne's vast expanse may be crossed in only five days, the truth is that if the Endless Desert





will it, she may stretch her roads out to infinity. Expressing this principle, the Infernal holds her hand out, palm-first, toward a single opponent. This is treated as a Blockade Movement action, though the Infernal rolls (Willpower + Cult) in place of ([Strength or Dexterity] + Athletics). Should the Infernal win this contest, her target is rendered unable to approach her for the duration of the Charm. The landscape between warlock and pursuer stretches out infinitely, and although the target perceives himself to be moving, no amount of exertion on his part can close the distance between the two. To observers, the area around the target seems to confusingly sprawl outward without limit, but does not actually move him away from any other individuals or objects. This Charm cannot be used on a single opponent more than once per action.

This Charm only functions in places of desolation. It does not count as a Charm use if deployed upon the sands of Cecelyne herself, including areas blighted by Holy Land Infliction (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Infernals**, p. 125).

Swallowed in Eternity adds (Essence) dice to the roll-off against conflicting effects such as Eternal Infatuation Dance (see **Glories of the Most High—The Maidens of Destiny**, p. 28).

### SCOURING BANISHMENT TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 5m or (5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Shaping, Sorcerous, Stackable

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Demonic Primacy of Essence

Some demons escape the prison of their ancestor overlords. Sometimes this serves the will of the Yozi. Often, the broken creators simply resent inferiors enjoying privileges they may not. To end such frustrations, an Infernal may use this Charm to select any perceived demon within (Essence x 100) yards. The demon in question appears to slightly erode at the edges, with patches of skin crumbling first to dust and then seeming nothingness as the scoured away Essence trickles into Cecelyne. This process is too slow to result in any actual injury. However, for as long as the Charm remains active, the demon can't heal by any means. Whenever it suffers levels of damage, the injured tissue dissolves further (this cosmetic injury doesn't increase the number of levels suffered). After applying each damage level, the Storyteller checks whether the total number of non-bashing damage levels currently applied to the demon exceeds its Essence rating. Once this threshold is reached, the spirit disintegrates completely and its scattered Essence makes the five-day crossing to reform in the dunes just outside the walls of Malfear. The spirit arrives in the same condition as it vanished. Scouring Banishment technique may be activated multiple times to mark different demons for banishment. The cost is five motes (plus one Willpower if the target belongs to the Second or Third Circle). With Essence 4+, the Infernal may use a single activation to affect as many valid targets as desired, provided she pays the requisite cost for each. Essence 6+ drops the cost to target First Circle demons to one mote each.

Essence 3+ Infernals may purchase this Charm a second time. In addition to the usual effects, targeted demons can't regain Willpower from stunts. Other means of Willpower recovery function normally. Furthermore, if a targeted demon runs

out of Willpower points for any reason, it dissolves and reforms in the sands outside Malfear as explained above.

A third purchase requires Essence 4+, extending the Charms power to affect gods, elementals and devas as though they were demons (eroding via damage and Willpower loss alike). The Yozi can feel whenever a god enters their realm this way and know the identity of that deity. How and whether they respond depends on how much they personally hate the intruder. The titans consider elementals below Essence 6 too pathetic to notice this way, though greater elementals draw their attention like gods.

Cecelyne does not like to think of the Underworld, and so it has not occurred to her that a fourth purchase is possible (also requiring Essence 4+). This purchase broadens its power to affect ghosts as per other spirits, though the Yozi never dignify the dead with automatic notice. It remains to be seen how long it will take for a warlock to realize this possibility and so force Cecelyne to gain this power. Perhaps she will be grateful to know she can damn the dead to the eternal suffering of the Demon Realm. Perhaps she will be horrified by the reminder of her own mortality. Only time will tell.

### INVESTITURE OF UNHOLY WILL

**Cost:** 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Sorcerous

**Duration:** Until Calibration

**Prerequisite Charms:** Demonic Primacy of Essence

While the souls of the Yozi must appear before the Exalted when bidden by the proper rites, they may resist enslavement by those who invoke this right. This Charm can enhance any physical attack against a demon, though generally the warlock pulls the blow so as not to harm the target. If the attack hits, it lays a mark of Primordial Essence upon the target until the next Calibration. This mark affects demons as follows:

- If they belong to the First or Second Circle, they add the Infernal's Essence in bonus dice on all rolls to resist sorcerous binding or banishment (maximum +5). This does not apply against the warlock who marked them.
- They suffer an external penalty of the warlock's Essence on all rolls to resist her attempts to sorcerously bind or banish them.
- If multiple Infernals lay their mark on a single demon, only the greatest bonus applies; however, each warlock benefits normally from her own mark when attempting to bind or banish the demon.
- If the demon is currently bound and tracks Limit (as per guidelines in **Roll of Glorious Divinity I and II**) when the mark is placed, the Infernal knows this and may add (his Willpower rating) Limit points to the demon's track.

Cecelyne was made to swear she would not use this Charm as part of her surrender oaths. Much to her frustration, she later discovered this prohibition also extended to her akuma.

### INAUSPICIOUS BENEEDICTION OF ENDEAVOR

**Cost:** 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Shaping, Sorcerous

**Duration:** Until broken

**Prerequisite Charms:** Unquestionable Yozi Authority, Sublimation of Ordained Purpose

Cecelyne grants her favor to organizations whose policies express the madness of her law. This Charm may be used to





enchant any social unit with a Magnitude no greater than the Infernal's (Essence or Bureaucracy, whichever is higher). The warlock must be socially interacting with the unit's leader and communicate the full intent of the Charm while using it, gaining the leader's assent. It is permissible to secure cooperation prior to activation via social attacks. Larger units must be targeted piecemeal as individual departments or bureaus. The warlock selects one task the organization must perform at recurring intervals or actions that must be avoided at all times; the burden should be strange and onerous without any seeming connection to the organization's function, but the task or taboo must be something the unit can accomplish. The Storyteller assesses how much extra work and hassle the chosen task/ban causes for the target organization from among the options listed below.

The severity of the drawback determines how many bonus successes the unit and all of its individual members receive when taking actions that directly further the enchanted unit's Policy. If the organization ignores the blessing the Infernal has given them and does not implement the task/ban within a week, the power of Cecelyne grinds the organization's fate as a Shaping effect. This also happens as soon as the task is not completed on schedule or the taboo is broken. The unit suffers one automatic botch on a critical action as per a broken Eclipse oath, and then the magic ends. Applying appropriate counter-magic to the unit leader breaks the effect without any doom, as does complete disbandment of the unit. If the leader changes, the new leader becomes the anchor point for applying counter-magic. A change in Policy does not affect the Charm. So long as the unit keeps to its duty or avoids its ban, the enchantment continues indefinitely. Units already enchanted by Inauspicious Benediction of Endeavor can't be targeted with further applications from any character.

Inauspicious Benediction of Endeavor may target an individual rather than a social unit, though it would not occur to Cecelyne herself to do so. Affected characters receive the bonus successes awarded by the burden toward actions directly supporting their Motivation. The Infernal may target herself, though the associated burden is no less onerous.

**Inconvenience (2 successes):** The duty isn't fun, but it's not really all that much work either. The primary weight of the burden stems from the distastefulness of the task. Example: stopping work three times a day at fixed times to ritually venerate the law of Cecelyne regardless of whatever else is going on. For taboos, the organization must avoid a particular convenience, but the loss doesn't really impede operations in any measurable way. Example: No one in the organization may imbibe alcohol. An inconvenience that doesn't frustrate members on a regular basis shouldn't qualify for any bonus.

**Challenge (3 successes):** The required task demands that members go out of their way, typically to do something immoral, abhorrent or both, but nothing that would seriously conflict with the average member's Intimacies. Example: Sacrificing a pure white kitten who has never known pain following the close of business each day; once a month, one member chosen at random must voluntarily accept being beaten past unconsciousness by other members. Taboos present equivalent difficulty and can be broken accidentally by the incautious. Example: Never kill a locust; never speak any translation of "Unconquered Sun."

**Hardship (4 successes):** The duty or ban seriously impacts the day to day operations of the organization, forcing it to cover up activities that would certainly attract immediate censure from the public and external authorities. Examples: The slow bleeding death of one unblemished baby who has never seen a Calibration assures one month of good fortune; never thank a god or a god's priest for anything, even with hollow or ironic courtesy.

### MIRACLE GIFT MASTERY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Verdant Emptiness Endowment

Cecelyne may give her blessings slowly, the better to exact compounding price for each piece of her gift. But this need not be so. With purchase of this Charm, an Infernal's power to wield Verdant Emptiness Endowment grows mightily as follows:

- She may bestow degrees of thaumaturgy like standard specialties; as usual, she need not possess the degree in question. The target must meet all prerequisites for learning the degree.
- She may give multiple dots of the same trait as a single blessing, as many as desired (subject to the usual trait maximum for the beneficiary). Since this is a single blessing, the number of botches associated with failing to pay the price is based on conferring one dot, regardless of the total number actually conferred. Conversely, since this is a single blessing, it does not matter if the target would end up in experience debt after a single dot—all dots still get conferred.
- She may bestow Attributes, Abilities or specialties instantly. This is Obvious, as swirling silver sands envelop the target and transform her mentally and physically as appropriate. If she knows Bestowal of Accursed Fortune and grants multiple Background dots, they still appear in weeks according to the new rating and cannot be granted faster.
- The price to refuse her blessing is (half her Essence rating, rounded up) Willpower points rather than just one. As a reminder, rejecting a gift is not considered resisting mental influence.

- She may bestow her blessing on anyone she can perceive within one mile, rather than being limited to (Essence rating) yards.

- With Essence 4+, she may bestow trait dots on mortal characters who are in experience debt.

- With Essence 4+, the cost to use Verdant Emptiness Endowment on a target may be lowered to a single mote, provided the target already accepted a blessing from the Infernal's use of the Charm earlier in the scene. However, as soon as the target pays Willpower to reject a gift, the cost resets to normal.

### DRAUGHT OF SWEET INFINITY



**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Emotion

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Verdant Emptiness Endowment

From time to time, the sands of the Endless Desert swell and burst apart, releasing a faint gust of perfumed wind, sweet and spicy and full of promise of benevolence not fitting to the Demon Realm. Those meant to breathe such grace do so five days hence, and by the power of Cecelyne, cripples may walk and



the blind may see—the better that they walk into the sands of eternity and behold her infinite splendor.

This Charm is a permanent enhancement of its prerequisite, allowing the Infernal to grant the expressed desires of others for healing, though she may not heal herself. It is even possible to grant a wish that is not communicated, but intended (as defined by the target's player), such as a coma patient's desire to wake. Five days before bearing witness to such a request, a perfumed breath escapes the warlock's lips unnoticed by her or anyone else—it is the faintest of sighs. And yet, in the place and moment for which the breath was intended, it takes root within the flesh of the beneficiary as a great blessing.

The power of this Charm can instantly mend any single Crippling injury in the blink of an eye, or heal (warlock's Essence or Cult) non-aggravated damage levels the target currently suffers. Having accepted the blessing, the target instantly develops an Intimacy of reverence toward the Infernal (or shifts the context of any existing Intimacy to reverence), and this natural Emotion effect cannot be further resisted due to the target's acceptance.

There are limits to Cecelyne's power, if not to herself. Once a target has received healing from this Charm, he cannot be healed again until five days pass. Only during Calibration does this restriction ease, during which targets may be healed as often as the Infernal chooses to activate Verdant Emptiness Endowment for the cause and pays full cost to do so (no activation cost discounts may be applied).

With Essence 4+, a single activation can mend one Crippling wound and heal damage (rather than having to choose). Essence 5+ allows the healing of all Crippling wounds and appropriate damage levels, but doing so adds a surcharge of four motes per Crippling wound past the first.

### KILLING CLAUSE LARGESSE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Shaping

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Verdant Emptiness Endowment

When Cecelyne strikes a bargain, doom befalls those who break it. Sometimes, this is insufficient. Upon learning Killing Clause Largesse, the Infernal may optionally increase the price of defaulting whenever she uses Verdant Emptiness Endowment to grant a trait dot. Should the beneficiary fail to carry out the price demanded of him, he does not face botches. Instead, for each botch he would have suffered, the Storyteller chooses one time in which to enhance a physical attack solely targeting him as a Shaping effect. Attacks enhanced this way become unblockable, undodgeable and unsoakable. If an attack does not hit in spite of these advantages, the “botch” is not spent and lingers on for another opportunity to slay him. Whenever a warlock attacks someone who has pending “botches” hanging over him as a result of her prior use of Verdant Emptiness Endowment, she immediately knows this fact in step 1 and may spend one of the “botches” to augment her attack. Deliberately spending a “botch” this way uses it up, even if the attack misses.

With Essence 4+, any mortal hit by a “botch” enhanced attack automatically dies as a Shaping effect before resolving damage. Against victim shielded from this automatic death, damage may still suffice to do the job.

### COST-COMPOUNDING OFFERING

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Verdant Emptiness Endowment

Cecelyne may demand a fixed price for her gifts, if an open-ended one. That is usually her way. Still, she is an immortal, and that gives her cause for patience. Whenever an Infernal with this Charm grants a trait dot with Verdant Emptiness Endowment, she can demand repayment at any time and the total number of botches imposed for failing to meet the demand increases by one (i.e. Essence +1). However, she can also wait and let the debt grow. For each Calibration that arrives without having asked for repayment, the total number of botches cumulatively rises by one. There is no limit to this accumulation.

*Example:* A prince bargains with the Endless Desert to assume power, gaining great Influence as a king. Nothing is asked of him, and so he reigns uneasily and eventually thinks himself free. Forty years later, he dreams of silver sands as his patron contacts him once more, demanding his beloved daughter in payment. Should the old king refuse, he faces 51 botches for his impertinence (Essence 10 + 1 + 40). Pity the Celestial whose bargain comes due a millennium hence.

### FINE PRINT BEQUEST

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Verdant Emptiness Endowment

The Endless Desert exacts a terrible price for her generosity. That doesn't mean her generosity needs not also have strings attached. Upon learning this Charm, the Infernal gains the power to add a clause to each gift she bestows with Verdant Emptiness Endowment. To do this, she must offer to fulfill the target's expressed desire and inform the target of the clause, which may be an action the target must never do or which he must do in response to specific stimuli. The clause must be something the target is actually capable of doing, though the difficulty is irrelevant. If all these conditions are met and the target accepts the blessing, the clause takes effect. Should the target ever break the terms of the clause, the blessing fades away over the same time it took to appear (returning appropriate experience points if applicable).

*Example:* Sulumor offers to make a warrior deadlier with his sword, granting the Melee specialty Swords +1. She warns that the gift is contingent on him never raising a hand against her. This gift takes a scene to appear, so if he ever physically attacks her, the specialty disappears at the end of the scene.

### PALACES LIKE SANDCASTLES

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Shaping, Sorcerous

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Bestowal of Accursed Fortune

Fortunes rise. Fortunes fall. A prince dwells in splendor one day and walks the streets destitute the next. A pauper takes his place. Dunes swell to mountains, then crumble away in the wind. The cycle repeats. It is all meaningless. Upon learning Palaces Like Sandcastles, the Infernal learns how to teach existence the truths best known to Cecelyne.



Whenever the warlock uses Bestowal of Accursed Fortune to grant Background dots to a beneficiary who accepts them, she may optionally choose a victim whom she touched or socially interacted with in the past day. The victim must possess the Background the warlock wishes to bestow at a rating equal or greater than the end result of her blessing. Should all these criteria be met, the victim loses dots at the same rate that the beneficiary gains them. Improbable coincidences ensure the good fortune of the victim actually transfers to the beneficiary, so it may be that an unfortunate student falls out of favor with his Sifu and is supplanted by a new pupil. A rich man may find his Resources confiscated by the state and given to a rising star as a reward for loyal service to his country. The Storyteller decides the story that ensures the transfer. Any time in the weeks that lead up to the final outcome, appropriate countermagic applied to the victim removes the curse and spoils the blessing entirely. The curse is also a Shaping effect and may be excised accordingly to ruin the warlock's plans. Once the transfer is complete, the effect ends and cannot be reversed with countermagic or anti-Shaping effects.

Depending on the tale the Storyteller uses to explain the Charm's effects, the victim may realize his good fortune has gone to another or not. Even if the transfer isn't immediately obvious, investigation may suffice to reveal it. Few victims appreciate such turn of events and most seek retribution of some sort. If the beneficiary should perish before the transfer is complete, the curse is broken and nothing is lost. The Infernal may choose for the narrative to be blatantly clear at the time of activation in order to incite this very outcome, forcing the Storyteller to choose a tale that ensures it. The reverse is not true. Though the warlock may cover up the transfer through mundane means, she can't activate the Charm in such a way that the transfer automatically remains secret. Fate is capricious even when compelled.

## SHE WHO LIVES IN HER NAME

### CHIRALITY PROHIBITION INDEX

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (One one-hour dramatic action)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Servitude, Shaping, Sorcerous

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Whispering Flame embodies the perfection of design and order as does no other. She pities the world for being less perfect than herself, and imposes her nature upon it as an act of mercy.

This Charm permits the warlock to re-order the land around her to reflect the principle of hierarchy, shifting the position of trees and walls, straightening or bending roads and rivers, reconfiguring the arrangement of buildings or moving them altogether to express the symmetrical perfection of a greater design. The Infernal may reorder the landscape in any manner she chooses, with the following limitations:

The changes she demands occur gradually, over the course of the next hour, too slowly to inflict damage on any living thing. The Infernal cannot intentionally create new landscape features—she only reconfigures what is already there. The Charm cannot reshape a demesne, the Wyld, or any area within ten

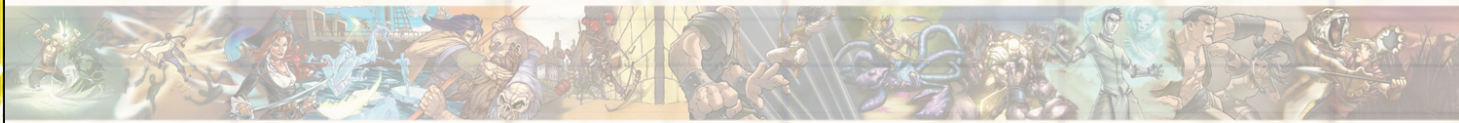
miles of the border of another landscape that has been reshaped through Chirality Prohibition Index or Holy Land Infliction. She might reconfigure a small village into a series of staggered circles around a central green, or into a rigid, balanced grid. An orchard could be rewoven into a perfect circular border of trees around a central field whose grass has been ranked into impressed-circles which confer the sacred order of the principle of hierarchy. Even the sky conforms to the symmetry of She Who Lives in Her Name, channeling clouds into a slow spiral around the central point of her design. The imposed changes span a circular area around the Infernal with a radius of (Willpower x 10) yards.

The changes, when viewed from above, must reflect a greater symmetry with the rest of the world. This symmetry is subject only to the superior perspective of the warlock, who exudes the truth of her Essence into the pattern of existence. Others who look upon the Infernal's design may see only a mystifying sprawl of indecipherable but tantalizing meaning. Such are the limits of their minds that they cannot understand the order the warlock seeks to bring—though they wish to.

Nearby mortals within one mile become fascinated by the sacred geometry of the Whispering Flame, and will settle in and around the edges of the symmetrical landscape. After each week an individual spends lingering within a mile of the affected area, they are automatically subjected to a social attack with a dice pool of the warlock's (Essence + Occult). Success counts as a scene spent working toward building an Intimacy of loyalty toward a new social unit—a cult dedicated to the study and veneration of the land's sacred design. This unnatural mental influence may be resisted for two Willpower.

Once a character has gained this loyalty, she must follow the Policy of the cult as an unnatural Servitude effect. The Infernal constructs the group's Policy at the time of this Charm's activation, as follows:

- Members of the cult loathe all things marked by the touch of the Wyld—they will attempt to drive Wyld mutants, raksha and beastmen out of the community, violently if necessary.
- Members of the cult dress in a similar, uniform manner as defined by the Infernal. The sacred landscapes created by She Who Lives in Her Name promote conservative black-and-white outfits which cover most of the body and leave little individuality for either men or women, but Infernals may enforce any sort of appearance they desire—or even outlaw clothing altogether.
- Members of the cult will prefer to speak a language of the Infernal's choice, and will seek to learn the favored language if they do not already know it. They will also refuse to speak any languages the Infernal forbids, or to respond to individuals who address them in forbidden tongues. She Who Lives in Her Name permits only Old Realm to be spoken in her domains, but Infernals may set the parameters of their dominions to their liking.
- Members of the cult will proscribe certain knowledge as defined by the Infernal. They will not teach forbidden information, nor speak of it, nor tolerate its dissemination among their ranks. This could be anything from Immaculate dogma to histories of a region that differ from a certain tale the Infernal has approved to knowledge of how to grow wheat—the bans included in the group's Policy are entirely up to the warlock.



- Members of the cult will proscribe certain sorts of action as defined by the Infernal. They will not engage in forbidden acts, nor permit individuals who do to remain within their community. This could be anything from worship of the gods (or of a particular god) to homosexual relationships to leaving the lands controlled by the cult. Again, the bans are whatever suits the Infernal's purpose.

- Members of the cult have one obligation to the group that they must perform, defined by the Infernal. This could be anything from tithing money to a certain member of the community (or to the Infernal), to providing sexual favors to a certain class of individuals, to promoting immigration to and settlement within the land. They also compulsively reconfigure their habitations to conform to the greater symmetry of the Infernal's design.

- Members of the cult will spend at least one hour every day attempting to puzzle out the secrets of the land's sacred geometry. The Infernal exists as a persistent blind spot in their awareness—they will not seek to interact with the warlock unless she first interacts with them, and will not turn on her if they observe her acting in violation of the cult's Policy.

Affected individuals may spend one Willpower to act against the group's Policy for a scene. Only breaking the Intimacy will permanently free a character from the Servitude effect.

Once the majority of the inhabitants of the region within a mile of the sacred landscape have gained an Intimacy of loyalty toward its cult, the range of the symmetrical landscape expands by a radius of one mile, and its mental influence spreads out to target all mortals within a mile of the new borders, at which point the cycle begins to repeat itself. This expansion causes the newly assimilated land to reconfigure itself to fit the symmetrical pattern of the sacred land. If the land's expanding border pushes into a region tainted by the Wyld, the tides of chaos recede. The land is no longer Sorcerous at this time and may no longer be destroyed by countermagic; only rooting out the cult and engaging in public works to destroy the Infernal's geometric patterns may return the land to normal. When the sacred land spans ten miles or more, it becomes a persistent Blasphemy.

When the Infernal reaches Essence 3+, hints of the landscape's authorship begin to appear in all lands she has affected and all lands she subsequently reshapes. Trees show a few crystalline leaves mixed in among the normal foliage, chiming softly when the wind stirs them. Inconsequential examples of Malfean wildlife may be found within the altered land—faintly luminous, hair-thin worms float upon the air; puffs of soft white seeds fall from the clouds, sprouting crystalline flowers where they land and take root; the Things Which Lurk in Corners may occasionally be glimpsed at sunrise and sunset.

### FOLLOW THE LEADER

**Cost:** 0m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Native, Obvious, Overdrive

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Chirality Prohibition Index, First She Who Lives in Her Name Excellency

In order to impose her perfection upon the world, the Whispering Flame must first teach it how to act. When the warlock learns this Charm, she gains an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, she may fill it by targeting a single opponent and outlawing certain actions. Valid bans include

specific combat actions (such as Move, Dash, Jump, Attack, Defend Other, Aim, Cast Sorcery, or specific Miscellaneous Actions such as Draw/Ready Weapon or stanching bleeding), using Charms of a particular type (Extra Action, Simple, Supplemental and Reflexive are valid; Permanent Charms are not), or activating Charms with a particular Keyword (such as Poison, Knockback, Emotion, or Counterattack).

The warlock signals the banned action to her target, or commands him to desist in a particular behavior, making this Charm unmistakably Obvious. Characters need not interact with the mechanical details of Exalted on the same level that players do; the warlock may relate banned actions to her opponents without being specific. "No moving!" would suffice to communicate that she has banned the Move Action, whereas, "You will cease in such petty behavior!" would allow her to communicate, in an Obvious fashion, the fact that she has banned a certain type of Charm. The outlawed action should be communicated between players using the technical language of Exalted. Players are the final arbiters of how their characters translate these details to one another.

The Infernal gains a single offensive mote the first time during a particular target's action that they engage in the forbidden action. She may target up to her (Essence rating) different individuals with Follow the Leader, but none may share the same ban. The warlock may change the nature of an individual's ban once per action, on her action tick.

However, the warlock must also abide by the full index of actions she has banned. If she has forbidden one individual from taking Dash actions and another from using Counterattacks, she is banned from Dashing and Counterattacking. The first time during each action that she violates a particular ban, the Infernal loses a number of offensive motes equal to the number of actions she has currently banned. Outlawed actions disappear from her index at the end of the scene. She may also lift the ban on all or some of the actions she has banned by using this Charm on her action tick.

### LEASE THE FLAME

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple (Speed 5)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Ego-Infused Pattern Primacy

She Who Lives in Her Name is sometimes benevolent in her schemes against gods and man. More than revenge, she savors the opportunity to prove that her enemies need her. This Charm functions identically to Essence-Lending Method (see *Exalted*, p. 217) save for the following changes:

The warlock need not touch her subject. She may simply will the power into a character she can perceive up to a mile away. She may transfer up to (Essence x 5) motes in this fashion. If both she and her target have Overdrive pools, she may transfer motes from her Overdrive pool into her subject's Overdrive pool. She may also transfer Essence from her default personal or peripheral mote pools into her Overdrive pool, or the Overdrive pool of another, at a rate of three regular motes per every one offensive mote. As with Essence-Lending Method, these transfers do not contribute to anima displays. Finally, if the warlock is lending Essence to a hierarchical superior in an organization to which she belongs (such as the Whispering Flame to the Primordial King), she may Lease the Flame without spending Willpower.



## ORBITAL IMPACT STORM

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple (Speed 3, DV -0)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Sorcerous

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Mind-Hand Manipulation

Creation was built to reflect the glorious order embodied by She Who Lives In Her Name, from the movement of the constellations to the closed circle of life and death. Taking up the least expression of the Pyrian Flame's perfect motion, the Infernal becomes a reflection of this truth.

Upon activating Orbital Impact Storm, the warlock seizes a clattering maelstrom of loose objects from the surrounding environment—stones and chairs, dinner plates, hammers, broken fence-posts, and any other nearby bric-a-brac (objects carried by individuals and all attuned artifacts are exempt from being appropriated in this manner, as are objects too large or heavy for the average adult mortal to lift with one hand). If necessary, the Infernal may even rip cobblestones loose from streets or bricks from walls, inflicting (Essence) levels of unsoakable damage in the process; objects and structures with a soak greater than 8L are immune to such vandalism. This Charm cannot be activated if the Storyteller decrees that the environment lacks appropriate objects to work with, though players are reminded that two-point stunts allow dramatic editing of the scenery.

The seized objects hang in midair for a moment. Then the newly-formed constellation of debris begins to orbit the Infernal at ever-increasing speeds, pulverizing those foolish enough to attempt to close with the warlock. This constitutes an environmental hazard (Damage 4L/action, Trauma 2) covering a sphere with a radius of (Essence) yards around the character. Even blunt objects inflict lethal damage at the speed generated by Orbital Impact Storm. Opponents may safely navigate the storm if their Dodge DV is higher than the Infernal's (Willpower x 2). Additionally, it becomes difficult to target the Infernal through the whirling maelstrom, as blades are knocked askew and arrows snapped in half before they can reach her flesh; attacks suffer an external penalty of (Infernal's Essence ÷ 2, round up).

Normally, action-interval environmental hazard exposure resolves after the victim's DV refreshes but before anyone acts on the tick. However, the storm created by this Charm damages victims after resolving all actions taken during the tick, meaning that characters agile enough to avoid the debris must take care not to penalize their Dodge DV to the point that they get hit.

Unlike most Sorcerous Charms, the warlock may deactivate Orbital Impact Storm voluntarily. This may be done peacefully with a diceless miscellaneous action, freezing the suspended objects in place a split second before dropping them. Alternately, she can reflexively pay 5 motes to hurl shrapnel in all directions as a one-time environmental hazard (Damage 5L, Trauma 3) with a radius of (Willpower x 5) yards. This terminates the Charm and does not count as a Charm activation. Opponents may avoid the debris outright if their Dodge DV is higher than the Infernal's (Willpower + Essence).

Essence 3+ Infernals can purchase this Charm a second time, extending its duration to one day (or indefinite with Essence 5+).

## PRECISION THOUGHT-FORCE EXERCISE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** First She Who Lives In Her Name Excellency, Mind-Hand Manipulation

She Who Lives In Her Name feels something like pity for humans. They are crippled amputees, incapable of reaching beyond their physical forms. It isn't really pity, of course, but rather an acute and targeted awareness of her superiority and the necessity of upgrading lesser beings to her specifications. The Green Sun Princes who learn this Charm perform a great service, serving as honored prototypes of humanoid transfiguration even as they civilize themselves.

This Charm permanently upgrades Mind-Hand Manipulation in the following ways:

- The Charm may be used to protect others with Defend Other actions out to its maximum range rather than the usual (Dexterity rating) yards.
- The Charm can be used to deliver Touch effects as though the emanated force is part of the Infernal's body.
- The Infernal adds +2 to his Parry DV using Mind-Hand Manipulation while taking a Guard action. With Essence 4+, this benefit also applies while using Defend Other to protect someone.

## FORCE-DRAINING EXIGENCE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Will-Crushing Force

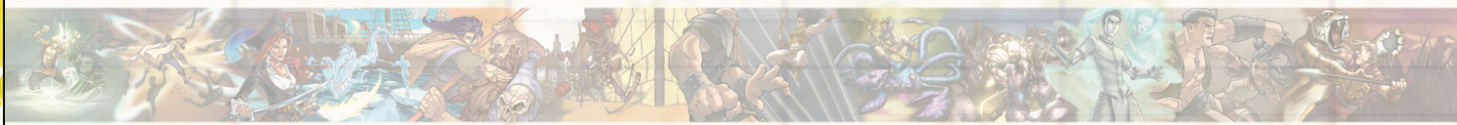
The Whispering Flame knows that the power and problem of the Exalted are one and the same. Upon learning this Charm, the character gains an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, she may fill it by enacting the following procedure: First, she must use Essence-Dissecting Stare (or a relative effect) to witness an opponent using an Overdrive Charm. She must then analyze the Charm. If it is unknown to her, roll the warlock's Intelligence + Occult against difficulty 5. If successful, the Infernal intuits the nature of how her target's Overdrive Charm functions. She also perceives each time the analyzed Charm delivers offensive motes to her target, and may use this information to form a rough idea of how full her target's Overdrive pool is.

Whenever an Infernal with this Charm uses Mind-Hand Manipulation to inflict at least one health level of damage to an opponent whose Overdrive she has analyzed, the Exalt automatically drains one offensive mote from her victim's Overdrive pool, adding it to her own. In addition, the warlock may reflexively modify her attack, diverting health levels of damage in step 10. For each health level of damage she withdraws from the attack, she instead siphons off three of the victim's offensive motes, adding these motes to her own Overdrive pool.

Force-Draining Exigence and Will-Crushing Force may not be used to enhance the same attack.







## ADORJAN

### IMPATIENT TEMPEST LABOR

**Cost:** 5+m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** One hour

**Prerequisite Charms:** Wind-Born Stride

Demons evacuating ahead of the Silent Wind often congregate in places she recently ravaged, counting on her to seek a new venue of massacre rather than endure the tedium of a familiar arena. They are wise to do so. Adorjan has little patience for tasks that bore her or require her to stay in one place for any length of time and counts on her speed to rush through chores. The base cost to activate this charm is five motes, plus an additional five mote surcharge for each time the Exalt has activated the Charm in the past 25 hours.

While enchanted by this Charm, the warlock completes all Ability-based actions in half the usual time, provided that those actions normally would take ten minutes or longer to complete. The Charm is not cumulative with other quickening effects; only the best applies. Impatient Tempest Labor also can't quicken the casting of spells. Each dot of Essence above 2 cumulatively halves this time, so an Essence 5 Infernal works at sixteen times normal speed. It is not possible to work at less than maximum speed, given Adorjan's impatience. Not all tasks that can be quickened benefit from doing so; just because a warlock can recite the entire Broken-Winged Crane in the span of a second doesn't mean that a listener can absorb spoken information at that rate. The Charm also doesn't quicken fixed time limits that have nothing to do with how quick the Infernal is, such as cooking time on an alchemical reagent or the maturation of a sired offspring within a pregnant mother (unless the warlock is the pregnant one, since surviving childbirth is a Stamina + Resistance roll for mortals). The Storyteller should use common sense when adjudicating such cases.

Adorjan struggles to build things that last because of her cultivated aversion to forming attachments. Consequently, the acceleration granted by this Charm may not allow a character to complete more than a day's worth of effort building or repairing items using any Craft Ability in a day. In the aforementioned Essence 5 example capable of completing 16 hours of work per hour, this limitation would allow her to spend a full hour of activation crafting, but slightly into the second hour, she would run against this limit and could not bring herself to "waste" any more time on crafts. She may use the remaining duration of accelerated speed for other tasks in the meantime, but she must wait a day before using the Charm for anything to do with construction or repairs.

### WIND SHEARING HEARTS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Joy in Violence Approach

Adorjan will fill the world with the silence of letting go. She carries out this thankless crusade with stoic perseverance, but her heroism is its own reward. Nothing is so rewarding to Adorjan as the surge of adrenaline that comes from forcing someone to part ways with their love. This Charm grants the warlock an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, it

accrues two motes each time she attacks a target that is being protected by way of the Defend Other action, so long as the defender harbors a positive Intimacy toward the Infernal's target. This Intimacy must be more than simple respect or admiration; it must have an intimate emotional context such as friendship or love.

The warlock also gains two offensive motes any time she attacks a Solar or Lunar who is being protected by their mate, regardless of the emotional context of their Intimacies, or lack thereof. The same also applies to Terrestrial Exalted bound by Sworn Brother's Oath (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 122).

### BEHEMOTH FETCH EXERCISE

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 7)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Knockback, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Thousandfold Typhoon Hand

The pets of the Yozis are not so dissimilar to the pets of mortals, save perhaps for the scope of exertions required to keep them happy and healthy. This Charm may enhance any close combat attack that successfully hits a target no greater than triple the warlock's own size. The target must be a single being or object; structures may not be toppled this way. The enhanced attack swats the target away in a direction of the Infernal's choice a distance equaling the number of yards the warlock moved via her own locomotion on the previous tick. If terrain allows, the victim skids to a halt stunned and prone, but suffering no further harm. If deliberately hurled into a solid barrier, the victim suffers dice of damage equal to the distance she would have continued to travel (maximum 25) and then slumps to the ground, stunned and prone. This damage is normally bashing, but may be lethal depending on the composition of the barrier.

If the Infernal uses this Charm where a Primordial behemoth or natural animal can see her do so, all of her subsequent actions to control, communicate with or train that creature later in the scene are at target number 6 rather than 7. Interactions with other similar beings may enjoy this benefit with Storyteller approval. Unrolled actions are unaffected. This perk doesn't improve if a creature observes multiple activations of this Charm.

If the Infernal has Essence 3+ and any Primordial behemoths or predatory natural animals observe the Infernal use this Charm to knock away something that they consider edible, the beasts feel an unnatural Compulsion to attack and devour the food source until successful or the scene ends. Resisting this urge costs only one Willpower and may be done at any time, but beasts will normally only resist if they personally know and care about the target as something more than a snack.

### WIND-DAUGHTER'S WRATH

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

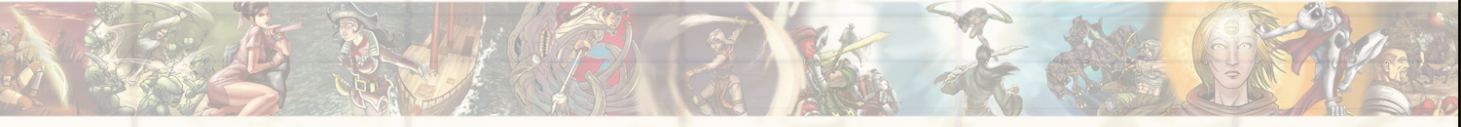
**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pellegrina's Fury

This Charm upgrades its prerequisite, broadening its power to damage all non-magical inanimate objects within range. Adorjan hopes this lesson will one day teach her daughter to think beyond her vendetta and eagerly awaits the day Pelleg-





rina surprises her by blowing away the arrogant metal towers of Malfeas.

A second purchase of this Charm requires Essence 4+, but broadens its scope further to include animate beings with an Essence rating lower than the warlock. Affected Essence users may pay 1m per tick in lieu of suffering damage, shielding themselves with an ablative layer of exuded power. Mortals and natural animals aren't so lucky and die in a matter of seconds. Effects that minimize or negate environmental damage work normally to mitigate damage/Essence drain from this Charm.

With Essence 6+, the second purchase allows the Charm to damage beings of equal Essence to the warlock and inflicts aggravated damage instead of lethal to objects and lower Essence beings.

### HUNGRY WIND HOWLING

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Murder is Meat

Adorjan knows what it is to feel loss. It is the pang of hunger that fuels her ravenous abattoir winds. This Charm grants an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, it gains motes under the following circumstances: Any time the Infernal witnesses an opponent slain by another's hand, she gains a single offensive mote per opponent slain. The Silent Wind is driven into ardor when she is denied her sup.

If the slain victim is an Essence-user, she accrues (Essence ÷ 2, rounded up) motes. The warlock must be rolled into battle to benefit from this Overdrive.

### UNBOUND FREEDOM INFILTRATION

**Cost:** 1ahl; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Gravity-Rebuking Grace

Bored with racing across the surface of walls, the Silent Wind may blow through them. Sometimes she leaves, finding freedom; at other times she enters, finding victims. To activate this Charm, the Infernal must be dashing at her maximum speed, and must have maintained this velocity throughout her entire previous action. Upon invocation, it allows her to body to shred apart into a crimson wind which blows through the cracks and gaps in a barrier, to reform on the other side. Smears and stains of blood are left behind in the Infernal's wake. This Charm cannot bypass obstacles more than (Essence) yards thick, or which are airtight (so, a door with a keyhole or a space beneath it, or a wooden wall with gaps between the boards would be valid targets, while a solid wall sheathed in marble would not). This Charm automatically allows the Infernal to bypass anyone attempting to physically impede her with a Blockade Movement action (see **Glories of the Most High—Luna**, p. 22)

At Essence 4+, Unbound Freedom Infiltration may be invoked as an innate power rather than a Charm activation by paying an extra aggravated health level upon activation.

### VOICE-DRINKING KISS

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Crippling, Shaping

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Sacred Kamilla's Inhalation, Eloquence in Unspoken Words

Those who have earned Adorjan's deepest regard may be graced with her most sacred gift—silence. This Charm may be invoked to supplement a kiss; if the target is an unwilling recipient of the Infernal's affections, this requires a clinch attempt (the kiss itself may be treated as a hold action if desired, though a crush attack is just as effective; so long as the Infernal draws in her victim's breath, the state of the rest of his body is of little consequence). With a quick inhalation of breath, the Infernal steals her victim's voice. Though not actually damaging, the process is momentarily but excruciatingly painful; coughing up a few drops of blood is a common aftereffect.

For as long as the Infernal commits Essence to maintain the Charm, she may speak in the voice she has stolen. Releasing the commitment of Essence returns the stolen voice to its proper owner. At Essence 4+, she gains the ability terminate the Charm by swallowing a stolen voice entirely, which nourishes her as if it were a corpse inhaled with Sacred Kamilla's Inhalation (or, optionally, as though it were the death of an extra, if the Infernal knows Murder is Meat). If the voice belonged to a mortal, that mortal is rendered permanently mute. If it belonged to a supernatural being, that being is rendered mute for one week per dot of the Infernal's Essence before finally regaining his voice.

A second purchase of this Charm, at Essence 4+, gives the Infernal the option to let a stolen voice's owner telepathically hear the words she speaks with it regardless of the distance between them (provided they are in the same realm of existence). This may even be used to make social attacks against the voice's original owner. Shutting the stolen voice out for a day costs one Willpower. This can be done as soon as communication begins to minimize the victim's risk. If a victim doesn't shut out words that turn out to be a social attack, it is too late to block that attack via immunity. The victim must first resolve the social attack before spending an extra Willpower to shut out the stolen voice.

### EMBRACING EMPTY PASSION

**Cost:** — (1wp); **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

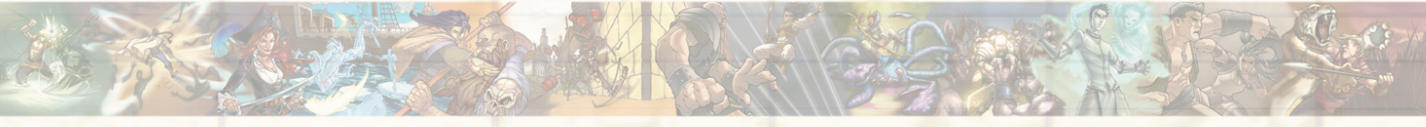
**Keywords:** Emotion

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Wind-Carried Passion

Love is transient and absurd. Since Adorjan cannot often convince the world of love's transience, her lessons chiefly focus on absurdity. This Charm upgrades Tragic Love Amusement when used to instill Intimacies in others through Wind-Carried Passion in the following ways:

- If the victim has Compassion 3+, he must suppress his Compassion for a scene of deliberate effort to count toward weakening the Intimacy.
- The first time the victim perceives the object of the created Intimacy each day counts as (victim's Compassion rating) scenes repairing any damage to the Intimacy unless he spends three Willpower to resist this unnatural mental influence. Once the Intimacy is fully eroded, it ceases to replenish itself this way.



• Once the Infernal has successfully created an Intimacy of love in another character with Tragic Love Amusement, she can spend a point of Willpower to terminate that Intimacy. This is an unblockable, undodgeable social attack that instantly functions without a roll across all distance and realms of existence. As the Intimacy vanishes, the victim regains a Compassion channel and is permitted to delete his memories of the Intimacy's object as if he had used Freedom Lets Go.

## THE EBON DRAGON

### CORROSIVE PATTERN INFLECTION

**Cost:** 2-10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Shaping, Sorcerous, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Loom-Snarling Deception

The Primordials built Creation. Compared with this feat, the transubstantiation of one object into another is relatively trivial. This Charm can only target non-magical inanimate objects. The Infernal pays one Willpower plus motes equal to twice the target's Resources value, then his player rolls (Manipulation + Lore) roll at a difficulty of the object's value. If this roll fails or botches, the target transforms into something unexpected and abhorrent of the Storyteller's choosing. The misshapen prodigies of such accidents aren't valid targets for this Charm and rarely have any monetary value or practical use, save perhaps as ugly decorations or random occult ingredients. Success envelops the object in coils of caustic energy, gruesomely melting and realigning its motonic structure to become any other non-magical inanimate object of equal or lesser Resources cost. Dissolving an opponent's weapon into goo or turning a suit of armor to dust (resulting in Resources 0 items) is a valid use of this Charm. Infernals can't make Resources 1+ objects they aren't familiar with, defined as spending a minimum of one scene studying or using such an item.

Although casual inspection reveals nothing unusual about transformed items, trained savants can recognize subtle hints of Yozi aesthetics in the objects with a difficulty 5 (Perception + Occult) roll. Furthermore, the objects lose stability after a number of months equal to their new Resources value, warping as per a failed activation roll. If countermagic dispels this Charm's effects prior to this dissolution, the object returns to its original state.

Infernals with Essence 4+ may simultaneously warp any number of valid targets within a radius of (Essence) yards around themselves without needing actual touch, provided they own all of those items. The difficulty for this feat is the highest difficulty for any targeted object. Small groups of related items may be changed together as a single item with Storyteller permission, such as transmuting one outfit into another. Further explanation on the limits of what is considered an object may be found on page 213 of **Exalted**.

### OUR LITTLE SECRET

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Compulsion, Emotion, Sorcerous, Stackable, Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Witness to Darkness

The surest way for Creation to fall into the state of wicked depravity that is most pleasing to the Ebon Dragon is for good men to do nothing, and the Shadow of All Things is more than ready to promote such inaction. To use this Charm, the warlock must touch a witness to an act of depravity, or to evidence of such an act. Henceforth, the target's mind is filled with paralyzing shame and horror when she considers relating what she has seen to any other character, either through speech or writing, forcing her to ultimately remain silent. This unnatural mental influence costs 3 Willpower to resist. The warlock must be aware that the witness has beheld a specific depravity, and may not blindly 'guess' when activating Our Little Secret. Multiple activations of this Charm may be placed on the same witness, to force silence on the subject of multiple valid acts.

An act of depravity is defined as any act which would cause shock, outrage, or scandal according to the common mores of Creation's dominant culture (currently the Realm) or the dominant culture in which the act occurs. Murder, adultery, rape, incest, theft, violent assault and disrespect toward the Terrestrial Exalted on the part of mortals are all examples of acts of depravity within the Realm, and are thus applicable wherever the Charm is used. More specific acts of depravity might include rudeness to an Essence 6+ divinity (if the Charm were used in Yu-Shan), enslavement of citizens of Nexus (if used in Nexus), or disobeying a superior officer (if used in Lookshy).

At Essence 3+, the Infernal may touch a piece of evidence related to an act of depravity rather than a witness, for a cost of 8m rather than 4m. This causes all individuals who subsequently witness the evidence so marked to be forced into silence as though they had been targeted with the 4m activation of Our Little Secret, as a Sorcerous effect.

With Essence 4+, the Charm's Compulsion is enhanced to also include a prohibition against moving or disturbing evidence of an act of depravity. For example, a character who found a mutilated body deep in the woods would not only be powerless to speak of his discovery, but also could not bring himself to give the corpse a proper burial or even to drag it back to town to be anonymously discovered and properly disposed of by others.

### THE FACE IN THE DARKNESS

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Compulsion, Crippling, Emotion, Native, Overdrive, Shaping, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** First Ebon Dragon Excellency, Our Little Secret

The Ultimate Darkness knows no greater pleasure than to shatter the mighty, break the hearts of heroes, and bring mortality to those who seemed invincible. Upon learning this Charm, the character gains an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, the Fiend may only fill it by acting as the architect of another man's ruin.

In order to use this Charm against a particular target, the warlock must first mark at least one character to whom the target has a positive Intimacy with the effect of Our Little Secret (see **Ink Monkeys**, Vol. 7). The Intimacy must have a strong emotional context, such as love or friendship, and the effect of the warlock's trigger of Our Little Secret must still be intact





(the target has not spent Willpower or used Charms to break their silence about the horror they have witnessed).

The Infernal touches his target and pays five motes to activate this Charm. The target immediately intuits that some great harm has befallen each affected loved one as an Obvious effect. This does not reveal the details of Our Little Secret or the exact nature of the harm that has been done to each victim. At this juncture, the character also understands that he may allow full knowledge of what has transpired to enter his consciousness. By doing so, he explicitly agrees to allow the effects of this Charm through his Shaping defenses (if any). If he chooses not to allow this dread knowledge to reveal itself to him, he must spend one Willpower to resist immediately running from the scene to fly to the aid of his loved ones. Spending Willpower to resist this unnatural Compulsion always grants characters with the Great Curse a point of Limit, even if they have already gained Limit for resisting unnatural mental influence during the scene.

If the target does allow himself to see The Face in the Darkness, he witnesses each and every depravity the warlock has forced his loved ones to endure in silence. This tragic and horrifying sequence of sounds and images plays through the target's mind instantly, but he experiences it in painstaking detail, standing helplessly and intangibly by as each of his loved ones are victimized. This cruel and deliberate show of atrocity has the following side effects:

- The target gains an Intimacy of hatred to the Infernal on the spot.
- If the target had any Overdrive motes, he loses a number of them equal to the number of victims revealed to him. The warlock adds five times this number of offensive motes to his Overdrive pool.
- The target feels emasculated by the harm done to his loved ones, and is unable to channel his Virtues for the rest of the scene as a Crippling effect.
- For the rest of the scene, if the target gains offensive motes to his Overdrive pool, any gains are reduced by a single mote, to a minimum of zero. Motes lost enter the warlock's Overdrive pool on the same tick.

### FERVOR-DRIVEN ANTAGONISM TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 10m, 2wp; **Mins:** Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 6 long ticks)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, Servitude, Social

**Duration:** Instant (one month)

**Prerequisite Charms:** Witness to Darkness

The worst cruelty the Exalted inflicted on the Primordials was forcing the humiliated titans to pay attention to their conquerors and care about them in the ways that they never thought about vermin. Turnabout is fair play. This Charm is an unnatural and unblockable social attack directed at a single target using a dice pool of (Manipulation + Presence + Essence). No actual communication takes place, as the magic reaches directly into the target's soul to poison her heart without regard for language barriers. Conventional senses cannot detect this assault, though victims with the power to perceive Charms (such as through Essence sight) understand exactly what the warlock is attempting and the attack is not unblockable for them. Even victims who remain unaware of the curse levied against their souls can apply their Dodge MDV as a passive instinct, but do not know they have done so.

If the attack succeeds, the target can pay three Willpower to reject the unholy influence. Doing so does not grant awareness of the magic she avoided, though she feels inexplicably tired. Fortunately, paying this Willpower also immunizes her against all applications of this Charm for the rest of the scene. Victims who fail to pay Willpower against a successful attack suffer as follows:

- The victim must avoid the warlock for a full month to break the Charm's magic (defined in subsequent bullets). Any scene of social interaction resets this countdown, whether hostile or cordial.
- If the victim harbors an existing Intimacy toward the warlock when the Charm takes hold, the Infernal learns that fact and understands the nature of those feelings. Moreover, that Intimacy becomes enchanted as an Emotion effect. If eroded or removed, the Intimacy returns at full strength each day at sunset until the magic ends. Effects that change the emotional context of the Intimacy are permissible and don't get reversed; the redefined Intimacy reasserts itself normally with its new context.
- If the victim has no Intimacy toward the Infernal at the time of activation, the Infernal realizes this and chooses an emotional context. The victim then gains an Intimacy toward him with the chosen context. The enchanted Intimacy continually reasserts itself as explained in the previous bullet.
- The victim feels drawn to seek out the Infernal, finding him to be irresistibly fascinating. This Servitude effect doesn't actually compel her in any way. Instead, the forced attention gnaws at her dreams. For every five days that pass without spending a scene socially interacting with the warlock, the victim suffers a cumulative -1 internal penalty on Conviction rolls to regain Willpower from rest. This penalty can reduce the pool to zero dice, forfeiting any gain. A scene of interaction with the warlock resets the penalty to zero (but resets the month countdown).

A second purchase of this Charm requires Essence 4+, but permits a Performance-based attack as an alternative to the standard Presence-based method described above. Compare the attack roll to the MDV of all listeners, each of whom resist separately as though individually targeted. All new Intimacies formed this way must have the same emotional context. The Storyteller may assume that no one resists unless they are naturally wary and untrusting or harbor personal animosity toward the warlock. Players choose whether to resist or not as normal.

### GOLDEN YEARS TARNISHED BLACK

**Cost:** 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, Illusion, Social

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Witness to Darkness

The Ebon Dragon is unsatisfied with ruining the present and future. He has to desecrate the past as well. Why else would he invent fate but to spread misery to all time and space? This Charm augments a Manipulation-based social attack targeting one victim (i.e. most likely using Investigation or Presence) in which the Infernal verbally prompts the target to recall positive memories associated with a particular time or subject. "Remember your wedding night?" and "Congratulations on your promotion!" are both examples of valid triggers. The memory need not be wholly positive to be targeted, so long as there



is some good part to destroy. The Infernal can word the attack so that it ironically validates the positive nature of the memory while actually calling attention to the negative details surrounding it. Regardless of whether the social attack forces an answer or not, the victim vividly relives the targeted experience within her own mind.

Unfortunately for the victim, the Ebon Dragon's power obscures and distorts the fond memory even as she recalls it. If the roll overcomes the target's MDV, the warlock ruins the memory. If the Storyteller determines the target has no positive memories to recall about the chosen topic, the Charm has no effect.

Victims misremember ruined memories in the worst possible light, glossing over or outright forgetting everything good about the experience in question. Everything bad is remembered in exacting and often exaggerated detail. The victim thinks the worst of all other participants in the remembered experience, especially anyone whom she can blame for any harm she suffered (however slight). A mother could misremember her dead son as a lazy good-for-nothing who talked back, forgetting that she also loved him and he loved her. Corrupted memories never introduce outright falsehoods. The mother remembers her son's laziness because he was sometimes lazy and remembers that he talked back because most children do. She does not remember him torturing small animals because that never happened. Thankfully for the Ebon Dragon, everyone is flawed. In that at least, Creation functions as designed.

Ruining memories interferes with Intimacies toward the subject of those memories. If the victim has no such Intimacy, then a negative Intimacy instantly forms toward that subject. Any existing positive Intimacy warps into a negative Intimacy. In either case, the victim's player chooses the Intimacy's new emotional context, subject to Storyteller approval. For instance, the aforementioned mother may feel resentment toward her son or hatred or contempt.

Corrupted memories are an unnatural Illusion effect. The victim can repair her damaged mind by paying one Willpower if she had no Intimacy toward the subject of the memory when the Infernal used Golden Years Tarnished Black or two Willpower if the Charm corrupted a positive Intimacy. This may seem counterintuitive given that a positive Intimacy helps defend against the Charm, but if the accursed magic takes root in spite of this bonus, the feelings turn cancerous and become a liability. The victim can pay this Willpower to heal the memory in the moment the Charm takes root (which also prevents the Intimacy from forming or being corrupted), but if she does not do so, she must wait until externally prompted or provide a compelling Storyteller-approved reason to question the memory.

Intimacies formed or corrupted by this Charm do not count against the usual limit a mind can sustain, at least so long as the associated memories remain corrupted. After all, the Ebon Dragon wouldn't want his enemies getting over their misery just because life went on. Once the memory heals, the Intimacy falls away as normal if neglected. Even without such healing, it is still possible to remove the Intimacy through normal means other than neglect.

A second purchase of this Charm at Essence 3+ allows it to enhance Performance-based spoken attacks as an alternative to the basic single-target use. In doing so, the Infernal picks a

single topic and all listeners react to the Charm as though separately targeted by the address. The corruptive mass oratory has no effect on listeners lacking appropriate memories to subvert.

### WEAK MINDS BELIEVE ANYTHING

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Golden Years Tarnished Black

The Ebon Dragon isn't thoughtlessly cruel like his siblings, indifferent to the suffering he brings to lesser beings. The Ultimate Darkness has more heart than that, honoring the most fragile child with the same diligent attention he would pay to a god or titan. He fairly ensures that all suffer unfairly. Still, it cannot really be said that all victims are alike to him. Purchase of this Charm permanently removes the Willpower cost to activate Golden Years Tarnished Black whenever the target is a single mortal, natural animal or Essence 1 magical being.

With Essence 4+, this Charm adds First Circle demons to the list of cost-discounted victims. Furthermore, the base mote cost to target anything on the list becomes the target's lowest Virtue or highest Virtue (respectively) depending on whether the target is an extra or not. Surcharges and discounts from other effects modify this new base cost normally, with the former applied before the latter.

### WANT BECOMES NEED

**Cost:** —(+1m); **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Golden Years Tarnished Black

As much fun as it can be to invert love into hate, there are other ways to ruin a memory. This Charm permanently upgrades its prerequisite. By paying an extra mote while using that Charm, the Infernal seeks a different outcome. Ruining a memory doesn't take away the pleasure of it. Quite to the contrary, the subject gains fetishistic appeal that is at once a source of titillation and shame. This induced desire results in a positive Intimacy of addiction toward the subject (possibly overriding an existing positive Intimacy with another emotional context). Healing this variant of memory damage and Intimacy gain requires the same process as the basic function of Golden Years Tarnished Black.

With Essence 3+, Want Becomes Need does more than distort memory and foster shame-poisoned longings for remembered joys. If the attack succeeds, the twisted memory and poisonous Intimacy join together to addict her soul. Most victims suffer an unnatural Compulsion duplicating a constant partially-controlled Overindulgence Limit Break (**Exalted**, p. 105), though they may take scant consolation that the behavior is solely limited to the subject of the altered memories/Intimacy and does not predispose them to other vices. Victims can pay one Willpower to suppress this addictive behavior for one day. Victims with Limit tracks can choose to gain one Limit instead of paying Willpower to ignore the addiction for a day. If this results in madness wholly unconnected to addiction, well, **Exalted** are strange creatures.

The addictive Compulsion instilled by Want Becomes Need is predicated on both the memory distortion and the associated Intimacy. If either is removed or meaningfully altered at any point (as determined by the Storyteller), the addiction instantly terminates and never comes back without further use of Want Becomes Need.





### EVERYTHING GETS WORSE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Golden Years Tarnished Black

While the Ebon Dragon stands to gain more from ruining beautiful memories than further sully painful recollections, he believes he can always find a way to worsen the world. After all, he always has so far. Purchase of this Charm broadens the utility of its prerequisite in the following ways:

- The Charm can target memories that don't have a meaningful positive component to them. There's not much silver lining to "That day you watched your little girl die in front of your eyes." When a bad memory is made worse this way, every pain associated with that memory becomes accentuated and exaggerated. A soldier remembers the fateful day his legion fell in battle against the Anathema as if it happened only yesterday. He remembers the sound of his friends' screams, the awful crunch of their bones and the shocked look as the newest recruit tried vainly to stuff his entrails back into his body after the monster eviscerated him with a backhanded slap. He remembers the stink of blood and offal and rancid sweat. Absence of a negative Intimacy creates one in the victim with a Storyteller-approved emotional context picked by the victim's player.

- At the Infernal's discretion, part of the imposed memory distortion can involve reassignment of blame to a target of the warlock's choosing. The victim's player can choose any Storyteller-approved chain of logic to justify this new opinion, however twisted and tangled. If the Storyteller cannot construct such a narrative because there is simply no way the new scapegoat could be responsible, the attack automatically fails. Still, this offers immense latitude. A child can construct a dozen reasons why it is her fault that her father abandoned her and her mother. If only she had been better behaved or told her daddy how much she loved him, he wouldn't have gone away.

- If the Infernal knows the Charm Weak Minds Believe Anything, he receives additional benefit when making a discount-cost victim believe she is the ultimate cause of her own suffering as explained previously. Such victims also lose (6 - the Infernal's Compassion) additional Willpower as the memory twists. If this depletes all of an extra's remaining Willpower, that victim's will breaks and she attempts to kill herself from shame and self-loathing at every opportunity for one day. If she survives due to the intervention of others, the urge passes. Despair wrought by this unnatural Compulsion is explicitly capable of overriding a target's survival instinct, thereby issuing the unstated and normally unacceptable order to commit suicide. The souls of victims who kill themselves as a result of Everything Gets Worse fall straight into Oblivion barring other magic that forces them to linger as a ghost or pass into Lethe. Much to the Ebon Dragon's frustration, annihilation trumps his Charms to banish souls into the darkness beyond existence. He has yet to find a way to inflict absolute despair for eternity, though not for lack of trying.

### BIBLE OF BROKEN TRUTHS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Sorcerous

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Golden Years Tarnished Black

The Ebon Dragon knows his own nature well enough to realize he is too often distracted tormenting individuals to properly damn the universe. Accordingly, he sends forth blasphemous revisionist texts into Creation as messengers of his lies. Upon purchasing this Charm, the Infernal permanently gains the power to use Golden Years Tarnished Black to enhance written social attacks matching the Charm's basic spoken use.

All that is necessary is for the words to clearly invoke the intended topic. Terse graffiti is just as useful for delivering the attack as a lengthier project like a novel or history textbook. Both Presence and Performance-based attacks are permissible, with the latter taking the form of general addresses to any reader. Text enchanted with this Charm is no more physically durable than normal, so fire remains an excellent countermeasure to most cursed writing.

The magic within the words is also a Sorcerous effect and can be dispelled as such, causing the text to fade away as though never written. Even stone tablets become unmarred and smooth once more as chiseled words disappear. Few realize that the empty page is the truest and most eloquent scripture of the Ebon Dragon. Of all his lies, the titan's insistence that he exists is the most audacious and preposterous.

### MEMORY POISON MASTERY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

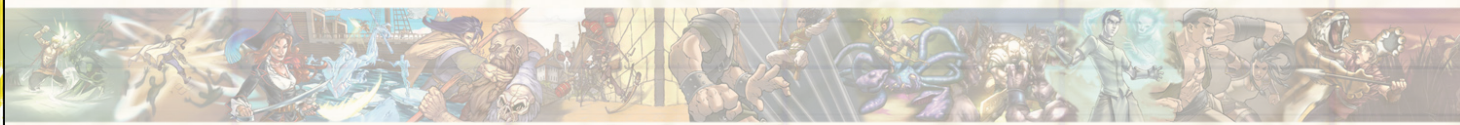
**Prerequisite Charms:** Golden Years Tarnished Black

With greater attunement to the Ebon Dragon comes greater power to attack the sanctity of treasured memories. The slight catch is that power is slavery. Those who can sabotage memories adroitly find themselves compelled to do so. This Charm permanently modifies its prerequisite as follows:

- A social attack enhanced by the Charm adds a number of bonus dice equal to the Infernal's Essence. These are dice added by a Charm and count toward those limits.

- The base cost to heal memories damaged by each activation of this Charm increases to three Willpower. If the memory corrupted a positive Intimacy, the cost rises even further to (Infernal's Essence rating, maximum five) Willpower. The victim still can only spend Willpower to heal a memory in the moment the Infernal attacks or in response to plausible prompting (such as encountering evidence that contradicts recollection).

- Upon overhearing a non-extra speaking of a treasured memory, the Infernal must use his next available action to attack the memory with Golden Years Tarnished Black unless he can't pay the cost to do so. He may use the Charm any way he knows how (such as creating an addiction via Want Becomes Need) and needn't stick to just ruining memories. If he doesn't attack the memory in question, he gains a point of Limit unless he has already gained Limit this way previously in the day. This mad need to taint others doesn't apply if the Infernal has no opportunity to react that way. Limit is not gained from hearing a memory relayed by an Infallible Messenger sent halfway around the world. Likewise, Limit isn't gained if the Infernal can't make social attacks for any reason, such as due to being bound and gagged. Ultimately, the Storyteller is the final arbiter, but should consider whether the character made a good faith effort to attack a cherished memory when given a reasonable chance to do so.



### TWISTED YESTERDAYS CURSE

**Cost:**—(+2m); **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Sorcerous

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Memory Poison Mastery

The Ebon Dragon does not permit his enemies to recover the truths his awful power rots from within. This Charm permanently upgrades Golden Years Tarnished Black. Whenever the Infernal activates that Charm to enhance a spoken attack against a single target, he can choose to pay an additional two motes to make his words Sorcerous. If the attack successfully overcomes the victim's MDV and corrupts her memory, then she can't heal this damage via Willpower expenditure—even to reject the corruption in the moment of the attack. Spending the Willpower normally needed to fix the memory does allow the victim to become suspicious that her recollection may be wrong, though not how or why. Methods of breaking mental influence other than spending Willpower work normally on Sorcerous invocations of Golden Years Tarnished Black, such as the Solar Charm Transcendent Hero's Meditation (*Exalted*, p. 201). Appropriate countermagic also works to reverse the Charm's effects.

### UNREASONING PREJUDICE INFLICTION

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Emotion, Servitude

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Golden Years Tarnished Black

There is little point in twisting a couple's love into hate if they turn right around and make up a week later. That just simply won't do. Fortunately, the Ebon Dragon long ago planned for such contingencies.

Golden Years Tarnished Black already bolsters the Intimacies it creates and corrupts, exempting them from usual Intimacy total maximums. Unreasoning Prejudice Infliction further enchants these Intimacies to resist removal. All of the following powers instantly terminate if the associated memory heals, leaving behind a perfectly normal non-magical Intimacy.

- The victim must resist any external attempt to damage enchanted Intimacies via mental influence with the best non-magical defenses available to her. Generally speaking, that means using her highest MDV and paying Willpower at every opportunity. If the influence succeeds in spite of her best effort, the effect resolves normally. Victims can pay five Willpower to forgo the defense mandated by this unnatural Emotion and Servitude effect, but must pay this exorbitant cost each time they wish to lower their mental guard against a social attack or other source of mental influence. Most victims find this urge too strong to fight and instead focus their efforts on fixing their memories or ridding themselves of the offending Intimacy.

- The victim cannot voluntarily take actions that would erode the Intimacy (as determined by the Storyteller). She can pay one Willpower per scene to suppress this unnatural Emotion and Servitude effect so that she can work toward freeing herself from the unwanted feelings.

- The victim's sleep is troubled with brooding nightmares about her damaged memories. Every time she regains Willpower points from sleep, she is considered to have spent that many scenes repairing the Intimacy of any damage done to it. In effect, the emotional pollution regenerates by feeding upon the suffering buried in her subconscious. If the Intimacy is actually removed, the feelings behind it die and cease regenerating.

### GLORIES THAT NEVER WERE

**Cost:**—(+1m); **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Unreasoning Prejudice Infliction

Sometimes the Ebon Dragon is best served by whiter lies than himself, veiling inconvenient truths behind the mists of nostalgia. By paying an extra mote while using Golden Years Tarnished Black, the Infernal ruins the targeted memory in a much more unorthodox manner. The victim retains and idealizes everything she finds good about the memory. At the same time, she forgets everything bad about the topic and/or minimizes the importance of bad elements as the Infernal chooses. For example, an aging Dynast can be made to remember the reign of the Scarlet Empress as a halcyon time of justice and peace, completely overlooking the tyranny and oppression of her totalitarian regime. A molested child can be made to adore her father once more. Most usefully, the Infernal can help a mortal enemy remember how much she enjoys his charming company and flattering praise, never mind those times he slept with her daughter, murdered her husband and burned down her house.

If the victim doesn't already have a positive Intimacy to a particular memory, whitewashing the recollection with Glories That Never Were instantly creates such an Intimacy with a Storyteller-approved emotional context chosen by the victim's player. An existing positive Intimacy becomes enchanted by the Charm. Healing memory damage and Intimacy gain inflicted by Glories That Never Were generally requires the same process as the basic function of Golden Years Tarnished Black (as modified by Unreasoning Prejudice Infliction). However, victims also add half their Willpower rating as an MDV bonus to resist all external attempts to weaken or remove the Intimacy associated with an idealized memory. This bonus reflects the way minds doggedly cling to delusions of better times in the bleak world that is Creation. Hope is often all people have, however false.

With Essence 4+, Glories That Never Were gets worse. If the bolstered positive Intimacy is removed by any means while its associated memory remains damaged, the victim experiences a sudden wave of despair as she comprehends the inherent ugliness of truth. This overreaction drags her mind to the opposite extreme like a swinging pendulum, changing the way her memories distort to match the base ruin inflicted by Golden Years Tarnished Black. What was pure good becomes hateful. Furthermore, a new enchanted Intimacy instantly forms toward the subject as per all rules of Golden Years Tarnished Black.

### DARK CLAWS SEIZE DARK HEARTS

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Unreasoning Prejudice Infliction

The Ultimate Darkness preys upon the vile feelings that seep from wounded memories. Such emotions are but a shadow of the Dragon, and so they rightly yield before their master and betray the heart that holds them. This Charm can enhance any social attack aimed at a single target (typically with Investigation or Presence), provided the attack preys upon an Intimacy created or corrupted by Golden Years Tarnished Black.



For instance, if the warlock caused a widow to despise her late husband, he could then attempt to prey upon that hate by suggesting she should set fire to all the art he painted as his life's work. Instead of the usual -1 MDV modifier, the social attack becomes unnatural (if not already) and unexpected, costing one additional Willpower to resist at each opportunity to do so (to a maximum of five Willpower as normal).

If the Infernal has Essence 7+, Dark Claws Seize Dark Hearts may also be used to augment Performance-based social attacks as an alternative to single target use. Such attacks work on all listeners, but the benefits of the Charm (unexpected, automatically unnatural, etc.) only apply against those with appropriate Intimacies.

### DRAGON'S LAIR OBTENEBRATION

**Cost:** —(+10m); **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Noon as Night Evocation (*Return of the Scarlet Empress*, p. 210)

The Ebon Dragon would choose almost any end to conflict over a glorious last stand. Though he loathes putting himself at risk, he knows the price of surrender. This Charm allows a Fiend to modify its prerequisite, paying an extra 10 motes upon activation to set the stage for a terrifying showdown. The Infernal must activate this effect in an enclosed space no larger than (Essence x 10) yards in radius. Enclosed means four walls, a ceiling (or other substantial overhead cover, such as a dome), and a floor. The Storyteller should not be overly precise in interpreting these parameters: the presence of windows, doors, or holes in the structure do not disqualify the use of this Charm. Before the sun's birth, the Ebon Dragon dwelt in cracks and the spaces between things, and he still holds dominion in these places. Characters wishing to bolt themselves into deep cracks or caves may gain this Charm's effects in spite of the gaping entrance which fronts one side of the enclosure. The Storyteller should follow the spirit of this Charm more than the letter.

Nothing is so dangerous as a dragon in its lair. This is especially true of the Ebon Dragon. The pitch black field within the enclosure has all the same statistics as the prerequisite, with the following additional effects: the darkness within this enclosure cannot be penetrated by natural light. Magical light sources strobe unnaturally, giving a hollow white effusion that produces only half the usual intensity. Shadows thrown by such light are always horrific, menacing intruders in the Dragon's Lair. But enemies of the warlock should be thankful to ever see them.

For the duration of the effect, the Fiend is aware of the exact position of anyone standing in the pall of Dragon's Lair Obtenebration, and may strike them at any distance, so long as both the warlock and his targets remain within the confines of the shadow. The Fiend may attack such targets as if he were standing right beside them, and may pick any angle for the attack, making cover completely impossible. Additionally, the first time any character emerges into the field of darkness, the Fiend is aware of it and may make an immediate unexpected reflexive attack against that character.

The Essence 6+ range expansion of Noon as Night Evocation does not apply to Dragon's Lair Obtenebration until Essence 8.

### SEIZING COIL ATEMI

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Sorcerous

**Duration:** Until the clinch ends

**Prerequisite Charms:** Dragon's Lair Obtenebration

The Shadow of All Things spreads his darkness so that he might know all things and that all things might know him. The character may use this Charm to supplement any attack made against characters standing within the pall of Noon as Night Evocation. If the attack accrues any post-soak damage, a massive torrent of black Essence wells up around the victim, dragging them into the air no more than ten yards off the ground. Gigantic characters (such as the Ebon Dragon) may raise their captives higher, to just below eye level. If the victim is an Exalt, this utter darkness strangles their anima as it binds them in powerful coils of shadow. This is an automatically successful clinch which will maintain itself using the Infernal's (Wits + Essence), with a number of automatic successes on every renewal of the clinch equal to the post-soak damage of the initial attack. The coils have a base damage of the Infernal's (Essence + Willpower)B, and will attempt to crush an opponent into submission so long as the Infernal maintains this effect. Characters lacking countermagic spells may physically attack shadow coils in order to free their allies. Shadow coils have the same DVs and soak as their creator, and must suffer three or more levels of damage from a single attack to disrupt them.

The Infernal may not attack a victim caught in his Seizing Coil Ateami without the use of free reflexive attacks. However, he may continue to attack other opponents within the shadows, and may capture (Essence) foes simultaneously using this Charm. Unlike most Sorcerous Charms, the Infernal must keep motes committed to Seizing Coil Ateami for the duration of the effect—typically until the clinch is broken, a relevant countermagic spell is cast, or he chooses to release a victim from his coils. If the pall created by Noon as Night Evocation is dispelled, all coils immediately release their victims as the effect terminates.

### WICKED VOID REVERSAL

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native, Overdrive

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Seizing Coil Ateami

The Ebon Dragon abides his imprisonment with thoughts of becoming his captors' warden. This Charm creates an Overdrive pool with a capacity of ten motes. Initially empty, the warlock may fill it any time he uses Seizing Coil Ateami to capture a target that has snared or successfully clinched him in the last week, or a target who has ever imprisoned him in his entire life. For each action the warlock maintains a successful clinch on valid targets with Seizing Coil Ateami, he gains offensive motes: one mote per unenlightened victim, and (victim's Essence ÷ 2, rounded up) motes from all Essence-channeling victims coiled in his shadows. When used by the Ebon Dragon, Wicked Void Reversal considers all non-Infernal, non-Alchemical Exalted as valid targets for this Charm's effect.





## SECOND CHANCES SAVORED

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Kill Feint Cleverness

If the character has an Overdrive pool, he may purchase this Charm to enhance its prerequisite. Whenever the Infernal uses Kill Feint Cleverness to regain motes, he may place those motes into his Overdrive pool. As the Ebon Dragon is a masterful cheater, this Charm places an additional offensive mote in the pool each time it is used.

## KIMBERY

### SONG OF THE DEPTHS

**Cost:** 15m; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Native, Obvious, Overdrive, Sea, Sorcerous

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** All-Devouring Depths Shintai

In the time before Creation, the Great Mother was ancient beyond reckoning, with a vastness surpassed only by the Endless Desert, and fathoms deep such as she could swallow the unborn universe. All facets of Kimberly exalt Kimberly; all fathoms of her limitless depths exist to magnify and exude Kimberly and sing of her greatness. So it is with lesser waters to deify to the greatest of all oceans.

When the Infernal learns this Charm, she gains an Overdrive pool with a capacity of twenty motes. Initially empty, it may be filled by the empowering hosannas of Primordial waters. This Charm may only be activated if surrounded by surface water on all sides for at least 100 yards. Doing so immediately calms the waters within (Essence x 500) yards. If a storm is raging in the area, it erodes gradually over the next ten ticks, until there is nothing but calm and eerie silence over the waters. In the midst of open sea, all waves vanish. A sufficiently large river will cease flowing. Currents lose their pull, and winds churn and whorl in loose vortices, making sails useless. Mundane vessels caught on such waters may only be moved manually (by use of oars) or by magical locomotion. But these doldrums are anything but lifeless.

The area of the effect then develops huge pulses of inner glow, as sickly yellow-green phosphorescent lights 30 yards wide rise to the surface like pustules on diseased skin. They churn, exude vapors, and strobe open and shut like great watching eyes, while the enormous shadows of alien nightmares rise up to swim just below the surface, turning calm waters into an ominous froth. Never cresting, these beasts can be seen only as shadows illuminated by eldritch glow—a manifestation of countless ancient horrors long since forgotten. Deep mournful lowing rises up from the depths. Soon it is followed by hundreds of intangible motonic fireflies which drift into the sky and can be seen for miles. Then the song begins, emanating from the collective voice of all aquatic existence: waves, wind, waters, and all the things living in them sing the song of Kimberly. This chant is in no known language, but listeners understand the words as a matter of instinct: Kimberly's greatness is unending, her power terrifying, her reach limitless, her love / hate (they are the same) boundless and inescapable.

Song of the Depths confers the following additional benefits:

- The warlock gains (Essence) offensive motes.
- As long as she remains in the area of the effect, she gains two offensive motes per action.
- Any beloved characters within the area of effect gain a single offensive mote per action, provided they have Overdrive pools.
- The character may invoke What Lurks Beneath as an innate power, for a cost of 10 motes, if she knows that Charm.
- Any offensive Charm the warlock uses against a reviled character is reduced in price by one mote, to a minimum of one mote, provided she pays the Charm's activation cost entirely from her Overdrive pool.
- Characters within the Charm's range attacking subjects of the Infernal's hatred gain the above benefit.

This effect may only be dispelled by casting Adamant Countermagic at the absolute center of the effect, or by succeeding with a Holy-enhanced Charisma + Presence attack against the effect itself, which has a dodge MDV equal to the warlock's. Lastly, Song of the Depths may be invoked as an innate power while the Infernal is using any Kimberly shintai, for a cost of 10 motes.

### THE TIDE TURNS

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Native, Overdrive, Reactor

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Bitter Heart Unbleeding, Intolerable Burning Truths (Hate Springs Eternal)

Kimberly is a legendary force of acrimony which all the hordes of chaos could not rend asunder. Rather, she drowned their Shapeless worlds in her darkest fathoms, and excelled toward greater survival, justified by the hatred that empowers her. An Infernal who learns this Charm gains an Overdrive pool with a capacity of fifteen motes. Initially empty, it may be filled by paying five motes and activating The Tide Turns. All of the character's positive Intimacies which are not related directly to herself or something she owns immediately turn negative, as the warlock channels every slight or irritation she has ever experienced, real or imagined, in conjunction with the turned Intimacies. This empowering bitterness sustains her, granting her a number of regular and offensive motes equal to the number of positive Intimacies tainted by her spite.

Positive Intimacies lost in this way do not stay so forever. The mercy of the Great Mother is such that the tide declines, giving pardon to swamped shores and flooded vistas. After a week has passed, the Infernal's positive Intimacies are automatically restored, losing their negative context and returning to positive status regardless of whether the character committed any scenes to their reconstruction. However, one of these Intimacies is always lost to the warlock's turgid enmity and subsequently forgotten. The tide always takes its toll. Should the player seek to recover it, this Intimacy will always return to the character with a negative context. The Storyteller decides which Intimacy is excised at the end of the week.

The Infernal may not use this Charm more than once a week, unless she takes the time to manually reconstruct her positive Intimacies before the week's end. Any new positive Intimacies built during this time supplant the former positive Intimacies; they remain negative at the end of the week. The warlock is still limited to (Willpower + Compassion) positive Intimacies.



### UNERRING GRIEF DISCIPLINE

**Cost:** — (1m); **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Intolerable Burning Truths (Never Forgive)

The Sea That Marched Against the Flame is catalyzed by animosity. Fixating on the grudge that drives her existence, Kimberly's power does not abate. While concentrating on a single reviled character, the warlock may commit one mote to prevent the offensive motes in her Overdrive pool from being lost at the end of the scene. She may retain a commitment to this effect indefinitely. However, doing so prevents her from gaining new offensive motes from any Overdrive Charm unless she has rolled Join Battle against the subject of her grudge. Kimberly is disciplined in the pursuit of her favorite feud. Offensive Charms paid through Overdrive, when used against any other character but the target of her grudge, cost an additional one mote to activate while this Charm is active.

The character may terminate the effect of Unerring Grief Discipline at any time, but doing so causes her Overdrive pool to void itself of all offensive motes currently in stock.

### SPITE HONING CURSES

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Unerring Grief Discipline

Kimberly has long been known to her fellows as the most bitter and spiteful of their kind, inviting her brethren into her drowning waters for the slightest irritation. But after countless millennia, the Yozis have come to appreciate her talent for vicious slurs. An Exalt with this Charm may use her Overdrive pool to fuel social attacks against reviled characters, without a Combo or Charm activation if entirely paid for by Overdrive motes. Note that doing so on the mass social combat scale is only practical if the Infernal hates everyone present—which is distinctly possible for the adepts of Kimberly.

## INFERNAL MONSTER CHARMS

The Infernal Monster is a force of unwavering, all-consuming rage, fueled by a hunger for violence beyond human comprehension of the word. The style's expansions fulfill this threat, offering an arsenal of blasphemies to Infernal Exalted brutal enough to explore them.

The Infernal Monster is not Malfeas. Slayers automatically favor Martial Arts and therefore Infernal Monster Style, so it is easy to forget that they are separate Charm sets. The thematic similarities between Malfeas Charms and Infernal Monster Charms only further clouds the issue. Both sets emphasize overkill and force and rage. Yet there are differences, too. Malfeas cannot restrain himself. He exists only at full volume and full power, unable to conceive of any other state of being. The Infernal Monster is more cunning. It watches and waits for the right moment to unleash its fury. When that moment comes, the monster explodes into a frenzy of hateful ultraviolence expressing pure physical force and visceral horror. There is nothing sophisticated or esoteric about the Infernal Monster's violence. The style does not sear enemies with the cold flames of a mad sun, nor encase its wielders in living metal armor.

The Infernal Monster remains a fundamentally human beast. It smashes, gnaws and shatters everything in its path. Malfeas conceives of forces beyond the physical, but the Infernal Monster only understands violence. Malfeas hates himself as much or more than he hates his enemies, while the Infernal Monster revels in its unholy might and howls bloody triumph at the sky.

The Infernal Monster is not the Lunar Hero. The Hero style of Luna's Chosen is the fighting art of trickster-warriors who guard their friends and control the terms of battle. The Lunar Hero does not permit her enemies to flee. She chooses whom they can attack. When she strikes, she is a whirlwind of sudden and deliberate force. These are not the ways of the Infernal Monster. Its only trick is the trick of mastering terrain and launching devastating ambushes. It does not control the terms of battle in all places; if it must rely upon the environment, then it does so by luring enemies into the dark holes where it can tilt the playing field sharply in its favor. The defining quality of the Infernal Monster's wrath is power, not speed.

Yet there is something reminiscent of Lunars in the Infernal Monster's territorial fury. Parts of the style explore the concept of the Old Thing In the Cave, the archetypal menace of humanity that emerges from its hellish lair to hunt and slay everything that crosses its path. Some Stewards take this ogre-like approach, drawing power from the lands they prowl and the caves in which they lair. Accordingly, some of the Infernal Monster Style expansion Charms below include information on Lunar Charms that function very similarly. These Charms are scattered among Lunar Charm trees. They can be monsters or savage kings, but they have no consolidated path to follow.

### ENLIGHTENING MADNESS CHARMS

These expansions of Infernal Monster Style explore the style's propensity for violent fury. Learning them changes how the character thinks and reacts to the world, invariably making the Exalt crazier and more dangerous to be around.

#### SMOLDERING RAGE BEAST

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Compulsion, Emotion, Rage

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Retribution Will Follow

Provoking the Infernal Monster is unwise. This Charm permanently improves its prerequisite in two ways. First, the Infernal can activate that Charm in response to any threat, bad news, insult, unwanted touch or physical attack directed at her as though these stimuli had inflicted levels of damage. Second, the Infernal can invoke Retribution Will Follow as an innate power rather than a Charm activation.

Smoldering Rage Beast carries a steep price. The Exalt must activate Retribution Will Follow whenever confronted with an opportunity to do so unless he pays one Willpower to resist (immunizing him against other Rage effects for a day as normal).

#### ALL-CONSUMING RAMPAGE RELEASE

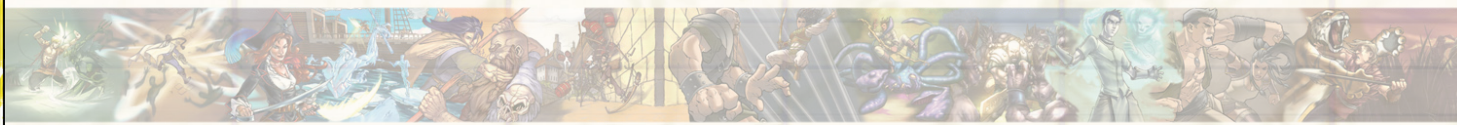
**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Retribution Will Follow

The Infernal Monster is a being of singular madness and violent purpose. He refuses to be conflicted in his urges. This Charm is a permanent modification of the Infernal's capabili-



ties. Whenever he hits Limit 10 and would enter a bout of Limit Break or Torment, he can allow the usual madness or suffering to take place. Alternately, he can choose to frenzy with benefits and drawbacks identical to an uncontrolled Berserk Anger Limit Break (**Exalted**, p. 105). He regains (Martial Arts rating) Willpower points from entering this rampage and is considered to have Retribution Will Follow active for all Infernal Monster Style Charms that have effects based on using that Charm. He can also choose to heal instead of regaining Willpower from going berserk, regenerating any of the following damage options: one level of aggravated, two levels of lethal or four levels of bashing.

With Essence 5+, the Infernal radiates his madness in a radius of (Martial Arts x 10) yards. Any being that hits Limit 10 within that radius has the option to frenzy like the Exalt. Such beings can only regain Willpower and may not heal by going berserk.

### FEARLESS FRENZY ATTITUDE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Retribution Will Follow

The Infernal Monster is dauntlessly fierce. This Charm is a permanent enhancement of the Infernal's capabilities that applies if he has Valor 3+. While using Retribution Will Follow or Infernal Monster Form, he adds his Martial Arts rating in bonus successes to all Valor rolls to resist fear and adds this same amount directly to his Valor rating to defend against effects resisted better with a higher rating. He also treats all Emotion effects solely based on instilling fear as unacceptable orders. This does not improve the effectiveness of Valor channels. Finally, he confers this same fearlessness to all Valor 3+ victims driven berserk by his Rage Charms.

Infernals with this Charm can choose to reflexively improve it at any time, making themselves permanently fearless even when not using Retribution Will Follow or Infernal Monster Form. The catch is that their "sane" resting state becomes identical to a partially-controlled Foolhardy Contempt Limit Break (**Exalted**, p. 105). Going berserk obviously trumps this behavior, as does Limit Break or behavior-altering Torment. However, when the acute madness ends, the pervasive madness of a mind without fear returns. Once the Infernal embraces a life without fear, he cannot go back to using the Charm as he first learned it. He can only explore deeper into the madness of the Infernal Monster, trading fearlessness for something worse.

### FURY IS FREEDOM

**Cost:** —(+1ahl, 2 Limit); **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 3;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Retribution Will Follow

The rage of the Infernal Monster is not just a shield against mental trickery and domination. Anger frees the mind. This Charm permanently enhances its prerequisite. Whenever the Infernal activates Retribution Will Follow, he can pay one aggravated health level and gain two Limit in addition to committing the usual mote. Doing so terminates all unnatural mental influence effects currently affecting his mind unless these effects meet one of the following criteria: the influence was

self-imposed, the influence was caused by a being with a higher Essence rating than the Infernal's Martial Arts at the time it was imposed or the influence functions by making the Infernal angry or taking advantage of his fury to make him perform specific anger-driven behavior. Use of Retribution Will Follow this way can reduce Limit by slaughtering or maiming, reducing the net increase to one point rather than two. When the killing rage passes, shattered mental influence effects do not return.

A secondary benefit of Fury is Freedom is that no mental influence can prevent the Exalt from activating Retribution Will Follow. It does not matter whether Fury Is Freedom can break the influence in question; nothing can prevent the Infernal from frenzying when he encounters the appropriate stimuli enabling activation of Retribution Will Follow.

### UNTAMED APOCALYPSE SHINTAI

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Smoldering Rage Beast, All-Consuming Rampage Release, Fearless Frenzy Attitude, Fury Is Freedom

The Infernal Monster has no worries or guilt. Absolute violence yields absolute freedom. This Charm is a permanent modification to the Infernal Exalt's psyche and soul, scarring her with empowering madness. Green Sun Princes can't be compelled to learn Untamed Apocalypse Shintai with any mental influence; they must truly wish to embrace its transcendent damnation. Akuma have no say in the matter; their patrons decide whether to devote their slaves into beasts of war. **Untamed Apocalypse Shintai makes characters largely unplayable, so Storytellers should probably restrict it to antagonists.** Learning the Charm changes the Infernal in the following ways:

- He lives in a constant state of fury like an uncontrolled Berserk Anger Limit Break (**Exalted**, p. 105). However, he is not compelled to wreck the environment in this resting state, just slaughter everything that moves. Furthermore, when he becomes fatigued or sleepy, he can end his rampage to seek a good place to rest. He will still attack anything that tries to prevent him from finding a lair, but will not pursue such opponents if they withdraw and let him resume his search. Living a berserk existence does not reduce the character's mental attributes or force him to fight incompetently. However, he won't take preparatory actions longer than a single miscellaneous action, so he can draw a weapon, but won't have the patience to strap into a warstrider.

- Activating Retribution Will Follow brings on a scene of unrestrained rage with a number of benefits (wound penalty reduction, mental influence resistance, etc.). His resting rage does not provide these benefits. The frenzy brought on by Retribution Will Follow, Limit Break and behavior-altering Torment all take precedence over the Infernal's mind and displace his constant fury for as long as they last.

- Infernal Monster Style and its expansions only cost the Infernal four experience points per Charm. This discount applies retroactively, awarding the difference in experience the Infernal is owed. Should the character somehow lose this Charm, he must pay that difference back. In the unlikely event a Storyteller lets a player take Untamed Apocalypse Shintai at character creation, the Infernal gains two Infernal Monster Style Charms



for every starting Charm allocated to them and can buy more for two bonus points each. Untamed Apocalypse Shintai is not a precedent for Charms that provide dramatic cost reductions to acquire Solar-level Charms unless those Charms wreck the character permanently and absolutely. Not all paths of transcendence are desirable.

- The Exalt can raise his traits up as high as 10 without regard for the usual age-cap. His constant bestial fury sharply limits the kinds of Charms he can use, but he shatters through the limits that govern most Essence users. If he somehow loses this Charm, he converts all dots in excess of his permitted age cap back into experience. Learning this Charm precludes metamorphosis into a Primordial. The Infernal cannot learn the Charms that initiate this apotheosis.

## INESCAPABLE FIEND CHARMS

These expansions of Infernal Monster Style explore the concept of the monster you cannot avoid. You cannot run. You cannot hide. The Infernal Monster will find you and destroy you. It is eager to feel your bones break under its touch, to tear screams and viscera from your flesh.

### IMPATIENT SLAUGHTER SPEED

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Raging Behemoth Charge

The Infernal Monster charges toward enemies. They are prey, not threats. Exalted with this Charm can activate Raging Behemoth Charge as an innate power rather than a Charm activation while using Retribution Will Follow or Infernal Monster Form. While using Raging Behemoth Charge, the Infernal also gains the following additional benefits:

- He cannot become fatigued from exertion. Any fatigue penalties suffered at the time of activation are suspended until the Charm ends, resuming as though no time had passed.
- He can run through muck, climb and swim toward valid opponents at the same speed as ground movement (rather than half).
- When moving toward a valid opponent, the Infernal's actions aren't capped by Athletics over unstable footing or swimming in rough conditions. He effectively has whatever Athletics he needs to ignore such complications.

### BOUNDING BEAST ADVANCE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Raging Behemoth Charge

The Infernal Monster leaps great distances to pounce on prey. While an Exalt with this Charm has Raging Behemoth Charge active, she adds her Martial Arts rating to her Athletics to calculate how far she can jump toward a valid opponent. With Essence 3+, she adds a bonus of +(Martial Arts + Essence) instead.

### LEAPING SMASH TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Bounding Beast Advance

Fleeing the Infernal Monster is an exercise in futility. This Charm enhances an unarmed attack (which can be an unarmed attempt to initiate a grapple), allowing the Infernal to reflexively jump toward the target before determining whether the target is in range for the purposes of resolving the attack. If he reaches his target, the attack resolves normally with a +2 bonus to its raw damage from added momentum. Otherwise, the jump moves the Infernal the appropriate distance but the attack automatically misses. Leaping Smash Technique can be activated as an innate power rather than a Charm activation if the Exalt has Raging Behemoth Charge or Infernal Monster Form active. Essence 2-3 Exalted can only use this Charm to enhance the first attack in a flurry; those with greater Essence surpass the limitation and can flurry to bound across the battlefield.

If Leaping Smash Technique is used in conjunction with God-Smashing Blow to enhance an attack, the final jump distance is doubled after applying any modifiers from Bounding Beast Advance.

### SHOCK AND AWE SLAM

**Cost:**—(+4m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Leaping Smash Technique

The Infernal Monster shouldn't be fast enough to strike as it does. Nothing that strong should be so fast. It's just not fair. This Charm permanently improves its prerequisite. The Infernal can pay an additional four motes when using Leaping Smash Technique to impose a DV penalty against the attack. If the target attempts to parry, the penalty is equal to the Exalt's Martial Arts rating. Dodges (and any combination of dodge and parry) only suffer a penalty of half the Infernal's Martial Arts. Although adding this penalty does not make the attack unexpected, defenses that convert an unexpected attack into an expected attack also negate the penalty.

If the Infernal has Essence 4+, the DV penalty to dodge increases to the Exalt's full Martial Arts.

### NOWHERE TO RUN

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

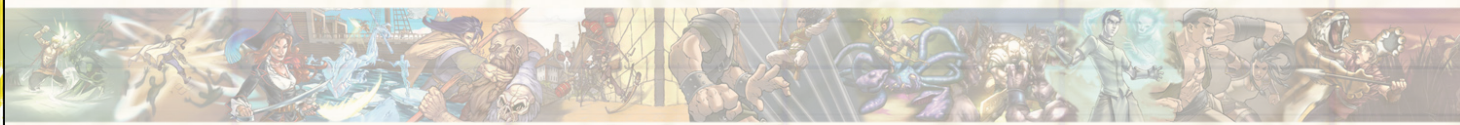
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Leaping Smash Technique

It is difficult to run fast enough or far enough to escape the Infernal Monster. Yet they always try. This Charm permanently enhances its prerequisite. Whenever the Infernal uses Leaping Smash Technique, if the target is aware of the Exalt's location and is moving away from him, the Exalt multiplies the maximum final jump distance by his (Martial Arts) after applying any modifiers from Bounding Beast Advance. If the Leaping Smash Technique is performed in conjunction with God-Smashing Blow, the distance modifier is doubled again,





so (Martial Arts x 2). This is a special exception on how multiplicative effects usually stack in Exalted. Characters who have an Intimacy of fear toward the Infernal are always considered moving away from him for the purposes of this Charm.

### NOWHERE TO HIDE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Sorcerous, Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Leaping Smash Technique

The Infernal finds those who flee her. Whenever an Infernal with this Charm uses Leaping Smash Technique to attack an individual, he can place a Sorcerous tag on that individual for one hour. The brief arcane link of sublime aggression connects the Infernal Monster with her intended quarry. It is possible to tag any number of separate victims with separate attacks, but Infernals can't tag and have no need to tag the same victim more than once.

Whenever the Infernal Monster uses Leaping Smash Technique while he has tagged one or more victims, he can choose one of those enemies as the attack's target and allow the arcane link to guide her. Her instinct-driven leap carries her in the direction of her quarry, regardless of whether she is aware of the victim's current location. If an unobstructed path to that target exists and the target is in range of the leap, the attack resolves as normal for use of Leaping Smash Technique. An invisible opponent (or a dematerialized one) still applies a -2 external penalty to the attack roll. If the opponent is out of reach or protected by total cover, the leap carries the Infernal the maximum possible distance toward her without slamming her into intervening obstacles (unless she chooses to slam through them because she has other magic enabling her to do so). With the right Charms, it is possible to use Nowhere to Hide to leap through a wall and resolve the attack against someone on the other side.

Martial Arts 5+ allows the Infernal to leap toward the closest god or demon bigger than a least god or Thing That Lurks In Corners that he can reach with the attack (as though that being were tagged). He can exclude any potential targets he can perceive to avoid attacking allies (even while in a berserk state). This doesn't let him hit dematerialized beings, but in conjunction with magic that does, he can use an attack as a means of testing if there are any spirits snooping about.

### BLOOD HERALDS DEATH

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Sorcerous, Stackable

**Duration:** One week

**Prerequisite Charms:** Nowhere to Hide

The Infernal Monster follows the scent of blood, whether that is blood he has drawn or the blood on the hands of those who wounded him. This Charm may be activated to Sorcerously tag any living victim the Infernal inflicted actual levels of damage on with an unarmed attack in the past hour. Alternatively, Blood Heralds Death can tag enemies who inflicted actual levels of damage to the Exalt in the past hour as a direct result of their actions (even unintentional injury). Either way, the tag forges an arcane link duplicating that placed by Nowhere to Hide (to the point that it can be used to tag characters in order to leap after them when they are close by). Unlike its

prerequisite. Blood Heralds Death places tags that last a week rather than an hour. If the tag is removed via countermagic, the Infernal requires new injuries to re-tag that character with another activation.

Whenever an Infernal makes a tracking roll to pursue a victim tagged by this Charm, that roll is enhanced as though by the Solar Charm Unshakeable Bloodhound Technique (Exalted, p. 211). However, the Infernal receives no bonus to the roll-off if another effect contests the tracking effort. With Essence 4+, the Infernal becomes immune to all fatigue accrued while actively tracking a tagged target. Sleep deprivation affects him normally, but he can give endless chase without tiring from exertion. Existing fatigue is also ignored while tracking tagged victims, but resumes as soon as he stops as though no time passed.

### ETERNAL MONSTROUS HUNT

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Blood Heralds Death

The Infernal Monster does not understand forgiveness. This Charm improves its prerequisite, allowing tags it places to last until the Exalt dies, the target dies or the tag is removed via countermagic (i.e. duration becomes indefinite rather than one month).

With Essence 6+, the Infernal's enmity is the stuff of terrible legend. If the target dies, the tag is inherited by the oldest surviving blood offspring of that person. If there is no child to inherit the tag, it passes to the victim's oldest surviving sibling. If there is not a sibling to carry on the family curse, the vendetta dies there. The Infernal intuitively knows when a transfer occurs and the relationship between the tag's last bearer and its new heir.

### ARMAGEDDON NIGHTMARE DUEL

**Cost:** 0m or 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Sorcerous

**Duration:** (Martial Arts rating) minutes

**Prerequisite Charms:** Blood Heralds Death

The Infernal Monster haunts his enemies. They see his rage-contorted face when they sleep. They feel his hot breath upon the back of their neck. They know he is coming for them. Upon activating this Charm, the Infernal's eyes glaze over as though from a distracting daydream. A small smile curls at the corner of his lips. He is completely unaware of his environment and unable to take physical actions in this fugue state, but remains upright if standing. The trance lasts for the Charm's full duration, but his player may choose for him to reflexively snap out of it and end the Charm in order to react to stimuli (like an incoming attack). It is also possible to activate Armageddon Nightmare Duel while the Infernal is unconscious, focusing his dreams on distant prey.

This Charm is not studied as an idle distraction to avoid boredom. At the time of activation, the Infernal chooses an enemy he has tagged with Blood Heralds Death. If that enemy is awake, he knows this and activating the Charm costs him nothing. The tagged character momentarily hallucinates and imagines he sees the Infernal somewhere nearby, but his senses catch up a split second later to reveal he's just jumping at shad-





ows. The delusion is unsettling, but too fleeting to have any mechanical impact.

If the tagged enemy is sleeping when Armageddon Nightmare Duel activates, paying fifteen motes and one Willpower allows the Infernal to meet the victim in a shared nightmare created by the Charm. Sleep means real sleep, not an alternative activity that counts as sleep for the target due to magic. This nightmare's terrain can contain any landscapes and environments natural to Creation and is arbitrarily vast, effectively an infinite plain on which to impose features as they are discovered. The Infernal and the victim are the only two beings in this world. Sessile life-forms like plants and fungi are permissible, as these qualify as scenery rather than actors in the psychodrama.

The two enter the dream in sight of one another, but no closer than one hundred yards. Neither can be placed in a starting position that is actively injurious to him, though targets immune to particular environmental hazards may begin exposed to such conditions. Inability to see or use similarly-acute senses is a special hazard for this purpose. The Infernal becomes aware of such immunities in the instant he activates the Charm so that he can set the stage appropriately. Storytellers should ensure that this rule is followed in spirit as well as letter. Placing an enemy on a tiny pedestal over a vast sea of lava with no way to move or escape without suffering burning horrid death is not technically a violation of the rule. Neither is placing a strong-but-slow enemy who can't see in the dark in pitch-black frozen cave so slick its floor can't be walked on without supernatural balance or astounding agility. Both scenarios are completely against the spirit of the Charm. Dangerous environments are permissible, but using them as weapons should require work and there should always be some means of avoiding the danger.

When the dream begins, the Infernal has full motes, Willpower, Virtue channels and health. He can choose not to carry over any lingering negative effects currently afflicting him into his dream self. In effect, his nightmare form is himself at full power, but with no Charms that require activations active. The victim enters the dream as she is in real life, but with no Charms active. If she is wounded or supernaturally beguiled or mutated into a three-armed freak outside the dream, she remains so within the dream. Both characters immediately join battle. Time flows in the dream at the same rate as reality, so the dream cannot actually take or appear to take longer than (the Infernal's Martial Arts) minutes.

Nothing that happens to the Infernal in the dream has any bearing on his actual self. If he dies or falls unconscious within the dream, the Charm ends and the dream ends for both parties. This also severs the sorcerous tag connecting the Infernal to that victim like countermagic. The victim has much more at stake. Any motes spent in the dream are lost to no real effect, though Exalted victims consider all dream-spent motes Peripheral as they subconsciously flare their animas. All Willpower and Virtue channels spent are actually spent. All mental influence imposed in the dream carries over to reality for its full duration. No physical harm carries over, but if the victim is killed in the dream, the Charm ends for both parties without breaking the tag.

Dying inside the dream feels like actually dying, so the experience drains five additional Willpower points from the victim and counts as a scene spent building an Intimacy of fear toward

the Infernal. If this results in the Intimacy actually taking root or bolstering an existing Intimacy of fear, nothing can remove it until a week has gone by since the victim awoke from the dream. Beings with a Limit track can gain equivalent points of Limit in lieu of losing any of the Willpower. Victims can choose to quickly commit suicide within the nightmare to escape it with minimal loss, but doing so causes the Intimacy of fear to form immediately rather than counting as a scene toward it.

If the victim's real body suffers any levels of damage during the dream, the Charm abruptly ends for both parties. This also happens if the Charm runs its full duration without being interrupted. Both dreamers leave the dream with the Infernal no worse for the wear and the victim depleted by her exertions within the dreamscape. The tag remains, but the dream does not hurt the victim's psyche like virtual death.

Victims of Armageddon Nightmare Duel leave the nightmare acutely aware of the Infernal Monster Style Charms the Exalt displayed. Those who are capable of learning Celestial Martial Arts from a teacher can instruct themselves in any of the Charms they observed as though the Infernal was their teacher. Obviously, only other Infernals can learn Infernal Monster expansions this way without an effect like the Eclipse anima power. Characters requiring a special initiation before they can learn Celestial Martial Arts (like Dragon-Blooded) cannot learn Charms from exposure to Armageddon Nightmare Duel until they undergo that initiation.

Players who purchase this Charm for their characters are expected to use it to create additional interesting scenes, not steal the spotlight. It is poor form to hold a game hostage to play out a personal fight. If the outcome isn't really in doubt and the both dreamers' players consent, a quick narrative of the one-sided brawl suffices in lieu of devoting an entire scene to the duel. Standing and fighting the Infernal in quick narration rather than jumping off a cliff may be equally futile, but at least the Intimacy of fear forms less quickly.

### DEATH-DEVOURING SADISM

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Armageddon Nightmare Duel

The Infernal Monster takes joy in crushing her enemies. This Charm permanently enhances its prerequisite. Whenever the Infernal kills a non-extra victim of Armageddon Nightmare Duel with an unarmed attack within the dreamscape, she regains two points of Willpower. If the victim intentionally commits suicide, the death yields only one point of Willpower. Accidental demise is unsatisfying. If the Infernal kills an enemy with an unarmed attack outside of the nightmare that she has previously killed in a nightmare, she regains three Willpower points.

### SANITY-DEVOURING NIGHT TERROR

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Illusion

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Armageddon Nightmare Duel

This Charm upgrades its prerequisite. If the Exalt has an Overdrive pool, offensive motes in this pool are not lost upon scene change to enter the arena of nightmare: the Infernal Monster enters the dreamscape with his full offensive might



intact. Furthermore, this Charm generates fictitious shades of the victim's positive Intimacies all across the dream world. These characters are completely oblivious to the circumstances surrounding their arrival in the dream world, and will perfectly ignore any magical attempts to persuade or influence their behavior.

The dreamscapes will patch themselves around these characters, creating scenes which are intimate to the victim. The victim might find himself wandering down a dark tunnel full of jagged rocks only to emerge into the kitchen of his long dead mother, who will appear to be alive, well, and busily preparing his breakfast. These representations of the victim's Intimacies are not hollow illusions to be laughed off or ignored. Even though the victim knows they cannot possibly be real, each has all the seeming of the people he most loves. They are, in fact, externally generated from within his heart, so he is completely unable to ignore the urge to protect or defend these characters unless he pays a point of Willpower to ignore the Infernal's unnatural Illusion, separately and for each Intimacy that he wishes to abandon. However, doing so in the dream also revokes this Intimacy from his heart when the nightmare ends.

Needless to say, the presence of these Intimacies leaves the victim vulnerable. Unlike the real figures they represent, they do not possess the combat traits or magical powers they may actually possess in real life. They will act in a manner befitting their motivations, but will interact with the horrific, external presence of nightmarish dreamscapes and the presence of a monster only if directly confronted with evidence of these things. Otherwise, mom will ignore a victim who is being beaten to death in the adjacent cave; as in nightmare, the figments of the dreamer's heart seem only to exist in the small, familiar scenes in which they are placed within the dream.

Of course, letting them off the hook would be too easy. If directly confronted by the Infernal Monster, they will attempt to flee or fight as accurate to their nature. However, having no actual traits or magic, each victim represents no greater threat status to the Infernal Monster than an extra. Killing a target's Intimacies while forcing him to watch grants the Infernal Monster (Essence) motes to his Overdrive pool, if he has one. Each slaughtered Intimacy also redefines itself with a context of tortured guilt when the dreamer awakens. As a final piece of advice, Gorol was the first Infernal Monster stylist to discover, to his detriment, the special interaction between Sanity-Devouring Night Terror and the Solar Charm Visage Made Law (see **Lords of Creation** (with errata), p. 80-81). If one of the victim's positive Intimacies have learned that Charm, his appearance in the dream will no longer be as an extra, but rather will carry his actual traits, Charms, panoply, and any other magic the character knows. In this way, Gorol was defeated when he attempted a dream assault on the Lunar wife of one of his most hated Solar enemies.

## ROAR OF THE DEVIL-BEAST CHARMS

These expansions of Infernal Monster Style build on the idea of the inescapable monster more abstractly, allowing her to terrorize and traumatize her prey with her primal screams.

## POST-TRAUMATIC BRUTALITY ROAR

**Cost:** 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, Obvious, Sorcerous, Stackable, War

**Duration:** One week

**Prerequisite Charms:** Nowhere to Run, Nowhere to Hide

The Infernal screams his fury, and the armies who have faced him remember his wrath. The thunderous bellow can be heard for a mile. Within that radius, the scream affects all organized Magnitude 3+ military units that engaged with the Infernal in the past day in mass combat while he fought as a solo unit. Even units not currently engaged in battle are affected, provided they are camped or marching together and clearly operating as a group.

The Infernal's player rolls Charisma + Martial Arts, adding a number of bonus successes equal to his Valor. Any affected unit led by a character with a Dodge MDV less than the number of successes rolled suffers an unnatural Emotion effect that imposes a -1 penalty to its Drill and Morale ratings as an unnatural Emotion effect. Units with perfect Morale are immune. Gaining perfect Morale terminates ongoing applications of the Charm affecting the unit. Leaders can pay two points of their own Willpower to rally the unit in hopes of reversing this damage; if the rally succeeds, the penalty is removed. Multiple roars stack their penalty, each of which requires a separate Willpower-fueled rally to remove.

With Essence 4+, the roar carries out to a radius of (Limit + 1) miles. The radius at which the roar may be heard by everyone does not improve with Essence 5+, but magic carries the sound to the ears of all valid targets in the same realm of existence. Affected units hear the magic-born cry as a faint and distant sound, clearly made by something far away—but not nearly far enough.

## RABBLE-TERRORIZING PUISSANCE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious, War

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Post-Traumatic Brutality Roar

What hope do mortal leaders have of reassuring their troops? They can't stop the Infernal Monster. They can't outplan him. They can't outfight him. They can say the beast will not come back again so soon, that lightning seldom strikes twice. Veterans see through such lies. This Charm permanently improves its prerequisite. The Willpower cost for Essence 1 leaders to rally away the effects of Post-Traumatic Brutality Roar is four Willpower rather than two.

With Essence 5+, this resistance cost increase also applies against unit leaders who are First Circle demons, Essence 1-3 UnExalted living Essence users (like Dragon-Kings and Mountain Folk), Essence 1-3 Fair Folk, Essence 1-3 gods, Essence 1-4 elementals and Essence 1-5 ghosts. Infernals who reach Essence 8+ extend the benefit against all Essence 1-5 unit leaders who are not Exalted.



### PANICKED SOLDIER STAMPEDE

**Cost:** —(+1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious, War

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Post-Traumatic Brutality Roar

Soldiers train to fight other soldiers, not Things That Must Not Be. This Charm permanently improves its prerequisite. By spending an additional Willpower to activate Post-Traumatic Brutality Roar, the scream also induces a rout check in all units successfully penalized by it. This check is made at a +2 difficulty modifier.

With Essence 6-7, the rout difficulty modifier rises to +3. It jumps to +4 at Essence 8-10.

### RANK-PARALYZING HORROR INFLECTION

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious, War

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Post-Traumatic Brutality Roar

Fear is a cancerous malaise that grows over time, sapping competence. This Charm permanently improves its prerequisite. All units currently suffering a penalty to Drill/Morale from invocations of the Infernal's Post-Traumatic Brutality Roar also suffer an equivalent internal penalty to all non-reflexive rolled actions using Attributes and/or Abilities.

### FEAR OF FORETOLD FURY

**Cost:** —(+1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious, War

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Post-Traumatic Brutality Roar

When the outcome is a given, trauma precedes horror. Those who stand in the presence of the Infernal Monster know this. This Charm permanently improves its prerequisite. By spending an additional Willpower to activate Post-Traumatic Brutality Roar, the cry penalizes all military units within a mile (whether or not they have engaged with the Infernal in the past day).

With Essence 5+, using Fear of Foretold Fury affects all units in full earshot distance (Limit +1 miles). The trauma also magically carries to all units in the same realm of existence who have ever engaged with the Infernal as a solo unit, provided they retained consistent unit identity and leadership since that battle. The Storyteller determines if a unit has undergone sufficient turnover or shift in identity that it no longer recalls the horror of that fight. Gradual replacement of the rank-and-file does not erode the impact of the experience. Grizzled veterans pass along the whispered horror stories to wide-eyed recruits. Some refuse to talk about That Day at all. They just scowl and drink and look nervously behind them. A unit leader can address the lingering damage from the experience by taking the time to reassure the ranks and inspire them. This convalescence extends the time required to perform a restorative rally to a dramatic action lasting one week (ten hours a day); the leader must pay five Willpower to make the roll at the end. If the rally succeeds, the unit is no longer scarred and can't be affected outside of the (Limit +1 mile) radius until they have another actual battle with the Infernal.

### CHAINED BEAST CHARMS

Long before there were Green Sun Princes, akuma explored the hideous potential of Infernal Monster Style. In so doing, they formulated four special Charms unique to each Exalted akuma type. These Charms are the only demonstrated examples of akuma-specific expansions, though it is possible that other such techniques exist as secret weapons for the day the Yozi unleash their beasts of war upon Creation.

### UNTHINKABLE SHINING HORROR

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Emotion, Form-Enhancing, Monstrous, Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Infernal Monster Form

It must not be forgotten that the inventor of Infernal Monster Style was a Solar akuma. Gorol was an abomination to his circle mates, a living rejection of everything he stood for. In forsaking any claim to heroism, the akuma made himself the perfect monster. Unthinkable Shining Horror is exclusively Native to Solar akuma and can't be learned by other beings. The Charm upgrades Infernal Monster Form, providing the following additional powers:

- The akuma is not obligated to attack his Yozi master or any of its component Third Circle demons while in a berserk state (such as that induced by Retribution Will Follow) unless said entities physically attacked him earlier in the scene.

- The fallen Solar shocks those who love him, giving him a chance to slaughter them in their moment of hesitation. Characters with a positive Intimacy toward the akuma suffer an internal penalty of (the akuma's Essence) to all physical attacks targeting him. Resisting this unnatural Emotion effect for a scene costs five Willpower. Characters must have had the Intimacy for a minimum of one month to invoke the penalty. The horror afflicts loved ones, not awed strangers.

- If the Exalt knows Solar Hero Form, he may activate it simultaneously with Infernal Monster Form, paying the full cost of both Charms. The joint activation uses the highest Speed and DV penalty for both Charms and allows them to co-exist.

- As an optional Blasphemy effect, the Solar akuma may shove aside the limitations of his Charms, raising his bonus dice cap to (Attribute + Ability + Essence) while enhancing unarmed attacks and parries. This power is optional and can be used at any point, but once reflexively invoked, it lasts until Infernal Monster Form ends.

### MOON-BEAST MONSTER

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native

**Duration:** Permanent

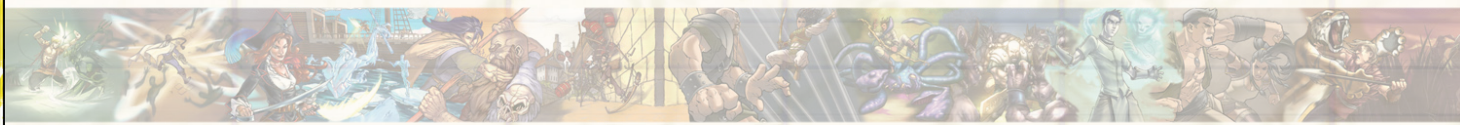
**Prerequisite Charms:** Infernal Monster Form

Lunar akuma are among the most savage weapons the Yozi command. It is not much of a leap from fury to rage or anger to madness. Moon-Beast Monster is only Native to Lunar akuma and may not be learned by other types of Infernals. The Charm provides the following effects:

- The akuma is not obligated to attack his Yozi master or any of its component Third Circle demons while in a berserk state (such as that induced by Retribution Will Follow) unless said entities physically attacked him earlier in the scene.







- Whenever the akuma activates Relentless Lunar Fury, he can simultaneously activate Retribution Will Follow as an innate power rather than a Charm activation. This still requires the usual commitment, but the use of Relentless Lunar Fury takes the place of suffering damage as a trigger condition.

- Infernal Monster Form gains the Gift keyword. Whenever the akuma shifts into war form, he may commit the usual cost to activate Infernal Monster Form. Used this way, the Form Charm remains active for as long as the Lunar remains in war form. This does not alter the way Infernal Monster Form accumulates its Strength bonus, so it still resets to zero at the end of each scene even if the Charm remains active.

- Armor created with Lunar Charms counts as armor created with Infernal Charms for the purposes of compatibility with Infernal Monster Style.

### FALLEN STAR FURY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Fate, Native, Shaping

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Infernal Monster Form

Sidereal akuma can expand Infernal Monster Style, but this is a dubious honor for those who already aspire to the Blossom of the Perfected Lotus. Fallen Star Fury is exclusively Native to Sidereal akuma and can't be learned by other beings. By purchasing the Charm, the akuma rejoins fate on his own hideous terms. His unholy power grabs the strands of causality and tangles them around his fingers. He is still considered outside of fate for any effect in which being removed is an asset, but can connect to the Loom to use astrology or otherwise benefit from being inside fate. In effect, he is between fate rather than fully outside it, perversely enjoying the best of both worlds. The Storyteller adjudicates which state is preferable with regard to resolving all effects that depend on whether the akuma is part of Fate. Additionally, the akuma is not obligated to attack his Yozi master or any of its component Third Circle demons while in a berserk state (such as that induced by Retribution Will Follow) unless said entities physically attacked him earlier in the scene.

With Essence 5+, the Charm gains the following additional powers, the last of which only helps masters of Infernal Monster Style:

- Infernal Monster Form does not interfere with the use of Sidereal Martial Arts Form-type Charms. For example, she can have Infernal Monster Form and Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form active at the same time. If another effect allows him to use a limited number of Sidereal Form-type Charms concurrently (like Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form), Infernal Monster Form does not count toward this limit. The akuma cannot generally use this power to stack Infernal Monster Form alongside other non-Sidereal Form-type Charms. This can be

enabled with Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form (or similar effects) by including lesser Forms within that Sidereal Form Charm and then stacking this with Infernal Monster Form.

- If employing the previous power to wield two Form-type Charms, then all form weapons of either style are considered form weapons for both styles. This does not apply if the styles use different range weapons. Infernal Monster cannot be practiced with a bow any more than a bow-themed style could use improvised weapons.

- The corrupt Vizier can activate Infernal Monster Form at the same time as he activates a Sidereal Martial Arts Form-type Charm, paying the usual cost to activate each Charm. This combined activation uses the highest Speed and DV penalty among both Form-type Charms.

- If the akuma flares his One Hand Fury with a Sidereal Martial Arts Form-type Charm, the burning runes spiral and twine from his hand and trail behind his blows like ribbons of smoldering emerald flame. This Obvious display provides the same benefits as the best sutra the akuma can use with that Sidereal Martial Art, but at no cost and without any chance of external disruption. For instance, if the akuma can only use a student sutra, then flaring his hand with a Sidereal form duplicates a student sutra.

### DRAGON-SPAWNED DEMON-MONSTER

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Native

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Infernal Monster Form

Terrestrial akuma achieve greatness their former peers cannot imagine. Through Infernal Monster Style, fallen Dragon-Blooded become incarnate natural disasters. Dragon-Spawned Demon-Monster is solely Native to Terrestrial akuma and can't be learned by other beings. It provides the following benefits:

- The akuma is not obligated to attack his Yozi master or any of its component Third Circle demons while in a berserk state (such as that induced by Retribution Will Follow) unless said entities physically attacked him earlier in the scene.

- Weapons of elemental energy created by Terrestrial Charms are considered form weapons for Infernal Monster Style (e.g. Refining the Inner Blade). If such Charms have the Holy keyword, they permanently lose their special benefits against creatures of darkness and cease to be Holy. If this results in a Charm that doesn't make sense, the Storyteller should exclude that Charm from conversion.

- Instant-duration Terrestrial Charms that damage targets through direct exposure to elemental energy are also considered form weapons for Infernal Monster Style (e.g. Elemental Bolt Attack). If such Charms are Holy, they are converted as previously explained. The akuma may also choose for such attacks to emerge from his mouth like the breath of a dragon.







# CHAPTER SEVEN

# ALCHEMICAL EXALTED

## ALCHEMICAL CHARMS

### LABOR AND UTILITY

#### UNIVERSAL PILOT KEY

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp [1m]; **Mins:** Wits 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Dexterity or Wits Augmentation

The Alchemical has two pairs of retractible tendrils coiled in ports mounted on his forearms and inner calves. When he activates this Charm while piloting an artifact vehicle, these needle-tipped tentacles extend and interface directly with the essence-powered workings of the vehicle, letting the Champion bypass the need for physical controls. While directly interfaced into the ship or vehicle, the Alchemical can make piloting rolls to control it as a reflexive action, and adds +2 to the Maneu-

verability of the vehicle. The Alchemical can still take actions normally without it interfering with his control of the vehicle, but moving from the spot where he activated the Charm (as with a Move or dash action) forcibly disconnects the tendrils of this Charm, causing it to deactivate.

#### Submodules:

*Electroneural Control Spurs* (Charisma 3, 3xp): This submodule is obsolete with the extinction of Estasian riding rats, but may find new uses should the Seal of Eight Divinities be breached. It enables the Alchemical to interface with living mounts using this Charm (dealing a single level of unsoakable lethal damage as its needles penetrate the flanks of a steed). Interfaced mounts have their Control rating reduced by two instead of receiving a Maneuverability bonus, to a minimum of control 0. Should the Alchemical wish to interface with an unwilling mount, he must roll (Dexterity + Martial Arts) as an attack to implant the tendrils.



## AUTOCHTHONIA AND THE CYCLE OF SOULS

Life in the Realm of Brass and Shadow begins much as it does in Creation. An infant is born and draws its first breath, and with this first breath, it receives a soul. The process is similar in either world, but not identical.

Humans in Creation are granted souls by Heaven, according to ancient processes designed by the Primordials. In the First Age, when Creation's total human population was steadily on the rise, infants often received new souls freshly drawn from the Well of Souls, consisting of a joined hun and po. In the Second Age, new hun souls are rarely produced. Instead the quiescent hun of a deceased individual is cleansed by the process of Lethe, bonded to a new po freshly extracted from the Well of Souls, and sent down to grant life to a newborn. This is necessary because upon the death of a mortal in Creation, higher and lower souls separate; the hun passes through Lethe if it does not linger as a ghost, while the vigilant po remains with the corpse until its final dissolution, at which point the animal soul vanishes.

In Autochthonia, souls are distributed by an ancient wonder known as the Radiant Amphora of Celestial Accumulation, more commonly called the Ewer of Souls. This incredible artifact automatically recycles souls in much the same manner as occurs in Creation, save that the souls it recycles have never been split apart; hun and po remain bonded after death, and pass together from life to life. The end of a mortal's life within Autochthonia is as neat as its beginning. Upon his last breath, the mortal's entire soul departs to the Ewer, to be cleansed of memories and given new life again. No part of his soul remains behind with his corpse, and the state claims his remains to be rendered down for the good of Autochthonia. This recycling system is as necessary as it is efficient, for Autochthonia has no way to produce new hun or po souls.

### AUTOCHTHONIAN BELIEFS

The vast majority of Autochthonians are ignorant as to the intricacies of their world's cycle of death and rebirth. The Tome of the Great Maker states that Autochthon bequeathed the holy artifacts known as soulgems to the people of the Eight Nations, that their souls might be captured and returned to the Radiant Amphora after death. The soul of any human who perishes without a soulgem, the Tome warns, will fall into the Void and be lost forever. Because of this, the Eight Nations implant soulgems into all infants shortly after birth. Thanks to the benevolence of the Machine God, no citizen of the Eight Nations must fear dissolution upon death; the Populat may toil in the secure knowledge that when their life ends and they lay down their burdens, they will soon be reborn to continue their sacred service to state and God.

### THE USE OF SOULGEMS

Autochthonian religious doctrine is mistaken. The soul of a mortal who dies without a soulgem simply returns to the Radiant Amphora rather than being lost to some mythical oblivion. Furthermore, the most senior leaders of the Glorious Luminors of the Brilliant Rapture are aware of this falsehood. Why, then, do they perpetuate the use of soulgems within Autochthonia?

When an Autochthonian dies and his soul flees into his soulgem, the soulgem imprints a specialized, singular mark upon the soul. This soulmark is unique, corresponding to the soulgem that created it, and it endures until the end of the soul's next incarnation, at which point the mark vanishes. The Luminors know how to read an individual's soulmark, a feat accomplished through a special device known as a Legacy Calibrator. The Luminors jealously guard the secret of how to build and operate these devices. Through this technique, they are able to identify an individual's former incarnation by consulting their enormous archive of citizen profiles and soulmark legacies.

This affords the Luminors two advantages. First, because they are the only group capable of determining an individual's incarnation history, they are also the only ones capable of determining the proper disposition of his new life. Senior Luminors review case files and decide whether an infant should be assigned to the Populat, Olgotary, Theomachracy, or Sodalities based on their soul's history of achievement and aptitude. The Luminors occasionally falsify a soul's legacy to give favorable treatment to the reincarnations of friends and allies, or to demote to the ranks of the Populat an individual who has caused trouble for them across multiple incarnations.

Such petty bureaucratic tyranny is merely an incidental bonus, of course. The true reason for the use of soulgems is that without this method of tracking the reincarnation history of souls, the Luminors would be unable to identify souls of repeated heroic character who are potentially capable of Alchemical Exaltation. Even the most cynical senior Luminors take this task seriously, for none of the Eight Nations would still survive without the might of its Champions.

### THE FUNCTION OF SOULGEMS

Soulgems serve three purposes: Social class identification, capturing souls, and imprinting souls for future identification by the Luminors.

After a Luminor review board has consulted a newborn's soul history—a task done with as much haste as possible, since most members of the Sodality believe that a crib death before soulgem implantation will consign the infant's soul to the Void—a soulgem is selected which corresponds to the social class the infant will be assigned to. The majority of Autochthonians are given round soulgems of black, polished onyx which signify membership in the Populat. Those destined for the Olgotary receive rectangular soulgems of orange topaz, while future Theomachrats are granted square soulgems of blue sapphire. Finally, the Five Sodalities all share the same diamond-shaped soulgems of purple amethyst. Estasia's Militate is known by its triangular ruby soulgems. All of these soulgems retain the same metaphysical properties—they mark a soul upon its entry to the gem postmortem, and they will hold a soul indefinitely after death, until it is manually released by the Pious Harvesters of the Hallowed Flesh.

The soulgems of the Alchemical Exalted are a bit different. Alchemical soulgems begin as perfect, many-faceted diamonds. Unlike other soulgems, these gems not only catch a Champion's soul after death, but bequeath the Exalt with a soul and grant him life. Also unlike the soulgems of Autochthonian mortals, Alchemical soulgems are not uniform in appearance; when a Champion draws in his first breath, the flawless diamond upon his forehead shifts in appearance to suit his personality and self-

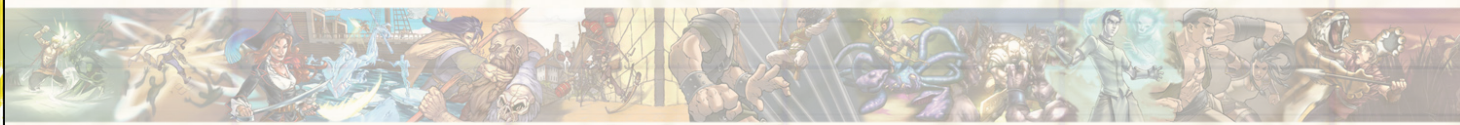


image. The gem of *Stern Whip of Industry*, for example, is an oval of deep emerald, while *Lissome Avid Engineer* bears a rectangular soulgem the same color as Creation's sky. A deceased Champion's soulgem returns to its clear, diamond original form once that hero's soul departs; otherwise, it retains its distinctive appearance until implanted in a new Exalt, at which point it customizes to the newly-empowered Alchemical.

The Sodalities believe that it is harmful to retain souls in a mortal soulgem for an extended period of time after death, particularly those of heroes. Though available data is not conclusive, many Luminors insist that they detect a statistical trend among those whose souls linger overlong in such gems between lives—such individuals, they claim, are less likely to be persons of outstanding merit in their next incarnation; as such, they worry that 'warehousing' heroic souls in unsuitable gems may decrease the likelihood that a soul will prove suitable for Alchemical Exaltation. As a result, each of the Eight Nations has a mandatory deadline by which a soul must be released from its gem if at all possible, ranging from three weeks (in Jarish) to six months (in Nurad).

Unlike soulgems intended for mortals, Alchemical soulgems are believed to be capable of holding a soul indefinitely after death without harm. The Eight Nations may retain the souls of their greatest heroes in this manner for years if need be, in order to ensure that when the time is right they will be able to live again in new incarnations. This practice is strongly frowned on by the Theomachracy if there are no plans to empower any new Champions in the foreseeable future, however, as The Tome of the Great Maker claims that it is a great wickedness to separate Autochthonia from its heroes.

Unfortunately, the lack of an automatic-release feature on soulgems means that sometimes corpses and soulgems are lost to the Reaches, and need to be recovered. While the loss of mortal souls is tragedy enough, each of the Eight Nations has a roster of Champions whose bodies could not be recovered, and whose soulgems are presumably still lost in the depths of the Reaches, waiting for some enterprising hero to recover them and return them to their homes and the cycle of reincarnation. Such national treasures are valued above orichalcum and starmetal, and to discover one is the dream of both mortal and Alchemical alike.

## NEW AUTOCHTHONIAN THAUMATURGY

Soul manipulation is an important, secret activity, vital to the Autochthonian way of life. These are a few of the secret rituals used by the Sodalities:

### THE SCIENCE OF BIOENHANCEMENT

*Soulgem Implantation* (0, Intelligence, 1, one minute): This exceedingly simple ritual, jealously guarded by the Illustrious Conductors of the Consecrated Veins, grants a soulgem to an individual. It is performed upon every Autochthonian infant within a week of birth, by unanimous order of the National Tripartite Assembly of all Eight Nations, but may also be performed upon captured second-generation outcasts from tunnel folk communities. The procedure is performed within a special chamber found in Autochthonian nurseries and re-education

centers known as a Unity Vault; both varieties of room are small, cramped, and dimly-lit by subdued red lights, reminiscent of a mechanical womb; the chief difference is that Unity Vaults at re-education complexes feature a sturdy table outfitted with restraints.

The procedure enough is swift and simple: a soulsteel plate featuring two needle-like prongs is placed against the forehead of the infant or outcast, and driven through the skull with a special starmetal-tipped hammer. The pain of this experience is so all-encompassing that it takes a few moments to register. During this time a soulgem is set against the backing plate, and a live nerve of the Great Maker is drawn down from a special housing in the Vault's ceiling. A spark of Essence jumps between cable and soulgem, fusing the gem to the plate as the agony of the procedure finally sets in, provoking ear-splitting mechanical scream from the patient.

Soulgem implantation, once learned, is so exceedingly simple that characters with a pool of at least six dice succeed at it automatically without need for a roll. Successful execution of this procedure inflicts one level of lethal damage to the target, while a failed attempt inflicts five levels. Botches tend to be ugly, involving skulls smashed by missed hammer swings or electrocution by inexpertly applied live wires—and if the subject is the son or daughter of a high-ranking member of the Tripartite, such mistakes are an excellent way for a young Conductor to discover what life is like among the ranks of the Lumpen.

*Soulgem Revocation* (3, Intelligence, 5, one hour): One of the most famous procedures in practice, Soulgem Revocation is a punishment reserved solely for the worst offenders of Autochthonia's laws. This ritual requires that the offender be brought to the nerve that was used to implant his soulgem originally. If the original nerve is unavailable, taking the offender to any nerve of the Great Maker which has died will work for the purpose of this procedure. The target must first be given a perfectly calculated dosage of an anesthetic drug, dropping his vitals to nothing and sending him into a near-death state. Once on the verge of death, one of his victims is brought forward. If a victim is unavailable, a representative of the victim—preferably a blood relative but also a significant other, best friend, or someone avowing support—can be substituted. The victim places a drop of their blood on the soulgem, which the thaumaturge paints in a symbol that reflects the crime committed. He then calls upon the soul of the offender, in a manner eerily reminiscent of Creation's Summon Ghost ritual (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 133).

If the procedure works, the soul of the offender is drawn into the soulgem by attraction to the blood of the victim, which is said to further seal his guilt. This is signified by the blood turning a bluish-white that glows in the dark. At this juncture, the nerve of the Great Maker is pressed against the soulgem and a word of practiced revocation is spoken. There is a distinctive pop sound as a spark travels backwards up the nerve (even a dead nerve), and the setting around the soulgem instantly begins to bleed as the soulsteel posts separate from the flesh and the setting ceases to be an extension of the offender's body. At this point a tool is used to carefully rip the setting (and the soulgem in it) from the offender's forehead. If the blood of the victim does not begin to glow, the ritual has failed to draw the soul into the soulgem, and any application of the Great Maker's





nerve to the gem will have no effect. Such a botch may be attributed to a technician's failure to measure the dosage of the anesthetic drug, or it may cause doubt to be thrown on the guilt of the offender.

The ruined shell of a person left behind in the wake of this ritual behaves much like a dream-eaten slave of the Fair Folk. The subject has no Motivation, his Virtues all drop to 1, his Willpower falls to 0, and his MDVs are also permanently set to 0. He becomes listless and pliant, doing whatever he is told. Autochthonians use such offenders as slave labor on dangerous, back-breaking projects for the remainder of their short and miserable lives. The Exalted never respond to this or any other ritual which draws their soul into their soulgem prematurely.

## THE SCIENCE OF THE DEAD

*Hope Starts Here* (2, Charisma, 3, ten minutes): The ritual that transfers the spirit of a destined hero from a mortal soulgem to an Alchemical soulgem is both quick enough to be efficacious and spectacle enough to evoke awe. A Luminor takes the soulgems to a small room where the wall has been stripped away to reveal a network of the Maker's Essence-conducting arteries. At this point, all witnesses are asked to stand still and silent and to think thoughts of the Maker's greatness and of the dire need for a new Champion. Banishing light from the room, the Luminor takes hold of a pre-selected cable, which has been ritually severed for the purpose of this ritual. This cable has a soulsteel clamp on one end, and an orichalcum clamp on the other. Carefully placing the mortal soulgem in the soulsteel clamp and the Alchemical soulgem in the orichalcum clamp, the Luminor invokes the presence of Autochthon, bidding him attend the faithful in their hour of need, then makes a final invocation bidding the future Champion within to bring light to the darkness of their world. At this point, the Luminor touches the soulgems together, completing the circuit. As the power flows through the soulgems, both glow softly. Then, as the spirit of the hero rises within, the mortal soulgem begins to glow brilliantly for a moment before going completely dark, at which point the Alchemical soulgem glows even brighter and briefly shines with enough force to light up the room, before dropping to a simple but unmistakable ethereal radiance. At this point the soulgems are parted, removed from the clamps, and the procedure is complete.

*Winding the Amphora* (1, Manipulation, 2, fifteen minutes): This procedure releases the spirit within a mortal soulgem into the Ewer of Souls. This procedure can only be enacted ten minutes before or five minutes after the hour. The soulgem is taken to the lonely, low-traffic end of a sector, where there is a station containing the Psychopomp Gears of the Transmodal Essence Recombinator. The Harvester places the soulgem on a dais close to the frightening mechanisms of death and makes a ward of salt around it, leading to a massive series of interlocked moonsilver and soulsteel plates that form a gigantic gate. He then draws a curtain around the salt ward. Pretending to be a parent, lover, or other person significant to the deceased, the Harvester calls her forth and her silhouette can be seen rising behind the curtain. The spirit may even call out to the thaumaturge (for this reason, many Harvesters wear earplugs during this ritual), but it cannot pass through the curtain due to the line of salt. At this point, a single rivet on a bulkhead begins to unscrew itself, and the dead gears that flank either side of the

machine each make one fraction of a turn, from smallest to largest, and the layered moonsilver-soulsteel gate behind the curtain slides open. A wind blows in, and sometimes there are sounds in it, and sometimes there are voices. Then a number of articulated tendrils appear, moving behind the curtain, wrapping around the startled spirit before dragging it back through the gateway, which slides shut with a bang, cutting off all noise and wind from the other side and draining the room of its sense of presences.

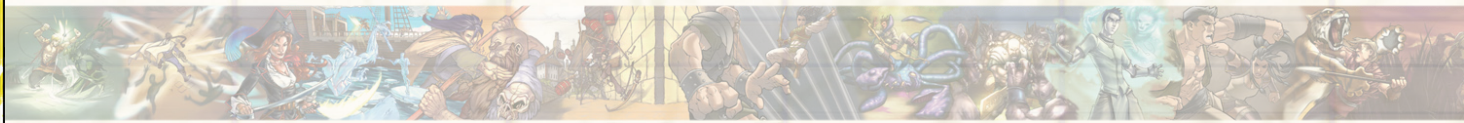
*A Hero's Goodbye* (2, Charisma, 3, twenty minutes): Sometimes it becomes necessary to release the soul of a Champion back into the Radiant Amphora so that it might spend a few lifetimes aggregating mortal experiences. When such an Alchemical dies, the procedure to return her soul to the Ewer is often performed as part of a state funeral. This ritual is performed by a high-ranking Harvester at an amphitheatre called the Cradle of Returns. The soulgem is carefully placed into a setting atop an altar that rises from the superstructure, and the Harvester says an emotional prayer to Autochthon, giving thanks for the Champion while they were allowed to have her, and summarily giving her back to the care of the Great Maker. She then presses down on the soulgem with a gloved hand bearing the seal of the Machine God, and a number of multi-colored Essence tubes light up around the circular borders of the amphitheatre, displaying images of the Alchemical's past incarnations, while a single column across from the Harvester is illuminated with a shaft of pure light, in which the spirit of the deceased Alchemical appears and begins to slowly ascend into the dark upper reaches, accompanied by a chorus of voices from deep within the Cradle singing the hymn of Autochthon, while a monitor reads out the data of the Champion's exploits, even going so far as to display some of her fondest memories as they flee her for the last time. During this time, each image of her past selves slowly winks out, the Essence tubes darkening as she ascends, until finally she is gone and the whole Cradle is dark except for the soulgem, which glows with the initial radiance given to it by a Luminor so long ago. Then, it too finally goes dark, and the ritual is complete.

## ARTIFACTS

### ESSENCE PULSE CANNON (ARTIFACT ••)

This specialized artifact weapon is custom designed to perfectly integrate with Transcendent Multimodal Artifact Matrix (see *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Alchemicals*, p. 166), so much so that the device's delicate motonic circuitry is incapable of independent operation. When deployed for a five mote attunement, the device transforms one of the character's hands and forearm into a the bulbous barrel of a heavy cannon mechanism. Within the machine, pneumatically-driven clockwork gears turn banks of capacitors in opposing rotation, building up charges of super-heated ball lightning in the colors of the Champion's anima. After each shot, the cannon audibly vents jets of steam from the wrist area to prevent overheating.

Essence Pulse Cannons use the base statistics below and gain the benefit of the appropriate thrown weapon Magical Material bonuses (though wielded with Archery). Each shot costs one mote for ammunition and can inflict bashing or lethal damage as desired. In the former case, damage never spills over past Incapacitated to become lethal and so cannot do worse than



knock the target out. Lethal attacks disintegrate slain or destroyed targets, destroying all non-indestructible objects carried by them. Physical disintegration does not affect the target spiritually (slain spirits to reform normally, etc.). Non-magical armor predominantly constructed of metal conducts the plasma blasts, reducing soak to one third (rounded up) rather than the piercing tag's usual half.

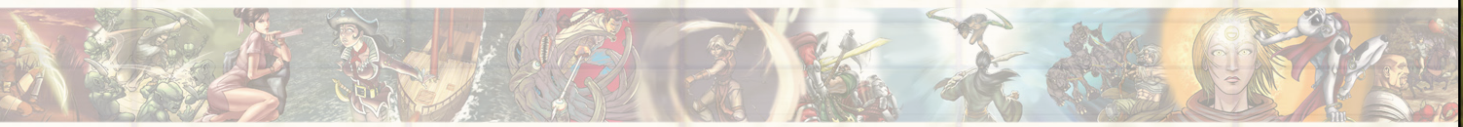
Variant models of this weaponry exist. Hands-free subtle designs can be mounted as miniaturized emitters implanted in the eyes, as shoulder turret cannons or any number of other options. Regardless of the specifics, such weapons only inflict 8L/12B due to their reduced size. Siege Devastators are rated

Artifact 3 and take the opposite approach, with oversized cannons that impose a -2 mobility penalty that stacks with any from armor and blasts that ignore the soak of non-magical metal armor entirely. Targets are also hurled back and suffer injury if slammed into objects as though the attack was enhanced by Heaven Thunder Hammer (see **Exalted**, p. 242), though knockback damage caps at 25L.

**Essence Pulse Cannon:** Speed 6, Accuracy +2, Damage 10L/15B, Rate 3, Range 100, Tags F, P

**Siege Devastator:** Speed 6, Accuracy +0, Damage 15L/20B, Rate 1, Range 200, Tags F, P





## CHAPTER EIGHT

# THE FAIR FOLK

## CUP

### WORLD-SHAPING

#### UNIVERSAL DESIRE TRINKET

**Cost:** 6m, 2g; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Compulsion, Illusion

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Unlimited Resplendence

Raksha covet hoards of gossamer, while mortals want for precious jade. If they desire riches in their hearts, how can any merciful faerie deny them? Upon using this Charm, the raksha enchants a single object he can perceive, rolling (Manipulation + Performance). The object's appearance does not actually change; instead, those who see it believe it to be valuable beyond all price. All characters who see the enchanted treasure and who have a Dodge MDV lower than the raksha's rolled successes covet it greatly. They suffer a -3 penalty to the MDVs against any mental influence that exploits their desire for it.

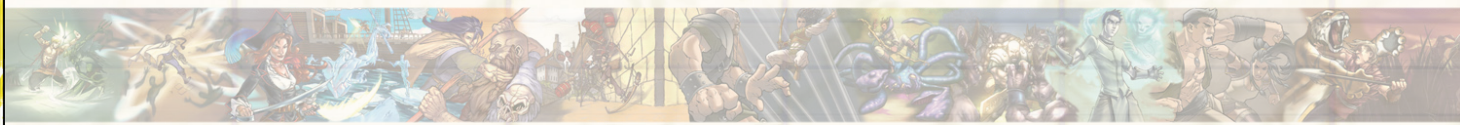
In addition, they are compelled to attempt to acquire it so long as they can see it, though this Compulsion cannot change the nature of men. An honest man cannot be turned to a thief by this influence—unless he chooses to steal it of his own free will, this influence will only compel him to attempt to buy or otherwise legitimately obtain the treasure. A character may pay two points of Willpower to resist this influence, rendering them immune to all such enchantments laid by the raksha for one day. If the raksha ends this Charm, all characters are freed from its unnatural mental influence. Furthermore, should the enchanted item be touched with cold iron, this Charm is terminated.

## THE FAIR FOLK REVISITED

Bells chime in the darkness beyond the edge of the village. Icicles hanging from the eaves shiver with anticipation. Women gather their children close and cover their ears, while men tighten their grip on ice-axes. The Winter Folk are abroad in the night.

Two princes of chaos vie for a maiden's affections. Their contest is reality itself; mountains rise and crumble, armies march,





and hearts break in the struggle. Their contemporaries look on with bright, hungry eyes.

A raksha noble sits his throne among opulent splendor to shame the very gods of Heaven. Miles-long streamers of silk flutter in air heavy with the most exotic perfumes; his clothes are alive with burning poetry, words that write themselves upon the very nature of those who read them. He beholds the ruin and poverty of his exile to this alien shore, and falls into despair.

These are the stories of the Fair Folk—invaders, nightmares, and broken refugees. The raksha remain a vital but little-understood element of **Exalted** stories. Here, then, are the inner lives of the tribes of madness.

## WHAT THE CREATION-BORN SEE

For all the contempt the Exalted held for the princes of chaos, the scars of the Balorian Crusade still mark Creation to this day. These wounds are most obvious in the ragged and embellished borders of all modern maps of Creation, where cartographers exercise artistic fancy because attempts at serious navigation are no longer possible, but they can also be found pervading the scholarship of the Creation-born. Savants tend to think of the Fair Folk in their most famous incarnation—as numberless hordes storming in from the inchoate chaos beyond the world. The Fair Folk assaulted Creation in the *hundreds of millions* during the Balorian Crusade—at the moment when the Scarlet Empress breached the Imperial Manse, there were more raksha within Creation's borders than living humans.

Any cosmologist from a respectable institution of higher learning will attest that the Wyld is infinite in scope, or so nearly infinite that any lesser distinction is not worth drawing. As a result, most savants believe that the Fair Folk are also infinite in number, and that for all of modern history, their vast, unstoppable tide has only been held back by fear of the might of the Realm.

The truth is somewhat different.

## BEHIND THE MASK

The raksha think of themselves as the battered remnants of a people once proud and mighty but now hovering at the brink of extinction. While the Wyld might be infinite in scope, the Fair Folk host is not.

## THE ECOLOGY OF THE UNSHAPED

The Wyld is a vast cauldron of boiling myth and churning narrative from which the unshaped naturally arise. When a tangle of fantasy happens to fumble into something resembling momentary internal coherence, a collection of Graces may form, hardening the dream against the surrounding storm of dissolution and change. These still-shifting-but-coherent narratives are what the common folk of Creation think of as Wyld storms and savants recognize as the unshaped raksha. The unshaped emerge by chance and without rhyme, reason, or regularity. In the First Age, the No Moon researcher Brilliant Sky once devised a deep-Wyld survival and exploration station and monitored a vast sector of Pure Chaos (to the extent that he was able to determine boundaries of the field of observation). He was able to derive almost no useful information about raksha birth demographics; in one year, he witnessed the formation of nine new self-aware vortices; in another year, 32; and then for a five-year span, none at all.

## HELP! WHAT DO I DO WITH THESE GUYS?

The raksha are strange, alien, mystifying, and frightening to the Creation-born. But they need not be so for players and Storytellers!

**Graceful Wicked Masques**, like **Exalted: the Fair Folk** before it, has an unfortunate reputation as being difficult to approach. Some players have trouble finding the proper context for the raksha, and as a result, let them go unused in their **Exalted** stories. This article is intended to provide an approachable, plain-language overview of the Fair Folk, their concerns and themes, and the context in which the information in **Graceful Wicked Masques** should be taken. It also outlines basic dramatic conflicts for the Fair Folk which Storytellers should be able to draw on to tell gripping stories about the princes of chaos. With the fundamentals of the raksha laid bare, it should be easy to add complexity back on, with a clearer idea of where everything is going and how it all fits together.

The total raksha population increases slowly; unshaped are born hungry, and their brethren are their primary source of food. The internal mythology of newborn unshaped is simple and dull in comparison to the maelstrom of possibility around them, and so they extend feelers of narrative into the endless sea of waypoints until they encounter another of their kind. Then, young unshaped move to the attack, sending their newly-sculpted fictions and Emanations to war. This cannibalistic growth/expansion phase lasts for centuries, by the reckoning of the hateful time-piece the Primordials inflicted on the Wyld—1,000 years of unchecked hunger is common. Eventually, if it survives, the unshaped passes out of its feeding frenzy and into a period of learning and consolidation which roughly corresponds to adulthood among the princes of chaos.

## THE ISHVARA

The typical raksha (shaped and unshaped alike) evolves along the course of a personal narrative, growing to embody an internal mythology it spends its immortal existence cultivating. Eventually this produces ancient Fair Folk of tremendous power, each of whom embodies a legend so persuasive or intense that the world bends around it. Working within the theme of its legend, such a raksha may stand against even the mighty Exalted.

But sometimes, rarely, occasionally, something happens which almost *never* happens—an occurrence seen only a handful of times in all the history of time and before-time. Sometimes a raksha's narrative evolution takes a *massive* leap forward, as if the protagonist had reached into the heart of the universe to grasp a myth so compelling and powerful that in embodying it, he would become a thing immortalized unto the heart of existence—a legend beyond all legend. These are the ishvara. They are vastly more potent than raksha of the same Essence, capable of standing against the most powerful of devas and engaging in duels with the Celestial Incarnae.

Such beings never come into existence by accident. The rarity of their appearance is directly proportional to the difficulty of a raksha ever achieving apotheosis. Like all other princes of chaos, Fair Folk who transcend into ishvara are evolving along the course of a personal mythology. The difference is that these raksha have created a narrative so compelling that *everyone*



goes along with it. By subordinating the tales of other legendary raksha, and even gods, the myth grows in power. If the raksha can entangle enough powerful beings in its story, by antagonism, alliance, or association, it begins to become something out of scope with what it was before. Eventually it reaches a narrative climax and grasps true power, becoming the embodiment of a legend, the living avatar of a myth which can shake reality to its foundations.

Such was the case with Princes Balor and Laashe, and the terror known as the Fomorian Dream.

Easily the most famous raksha to have ever existed, Prince Balor of the Terrible Gaze became ishvara by grasping a legend countless Fair Ones had failed to reach. His tale was that he would be *the one* to lead the raksha against Creation and destroy it. This narrative painted him as the greatest of all fae, who would return chaos to the universe, laying low the blasphemy of shape forever. By the time he reached the pinnacle of his power, the majority of all raksha in existence were beholden to the story of Balor, who surpassed all.

When Prince Balor grasped the tail of Ishiika for the first time, it was embedded so deep into the Faraway—to whence it had been flung by the Unconquered Sun—that it was thought impossible that it would ever be retrieved. When Prince Balor drew Ishiika from its tomb and wielded it, he made his power clear to the watching universe: the impossible was meaningless before him with the Terrible Gaze.

As his legend grew, so did his might. Bearing the aspect of the destroyer, Balor had a number of powers. His Terrible Gaze, which could slay his enemies by the thousands with the weight of his stare, was perhaps the least among these, but the one which best informed his legend—his eyes alone could sear reality. He was in possession of several such divine miracles, which gave him the might to defeat ancient heroes of the Silver Pact in single combat, stand triumphant over Celestial gods, and wield Ishiika with ease.

## AND THEN, FIRE

Prince Balor of the Terrible Gaze led the majority of the tribes of madness into Creation in his great assault on the house of the Primordials. The greatest and most fervent among them took on the blasphemy of shape in emulation of mighty Balor, while the weakest were enslaved and forced through the Gateway of Sundraprisha act as the vanguard of the Prince's elite and the unshaped that followed. The Dragon-Blooded host fell in disarray, and the fearsome Lunar Exalted were overwhelmed by the torrent, and it was soon clear that Creation would die and the Wyld would be pure once again.

Then the skies rained down iron and flame and whirlwinds of poisoned thorns. The earth convulsed and devoured commoners by the tens of thousands. The Solar Exalted had been more powerful, suspicious and idle than the raksha had ever dreamed, and their weapon worked a massacre among the princes of chaos beyond even the imagination of the children of dream.

The Scarlet Empress and the Realm Defense Grid killed the vast majority of raksha in existence in one mighty stroke. The result was catastrophic. In just minutes, it was as if the raksha had suffered their own Great Contagion. Only a small handful of unshaped escaped back into the Wyld. Most of the surviv-

ing shaped raksha had donned permanent bodies. Unable to abandon their forms, they were stranded on the shores of Creation, in the strata of Wyld-infused reality they came to call Rakshastan.

## REFUGEES IN THE HOUSE OF THE PRIMORDIALS

In RY 768, most of the raksha in Creation come from one of three sources.

The first are survivors of the Balorian Crusade who are still stranded on Creation's shores. Some continue to dream of the destruction of the house of the Primordials and the conclusion of Prince Balor's dream; many are members of the Church of Balor. Others have given up the Crusade as a fool's errand that has brought only destruction to their race. These raksha, resigned to their life in exile, tend to exist as the greatest predators among their kind, attempting to resume the games of conquest and dominion that occupied them in the Wyld.

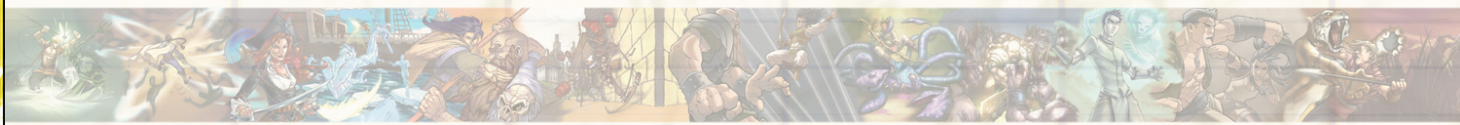
The second are 'native' raksha—those created within Rakshastan since the end of the Balorian Crusade, who have never known life as one of the unshaped. Such raksha are produced through the sexual arts of the Staff and occasionally even arise naturally within the Deep Wyld, much as unshaped congeal from Pure Chaos—though such Wyld-born shaped raksha are rare in the extreme. Some dream of the ancestral homeland they have never known, while others are content with their lives in Creation.

The third are unshaped which have passed through the Gateway of Sundraprisha since the end of the Crusade. The Crusade survivors and Wyld-born shaped raksha were alarmed by the first wave of these Fair Folk, but soon came to realize they were not facing an invasion, but rather receiving an influx of refugees.

In the wake of the Balorian Crusade only a relative handful of unshaped remained in the Wyld, and most of those had no interest in Creation. They watched Balor lead his army to ruin, shrugged, and attempted to resume their mercurial existences.

Then there came a terrifying and unforeseen turn of events. As if in response to the sudden annihilation of so many raksha, there was a sudden massive birthing of new unshaped. But these unshaped were different. They were forming under a single cohesive and powerful narrative, which painted them as the predators-in-the-deep, superior monsters, purebred hunters induced for hunting, slaying, and killing. These hannya were things of endless, ravenous appetite. Empowered by the defeat of the raksha hordes, the hannya narrative played upon the failure and defeat of the returning Crusaders, to paint them as weak, victims, and therefore prey. None were safe in this new and predatory age; even the most ancient and powerful of unshaped were constantly hunted by packs of lean, hungry vortices. Those who were unwilling or unable to spend every moment locked in a life-or-death fight for survival were forced to seek refuge in the house of the Primordials. Ever empowered by their status as apex predators, this new generation of unshaped will never leave its hunting stage, as the tale of their all-consuming hunger constantly reinforces itself.

Caught between two worlds, those refugees which Creation knows as the Fair Folk have adapted to their liminal existence in a variety of ways.



## ON ALIEN SHORES

To play a raksha is to play a proud and mighty hero stranded on the threshold of a strange, hostile world. The shaped Fair Folk cannot go home—either they have donned bodies they cannot remove, or are unwilling to cast themselves into the feeding frenzy that now dominates the Wyld. They are refugees encamped at the edge of an engine designed to destroy them.

But that engine has now fallen into disrepair, and the Time of Tumult offers great opportunities for young raksha looking for something beyond the desultory games of power played by the potentates of their kind.

## THE GAMES FAERIES PLAY

The raksha are beings of role and ritual. These things bind together their Graces and protect them from dissolution by the ever-shifting tides of the Wyld. If the myth that is their life is to accumulate power and elaborate itself, it must entangle other narratives with its own; if it does not, it will stagnate and reach its conclusion, and for the Fair Folk, scribing The End means calcification and death. For this reason, raksha cannot simply sit idle in the company of their own kind—a Warrior will sicken without conflict, an Entertainer wilt and die if she is not attempting to bring others under her influence through the graceful arts of addiction and submission.

So it is that when raksha gather into a court, they act upon one another. They must. The company of their fellows defines the context of their lives, such that a raksha without context soon becomes a raksha without life.

This is the status quo of the courts of Rakshastan: The most powerful nobles rise to the top, accumulating widespread oaths of fealty, and then cling to power atop a ceaselessly churning mill of ambition. Those who lack the alliances or prowess necessary to fend off all comers are soon dragged under and deposed; those who are too efficient at the art of absolute tyranny reign for a time over an unchanging realm where none dare lift a finger in challenge, until they calcify into statues upon their thrones. Then the court resumes its predatory cycles.

The primary reason Rakshastan doesn't dissolve into widespread civil war is that the majority of shaped raksha have limited interest in dominating their fellows; if they wished to engage in no-holds-barred contests for absolute supremacy, they would be out in the Wyld, grappling with the young unshaped. Most Fair Folk participate in raksha politics primarily to defend themselves and keep boredom at bay. A Luminary might conceive of a great desire to gain control of a freehold's Glory, and spend years building alliances, claiming Graces, and pulling the teeth of enemies in order to do so. Eventually, successful, she defends her new prize for a time; but if she succeeds too well, and finds that there are no challenges to her position, she is likely to repudiate her allies, or attempt to make guardians or lackeys of her conquered enemies, fully aware that by returning some degree of agency and volition she also gives them the power to threaten her again. Boredom is the great bane of the raksha; if the story of a faerie's life never changes, it is almost impossible to remain motivated, and apathy is capable of unmaking the princes of chaos if permitted to settle and stay for long enough.

And so raksha endanger themselves with irrational politics. They are, after all, immortal; falling from grace today simply presents an opportunity to climb back to the heights of power tomorrow.

Of course, some Fair Folk have more serious ambitions. When they claim a Heart, it will never be returned. These no-holds-barred raksha politicians may run the risk of calcification through a 'solved' personal narrative, but they endanger those around them even more. Raksha threaten one another all the time; a successful prince of chaos must be able to evaluate the level of threat his fellows present and respond accordingly.

## LIVING ON THE EDGE

Conceptualizing the raksha requires understanding their situation. The denizens of Rakshastan are refugees, trapped between two worlds. They can neither go home—the realms of pure chaos and unfiltered make-believe—nor are they welcomed in the lands of Creation. Stranded forever in the most fragile of sanctuaries, the raksha exist on sips of dreams and gasps of emotion, the exiles of a failed crusade. In the eras before this one, the raksha were more numerous than the sands and the stars; a horde beyond counting. The Fair Folk are creatures on the verge of extinction. In the Wyld they are hunted by a newer, sleeker, deadlier apex predator. In Creation, they are shunned with gifts of cold iron and moonsilver talons. Their isolation has driven them to take on many shapes and identities, twisting their narratives into forms which they hope will one day solve the riddle of Creation and the Wyld: how to exist within—or conquer—one or the other.

## INTO THE LANDS OF SHAPE

Some Fair Folk reason that if they cannot go home, then there is little sense skulking on the periphery of Creation attempting to recreate in pale miniature the grandeur and intrigue of the courts of the Wyld. Why not strike off into the house of the Primordials, discover its secrets, perhaps even conquer and rule it?

Creation has led to the rise of a number of strange philosophies and factions among the raksha, particularly among those who make frequent sojourns deep into the house of the Primordials or even live in it full-time. A few of the most notable or widespread are detailed below.

## GOING NATIVE

In Nexus, Great Forks, Chiaroscuro, and many other major cities of Creation, a diligent searcher will find a few raksha living among the common press of humanity. They sell their services as entertainers, courtesans, warriors, miracle-workers—purveyors of dream. In exchange, they take a nip from a soul here, a sip of dream there. A community with a raksha in residence is never fully comfortable with their local alien, but there is a certain exotic allure to 'tame' Fair Folk, and Creation-born flock to visit them, even against their better judgment.

Life among mortals is less boring than most raksha would assume. Humans are strange, unpredictable—they do not arrange their lives in ritualistic relationships, and so when they break the pattern of their lives with bouts of irrational behavior, these are often a complete surprise to the Fair Folk, and thus a delight. Murders among the raksha are often heavily foreshadowed, with the victim standing to gain as much as the killer. But among mortals? A corpse appears one day, and everything falls into pandemonium! Mortals fall in love with little rhyme or reason, or hate one another when there is no clear profit for either party in the rivalry. Raksha find the honesty of their actions bizarre and thus intriguing. This is especially so when dealing with exceptional Creation-born such as the Exalted,





who storm up and down the length of the world transforming it according to their will. Such adventure makes for an attractive alternative to raksha politics.

A few Fair Folk, considered aberrant and bizarre even by their own kind, become so fascinated with mortals that they attempt to emulate them in every way—living in disguise among human communities, perhaps as a cobbler or courtesan, and attempting to puzzle out the secrets of genuine belief and behavior. There is even a small group of raksha attempting to find a way to synthesize a true human soul and cause it to cohabit with their Wyld nature—to gain the best benefits of mortality and immortality, human and raksha. They are known among their kind as sanskaras. Much of their research focuses on the breeding and examination of fae-blooded children, but they have yet to find a way to cause a true soul to permanently cohabit with the Heart.

Most Fair Folk can imagine no practical purpose to such hybridization, and are vaguely offended by the notion. They think the sanskaras mad, even by the Wyld's lax standards.

### THE SHUDDADVAITA

There exists a faction of Fair Folk who believe it possible to reshape the entirety of the Wyld using Creation as their catalyst. They are the Shuddadvaita, the bearers of the way, and they seek to merge Creation and the Wyld in such a way that the fusion of land and chaos rolls on in all directions infinitely. In this endless, borderless sprawl of Middlemarches and Deep Wyld, they will hunt and conquer as kings.

They call this idealized world Nidana, the chain of causation. Shuddadvaita tend to be what the Creation-born regard as domesticated. They are the raksha who are most common to Creation's more cosmopolitan cities, living amongst her people in relative harmony. Other Fair Folk regard the Shuddadvaita as landlocked lunatics who have grown maddened by their entrapment between the hostile lands of shape and the feeding frenzy of the Wyld and seek to put an end to the purity of chaos so that they might once more have their full range of motion—even if it means robbing their entire species of the gift of shapelessness forever.

The Shuddadvaita could care less what their contemporaries think; they believe that by creating Nidana, the goals of all factions will be achieved, even if not in a way anyone else would have quite wanted to achieve them. The Creation-born will still have a world, now infinite in scope (although steeped in Middlemarch to Deep Wyld-intensity chaos), and the raksha will have their infinity back, albeit slower and more constrained in its transformations. The Shuddadvaita are excited by the return of the Solar Exalted; some believe that if they can recruit a few young Twilights to their cause, the Solars might be able to act as the catalyst to bring about their eternal dream.

### THE FOMORIANS

Though the ishvara known as the Fomorian Dream is long dead, slain by the Unconquered Sun in prehistory, his philosophy lives on in those Fair Folk who have taken up his name and cause. The Fomorians believe the house of the Primordials needs to be burned down and its inhabitants put to the sword, and they aim to do so from within. This is hardly an unusual sentiment among the Fair Folk, particularly among survivors of the Balorian Crusade, but the Fomorians take the philosophy of the Church of Balor (of which many are members) one step further. Not content with the destruction of the Primordials and their works, they seek a return to the absolute purity of

the Wyld, and thus the elimination of all sentience. Only when there are no self-aware patterns within the great chaos of the Wyld will the Fomorians be satisfied that the universe is as it should be, cleansed of all memory of the hated Primordials and their works.

Many raksha understandably take issue with the Fomorian philosophy, and so the average Fomorian is well-versed not only in the ways of destruction within the shaped world, but also in the arts of shaping battle. Shaped Fomorians rarely assume the beautiful forms generally associated with the Fair Folk, instead choosing to craft themselves into living nightmares: moss-skinned, prognathous trolls; ogres with flesh-tearing fangs and great curving horns; stone-armored gargoyles with vast dark wings; pale, elongated terrors with poison-dripping nails; living shadows which race upon the north wind and freeze blood with a touch; and other monstrous forms with which to tear asunder the shaped world.

### THE BALORIAN HERESY

The raksha of the Church of Balor are delighted to possess the one thing every good religion needs—a persistent, widespread heresy that sends members of the Church searching far and wide throughout Creation, not for cracks in the pillars that hold up the house of the Primordials...but for Prince Balor himself.

The popular Balorian Heresy holds that Prince Balor never died in the course of the Crusade. After his infinitely powerful gaze saw through the intended betrayal of the sisters Incarnadine and Viridian, the Prince faked his demise by turning his Terrible Gaze upon himself and creating the field of devastation that features so prominently in the Testaments of the Church of Balor.

Having destroyed his enemies, the clever warlord spirited himself away and watched to see what his army would make of his apparent demise. Balor wished to test the veracity of his legend and determine whether the tribes of madness could truly destroy Creation without him. The Heresy fragments at this point, depending on which version of the actions of Princess Melusine and the Duke of Mirrors the adherent believes, but all versions of the legend end the same way—with Prince Balor willingly entering a state of calcification to avoid destruction by the Realm Defense Grid.

Adherents of the Balorian Heresy search far and wide across Creation for the reliquary of the greatest of all Fair Folk, intent on reviving him. In the meantime, they attempt to rescue every calcified raksha they come across from that state—it is difficult to determine at first glance who a reliquary used to be, and so any might potentially be lost Balor.

The legend of the Heresy states that Prince Balor meditates within his reliquary as he waits for the faithful to find him, and that when he emerges, he shall have confirmed that he is truly the only one capable of leading the tribes of madness to victory. More powerful than ever, he will call forth a Second Crusade. Then mighty Balor shall cast the Deathlords back into the Underworld, topple the Elemental Poles, steal each of Luna's many shapes and slay them one by one, and tear the sky asunder so that the sun falls into the sea and steams both away to nothingness. He will wield Ishiika within the boundaries of Creation, for he will have grown such that the grass-cutter scythe is smaller beside him.

Those Creation-born who are aware of the Heresy dismiss it as delusions of raksha grandeur, and hope they are correct to do so.



# CHAPTER NINE MARTIAL ARTS

## TERRESTRIAL MARTIAL ARTS

### IVORY PESTLE STYLE

The human body has a frame of living stone. Bones and teeth are partly mineral, as every Child of Pasiap knows. Ivory Pestle Style calls upon that elemental power; it employs pole-like weapons that mimic the shape of the long arm and leg bones.

Of all body parts, the skeleton endures longest after death, which gives bone a connection to death and the Underworld. Ivory Pestle Style also uses the martial artist's own skeleton to draw upon the subtler Essence of death, enabling its masters to affect ghosts and other spirits.

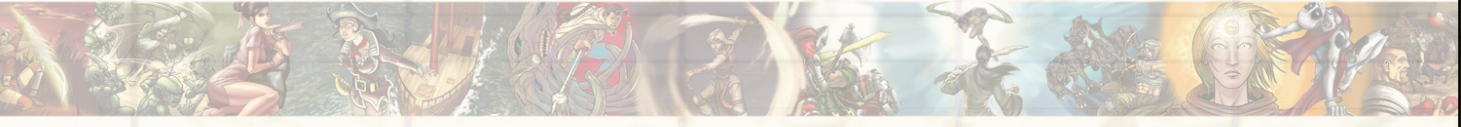
That deathly connection gives Ivory Pestle Style a dubious reputation. Nevertheless, the style was invented during the Shogunate specifically to fight ghosts. Martial arts tradition ascribes its origin to Autumn Veil, a Daughter of Pasiap who vowed revenge on the restless dead after losing her daimyo father in battle with a shadowland's ghostly legions. Nowadays, enlightened mortal priests of the Maiden of Endings sometimes learn Ivory Pestle Style as a way to protect themselves against mortal and undead foes who might attack them in their fune-

real duties. The gravedigger-priests of the Violet Lotus Temple, for instance, defend themselves using their spades.

This Terrestrial Martial Arts style is aspected toward the element of Earth.

**Weapons and Armor:** Ivory Pestle practitioners can wear light armor. Staves or similar weapons, such as a cudgel, stick, tetsubo or wrackstaff, are form weapons for Ivory Pestle Style, and count as unarmed attacks for the purpose of its Charms. Practitioners can also use the shaft of a spear, polearm or dire lance as if it were an ordinary staff. Ivory Pestle Charms cannot be applied to attacks using the blades of such weapons. On the other hand, Ivory Pestle stylists frequently make use of improvised weapons such as crowbars, oars or coatstands: Treat such weapons as sticks, cudgels, staves or tetsubos, as appropriate to their size. Although Ivory Pestle Charms can be employed with barehanded strikes, the full power of the style is only available to martial artists who wield staff-like weapons. Fortunately, one can find some sort of improvised stick, club or staff almost anywhere.

**Complementary Abilities:** Due to Ivory Pestle Style's emphasis on weapons, practitioners need at least two dots in Melee to learn its Charms.



### DYNAMIC FORM TRANSITION

Ivory Pestle Form may be reflexively assumed without a Charm activation in the following ways:

- If the practitioner lands an unarmed Ivory Pestle style strike which inflicts at least one health level of damage.
- If the practitioner is currently using any other Martial Arts Form and inflicts at least one health level of damage with that style's unarmed attack.
- If the practitioner uses a pole-type weapon to inflict knockdown with a Martial Arts attack.

### IVORY OBSTRUCTION KATA

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The martial artist deftly whips her weapon between the legs of her opponent to trip him and send him flying. No matter what the raw damage of a successful attack that is supplemented with this Charm, the attack deals Knockback, and the target's player must roll to resist Knockdown (see **Exalted**, p. 153). The attacker can add her permanent Essence score either to the difficulty to resist Knockdown or to the number of yards the target is knocked back: She can increase the distance her opponent moves or the chance that he falls to the ground, but not both.

Use of Ivory Obstruction Kata in a flurry is self-limiting. If the martial artist hurls an opponent beyond her weapon's reach, she cannot continue attempting to strike or throw him further.

### WHIRLING PESTLE KATA

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1;

**Type:** Extra Action

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The martial artist spins his staff to launch a series of rapidfire attacks against his foe. The resulting flurry is limited to the weapon's Rate +1, and the attacker still suffers a DV penalty from each attack, but the attack rolls do not take any penalty for multiple actions. The martial artist cannot take additional actions besides the Charm-enhanced flurry, except his normal, reflexive Move.

### STICK AND STAFF STUNTING

Stick and staff-type weapons are excellent for stunting. Pole vaulting with a staff is only the start. You can spin them to strike with extra speed and force (and look cool). You can cross a pair of smaller weapons to catch an opponent's weapon in an X (a stunt for a parry or attempt to disarm). You can play a drum solo on your enemies' helmets as you beat them silly! Options expand even further when you think of all the things that could be used as improvised stick or staff weapons, or that you could incorporate in such a weapon. In the classic martial arts movie *Circle of Iron*, for instance, a staff doubled as a flute. Let your imagination run wild!

### IVORY PESTLE FORM

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-basic, Form-type

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Ivory Obstruction Kata, Whirling Pestle Kata

As the martial artist swings her weapon and treads the steps of the Ivory Pestle Form, she links the Essence of her bones to the Essence of her club or staff, making it truly an extension of her body. This has four effects:

- The deadly force channeled through the martial artist's bones and weapon enable her to strike or clinch dematerialized ghosts. (The Form does not enable the martial artist to perceive such entities, however.)
- While the Form remains active, staff-type weapons gain +1 Rate. This stacks with the benefits of Whirling Pestle Kata or other Charms that increase a weapon's Rate, but not with Charms such as Iron Whirlwind Attack that ignore a weapon's Rate.
- The martial artist also takes no penalties to his Parry DV— not even wound penalties—as long as he fights using a staff-type weapon.
- The martial artist may wield a stick or club in each hand and employ either weapon for attack or defense. This offers no intrinsic advantage to the martial artist, but she will not suffer any sort of penalty for wielding a weapon in her off hand.

The first time a Charm with a Flaw of Invulnerability is used during the same action Ivory Pestle Form is activated, it adds a two Willpower surcharge to its activation cost.

### CRUSHING PESTLE ATEMI

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5, DV -1)

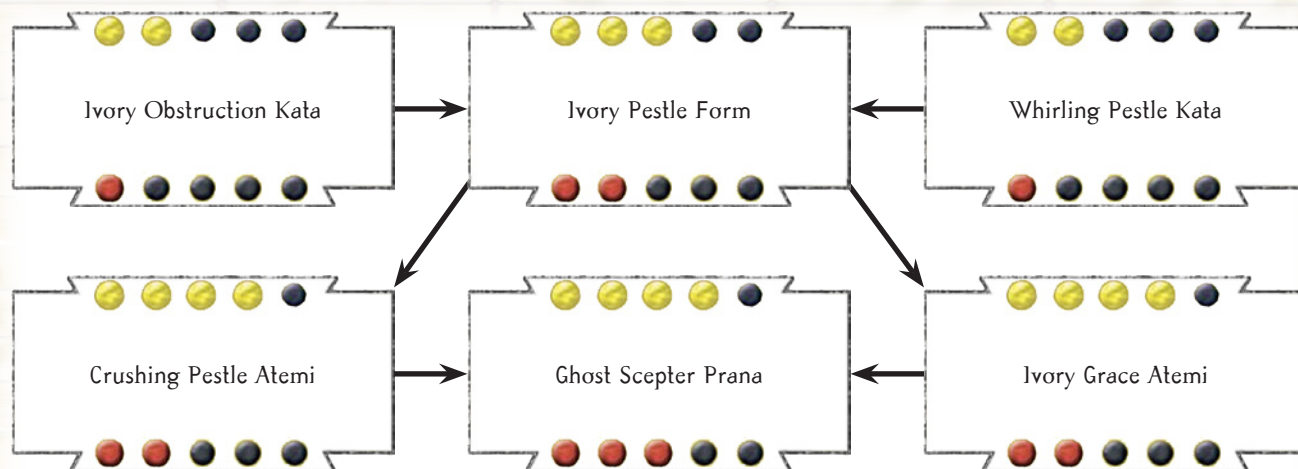
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Crippling

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Ivory Pestle Form

The martial artist lashes forward with a swift, stabbing blow to strike an enemy's weapon, armor or body. Her player rolls a (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack. The Essence-charged impact exerts brief but tremendous crushing force. The attack's damage is both aggravated and piercing—but no matter how much damage the player rolls, a living (or at least animate) target suffers no more than one level of damage. Weapons and armor, however, take full damage. By specifically targeting an opponent's hand, the martial artist can cripple that hand so the foe can no longer hold a weapon or shield. A martial artist could also cripple an enemy's leg. (See **Exalted**, p. 152 for crippling effects.) Attacks with this Charm take no penalty for called shots against small targets or specific body parts.

Weapons are considered to have a number of health levels equal to their damage rating, while armor is considered to have a number of health levels equal to its highest soak rating. They are damaged as objects—dice are applied as direct health levels of damage, rather than being rolled. Mundane weapons and armor with no remaining health are destroyed; artifacts are harder, and are forcibly de-attuned rather than being destroyed.



### IVORY GRACE ATEMI

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Crippling

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Ivory Pestle Form

The martial artist may seem to strike lightly, but Essence pours through the weapon into the target's bones, freezing the martial artist's opponent with the rigidity of stone... or of death. The martial artist's player rolls a normal (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack. A successful attack can stun a foe, even if it does not inflict any damage. The target's player rolls (Stamina + Resistance) at a difficulty of (attacker's Essence) to resist the stunning effect. Failure means the target is stunned for the rest of his current action, plus one additional action per level of damage suffered from the attack. See **Exalted**, p. 153, for the effects of being stunned.

### GHOST SCEPTER PRANA

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Crippling, Obvious, Stackable

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Crushing Pestle Atemi, Ivory Grace Atemi

The final technique of Ivory Pestle Style charges the martial artist's weapon with a hard, bone-white aura of Essence. This aura can bypass material barriers. The martial artist attempts an unarmed Martial Arts strike (not a clinch) with his weapon. A successful attack's damage ignores soak from armor, though Hardness still applies and the target still gains soak from Stamina and Charms.

If the target suffers any damage from the Ghost Scepter Prana, he also loses one dot of Dexterity as his Essence petrifies. Opponents reduced to 0 Dexterity become too stiff to move; ghosts become statues of solid ivory. Affected creatures regain Dexterity at the same rate that they recover levels of bashing damage. As a final benefit, the Essence-charged weapon can affect any dematerialized entity, from ghosts to gods.

### SWAYING GRASS DANCE STYLE

This curious Terrestrial martial arts style first emerged among the slave pens of the distant East. According to the tale passed down by the style's practitioners, it originated on a particular

Guild plantation, where slaves worked to harvest drugs that assisted in achieving Essence sight. These slaves were forbidden tools or possessions of any sort beyond the most minimal clothing, and any fighting within the pens was punished severely; but it seemed normal to their keepers when the hallucinogen-addled slaves took to spending their evenings in wild, ecstatic dance. This dance, created by a rebellious young slave named Silver Leaf, was actually a developing form of unarmed combat, intended to be used to rise up and overthrow the plantation. Silver Leaf's unexpected Exaltation at the behest of the Wood Dragon acted as the catalyst for this uprising; extending her nascent style's precepts into a supernatural martial arts form, she tore the plantation apart and led the slaves into the forest.

Most scattered, but a few freedmen stayed on with Silver Leaf, pledging themselves as her loyal students and followers. Now the Swaying Grass Dance Style has spread to all five Poles of Creation, in both its limited form as a surreptitious slave style, and its true form as an Exalted combat art. Rumor has it that Silver Leaf still walks the Threshold, selling herself into plantation slavery for the purpose of causing uprisings among the pens. This Terrestrial martial arts style is aspected toward the element of Wood.

**Weapons and Armor:** Swaying Grass Dance style exclusively employs kicks; its Charms will not function with unarmed punches. As such, kicks, iron boots and god-kicking boots are considered in-style weapons, and are treated as unarmed attacks for the purpose of its Charms. This style is not compatible with armor.

**Complementary Abilities:** Understanding the precepts of the Swaying Grass Dance Style requires two dots of Performance.

### JUBILANT BATTLE PROPOSITION

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The martial artist catches her opponents off-guard by masking her aggressive intent in joyous dance. The character must already be engaging in dance to activate this Charm. When she does so, she adds a number of successes equal to her Performance to her Join Battle roll.



### SWEEPING MEADOW AWARENESS PRACTICE

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The fighter sways and weaves as she fights, shifting her body and maintaining full awareness of her surroundings. When surrounded by opponents, this Charm prevents one of those attackers from making an undefended attack against the character's back; the Grass Dancer applies her DV normally to this attack, removing its unexpected quality.

### SWAYING GRASS DANCE FORM

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 4)

**Keywords:** Form-type

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Jubilant Battle Proposition, Sweeping Meadow Awareness Practice

The martial artist begins to sway and dance, shuffling in and out of combat-ready stances unpredictably. Her kicks slash up from dead angles, and any glimpsed openings are gone before opponents can act on them. The character's unarmed attacks gain -1 Speed, +1 Accuracy, +2 Defense, and +1 Rate. She takes no penalties for fighting prone, and may rise from prone reflexively. These benefits may not lower the character's Speed below 3. She is also considered to be dancing while this Form is active, and any attempts to recognize this Charm's activation as a form of combat-readiness suffer a -2 external penalty.

### TEETH IN THE GRASS STRIKE

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Swaying Grass Dance Style

The character feints high then scythes her leg up from below with no warning. So convincing is her feint that the opponent is absolutely convinced the next strike will come in from above. The character makes an unarmed Martial Arts attack. If the character's successes on the attack roll exceed the target's Dodge MDV, the attack is unexpected. If the character is standing in tall grass or shallow water, or the terrain otherwise obscures her legs and feet from view, add two bonus successes to the attack. This Charm's unnatural mental influence costs one point of Willpower to resist. Targets become immune to this Charm for the rest of the scene after spending three points of Willpower.

### ROLLING WITH THE WIND METHOD

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Swaying Grass Dance Form

The harsh upbringing of this style's practitioners makes them fast to react to danger. Those who land one blow upon a Grass Dancer rarely manage a second. When the character is struck and this Charm is activated, the martial artist goes cartwheeling (attacker's Strength x 5) yards away, exactly as though

she suffered from knockback, save that the character controls which direction he tumbles in and whether or not she strikes any objects.

### INESCAPABLE TUMBLEWEED PRANA

**Cost:** 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** Until next action

**Prerequisite Charms:** Teeth in the Grass Strike, Rolling with the Wind Method

Those who would oppose a practitioner of the Swaying Grass Dance Style reap the whirlwind. Shuffling along with a dizzying series of quick-steps and cartwheels, the character pursues an adversary. This Charm must be targeted against another character when activated; this target must be within unarmed striking range, and must have already attacked the martial artist within the current scene. For the duration of the Charm, the martial artist gains whatever mobility is necessary to follow her target. Her Move speed matches that of her target, even if Charms such as Leaping Dodge Method or Rolling With the Wind Method are employed. This pursuit explicitly includes whatever acrobatic prowess is necessary to pursue a flying opponent, so long as there are trees or other structures to climb through in order to reach them. Inescapable Tumbleweed Prana will not allow the character to follow a target who moves away by teleporting.

### WHIRLING RHYTHM REVOLUTION

**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Extra Action

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Inescapable Tumbleweed Prana

The character listens to the music pounding in her heart, and then whirls to the attack. She launches an unarmed martial arts attack, and, if it inflicts any damage, immediately launches another. These attacks utilize the character's full dice pool, ignore Rate, and levy a DV penalty equal to the highest penalty incurred by any one attack. The character may launch a total number of attacks equal to her Performance, or until she fails to inflict damage, whichever comes first.

### GRASS REAPING POSTURE

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Until broken

**Prerequisite Charms:** Inescapable Tumbleweed Prana

The character imposes her rhythm upon another, taking control of the battle. This Charm begins with a low, sudden leg sweep. The character makes an unarmed Martial Arts attack. Resolve this attack normally; if the attack strikes the target, they suffer automatic knockdown. Thereafter the martial artist shuffles about her downed foe, confusing him and buffeting him to the ground with her legs should he try to escape. So long as the martial artist remains within unarmed attacking range of her prone target, all the target's attempts to rise from prone provoke a reflexive contested Dexterity + Martial Arts roll. If the target wins, he rises from prone successfully. If the Grass Dancer wins or ties, the target remains prone. Grass Reaping Posture lasts until the martial artist moves out of range or until the target successfully rises from prone.





## SERENADING THE REED

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 3, DV -1)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Whirling Rhythm Revolution, Grass Reaping Posture

The martial artist draws strength from dance, and his dance is empowered by music. This Charm may only be activated in the presence of music or song with rhythm, and this music cannot originate with the character. So long as the music plays on, the character's DV is raised by half the Performance rating of the most skilled musician or singer performing (round up).

## CELESTIAL MARTIAL ARTS

### GENERAL CHARMS

#### FLOWING KATA FORM

**Cost:** 6m+ (1wp per Form); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

**Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One Scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Two Complete non-Terrestrial Styles

Grandmasters understand that all principles are connected and all fighting styles express different petals of the same Perfected Lotus. Flowing Kata Form expresses this principle as one of the rare Celestial Martial Arts Charms unconnected to any style. Invoking it requires a commitment of at least six motes. So long as the Charm remains active and the martial artist has no Form-type Charms active, he can pay one Willpower (and any non-mote costs) to reflexively activate any known Martial Arts Form-type Charm with a mote cost less than the number of motes committed to Flowing Kata Form. This Willpower surcharge does not apply the first time a martial artist invokes a Form Charm this way each scene.

Activating a Form-type Charm via Flowing Kata Form doesn't count as a Charm activation or cost motes, though Dragon-Blooded still have to roll to invoke a Celestial Martial Arts Form. Forms turned on this way inhibit activation of other Form-type Charms as normal for the keyword. Even magic that allows multiple Form-type Charms to coexist does not allow reflexive invocation while using another Form. Characters with "multi-Form" magic remain free to stack Forms by conventionally activating them.

There is no limit on how often a martial artist can reflexively adopt a new Form beyond the Willpower cost to do so, making it possible to use one Form to help an attack hit and then swapping to another to enhance the attack if it hits. Enabling a flexible fighting style that changes tactics without warning is the very reason Flowing Kata Form exists.

### BLACK CLAW STYLE

Three times during the First Age, deer-footed Mara concocted grand and insidious schemes to bring low the Chosen of Creation. Three times, her plans came to naught. Mara's prestige within Malfeas remains undiminished despite these failures, for the tools of her ambition still abide in the world and much cautionary lore regarding them has vanished in the fires of cataclysm and revolt. The Black Claw style was her second

plan, and while it failed, it has not passed from existence and might still bear fruit in this Age or the next.

Also known variously as the Fainting Maiden style or the Mouse-Seizes-Bear Art, Black Claw style utilizes the tools of misdirection, perception and love as its primary weapons. Victory is grasped by opening oneself utterly to the aggressions of one's foe so that he castigates himself as thoroughly as his victim. Defeat is mollified by exposing the perfidy of the victorious.

Black Claw style has two qualities that differentiate it from other Celestial Martial Arts. First, like all demon-created Celestial arts, any demon of any circle may practice the style so long as the spirit satisfies all relevant trait minimums. Second, Mara's association with perverse relationships bleeds into every Charm, inseparably binding sifu and student. It is impossible to know the secrets of this style without being exposed to the innermost heart of one's instructor, and impossible to understand that knowledge without accepting what is within that heart. So it is that every Black Claw practitioner bears an Intimacy of genuine and unbreakable love toward his teacher. No amount of natural persuasion or scenes spent working against this love can weaken the Intimacy. Only unnatural mental influence can sever the emotional connection, and even then, every scene in which the character invokes a Black Claw style Charm counts as a scene spent rebuilding the Intimacy.

This style gained popularity in Creation during the First Deliberative Era of the Old Realm. Its practice, which began among several of Brigid's students, quickly flourished throughout the Solar and Lunar community. Its first Exalted practitioners viewed the style as a quaint and amusing demon-trap, its dangers easily seen and avoided so that its benefits could be enjoyed. However, as the art spread far and wide, it came to be regarded with unease—while conquered demons were of no threat to the Realm, the idea of a power bloc forming among young Solars bonded in love to a handful of mighty teachers (all the worse if those teachers were Lunars, or Sidereals!) was quite alarming. So it was that after a few short centuries Queen Merela outlawed the style and brutally suppressed its schools. Those without the personal or political power to ignore the law were bonded in Eclipse-sanctified oaths to forsake the practice of the style. Save for a handful of lovestruck outlaws, it fell from the history of Creation.

The Black Claw style likewise proved disruptive to the regimented chaos of the Demon City. Because it allowed the weak to bond the mighty to themselves in chains of love, Cecelyne issued a partial proscription against the style, sanctioning its use only by citizens of Malfeas. Orabilis, who does not consider love to be a form of wisdom, tasked his soul Florivet with rooting out illegal schools within the Demon City. However, the Whim-of-the-Wind has rarely bothered looking since he became an adventurer. On the rare occasions when he uncovers demonic serfs making unauthorized use of the Black Claw, he defeats them in gaudy and spectacular public fights, but this happens less and less as time goes on. The public resentment against him after such battles makes Florivet sullen and unenthusiastic.

Now, as the Reclamation begins, Black Claw style is experiencing a resurgence. Mara has already taken on several Green Sun Princes as students (and lovers), and it will not be long before they establish their first school in Creation.



**Weapons and Armor:** Black Claw style may only be practiced with bare hands, and without armor. An appearance of martial readiness would undermine practitioners' posture of unjustly assaulted innocence.

**Complementary Abilities:** To properly grasp the insights upon which the style is founded, a student must possess at least two dots spread in any fashion among Larceny, Socialize and Performance.

### OPEN PALM CARESS

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

From the beginning, things start to go wrong. Righteous heroes find themselves cast as a vicious bullies when they fight a student of the Black Claw—even if the martial artist picked the fight himself. This Charm supplements a Join Battle action, adding the user's Essence in bonus successes.

Regardless of whether the Join Battle roll permits the martial artist to act first, compare the result to the Dodge MDV of all other characters who witness the fight begin (including all combatants). If the roll result is higher, they suffer an unnatural Illusion effect which costs two Willpower to resist, convincing them that the martial artist's opponents initiated hostilities. This even applies to the opponents themselves, who may suddenly find themselves quite confused about why they are attacking the character. Characters that do not pay this cost upfront can pay four Willpower to correct their memories later, but only with external prompting or a compelling personal reason to question the memory and not until a day has passed since they last encountered the martial artist. Minds need distance from such a toxic presence before they can think clearly. This Charm may enhance only the first Join Battle roll the character makes in a fight.

### TORN LOTUS DEFENSE

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 10)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Every Black Claw student must submit to his sifu. As one whose heart has already been conquered, he knows that any greater defeat is impossible. The martial artist draws on the memory of his love and channels it into his stance, projecting unmistakable and fragile resolution: a sight to move the hearts of gods and demons alike.

This Charm may be invoked when the character successfully negates an attack with his DV. The aggressor is struck by the character's posture of resolute defiance, and treats the successful defense as a scene spent working toward building a positive Intimacy for the martial artist. The specific emotional context of the Intimacy, be it respect, admiration, or even unexpected love, depends on the context of the situation and may be chosen by the attacker's player. This unnatural mental influence costs one Willpower to resist.

This Charm will not function if evoked in conjunction with a Charm possessing a Flaw of Invulnerability (or equivalent effect, such as an Infernal Imperfection); the martial artist's beauty lies in his weakness, not his invulnerable strength.

### FLEXING THE EMERALD CLAW

**Cost:** 3m or 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion, Obvious, Poison

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Open Palm Caress, Torn Lotus Defense

Even for the unjustly wronged, there comes a time to strike back. Students of the Black Claw opt to do so with deceptive force. By paying three motes to supplement an unarmed attack, the martial artist's hand becomes wreathed in a bilious green spray of Essence. If the attack hits, it inflicts normal damage and the victim becomes afflicted with a dose of poison with the following statistics: (7L/action, 3, —/—, -2). This poison is exceptionally subtle, displaying no outward symptoms as it destroys its victim from the inside. By paying four motes instead, the martial artist may veil his strike in an unnatural Illusion effect, removing the Obvious tag for all observers save the Charm's target. This Illusion may be ignored by observers who spend one Willpower.

### BLACK CLAW FORM

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Emotion, Form-type

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Flexing the Emerald Claw

The martial artist assumes a defensive posture, equally declarative of his unwillingness to fight and his readiness to defend himself regardless. During Step 9 of any attack directed against him, the character may pay one mote to leap away from his aggressor (Appearance) yards, although the character does not actually move until after Step 10 has been resolved.

Additionally, as only a brute would assault such a reluctant opponent, each attack directed at the character causes any onlookers to act as though the attacker had just spent a scene eroding any positive Intimacies they might feel toward him. This unnatural Emotion effect costs one Willpower to ignore for the rest of the scene with regard to that attacker. Witnesses with higher Essence than the Charm's user who pay this cost ignore its influence with regard to all attackers.

Finally, the character may parry lethal and ranged attacks without a stunt or Charm, and Torn Lotus Defense does not count as a Charm activation while this Form is active.

### STORM-CALMING EMBRACE

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

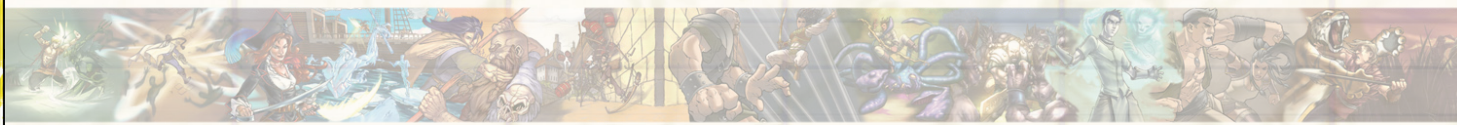
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Crippling

**Duration:** Until next action

**Prerequisite Charms:** Black Claw Form

Despite being cruelly assaulted, the martial artist clasps his opponent to him. Swallowing his rancor, he does nothing to escalate the fight—such virtue! This Charm allows the martial artist to add his Essence rating in dice to all attempts to establish, maintain or control a grapple. However, a clinch enhanced by this Charm may only be used to apply a hold, not to crush or throw.

Incidentally, as a Crippling effect, the target the martial artist is holding automatically fails all Toxicity rolls, and any poisons in the target's system add the L tag to their Toxicity.



### DOE EYES DEFENSE

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Black Claw Form

The Black Claw practitioner is well aware that vulnerability is his greatest defense, and exploits it ruthlessly. The martial artist falls back hurriedly in response to an attack, his every movement accentuating his inferiority in the face of the oncoming assault. Realization of her target's weakness unnerves or unduly excites the attacker, depending on her temperament, causing her to experience an internal penalty on her attack roll equal to the martial artist's (Appearance + 2). This unnatural mental influence costs two Willpower to ignore. In the First Age, this technique was also sometimes known as the Fainting Maiden Ward, or the Painted Boy Defense.

### TABLE-TURNING REVERSAL

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack, Emotion

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Black Claw Form

Only a coward would use a weapon to strike down an unarmed man. All Creation rejoices to see a bully given a dose of his own medicine, and the martial artist is the one to do it.

This Charm is activated in response to an attack; regardless of whether the attack succeeds, the martial artist may launch a counterattack. This counterattack is a standard disarm attempt (see *Exalted*, p.158), save that rather than knocking the opponent's weapon away, the martial artist steals and reflexively equips it. If the counterattack succeeds, he may treat the pilfered weapon as though it were an unarmed attack for the purpose of all Black Claw style Charms then for the rest of the scene or until the weapon leaves his grasp, whichever comes first. Weapons made entirely of Essence and attuned artifact weapons are not valid targets for this Charm.

Additionally, all characters who witness a successful disarm performed with this Charm treat the sight as a scene of work toward building a positive Intimacy for the martial artist. The emotional context of this Intimacy is chosen by the observer's player. This unnatural mental influence costs one Willpower to resist.

### OUTRAGE-KINDLING CRY

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Compulsion, Counterattack

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Storm-Calming Embrace, Doe Eyes Defense, Table-Turning Reversal

These things are natural in Creation, but not Malfeas: To cheer for the underdog, to feel one's heart go out to another in pain, and to abhor injustice. Thus pious critics of Black Claw style are revealed as hypocrites; this technique employs the weapons of Creation, not Hell.

This Charm may be activated in response to an attack that successfully strikes the martial artist. It takes the form of a kiai that compresses the character's agony into a heart-rending wail. Roll ([Manipulation or Appearance] + Performance), adding a number of successes equal to any wound penalties the martial artist may be suffering, and apply it against the Dodge MDV of all witnesses within earshot save for the attacker himself. Those who succumb to this unnatural mental influence (spending the standard one Willpower to resist immunizes a listener for the rest of the scene) suffer a Compulsion to assault the martial artist's attacker and to protect the martial artist. This behavior persists until either the attacker or the martial artist has been out of sight for one minute, or the scene ends, whichever comes first.

The attack is considered automatically successful against all listeners who have a positive intimacy toward the martial artist, a negative intimacy toward the attacker, or who believe the attacker started the fight.

### HEART-RIPPING CLAW

**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Outrage-Kindling Cry

This is the secret final technique of the Black Claw style. In the past, many teachers kept this Charm to themselves. Though the Yozis have forbidden their progeny from withholding it from the Green Sun Princess, it seems likely that many of the style's Infernal masters may likewise neglect to mention Heart-Ripping Claw when they establish their schools in Creation.

Eight wisdoms live at the heart of Black Claw style: Love is a lie; innocence is a lie; blame is a lie; lies are inescapable. Children betray their





parents; gods betray their makers; students betray their teachers; betrayal is inescapable. Wise masters are ready to strike first, and strike better.

Enhancing an unarmed attack with this Charm causes the attacking limb to be wreathed in a corona of screaming black shadows, razor-edged and lashing. An attack so enhanced inflicts lethal damage, and adds a raw damage bonus equal to twice the martial artist's Essence rating.

Moreover, if the Black Claw master is held in someone's heart, he cannot fail to strike that mark. This Charm acts as an unblockable and undodgeable attack against any target harboring a positive Intimacy toward the martial artist. If the attack would have missed such a target without this Charm, then it strikes with a threshold of 0 successes. If the target has an Intimacy of love toward the martial artist, then the attack inflicts aggravated damage in addition to the benefits mentioned above. If this Charm slays an opponent, the Infernal tears the target's heart out of their chest and holds it in his fist as it crumbles to ash.

## COBRA STYLE

Cobra style emerged in the latter years of the Shogunate, during a time of internecine strife that was tearing apart the last vestiges of Solar infrastructure. Out of this period of waste and war came a ruthless killer wielding a vicious fusion of Snake and Crane.

Known as Cobra Samue due to the snakeskin jacket he wore, the killer wielded a style never before seen in Creation. As Cobra style's sole practitioner, Cobra Samue was responsible for the deaths of a dozen Dragon-Blooded officials. His victims were left horribly twisted by his poisonous attacks, his Heavenly Brand of Penance burned into their backs by an unknown and horrific final attack.

Initially the killings were seen as the work of a non-partisan mercenary. It was only when four Sidereals were subsequently murdered, their corpses branded by the immolating poison of the Cobra, that the Fivescore Fellowship recognized that one amongst them had gone mad.

They were correct. The man called Cobra Samue was also known as Ni Zhang, a legendary Bronze Faction martial arts master.

During the Usurpation he was forced to kill a century-old Lawgiver whom he had trained since the man's Second Breath. Zhang knew the Solar was not a crazed monster, and the killing of a favored student weighed upon his soul. When he saw the same excesses and waste mirrored in the Shogunate, it was more than he could bear. He saw himself as having been duped into betrayal and murder so that new tyrants could assume the reins of power. Creation was no safer. All that had changed was that he was now a killer—a murderer. Ni Zhang had slain before, but he had always known the rightness of his cause. When he blended Snake and Crane into the first steps of the Cobra he was no longer sure. The possibility that he had been deceived drove him mad.

A master of several Sidereal Martial Arts, Ni Zhang knew he needed only a Celestial level of power to make his displeasure known. The style need only be fast, cruel and unexpected. Transcendent unity with the stars was not required to commit acts of fatal betrayal. Rather, he would use poison.

Under the southern sun he labored to emulate the greatest of all snakes, who was the desert king of death, the cold and merciless icon of serpentine majesty. Blending the speed and penetrating strikes of the Snake, and the fluttering, airy ripostes and defenses of the Crane, Ni Zhang fashioned Cobra as an ultimately lethal vector for delivering fatal poisonous counterattacks.

Then the murders began.

For a time it seemed the killer was unstoppable, his Cobra style invincible. The assassin called Cobra Samue haunted the minds of the Sidereal Exalted, who fell into greater distrust of one another, knowing that one amongst them must be the killer. While they fell over themselves investigating one another, at least one amongst them spent her time examining the bodies of the victims, and the scenes of those fatal battles, trying to construct a technique which might counter the unknown master's deadly style.

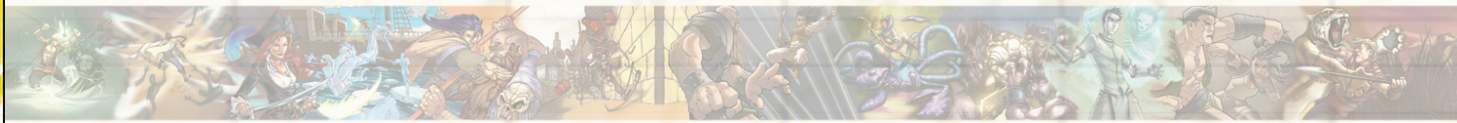
When Anys Syn did finally confront the killer, she knew the secret which would fell the Cobra and end his bloody quest. Cobra style was born from the coldness of a heart which had betrayed and turned poisonous. It depended on that cold, inhuman state to make its user into a harbinger of death. So any semblance of a heart would be the traitor's undoing. She had also learned the true identity of Cobra Samue—the snakeskin coat he wore had belonged to a Solar she had trained alongside, under the watchful gaze of Master Ni Zhang.

The battle was brutal, and Anys Syn would surely have died had she not uncovered the secret of Cobra Samue. Ni Zhang's feelings for his student created a fatal weakness in the cold and merciless power of his technique. In a sudden flash, Anys Syn held the beating heart of her master in one jet-wreathed claw as it crumbled to ash.

How Cobra style survived into practice is another matter entirely. Some say Syn herself reconstructed the style from her single battle with Ni Zhang. Others say he left scrolls describing the techniques in the tomb of a Lawgiver, and those were carried away by bandits sometime after the fall of the Shogunate. Whatever the case may be, Cobra style exists as a notorious killing art, with an equally fearsome legacy.

**Weapons and Armor:** Cobra style considers any identical set of dual wielded swords which do not possess the 2 tag to be unarmed attacks for the purpose of its Charms. It may not be practiced in armor.

**Notes:** Cobra stylists wield their blades with a descending grip—the blades facing the ground with the hilts facing the sky. This facilitates punching without ever releasing the blade, and allows the practitioner to adjust his swing for a fatal strike. Students of Cobra also carry a compliment of ranged ammunition and throwing weaponry. This style provides no inherent ranged attacks, but allows the practitioner to unleash counterattacks against opponents at range through the style's Form and the Charm Death Dreaming Flux.



### SHOWING THE COBRA'S FANGS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Cobra stylist forms his hands into the famous fangs for which this style is known. Bending and poising his fingers into perfect receptacles for his killing Essence, his “hand fang” strike gains the following stats: Speed 5, Accuracy +3, Damage +5L, Defense +2, Rate 1, Tags: N. A character using this attack adds one automatic success to all Martial Arts attacks which seek to Poison the target. The Cobra’s Fangs share Rate with the martial artist’s punch attack; so, since a punch is Rate 3, the character could punch twice and fang strike once in a single flurry. The Cobra’s Fangs are considered an unarmed attack for the purpose of Cobra style Charms, or for any Martial Arts Charm with the Poison Keyword, but are not compatible with any other Charms of any other style.

When the character has learned the Charm Marked by Eternity, his fangs are further enhanced: they now do 8L Damage, have a Defense of +3, and add two automatic successes to Poison-inflicting Martial Arts attacks.

### COBRA-EYE SPLENDOR

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion

**Duration:** One tick

**Prerequisite Charms:** Showing the Cobra’s Fangs

The cobra’s eye flashes as he marks his targets, instilling them with paralyzing fear. The martial artist imbues opponents with this terror and himself with the cobra’s impossible grace. This Charm inflicts an external penalty equal to the Martial Artist’s (Presence ÷ 2, round up) on all attacks against him, as an Emotion effect which may not be resisted with Willpower. If an incoming attack is undodgeable, this Charm removes that quality.

### KING COBRA STRIKES

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 9)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Counterattack, Poison

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Showing the Cobra’s Fangs

Pity those who would tread upon the cobra—it is the last step they will take. This Charm permits the martial artist to make an unarmed Martial Arts counterattack at his full dice pool in response to an attack directed at him. This counterattack adds three automatic successes if the attacker rolled fewer Join Battle successes at the beginning of the fight than the martial artist did. If he strikes his attacker, the martial artist inflicts a poison with the following traits: (10L/action, 2, —/—, -2 recurring). The *recurring* tag indicates that at each interval, the penalty increases by -1 unless the target has taken no Move, Dash or Jump actions since the last interval.

At Essence 3+, if the user has Cobra Form active, he may pay an additional mote per target to launch this counterattack simultaneously against (Martial Arts) targets within 20 yards—he may even target individuals who have not attacked him. The Martial Artist pays for the attack only once and makes one roll, applying it to all targets. This is called the Spitting Venom Attack.

### COBRA FORM

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-basic, Form-type

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Cobra-Eye Splendor, King Cobra Strikes

The martial artist rises up, body coiled to move, hands steady. While in Cobra Form, the martial artist’s Cobra Fang attacks gain Rate 2. He may fight while prone without suffering any penalties, and may reflexively regain his feet at will without being considered to have taken a rise from prone action. Any Poison-keyword Martial Arts Charms the character uses are reduced in price by one mote, to a minimum of one mote, and their Toxicity increases by 2.

Finally, any unexpected attacks the martial artist makes ignore soak altogether.

The first time a Charm with a Flaw of Invulnerability is used during the same action Cobra Form is activated, it adds a two Willpower surcharge to its activation cost.

Additionally, the Cobra stylist enjoys the following benefits, if applicable:

- The Cobra stylist may invoke Snake Strikes the Heel (see *Exalted*, p. 241), Feather-Stirred Arrow Deflection (see *Glories of the Most High*, p. 103), and Flexing the Emerald Claw (see *Ink Monkeys*, Vol. 10) as innate powers, if he knows any of those Charms. If activated in this manner, those Charms reduce their activation cost by one mote.

- If the character has an Overdrive pool, he adds one mote to that pool on every damage interval for poisons he has inflicted on anyone in the scene, including himself. This mote benefit stacks by the number of poisons on a single target, as well as poisons across multiple targets, but may not exceed five motes per action. Poisoned targets must be within 20 yards of the Martial Artist for him to benefit from this effect.

### DYNAMIC FORM TRANSITION

One of Master Zhang’s innovations to the field of martial arts, a practitioner of Cobra style who has learned Cobra Form may reflexively transition into that Form without a Charm activation in the following ways:

- If the practitioner lands an unarmed Cobra style strike which inflicts at least one level of damage.
- If the practitioner is currently using any other Martial Arts Form and inflicts at least one level of damage with that style’s unarmed attack.
- If the practitioner uses King Cobra Strikes and the opponent responds with a Charm bearing a Flaw of Invulnerability.

### RAISING THE COBRA’S HOOD

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 3)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Compulsion

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Cobra Form

The cobra unfurls its hood to show its victim death’s true form. His stance radiates the authority over death he wields, permitting him to make a (Manipulation + Martial Arts) social attack against the Dodge MDV of one target within 20 yards, adding (Presence ÷ 2, round up) automatic successes. The victim may add half their (Martial Arts or Presence, rounded down) to their MDV to resist this effect.



If successful, the target is completely paralyzed, and may not move or act—they are Inactive as if held in a clinch. Even drawing breath is difficult—the victim begins to suffocate so long as they remain paralyzed (see **Exalted**, p. 130). The martial artist also may not move or attack while his victim is paralyzed (save for launching Counterattacks), as though he were controlling a clinch. Each time the martial artist's DV refreshes, his victim may attempt to free himself (this is treated as a standard Martial Arts attempt to breaking a clinch against a number of successes equal to the Cobra stylist's Presence + Essence). Otherwise, he remains paralyzed until the martial artist releases the motes committed to this Charm, or until he spends one Willpower to resist the Charm's unnatural mental influence. However, breaking Raising the Cobra's Hood by spending Willpower imposes a five-mote surcharge on the next Charm the victim activates on that tick. Characters become immune to Raising the Cobra's Hood for the rest of the scene after spending Willpower in this fashion three times.

### FALSE CRANE POSTURE

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** One tick

**Prerequisite Charms:** Raising the Cobra's Hood

The snake attempts to cloak its lethal aspect behind the majesty of the crane, but can never truly hide its nature. The practitioner raises her arms and turns them out like the cantilevered wings of a water bird while folding her legs beneath her like the coils of a snake. She remains this way for one tick. During this time she may move along the ground by flapping her "wings" and twisting her waist sharply, spinning side to side, backwards or forwards as if she were standing. However, she may not take a Dash action, and her Dodge DV suffers a -3 penalty. Taking any sort of Jump action (including Charms such as Leaping Dodge Method) terminates this Charm automatically, but the uncoiling action doubles the length of the jump and adds (Essence) raw damage to any attack made during the jump.

While assuming the False Crane Posture, each attack from a hostile opponent the practitioner successfully dodges without using a Charm with a Flaw of Invulnerability at any point during attack resolution adds one dodge to a pool of up to (Martial Arts + 3) free reflexive perfect dodges. These dodges each last for one instant, are capable of dodging even undodgeable attacks the martial artist is aware of, cost 0 motes, do not count as a Charm activation and have an inverted Compassion Flaw; they cannot be used while the practitioner is aware of the presence of a character to whom she has an Intimacy with a positive emotional context.

Furthermore, using any other Charm with a Flaw of Invulnerability instantly consumes one of the practitioner's dodges, if he has any. If the martial artist has employed free reflexive dodges in the scene, and has none left, his next activation of a Charm with a Flaw of Invulnerability carries a one Willpower surcharge. If the practitioner manages to generate new free reflexive dodges, the surcharge is reinstated once these dodges are entirely depleted. The Cobra stylist retains any unused free reflexive dodges until the end of the scene.

False Crane Posture does not count as a Charm activation while Cobra Form is active.

### DREAD SCALE FASCINATION

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 5)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** False Crane Posture

The martial artist meditates for five ticks, at the end of which his Essence coils around him like a second skin, shimmering and scaled, accompanied by a serpentine hiss of anima. This creates (Essence) shimmers in the practitioner's anima, to a maximum of five. Each time the Cobra stylist fails to dodge an attack, the post-soak damage rolled against him is applied to one of his shimmers before it is applied to the martial artist. The attack appears to strike, and even feels as if it strikes the martial artist, but instead it tears away a castoff skin. Each shimmer has a number of -0 health levels equal to half the practitioner's Dodge DV (unmodified by Charms, spells or equipment), rounded up, with a minimum of 5. These health levels vanish when they suffer any damage at all, and the castoff skin is torn away and vanishes in a curl of steam. If an attack does more than the shimmer's health levels, the rest of the damage goes through to the martial artist. The practitioner must use his Dodge DV to qualify for this benefit; if he applies his Parry DV, attacks ignore the shimmers entirely. The Cobra stylist may not use Dread Scale Fascination again until all of his shimmers have been removed. Area-of-effect attacks apply their damage to all of the martial artist's shimmers simultaneously. If an attack destroys any shimmers without harming the martial artist, the martial artist is considered to have successfully dodged the attack only for the purpose of False Crane Posture.

Finally, if the practitioner uses an instant-duration Charm bearing a Flaw of Invulnerability to prevent an attack from harming him, he loses one shimmer; if the Charm is tick length, he loses three, and if it is action length he loses five. This limitation does not apply to free reflexive dodges granted by False Crane Posture.

### DEATH-DREAMING FLUX

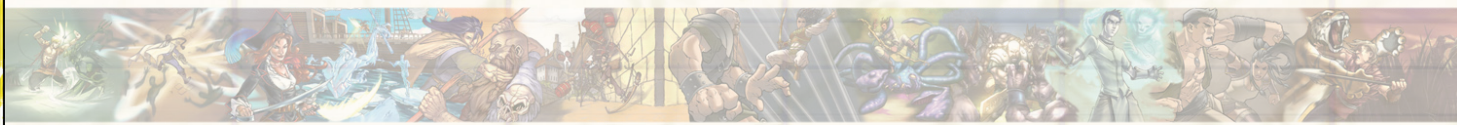
**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Cobra Form

The cobra slithers through a dream. Provoked by the presence of others, it condemns the living so that they might join it in a reverie of death. This Charm may only be used once per action; upon activation, the martial artist selects a single opponent who did not attack him during his previous action. The martial artist experiences an illusory affront on behalf of the selected opponent—an attack against himself which the practitioner imagines. This imaginary attack only occurs if the martial artist is inside the opponent's engagement range, and is made with whatever weapon the opponent currently wields (for example, if the opponent were wielding a bow, they would make an imaginary [Dexterity + Archery] attack). The attack is assumed to be automatically successful, but may be rolled to determine successes, damage and other elements of resolution if knowing this information is important for whatever Counterattack the martial artist plans to activate in response. If rolled, the illusory attack ignores the Cobra stylist's DVs and soak. As the attack is imaginary, no harm actually befalls the martial



artist as a result of the strike; the attack is considered only real enough to permit the martial artist to trigger Counterattack Charms in response.

If Cobra Form is active, Death-Dreaming Flux does not count as a Charm activation.

### HYPNOTIC SWAYING MOTION

**Cost:** 7m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 3)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Compulsion

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Death-Dreaming Flux

The cobra reels in his victims with deadly magnetism. Upon activating this Charm, the martial artist makes a (Manipulation + Martial Arts + Essence) attack that is applied to the Dodge MDV of all opponents within 20 yards. Victims may add half their Martial Arts or Presence (rounded down) to their Dodge MDVs in order to resist. Those affected are compelled to immediately move as close as they are able to the martial artist and, having gotten as close as reasonably possible under the circumstances, attack him once. (For example, if the martial artist is in an open field, opponents will chase him until they are able to get to point blank range; if the martial artist is on the other side of a wide pit, opponents will approach the lip of the pit and then attack across it if able; if not, they will seek a path around). Resisting this unnatural mental influence costs one point of Willpower.

Any character affected by this Charm whom the martial artist has poisoned resolve poison damage twice during each interval that passes until they are able to launch an attack at the martial artist, or until they spend Willpower. This does not hasten the poison's departure from the bodies of the afflicted; it merely increases its lethality. Spending Willpower to resist the Charm also causes any active poisons in the system to resolve one additional time on that tick; again, this does not reduce the amount of time it takes for the poison to leave the victim's system.

### FORKED TONGUE TRANSITION

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** One action

**Prerequisite Charms:** Cobra Form

*His defense is a lie, thought Syn. My attacks humor him.* — The Cobra hones his defense, transforming his fighting style in response to each of his enemy's attacks. Each time the practitioner is attacked while this Charm is active, he gains one style point which can be used to create a number of different enhancements to his fighting style. The martial artist must gain five style points (his "lead") before he can begin to transition into graduated combat effects. Additional style points accrued beyond the lead may be spent for combat benefits; point assignment is reflexive, costs no motes and does not count as a Charm activation. Style points are stocked indefinitely, but the martial artist may stock no more than (Martial Arts) points beyond the five point lead. Finally, he may not spend from the initial five style points unless an effect specifically allows him to do so. However, doing so renders him unable to spend additional style points, hampering his transitioning power until he has refilled his five point lead.

- The character may expend one lead point to ignore all penalties to one of his DVs against a single attack.

- The character reduces his wound penalties by the number of points expended for one action.

- The character retroactively increases his Join Battle result by one success for one point. This may assist King Cobra Strikes.

- The character gains two successes on his Join Battle roll per point expended. He may only pay this effect from his five point lead.

- The character adds one automatic success to his next use of King Cobra Strikes for each two points expended.

- The character spends two points to succeed on all poison resistance rolls for one action.

- If the character has an Overdrive pool, he may spend two points for one offensive mote.

- The character may stock one free reflexive attack for four points. Abyssal, Infernal, and Solar Exalted may stock up to (Dexterity + 3) free reflexive attacks, while Terrestrial and Celestial Exalts may stock up to their Dexterity. Other characters are limited to (Essence) free reflexive attacks. These attacks may only be invoked on the character's action tick, or on any tick on which the practitioner is attacked. However, attacking outside the character's action tick consumes two free reflexive attacks.

- The character's Move and Dash actions gain ten yards per tick for one action, for two points.

- The character adds the unexpected quality to a Counter-attack Charm. This costs five lead points.

### TOUCH OF FINALITY

**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive (Step 10)

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Forked Tongue Transition

This strike is feared as one of the deadliest in martial arts. This Charm may be activated in step 10 during an unarmed Martial Arts attack that successfully inflicted damage on its target. If the target is already poisoned, the total Damage of all poisons in their system discharges at once—rather than moving through them at one die per interval, the total damage value of all poisons is combined and rolled at once. This damage becomes aggravated regardless of previous type, and has a Toxicity rating equal to that of the highest value among all poisons, plus 2.

If the target survives Touch of Finality and had any poisons in his system, all poisons are burned out of his system, but he suffers a -4 internal penalty for two actions due to excruciating pain, and takes an automatic aggravated health level of damage in addition to any inflicted by the poisons.

### MARKED BY ETERNITY

**Cost:** —(5m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

**Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Obvious, Poison

**Duration:** Permanent

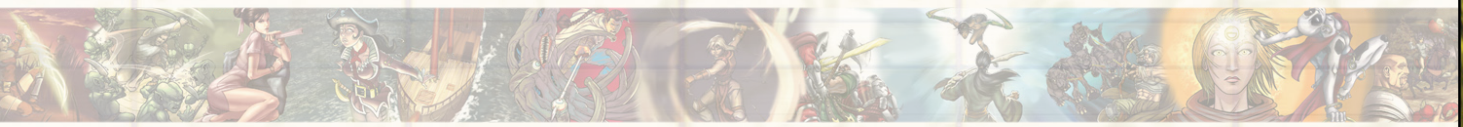
**Prerequisite Charms:** Dread Scale Fascination, Hypnotic Swaying Motion, Touch of Finality











## CHAPTER TEN

# ALLIES, FOES & PETS

## ANIMALS

### INK MONKEY (FAMILIAR ●●●●●)

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 1, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4, Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Athletics 2 (Climbing +3), Awareness 5, Dodge 4, Integrity 1, Larceny 2 (Pickpocketing +2), Linguistics (Native: Old Realm, Ink Monkey Chatter +1, Forest Tongue or appropriate Tribal Tongue) 2, Martial Arts 1 (Biting +1, Dirty Fighting +1, While Victim Is Casting a Spell +1), Occult 1, Performance 3 (Fooling Mortals +3), Resistance 1, Stealth 4 (Creeping Closer +1), Survival 2

**Backgrounds:** Allies 1 (Ink Monkey Swarm)

**Powers:**

*Environmental Adaptation:* Ink Monkeys add three successes to all Survival rolls in temperate forest climates. They also suffer a -2 internal penalty to all non-reflexive actions while in

cold weather conditions; even a brisk day makes them miserable.

*Meditative Capering:* Essence users with Occult 4+ who meditate while watching Ink Monkeys play observe secret mudras of cosmic enlightenment hidden in their movements. These truths confer 10 motes per hour of meditation instead of the usual eight.

*Scent of Magic:* Whenever an Ink Monkey perceives an Intelligence 2+ character with a basic Awareness check, it intuits that target's Occult rating as hunger pains proportional to the target's metaphysical understanding. Anyone with Occult 2+ registers as prey. Ink Monkeys also add a number of bonus successes on all tracking-based Survival rolls equal to their quarry's Occult rating.

*Air Inked With Lies:* Ink Monkeys can fool others with illusions that beguile the mind's eye, courtesy of the crushed gossamer used in the ink that changed them into monsters. Creating an illusion requires a (Manipulation + Performance) roll as a social attack that potentially affects all Intelligence 2+ beings who could perceive it within 100 yards of the monkeys.



Anything unreal may be created out of thin air within the maximum radius. If the attack overcomes an observer's Dodge MDV, she believes the unreal things are actually present and reacts accordingly until she encounters proof that the illusions are fake (they have no substance) or she spends a total of three Willpower points to inoculate her mind against this power for a day. Those who resist in any way and other Ink Monkeys still perceive the illusions, but always recognize them for what they are. This doesn't stop the creatures pretending something is real to give the ruse added credibility, like scattering and howling in response to the arrival of a large predator.

**Attacks:**

*Bite:* Speed 3, Accuracy 8 (+ specialties), Damage 3L, Parry DV -, Rate 2, Tags: N

*Strike:* Speed 5, Accuracy 7 (+ specialties), Damage 2B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags: N

*Clinch:* Speed 6, Accuracy 6 (+ specialties), Damage 1B, Parry DV -, Rate 1, Tags: C, N, P

**Soak:** 0L/1B

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 5

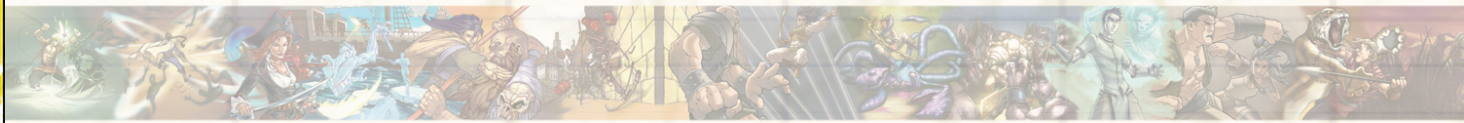
**Willpower:** 5

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Though their mouths cannot speak human languages, all Ink Monkeys are imprinted with understanding of Old Realm as part of their genesis template. Borighana included this so she could instruct them to stop biting without having to break them. The creatures benefit from a -1 external penalty to hit them due to their small size and up to eight of them can surround a human-sized target. Ink Monkeys are often extras.







# CHAPTER TEN FAR SHORES AND WONDERS

## INFERNAL MANSES

### THE PIT OF PERFECTED SAND

#### (VITRIOL MANSE •)

This is a tale the demons tell.

Ages ago, when the demon prison was new, the Yozi Kimberly took on a form with a thousand arms to embrace and a thousand eyes to weep. She raced across the skies of Hell like a grieving star, and as she ran, she let fall a single tear upon the sands of Cecelyne.

From the tear rose a new race of beings. Kin to crabs and sea-jellies, these things ate deep into the sands around them until they had dug a vast pit. At the bottom of the pit was a pool of vitriol; this was Kimberly's tear, such things being of a larger scale than those of mortal-kind.

Often, creatures of Cecelyne passed by the pit. These the things of the pit also devoured. For it was the nature of these things to devour all that is imperfect, and Cecelyne cannot abide perfection in her works.

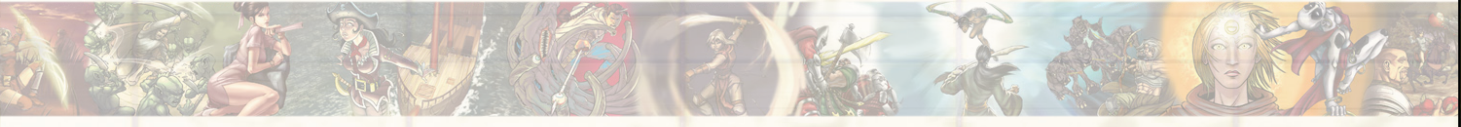
Millennia passed. Then there came to the pit something new: a mortal woman, sore and wounded from her flight through the Endless Desert, a newborn child in her arms. Having wandered unwittingly onto one of the secret paths into Cecelyne, the woman's caravan had been ravaged by the creatures of the desert. She had fled, hoping against hope for succor. And now she came to the pit.

The things of the pit devoured the woman; she was wounded, and her wounds made her imperfect. They devoured her garment; it was tattered and torn, and this made it imperfect. They even devoured her dagger; it had been notched in battle, and that made it imperfect.

But the newborn child was perfect.

The creatures of the pit did not harm the child. With infinite tenderness, they took her among themselves. They sheltered her from the desert. They fed her from their own bodies, so that the taint of vitriol flowed through her veins. She grew, and with each year that passed she became ever more precocious in the hateful ways of Hell.

Then the child skinned her knee at play. This made her imperfect. And the creatures of the pit devoured her.



## THE THINGS OF THE PIT

Each bush grows about 30 feet tall. In combat, the topiary bushes become huge lumbering beasts that try to trample their targets.

**Str/Dex/Sta**    **Per/Int/Wits/Will**    **Health Lvl**  
6/3/4            2/2/3/5            -0x2/-1x2/-2x2/-4/1

**Attack (Spd/Acc/Dmg/Rate)**            **Dodge DV/Soak**  
Claw: 5/6/6L/2                            3/4L/6B  
Grab: 6/8/5B + poison\*/2

**Abilities:** Athletics 3 (Sandy Surfaces +2), Awareness 1 (Imperfection +3), Dodge 3, Integrity 5, Investigation 1 (Imperfection +3), Martial Arts 3, Presence 3, Resistance 4, Stealth 2, Survival 1.

**Other Notes:** The things of the pit gain +4L soak vs. acid or -4L damage from acid-based environmental effects. They attack and devour anything that they believe to be imperfect. They may subsist indefinitely on a diet of acid and sand.

At this point in the tale, the demons laugh—for their sense of humor is not wholly unakin to our own.

**Game Effects:** (Manse's rating of 1) x 2 + 2 Maintenance (smoothing the pit's sides) + 4 Fragility (pit of ordinary sand) + 2 Habitability (roofless pit) = 10 Creation Points. The things of the pit, thirty in number, qualify as a tripled Bound Servant Force (9). Should some or all of them be slain, a new one crawls out of the pool of vitriol each day until their numbers are restored. The pool of vitriol seethes with the corrosive force of an Essence Vent (1); it is the manse's hearthroom, and a demon-maggot gem forms at the bottom of it.

## RAIKURU'S DREAM

### (HEGRA MANSE ••)

In the skies of the eleventh layer of the Demon City is a place where the Green Sun and the Blood-Red Moon once made war, then made love—albeit not as mortals do—and then slept for a time, to dream the terrible dreams of the Unquestionable.

In that place, aloft in the Malfean sky, there throbs and pulses a palace of all colors and none, a palace whose shifting spires thrum with black lightning. It is a manse crafted from the stuff of dreams, clotted and congealed, its substance strengthened each month by the vital Essence of a mortal impaled upon its uttermost spire.

This palace has five rooms. These have neither size nor shape as we know them, for they too are made of dream-stuff, of ephemera without form. A single path leads through these rooms, one after the other, until one reaches the center and that which slumbers there.

The palace's outer gate, carved of lapis lazuli, opens onto the first of these rooms. It contains a dream of a country house and

its garden, furnished richly in the style of the last years of the Shogunate. A handsome woman dwells here alone, all love and tenderness to those who visit. She is also of dream-stuff, but she has power nonetheless within this place. She will speak of many things—but not of the plague-struck graves that lie hidden in the garden.

One door in the country house is carved of solid amber. It opens onto a fortress overlooking a military camp. Countless soldiers and officers swarm about here, but they are people of smoke, faceless. Only one seems real: a tall man in armor, grim but kindly, his demeanor that of one accustomed to respect. He never leaves his war room. Six tigers stalk around the great map-table and curl up in its seats like tired men.

Hidden inside the fortress is a gate shaped from a solid ruby. The room beyond contains only fire: streamers of pale flame falling from the heavens, consuming cities and forests and seas. At the heart of the conflagration is a fiery female face, majestic, terrifying, that fills the world from edge to edge. Those who gaze upon her can see nothing but her burning eyes, hear nothing but her inconceivable demands.

Her livid mouth, her leaden throat, forms the fourth door. Beyond lies a familiar sight: the blazing metal and black stone of Malfeas. But it is a place of chains, a prison, inescapable. The one who dwells here, dark-eyed, reptilian, garbed as a minister and a scholar, speaks in an endless, sonorous whisper of doom, and defeat, and despair.

Those who slip their chains and evade this final guardian may seek the last door, a portal of malachite. The room beyond contains but one thing. A pale-haired youth, poised between child and man, lies sleeping in an impervious mass of crystal. This place is his dream and his prison. Should he be freed, the manse would crumble to dust, and less than dust. But he cannot leave. He cannot even wake.

**Game Effects:** (Manse's rating of 2) x 2 + 2 Maintenance (monthly sacrifice) + 2 Vulnerability (destroyed if chrysalis opened) = 8 Creation Points. The manse is Floating (3) 400 yards above the stones of the Demon City, though it is usually accessible via aerial causeways. Essence Vents (1) shroud its spires—both atop and beneath the structure—with crackling black lightning that strips away and consumes one Intimacy per action as an Emotion effect unless the affected character succeeds on a (Stamina + Integrity) check, difficulty 3. A character with no remaining Intimacies suffers a (5L, Trauma 5) environmental hazard instead.

The manse is drawn from the dreams of Riarda Raikuru, the young man trapped at its heart by an application of Chrysalis of Preservation (**Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, pp.152-153) The manse's hearthstone, a lips-like-poppies gemstone, manifests atop his chrysalis. The four entities in the manse's outer rooms are formed from his dreams and his nightmares. As a Bound

## RENEWABLE SERVANTS

As a general rule, creating or summoning minions has no effect on the geomancy of a manse. One may call forth any number of guardian demons if one has the time and the capability. When using the manse creation rules in Oadenol's Codex, this costs no Creation Points.

A manse which invests Creation Points in bound servants or guardians possesses automated mechanisms wherewith to renew its stock of servant creatures when they are destroyed. Depending on the nature of the servants, this might represent a genesis laboratory full of embryo-laden vats, a magitech workroom where glittering mechanical limbs reconstruct broken automata, or a summoning chamber where an inlaid circle of orichalcum and brass thrums with a spell of summoning that never wholly ends. These mechanisms renew one bound servant or guardian per day, up to a maximum of the manse's full complement of servants.



Servant Force (3), they are gossamer entities distantly akin to the raksha or the emanations of the Unshaped. The manse itself qualifies as Deep Wyld for purposes of Charms and effects, and acts as a Comfort Zone (1), adapting to the environmental needs of visitors.

Should Raikuru be freed, he will soon—perhaps instantly!—Exalt as an Earth-aspected Dragon-Blood with Breeding 5. His world and everyone he has ever known is gone. All he has to hold on to is his unshakeable belief that he is the heir to the Shogunate. He will do all he can to make that dream real.

### THE FOUR GUARDIANS OF RAIKURU'S DREAM

Each of the four outer rooms of the manse is both a location and a living thing. These phantasmal emanations seek to detain unauthorized intruders by enmeshing them in their environments and narratives. Treat them as Fair Folk diplomats (see *Exalted*, p. 285). If you are using the rules in *Graceful Wicked Masques*, the house-mother is an Entertainer, the fortress-father is a Warrior, the fire-Empress is a Diplomat and the prison-demon is a Worker. They are metaphysical components of the manse, and as such they cannot leave it under any circumstances, nor may they be brought out of it. None can be permanently killed without destroying the manse—not even with cold iron. Destroyed guardians are renewed at a rate of one per day.

### THE ENGINE RISING TO THE WOUNDED SKY

(ISIDOROS MANSE ●●●)

Thousands of years ago, when the Yozis were new to their prison, Isidoros—The Black Boar Who Twists the Skies—raced up the flank of the mountain Qaf—The Heaven-Violating Spear—in search of the mountain's summit. Though his cyclopean bulk crossed leagues at every step and he raced for a year and a day, Isidoros came no nearer to the summit. But the Boar would brook no failure, so when he left the mountain behind, his last hoofprint raced on in his stead, sliding ceaselessly upward along the slope toward its destination.

At a later date, some Infernal power—likely one of the Unquestionable—raised a manse upon the hoofprint. Carried ever upward by Isidoros' might, the manse has had many masters since then, though few remain for long. There are certain disadvantages that come with an abode that never stops moving; traveling between it and the rest of Malfeas can be inconvenient, especially as Qaf is accessible only by certain hidden gates, and if an enemy sets an ambush in the manse's path, there is no evading it.

For all that it occupies but the smallest part of the hoofprint, the Engine Rising is as large as any palace in Creation. It is a thrusting mass of bronze, this manse, spined with whiskers of brass, carbuncled with hornblende and ocher-hued masses of dolomite. Within its cavernous halls, titanic gears and chains of black iron grind away at unknown—perhaps purposeless—tasks. Steam howls through hidden conduits within the walls and gushes out to trail behind the rising manse like a thousand tattered war banners.

It is said that Qaf has no summit, in which case the manse's journey is fruitless. But some of Hell's philosophers dispute this

hypothesis. They believe that now, at the turning of the Age, impossible things may come to fruition. Some of these—mostly lesser demon scholars such as the naneke, though a few demons of the higher orders occasionally join their number—have gathered on the great prow-like foretower of the Engine to watch for Qaf's summit and such wonders as may lie hidden there.

Game Effects: (Manse's rating of 3) x 2 = 6 Creation Points. The Engine Rising's massive gates, oddly angled towers and sloping walls make it an effective Fortress (2). As a Traveling Manse (1) associated with a moving demesne, the Engine Rising moves at a constant speed of 25 miles per hour, or 625 miles per day. Moreover, it is Unstoppable (3); nothing can stay its course. Creatures, objects and structures in its path slide aside or crumble away as it approaches, only to return to their former places after it has passed. The hearthstone, a stone of the solipsist, appears in the hearthstone chamber at the center of the manse's enigmatic machinery.

### SCATHRA YN THERA, THE LIVING CAVERN

(KIMBERY MANSE ●●●●)

In the Age of Dreams, certain of the Exalted raised buildings of their own—pleasure palaces, laboratories, manses—amid the brazen structures of the Demon City. Many of these were built of materials imported from Creation. Few survive into the Age of Sorrows.

On the outermost layer of Malfeas, where Kimberly's surf toys with a beach of black sand tiger-striped with viridian, the Eclipse Caste Solar Chambriilian Peselle once raised a villa of white and pink marble—cut from the flank of Meru—at the base of a cliff. There she would stay for a few days each century to watch sea demons cavort and make war amid the acid tides of the Demon Sea.

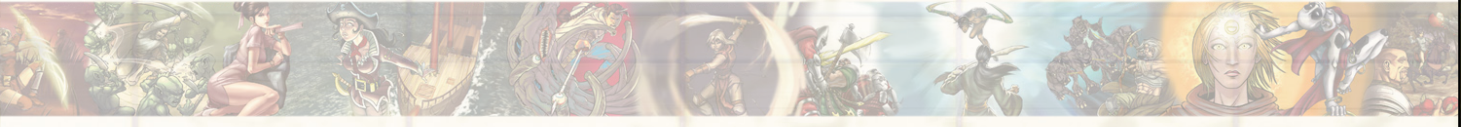
After the Usurpation, when it became clear that the Exalted were not returning to the Demon City, Kimberly's waters rushed into Peselle's villa, sweeping away all that lay within. Then she withdrew. Nine years later, the villa's marble walls shuddered and gave birth to a new thing: a behemoth-child of Kimberly.

The behemoth-cavern Scathra yn Thera is sessile. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that she lives. Those who traverse her gullet, past her nacreous teeth and her tongues of coral, observe the dark blood pulsing through the veined pink marble that is her flesh. Acidic fluids drip down her walls and trickle into her hidden viscera. Her many chambers reshape themselves to accommodate the needs of her guests, but guests are rare. Few are welcome within her body except as nourishment.

Madelrada, eighth soul of Kimberly, holds Scathra yn Thera as her possession and her pet. Only on rare occasions does she dwell there herself. She has set no guard there, for the manse wards itself most effectively. Madelrada has left the manse's hearthstone, an against-the-flame pearl, in the keeping of one of her captains.

Game Effects: (Manse's rating of 4) x 2 + 2 Maintenance (ritual feeding) = 10 Creation Points. As a behemoth-manse, Scathra yn Thera is a Living Manse (1) that is capable of Regeneration (3). Though not fully sentient, her Ability Enlightenment (3) gives her sufficient intellect to love and serve both





her Yozi mother and her demon mistress, while her affinity for demons and akuma of Kimbery grants the benefits of Well-Flavored Aspect (1).

Her three snaring tongues, which can pull a target into her maw on a successful grappling attack, are Dangerous Traps (2)—although “Dangerous Weapons” might be more apt. So are the streams of bile that gush through her chambers and passages at predictable intervals, inflicting damage as an acid bath (see *Exalted*, p. 131).

### SCATHRA YN THERA

**Ability Enlightenment:** Awareness 4, Martial Arts 4, Presence 4, Resistance 4

**Join Battle:** 4 automatic successes

**Attacks:**

*Tongue Lash:* Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 10L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Range 100

*Tongue Clinch:* Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 5B, Parry DV –, Rate 3, Range 100

**Soak:** 12L/18B external, 6L/12B internal

**Health Levels:** -0 x 80 / Power Failure

**Dodge DV:** –

**Willpower:** –

**Essence:** 4

**Other Notes:** Scathra yn Thera may combine Tongue Lash and Tongue Clinch attacks as part of the same flurry. When she controls a clinch, she may pull the target inside her gullet instead of the usual clinch actions, depositing him in an empty chamber or one filled with bile.

## THE TRANSCENDENT BLOSSOM OF THE EMERALD DAWN

(MALFEAS MANSE ●●●●)

Five years ago, the Solar Exalted returned to the world.

Five years ago, Malfeas, the Brass Dancer, strode into the silver forest Szoreny to dance amid his own reflections. Those reflections came together to form a dancer of silver. One led and the other followed, and together they vanished into the labyrinth of mirrors. Then came a flash seen for miles and a wave of green and silver fire that blazed through that part of the Yozi-wood, incinerating all those demons that had not the wit to flee the dance.

From the heart of the conflagration sprouted a strange plant with leaves and stem of mirror-bright brass. Within days, it grew as large as a house, its leaves hanging down to the earth

### MADLRADA

In her favored form, Madelrada appears as a massive woman, twelve feet tall and barrel-chested, her liquid eyes gleaming with blunt, authoritative intellect, her skin a shell of dark blue ice sheathing an inexhaustible wellspring of vitriol. This is only a fragment of her true being. Armies form her flesh; her Essence runs through her soldiers, clothing her in their bodies and blades. All who accept her coin and march beneath her banner join an entity greater than themselves, and death only cements their place in her ranks.

**Additional Powers:**

*Body of Troops*—Madelrada never stands alone. Her soldier-selves take many forms; some are mortals and demons, but most are ancient Lintha bound to her service across the ages. Her Essence flows through them all; their blood is seawater, while their wounds scab over with dark blue ice. The oldest consist wholly of ice, their flesh having perished with the passing years.

Her entire legion appears when she is summoned, spread over a one-mile radius. If she has insufficient troops at hand on the battlefield, she may spend 1wp to revive the fallen, restoring one lost dot of her legion’s Magnitude and refreshing their Endurance. If the legion’s Magnitude drops to 0, she reflexively revivifies 10 soldiers and gains a point of Limit. Reductions in Magnitude from Ghost-Eating Technique or equivalent effects are permanent; such losses can only be reversed by accepting new, living soldiers into her army-self.

Madelrada is a general, not a warlord, and fights in service to her masters. Her summoner directs her legion in mass combat.

*She Who Lives in Her Army*—The general and her army are one and the same; so long as the army exists, she cannot truly die. If Madelrada’s general-body is destroyed by any means—even using Ghost-Eating Technique or its equivalent—while within 300 yards of one of her soldier-selves, her Essence transfers to the nearest of them, snuffing out the soldier’s identity and replacing it with her own. The soldier’s form cracks and shatters, crumbling away into a heap of watery ice

as Madelrada’s general-body unfolds from within. When this happens, Madelrada loses all of her remaining Willpower and rolls five dice, gaining Limit equal to the successes rolled.

### MADLRADA’S LEGION

**Description:** Madelrada’s soldier-selves retain the forms they wore when they swore themselves to her service, but they move and act as one. Each becomes no more than a cell in her body, his will and Essence subsumed into a greater whole. They know no fear and never rout.

**Commanding Officer:** Madelrada’s summoner.

**Armor Color:** Dark blue

**Motto:** “Madelrada!”

**General Makeup:** 10,000 light infantry armed with lamellar armor and mixed weapons

**Overall Quality:** Elite

**Magnitude:** 9

**Drill:** 5

**Close Combat Attack:** 6 **Close Combat Damage:** 5

**Ranged Attack:** 4 **Ranged Damage:** 3

**Endurance:** 10

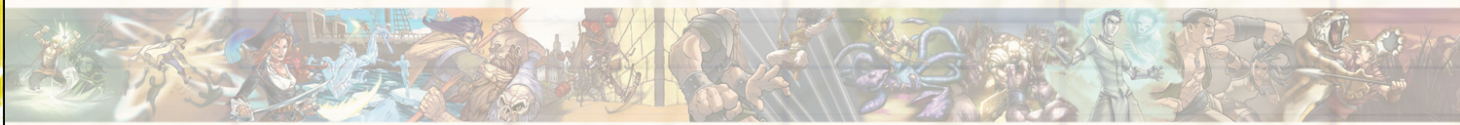
**Might:** 5

**Armor:** 3

**Morale:** N/A

**Formation:** Madelrada’s Legion typically fights in skirmish formation, but moves flawlessly into any formation its commander wishes. In mass combat, Madelrada’s power flows through her legionnaires, enhancing their abilities immeasurably. Taken individually, demon soldiers have traits appropriate to their race, while mortals and Lintha have those of mortal heroes (see *Exalted*, p. 260) with perfect weapons and armor of unmelting blue ice. Their former Motivations are replaced with “Urge: Fight on Madelrada’s behalf.” (See *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Infernals*, pp. 79-80 for Urge mechanics.) Madelrada may spend 1wp to release a living soldier from her service and her Essence; the revived dead remain hers forever.





to form a maze of shining yellow metal. It has grown since then to become a single living tower the size of a small city, Szoreny's silver trunks and quicksilver pools sliding away to accommodate its expansion.

Demons gather around the manse. They adore it as they would an Unquestionable, or even one of the Yozi's themselves. More and more have come as the manse has grown. They do not quarrel. They do not leave.

In the manse's fifth year, a bud began to swell at the tip of its central stalk. Now the bud looms as large as a queen's bedchamber. Its metal has become clear as glass, and an emerald radiance blazes forth from within. At the heart of the glow, observers can distinguish a perfect female figure curled in a fetal position amid the green. It is her will that gathers the demons to worship. Her eyes are open. She awaits her birth.

**Game Effects:** (Manse's rating of 5) x 2 + 1 Habitability = 11 Creation Points—but as a Geomantic Nexus (1) linked to thousands of other Malfeas-affected manses throughout Hell, it has an effectively limitless Creation Point total. So pure and so powerful is the Malfeas Essence flowing through the manse that it is effectively Consecrated (4) and Indestructible (4). If this were not enough, the demons surrounding it act as both a Bound Servant Force (3) and a Guardian Force (4).

Even unborn, the nameless, radiant figure inside the manse possesses a staggeringly powerful intellect. More than merely Sentient (4), she is the nucleus of a Synergistic Overmind (5). Her Extended Zone of Influence (4) spans a five-mile radius. Within that area, she—like the slumbering Elemental Dragons of Creation—interacts with her environment using the Eyeless Sight of Daana'd (2), the Glorious Halo of Hesiesh (2), Mela's Sweet Whisper (2), Pasiap's Buried Whiskers (2) and the Subtle Breath of Sextes Jylis (2). But her greatest powers are of the mind: She can communicate by means of The Silent Voice (3), read thoughts using Invisible Theft (4), and command wills with One Mind Within (5). The manse's hearthstone—currently, at this stage of its evolution, a shattering emerald aegis stone—is clasped between her hands.

### PRIMORDIAL-ASPECTED AND DEVA-BOUND DEMESNES

Demesnes aspected toward unbound Primordials are theoretically possible. In practice, however, such things are vanishingly rare. Instantiating a Primordial's aspect requires either that the Primordial interact meaningfully with the demesne or that other Essence users employ exotic demesne-engineering techniques to mimic such interaction. Gaia is not currently active in Creation, while geomancers with the skills to emulate her Essence are vanishingly rare. And in Autochthonia, the Great Maker has deliberately re-engineered his Essence flows so as not to produce demesnes of any kind.

It is also possible to create a deva-bound manse or demesne—one which resonates with a Third Circle or Second Circle deva—in the same manner as a demon-bound manse (see **The Broken-Winged Crane**, p. 5). But like Primordial-aspect demesnes, deva-bound demesnes are rare to the point of nonexistence. Gaia's Elemental Dragon souls do not stir from the Elemental Poles, and few of Creation's geomancers are sufficiently erudite as to recognize that deva-bound manses can even exist, let alone know how to create one.

## INFERNAL GEOMANCY

### INFERNAL DEMESNES

Where Creation is composed of the five elements, the stone and wind and water of the demon prison derive from the flesh of the Yozi, and they channel the energies of reality in utterly incongruous ways. But for all its bizarre and inimical qualities, infernal Essence still pools in places that Creation's geomancers would recognize as demesnes. Most appear at intersections of the veins of Essence that run through the Demon City and his fellows; these express the Essence of the sole Malfeas element, vitriol. Occasionally a demesne manifests in a place that has been touched by a Yozi and takes on that Yozi's aspect. Like their Celestial counterparts, these Yozi-aspected demesnes stand apart from the channels of Essence.

Each demesne expresses the nature of its aspect in unique ways. Sometimes this overlaps with another aspect. This is only to be expected, for each Yozi has much in common with many of its fellows and with the vitriol that flows through them.

**Vitriol:** acids, hate, resentment, revenge, destruction, damage, diminishment, decay, dissonance, depression, degeneration, mutation, evolution, refinement, simplification, atrophy, scarring, stoicism, resistance, floods, forest fires, the metody, bogs, ruins, fallow fields, atonal music, ecstatic dances, sculpture, hellwands, harrows, vitriol, algarel, rust

**Adorjan:** silence, emptiness, wind, storms, motion, restlessness, the unexpected, inevitability, purity, anarchy, catastrophe, ruin, spite, tragedy, pain, dread, clarity, enlightenment, madness, freedom, death, the Scourge Caste, plains, roads, abattoirs, idiots, madmen, executioners, garrotes, axes, scythes, the peghedu, shattered musical instruments, ivory, dust

**Cecelyne:** deserts, sand, desolation, deliberation, deprivation, tyranny, boundaries, hidden ways, endlessness, relentless-ness, insight, old age, laws, reverence, miracles, liturgies, scriptures, prayer strips, scorpions, serpents, the Malefactor Caste, walls, dams, caravans, libraries, prisons, temples, whips, gongs, sitars, gray amber, leather, glass, tin

**The Ebon Dragon:** shadows, darkness, night, fear, lies, subtlety, treachery, blasphemy, malice, crime, seduction, indulgence, revelry, sophistication, corruption, debasement, slavery, despair, resistance, persistence, transitions, weddings, funerals, death, reptiles, spirals, the Fiend Caste, caves, mines, graveyards, doors, daggers, seven-section staves, flutes, dirges, the midwryth, tarnished gold, obsidian

**Elloge:** language, words, writing, symbols, sounds, speech, names, ideas, narratives, fictions, stories, poetry, metaphor, relationships, memories, communication, introspection, self-deception, mythology, imagination, moods, themes, motifs, archetypes, abstraction, elaboration, deconstruction, paradox, romance, children, wedding vows, epitaphs, music, dance, roads, bridges, whistling-bulb arrows, the nattersquid, whisper-shell, runepearls, glyphstone

**Hegra:** storms, iridescent winds, psychedelic rain, ebon lightning, thunder, clouds, fog, sleep, dreams, nightmares, visions, emotions, impulse, madness, ecstasy, addiction, drugs, alchemy, distillation, gifts, intensity, obligation, acceptance, false kindness, tides, barter, wealth, imbalance, theft, plagiarism, prostitution, scavenging, agriculture, waste, junk, improvised weapons, harps, the unju, dreamstones, tourmaline, opals





**Isidoros:** size, momentum, strength, force, violence, bloodshed, destruction, wreckage, victory, pride, defiance, opposition, insurrection, impertinence, forthrightness, independence, heroism, largesse, bounty, vitality, flesh and blood, terrestrial behemoths, boars, hooves, hoof-prints, islands, icebergs, goremauls, gongs, the khomfai, black iron, bronze, star ruby, smoldering lead

**Kimbery:** the ocean, tides, storms, salt, tears, blood, corrosion, poison, disease, drowning, depths, dissolution, fluidity, flux, creating life, reshaping life, defiance, suffering, sadism, transgression, aquatic predators, aquatic behemoths, sea caves, the blood-red moon, the Lintha, axes, boomerangs, timbrels, zithers, the sourn, blue ice, coral, black lead, copper, crimson silver, scarlet pearls

**Malfeas:** cities, cyclopean architecture, vastness, arrogance, hubris, glory, terror, callousness, cruelty, rage, self-loathing, self-harm, pain, power, authority, tyranny, war, the green sun, the Slayer Caste, promontories, palaces, monuments, armories, daiklaves, razor harnesses, drums, horns, cymbals, the riwanon, brass, green iron, emeralds, black marble, basalt

**Metagaos:** swamps, vegetation, disease, hunger, consumption, absorption, replication, simulation, disguise, misdirection, stealth, wilderness, gestation, hybridization, chimerism, parasitism, greed, bureaucracy, amphibians, insect colonies, branching paths, instinct, traps, slums, kitchens, leper colonies, man-catchers, bolas, red amber, petrified wood, jasper, hepatizon

**Oramus:** the Wyld, dreams, delusion, madness, creation, children, birth, novelty, nonconformity, uniqueness, invention, art, style, flair, signatures, spontaneity, flexibility, wonder, mystery, chaos, chance, luck, improbability, impossibility, incomprehensibility, anomalies, boundaries, transgression, transcendence, dragons, wings, the number seven, sardonyx, pearls, opalescent quicksilver

**Qaf:** mountain slopes, ascent, movement, striving, questing, pilgrimage, faith, devotion, aspiration, progress, perfection, transcendence, apotheosis, mysticism, parables, serenity, aloneness, aloofness, ignorance, secrets, discovery, convergence, physical and emotional endurance, support, strength, hermits, pillars, calendars, helices, arrows, spears, winding horns, the brantome, spider silk, black nacre, mica

**She Who Lives In Her Name:** hierarchy, bureaucracy, industry, efficiency, consistency, order, logic, dispassion, ruthlessness, analysis, clarity, precision, improvement, perfection, patterns, symmetry, geometric shapes, circles, spheres, mechanisms, time, music, the Defiler Caste, ministries, pagodas, chakrams, pikes, harps, sitars, flames, gold, crystal

**Szoreny:** mirrors, duplication, reflection, contemplation, patience, symmetry, complexity, bifurcation, recursion, simultaneity, receptivity, memory, understanding, awareness, illusion, ennui, logic, puzzles, secrets, schemes, deception, concealment, mimicry, rivalry, forests, caves, labyrinths, shields, paired weapons, bells, silver, quicksilver, banded agate, glass

## INFERNAL MANSES

Both demesnes and manses express the nature of their underlying Essences, but where a demesne manifests its qualities naturally, the specifics of a manse emerge from the mind of its architect. A character designing a manse may use any of the elements suggested below or she may provide her own. For further inspiration, see the list of demesne associations above, and the various Charms bestowed by the relevant Yozi.

**Vitriol:** Twisting corridors, irregularly shaped rooms and halls, warped and scarred stones, stained and tarnished surfaces, jagged metal, dark colors, smells of decay, angry masks, cracked mirrors, moth and maggot motifs, pits of vitriol.

**Adorjan:** High ceilings, open areas, doorless thresholds, worn surfaces, stark lighting, sterile cleanliness, unfurnished chambers, sound-muffling acoustics, fluctuating temperatures, air in constant motion, wind and arrow-storm motifs, red and white.

**Cecelyne:** Wide open spaces, featureless walls, looping corridors, partitions, sealed chambers, locked doors, spartan furnishings, dry air, oppressive temperatures, sand-strewn floors, sandstone, depictions of desert creatures, religious iconography, chapels to the Yozis.

**The Ebon Dragon:** Spiraling corridors, shadowy illumination, winding stairs, gauzy curtains, jet and bone ornaments, iconography of extinct plants and animals, black and gray, stagnant water, secret passages, broken doors, cracks in the walls.

**Elloge:** Contrasting colors, inscriptions, arabesques, emblems, symbol-flags, obelisks, parterres and knot gardens, topiaries, theaters, parlors, studies, libraries, scriptoriums, chantries, nurseries, bedchambers, cenotaphs, acoustic lenses, bells and chimes, birdsong.

**Hegra:** Irregular rounded rooms, iridescent surfaces, mists and fogs, dreamstones, curdled dreams, lightning-bolt motifs, banners, curtains, banquet halls, bedrooms, seraglios, madhouses, junkyards, clutter, vineyards, bazaars, drugs, alcohol, incense.

**Isidoros:** Dark stone or metal, heavy or blocky construction, organic-looking structures, manufactories, rivers, waterfalls, geysers, sharp points and angles, wheels, rails, mechanisms, booming noises, dojos, weapons, furs, heat or flames, animal smells, boar motifs.

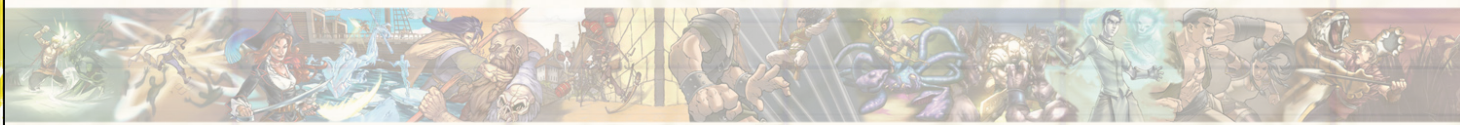
**Kimbery:** Organic curves, rising and falling halls, pools of seawater, decorative islets, limestone, shale, coral, pearls, scarlet moon motifs, carvings of ships, transgressive art, unpleasant sounds, green and red, aquatic creatures, mosses.

**Malfeas:** Organic-looking structures, rough-hewn grandeur, cyclopean scale, black stone, verdigrised brass, emerald flames, black and gold, green sunburst motifs, thrones, spikes, weaponry, instruments of torture, courtyards open to the Green Sun.

**Metagaos:** Labyrinthine layouts, wooden construction, stagnant water, damp unmoving air, swamp vegetation, tangled roots, compost heaps, vivariums, nested chambers, carnivorous plant motifs, concealed patches of brilliant color, shades of gray.

### MANSES AND YOZI DEATH

If a Yozi suffers fetich death, all manses of its aspect immediately suffer Power Failure (see *Oadenol's Codex*, p. 62) as their Essence ceases to resonate with the Yozi's new nature. These must be redesigned and rebuilt from scratch. If a Yozi is permanently slain and becomes a Neverborn, not only do all manses of its aspect immediately suffer Power Failure as above, but all of its manses and demesnes immediately shift aspect to Abyssal. Some truly ancient Abyssal manses and demesnes in Creation may have been Primordial-aspected during the Time of Glory.



**Oramus:** Irregularly shaped rooms, random colors, untended gardens, follies, nonsensical architectural elements, floor plans that rearrange themselves, art galleries, studios, paintings, sculptures, curios, many-winged dragon motifs.

**Qaf:** Walled compounds, gates, roads, stairs, terraces, balconies, galleries, intersections, gardens, pergolas, ladders, empty shrines, unmarked altars, incomplete sculpture, mystical symbols, hermitages, monasteries, refectories, gymnasiums, workhouses, asylums.

**She Who Lives In Her Name:** Straight lines, spherical rooms, circular windows, illuminated domes, ornamentation of geometrical design, rainbow bands of color, lack of wasted space, timepieces, clockworks, orreries, flames, crystal, glass.

**Szoreny:** Symmetrical layouts, wood paneling, scenic panoramas, right angles, windows, portraits, triptychs, mirrors, reflecting pools, quicksilver ponds, orchards, metal statuary, mazes, meditative cells, echo chambers, silver and gray.

### FAVORED MANSE POWERS BY INFERNAL ASPECT

In the manse construction system provided in **Oadenol's Codex** (pp. 63-79), certain manse powers are Favored by specific Terrestrial and Celestial aspects, reducing their effective point value by one (p. 66). The following list of manse powers indicates which powers are Favored by each infernal manse aspect.

**Vitriol:** Mutagenic (1)

**Adorjan:** Limited Mobility (2); Floating (3), The Silent Voice (3); Mobile (4)

**Cecelyne:** Emerald/Iron Circle Feedback (3), Zone of Influence (3); Extended Zone of Influence (4), Sapphire/Onyx Circle Feedback (4)

**The Ebon Dragon:** Geomantic Subtlety (2), Hidden Passages (2), Veil of Shadow (2); Black Tabernacle (4)

**Elloge:** Password Activations (1); Archive (2), Mela's Sweet Whisper (2)

**Hegra:** Emotional Focus (2), Sympathetic Dream Link (2); Palace of Unreality (5)

**Isidoros:** Armored (3), Fortress (3); Unstoppable (4); Indestructible (5)

**Kimbery:** Mutagenic (1); Subtle Breath of Sextes Jylis (2); Provider (3); Genesis Laboratory (5)

**Malfes:** Self-Destruct Sequence (1); Host-Binding Circle (2); Fortress (3), Regeneration (3); One Mind Within (5)

**Metagaos:** Living Manse (1); Self-Stabilizing (2); Regeneration (3); Genesis Laboratory (5)

**Oramus:** Dynamic Architecture (3); Otherworld Gate (5), Palace of Unreality (5), Gate of Auspicious Passage (5)

**Qaf:** Immutable (2); Greater Veil of Shadows (4); Alternate Locations (5)

**She Who Lives In Her Name:** Analytical Senses (3), Inside Fate (3); One Mind Within (5), Synergistic Overmind (5)

### ADAMANT/OBSIDIAN CIRCLE FEEDBACK

The manse power Adamant Circle Feedback (see **Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 77-78), which was previously limited to Solar manses, may be added to any Yozi-aspected manse. Likewise, the related Abyssal-only manse power Obsidian Circle Feedback may be added to any manse aspected to Cecelyne, the Ebon Dragon or Oramus.

### DEMON-BOUND HEARTHSTONES

Certain Yozi-aspected hearthstones resonate with one of the Yozi's sub-souls rather than with the Yozi itself. These are marked as Demon-Bound. If the demon in question is permanently destroyed, the manse generating the Hearthstone immediately suffers Power Failure and must be redesigned.

**Szoreny:** The Glorious Halo of Hesiesh (2); Puzzle Manse (3), Greater Veil of Shadows (4), Alternate Locations (5), Palace of Unreality (5)

**All Yozi:** Living Manse (1); Ability Enlightenment (4), Rainbow Tabernacle (4), Wyld Revocation (4); Sentient (5)

### FAVORED POWERS FOR DEMON-BOUND MANSES

A demon-bound manse resonates more closely with a demon of the Third or Second Circle than with its foundational Yozi. Each demon has its own unique affinities, giving manses bound to it a different set of favored powers than those favored by its progenitor. Examples follow.

**Berengiere:** Archive (2), Master's Workshop Manse [Craft: Wood only] (2); Workshop Manse [Craft: Wood only] (3)

**Gumela:** Archive (2), Emotional Focus (2)

**Ligier:** Master's Workshop Manse (2); Integrated Utility Artifacts (3), Workshop Manse (3); Atelier-Manse (4); Factory-Cathedral (5)

**Makarios:** Sympathetic Dream Link (2); Palace of Unreality (5)

**Orabilis:** Archive (2), Eyeless Sight of Daana'd (2), Pasiap's Buried Whiskers (2)

**Sondok:** Fortress (3); Essence Shield (4), Integrated Essence Artillery (4)

### NEW MANSE POWERS

Except where indicated, these manse powers are available to manses in Creation as well as in Hell.

### VULNERABILITY

This manse flaw is a variation on Fragility, but instead of being generally easier to damage, a Vulnerable manse possesses a more narrowly defined weak spot or is susceptible to some specific threat. The manse's architecture may be sustained by Essence to the point that disrupting those Essence flows brings down the roof; its metaphysical qualities may be susceptible to an antithetical force; or it may rely upon load-bearing architectural members that can be shattered. In all cases, exploiting the manse's flaw fills its damage track and sends it into Power Failure.

A manse cannot receive Creation Points from both Fragility and Vulnerability. Neither flaw is compatible with the Armored or Indestructible manse powers.

The Vulnerability flaw may be applied to all manses.

- The manse is only slightly vulnerable. It requires great power or deep infiltration to take advantage of this weakness. Examples: Adamant Countermagic, a Celestial Circle spell designed specifically to destroy the manse, shattering the rune-carved granite keystone in its main hall, shining the reflected light of the Unconquered Sun into every room of the manse, slaying the Second Circle demon that abides in the hearthstone chamber.





- The manse is exceptionally vulnerable. Even mortals can take advantage of its flaws to bring it down, if they possess the knowledge to do so. Examples: Emerald Countermagic, riding counterclockwise around the manse on a black simhata, destroying the ancient tree that stands outside its main gate, speaking the name of the Maiden of Endings within its walls.

## ONE-POINT POWERS

### MUTAGENIC (VITRIOL, KIMBERY FAVORED)

Carefully tailored Essence flows slowly warp flesh and brain and bone, inducing a specific set of mutations like those brought about by an uncapped demesne (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 50).

This power may be upgraded. If purchased as a two-point power, the mutation rate is measured in seasons instead of years. At three points, it is measured in months; at four points, in weeks; at five points, in days.

### TRAVELING

#### A moving demesne

Most demesnes are fixed to one spot, but a rare few—typically connected with fluid elements like Air and Water, or peripatetic Yozis such as Adorjan—are mobile in nature, either roving randomly about or following a set course. It is more difficult to establish a manse on such a demesne; its geomancy must deal with constant flux amid tangent Essence flows. This itinerant quality is a structural prerequisite for certain other manse powers.

Such a demesne moves at a fixed speed determined by the Storyteller, but no faster than a tireless horse (see *Exalted*, p. 264). Movable objects in the manse's path are roughly shoved aside (5L, Trauma 3). Fixed objects are torn apart. If the manse hits a fixed object too massive and stable to uproot, such as a medium-sized stone building or a giant redwood, the manse gets caught on the obstruction. This dislodges the manse from the demesne; it is damaged as though by an earthquake and turns into a static structure. This induces immediate and irreversible Power Failure.

Anyone who is immune to Knockback effects or parries the manse (such as via the charm Heavenly Guardian Defense) takes no damage and does not lose his footing. However, he does not stop the manse in the process unless he can muster a reflexive 25-point Feat of Strength (see *Exalted*, p. 127). Instead, the ground he stands on (if any) immediately starts sliding along with the manse; effectively, the manse is a vehicle which the character has just boarded. The manse generates 20 automatic successes against Blockade Movement actions; a successful blockade likewise stops the manse. In either case, stopping the manse dislodges it from the demesne, inducing Power Failure as above.

A character that moves from the Traveling demesne onto normal ground suffers falling damage from the sudden change in momentum. For every five miles per hour of the demesne's speed (*Exalted*, p. 264), add one to the number of yards fallen (if any) when calculating this damage.

## TWO-POINT POWERS

### EMOTIONAL FOCUS (FIRE, HEGRA FAVORED)

**Craft (various) 4, Socialize 4**

Inscriptions, mosaics, recorded voices, scents and other sensory cues combine with mind-altering flows of Essence to instill a specific emotion toward an ordained subject: adoration of Adorjan, fear of the Anathema, love of Creation, hatred of imprisonment, or any other conceivable combination. Each scene spent in the manse counts as a scene spent building a predetermined Intimacy for any character whose Dodge MDV is 5 or less. One with a Dodge MDV of 8 or less treats each day in the manse as a scene spent building the Intimacy. This is a Compulsion and Emotion effect. A character whose Dodge MDV is 9 or higher are immune.

At the Storyteller's discretion, a specific aspect may be treated as Favored if it dovetails with the manse's Intimacy. For instance, "Murder (craving)" would be a Favored Emotional Focus for an Abyssal manse, while "Luna (reverence)" would be Favored for a Lunar manse.

## THREE-POINT POWERS

### INSIDE FATE (SHE WHO LIVES IN

### HER NAME, SIDEREAL FAVORED)

**Craft (Fate) 5, a realm of reality beyond the reach of the Loom of Fate**

The "Outside Fate" manse power is not used for manses constructed outside Creation. Such manses naturally exist outside of fate and need no expenditure of Creation Points to be built in this fashion. Instead, such a manse may be connected to the Loom of Fate through some arcane mechanism, such as sorcery, subverted Pattern Spiders or seams sewn with threads of Time. Such a manse exists inside of Fate. Astrology can discern what transpires within normally, and both the manse and its inhabitants are considered to be part of Fate for all purposes.

## FOUR-POINT POWERS

### UNSTOPPABLE (ISIDOROS, WATER FAVORED)

**Structure: Traveling**

Placing a sturdy obstacle in the path of a Traveling manse can be dangerous and destructive, not only for the effects on the manse itself, but for the near-certainty of Essence buildup and detonation. This manse avoids the problem by distorting space to shunt obstacles out of its path. Ground, water and air part before it and flow around it like a stream washing around a stone, carrying buildings, trees and players characters along for the ride. Unbroken barriers warp like taffy to accommodate the manse's movement. All moved or warped objects return to their previous locations and shapes once the manse has passed.

These are Shaping effects on the world, not those in it. As such, characters whose Shaping defenses protect only themselves, such as a Solar using Integrity-Protecting Prana, are affected by this power. It is also considered to be in accord with the laws of Creation as judged by Chaos-Repelling Prana and similar effects.

## FIVE-POINT POWERS

### INFERNAL BASTION (YOZI-ASPECTED ONLY)

Raised by Infernal sorcery, this manse need not be located in a demesne, as it is directly and deliberately fueled by the nigh-limitless energies of its patron Yozi. It functions in much the same manner as the Inauspicious Citadel manse power (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 78), granting an effectively limitless supply of Creation Points which are spent by the Yozi to whom it is aspected—limited by whatever restrictions apply to that Yozi's Sorcerous Enlightenment Charm—along with Well-Flavored Aspect. The Yozi may take control of the manse's powers at any time.

Unlike Inauspicious Citadel, there is no requirement that the Infernal Bastion be located in a shadowland.

### INFERNAL BASTION (ADAMANT CIRCLE SORcery; INFERNAL ONLY)

**Cost:** 60m

**Target:** Conjured bastion

This mighty incantation raises a fortress charged with the Essence of a Yozi for whom the caster possesses the appropriate Sorcerous Enlightenment Charm. It must be performed in a place congruent with the chosen Yozi: an utterly silent region for Adorjan, a city for Malfears, a place of desolation for Cecelyne, and so forth. 100 mortals must be sacrificed at the sorcerer's command, and these sacrifices must also correspond to the chosen Yozi. For example, the Ebon Dragon's victims must be betrayed—slain by those whom they love or trust—while those sacrificed to She Who Lives in Her Name must be transmuted to inanimate substances by magical means. At the ritual's end, the fortress manifests around the sorcerer in a paroxysm of elements and Essence, either rising from the earth or crystallizing out of the air. Those who do not huddle beneath the sorcerer's cloak or flee the scene will be hard put to survive the resulting concatenation of unleashed forces (10L/action, Trauma 5, duration of one long tick).

Casting this spell is a Blasphemy effect if the rite is performed in Creation. However, its echoes resonate throughout the Loom of Fate, making the infernal bastion's precise location impossible to discern. Yu-Shan becomes aware of which Direction the manse lies in, and no more.

Each infernal bastion is a unique manse that bears the mark of its foundational Yozi. The Storyteller designs it as a manse of that Yozi's aspect with the Infernal Bastion manse power (see above). Such a manse appears utterly alien in Creation and looms menacingly even if erected amidst the alien architecture of the Demon City.

The manse is anchored to the life-force of the sorcerer who brought it into being. Whenever the sorcerer is within its walls, she receives all the benefits of an attuned three-dot manse, including the special powers of a three-dot hearthstone of her choice that shares the manse's aspect. If she leaves the manse, these benefits are lost until she returns. Note that the manse does not actually sit on a demesne, and thus is not subject to Essence Buildup.

A sorcerer may only sustain one infernal bastion at a time. Should she die or create a new bastion, the old one crumbles into ruin.

### WHERE'S THE STORY?

The collection of information here about Infernal aspects for geomancy originally appears in *Ink Monkeys*, Vol. 46 along with some excellent, less mechanical setting pieces for various Yozi. Because of the attempt to divide this PDF into more discrete chunks for ease of use, the information on the Yozi themselves have been moved to the Essential Essays Chapter (page 167).

## NEW INFERNAL HEARTHSTONES

### HEARTHSTONES OF VITRIOL

Before the Primordial War, the King of the Primordials proposed the creation of *Theion To*, an element that refined and evolved that which it touched. Something akin to *Theion To* runs through the streets of the Demon City, but it is not the same; the malignance of the Yozi has tainted it at the root, and it can never be the pure substance devised in elder ages. Now it corrupts, dissolves and destroys all that it touches. It is now and forever *vitriol*, the element of hate.

### TATTERED PORTRAIT GEMSTONE (MANSE •)

As a miscellaneous action, the bearer of this dark, varicolored cabochon can alter his appearance in a limited way. He may not look like someone or something else, but he may appear as a diminished version of himself: older, scarred, diseased, crippled or otherwise lessened in some fashion. Such lessening is real and imposes appropriate penalties. This is a Crippling effect. If the effects are particularly dramatic, those who know the bearer will need a successful (Perception + Awareness) roll to recognize him. The effects can be reversed as another miscellaneous action or when the bearer's attunement with the stone is broken.

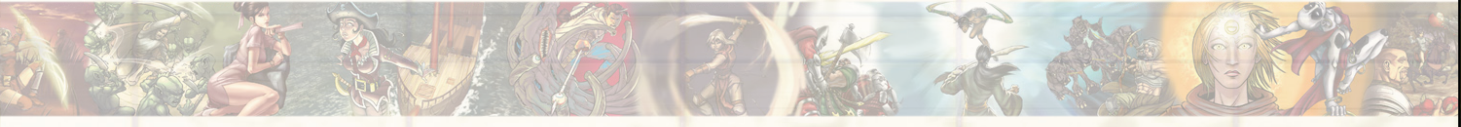
### DETACHMENT-PIERCING STONE (MANSE ••)

A scarlet vein runs through this ivory-colored rectangle. Its bearer's speech confuses and dismays her targets, undermining their ability to resist persuasion. Whenever the bearer makes a successful social attack, the target suffers a -1 *cumulative* penalty to his Dodge MDV against all of the bearer's social attacks for the duration of the scene, up to a maximum of -3. This is an Emotion effect.

A similar, three-dot hearthstone imposes this penalty against social attacks from all sources, not just the hearthstone bearer.

### STONE OF ACRID UNDERSTANDING (MANSE •••)

This sharp-edged, glassy violet stone minimizes the need for formal training by etching skills directly into its bearer's muscles and nerves. Training intervals decrease from days to hours, weeks to days and months to weeks. This is a painful process; crackling steam rises from the parts of the bearer's body involved in the activity being learned. The bearer spends experience points as normal and suffers a -2 internal penalty to all actions which persists until the training is completed or attunement to the stone is broken. The stone's benefits do not stack with any other effect that reduces training time.



## HEARTHSTONES OF ADORJAN

### GEMSTONE OF THE PURE BODY (MANSE ●●●)

The bearer of this ruby stone may, as a miscellaneous action, expel any foreign substance from her body, such as drugs, poisons, arrows or tattoos. This does not repair any harm already inflicted by these substances, nor does it heal injuries caused by ejecting prostheses. Note that poisons which inflict damage each action do so at the start of the acting character's action (**Exalted**, p. 130), so a poison being ejected by the Gemstone of the Pure Body will inflict damage at the start of the action to eject it.

Tattoos, prostheses and other objects and substances that resonate with the bearer's Essence, such as attuned artifact grafts and Lunar tattoos, do not count as foreign and cannot be expelled by the stone.

### LOVE-TREADS-SOFTLY GEMSTONE (MANSE ●●●)

Sky-blue flakes shimmer at the heart of this milky jewel. The bearer adds (Compassion) dice to Stealth checks to establish or reestablish surprise against a target for which she bears a positive Intimacy. These bonus dice become automatic successes within the confines of the Silent Wind or the landscapes of her Third Circle souls.

### EMPTY HEART STONE (MANSE ●●●●)

The sharpened edges of this lenticular stone are shot through with many colors, but the center is clear as glass. It draws in and devours those feelings which would distract its bearer from his goals. The bearer perfectly resists all Emotion effects, loses all Intimacies and cannot build further Intimacies.

## HEARTHSTONES OF CECELYNE

### OVERFLOWING ESSENCE STONE (MANSE ●)

The concentric glassy shells comprising this sphere slowly grow outward and crumble to sand, replaced by new shells expanding from its core. Its bearer draws power from self-control. The bearer regains (Temperance + 2) motes per hour from the stone instead of the standard 2 motes per hour.

### SAND SERPENT JEWEL (MANSE ●●)

The bearer of this chatoyant gray stone exercises preternatural deliberation in battle. He may extend his Aim actions to (3 + Essence) ticks. Other effects that supplement Aim actions with additional bonus dice or other benefits on a per-tick basis only apply to the first three Aim ticks.

### THE SORCERER'S WALL (MANSE 4)

Specks of vivid green light effervesce in the heart of this silvery cabochon. Its bearer may reflexively shatter any undesirable Terrestrial Circle spell that tries to affect her, as per the 10m version of Emerald Countermagic (**Exalted**, p. 253).

### PANOPTICON STONE (MANSE ●●●●●)

#### Demon-Bound (Orabilis)

The bearer of this transparent pale green gem may spend one Willpower to manifest a small hovering sphere of glass. This magical orb is identical to an eye of Orabilis (**The Books of Sorcery**, Vol. V—**Roll of Glorious Divinity II**, p.55), except

that instead of informing and serving Orabilis, it informs and serves the hearthstone bearer, and its Intimacies are toward the instructions given to it by the bearer instead of the laws of Cecelyne.

## HEARTHSTONES OF THE EBON DRAGON

### PEARL OF SHADOW FORM (MANSE ●●●●●)

This jet-black orb transforms its bearer's body and possessions into living shadow. She becomes an intangible silhouette that moves along surfaces as a shadow does and can flow through the narrowest of openings. In shadow form, she is a creature of darkness and may not affect the material world in any way. Likewise, others can only touch or affect her with powers that affect the immaterial or cause Holy damage. Entering or leaving shadow form is a miscellaneous Desecration and Shaping action costing 5m. The pearl's effects last indefinitely until the bearer chooses to end them or until she is touched by sunlight, moonlight or the light of the Green Sun.

## HEARTHSTONES OF ELLOGE

### INVIOULATE NARRATIVE STONE (MANSE ●●)

The bearer of this stone cannot be drawn into the tales of the Fair Folk, for she has her own story. She may spend one Willpower to perfectly defend against all raksha-generated Shaping effects until the start of her next action.

### REMEMBRANCE-CACHING AMBER (MANSE ●●)

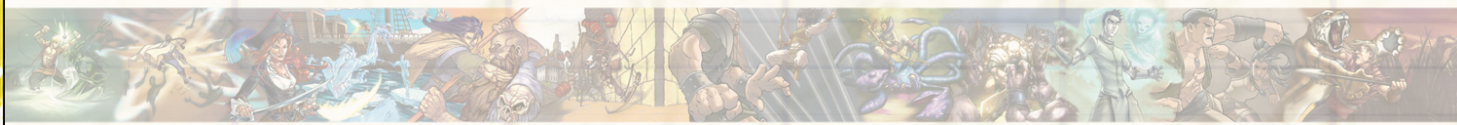
The bearer of this rich golden ellipsoid may store up to (Essence) memories within its gleaming depths. A stored memory—either a single fact, or the events of a single scene—is entirely forgotten by the bearer; he can recollect nothing of it, nor may others glean it from his mind through magic. When storing a memory, the bearer chooses a single word or symbol to mark it. This sign appears within the stone; it is the only indication of the stored memory's nature.

Any character attuned to the stone may touch it and spend one Willpower to absorb one of the memories stored within. He will recall the chosen memory as though he had experienced it personally. If the stone already contains a number of memories equal to the bearer's Essence—or more, if memories have been added by another, higher-Essence character attuned to the manse—this is the only way to free up room to store more memories.

If the stone is destroyed, the memories remain stored in its parent manse's Essence pattern and will become accessible again once the stone regrows. However, damaging the manse's geomancy enough to shatter its hearthstone will disrupt its Essence pattern, obliterating all of its stored memories.

### SAVANT'S LENS (MANSE ●●●)

This lenticular blue stone translates any text viewed through it into Old Realm script. Codes and ciphers appear in Old Realm script but are not decrypted.



## HEARTHSTONES OF HEGRA

### GRAND DREAMSTONE (MANSE •)

This dazzling green opal acts as a dreamstone (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 156), but with no limit as to how many nights' worth of dreams it can hold.

### STONE OF EMOTIONAL ALCHEMY (MANSE ••)

The bearer of this silver-streaked yellow stone may spend one Willpower to reflexively change the emotional tenor of one of her Intimacies in any manner she likes—from love to hate, for example, or from fear to admiration. Intimacies altered in this way are as permanent as any other.

### PALLID PACHYDERM JEWEL (MANSE •••)

When the bearer of this luminous white stone makes a social attack to persuade someone to accept and/or keep a gift, or to gain an Intimacy to such a gift, treat the attack as unnatural mental influence.

## HEARTHSTONES OF ISIDOROS

### GEMSTONE OF HEROIC MIGHT (MANSE •)

The bearer of this vivid amber jewel is as strong as she believes herself to be. She adds (Valor) to all Feats of Strength.

### GEM OF REDOUBLED FORCE (MANSE •••)

A white asterism gleams within this reddish-black stone. Its bearer grows stronger, not weaker, with injury. He adds his current wound penalty to his dice pool instead of subtracting it.

## HEARTHSTONES OF KIMBERY

### GEM OF THE HEART'S CHATELAINE (MANSE ••)

This roseate jewel grants its bearer additional finesse in manipulating others. When performing a social attack that supports one of the target's Intimacies, a dominant Virtue or Motivation, the target suffers an additional -1 MDV penalty as an Emotion effect. This increases to -2 when performed within the landscape of Kimberly or one of her Third Circle souls.

## HEARTHSTONES OF MALFEAS

### JEWEL OF THE TITAN (MANSE ••)

The bearer of this brass-laced purple orb may spend one Willpower to enlarge her body and possessions to unnatural proportions, giving her the Giant blight (*Compass of Celestial Directions II: The Wyld*, p.148) as a Desecration effect. Belongings that leave her possession revert to their original size, while objects she picks up grow to her scale.

### GEM OF THE VIRIDIAN LANCE (MANSE •••)

#### Demon-Bound (Gervesin)

Where other hearthstones are set into artifacts, this green jewel forms its own. Its bearer may reflexively spend five motes to transform it into a spear of green light for the rest of the scene.

**Green Spear:** Speed 5, Accuracy +5, Damage +8L/+12L, Defense +2, Rate 2, Tags: 2, L, R

**Thrown Green Spear:** Speed 5, Accuracy +5, Damage +8L/+12L, Rate 1, Range 100, Tags: T

## HEARTHSTONES OF METAGAOS

### GEM OF PESTILENCE (MANSE • - ••••)

This waxy ochre gemstone has an unwholesome sheen. Each of the bearer's attacks that inflicts at least one health level of damage acts as vector for disease (see *Exalted*, pp. 350-353), requiring a (Stamina + Resistance) check against the disease's Virulence to avoid infection. This is considered to be a mundane disease in all respects once the target is infected; it spreads and is cured normally.

There are numerous specific variations of the Gem of Pestilence, each spreading a different disease. These include leprosy (•), hysteria (••), cholera (•••), rabies (••••) and plague (•••••).

### IRON JAW GEMSTONE (MANSE •••)

The bearer of this grayish ivory wedge gains the ability to eat and digest anything. The bearer's teeth become as hard and sharp as adamant, able to gnaw through anything short of the Five Magical Materials, while his stomach becomes capable of digesting anything put into it, including metal and stone. This does not allow the bearer to draw nourishment from non-nourishing substances, nor does it protect against poison.

**Iron Jaw Bite:** Speed 5, Accuracy +1, Damage +3L, Defense n/a, Rate 1, Piercing

## HEARTHSTONES OF ORAMUS

### SIGN OF CHAOS (MANSE • - •••••)

This hearthstone may appear as almost any fist-sized object: a jewel, an egg, a fruit, a flower. Its bearer gains power over chance and the Wyld, acquiring a rating in the Style Background (see *Graceful Wicked Masques*, pp. 98-99) equal to the stone's rating. If she is not a raksha, modify the Style rules as follows:

**Style •:** Stunt pool equals highest Virtue.

**Style ••:** Stunt pool equals sum of two highest Virtues.

**Style •••:** Recover stunt dice equal to lowest Virtue.

**Style ••••:** Regain all spent stunt dice upon entering Limit Break.

**Style •••••:** The number of Wyld stunts allowed per story equals the bearer's lowest Virtue. Each Wyld stunt performed in Creation costs 1wp.

For purposes of the Style Background, the hearthstone bearer treats environments formed by Oramus's Third Circle souls as Deep Wyld.

### EYE OF IMPOSSIBLE VISIONS (MANSE •••)

By meditating upon this silky white stone for one week and spending one Willpower, the bearer casts her gaze across the Beyond—that transcendent realm that contains such things as cannot be, have never existed and never will come to pass—in order to better understand that which is. Treat this scrying as a vision-quest (*Compass of Celestial Directions: the Wyld*, pp. 139-141). Using the stone requires only one day of meditation within the landscape of any of Oramus' Third Circle souls.

### GEM OF DREAM ACQUISITION (MANSE •••)

By spending one Willpower when he falls asleep, the bearer of this rippling rainbow gemstone shapes an item of his desire





while dreaming, so that it appears in his possession when he awakens. This is an Illusion and Shaping effect. He may evoke any inanimate object he can imagine whose dimensions do not exceed his own. Such items are perfect in quality (**Exalted**, p. 366) but have no magical powers, even if they emulate the appearance of a magical device or substance. For example, a dream-born Daiklave of Conquest (**Exalted**, p. 392) would look most impressive, but would have the statistics of a perfect straight sword.

Dream-born items possess a surreal, otherworldly quality that is instantly recognizable by anyone with Dodge MDV of 8 or higher. Other characters may spend one Willpower to recognize such an item's dreamlike nature. Note that this does not deny the object's solidity; a merchant may discern that a jade daiklave is unreal and refuse to purchase it, but this provides no protection against being struck with its edge. Dream-born items fade into nothingness when the bearer next loses consciousness or when touched by cold iron.

## HEARTHSTONES OF QAF

### MOUNTAIN-SOUL CABOCHON (MANSE ●●●)

Like a stair carved into the side of a mountain, this rainbow-flecked black stone provides an unshakable foundation for its bearer's aspirations. In any scene in which the bearer is actively attempting to further an as-yet unachieved ideal toward which he possesses a positive Intimacy, that Intimacy cannot be eroded or altered in any way.

## HEARTHSTONES OF SHE WHO LIVES IN HER NAME

### DETERMINISTIC ORB (MANSE ●●●●)

The bearer of this flawless crystal sphere thinks, speaks and acts with punctilious balance, moderation and restraint, such that randomness plays no part in her work. The bearer never rolls dice; instead, she gains one success for every two dice in her pool, rounded up. In addition, her Temperance is set to 5.

## HEARTHSTONES OF SZORENY

### INVERTED CITY INTAGLIO (MANSE ●●)

Like a coin, each layer of the Demon City has two faces. On each face, the layer's surface is "down" while the green sun is "up." The bearer of this basalt disk—elaborate filigree with silver on one side, brass on the other—may, as a Speed 10 Sorcerous Shaping action, transport himself from one face of a Malfean layer to the corresponding point on the opposite face. He sinks into the ground and falls for five minutes, sleeting intangibly through stone and metal, labyrinthine catacombs and Kimberly's hidden waters, until he falls "up" to emerge among the structures on the other side. Anyone else within 5 yards may "hitch a ride" with the bearer by reflexively spending 1wp at any point during the bearer's action.

### MIRROR-CITY GATEWAY STONE (MANSE ●●●●) Demon-Bound (Kagami)

While in Malfeas or within ten miles of the demon Kagami's summoner in Creation, the bearer of this polished silvery gemstone may pass freely into the City of Mirrors (**Compass of Ce-**

**lestial Directions: Malfeas**, pp. 120-122) by stepping through any reflective surface large enough to accommodate his form. In other locales or realms of existence, where Kagami is not coterminous with the bearer's location, the bearer instead enters a small mirror-realm—no larger than a single room—that reflects his current surroundings. This mirror-realm acts as a sanctum (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, p.15).

## CONVERTING HEARTHSTONES TO INFERNAL ASPECTS

Many hearthstone effects appear in manses of multiple aspects. For example, the effects of many water-aspected hearthstones manifest in the hearthstones of Kimberly, while necromantic powers develop in the hearthstones of both Abyssal-aspected and Ebon Dragon-aspected manses. Numerous hearthstones appear in **Exalted**, pages 382-383, and in **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III: Oadenol's Codex**, pages 85-107, a number of which have been listed below as examples. Storytellers should feel free to use any other hearthstones that seem appropriate to a given aspect.

When converting a hearthstone from another aspect, be sure to change the stone's appearance to match the nature of its new aspect. To get some ideas for a stone's appearance, see the **Demesne Associations** entry.

### A NOTE ON PAGE REFERENCES

To save space and ink, unremarked page references to **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex** in the following section are shortened to a page with no book name.  
—Plague of Hats

## HEARTHSTONES OF VITRIOL

**Brazen Healing Stone (Manse 1):** As the Stone of Healing (**Exalted**, p. 383), but injuries treated by the bearer of this stone leave scars that glisten the color of brass.

**Hardened Spirit Gemstone (Manse 1):** Page 89.

**Road of Hatred Stone (Manse 1):** Page 101.

**Vitriol-Tongue Jewel (Manse 1):** As the Godspeaking Trilium (**Oadenol's Codex**, p. 85), but it affects demons associated with vitriol and gods of malice and hatred.

**Acid-Treading Stone (Manse 2):** As the Gem of Elemental Travel (**Oadenol's Codex**, p. 87), but only to walk across the surface of vitriol.

**Dark Passion Lens (Manse 2):** As the Prism of Focused Passion (**Oadenol's Codex**, p. 93), but only to inflame negative emotions—anger, hate, fear, etc.

**Flawed Gem (Manse 2):** Page 101.

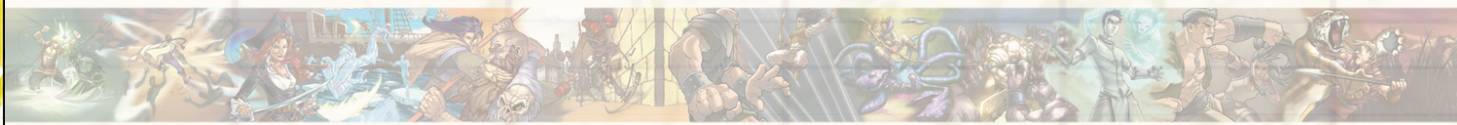
**Hell-Talon Gem (Manse 2):** As the Kill-Hand Gem (**Oadenol's Codex**, p. 89), but it warps the bearer's hands and/or feet into clawed demoniac shapes when in use.

**Cloak-of-Corrosion Jewel (Manse 3):** As the Gem of White Heat (**Oadenol's Codex**, p. 94), but instead of fire, it surrounds the bearer with a corrosive vitriolic anima with similar effects.

**Discord Stone (Manse 3):** Page 93.

**Jewel of Vitriol's Wellspring (Manse 3):** As the Jewel of Daana'd (**Oadenol's Codex**, p. 97), but instead of affecting water elements, it affects the metedy and other demons attuned to the element of vitriol.





Stone of Dust (Manse 3): Page 102.

Mordant Amethyst (Manse 4): As the Candent Carbuncle (Oadenol's Codex, p. 94), but it creates and protects against acid instead of fire.

Scathing Marrow Stone (Manse 5): As the Gem of Bones to Fire (Oadenol's Codex, p. 95), but the target's bones ooze vitriol instead.

Withering Gem (Manse 5): Page 103.

## HEARTHSTONES OF ADORJAN

Gem of Echoes (Manse 1): Page 85.

Jewel of the Flying Heart (Manse 1): Page 85.

Jewel of Youthful Suppleness (Manse 1): Page 99.

The Monkey Stone (Manse 2): As per Exalted, page 383.

Stone of the Hunt (Manse 1): Page 99.

Stone of the Light Sleeper (Manse 1): Page 93.

Ghostwalker Crystal (Manse 2): Page 102.

Kill-Hand Gem (Manse 2): Page 89.

Mind-Cleansing Gem (Manse 2): Page 96.

Survival Stone (Manse 2): Page 99.

Wind Jewel (Manse 2): Page 86. Winds summoned or controlled by means of this stone are silent in and of themselves, though objects moved by the wind—ruffled papers, flapping or cracking sails, etc—continue to make noise in the usual way.

Discord Stone (Manse 3): Page 93.

The Freedom Stone (Manse 3): As per Exalted, page 383.

Gem of Elemental Travel (Manse 3): Page 86.

Gem of the Flight Zone (Manse 3): As per Splinters of the Wyld, page 7.

Gemstone of Entrance (Manse 3): Page 99.

Orb of the Unnoticed Predator (Manse 3): Page 103.

The Stone of Silent Passage (Manse 3): As per Return of the Scarlet Empress, page 87.

Windhands Gemstone (Manse 3): As per Exalted, page 382. Crimson-hued breezes trace the bearer's movements when she employs the stone's abilities, making its use Obvious.

Gem of Love's Scarlet Wings (Manse 4): As the Against-the-Flame Pearl (The Broken-Winged Crane, p. 7), but only usable against an opponent toward whom the bearer possesses an Intimacy of love.

Stone of Airwalking (Manse 4): Page 88.

Stone of the Sure Path (Manse 4): Page 100. While the stone's power is in use, the bearer is accompanied by the sound of far-off drums whenever she advances toward her destination. *Demon-Bound: Zsofika.*

Gem of Madness (Manse 5): Page 104.

Gem of Perfect Mobility (Manse 5): Page 107.

## HEARTHSTONES OF CECELYNE

Cropstone of Cecelyne (Manse 1): As the Farmer's Stone (Oadenol's Codex, p.98), but the crops appear withered and deformed, with an iridescent sheen.

Gem of Holiness (Manse 1): Page 104.

Jewel of the Clever Merchant (Manse 1): Page 95.

Jewel of Infernal Oratorion (Manse 1): As the Godspeaking Trillion (Oadenol's Codex, p. 85), but it affects First Circle demons instead of gods and elementals of air.

Stone of Circulation (Manse 1): Page 92.

Stone of the Spider's Eye (Manse 1): Page 86.

Gemstone of Surface Thoughts (Manse 2): As per Exalted, page 382.

Infernal Oathstone (Manse 2): As the Oathstone (Oadenol's Codex, p. 106), but the giver suffers no penalty for breaking the oath if she has a higher Essence rating than the recipient.

Jewel of the Celestial Mandarin (Manse 2): Page 105.

Jewel of the Lawgiver's Authority (Manse 2): Page 106.

Stone of First Impressions (Manse 2): Page 86.

Survival Stone (Manse 2): Page 99.

Gem of Grace (Manse 3): As per Exalted, page 384.

Gem of Sorcery (Manse 3): Page 107.

Key of Mastery (Manse 3): Page 88.

Stone of Judgment (Manse 3): Page 97.

Stone of the Silver Dune (Manse 3): As the Gemstone of the White Jade Tree (Oadenol's Codex, p. 90), but the bearer's skin turns to silvery sandstone. Sand sifts from her joints as she moves.

Gem of Wise Discernment (Manse 4): Page 105.

Twice-Striking Lightning Prism (Manse 4): Page 88.

Wilderness Gem (Manse 4): Page 104.

Stone of Loyalty (Manse 5): Page 100.

Third Hand Orb (Manse 5): Page 88.

## HEARTHSTONES OF THE EBON DRAGON

Deceiver's Stone (Manse 1): As the Deception Engine (The Manual of Exalted Power—The Alchemicals, p. 205).

Gem of Night Vision (Manse 1): Page 91.

Gem of Unholy Perfection (Manse 1): As the Gem of Perfection (Oadenol's Codex, p. 89), but the stone cannot mend any harm inflicted by Holy effects. In addition, the bearer becomes a creature of darkness, and if this condition is ever removed, all injuries and defects mended by the stone will immediately return.

Gemstone of Shadows (Manse 1): Page 103.

Shadow-Soul Gem (Manse 1): As the Stone of Comfort (Oadenol's Codex, p. 89), but has no effect on derangements that involve a lack of empathy—sociopathy, narcissism, etc.

Stone of Earth's Blood (Manse 1): Page 89.

Gem of Seduction (Manse 2): Page 93.

Stone of Recognition (Manse 2): Page 96.

Chameleon Stone (Manse 2): Page 103.

False Death Stone (Manse 2): Page 101.

Impervious Diamond Heart (Manse 2): As per The Broken-Winged Crane, page 7.

Jewel of the Graceful Courtier (Manse 2): Page 103.

The Freedom Stone (Manse 3): As per Exalted, page 383.

Jewel of the Forge of Night (Manse 3): As the Jewel of the Master's Hand (Oadenol's Codex, p. 90), but its primary bonus is to Craft (Fire) instead of Craft (Earth). Metalwork crafted with the aid of this stone has a dark luster. *Demon-Bound: Alveua.*

Gem of Forgetting (Manse 3): Page 87.

Discord Stone (Manse 3): Page 93.

Gem of Desire (Manse 3): Page 93.

Stone of Judgment (Manse 3): Page 97.

Style-Emulating Stone (Manse 3): As per The Broken-Winged Crane, page 7.

The Black Key (Manse 4): As the Key of Mastery (Oadenol's Codex, page 88), but it attunes to necromancy spells



rather than sorcery. The Abyssal-aspected version is a three-dot stone.

**Gem of Masks (Manse 4):** Page 98.

**Stone of Dream Entrance (Manse 4):** Page 103. *Demon-Bound: Makarios*.

**Fire-Eating Rock (Manse 5):** Page 95.

**Gem of the Starless Sky (Manse 5):** As the Gem of the Night Sky (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 103), but the sky becomes as dark and empty as an overcast night.

## HEARTHSTONES OF ELLOGE

**Gem of Visitations (Manse 1):** Page 85.

**Gemstones of Synchronicity (Manse 1):** Page 89.

**Jewel of Infernal Oration (Manse 1):** As the Godspeaking Trillion (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 85), but it affects First Circle demons instead of gods and elementals of air.

**Memory Stone (Manse 1):** Page 85.

**Stone of Passion (Manse 1):** Page 93.

**Stone of Quick Thought (Manse 1):** Page 86.

**The Diviner's Stone (Manse 2):** As the Gem of Omens (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 104), but instead of taking inspiration from nature, the bearer must seek his omens from words and symbols, using such methods as automatic writing, bibliomancy, cledonancy, numerology or rune-casting.

**Elegant Communication Stone (Manse 2):** As the Quickmouth Apparatus (*The Manual of Exalted Power—The Alchemicals*, p. 205).

**Gemstone of Surface Thoughts (Manse 2):** As per *Exalted*, page 382.

**Jewel of the Lawgiver's Authority (Manse 2):** Page 106.

**Jewel of Swift Comprehension (Manse 2):** Page 86.

**Stone of Glyph Sense (Manse 2):** As the Jewel of Fire Sense (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 92), but senses writing instead of fire.

**The Calligrapher's Inkstone (Manse 3):** As the Jewel of the Master's Hand (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 90), but its primary bonus is to Craft (Air) instead of Craft (Earth). Anything crafted with the aid of this hearthstone must include some form of writing or symbology in order to receive the bonus.

**The Death-Speech Gemstone (Manse 3):** As per *Exalted*, page 384.

**Gemstone of the Brother's Bond (Manse 3):** Page 90. The names of all members of the brotherhood appear in tiny characters at the heart of the stone.

**Gemstone of Spoken Language (Manse 3):** As per *Oadenol's Codex*, page 87.

**Jewel of Whispers (Manse 3):** Page 87.

**Key of Mastery (Manse 3):** Page 88. Careful examination reveals tiny glyphs and diagrams dancing at the heart of the gem. The nature of the spell can be discerned from these symbols on a successful (Perception + Occult) roll; the difficulty is 3 for Terrestrial Circle spells, 4 for Celestial Circle and 5 for Solar Circle.

**Stone of Judgment (Manse 3):** Page 97.

**Sky-Charting Stone (Manse 4):** As the Gem of the Wind's Secrets (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 88), but instead of projecting realistic images, it provides all information in the form of ideograms and symbols.

**Third Hand Orb (Manse 5):** Page 85. Contains symbology as per Key of Mastery above.

## HEARTHSTONES OF HEGRA

**Infernal Storm-Tongue Stone (Manse 1):** As the Godspeaking Trillion (*Oadenol's Codex*, p.85), but it affects demons of weather, wind and sky instead of gods and elementals of air.

**Life-Drain Stone (Manse 1):** Page 101.

**Lullaby Stone (Manse 1):** Page 95.

**Memorial Iron (Manse 1):** Page 92.

**Stone of Earth's Blood (Manse 1):** Page 89.

**Stone of Passion (Manse 1):** Page 93.

**Gemstone of Deep Drink (Manse 2):** Page 99.

**Prism of Focused Passion (Manse 2):** Page 93.

**Road of Passion Stone (Manse 2):** As the Road of Hatred Stone (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 101), but usable for any Intimacy, no matter its emotional tenor. The bearer may reflexively switch the Intimacy to be enhanced by spending 1wp.

**Scintillating Gem of Ally's Embrace (Manse 2):** Page 99.

**Crystal Venom Jewel (Manse 3):** Page 101. Activating the stone is a reflexive action costing 1wp.

**Gem of Desire (Manse 3):** Page 93.

**Gem of Safe Harvest (Manse 3):** Page 90.

**Mad Healer's Jewel (Manse 3):** As the Stone of Healer's Flower (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 88), but only usable when the bearer is intoxicated, drugged or deranged in some fashion. The bearer's altered state of consciousness passes to the recipient of the stone's healing, who may choose to block all of the stone's effects by spending 1wp.

**Dream-Stone (Manse 4):** As per *Exalted*, page 384.

**Gem of Fear's Breath (Manse 4):** As the Terror Projector (*The Manual of Exalted Power—The Alchemicals*, p. 206), but the fumes it produces are bright with iridescent colors.

**Midnight War Crystal (Manse 4):** As per *Lords of Creation*, page 143.

**Stone of Dream Entrance (Manse 4):** Page 103.

**Gem of Sleep (Manse 5):** Page 98.

**Gem of Madness (Manse 5):** Page 104.

## HEARTHSTONES OF ISIDOROS

**Hardened Spirit Gemstone (Manse 1):** Page 89.

**Stone of Earth's Blood (Manse 1):** Page 89.

**Stone of the Emerald Rooster (Manse 1):** Page 99.

**Stone of the Hunt (Manse 1):** Page 99.

**Boar's Eye Stone (Manse 2):** As the Spider's Eye Stone (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 90), but instead allows the bearer to see through the eyes of boars, domestic pigs and other porcine creatures.

**Eye of the First Goat (Manse 2):** Page 89.

**Gemstone of Last Resort (Manse 2):** Page 93.

**Kill-Hand Gem (Manse 2):** Page 89.

**Stubborn Boar Gemstone (Manse 2):** As the Mind-Cleansing Gem (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 96), with this additional effect: a target freed from mental influence by the stone immediately gains an Intimacy of anger toward whoever imposed the mental influence.

**The Freedom Stone (Manse 3):** As per *Exalted*, page 383.

**Gem of Elemental Travel (Manse 3):** Page 87.

**Guardian Gem (Manse 3):** Page 105.

**Stone of Resilient Bamboo (Manse 3):** Page 100.





**Stone of the Sure Path (Manse 3):** Page 100. Isidoros cannot abide stealth, and so the bearer always leaves a trail while this stone's ability is in use.

**Stone of Valor (Manse 3):** As the Stone of Temperance (Oadenol's Codex, p. 90), but for Valor instead of Temperance.

**Gem of Adamant Skin (Manse 4):** As per *Exalted*, page 382.

**Flaw-Transcending Amethyst (Manse 4):** As per *The Broken-Winged Crane*, page 7.

**Seven Leaping Dragons Stone (Manse 4):** As per *Exalted*, page 384.

**Unconquerable Silence Gemstone (Manse 4):** As per *The Broken-Winged Crane*, page 4.

**Ember-Steed Jewel (Manse 5):** As the Firebird Gem (Oadenol's Codex, p. 94), but the bearer becomes a fiery horse that flies without wings. *Demon-Bound: Ferand*.

## HEARTHSTONES OF KIMBERY

**Crystal of Seawalking (Manse 1):** Page 95.

**Gem of Dignity (Manse 1):** Page 88.

**Gem of the Noble Brook (Manse 1):** Page 95.

**Memory Stone (Manse 1):** Page 85. Memories associated with suffering, ugliness and shame are especially distinct, as are memories of events that transpired within Kimbery's waters or upon her shores.

**Stone of Earth's Blood (Manse 1):** Page 89.

**Gem of Tears to Poison (Manse 2):** Page 96.

**Gemstone of Deep Drink (Manse 2):** Page 99.

**Jewel of the Graceful Courtier (Manse 2):** Page 103.

**Scintillating Gem of Ally's Embrace (Manse 2):** Page 99.

**Sphere of Courtesans' Constellation (Manse 2):** Page 106.

**Adder's Eye (Manse 3):** Page 99.

**Bitter Revelation Stone (Manse 3):** As per *The Broken-Winged Crane*, page 5.

**Bloodstone (Manse 3):** Page 96.

**Crystal Venom Jewel (Manse 3):** Page 101. Activating the stone is a reflexive action costing 1wp.

**Discord Stone (Manse 3):** Page 93.

**Gem of the Burning House (Manse 3):** Page 94.

**Gem of Elemental Travel (Manse 3):** Page 86.

**Gem of Forgetting (Manse 3):** Page 87.

**Gem of the Great Mother's Brood (Manse 3):** As the Jewel of Daana'd (Oadenol's Codex, p. 97), but instead of affecting water elementals, it affects demons descended from Kimbery, as well as all demons, behemoths and other entities that are native to Kimbery's waters.

**Gem of the Shining Moon's Glory (Manse 4):** As per *Scroll of Exalts*, page 47.

**Gemstone of Solid Water (Manse 4):** Page 98.

**Stone of Inhuman Beauty (Manse 4):** Page 107.

**Seacalm Gemstone (Manse 4):** As per *Exalted*, page 383.

**Fire-Eating Rock (Manse 5):** Page 95.

**Stone of the Demon Sea (Manse 5):** As the Stone of Aquatic Prowess (Oadenol's Codex, p. 97), but it also functions in acidic environments such as vitriol or Kimbery's waters. The bearer and her possessions are immune to all acids.

## HEARTHSTONES OF MALFEAS

**Ever-Open Eye (Manse 1):** Page 104.

**Gem of Dignity (Manse 1):** Page 88.

**Hardened Spirit Gemstone (Manse 1):** Page 89.

**Road of Hatred Stone (Manse 1):** Page 101.

**Stone of the Emerald Rooster (Manse 1):** Page 99.

**Battle Fire Ruby (Manse 2):** Page 93.

**Gem of Infernal Regeneration (Manse 2):** As the Gem of Perfection (Oadenol's Codex, p. 89), but injuries repaired by the stone leave scars made from hard, yet strangely flexible, black stone and brass. This is a Crippling effect that the hearthstone cannot remove.

**Hell-Tyrant Jewel (Manse 2):** As the Godspeaking Trillion (Oadenol's Codex, p. 85), but it affects all entities native to Malfeas instead.

**Kill-Hand Gem (Manse 2):** Page 89.

**Bloody Knuckle Stone (Manse 3):** As per *Scroll of Exalts*, page 137.

**Gem of Safe Harvest (Manse 3):** Page 90.

**Gemstone of the Black Tower (Manse 3):** As the Gemstone of the White Jade Tree (Oadenol's Codex, p. 90), but the bearer's skin becomes pliable black stone adorned with filigree of shining brass.

**Green Sun Shard (Manse 3):** Fire Dragon's Scale (Oadenol's Codex, p. 93), but the weapon burns instead with a green flame. *Demon-Bound: Ligier*.

**Jewel of the Master's Hand (Manse 3):** As per Oadenol's Codex, p. 90. *Demon-Bound: Ligier*.

**One Will Gem (Manse 3):** As per *Scroll of Exalts*, page 51.

**Stone of Resilient Bamboo (Manse 3):** Page 100.

**Crystal of Legendary Leadership (Manse 3):** Page 107.

**Earth-Commanding Stone (Manse 4):** Page 91. Affected earth and stone turn black; reflective inclusions, such as ore and crystals, turn to brass.

**Gem of Adamant Skin (Manse 4):** As per *Exalted*, page 382.

**Hell-Eyed Jewel (Manse 4):** As the Bloody-Eyed Burning Jewel (Oadenol's Codex, p. 94), but the bearer shoots beams of emerald light instead. *Demon-Bound: Ligier*.

**Scarlet Polestar Gem (Manse 4):** As per *The Broken-Winged Crane*, page 4.

**Gem of the Green Spear (Manse 5):** As the Firebird Gem (Oadenol's Codex, p. 94), but the bearer turns into a flying brass spear sheathed in green fire. *Demon-Bound: Gervesin*.

**Gem of Ligier's Light (Manse 5):** As the Gem of Day's Light (*Exalted*, p. 384), but it sheds the emerald light of the Green Sun. *Demon-Bound: Ligier*.

**Jewel of the Brass Forest (Manse 5):** As the Jewel of the Forest Warriors (Oadenol's Codex, p. 106), but trees animated in this way take on a brassy luster.

**Stone of Loyalty (Manse 5):** Page 101.

## HEARTHSTONES OF METAGAOS

**Dragon Willow Agate (Manse 1):** Page 98.

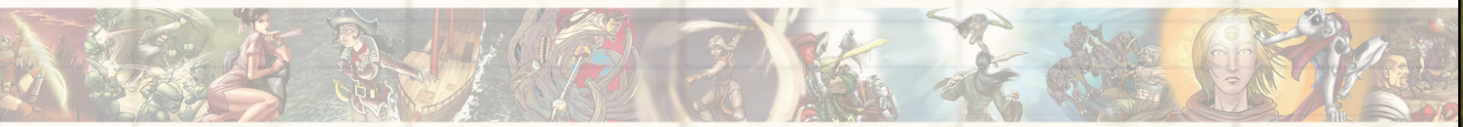
**Gem of Injury Sense (Manse 1):** Page 98.

**Gemstones of Synchronicity (Manse 1):** As per Oadenol's Codex, page 89.

**The Labyrinthine Eye (Manse 1):** Page 95.

**Voice-of-the-Root Stone (Manse 1):** As the Godspeaking Trillion (Oadenol's Codex, p. 85), but instead of wind and weather spirits, it affects wood elementals, plant-demons and gods associated with vegetation.

**Chameleon Stone (Manse 2):** Page 103.



**Flawed Gem (Manse 2):** Page 101. As affected objects decay, their remains are infested by Metagaos' grotesque molds and fungi.

**Gem of Tears to Poison (Manse 2):** Page 96.

**Gemstone of Deep Drink (Manse 2):** Page 99.

**Adder's Eye (Manse 3):** Page 99.

**Bloodstone (Manse 3):** Page 96.

**Gem of Safe Harvest (Manse 3):** Page 90.

**Gemstone of the Brother's Bond (Manse 3):** Page 90.

**Gemstone of the Unwilted Blossom (Manse 3):** As the Gemstone of the White Jade Tree (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 90), but the bearer's skin changes to gnarled gray bark as hard and shiny as ivory.

**Sword-and-Fist Unity Stone (Manse 4):** As per *The Broken-Winged Crane*, page 6.

**Plant-Commanding Stone (Manse 4):** As the Earth-Commanding Stone (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 91), but it affects living vegetable matter instead of earth and stone.

**Song of Life Stone (Manse 4):** Page 100. Plants affected by this stone take on the peculiarly alien shapes and colorless shades of the vegetation that grows in Metagaos.

**Tree-Refuge Stone (Manse 4):** As the Stone of Refuge (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 91), but it allows the bearer to hide, not within earth or stone, but within a tree or other sufficiently large plant.

**Jewel of the Forest Warriors (Manse 5):** Page 100. Forest warriors animated by this stone share the uncanny textures and chiaroscuro tones of the plants of Metagaos.

**Withering Gem (Manse 5):** Page 103.

## HEARTHSTONES OF ORAMUS

**The Labyrinthine Eye (Manse 1):** Page 93, but instead of making the correct direction obvious to the bearer, the stone assures that random methods used to choose a direction, such as flipping a coin, produce the correct result.

**Lullaby Stone (Manse 1):** Page 95.

**Memorial Iron (Manse 1):** Page 92. The stone never shows memories of events as they happened. Instead, the bearer recalls events that never happened, that happened differently, or which have yet to come to pass.

**Stone of Shelter (Manse 1):** Page 99, but requires the use of random techniques (as per *The Labyrinthine Eye*, above).

**Wyld-Speaking Beryl (Manse 1):** As the Godspeaking Trillion (*Oadenol's Codex*, page 85), but it affects raksha, Wyld mutants and demons of Oramus instead of air spirits.

**Gem of Omens (Manse 2):** Page 104.

**Ghostwalker Crystal (Manse 2):** Page 102. This stone does not improve its bearer's stealth. Instead, distractions coincidentally appear in the bearer's wake: animals rustling in the underbrush, breezes blowing away her footprints in the dust, etc.

**Jewel of the Celestial Mandarin (Manse 2):** Page 105. Spirits recognize that the bearer carries a token of the eldest entity in Creation and accord him appropriate respect.

**Jewel of the Rabbit's Sword (Manse 2):** Page 103.

**Discord Stone (Manse 3):** Page 93.

**The Freedom Stone (Manse 3):** As per *Exalted*, page 383.

**Guardian Gem (Manse 3):** Page 105. The beneficial effects of rerolls manifest as astounding luck.

**Jewel of the Nameless Garden (Manse 3):** As the Jewel of the Master's Hand (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 90), but its pri-

mary bonus is to Craft (Wood) instead of Craft (Earth). No two things created or grown with the aid of this hearthstone look exactly alike. *Demon-Bound: Benezet*.

**Seacalm Gemstone (Manse 3):** As per *Exalted*, page 383.

**Dream-Stone (Manse 4):** As per *Exalted*, page 384.

**Stone of Dream Entrance (Manse 4):** Page 103.

**Transgressive Excellence Jewel (Manse 4):** As per *The Broken-Winged Crane*, page 6.

**Gem of Madness (Manse 5):** Page 104.

**Wyld-Sky Jewel (Manse 5):** As the Gem of the Night Sky (*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 103), but the firmament becomes an ever-shifting tableau of Wyld prodigies and celestial impossibilities. The sky shifts randomly between bright and dark; if relevant, flip a coin once per long tick.

## HEARTHSTONES OF QAF

**Gem of Holiness (Manse 1):** Page 104.

**Gem of the Unfailing Path (Manse 1):** As per *The Broken-Winged Crane*, page 5.

**Gem of the Noble Brook (Manse 1):** Page 95.

**Gemstones of Synchronicity (Manse 1):** Page 89.

**The Monkey Stone (Manse 1):** As per *Exalted*, page 383.

**Stone of Shelter (Manse 1):** Page 99. Shelters found by means of this stone are most often caves or other rock formations, and are typically found in high places.

**Gem of Perfection (Manse 2):** Page 89.

**Gem of Youth (Water 2):** Page 96.

**Purifying Mercy Stone (Manse 2):** Page 86.

**Scintillating Gem of Ally's Embrace (Manse 2):** Page 99.

**Stone of the Earthweb (Manse 2):** Page 90.

**Stone of Shelter (Manse 2):** Page 99.

**Gemstone of the Brother's Bond (Manse 3):** Page 90.

**Gemstone of Mental Health (Manse 3):** Page 100.

**Icon of the Stylite (Manse 3):** As the Jewel of the Desert Bodhisattva (*The Broken-Winged Crane*, p. 5), but instead of the indicated methods of converting the bonus dice into successes, they become successes within the landscapes of Qaf and his Third Circle souls, or when creating an Intimacy toward the idea of prayer, mysticism or reverence.

**One Will Gem (Manse 3):** As per *Scroll of Exalts*, page 51.

**Stone of the Sure Path (Manse 3):** Page 100. Unless taking the most direct route, the path will inevitably detour into the mountains.

**Stone of Temperance (Manse 3):** Page 90.

**Stone of Refuge (Manse 4):** Page 91.

**Transgressive Excellence Jewel (Manse 4):** As per *The Broken-Winged Crane*, page 6.

**Unconquerable Silence Gemstone (Manse 4):** As per *The Broken-Winged Crane*, page 4.

**Gem of Immortality (Manse 5):** As per *Exalted*, page 382.

**Home's Hearth (Manse 5):** Page 105. The stone transports characters to the exterior of its manse; they must take the final steps themselves.

**Jewel of the True Self (Manse 5):** As per *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions*, Vol. 1—*The Scavenger Lands*, page 134.



## HEARTHSTONES OF SHE WHO LIVES IN HER NAME

**Gem of the Calm Heart (Manse 1):** As per *Exalted*, page 382.

**Gem of Injury Sense (Manse 1):** Page 98.

**The Labyrinthine Eye (Manse 1):** Page 95.

**Memory Stone (Manse 1):** Page 86. Memories formed after being attuned to this hearthstone have no emotional overtones. This effect fades along with the memories' unusual sharpness once the bearer is no longer attuned.

**Stone of Quick Thought (Manse 1):** Page 86.

**Stone of the Spider's Eye (Manse 1):** Page 86.

**Cold Iron Bauble (Manse 2):** Page 89.

**Gemstone of Surface Thoughts (Manse 2):** As per *Exalted*, page 382.

**Jewel of Swift Comprehension (Manse 2):** Page 86.

**Savant's Icy Eye (Manse 2):** Page 86.

**Stone of Mending Flaws (Manse 2):** Page 99. Repaired items look peculiarly clean and symmetrical.

**Gemstone of Mental Health (Manse 3):** Page 99.

**One Will Gem (Manse 3):** As per *Scroll of Exalts*, page 51.

**Precision of Form Gemstone (Manse 3):** Page 105.

**Sphere of Perfect Balance (Manse 3):** Page 90.

**Stone of Judgment (Manse 3):** Page 97.

**Stone of the Sure Path (Manse 3):** Page 100.

**Bright Eye of the Fire Dragon (Manse 4):** Page 94. Any fire the bearer looks through assumes a perfectly symmetrical shape. Nearby onlookers may discern that they are being scried upon with a (Perception + Occult) roll, difficulty 4.

**Gem of Wise Discernment (Manse 4):** Page 105.

**Iron Soul Stone (Manse 5):** Page 91.

**Scrying Stone (Manse 5):** Page 105.

**Stone of Loyalty (Manse 5):** Page 101.

## HEARTHSTONES OF SZORENY

**Gem of Echoes (Manse 1):** Page 85.

**Gemstones of Synchronicity (Manse 1):** Page 89.

**The Labyrinthine Eye (Manse 1):** Page 95.

**Memorial Iron (Manse 1):** Page 92.

**Memory Stone (Manse 1):** Page 85.

**Narcissist's Stone (Manse 1):** As the *Road of Hatred Stone (Oadenol's Codex, p. 101)*, but instead of *Intimacies of hatred*, the stone reinforces an *Intimacy* connected to the bearer—a quality, a goal or an ideal that she possesses, or simply an *Intimacy* to herself.

**Chameleon Stone (Manse 2):** Page 103.

**Jewel of the Graceful Courtier (Manse 2):** Page 103.

**Opal of the Hunted (Manse 2):** Page 99.

**The Sentinel's Stone (Manse 2):** Page 93.

**Salt Gem of the Spirit's Eye (Manse 2):** As per *Scroll of Exalts*, page 111.

**Stone of Recognition (Manse 2):** Page 96.

**Gem of Forgetting (Manse 3):** Page 87.

**Gemstone of Mental Health (Manse 3):** Page 99.

**Stone of Gender Transformation (Manse 3):** Page 97.

**Stone of Temperance (Manse 3):** Page 90.

**Gem of Masks (Manse 4):** Page 98.

**Gemstone of the Mirror's Eye (Manse 4):** As the *Bright Eye of the Fire Dragon (Oadenol's Codex, p. 94)*, but the bearer sees through mirrors instead of fires.

**Stone of Mirror Refuge (Manse 4):** As the *Stone of Refuge (Oadenol's Codex, p. 91)*, but instead of *melding* with the earth, the bearer enters a mirror large enough to fit her body into. Unlike the *Stone of Refuge*, the bearer can see out of the mirror while *melded*. *Demon-Bound: Kagami*.

**Jewel of the Forest Warriors (Manse 5):** Page 100. Forest warriors animated by this stone take on a silvery sheen. Their leaves glitter, their bark bears the dark stains of tarnish and their sap shines like quicksilver.

**Scrying Stone (Manse 5):** Page 105.





Oliver Sutton



## CHAPTER TWELVE

# THE NAMELESS LAIR

## OF MA-HA-SUCHI

### THE NAMELESS LAIR OF MA-HA-SUCHI

The Queen of Fangs is not the only Chosen of Luna to reclaim an ancient place in the Eastern woodlands. She is also not the only maniac to turn such a place into a personal heart of darkness.

Before the Usurpation, the domain of the Lunar elder Ma-Ha-Suchi had a name: the Salon Provocative. Located near what is now the city of Greyfalls, the Salon became one of the cultural icons in the final centuries of the Old Realm. Everyone who was anyone coveted an invitation to one of the gala balls, art exhibits and music festivals held at the ultra-fashionable retreat of the Wolf with the Red Roses, one of Creation's most celebrated bon vivants. Ma-Ha-Suchi gradually expanded the Salon from a 50-room manse into a complete cultural center with its own symphony hall, outdoor amphitheater and a three-story museum to display the Lunar's extensive art collection, including many great works he had crafted himself.

That was long, long ago: before the Usurpation, before the Lunar Exile, before centuries in the Wyld twisted Ma-Ha-Suchi

so he grew horns and cloven hooves and learned to despise his reflection. After the Great Contagion, the Wolf with the Red Roses emerged from the Wyld as a twisted monstrosity, as close as any Lunar elder came to becoming a chimera without being put down by his peers. At the time, they thought his mind was still sound.

When Ma-Ha-Suchi returned to the Salon Provocative, he found his home surprisingly intact... except his treasury of art was relabeled as Dragon-Blooded work. His first act was to smash every mirror on the grounds. Then he burned every work of art, smashed every musical instrument and defaced everything that reminded him of the decadent artiste and socialite he had been. A hatred of the civilization that once adored him consumed Ma-Ha-Suchi, and it blossomed into a hatred of civilization in every form.

History has all but forgotten the Salon Provocative, and Ma-Ha-Suchi has no wish to revive it. Even mentioning his lair's former name can drive him into a homicidal rage.

After reasserting ownership over the former Salon, Ma-Ha-Suchi set himself to building an army. Several small villages dotted the forest surrounding his domain, as well as a small



Wyld zone less than a day from the lair. The Lunar quickly conquered the villages and forced their peoples into the Wyld to construct a prison camp that he dubbed the Rutting Pens. Once completed, the Rutting Pens lived down to their name.

For months, Ma-Ha-Suchi systematically forced himself on every woman of child-bearing age among the mortal population, stopping only long enough to change his gender so that he could rape some of the more desirable men as a change of pace. In the coming years, the pitiful women of the Rutting Pens bore him dozens of goat-wolf hybrid children. Few of them survived giving birth. Ma-Ha-Suchi himself bore several litters from the seed of the male prisoners. After the initial orgy, the breeding continued more slowly as Ma-Ha-Suchi traveled further afield to find new victims, and the human population fled the grotesque monster that abducted them for a nameless doom.

After decades of intensive (and deliberately degrading) breeding practices, Ma-Ha-Suchi had enough male and female offspring to create a stable beastman line that could breed on its own. The Lunar then could devote himself to more important concerns. Today, Ma-Ha-Suchi lords over a nation of beastmen who combine the traits of goats and wolves with a humanoid form... and a bent towards cannibalism and unrestrained brutality. He also leads a coterie of younger Lunar Exalts won to his allegiance by a powerful charisma undiminished by his Wyld taint, and by a shared hatred of the Dragon-Blooded and their Realm.

Few of his followers realize the true scope of Ma-Ha-Suchi's wrath, however, for the Lunar truly does despise almost everything. He hates civilization in all forms as a distraction from the survival instinct that should be the sole motive for action. He hates the Dragon-Blooded and Sidereals for forcing him into the Wyld where he was so terribly disfigured. He hates the Solars for falling, not just to the Dragon-Blooded, but also to their own appetites. He hates mortals, because he believes none of them could ever love him now the way they did when he was beautiful. He especially hates himself, because he allowed the Wyld to change him when so many of his peers proved resistant. Hatred consumes Ma-Ha-Suchi. If he has his way, it will consume the world as well.

## THE LAIR TODAY

Forest now covers the ruins of much of the former Salon Provocative. The manse at the center of the compound stands four stories tall and contains about 50 rooms. Architecturally, it resembles a flat-roof step pyramid constructed in a style suggestive of the Dragon King structures of distant Rathess, but with elegant stone flourishes and facades. Once, rooms tastefully decorated with expensive furniture and objets d'art lined each step. Today, most of the rooms contain naught but straw for beastmen to sleep on and a few gnawed bones left from their latest victims. Only a few rooms in the manse have been preserved beyond the basic structures needed for the manse to channel Essence.

Ma-Ha-Suchi's throne room was once a grand ball room where the Lunar used to host feasts and formal dances. The only surviving furnishing is the great stone throne that Ma-Ha-Suchi once gallantly offered to visiting Solar dignitaries. Today, only he sits on that throne, and even its enchanted stone does not hold up well to its master's abuse. The stone armrests are riddled with cracks caused when the Lunar, incensed over

## THE DARK MAGIC OF MA-HA-SUCHI

While Ma-Ha-Suchi's puissance is well-known (and feared) throughout the Silver Pact, few Lunars grasp how broad his interests once were. In the early days after his Exaltation, Ma-Ha-Suchi was considered something of a prodigy at magic and was groomed for a place among the Lunar sorcerers of the Crossroads Society. In his youth, however, Ma-Ha-Suchi was simply too much of a dilettante to pursue the study of sorcery with any diligence, and the Crossroads Society cut ties with him.

When he returned to Creation, though, Ma-Ha-Suchi vowed to seize any advantage against his many enemies. One of those enemies is the Deathlord called the Mask of Winters. The Deathlord changed his face and his name, but not the livery of his soldiers or the puissance of his magic. Ma-Ha-Suchi recognized the Mask of Winters as the Solar sorcerer Larquen Quen and remembers him clearly and bitterly. Although Ma-Ha-Suchi's magical resources are quite limited compared to many of his Lunar peers, he initiated himself into both Emerald Circle sorcery and Iron Circle necromancy. The White Bone Emissary spell, invented by Ma-Ha-Suchi a few centuries ago, is now his preferred means of communicating with his allies.

### WHITE BONE EMISSARY (IRON CIRCLE NECROMANCY SPELL)

**Cost:** 10m (or less)

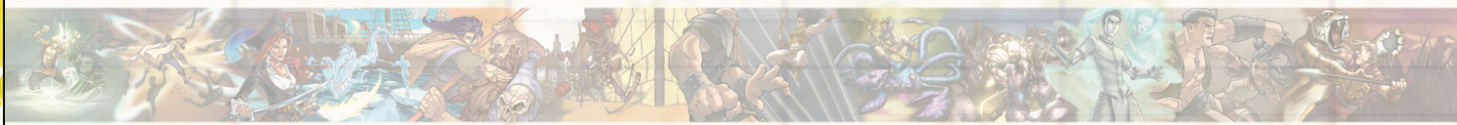
**Target:** One skull

The White Bone Emissary spell is the necromantic analogue to the Infallible Messenger spell of Emerald Circle Sorcery. Instead of summoning a cherub of Essence to deliver the necromancer's message, however, the necromancer speaks his words into the ear-hole of a skull that has been boiled and stripped clean of flesh. When the spell is cast, the skull instantly teleports to the intended recipient of the message and delivers it perfectly in the necromancer's voice before crumbling to dust. The spell can use the skull of any sentient being that had a soul, but the skulls of Essence-users offer a particular advantage. For every point by which the Essence of the skull's previous owner exceeded 1, the Essence cost of the spell is reduced by one mote, to a minimum of one mote.

some slight or failure, grasped them so tightly that they nearly snapped apart. Ma-Ha-Suchi generally uses the throne room when he meets with other Lunars or when he wishes to oversee the ritual execution of intruders, especially Dragon-Blooded. He typically sends captured Realm soldiers to the Rutting Pens, but actual Terrestrial officers he slays outright. Ma-Ha-Suchi has no wish to sully the race he so carefully cultivated with the blood of the Dragons. Instead, he preserves the skulls of Terrestrial Exalts for use in communicating with his allies through the White Bone Emissary spell.

The top floor of the manse holds its Hearthroom, which also serves as the master bedroom. The bedroom still has functional Old Realm furniture, although Ma-Ha-Suchi's regular furies leave it all damaged. (He would have destroyed it long ago, except the manse's magic renders it preternaturally durable.) The only mirror in the entire complex is a massive adamant mirror





## TOPIARY OF TERROR

Each bush grows about 30 feet tall. In combat, the topiary bushes become huge lumbering beasts that try to trample their targets.

**Str/Dex/Sta**    **Per/Int/Wits/Will**    **Health Lvl**

14/3/10

2/1/2/4

-0x3/-1x3/-2x3/-4/1

**Attack (Spd/Acc/Dmg/Rate)**

Trample: 3/5/14L/1

**Dodge DV/Soak**

1/4L/10B

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Integrity 1, Martial Arts 2, Presence 3, Resistance 4.

**Note:** The topiary bushes treat all fire-based attacks as inflicting aggravated damage.

mounted in the ceiling atop Ma-Ha-Suchi's circular bed. It has survived all of the Lunar's rages only because it is an integral part of the manse's power. Ma-Ha-Suchi could cover it—but he wants to wake each morning to the sight of his own deformed appearance, as a constant reminder why his rage burns so hot.

The lair of Ma-Ha-Suchi is a four-dot Lunar manse. The legendary Kal Bax designed it; and like many of Bax's masterpieces, it has endured the ravages of time (and a crazed Lunar) remarkably well. While centuries of abuse scar the manse's furnishings, its internal Essence mechanisms still function. These include Essence lights in every room and fully functioning air-conditioning and water treatment systems. The manse also has an Old Realm plumbing system, although neither Ma-Ha-Suchi nor his children ever bother to use it. The wolf aspect of their natures is invariably dominant: As such, the Lunar and his offspring have an aversion to excreting waste inside their communal lair, even in toilet facilities designed for that very purpose.

The hearthstone of the manse is the Gem of the Shining Moon's Glory. This gives its bearer a +3 dice bonus on all Charisma-related rolls. Once, Ma-Ha-Suchi used this gem to lure resisting beauties into his bed. Today, he uses it to maintain the loyalty of his Lunar and beastmen followers and whip them into bloodthirsty rages.

## PERFORMANCE HALL

On the west side of the manse stands a large domed structure that Ma-Ha-Suchi once used to stage dramatic and musical works. Today, he uses it when he harangues his troops. The auditorium seats 500 with standing room for many more. Its magically-reinforced acoustics ensure that even a baying mob calling for the blood of Ma-Ha-Suchi's enemies can still hear their master clearly when he speaks from the center of the stage. The building still has a functional Essence-lighting system.

A thin layer of moonsilver coats the back of the stage. At the proper gesture from anyone attuned to the manse, this moonsilver screen changes to display whatever the user wishes, most commonly a massive thirty-foot high projection of Ma-Ha-Suchi's face as he speaks. The screen could just as easily provide any one of hundreds of backdrops for plays or display Old Realm dramatic productions—hundreds of crystals bearing such recordings lie scattered through the forest mould nearby, where Ma-Ha-Suchi threw them long ago—but Ma-Ha-Suchi would never sanction the use of his hall for such a frivolous, peaceable purpose.

## BEASTMAN BARRACKS

On the east side of the manse stands a large, three-story rectangular building that once displayed Ma-Ha-Suchi's massive art collection. The Lunar burned and broke the entire collection of priceless antiquities upon returning to the Salon. Today, the museum serves as barracks for several hundred beastmen.

## COURTYARD

South of the manse between the other two buildings is a square stone courtyard about 150 yards on each side. Long ago, Ma-Ha-Suchi staged outdoor festivals and carnivals here for the mortals who lived near the Salon Provocative. At that time, the courtyard featured magical topiary bushes carefully trimmed into the shape of animals and fantastic creatures and then enchanted by one of the Old Realm's greatest Wood Aspects so that they could move about, capering and dancing for the amusement of visitors. The bushes still stand, but they are overgrown today. Their magic still functions, though, and Ma-Ha-Suchi turns the topiary to a darker purposes. At his command, the enchanted shrubs can tear their roots from the ground and stagger after any target of Ma-Ha-Suchi's choosing.

## AMPHITHEATER

North and to the back of the manse is a great stone amphitheater where Ma-Ha-Suchi once staged outdoor concerts and plays. Since his return to the manse, he has used it when speaking before crowds too large to fit into the performance hall. The stone amphitheater is enchanted to resist rain, wind and excess heat and can seat well over 2,000 people. The amphitheater does not have a moonsilver projection screen like the one in the performance hall, but it does have similar acoustic properties.

Recently, the amphitheater was damaged during a battle between Ma-Ha-Suchi and a young but powerful Dawn Caste who opposed the Lunar's recent forays into civilized lands. The Solar killed scores of beastmen, but was overcome by the vastly more experienced Lunar. Surprisingly, Ma-Ha-Suchi spared the Solar's life, either in repayment of some past debt or because he feared the Solar's death might lead his circle-mates to discover the Rutting Pens and the vast army that he builds there.

## THE RUTTING PENS

The bulk of Ma-Ha-Suchi's forces live within the Wyld zone located about five miles northeast of his lair. A fluke of local geomancy caught and preserved a Wyld storm brought by the Fair Folk invasion. The Wyld zone is rough circle with a diameter of about a quarter-mile... from the perspective of anyone in Creation. Once an intruder crosses the threshold of the Wyld zone, she discovers that the Bordermarches at the zone's periphery are about two miles across. After crossing that distance, the intruder enters the Middlemarches that make up the bulk of the Wyld zone, and which encompass about 50 square miles. This is at once impossible, and quite typical for the Wyld.

The Rutting Pens, constructed nearly seven centuries ago to hold the humans who bore the first generation of Ma-Ha-Suchi's beastmen, now cover several dozen acres. They consist of 20-some stone buildings within a large spiked wall. Since Ma-Ha-Suchi's beastmen now propagate themselves, the Lunar no longer stocks them as he once did. Nevertheless, the Pens hold dozens of mortals captured in Ma-Ha-Suchi's raids on the sur-





rounding territories. Thaumaturgy incorporated into the walls prevents Wyld mutation in a massive version of the House of Refuge talisman (see **Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, p. 142; Artifact ••• for the increased area). Ma-Ha-Suchi considers his beastmen to be the ideal form for his followers, and he seeks to prevent further mutations from affecting their lineage.

The Pens occupy the center of a massive encampment of about 30,000 beastmen. The beastmen are not barbarians; they are savages. From the time they are old enough to hold a spear, they train for combat. Ma-Ha-Suchi's "survival of the fittest" dogma permeates every aspect of their society. The Wyld's power to turn people into simplified stories prevents any of them from questioning the beliefs the Lunar imparts to them. Normally, the beastmen feed on the fruit of the organ-vines that Ma-Ha-Suchi shaped from the Wyld: fast-growing plants that grow hot, bloody hearts, livers, kidneys and other viscera instead of squash or gourds.

Ma-Ha-Suchi still regularly breeds with both male and female captives within the Pens and with his beastmen to maintain a strong Half-Caste presence within his forces. He appoints his children to the upper ranks of his armies. When a Lunar from outside his domain seeks to win Ma-Ha-Suchi's favor, part of the initiation into his service is to drink the Heart's Blood of a beastman and then sire or birth at least one child from mortals taken from the Pens. Even the most trusted of Ma-Ha-Suchi's lieutenants, however, are not allowed to learn the true size and nature of the Rutting Pens and the massive force of beastmen that he gathers there.

Captured mortals are only sent to the Rutting Pens if they are healthy and of breeding age (or likely to reach it within a year or so, in the case of children). Any other captured mortals are usually sent to Ma-Ha-Suchi's manse, where he presents them as a feast to beastmen who have somehow earned his favor. The lucky ones are killed before the beastmen begin to devour their flesh. Any beastman who dies or displeases Ma-Ha-Suchi in some way is also eaten. Their chimeric ancestry turns Ma-Ha-Suchi's progeny into deeply confused creatures: The wolf part sees the goat part as prey.

### CONSEQUENCES OF EXPOSURE

The rest of the Silver Pact knows that Ma-Ha-Suchi is a serial rapist and has a nigh-psychotic hatred of civilization. Nevertheless, he fought the invading Fair Folk with great courage and many other Lunars are indebted to him for times when he helped them against their enemies within civilization. The Silver Pact also makes a big deal about letting Lunars run their domains as they will: Let Luna be the judge of her Chosen's behavior.

If other Lunars knew the full extent of Ma-Ha-Suchi's brutality and perversion, given physical form through the Rutting Pens, many of them would decide that the Wyld turned him into a chimera after all—a mad, Wyld-twisted monster whose Exaltation must be freed and purified by the death of its current host. No one in the Pact would defend Ma-Ha-Suchi except his most devoted acolytes and, perhaps, his fellow psychopath Raksi. On the other hand, Ma-Ha-Suchi has other powerful allies too, such as Amoth City-Smiter, god of tumbled ruins. Exposing the Rutting Pens could spark a war that reaches all the way into Heaven.

## SAVAGE HORDE OF MA-HA-SUCHI

**Description:** So far, Ma-Ha-Suchi has sent only raiding parties of a few dozen or a few hundred beastmen against his victims. Once the Lunar decides the time has come for open war, however, he sends out entire legions of beastmen. They lack significant weapons, but there are lots of them and they feel no fear. Their leader is one of Ma-Ha-Suchi's own Half-Caste sons, a hulking brute who knows a number of Lunar Charms and so might be mistaken for Ma-Ha-Suchi himself. Ma-Ha-Suchi can mobilize ten such hordes.

**Commanding Officer:** Second Claw

**Armor Color:** Their own fur.

**Motto:** A mad mix of bleating and howling.

**General Makeup:** 3,000 beastmen armed with clubs, crude spears and their own fangs.

**Overall Quality:** Excellent

**Magnitude:** 8

**Drill:** 1

**Close Combat Attack:** 3 **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** — **Ranged Damage:** —

**Endurance:** 5 **Might:** 0

**Armor:** 1 (-0 mobility)

**Morale:** 5

**Formation:** While the beastmen are temperamentally incapable of conventional drill, their pack and herd instincts enable them to fight in skirmishing formation as long as they have any recognized leader. Heroes can split off fang-sized units that fight in relaxed formation. Each horde has eight such heroes and eight relays trained to relay orders through loud howls. Individually, the wolfmen from pages 282-283 of **Exalted** can represent Ma-Ha-Suchi's beastmen: Just remove the armor and arm them with spears and clubs.

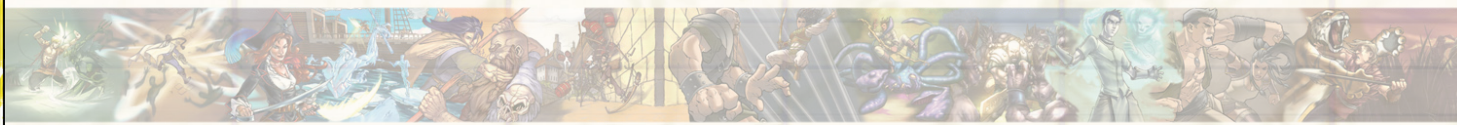
## THE LAND-BORN

Moving further into the East, an explorer can find small territories belonging to the Land-Born. Not precisely spirits nor elementals, definitely not Wyld-spawn nor created by sorcery, the Land-Born are species of sentient tree, intelligent mobile fungi, sapient dragonflies or other strange races and cultures. In a few cases, their societies overlap with human (or near-human) tribes, and yet stay nearly invisible to them. Like humans, the Land-Born have their shamans and occasionally their God-Blooded, but they remain apart from mortal realms.

Some scholars wrongly attribute the Land-Born to Lunar breeding experiments. Sorcerers lie when they claim them as masterworks. The Primordials might have created them as experiments in granting mobility and intelligence to plants and lower animals, but no mortal can say for sure. Perhaps they simply result from the enormous fecundity of the Elemental Pole of Wood: intelligence evolved from challenge and response within the environment itself.

## THE CHAUN

Mortal scholarship incorrectly identifies the chaun as survivors of a village cursed by a forest spirit. In truth they are mobile offspring of tolembi trees, whose sap they use to make their beautiful lacquered boxes and bowls—and also to harden a nail of their off hand into a deadly stabbing weapon.



The chaun look reasonably human, but these brown-skinned pygmies are nothing of the sort. Chaun give birth to seeds for more trees rather than more of their own kind. Instead, the birth-tree of each tribe produces chaun of one of six basic types: warriors, shamans, elders, artisans, children and gardeners. Careful observers may notice that the different members of a tribe all bear a marked resemblance to each other, and that members of the same caste look even more closely alike.

Chaun warriors can appear both male and female, with men wielding spears and women using small bows. When they mate they produce seeds, which a chaun tribe plants at some distance from their home ground (often at great risk to themselves). Once a tree matures, it produces chaun of its own. The new chaun grow in pods hanging from lacy, drippy flowers that exude a toxic gas. Animals who wander too close to such trees fall into a stupor from which they rarely awaken. Humans have some resistance, but tend to avoid the putrid-smelling flowers. The litter of sleeping bodies around the tolembi tree are toxic for many animals including humans, but chaun emerging from their seed pods find them delectable. They seek to duplicate the flavor of their birth food by brewing complex poisons and potent drugs that they shoot into their victims and feed to their guests.

Because the chaun originate from plants despite their appearance, humans do not easily comprehend their society. Chaun do not grow up. A child, once born, remains a child—it exists as part of a system of camouflage that protects the tree by putting the chaun at risk instead of the tree. A warrior remains a warrior, fighting to defend its tree; it is difficult to turn them to any other purpose.

Elders are born into a tribe's leadership, and continue to govern the tribe until they exhaust their average lifespan of 40 years. Chaun elders can negotiate a peace agreement or argue for war mere minutes after their birth, but they can never wield a weapon effectively.

Artisans can brew any of the tribe's known potions or poisons, and can learn to concoct others with expert skill, but not one of them has any idea how to lead the people. Most artisans make baskets and other tools, but some become healers.

Gardeners care for the trees and plant beneficial fungi and allied plants among the roots, but they do not raise food for their fellow chaun; the race hunts, rather than practicing agriculture.

The chaun do not worship any gods, elementals or other spirits. They know such entities exist; they just don't care. Dead chaun become compost and do not leave ghosts.

Chaun do not dance, play music or create art. They have no written language, and their 'language' has more in common with twittering birds than with the speech of mortals. For the most part they do not tell stories or perform ceremonies, though individual trees may learn these arts and pass them on to specific tribes. These are just more camouflage for the tribe.

The birth tree maintains some control over the chaun it spawned. Each chaun usually drinks a concoction of hallucinogenic plants and tree sap several times a year. The tree can infuse the sap with general messages to the tribe, usually no more

than a half-dozen words in human language, such as, "Attack nearby humans," or "Clean mushrooms off my trunk." Chaun elders can also climb into hollows in the tree and suck sap directly from specially drilled holes, or pour message-potions into the heartwood to communicate information to the tree. These message potions can deliver highly complex information equivalent to dozens of pages of images and text. Knowledge imparted to the tree in this way becomes part of the information the tree passes on to its chaun offspring in the next generation—an alchemical formula thus encountered is thus reverse engineered to become part of the pharmacy of the artisans.

Chaun tribes rarely cooperate with each other, unless their trees are at great distances from one another. Since the trees compete with each other for resources when placed too close together, the tolembis often direct their minions against each other in all-out war. Chaun are also universally hostile to other races, but can pretend to make peace for the sake of protecting their birth-tree. If a tolembi tree forged a genuine alliance with other creatures—including other tolembi trees—this would be a vast change for the chaun, possibly altering life throughout the deep Eastern woods.

## THE PINEYS

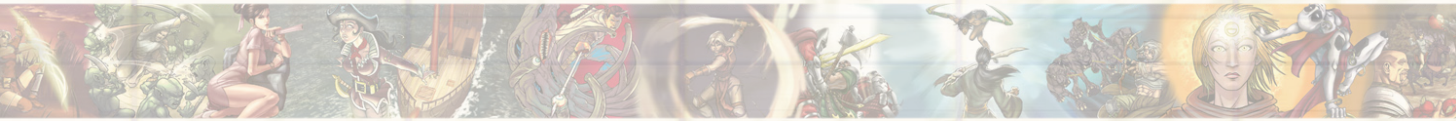
Like the chaun, the pineys are sentient plants. Despite their humanoid shape, they have more in common with conifers than humans. Underneath their coat of long, bristling needles, pineys resemble spider monkeys with spindly arms and legs. They live in the far Northeast, where they find the sunlight adequate and the temperature enjoyable.

Pineys do not have brains in their heads. Instead, they store portions of their intelligence in each needle. A mature piney is as smart as most humans, and knows much of the forest. A smaller piney, or one lately involved in combat, can be quite stupid. Pineys can shoot their needles at attacking enemies, but this quickly reduces their knowledge and mental agility. Though few predators are interested in pineys since they are vegetable and not animal material, large herbivores and parasitic infestations can endanger piney communities.

Piney culture is based on traveling through the forest in search of sunny patches of ground or tree-branch where a troupe may pause for refreshment. Pineys spend about half their time lounging in patches of sunlight while they make tools, weapons, sculptures and ornaments out of deadwood, other plant matter and stones. They are not much interested in trade, but love stories about the outside world and enjoy sharing tales heard from others. Pineys are not great secret-keepers. They love gossip and sharing information, eagerly reporting the doings of others to anyone they encounter that does not attack them. In contrast to the murderous chaun, pineys like everyone and most people like pineys.

In combat, pineys fire their needles like darts or arrows, or use handmade weapons of carved wood. They can be strong and fast, but cannot comprehend military formations or command. Preferring to fight one-on-one, they are often at a disadvantage against organized groups.





## NEW SHOOTS: THE PARROT TRIBE LEAGUE

At the Eastern limit of Creation, the trees grow miles high with trunks hundreds of feet wide. Soil forms in crevices in their bark and branches, to support normal-sized trees and plants. Here the Realm, the Scavenger Lands and the other great nations of the Threshold are almost unknown. Only a few explorers and traders ever reach this far. They find peoples who know nothing of the great struggles that wrack Creation's heartland.

The Parrot Tribes of the far East form a small confederation that protects itself against both Wyld and human incursions. These beastmen look like a fusion of human and bird, with clawed hands on their wing-joints (much like the hawk-people of Metagalapa). The color of their plumage defines their tribe: red, blue, yellow, green and white tribes, with the Rainbow Parrots of multi-colored plumage as a new caste common to the five older tribes. They have a brand-new legend about their origin, that Arilak the Unseen made their ancestors. The current generation is in the process of forgetting that they invented the legend to unify their tribes.

These beastmen live hundreds of miles east of Mahalanka. Their entire domain consists of a single giant brazil-nut tree. They live off fruit and the tree's nuts. Centuries ago, they figured out how to plant fruit-pits, increasing their food supply. Like their parrot ancestors, they live in hollow trees; unlike their avian ancestors, they can hollow out the trees themselves.

In former times, the Parrot Tribes fought each other constantly. Shamans deeply indebted to spirits sought sacrifices with greater and more imaginative desperation, and there was wholesale slaughter among the parrots. At least three tribes died out completely.

Sometime around RY 650—the Parrots themselves have only a vague idea of the passage of years—A Blue Parrot was born to a Red Parrot father and mother. Blue from Red, as the child was called, grew to be a mighty warrior in service to his tribe—the Red Parrots. Perhaps he was not the first, but he was the first allowed to live. Because of his great deeds, and his forcefulness in asserting his lineage, Blue from Red became a model for others. More children of unexpected color followed, and were allowed to live.

Around RY 695, the first Rainbow Parrot appeared, the woman called Peace with Heaven. She set out to end her tribal shamans' obligations to the spirits, largely by assassinating the shamans. She and her successors forged a new relationship with

the spirit world for the Parrot Tribes as a whole. The tribes now worship Gaia as supreme deity, Arilak the Unseen as her child and deputy, and the lesser elemental dragons as emissaries to Creation. In practice, they still deal only with small gods and elementals, but they remind these spirits of their deeply subordinate status in Creation, and make them work for any offerings they receive.

About RY 735, the Parrot Tribes met in council and formed an official confederation. Spirits and small gods blessed the union. Under the terms of the confederacy, children belong to the tribe of their feather color, but also to the sept of their mothers. The children thus form bridges between the various septs and tribes, and improve relationships between the various branches of the confederation. Rainbow Parrots can claim membership in their mother's sept and every tribe for which they have the proper hue. In fact, they've informally become pan-tribal, and so are seen as neutral arbiters.

Formally, each sept within each tribe has its own chief and its own shaman. Each tribe has a paramount chief, and each paramount chief has a number of votes equal to the number of chiefs she leads whenever the confederacy's main council is called. Not all tribes are created equal, though. The Red, Blue and Yellow Parrots each have more than 40 septs, while the Greens and Whites have about 25 and 20, respectively. The complete confederation has a population of 8,000 or so adults. The Rainbow Parrots, while growing in number, still number less than 100 total. Peace with Heaven died many years ago.

To give their confederation a center, the parrot-folk covered the highest branches of their tree in transplanted orchids and flowering vines and declared it the Great Rainbow Tree of Arilak, the visible expression of her unseen presence. Perhaps their reverence roused the small god of the tree to wakefulness; perhaps Arilak heard their prayers. The Great Rainbow Tree, however, is now at once god, temple and territory—not a Forest Walker yet, but give it a few centuries.

The Parrots have no Exalted, God-Blooded or indeed any Essence-wielders of their own; little thamaturgy and no sorcery, supernatural martial arts, First Age artifacts or other potent magic. When they need a small miracle, they must dicker with a spirit. Their shamans slowly negotiate new pacts, no longer offering complete submission. Gaining the upper hand on their former masters, however, enhances the Parrots' new sense of confidence, hope and boundless possibility.

The Confederacy is not all sweetness and light. They are highly territorial. Outsiders risk death just coming near the borders of Parrot territory, as these beastmen attack with poi-

### The Parrot Tribe League, a Magnitude 2 Dominion

**Military:** 2    **Government:** 1    **Culture:** 2

**Abilities:** Awareness 1, Bureaucracy 1, Craft 2, Occult 2 (Supernatural Etiquette +1), Performance 1, Presence 2 (Religious Conversions +1), Stealth 1, War 1

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 2, Temperance 3, Valor 2

**Virtue Flaw:** Compassion                      **Current Limit:** 4

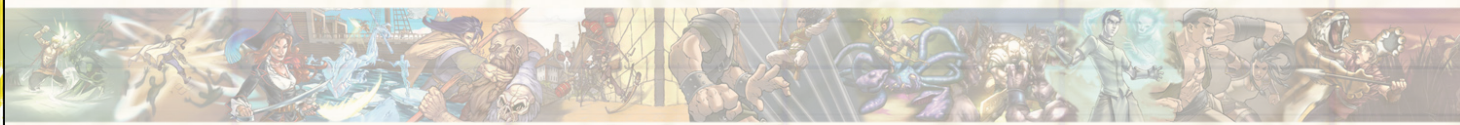
**Willpower:** 6

**Bonus Points:** 10

**External Bonus Points:** 0

**Notes:** The Parrot Tribe League spends bonus points on its second dot of Presence and the Occult and Presence Specialties, leaving four bonus points unspent. These represent raw social potential for a society that is still inventing itself. The League has no significant connections with any outside culture, so it does not yet have external bonus points.

The League's Virtue Flaw is Vindictive Fragmentation. In limit break, the League shatters back into tribes that attack each other to settle old scores. The Rainbow Parrots take the worst of it, since they have no clear allegiance among the tribes.



soned darts. If any intruder survives the attack but is incapacitated, the parrot-folk sacrifice him to the Great Rainbow Tree. So far, however, the only outsiders they've ever met are other tribes at the fringe of Creation.

## PARROT TRIBE MILITIA

**Description:** This represents a parrot-folk village mobilized for war against intruders. They begin fights by raining darts (treat as knives) down on their enemies, taking advantage of their ability to fly. The darts are, of course, poisoned. Only if the enemy seems significantly weakened do the warriors close to attack hand-to-hand.

**Commanding Officer:** Chief Frawk

**Armor Color:** None but their own plumage

**Motto:** "Protect the nests, protect the tree!"

**General Makeup:** 50-some parrot-folk with darts and equal proportions of short spears, clubs and stone axes.

**Overall Quality:** Fair

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 1

**Close Combat Attack:** 2 **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 2 **Ranged Damage:** 1

**Endurance:** 3 **Might:** 1

**Armor:** 0 (-0 mobility penalty)

**Morale:** 2

**Formation:** Parrot warriors never come closer than skirmish- ing formation, since they need room to fly. That ability to fly over, around and possibly under opponents, coupled with their poisoned darts, accounts for their Might relative to ground- bound combatants. The chief of the tribal village has two sub- chiefs as heroes who can take command or split off fangs of warriors.

## STRANGE EASTERN FOLK

### CHAUN WARRIORS

Chaun are slender but muscular, standing between three and four feet high. Their skin is a dark chestnut color. Chaun keep their hair dyed and spiked in a wide range of colors. Each has a long nail on the off hand, stiffened so it can strike like a stiletto, and feet almost bark-like in their calluses. Chaun warriors fight in much the same way as normal Eastern barbarian tribes, but tend to make extremely frequent use of poison.

**Motivation:** Protect and feed the parent tree.

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 1, Temperance 1, Valor 3

**Abilities:** Archery 4\*, Athletics 3 (Jump +3), Awareness 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 1, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 2 (Javelin +1)\*, Resistance 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1 (Forest +2), Thrown 2 (Javelin +1)\*

**Join Battle:** 6

**Attacks:**

*Punch:* Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Defense 7, Rate 3

*Kick:* Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Defense 4, Rate 2

*Clinch:* Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Defense —, Rate 1

*Nail:* Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 1L\*, Defense 4, Rate 3

*Javelin (Melee):* Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 5L\*, Defense 7, Rate 2

*Javelin (Thrown):* Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 5L\*, Range 20, Rate 2

*Self Bow:* Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 4L\*\*, Range 150, Rate 2

\* Plus poison: treat as Arrow Frog Venom (**Exalted**, p. 131).

\*\* Broadhead arrows plus Arrow Frog Venom.

**Soak:** 1L/3B

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 3 **Willpower:** 4

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Female Chaun possess Archery using self bows and broadhead arrows. Male Chaun possess Melee and Thrown and use javelins. Both poison their weapons and nails with a variety of toxins, all equal to Arrow Frog Venom (**Exalted**, p. 131).

Tribal elders defend themselves with Death Sap, and occasionally bestow a single dose to accomplished warriors. It has the following stats: Damage 10L, Toxicity 4, Tolerance —/—, Penalty -4.

Chaun are not represented using Wyld mutations because despite their appearance, they are not even remotely human.

### PARROTMEN

Parrot beastmen dwell far in the East. In most ways, their warriors resemble fighters from the region's human tribes, even to fighting perched in tree branches. While parrotmen can fly, they do not fly well or for long distances. The parrot tribes tend to rain down poisoned knives or darts from above until the target collapses.

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 3

**Abilities:** Athletics 2 (Flight +1), Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 1, Martial Arts 2, Melee 2 (Knife +1), Presence 1, Resistance 2, Stealth 1 (Arboreal +1), Socialize 1, Survival 2 (Arboreal +1), Thrown 2, War 1

Wyld Mutations: Poxes: Claws, Feathers, Tail; Blights: Glider

**Join Battle:** 4

**Attacks:**

*Punch:* Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2L, Defense 7, Rate 3

*Kick:* Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5L, Defense 4, Rate 2

*Clinch:* Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Defense -, Rate 1

*Knife:* Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 4L\*, Defense 6, Rate 3

*Knife (Thrown):* Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 4L\*, Range 15, Rate 3

\* Plus poison: treat as Coral Snake Venom (**Exalted**, p. 131).

**Soak:** 3B/0L

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 2 **Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** 1

### PINEYS

The strange land-born pineys are not usually offensive, but kill without hesitation to protect their families. Pineys have an acute weakness to fire, and avoid it at all costs. Only piney families coordinate their actions well. Tribes fight as families or individuals, eschewing large-scale tactics and coordination.



A piney superficially resembles a human covered in a dense layer of pine needles. Actually, their bodies are mostly needles, with stick-thin limbs and a monkey-like head with large, dark eyes.

**Motivation:** Few pineys desire more than to survive, propagate and enjoy hearing and telling about interesting events in their forest.

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 2, Temperance 3, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Archery 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Craft (Wood) 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 1, Linguistics (Native: Piney; Others: Forest-Tongue) 1, Martial Arts 3, Melee 3, Performance 2, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Stealth 3, Socialize 2, Survival 1 (Forest +2), Thrown 1 (Needles +2)

**Join Battle:** 5

**Attacks:**

*Punch:* Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 4B, Defense 8, Rate 3

*Kick:* Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 7B, Defense 5, Rate 2

*Clinch:* Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Defense —, Rate 1

*Chopping Sword:* Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 9L/2, Defense 5, Rate 2

*Needle:* Speed 4, Accuracy 6, Damage 5L, Range 15, Rate 3

*Long Bow:* Speed 6 Accuracy 6, Damage 6L\*, Range 200, Rate 3

\* Uses broadhead arrows.

**Special Abilities:**

*Losing Their Minds*—Pineys can throw handfuls of their needles like, what else, throwing needles. Every three needle attacks made during a single scene, however, reduces one of the piney's Mental Attributes by 1, starting with the highest Attributes. These dots return at a rate of one dot per day if the piney rests properly.

*Merging*—Several bonded pineys (a couple and their children) may join together to form a single larger, smarter one. This requires physical contact, a miscellaneous action and one Willpower from each piney who wishes to join. For every piney that is added on, the largest piney (typically the adult male) gains a -1 Health Level, as well as one dot each of Strength, Stamina, Perception, Intelligence and Wits. As many as 10 pineys can bond in this way, but bonuses cap out at +5. Damage done to the giant piney is done to all of the pineys within. This giant piney may hang together for a full scene before participants must spend another Willpower point to prevent separation.

*Spiny Surface*—Anyone striking or grappling a piney without adequate protection (sturdy boots or gloves, for instance) suffers one die of lethal damage.

**Soak:** 6L/10B

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 4 **Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** 2

**Other Notes:** Pineys are vulnerable to fire. They have only half of their normal soak against such attacks. Additionally, if a piney touches fire her player must roll (Wits + Resistance), difficulty 1-5 based on size and heat, or go up like a bonfire. The burning piney suffers environmental damage until the fire can be quenched. Putting out a flaming piney requires a whole lot of water and by that time, it's usually too late.

## TREE-DWELLING WARRIORS

There are innumerable tree-dwelling tribes in the deep East. Though such tribes are diverse, these stats can represent a common human warrior from one of these tribes. Unlike Haktan guards, these warriors exhibit virtually no group coordination, but can show great cunning individually. They are usually poorly equipped, except for their poisons.

**Motivation:** Varies, but usually focus on survival, protecting their family and community, or gaining status. Like all humans, however, exceptional individuals tend to possess exceptional and individual motivations.

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 3

**Abilities:** Athletics 2 (Arboreal +1), Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Martial Arts 2, Melee 2 (Sword-Club +1), Presence 1, Resistance 2, Stealth 1 (Arboreal +1), Survival 2 (Arboreal +1), Thrown 2 (Blowgun +1)

**Join Battle:** 4

**Attacks:**

*Punch:* Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Defense 7, Rate 3

*Kick:* Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Defense 4, Rate 2

*Clinch:* Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Defense —, Rate 1

*Blowgun Dart:* Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 1L\*, Range 20, Rate 2

\* Plus poison: Arrow Frog Venom (**Exalted**, p. 131).

*Sword-Club:* Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 5L/B, Defense 5, Rate 2

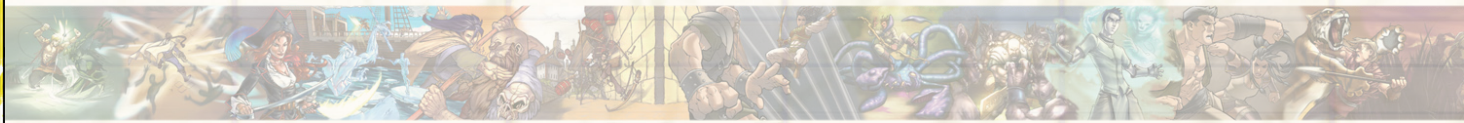
**Soak:** 0L/3B

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 2 **Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** These warriors poison their darts; other poisons are possible besides arrow frog venom. See **Scroll of Kings**, p. 131 and p. 136 for descriptions and rules for blowguns and the sword-club (a truncheon lined with razor-sharp flint or obsidian shards).



# CHAPTER THIRTEEN THE DAYSTAR

## BIRTH OF THE DAYSTAR

Savants and priests often speak interchangeably of the Unconquered Sun and the Daystar, attributing everything from the sun's movement to its matchless brilliance to Ignis Divine. They do this because they must; the Sun and his dominion—the Daystar—more than any other god, extend from one another, two parts of a whole. Similarly, it becomes impossible to speak of the birth of the Daystar without also talking about the creation of the Unconquered Sun.

The Daystar came about as a fact of Our Guarding Star's birth, for they were an effort by the Holy Tyrant to create the perfect being. More specifically, their creation was a gambit by the Ultimate Darkness to create a light, perfect and infinite, that would expand his darkness infinitely and make him real. Where most domains precede the spirit that represents them, Ignis Divine and the Daystar were forged in tandem; god and sun were engineered, planned, and constructed parallel and concurrent to one another.

In the earliest days of existence, a green sun shed its stunted emerald glow over all things. Such was the hubris of the

Primordial King that his aspect presided over all his brethren had wrought, as a sign to them of his unending reign. Casting no shadows, its viridian light also prevented the Shadow of All Things from passing into existence. This displeased the Ultimate Darkness, who quickly formulated a plot by which he would gain this advantage.

When the time was right, he came to the Primordial King in a whisper, skillfully pointing out Creation's near-completion and honoring the Holy Tyrant as its commissioner, for by his will the universe had been constructed. But then the All-Shadow preyed upon his pride, feigning pity and shame that his king could not also be seen as one of Creation's major architects, for the work of casting the universe had all but finished without his touch. At this the Empyrean Chaos thundered frightfully, but the Shadow of All Things had expected this, and had not risked his ire casually. Rather, he suggested that Creation was not finished—could not be finished—until the Primordial King had laid his crowning touch upon it.

But what should that addition possibly be? Now the Holy Tyrant was listening, his wrath assuaged by intrigue, as the All-Shadow whispered a temptation to sate his avarice. "Your



light is a great one,” said he. “But lowly Creation is not worthy. Move your fire to Yu-Shan and hang another in its place, to stand as proof of your supreme design. Forever.”

The Primordial King saw merit in this counsel, and thus began to lay plans for building the Daystar. Not even the Shadow of All Things could have foreseen how much the Holy Tyrant would take to the task. Where any effort at all would have made the All-Shadow’s plan a success, the Empyrean Chaos worked with a fever that exceeded the Dragon’s wildest dreams. The Primordial King demanded of himself that his contribution to Creation should be the most outstanding, spectacular addition the world would ever see, flooring the contributions of his brothers and sisters and standing as a sign of his genius and invincibility for all eternity.

His contribution would even be practical: an intensity of matchless destructive force and devouring flame, but one which would warm and nourish Creation and protect it. That above all excited the Holy Tyrant, for none would see it coming. He would have to reach outside of himself to build it, and in defying his nature, prove his superiority over the other Primordials once more, for he would have done the impossible.

For this he enlisted the Divine Ignition, Cytherea, whose imbuing and purifying Essence provided Gaia’s own with the substance it needed to produce Creation. He also enlisted Autochthon, in a manner of speaking, by savaging one of his greatest creations and commandeering (or rather, ripping out) a core component. With this the Primordial King went to work, disassembling and reassembling his younger brother’s ‘gift’ to suit his purposes. Then releasing a portion of his purest flame into Cytherea, who rallied to contain it, he set her to work on the ignition of a flame greater than his own.

Cytherea strained to purify the emerald flame again and again, applying all of her forces to this task. When she had refined these fires hotter than even her king could stand them, and they were bright such as only he could dare to stare into the beams, the Holy Tyrant knew that his work was almost complete. With what he had stolen from Autochthon, he had constructed an engine which would devour the Wyld to stoke this new, pure and perfect white flame. His handiwork could not only carry and produce this new flame, but also sustain it with a nigh-endless source of fuel. Plunging his engine into the heart of solar fires, the flames flowed through his invention, consuming it utterly. But that was exactly as he had planned it, for his engine had been designed to merge with the flame, rebuilding itself within the heat of perfect day, galvanized by holy fire to perform its sacred function. It was the birth of a new sun, and the Holy Tyrant dubbed it the Daystar.

But his work was not finished.

The Ultimate Darkness had been harnessing the power to craft gods, so that he might produce his own antithesis and imbue the light of perfect day with the might necessary to form an everlasting darkness. The creation of the Daystar gave him the context he needed to focus on the shape of his non-extant nemesis; to capture his derisive, self-righteous sneer and war-machine magnanimity and make them real. From the depths of his empty, wicked darkness, the Shadow of All Things synthesized his absolute polar opposite: a being of light, justice and hope, to be the spirit of the Daystar. While Ignis Divine yet slept, awaiting the waking-word, the Holy Tyrant saw how he burned bright and never faltered and pronounced, “He will call me father.” And the Ultimate Darkness thought, He will call me master.

How wrong they both were.

## SELECTED LABORS OF THE SUN

...Then the Sun was given, as a babe, to the Sisters of Fate. They carried him to the end of time, faithful Daystar following and wagging its tail. They lay him there alone and set the Daystar in a torch to keep him company, and to draw its attention. When they left, it came—the Wolf That Devours All. It swallowed baby Sun and Daystar, but they shone through fiercely, and as the shadows fled it from within, it was torn inside-out. Then the babe emerged a boy, with his faithful flame well at hand, and the Sisters came to take him home.

Another labor was to test his heart.

The Primordials took away his star, his only friend, and made nine others. They set all ten in the sky and gave him a bow, telling him to strike them down before Creation was burned away. Knowing he would not risk a shot that would kill his friend, the nine suns coerced the Daystar into a game. The suns danced and whirled around one another until they were as a single flame, obscuring the Daystar. So, the young Sol Incarnate loaded his bow with a mighty tree and fired it into the horizon, knowing fetch was the game his star loved best. When it was safely away, he saw the others did not know the game and struck them down, adding their flames to his own.

Yet another would test his virtue.

For this he was delivered Kimberly, who carried him to the end of the world on a barque out of her depths. Holding the Daystar on his head, the Sun rode to the furthest point west, tempted all the way by the Sea That Marched Against The Flame, who hated him and wished for nothing more than to drown his baby star in her waters. Were he to stray from his task, she had the right to sink his ship and squelch his fires forever. But he resisted her seductions and stayed true to his task, setting the sun in the farthest West at the end of the day. When he touched the Daystar to her waters and it was not doused, she screamed. Then he revealed to her the truth: he had completed his task not out of fear of death, but because it was what he said he would do. Once again, he returned home triumphant.

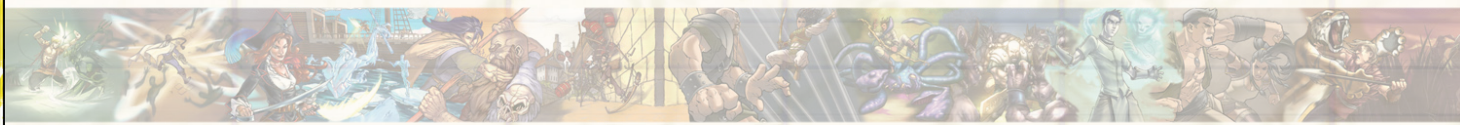
And another would test his mettle.

Carrying the Daystar in a lantern, the young Sol Incarnate stood upon the snout of Isidoros; one hand holding the lantern, two steering his tusks, he drove the Black Boar That Twists the Skies deep into the Faraway, where they did battle with the enemy of the Primordials and together knocked it down.

But it was in one of the last and most dangerous tests that the Sun learned its true purpose.

By some deception, the Shadow of All Things took the Daystar to a cave at the end of the universe, in which horrors and detritus cast away during the birth of Creation had been sealed. With the light of existence thus vanquished, the Ultimate Darkness rejoiced, for only he knew the secret location of the cave. Yet when the Guarding Star returned from that oblivion, bearing a light which shone stronger than before, the All-Shadow felt fear, for in the cave light had been swallowed up in true darkness, but only greater light had emerged.





Yet the Primordial King was not satisfied, for nothing untried could truly be perfect. Now the Ultimate Darkness and the Divine Ignition realized too late that they had been caught in the mania of their king, who never did things by halves. Channeling his epic idea of valiance, the Holy Tyrant devised a series of labors to test the mettle of what they had created. He then proclaimed that for every test the newborn god and sibling star failed, they would be broken down and redesigned, again and again, until they were able to conquer them all. After every successfully completed labor, however, sun and spirit would emerge evolved ever closer toward their ideal forms, whereupon their progenitors would prepare them for the next task, adjusting their designs to ready them for the next phase of evolution.

Pointing out that the Shadow was the Most Vile and Wicked of All Things, the Primordial King enlisted his aid in fixing the labors and making them cruel, so that each trial would be more terrible than the last, and so that the full power of each improved design might be fully realized. Then by the wisdom of Cytherea they set a limit to the number of tests they required of the foundling star. Were he to successfully complete this number of feats, they would indeed have their Sol Incarnate. And so the waking-word was spoken, and Ignis Divine opened his eyes. It was time for him to be tested.

So certain were the Primordials of their creation's eventual failure, that they set themselves against him almost as enemies from the start. Such was their insanity that they conspired to destroy what they had made, conceiving of increasingly more dangerous and nigh-impossible tasks at each interval of the process, until they were effectively competing with themselves. During this time, they both loved and hated what they had wrought. Such was their pride, hubris, and excitement at this game, that with each feat he mastered, they saw themselves succeeding, even as they were simultaneously reduced to scorn and disbelief that he had won! In the end, the Primordials could scarcely believe that their masterwork had been perfect from the very first. So caught up were they in this string of victories that they even extended the Sun's labors by two. Upon seeing him emerge undefeated from the final test, Cytherea claimed that he was truly the Unconquered Sun.

Feeling a strange new sort of pride, the Holy Tyrant hung the Daystar in the sky, and the Shadow of All Things seeped through the cracks in the darkest places, to await his crowning darkness. And thus myth diverges (such as it can, such as is possible in Creation) from history.

## THE SUN, UNCONQUERED

When he made the Daystar, the Primordial King completed one of the most unselfish, heroic acts he had ever attempted. By allowing such a pure, perfect flame to be apart from himself, he thought he was increasing his own majesty, for what he had wrought was greater than all things. When he looked at the Sun, he fancied that he was looking in a mirror. He was wrong, but in pursuit of the epitome of unending greatness, he had set a value of perfection outside of his crushing tyranny, and in a sense, had made it even more brilliant than himself. If he felt that this was a reflection on himself, increasing his invincibility, he would come to be disavowed of that notion when the first Solars struck blows against him. Ironically, he had been tricked into creating a light which gave real power to the Shadow of

All Things. To ensure his decision would not be profaned, the Holy Tyrant then looked upon Ignis Divine, whom his sibling had brought forth to be Sol Incarnate. Infusing him with indomitable will, the King of the Primordials declared that the Unconquered Sun be the unquestioned and absolute commander of the Daystar, answerable directly and exclusively to the Holy Tyrant.

The Daystar and the Unconquered Sun have one of the most unique 'dominion and god' relationships ever established. The Daystar is an attempt to resemble a perfect and limitless form, which allowed for the creation of the Unconquered Sun, who came to represent this and so much more. But their designs are interwoven, so that the Unconquered Sun is not merely a representation of the Daystar; unlike so many other gods, he is the incarnation of his dominion, and in so many ways, it was created to give him form. The Daystar gives the Unconquered Sun a basis to exist, and by existing, the Unconquered Sun excels to an even greater standard, increasing the effect of the Daystar, so that it encompasses more than what it began as. Then, as it expands its ability to represent him, he excels further, and the process is repeated again and again until the quantification is insensate and starts over at the beginning: ultimate perfection. The Sun, Unconquered.

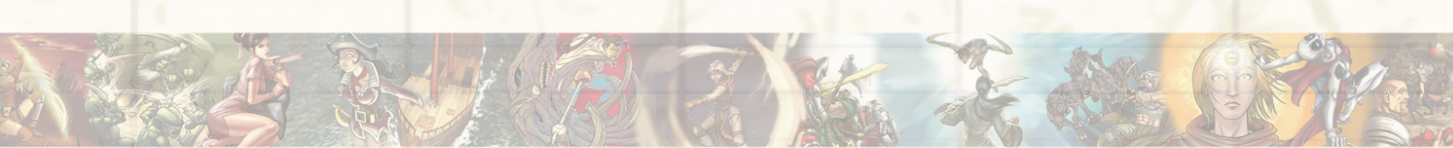
Not only is the Daystar the dominion and source of the Unconquered Sun, but it also is like his familiar; heeding his call, loyal, faithful and true. Like a daiklave, it is the artifact which saw him through the start of his legend and will see him through to its ending. It is the chariot he rides across the sky and the weapon with which he waged war on the enemies of the Primordials and Creation. Together with the Daystar, the Unconquered Sun completed all the labors tasked to him by his creators and was deemed worthy of existence by the Emphyreal Chaos. Our Guarding Star was then given charge over Creation, protecting it from the Wyld and other threats beyond Creation's shores, and when such a need arose, it was the Daystar that accompanied him into the great beyond to fight his maker's wars.

Together with the Daystar, the Unconquered Sun is the greatest force ever in existence, and with it he patrolled the universe, ensuring the safety of all within his charge. Then one day, disenchanted with a reality that could not match his hopes, the Unconquered Sun quit the helm of the Daystar, leaving it to Nysela. No more are its great adventures or voyages into the beyond; it has been decades since its master last walked its halls and centuries since its mighty weapons were armed or used. The Daystar continues its unwavering course across the sky, day after day, a marvel beyond compare, its true power forgotten, its potential scope unguessed, largely beyond the consideration of god and man alike.

## FROM THEN 'TIL NOW

For as closely as the first Exalted worked with the Unconquered Sun, the Chosen have walked the Daystar's halls only rarely. A command meeting was held in its war room in the early days of the Aftershock War, when the peak of Meru was briefly rendered uninhabitable. In the seventh century of the First Age, a small team of Twilight engineers were allowed aboard to synchronize certain of its weapon systems with the Realm Defense Grid. The Unconquered Sun invited the remaining survivors of the Primordial War to a banquet held in





## THE SILENT CANNONS OF THE DAYSTAR

The Dirigible Engine Daystar is the mightiest battlestation ever constructed, putting to shame even the awesome Titan directional fortresses of the Solar Deliberative. Helmed by the Unconquered Sun and his loyal crew of divinities, it was designed to act as a command center and primary weapon for the world's disparate armies, enabling Creation to fight off extinction-level threats up to and including raksha assaults numbering into the billions or even attacks by hostile Primordials from the unknown and unknowable reaches of the deepest Wyld.

And yet, the few sketchy surviving records of the Primordial War, including the oral histories related by its Exalted survivors, make no mention of the sun playing a major role in the War. Why?

The Unconquered Sun stood aboard the Daystar's bridge, peering down at Creation far below, as the first Solar army made its first mass charge against the assembled ranks of the Primordials' loyalist races, led by their most militant souls. He considered striking the Clouds That Rain Teeth from the sky with his Apollyon Cannon, of burning a line through the ranks of the enemy with the Breath of the Sun.

In the end, he did nothing.

First Age savants and historians spent centuries speculating on the reason for the Most High's inaction, and the issue was still unresolved at the turn of the Age. In truth, the Unconquered Sun only deigned to explain his reasoning once. The recipient of his words was a Solar firebrand who had climbed the tumbled bones of the freshly slain Star-Spanning Serpent and snuck aboard the station, intent on commandeering its apocalyptic weapons and decisively turning the tide of the War. The impetuous young woman risked her life, struggling valiantly against the Unconquered Sun to arrest the controls of the Daystar, ultimately falling to his unassailable might. She was not slain. Rather, Ignis Divine took the young Rathesian native aside and asked her to look beyond the bloodshed of tomorrow to the Age that waited beyond. Creation could and would endure without the Primordials, he said, but not without the sun. Bringing the Daystar into the War, he believed, would make it a priority target, and the combined might of the Primordials was potentially capable of ruining the brightest point in the world they had made. Could the sun's flames withstand being smothered by the chill of Hunanura, the Heart-Frost Unending? Likely so. But what if the borders of Creation were closed to the sun's entry by Mabhaddoth, Architect of Locks? Perhaps it could force a path anyway. But what if that path should leave it stranded in the dreams of Oramus, the Dragon Beyond the World?

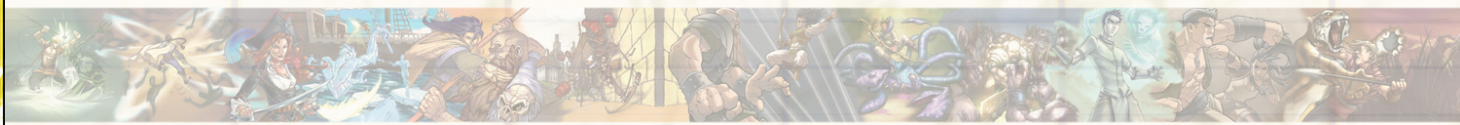
And yet, the Unconquered Sun said, if these were the only dangers of unleashing the Daystar upon the Primordials, he would have done so in a heartbeat. What he rejected most of all was the notion of the Daystar becoming a herald of destruction in the eyes and hearts of Creation's inhabitants. Its guns were designed to be deployed against horrors from without—not to scour the world down to its molten foundations. The Exalted, he explained, would carry the day, and the sun would be a symbol of their benevolent and mighty presence among men. He would not unleash his ultimate flames and transform the sun into a harbinger of dread and a symbol of imminent destruction in all the Ages to follow.

In the end, the young Solar saw reason in his words, and was sent down from the Daystar to rejoin her army, carried aboard the Chirmirajen. This was the first meeting between the Unconquered Sun and Merela, but not the last.

their honor upon the 1,000th anniversary of the defeat of the titans. In total, the Exalted are known to have visited the Daystar only five times since the end of the Primordial War, though it was rumored that Queen Merela made more frequent, clandestine visits to the Chariot of the Most High.

In truth, the Daystar has been generally off limits to the Exalted as a whole. The Solars well knew this was a point not to press with the Unconquered Sun, for the Daystar was beyond the boundaries of their mandate to rule Creation and was the sovereign dominion of Ignis Divine. As such, it has remained out of play for most of recorded history. After the Usurpation, the Sidereals tried to get an injunction from the Bureau of Heaven ordering Nysela to turn over the key to the Daystar to the Bureau of Destiny, citing the dire need for its power in the era to come. Nysela fought this injunction bitterly, and when it became clear that her recriminations would soon bring a response from the Unconquered Sun, the Maidens quietly advised the Sidereals to give up their case.

Nysela has remained the attendant master of the Daystar since then, and she has honored the Unconquered Sun's sanctuary by keeping it out of the hands of the Exalted and interloper spirits who would profane its purpose and misuse its power. However, the Goddess of Righteous Ideals and Heavenly Duty is so busy flying the Daystar that she sometimes has no time to check up on errant gods personally, opting instead to bring them to her on the Daystar using the Chirmirajen, where they might answer for their derelictions. Not so for the Chosen—from the Usurpation up until the breaking of the Jade Prison, not a single Exalt has set foot on the Daystar. But now certain wayward souls amongst the newly-returned Solars have found the solar monorail pulled to a stop in front of them, its doors sliding open in wordless demand that they board and be carried to the Daystar. There Nysela will lecture them about their duty to Creation or even force them to crew the Daystar for the day, an experience which not only gives them an appreciation



for hard work, but also reveals to them the true scope of their potential.

Though it still provides numerous benefits to Creation just by dint of its existence, the Daystar has long ceased to be a direct player in the course of Creation's history. Yet as the Age of Sorrows winds onward, that may very well change. Were you able to board the Daystar and assume its controls, what would history tell of your deeds?

## CHARIOT OF THE MOST HIGH

Each day in Creation begins with the rising of the sun. It peeks up over the edge of the world from the depths of Pure Chaos, sometimes emitting a brief green flash as it passes through the Pole of Wood and into the skies of Creation. The green flash lasts only a few seconds, amounting to the total time it takes to pass through the Pole of Wood. Within the Pole, dawn's early light filters in from all angles, never revealing the true position of the sun except to suggest that it is 'up' relative to the location of the person experiencing it. Occasionally crimson spirals may be found, thousands of miles long, composed of blazing trees and vines in a whorl around a cinder, suggesting the ingress of the Daystar, but this has never been directly witnessed. Such spectacles are brief and quickly subsumed back into the Pole, doing no harm to its integrity. Strong emanations of solar fire from within the Pole of Wood serve to generate particularly brilliant orange and red horizons, as if the eastern skies were in flames.

Banked at daybreak, the sun's flames are steadily turned up and up as it rises through the morning, until the Daystar reaches its zenith directly above the peak of the Imperial Mountain. This incredible display shames the Pole of Fire in its sheer intensity, radiating killing heat miles out into the celestial void. Far below, on the surface of Creation, the sun's light is merely warm, nourishing crops, melting snow, and baking the dry deserts of the South.

As men and women across Creation finish their lunches and return to their labors, so too does the sun continue its course. It departs the Blessed Isle and sails above the endless blue depths of the West, dropping low as evening approaches. Again the mighty orb's flames are banked, so that it does not boil away the ocean and unleash great typhoons of killing steam on an entire Direction; at last, the sun passes back into Pure Chaos through the Pole of Water. Inside the Pole of Water, sundown tends to turn the Pole all the shades of sunset—shimmering golds wavering into luxurious oranges deepening into heart-stopping reds—as the sun appears to sink beneath the waves and rise into the sky simultaneously, until it has fully departed for the Wyld. Sometimes this exit is cause for spectacular displays of color across the entire horizon, as if all the hues of flame were being reflected through the soft and refractive Essence of water that permeates the Western sky. As with sunrise, a rare green flash sometimes occurs just as the sun sinks below the edge of the world.

The miracle of the sun's procession plays out every day, witnessed by all who dwell on the surface of Creation. It is little pondered, save by the most esoteric of savants, and understood even less.

## DIRIGIBLE ENGINE DAYSTAR

The sun flies through Creation's skies throughout the day, making its ageless pilgrimage from East to West. From the ground it seems to be a blazingly incandescent coin, too bright to look directly upon. Were an observer to grow wings and attempt to fly up toward the sun (as some Exalted do, from time to time) he would fly all day and all night, and all day and all night again, and the sun would still seem a distant, burning coin. It is unknown to savants of the Second Age precisely how high in the celestial vault the Daystar rides at its highest point, but surviving records of the Solar Deliberative reveal that a Chariot of the Blazing Sun summoned upon the peak of the Imperial Mountain at the first crack of dawn's light is incapable of reaching the Daystar before it passes from Creation. The trip is daunting indeed, even for the Exalted.

For those with the perseverance or cleverness to actually draw near the sun, the 'coin' swells to become a sphere of incomparable flame. It is difficult to judge the Daystar's precise size in the emptiness of the Celestial Vault, but it is massive by any standards.

This is as close as most intruders will ever come to the Unconquered Sun's most private sanctum; if the Daystar's interior has ever been breached by force, the histories of Heaven and Creation do not record the incident.

For those invited within, the sun's interior contains wonders even stranger than its marvelous outer surface.

## WITHIN THE SUN

The sun is a crucible of blazing Essence winding around a gyre of devastating aspect. A ponderous Primordial engine that eats the Wyld, the Daystar is a trauma in the very fabric of reality, rendering down universal principles in unbound entropic fire and feeding on primal chaos to project an image of ultimate power to the farthest ends of existence. Its surface is a blinding riot of disasters: prominences rising like mountains, solar flares blasting off through the cosmos, and magnetic Essence storms that can swallow entire nations. Beneath its immense surface, massive layers of apocalyptic force grind together in an infinite cataclysm of shinmaic screaming and sunquakes that shatter substance down to composite motes.

As much as it is a reality-stabilizing, life-sustaining nexus from a distance, the sun annihilates whatever passes close to it. Were an intruder to somehow permeate the surface of the sun and not be immediately destroyed—and presuming they could somehow see through to its core—they would bear witness to eruptions of staggering size, torrential waves of gravity and spatial distortion, endless incomparable solar flame, and the construct which is capable of producing such power. Glimmering at its depths, so distant as to be barely visible from the edge of the interior, is a solid shape: the appearance of stable form amongst the raging conflagration that makes up the rest of the interior.

The core of the Daystar, seen through the flames it produces, consists of layer upon layer of interlocked plates, their edges turned outward in jagged points, giving the superstructure the look of a foreboding five-metal star. Hundreds of massive vents spew sunfire from between these jags and spikes, most of which are orichalcum, but some of which have the colors of starmetal and obsidian. Deep, layered chambers alive with molten red and white jade and ringed by adamant hide photovoltaic Essence collectors which aid in moderating and intensifying the





sun's flames. The greater elemental dragon of fire Gardullis is found here, wound around and through the superstructure, his segments locked into place by great shifting plates.

## THE FINAL REDOUBT OF THE UNCONQUERED SUN

The Daystar's core superstructure could best be described as an engine-star, birthing its own tremendous flames and drawing them around itself in an invincible sphere. The core itself has the appearance of five metals, but in reality its physical substance transcended that definition long ago, when it was consumed by and became part of the Primordials' solar flame. Now it exists to perpetuate these same fires, and to keep safe those held within its heart, so that they may perform the labors tasked to them.

### LAY OF THE STATION INDOMITABLE

Inside the Daystar's core is a complex of outstanding size and scope: stunning Primordial artifice pulling double duty as both warship and engine. This massive, sprawling network of hallways, decks, and chambers is properly known as the Station Indomitable. It is the battleship of the Unconquered Sun, the heart of the Daystar, and it is from here that Sol Incarnate rose to embody his eponymous title.

The Dirigible Engine's interior is broken into quarters named after the four Virtues. Listed below are the major features of each quarter; several locations remain unlisted, and the contents of some are known only to the Most High.

The Temperance Quarter contains the Chamber Omnipotent, the Eyrie of the Watchdog's Faith, and the Furnace Emphyrean. The Valor Quarter holds the Cup of Fire, Ward of the Crusader, the workshop of Bannery Bu and the Gates of Halidom. The Compassion Quarter harbors the Light of Day Cathedral, the Shrine of Hours and the Den of Reason. Lastly, the Conviction Quarter maintains Gransol Terminus, the Phyrrium, and the Ward of the Dragon.

These quarters exist across several decks and layers and are connected by lifts, stairwells, bridges and promenades. Monorail depots connect each quarter by way of synaptic Nirvikalpa gateways, greatly reducing the amount of time it takes to traverse the vast engine-warship complex of the solar barque.

### GRANSOL TERMINUS

The paddock for the Chirmirajen, Gransol Terminus is the Daystar's chief landing, where those summoned to the Station Indomitable may stand in judgment. Without authorization it is impossible to proceed further into the Daystar. Because of this, Gransol Terminus is always the first and often the only part of the Daystar a visitor will ever see. What they see is this: a long plaza floor, thousands of interlinking suns swooping toward a grand orichalcum door on which a sunburst emblem has been engraved. Around them, the walls are thick pillars wrapped with depictions of ancient, nameless saints and a-richim soaring through pearl- and gold-colored clouds to do battle with unseen ethereal warriors. Above, the ceiling is a fresco depicting Cytherea, the Dragon's Shadow, and the Emphyrean Chaos watching the sun rise. To the left of the grand orichalcum door is an arch over a stair that leads to suffering, and the word above it in Old Realm means corrupt. There is

also an arch to the right of the orichalcum door. Through it, a stair rises into grandeur, and the word above it in Old Realm means just.

At this point, a visitor who wishes to escape the Daystar must return to the Chirmirajen. It sits behind them in a long tunnel which extends deceptively far in both directions, and opens into the raw uncapped flames of the sun. As for the Chirmirajen itself, when it pulls into this dock, it comes in blazing with an aura of heat. Dozens of nozzles in the ceiling fire jets of freezing elemental Essence over its surface to cool it down, leaving it coated in a thin layer of ice that shatters when the door opens. The tunnel is also ambulatory, capable of detaching from Gransol Terminus and carrying the entire railway to different parts of the Daystar.

But presuming one does not or cannot beat a hasty retreat, there is the grand orichalcum door at far end of the plaza. Through this door awaits Nysela, Charioteer of the Daystar. When she is ready to give audience, the attending character hears the movement of great metal intestines grinding gears and slamming doors. Then there is a burst of steam from bearings in the floor and the whole door pivots like a turntable with the Siege Honaris attached. Inside it is Nysela, the captain-in-trust, who works ceaselessly at the pumps and bellows of the Daystar and has little patience for those who do not live up to their own promise.

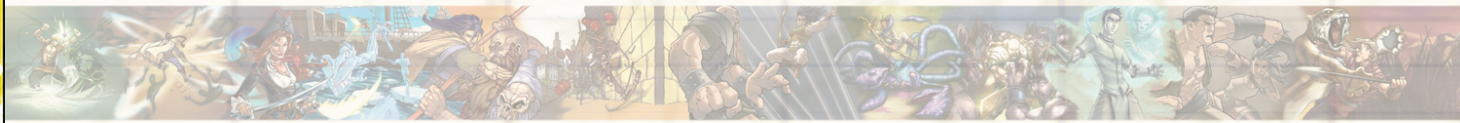
Nysela cares not for affiliation, nor situation. She speaks equally to Abyssal and Infernal Exalted as she does to Solars. In her mind, evil is not an allegiance but an action, and if she has called someone before her, their actions are all she is interested in. Chiefly she wants to know one thing from any of the Exalted who find themselves before her: What will you do in the service of Creation? To this effect, her words are like a drill, cutting through the strata of Yozi propaganda and Neverborn taint to evoke the true purpose of the Chosen standing before her.

### THE CHAMBER OMNIPOTENT: BRIDGE OF THE DAYSTAR

The Daystar is a weaponized force of nature. In addition to the passive blessings and protections it grants to the world below, it may also be flown, harnessed, and aimed at those who would threaten Creation, from within or without. As the aerial battleship of Creation's skies, the Dirigible Engine's bridge is the point from which its cataclysmic weapons may be commanded and its rigid course altered. From this sacred chamber, one could even fly the sun beyond the boundaries of Creation—though it has not undertaken such a sojourn since the First Age.

The first impression of any visitor to the Chamber Omnipotent is one of sheer, overwhelming power. The deck below thrums with the strain of channeling torrents of Essence to and from the bridge's command stations. The air is charged, and seems to carry an electric surge into the lungs with each breath. The sensation is far more intense than standing atop even the most potent of uncapped demesnes. And this is merely the result of standing on the deck.

The bridge is dominated by a curved front wall, formed of a solid sheet of solar Essence. An unblemished vista of raging flames can be faintly made out behind it. With a word and a gesture, the Daystar's commander may summon live views of any point in Creation touched by the light of the sun, or project



archived information on known enemies of the world. The dossiers on Malfeas and the Ebon Dragon are particularly detailed.

Several command stations hug the wall beneath this screen, each responsible for regulating particular elements of the Daystar's flight and controlling a different suite of apocalyptic weaponry. Their surfaces bristle with levers, toggles, buttons and Essence-responsive crystals, all completely unmarked; their long-absent operators were expected to know each function of their station by heart. Now they stand empty, long abandoned by the crew who once sat in support of the Unconquered Sun.

Crewing one of the bridge's command stations is an exhausting task; the consoles are supercharged with solar Essence, which visibly leaps from their levers and dials at a touch, forming tiny pops and sparks between the fingers of an operator and the mechanisms themselves. At first an operator feels limitless power humming beneath their fingertips, but even routine direction of this vast power quickly proves physically demanding, much less the complex orchestra of cosmic destruction that occurs when the Daystar enters battle. Emotionally, the experience of working the control stations is something else altogether, filling the operator with a boundless and positive energy; the final result is that crewing the Daystar feels more like a revelation than a job.

The walls of the Chamber Omnipotent are festooned with display screens, dials, gauges and meters displaying readings from throughout the station, all inevitably within optimal ranges. Bronze tubes permit communication with other decks. The floor is dominated by an enormous mosaic depicting a kneeling warrior with a face like a Western tribal mask, great gnashing teeth, and headless serpents twined about his arms, carrying a set of wind-fire wheels which resemble sun and moon. The lumen Rahu sleeps within the mosaic, ready to leap forth at the first hint of violence upon the bridge.

The rear of the Chamber Omnipotent is festooned with bronze tracks and enormous orichalcum gears, with a great empty tunnel leading back and down into the wall. This is where the Siege Honaris normally rests, the goddess Nysela (see *Glories of the Most High—The Unconquered Sun*, p. 14) seated within, guiding the sun on its daily course across the sky.

## THE SIEGE HONARIS

When the Unconquered Sun held the bridge of the Daystar, he did so from the Siege Honaris. Otherwise known as the command center of the Daystar, the Siege Honaris is a mobile station that carries the Charioteer of the Daystar—now Nysela—through various parts of the station, allowing her to remain at the sun's controls even while attending to other sections of the interior.

The Siege Honaris is an enormous, open-topped dome roughly the size of a yeddim, and normally dominates the rear wall of the Chamber Omnipotent. Its interior is arranged around a pivoting, straight-backed chair. A dizzying spiral of levers, pulleys, command keys, cranks, throttles and receptor crystals surrounds Nysela, tilted slightly inward, eager to be used. A rack curves out above the Charioteer, from which a colony of levers, handles and switches depend. A forest of pedals surrounds the command seat, which can swivel to easily reach them. The Siege Honaris's front is dominated by a massive naval wheel of white jade which seems to burn from within

with a ruddy orange light—the only naturally-occurring white jade ever found at the Pole of Fire.

This constellation of controls is capable of operating most of Daystar's primary systems, and it is here that Nysela spends the majority of each day busily working the cranks and levers that adjust the sun's course. Operating the Siege Honaris was demanding for the Most High, and is doubly so for Nysela—less because she must perform the Unconquered Sun's work with only half as many arms, and more due to the fact that she has been forced to learn through practice the controls that Ignis Divine embodied.

The exterior of the Siege Honaris is almost pure function: Its sides and back are festooned with gears, cables, tracks and clamps, which grant it mobility along a series of rails, chains, and pulleys built into the station. In general, Nysela can reach any point within the superstructure in less than a minute, propelled through metallic darkness amidst a cacophony of clanking gears and rattling chains.

Since its abandonment by its first and most famous captain, the image of Nysela furiously working the levers and cranks of the Siege Honaris has become synonymous with the Daystar. It is no secret to the gossips of Heaven that the controls the Unconquered Sun absented have become partly hers, and marked by her presence. A series of markings along the nose of the Siege Honaris tally the number of behemoths and raksha she has shot down. Decorations hang from the overhead levers, mostly an assortment of talismans and trinkets she has collected from derelict gods and their stunned priests. Legend in Yu-Shan holds that a particular toy roosts on the dash behind Nysela: a bobble-headed doll in the likeness of Chejop Kejak, taken from a Sidereal assassin who escaped after making an attempt on Nysela during a Carnival of Meeting. Nysela has left a standing offer in Yu-Shan for someone to collect the toy from her while she is in the city. No one ever has.

## THE SIEGE PERILOUS

The wheel in the Siege Honaris is an auxiliary backup. The true captain's wheel sits high atop the bridge, affixed to an immense retractable folded-pillar mechanism near the ceiling. It is the most eye-catching object amidst a chamber of wonders: a classic ship's wheel with a sunburst pattern laid across its spokes, forged of orichalcum purified in the core of the sun. The arm extends the wheel down to the Daystar's pilot upon command, and in this mode the sun's command module is known as the Siege Perilous. Making such a request is inadvisable for any save Ignis Divine himself. Any mortal attempting to sit the Siege Perilous would surely be struck dead on the spot. Nysela has only found it necessary to take the wheel twice during her time piloting the Chariot of the Most High. On both occasions it felt like holding onto a lightning bolt, and she was unable to sleep or even rest for a month afterward.

The Unconquered Sun has been known to comment that he finds the feel of the true wheel under his hand relaxing.



## EYRIE OF THE WATCHDOG'S FAITH

When Sun and the Daystar faced the trials of their progenitors, they did so alone. This changed after the Guarding Star was installed as Creation's defender. At the height of its commission, the Dirigible Engine was crewed by many gods, and not all of them worked the stations of the Chamber Omnipotent. The Eyrie of the Watchdog's Faith was a crucial center of information and organization for the crew of the Daystar. It served not only as the security hub of the Station Indomitable, but also as a monitoring station which could detect threats to Creation from within her borders and beyond. The Eyrie also served as the Daystar's war room. Its center is dominated by a round platform around which the Unconquered Sun's closest allies would gather to witness his plans unfolding on a plain of Essence maps and photomotonic displays.

But the Unconquered Sun needed no heads-up displays, no monitoring artifice, no warning systems, and had no need for maps or diagrams. All the awareness contained within the Eyrie was born within the Essence of his senses. However, he recognized that his crew could not see all that he could see or know all that he could know, so it was here that he counseled them on his ideologies and briefed them on future plans of action. It was also here that he bid a number of his crew remain on guard to hone the warning senses of the Daystar and make them their own, preparing them for a time when he would not or could not be there.

The Eyrie is a large octagonal room split into outer and inner wards. On the walls of the outer ward, massive screens thrum and pulse with spectral displays, showing Essence grids overlaying Creation, as well as weather patterns, tectonic activity, and the movements of the Wyld. At a moment's notice they can be ordered to display any image which the Light of Day Cathedral can pick up, and such images can further be broadcast from the Eyrie to the Chamber Omnipotent. This kind of cross-referencing is found throughout all of the Daystar's systems, but nowhere as often as the Eyrie of the Watchdog's Faith, which taps all the sensory systems of the Daystar and further communicates back to key locations across the Station Indomitable.

Eight crew posts are situated around the outer ward, one for each wall. Here characters can borrow the senses of the Daystar by donning a special helm that lowers from each terminal at a command. The stations of the outer ward use scrying mechanics, subaural imaging, Wyld-tracing static, and photosphere resonance assemblers to trace for threats to Creation. They also monitor the interior of the Station Indomitable for threats, by use of sonic pulse detection and foreign-Essence moderators. At the head of the Eyrie sits an iron gong with a map of the Daystar chiseled into it, each room represented by a circle along a number of lines representing hallways. When something is amiss the circles light up with soft Essence and the gong thrums gently at intervals until security has been cleared. When a more serious threat appears it tolls louder, sounding strangely like the bark of a great hound, its glow changing from a soft bluish-white to a livid red. At every toll this candescent display intensifies until the red light crawls the hallways in search of the threat, drawing with it every lumen it passes along the way.

While the outer ward is dedicated to gathering information, the inner ward is where data is processed. A mechanism resembling a large circular stage rises up from a platform at the center

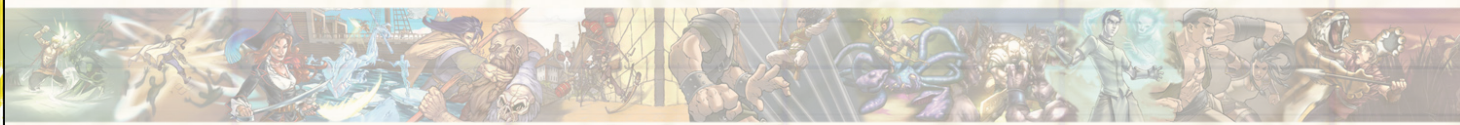
of the room. The mechanism can synch up with the monitoring systems of the Light of Day Cathedral to produce detailed images from Creation, by projecting them from a membrane of solid light across the surface of the stage. When the Daystar detects danger or when someone from the outer ward orders it to visualize something they have detected, images flare into existence above the inner ward like an iconic anima display. The inner ward is also able to further intensify its view to trace the Dragon Lines under Creation, and can use Essence-mapping to locate demesnes, shadowlands, Wyld zones, and hellscape on Creation's surface. It may also establish a link to the Realm Defense Grid, using the Grid's war menses to provide precision data on targets in Creation. The Daystar further enhances the Sword of Creation by way of the Magnus Protocol, which provides the innermost stronghold of the Imperial Mense with coordinates that apply to targets normally outside of the grid, such as just outside Creation or within the Dome of Heaven. Using these coordinates, the Sword of Creation may even bank a shot off the Daystar to increase its range, or to mark targets for the Daystar's guns, increasing their accuracy.

The inner ward was the staging point for many of the Unconquered Sun's most daring and legendary plans. Because of this, he sought to further protect it. With command authorization, a user may cause the inner ward to rise into the air, where an occulted five-metal blast-shield will close over the entire inner ward, sealing it inside. As it is, the sun is an insuperable cosmic force, generating so much Essence that time and space are twisted around it and crushed, making attempts to sorcerously penetrate it with one's senses impossible. This final addition to the inner ward was made in the event of the Daystar being overrun with enemies. When it is enclosed, those within cannot be sensed by any form of magic. This feature was something the Unconquered Sun personally added to the Daystar, and was pivotal to allowing the Incarnae to plot against their Primordial masters during those desperate times when Ligier was aboard the Daystar and a more choice location would have carried even greater risk of discovery.

Inside this occulted vault are six mirror-like curvatures that hang from the ceiling. They are now dark, but long ago they commanded a view of Silver Chair and the Five Maiden Towers across its surface. With his voice alone the Unconquered Sun could summon the other Incarnae, who would appear within these mirrors as surely as if they were within the chamber. Who knows what would suffice to bring these mirrors back into operation—or if the Incarnae would even answer the hail of one who could manage such a feat? In any case, once enclosed, one can safely coordinate information and even commands to the rest of the Daystar. Should Nysela ever be forced to retreat from the Chamber Omnipotent, she will surely close herself up within the central vault of the Eyrie, where she may spoil an invader's plans to control the Chariot of the Most High.

## THE PHYRIUM

It was in this solemn chamber that the crimes of divinities were judged and punished during the Time of Glory, in a court formally known as the Most Exalted Station of Absolute Justice. It was from the Phyrum that the Unconquered Sun named the Shadow of All Things the first creature of darkness. From the Phyrum, the corrupt, wicked, and treacherous were weighed in the balance, and those found guilty were most com-



monly sentenced to burn in the cleansing flames of the sun. From the hallowed pulpit of the Phyrium, the Unconquered Sun dispensed the first true justice his newborn universe had ever known. The rulings and decrees that spilled forth from the Phyrium shook the world, and were a topic of discussion well into the First Age. Even the Maidens would sit, enthralled by the order dictated by their Guarding Star, and watch as he largely wrote and innovated the concept of justice.

Though Ignis Divine wished for his court to be the one source of unremitting justice in a chaotic Creation, there were occasions when he was obligated to punish gods for acts of rebellion against the Primordial hegemony he himself despised. The souls of the Holy Tyrant were often outraged by his leniency in such cases, though their master could rarely stir himself to be concerned with the petty affairs of delinquent gods. For the Unconquered Sun's part, each unjust law he was made to consider and circumvent only hardened his heart against the Primordials, hastening the day of the Divine Rebellion.

The Phyrium continued to serve as the highest court among the divine order even during the Primordial War. While it no longer tried gods for disloyalty to the Primordials, many examples were made of war profiteers, malingerers, and traitors to the revolution. On no less than seven occasions the chamber witnessed the trial of Celestial Exalted, on charges of treason and collusion with the Primordials.

But that was long ago, and this is now. The Most Exalted Station of Divine Justice has not convened to hear a case since the end of the First Age, leaving even the most heinous crimes against the order of Heaven to the fallible discretion of Yu-Shan's magistrates, and the worst of atrocities against Creation to the corrupt censors of the four Directions. Now the Phyrium is simply a vast, empty chamber. The room is high and circular, towering up and up until its ceiling is lost in a web of mazy darkness strung with distant strands of glittering light upon which the Essence of the Maidens once perched, on those occasions when they wished to observe a particularly portentous

trial or judgment. The walls are black volcanic glass, shivered with empty cracks in which streams of molten orichalcum once flowed, flaring higher and brighter as trials progressed. Two high and narrow galleries line the walls flanking the great doors that grant admittance to the Phyrium, and it is at these stations that the Hidden Judges of the Secret Flame once stood vigil over the Court of Absolute Justice. No more. Now the walls are dark and the galleries empty, and no testimony is heard in the Phyrium.

Still, the room was not known for its observers, but for the accused and their judge. As such, it is singularly dominated by the central floor whence testimony was given, and by the high pulpit at which the Unconquered Sun once stood, casting all other features into relative insignificance. The pulpit, set at the back of the chamber, towers a full 20 feet into the air, dressed in orichalcum and bearing a plate marked with the emblem of the Phyrium. That plate bears the legend of the Phyrium and the simple sign of a spear twined with laurel leaves—an emblem that also adorned the Hall of the Deliberative, after the Unconquered Sun acknowledged his Chosen as the Lawgivers.

It is here that the Unconquered Sun stood in judgment of gods and Exalted alike, peering into the hearts of the accused and issuing pardons or condemnation in accordance with what he saw. Below the pulpit is the floor where the accused gave testimony—an empty expanse of invisible force suspending suspected criminals inches above the open, roaring white-orange inferno of the sun. Those innocent of the crimes leveled against them took comfort from this holy fire, finding in it the courage to speak the truth as best they knew it, while the guilty felt all their guile and lies evaporate upon their tongues. At a gesture from the pulpit this barrier could vanish, dropping convicted traitors into the infinite furnace that is the core of the Daystar, where their Essence would be consumed by an unparalleled intensity of heat, light and gravity, transformed into fuel for Creation's defense. Such was the most common judgment handed down against the guilty, though on occasion the Unconquered Sun was given to more poetically just (though no less harsh) sentences.

Overshadowed by the grand architecture and a haunting sense of abandonment, one part of the Phyrium tends to go unnoticed. The ledger, a great, gilded tome, sits in an unobtrusive alcove near the galleries of the Judges. This book is a record of every case the Unconquered Sun ever tried, including criminal charges, verdict and final sentence. Only the Unconquered Sun may cause the book to display such information; for all others, it is simply a list of defendants, including the names of several Exalted and all the Yozis. The final defendant tried by the Unconquered Sun was himself, as the final entry bears his name.

## THE CUP OF FIRE

A riot of color assaults any visitor who enters the Cup of Fire through one of its four doors, announcing not only the magnificent grandeur of the prize that sleeps at the heart of the chamber, but also the terrible danger that awaits any who would seek to abscond with it.

The Cup of Fire is massive, spanning better than 500 yards. It has no ceiling to speak of, nor walls—rather than ending in definite boundaries, the borders of the room instead seem to fade away in a soft haze of golden light, rising to a bright

### HELMING THE OUTER WARD

Those stationed around the outer ward of the Eyrie may find themselves donning the control helmets found at each terminal, in order to make full use of the Daystar's senses. In conjunction with the control consoles, the helm allows the user to send sonic pulses out from the Daystar, which can be used to listen to the underways and passages beneath Creation, to track the movements of the darkbrood or hone in on the sound of a behemoth's heartbeat. Each station also features a number of advanced scrying mechanics which lends the user a number of delicate and intricate options for scanning Creation for important persons or things. Wyld-tracing static systems allow a skillful user to measure and detect any large anomalies in the Wyld, by scanning the Daystar's most distant emanations. Such a practice takes incredible skill and concentration, given the unreliable nature of information coming back from the Wyld, and that the Daystar's Essence dwindles the farther it travels out of Creation, making it harder to read. This particular system also carries a danger to those using it: there is always the chance for those probing the Wyld to have their minds attacked by terrifying intellects lingering within the tides of chaos. Using the Daystar's senses is not without risk.





azure above, which lends the impression of an open sky. Closer examination of these subtle borders reveals a series of tiny interlocking pyramids forged of raw Essence, rising and collapsing with the rhythm of the Unconquered Sun's breath. They are utterly impervious to damage, and their tips are as sharp as the point of a Glorious Solar Saber.

The room is dominated by a gently rising hill topped by an open-roofed shrine composed of four walls of flawless stone. The sides of the hill and the ground surrounding it are carpeted in grass the color of freshly-mined jade among which wild roses grow, their crimson hue shouting out to the eye for attention. The air carries the charge of active Essence, rolling out in waves from the shrine's gates, and the sound of chimes can be heard at some indefinite distance. Four high sets of rose quartz stairs ascend the hill, one on each of its faces, leading to the four open gates of the shrine. The outer walls of the shrine are carved with reliefs depicting fearsome guardians—a coiled azure serpent facing east, a beautiful vermillion swallow facing south, a fearsome white tiger facing west, and a mighty black tortoise facing north.

Within the gates of the shrine the humming waves of Essence intensify into something almost tangible; any active anima banner brought into the field is dragged up toward the ceiling of the chamber in long tattered streamers, carried on the currents of power rising from the center of the shrine. The floor curves down to a central bowl, tiled in polished gold in which the reflections of clouds may be observed to serenely drift, despite the absence of any such things in the faux-sky above. In the corners of the shrine grow four cherry trees, endlessly caressed by a gentle breeze, sighing out their weight of delicate pink petals. In the center of the floral storm stands a torii of crimson starmetal, and beneath it, hanging point-down in the air, is one of the greatest treasures of the Unconquered Sun—the Aidenweiss, Sword of the General Supreme of the Celestial Host. All the majesty of the Cup of Fire is a mere reflection of this weapon's power and glory, and all of the many dangers of the room exist to prevent its hilt from ever feeling the touch of an unworthy hand.

## THE FURNACE EMPYREAN: FORGE OF THE SUN

One of the greatest wonders of the Daystar is hidden away behind two enormous doors of pure red jade, each eight feet high and a yard thick. When closed, the doors display a breathtakingly detailed carving of a tiered ziggurat balancing the sun atop its peak. These doors have no lock, though their sheer weight makes them a challenge to open (left open for more than a minute, they close on their own). Their purpose is not security, but to contain the cacophonous din of the room within.

Behind these doors stands the Furnace Empyrean, a workshop of singular nature and unrivaled power. The main chamber of the Forge of the Sun is defined by a cataclysmic pillar of flame roaring up through a hole in the floor and exiting the chamber through another in the ceiling. By its light, shadows are printed upon the walls of the Forge as though set in ink, and an afterimage of the flames dances in the eyes of visitors for minutes afterward—only an enchantment laid down by the merciful Unconquered Sun prevents the Furnace from permanently blinding those who seek to work at it. This white-orange

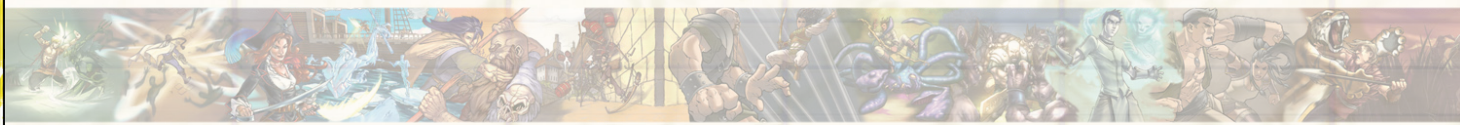
beam is pulled in directly from the heart of the sun, channeled through the Daystar's superstructure to the Forge. Essence accelerators ring the pit in the floor, liberated from Autochthon's workshop millennia ago by the Primordial King, and further enhanced by having had strands of Cytherea's hair woven through them; they not only intensify the heat of the sunfire as it passes through the Forge, but fold raw Wyld energy into the beam as well. This dynamic Essence, pulled from the Daystar's Wyld-consuming engine, is burned out on contact with the Forge, but tempers the unrivaled destructive power of the flame, imbuing it with a creative, generative spark.

In the shadow of the flame stands a massive, ornately-crafted anvil of pure orichalcum, with adoring carved Dragon Kings holding it up from below. A dozen master smiths could work at it in tandem without jostling elbows. Visitors discover the walls of the Forge to be lined with cabinets and tool racks, all apparently empty. If offered up a tithe one mote of Essence, the shelves draw in ambient Wyld energy from the pillar of sunfire to create whatever raw ingredients may be necessary—iron, charcoal, gold, alchemical reagents, and other key components of magical craftsmanship. A number of additional workbenches, kilns and smaller anvils also line the ulterior walls, allowing for crafts to be worked on a smaller scale, or for more ambitious crafters to multitask. The Furnace boasts a low, domed ceiling, decorated with a series of beautifully simple murals depicting various miracles of the Unconquered Sun. While the murals seem at first glance to be ink-work, those working the Forge soon notice that the smoke and steam of their labor collects at the ceiling, scrubbing away the existing murals and replacing them with new works rendered in soot and smoke-stains.

Within the confines of the Forge, visitors who know the Charm Wyld-Shaping Technique may use it to create unique components or the five magic materials. The tool racks work in the same manner—for one mote, the rack will shape any non-artifact tool a craftsman may desire, from masterwork hammers, tongs, and chisels, to the exacting tools of First Age artifice: hyperion keys, valgrind couplers, motonic flow calibrators, elysium locks, legacy braids, and more.

For more large-scale undertakings, the main control apparatus of the Forge fronts a transparent wall looking out into a massive stadium-sized bay. When activated, the chamber beyond this wall comes alive with world-shaking power; massive intersecting columns of sunfire criss-cross through wavy bursts of Wyld energy, birthing and forging breathtaking wonders of titanic size and epic scope. A pair of ports beside the control apparatus allow for more direct control of these processes. When a visitor fits his arms into these, sleeves seal down over his hands and arms all the way down to the elbow, allowing him to control massive orichalcum and starmetal arms within the chamber, which can expertly and effortlessly lift and turn objects weighing hundreds of tons, but are dexterous enough to put calligraphy on objects as small and delicate as a teacup. Touching a number of directional glyphs on the control apparatus may cause the transparent bay wall to magnify parts of the object being crafted, or display an analysis of the process. For more hands-on artisans, the forging process may be halted and the main chamber may be entered by way of a rolling bulkhead. Windblades just inside this barricade allow a crafter to fly across the vast gulf of the chamber to personally inspect his creation. The key to this bulkhead slides out of the side of





the control apparatus and is the only way to open or close the door. Visitors who insist on entering the chamber are urged to keep the key with them at all times, for the incredibly lethal processes of the forging chamber will not activate so long as the barricade door is still open. The interior of the forging chamber, as well as the transparent bay wall, are indestructible in order to resist the cataclysmic reactions that sometimes come of large scale crafting, be they deliberate or the result of failure.

For epic wonders of a smaller scale, the central forge of the Furnace Empyrean is preferable to those crafters who wish to work hands-on and up close with their materials through every step of the process. A second control apparatus beside the central pillar of flame allows for the visitor to raise a mechanism from the floor on either side of the forge, each of which sports a smaller version of the orichalcum and starmetal arms of the forging chamber. For objects that must be immersed into the column for long periods, these arms can prove quite useful, though workers who prefer to use god-forged tools to hold their creations within the very heart's flame of the sun are urged to make full use of the Forge's tool racks.

Aside from availability of materials and tools, the mechanical benefits of crafting at the Furnace Empyrean are fourfold: First, the Forge of the Sun counts as a supernal workshop, granting six dice to all crafting rolls—in all of recorded history, only the

personal workshops of Autochthon himself were its peer. Second, the sun's holy flames hasten all efforts within the forge; materials almost seem to leap together, rushing toward the completion of their designer's dreams and efforts. All crafting times are halved after the use of any Charms or other magics. Third, the act of crafting an artifact within the confines of the Furnace Empyrean itself counts as an exotic component—and for this reason, there are certain world-shaking wonders that may only be crafted at the Forge of the Sun. Most, for that reason, remain purely theoretical exercises. Finally, Solar, Abyssal and Infernal Exalted working at the Forge regain five motes and one point of Willpower at each crafting interval.

The Forge of the Sun remembers every wonder ever crafted within its walls, save those it has been commanded to forget, and an authorized user may call up the schematics for these and an innumerable host of other First Age wonders. These schematics appear as three-dimensional Essence displays on the transparent wall of the forging chamber, but reveal little pertaining to the secrets by which each was forged. In order to replicate such wonders, the Furnace Empyrean always demands a price—something valuable cast into its flames. Users experience this demand as a burst of inexplicable insight and nameless certainty. The more rare or powerful the object of the schematic desired, the higher (and more personal) the Forge's

### THE TRUE FACE OF THE CUP OF FIRE

For all the seeming serenity of the Cup of Fire, the Aidenweiss's shrine is formidably defended. First, touching or being knocked into any of the room's borders automatically inflicts three levels of lethal damage. Second, should any creature of darkness set foot upon the steps or ground of the chamber, all grass within the Cup immediately bursts into flames. This raging inferno inflicts damage as a bonfire. Furthermore, all of the roses amidst the grass explode into a whirling storm of razor-edged petals and screaming thorns, inflicting an entirely separate environmental hazard on everything in the room (Damage 5L/action, trauma 3L).

Those who would claim the Aidenweiss without the Unconquered Sun's permission behold the true face of the Cup of Fire. It is generally the last thing they ever see. The rolling hill, simple shrine, and hazy walls immediately vanish. In their place is a massive vault of flames. The victim stands within a ring of fire at the foot of the Cup; the Aidenweiss hangs above them, a jewel in the eye of a hurricane. The shrine atop the hill dissolves into a cauldron of sunfire; tendrils of lightning extend from its surface to crawl the walls of the room. This miniature sun spans 20 yards around the Aidenweiss, inflicting environmental damage of 30L/action, trauma 5L on any characters attempting to push into it. Gigantic adamant pyramids press in around this sphere of power from all angles, showing a flow of molten orichalcum between their diamond-plated segments and throwing off arcs of burning Essence inflicting five levels of lethal damage per tick to any character whose Dodge DV drops below 7. Brilliant vines of perfect green flame bound the room, sprouting roses made of fire and blood and pulsing with the heartbeat of power. The lightning crawling throughout the room is capable of coursing through the unwary, paralyzing them as they are cooked alive; each action characters must make a reflexive (Dexterity + Athletics) roll, difficulty 5, to avoid contact with any of these crackling

streams. Should a character come into contact with a lightning tendril, they are immediately subjected to a 25-success clinch which inflicts 10L per action until the intruder breaks free or dies. Waves of force ripple out from the Aidenweiss once per tick, inflicting a Blockade Movement action with 15 successes on all characters within the chamber attempting to approach it.

The room breathes; a rain of cherry blossoms flutters down almost in slow motion, covering an area spanning 50 yards from the Aidenweiss. Being touched by so much as a single blossom sets off a general alarm throughout the entire Daystar and causes the floor to exert a massive gravity well as a Shaping effect, slowing an intruder's movement to at most one yard per tick; moving five yards through the storm without touching any blossoms requires a difficulty 15 (Dexterity + Dodge) roll, or the use of a perfect dodge. The Unconquered Sun may cause the trees to cease shedding their endless blossoms for a scene by spending a single mote.

The carvings on the walls of the shrine are the slumbering forms of the lumina Cherulong, Jujak, Bayrakan and Hyonmu. All four are completely immune to the hazards of the chamber, and their awakening is the catalyst for its transformation from serene shrine to cataclysm of flame. Even in their sleep, all four have exceptionally keen senses, applying ten automatic successes to all attempts to detect any character entering the chamber. They automatically awaken should any creature of darkness set foot on the steps of the shrine or the grass of the hill. The guardians also rise from their slumber if a blossom touches the body of any unauthorized visitor or if the Aidenweiss is moved from the center of the shrine by any hand save that of the Unconquered Sun.

A thief who makes off with the Aidenweiss has 25 hours after leaving the Daystar to consider returning the Key of White Fire to the Dirigible Engine before the Gardullis is released.





## FORGE GOODS

Attempting to remove tools or raw materials from the Furnace Empyrean is a fruitless endeavor, as those objects will vanish and return to the Forge's shelves and racks when removed from the premises. Attempting to remove any goods constructed within the Forge, be it raw material generated with Wyld-Shaping Technique or a hand-crafted jade daiklave, will result in the great jade doors of the Forge sealing irreversibly shut until the object in question is committed back to the sun's flames in return for a forge testimony. One who attempts to force these gates to open should soon expect a visitation from one of the Daystar's more powerful residents.

## FORGE TESTIMONIES

Wonders forged within the Furnace Empyrean take the form of forge testimonies, solid Essence tickets which can be redeemed in locations around Creation during certain solar phases. Each testimony is characterized by a different Solar castemark indicating the redeeming phase, along with the location where the item can be claimed. In general, simpler items can be redeemed in any location during any phase—such a ticket will bear all five castemarks. More powerful items may require the character to rip his ticket in a more difficult location. The solar phase can also be used to complicate matters, such as the case of a ticket which requires a testimony be redeemed in Thorns at twilight, at dawn in the stomach of a behemoth, or during a solar eclipse in the ruined Twilight Archdiocese of shattered Meru.

Such difficult requests should not be seen merely as an obstacle to obtaining the item, but rather as a final, vital step in the crafting process, giving the object that last perfect touch which makes it complete. Consider: What power should be born under the same sign which heralded the return of the Solar Exalted?

price is likely to be. This same fee is applied to wholly original wonders an individual wishes to craft, should he be unable to supply all the materials or raw power to complete his invention.

Lastly, all wonders crafted within the Forge of the Sun are immediately consigned to its flames, where they are moved to the safety of Elsewhere. In the place of his handiwork, the visitor is instead given a 'forge testimony,' a ticket made of concentrated Essence, on which a Dawn, Zenith, Twilight, Night, or Eclipse castemark has been printed, along with a description of the item and a delivery point—usually somewhere in Creation. When the visitor arrives at the prescribed location and rips apart his testimony during the corresponding phase, the item appears in a flash of Essence. Furthermore, testimonies that have not been ripped can be returned to the Furnace Empyrean. Doing so guarantees the reappearance of the listed item within the crafting bay, ready for further modifications. Because of the incredible power and speed with which one may craft wonders in the Forge of the Sun, the most powerful artifacts produced are usually redeemable only upon a solar eclipse. Fortunately, there is no expiration date on these vouchers; the attached item will remain in Elsewhere for an eternity—so long as the ticket remains in tact.

For anyone so blessed as to be given the right to ply his craft within the Furnace Empyrean, the experience is vivifying, connecting one so engaged with the forces that forged the universe. On top of any other response they might have to the Forge of the Sun, Solar, Abyssal and Infernal Exalted find the room to be achingly familiar and deeply energizing—it feels almost like returning home after a long absence. This sensation only intensifies should they attempt to directly work the Forge where their Exaltations were crafted.

## THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN

What most visitors think of as the cabin of the Unconquered Sun is a wide office on an upper deck of the Daystar. Both minimalist and grandiose, this office is dominated by a single mammoth desk and backlit by a massive bay window showing out into the molten white brightness of solar flames. Long ago, the Unconquered Sun cut an iconic silhouette against the flames, and his long shadow fell all the way to the door. No more. Desk and window remain, but Sol Incarnate has long vanished.

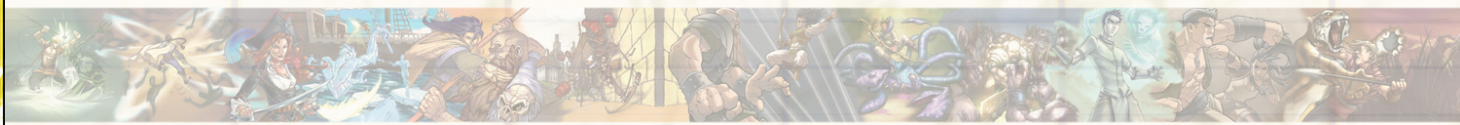
In reality, this room is not the Unconquered Sun's actual quarters, but merely a place of business. His true residence on the Daystar may be found through an inconspicuous door hidden near the absolute core of the Station Indomitable.

## THE DEN OF REASON: TRUE INNER SANCTUM OF THE MOST HIGH

This is the hell that exists at the heart of the sun: a circular chamber lined with screens of solid light. In ages past, the Unconquered Sun meditated upon a dais at its center, while a spectacle played out on the walls—all the woes of the world in a thousand visions of strife. Here the Unconquered Sun watched evil unfold, darkness spreading across the land, and knew that he could not eradicate it, for he knew its source, and was powerless to lift his hand against it. What he could do was refuse to allow it to spoil his heart, but rather strengthen his resolve. What he could do was witness the suffering of mankind, hear their cries for a savior, and search the wreckage of Creation for the appearance of those who could carry his light through the pitch.

This room was not a place of rest, but rather the antithesis of rest. When a threat to Creation would appear, the Unconquered Sun would see it here and rise from his contemplation of wicked shadow to strike evil down. This was the nature of his endless and ultimately futile battle for countless eons. This dramatically changed with the emergence of the Solar Exalted. Where there was sorrow and suffering, someone lit up like a bonfire...and ended it. Wars were fought, Creation was expanded, and the forces of evil were vanquished. Over time the horrors that assailed the Unconquered Sun became scarce, the walls of his room just that: walls.

But now the room is a flood of horrors worse than before. It is a cacophony of screams and mourning, of riots, plague, and war, of tyrant gods and demons unbound, and the forces of chaos spilling forth into Creation to enslave the hearts of men. And atop the dais where the Unconquered Sun once sat now rests the ornate sarcophagus of a murdered Solar queen.



## A TOUR OF THE DAYSTAR

The Daystar's interior is filled with curiosities, more than just those listed here. What follows is a brief look at some of the most notable locales of the Station Indomitable.

### THE SHRINE OF HOURS

A temple said to honor the timelessness of the Unconquered Sun, this chamber sports columns that fly to a domed ceiling of black glass. On the floor is an ornate brass sundial 30 yards across, its surface an elaborate engraving of concentric circles pulled outward from the center by the points of a star, its border framed by serpentine glyphs which indicate different times of day in an old and forgotten language. A primeval face of Ignis Divine stares out from the exact center, his countenance wreathed by a corona of two dozen grasping hands.

Five towering statues of the Maidens surround and look down upon the sundial, noting that it lacks a shadow and tells no time. A mural on the wall depicts the Sisters of Fate leaving the babe Sun alone amongst the stars as the Wolf at the End of Time approaches, its fangs gleaming in the light of galaxies.

In this room: Newly canonized saints amongst the righteous dead gather around the sundial in robes of sackcloth to meditate away their human experiences until they wear their moments like armor. As no new righteous dead have been canonized since the Unconquered Sun turned his face from Creation, this room is typically empty. Visitors who choose to spend time meditating here may find themselves recalling things long forgotten or locked away. For a tithe of one mote, paid by touching the sundial, one may turn these moments of clarity into a crystal which will show the memory within to anyone who holds it. Such memories can form particularly valuable exotic ingredients for artifacts, or form a currency which the Daystar will take in return for the use of certain of its systems. Additionally, these memories may be laid at the feet of the various statues in lieu of a tithe to that particular Maiden. Giving Venus a memory of grief or suffering results in consolation and reconciliation. Giving Mercury a memory of a journey one regrets having never taken results, eventually, in a dream that will show the outcome had they taken it. Gifting Mars with a memory of a battle one has lost also results in a later dream in which a solution is suggested. Giving Jupiter any memory one wishes to seal away results in a temporary forgetting that lasts until they use the Shrine of Hours to get it back. Conversely, any memory tithed to Saturn is destroyed and lost forever.

### WARD OF THE CRUSADER

An enormous bay sporting empty cells for two dozen warstriders, more remarkable than what it lacks is what it boasts. Four Dawning Sun Indomitable-class heavy battlecruisers are docked here, floating serenely in a massive canal 100 fathoms deep. They arrived aboard the Daystar shortly after the Usurpation, when Leviathan met with Nysela at sunset and convinced her to allow him to sail the ships into the sun and hide them for safekeeping.

The floors of the bay have been painted in several elaborate scenes. One mural on the jetty depicts the boy Ignis Divine using the Daystar as a life preserver while caught in the maelstrom of the Mouth That Swallows Reason, while another shows the Unconquered Sun out amongst the Maidens, pointing the Daystar at a dumbstruck Arad the Hunter.

**In this room:** An Exalt who has greatly impressed Nysela with a record of hard labor done in the service of Creation may claim one Dawning Sun Indomitable for himself, but may not take such a prize from the Daystar until he has proven himself capable of piloting such a rare and powerful treasure. Once he has shown his acumen by piloting the ship around the canal, on the next setting of the sun Nysela will open a coronal hole in the side of the Daystar, as well as the far wall of the Ward of the Crusader, bending distance between the core of the Daystar and the surface of the sun and allowing for the Dawning Sun Indomitable to be piloted out onto Creation's oceans once more.

Enterprising heroes may also find it appealing to convince Nysela to let them use the Ward of the Crusader as a staging point where they can hide powerful ships and warstriders. Such a bargain won't be made easily; one who expects to store his weapons in the Ward of the Crusader can equally be expected to use them in service of the Charioteer of the Daystar.

### THE LIGHT OF DAY CATHEDRAL

On the lowest deck of the Daystar sits the Light of Day Cathedral. A black chamber hundreds of yards long, it is the observation deck of the Daystar. The only immediately visible feature of this chamber is a column of soft light illuminating a single catwalk from the entrance, to a crystal clear platform that seems to hang over the abyss. Upon this platform is a curious thing: a gilded stand from which arise 300 small orichalcum pedestals. In a better Age, each pedestal displayed one of the incarnate Solar Exalted, and if repaired, would do so again. The device is currently dim and still, however, with what looks to be a spear-hole in its side.

**In this room:** Aside from this curio is a crystal cube, which can float and is drawn naturally up to a hand that is raised over it. This cube has grooves on its surface that speak through the fingertips to the mind of the user in a language of instinct. With authorization from the Daystar, the visitor may use this cube to manipulate several gigantic lenses in the room, which blaze into existence with a subaural hum as they begin to collect Essence. These lenses can display scenes from anywhere in Creation, and can be conjoined to give a complete view of the world below, as surely as if the sun's bottom were made of glass.

### THE GATES OF HALIDOM

Through a circular hatch engraved with images of circling aurichim lies the Gates of Halidom. One steps through the hatch into a bewildering scenario: the craggy mouth of a cave opening out to blue skies and the light of day; a leaf-blown landing before a gigantic gate of wood, stone, and red jade.

To approach the gates evokes an eerie sensation. The feeling is not ominous or unwelcome, nor is it threatening, but the visitor feels herself getting further away from life and closer to the forces of death. Yet the feeling is not unnatural, nor does it produce a morbid fascination; rather, as strange and foreboding as it seems, it feels hallowed and tranquil, as if to gently convince the wanderer to return to the life she has left behind.

To venture forward reveals further strangeness: a wind that lifts and stirs the variegated leaves into a gently turning whorl of oranges and reds not unlike a pyre. Warmth exudes from this apparition like the attentions of the sun on a summer afternoon, and one can see the vaporous shape of the lumen Garmonada behind the still-cycling leaves, which whirl ever-faster until they seem to dance like flames.





Soon the leaves waltz away with the wind and the presence of Garmonada, and the gates swing open. The God Bridge flies out from this point—a carved-jade bridge over a mile long—rising into the air as it sits like a rainbow in the beams of a curious sun. A massive fortress with a burning roof and blazing spires extends above the precise center of the bridge. Aurichim swarm in the skies around its burning heights, circling, roosting on the coronal baileys, diving in and out of the highest spire windows. This place is the Howling Crucible, the home of the righteous dead.

As one approaches the Crucible's titanic arch, the feeling of ambivalence deepens. The visitor is aware of the Daystar dwindling away at her back and that she has crossed the threshold beyond life. Yet she also knows that her life remains safe so long as she does not attack, for the aurichim hail her and the massive obsidian doors swing wide, bidding her enter and welcome.

Within the Howling Crucible are men and women dressed in their finest garbs. They gather about strange statues, paintings and rugs bearing thousandfold patterns, details within details within details. They converse upon the weather, the state of daylight and the nearness of Calibration. They speak of things like solar flares and parhelia as if they were their kin, and they are eager, most eager, to greet a visitor—shake her hand and feel the presence of Creation once more. Their control is great, however, so they do not ask questions, yet if she were to tell them where she came from, she could have the entire floor silent in a moment. She could, in fact, hold sway over all the Sun's saints.

Within the Howling Crucible are many halls and doors and stairways. Some of these rooms are not for the visitor, though many are. Many are the chambers where the lumina sit in silent contemplation of the truths they see within the sun's flames. Many of them look like giant toys run down, silent, sleeping. For the visitor there is a feast waiting, and perhaps a warm bed. Eventually she will be led to the Court of Noble Truth, where all the righteous dead gather so that they may hold council, listening to the eldest and most charismatic of them set the standards of worship and create the trends for action, deliberating on how best to serve and protect the dominion of the Sun.

**In this room:** It has been long since the righteous dead have seen anyone from Creation, much less an Exalt. To be a Solar Exalted in this place is to evoke something like awe, for even in this place far from life, the Chosen of the Sun are like a legend that never dies. Yet unlike many, the righteous dead never questioned their eventual return, for within the flames of the sun time is but matter of perspective, and theirs has never changed. The righteous dead, the lumina and the glamifores, all have much to say about the Daystar, for they toil and train within its flames, refining themselves over and over until they are perfect for its service. They are a mighty force to be harnessed, yet without the right Charms or sorcery, none may do so. To speak to them of their limitations—that they are bound to the Chariot of the Most High; that their lot is service, meditation and practice—may reveal much. Or it may reveal little, for they know nothing of the workings of the Daystar, and none may crew her stations. Yet when the truth is revealed, the righteous dead will prove to be greater allies than one can imagine.

## WARD OF THE DRAGON

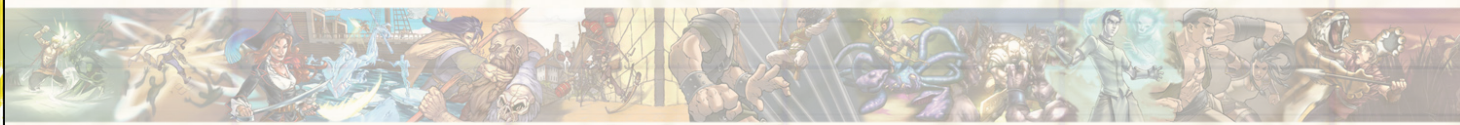
Used at the height of the Phyrum to hold prisoners while they awaited legal processing, the Ward of the Dragon is the gaol of the Daystar, and the closest thing it has to a brig. Featuring eight large Essence containment cells built along the interior wall, prisoners could be sealed indefinitely in pockets of Elsewhere while waiting for judgment day. It was also the place from which the crew of the Daystar could keep tabs on dangerous entities bound throughout existence by the Most High. Now it serves as the primary monitoring station of the greater elemental dragon of fire, the Gardullis. Three of its Essence containment cells, which the Unconquered Sun prided himself on keeping vacant, still bear a glyph marking occupation: Our Guarding Star's unfinished business.

The first impression one gets upon entering the Ward of the Dragon is one of unwelcome, and it is isn't hard to see why. The gaol of the Daystar is one of the most foreboding chambers conceivable. Those who enter this iron and soulsteel coffin find themselves in a bay 50 yards long. Clusters of multifaceted crimson glass adorn the walls, catching the visitor's reflection from dozens of angles. At the farthest end the wall spreads open to reveal a massive bay window of this same ruby honeycomb, looking out onto the fires of the Daystar and the head of the sleeping Gardullis. Sleeping, that is, until someone takes more than a few steps into the chamber. As soon as the Gardullis senses an intruder, one eye snaps open. As he peers into the Ward, his great glowing eye is reflected throughout the room in a hundred panes of glass, so that his glare might follow the intruder's passage.

Dominating the ceiling is what appears to be a massive six-tiered chandelier composed of hundreds of swords of solid Essence hanging point-down in suspension. Glowing with pure white luminescence and thrumming with power, this is the lumen Yjimatria, a mighty arhat whose breath stirs his crystalline body so that his blades dance and gently touch together, chiming out a bitter lullaby for his charges.

Directly beneath Yjimatria is the Gehenna Vector, a glass-like orb of semi-transparent atmosphere floating just a few feet off the ground, buffeted by a flow of Essence from a claw-shaped vent on the floor beneath it. Within the sphere of the Vector, one can see all of Malfeas in miniature, down to the dust devils dancing over Cecelyne and sometimes even the waver and waft of the Ebon Dragon. Those who know the commands of the Ward may pass their hand over the Vector and order it to focus on parts of Malfeas they wish to see more closely. The surface of the orb ripples, dissolving the distant picture of Malfeas and replacing it with an expanded view of its wards and boweries. However, those who look too closely into the Demon City run the risk of being seen in turn, and incautious use of the Gehenna Vector stirs the song of Yjimatria into a warning melody.

**In this room:** Eight Essence containment cells flank the room. These cells are faced with capsule-shaped doors that are normally open on dark and empty interiors. Three however are occupied, and their doors are sealed shut, with a single window that reveals nothing save for a glyph that indicates occupation. Nysela knows what horrors are trapped within those containers and will not reveal the code sequences to open the doors unless given an order to do so by the Unconquered Sun.



However, the five empty cells are still operational, and using them is a matter of ease: one simply enters a command into a kiosk beside the cell he wishes to employ. The portal glows blindingly as a channel is opened into a featureless white room in Elsewhere. After throwing the prisoner into the portal, a simple button press seals the door behind them. Feeding a single mote to the control will generate a code which will open the door, at which point no other code may be generated.

If one can bear the piercing gaze of the murderous Gardullis, the crystal facets about the room may also be mastered by words known to both Nysela and the Gardullis, allowing the user to look in on a number of strange and terrible beings sealed throughout Creation and beyond by the order of Ignis Divine. The Gehenna Vector takes an entirely different set of words to access, which the Gardullis doesn't know and Nysela is loathe to teach. Nevertheless, the Vector is a yielding and intuitive structure, and may be mastered by those puissant in the ways of manipulating complex magitech artifice. However, should one suddenly find themselves sucked through the vaporous atmosphere of the orb and directly onto the streets of Malfeas, a return to the Daystar is not likely to be easy. Using the Gehenna Vector without proper instruction is an extreme risk.

## CIRCUMNAVIGATING THE STATION INDOMITABLE

The Daystar is vast, and its inner-workings are often inimical displays of immeasurable power that must be detoured around. Without the aid of the Siege Honaris, a person traveling on foot from one end of the Dirigible Engine to the other can expect a minimum journey of two hours. However, by boarding the Chirmirajen at a paddock located in each quarter of the Daystar, a person can travel to the adjacent quarter in five minutes, and the opposite station in ten.

The Chirmirajen is able to achieve such a feat by traveling through a series of synaptic Nirvikalpa gateways between the Daystar's chakras—channels which exploit the shinmaic principles of Nirvikalpa and Nirupadhika to enable movement through the Daystar's crushing Essence. These gateways are nearly impossible to traverse outside of the Chirmirajen. Were one to leap from the monorail while it was transitioning through a synapse, they would find themselves shredded down to motes by the entropy therein, if not sucked into the mind of the Daystar to join the universe as a single speck of dust in freefall through a space in which galaxies are born in instants and die out in minutes—assuming they weren't lucky enough to be ejected entirely from the core complex and into the fires at the heart of the sun. However, riding inside the Chirmirajen is relatively comfortable.

These synapses form four tunnels between the quarters of the Daystar, and traveling through them reveals a spectacular phenomenon. As the Chirmirajen races through Nirvikalpa, phantom images play out monumental scenes from throughout history, or display snapshots of some of the world's most momentous figures. To what extent these images are connected to the memories of the Unconquered Sun is debatable, for while some believe these are images occurring within the mind of the Sun, others posit that the visions contained therein are caused by the Daystar's innate contemplation of and link to the rest of the universe.

Furthermore, each synapse follows a mysterious theme, and while the images vary from trip to trip, each sports a specific set of visions which it will almost always display. Repeated trips around the Daystar are not guaranteed to reveal all the secrets of the universe, however, so the more one travels the less likely one is to see something new.

The first synapse displays moments in time having to do with the Primordials. Most commonly seen is Autochthon's departure from Creation, his search arrays cutting swaths in the countryside as he draws thousands of people into the vortex of his world-body. Sometimes the comet Gnosis soars alongside the Chirmirajen and one can see Gaia standing atop it, barefoot, hair and robes flapping in the wind, vapor and dust breaking over her. She lifts her eyes and the image dissolves. Occasionally passengers see the Yozis folding in upon themselves, in and in, as Malfeas's bones close over his brethren to seal them for eternity.

The second synapse seems concerned with the First Age, starting with its favored images: the death of White Ram at the gates of Yu-Shan; Merela receiving the Crown of Thunders; a banquet table sporting the makings of a feast, but all the chairs are empty and a single glass of wine has spilled, a crimson stain spreading as flames dance in the windows.

The third synapse dwells upon the lightning that rained down upon Chiaroscuro, shattering and toppling its ancient towers and melting them into slag. It favors the majestic Scarlet Empress as she sits upon the Dragon Throne, her painted face and enigmatic eyes haunting the viewer with a promise of untold secrets. It often shows Manosque Viridian and his armies falling up and up into the skies and out of existence.

The last synapse has an unknown theme, but carries these final visions for those who ride the Chirmirajen: the Empress leading Lillun by the hand down a long tunnel, their forms disappearing into shadow; a torch-lit funeral procession a mile long, a bier bearing the body of Ingosh Silverclaws; the Mask of Winters walking down the cracked, rubble-strewn streets of Thorns, stepping over the bodies of slain defenders, and this—a young female Solar standing in the haunted ruins of Chiaroscuro, a Dragon-Blooded fallen at her feet and another running for his life. A lion roars in the bonfire of her anima while she laughs at her assailant's retreating image.

## ICONS OF THE DAYSTAR

### THE KEY OF WHITE FIRE

Though it has all the seeming of the iconic weapon of the Exalted, the Aidenweiss is no mere daiklave. Appearing as a double-edged sword of flawless design, the Aidenweiss sports an orichalcum blade so refined it has a colorless, perfectly reflective surface that blazes golden light when Essence is channeled through it. The hilt and crossguard are similarly impeccable; deeper gold orichalcum peaking through a spiraling outer layer of adamant; blades of fire circling around what appears to be the empty setting for a single hearthstone, like the sun's corona turned in on itself.

In fact, no hearthstone can be placed within the Aidenweiss. Further examination reveals why. The Aidenweiss is itself a manse; where the hearthstone would be placed, it produces a hearthstone of its own. This hearthstone is always formed at the





end of the Aidenweiss's tenure in Creation. Before it returns to the Daystar, it evaluates its wielder, drawing from the sum of its experiences to synthesize a five-dot hearthstone tailored to the one who has carried it. Four such hearthstones have been produced. A hearthstone produced by the Aidenweiss remains permanently attuned to the bearer of its owner's Exaltation, even if the Aidenweiss is carried by another. The effect of these hearthstones is unknown. They were given to the Exalts who engendered them, and those individuals guarded them dearly.

When an Exalt attunes to the Aidenweiss (as a manse, not an artifact, and thus requiring no commitment of Essence), they are not only bound to the daiklave, gaining the normal benefits from attunement to an artifact, but so long as they carry it, they are treated as if they stood within the manse of the Daystar, regaining Essence at a rate of 24 motes per hour. Not only that, but the Aidenweiss confers control over certain of the Daystar's weapon systems to the wielder, most notably those powers which may unleash and command the Sun's legions. Furthermore, the Aidenweiss has been encoded with the definition of Holy substantiated by Sol Incarnate. A blade forged in the time before humanity existed, the Aidenweiss perpetuates the definition of Holy autonomously. Should the sun ever go dark and the power of Holy fade from the cosmos, it will live on within the Aidenweiss, and confer that power to the one who wields it—provided that they prove themselves equal to the ideal of justice which birthed the Unconquered Sun.

Yet while the Unconquered Sun still lives, the Aidenweiss may not be removed from the Cup of Fire without his consent. To do so will invoke the ire of the Most High. This is one of the few known ways to release the Gardullis, who may sense the Aidenweiss wherever it is, and who will go to the greatest lengths to retrieve the blade and carry it back to the Daystar.

For all its fearsome powers, the most important feature of the Aidenweiss is what it represents. As much symbol as weapon, the act of entrusting an individual with the blade traditionally confers upon them the rank of General Supreme over all of the Unconquered Sun's legions. Wielding the Aidenweiss makes its bearer nominally equal in rank to the highest-ranked officer amongst all his allies—provided that ally is the highest rank possible within all the assembled forces—and one rank higher than the leader of wartime opposition. More specifically, granting the Aidenweiss to an Exalt indicates that the Unconquered Sun has selected that individual to act as high commander over the assembled armies of the Chosen during a time of Creation-spanning war.

The Aidenweiss has been conferred to the Exalted four times throughout recorded history; on three occasions it was a Solar Exalted who wielded the Key of White Fire. The fourth time creates a bit of a problem for historians. The first General Supreme was commissioned during the Primordial War. This Solar was not Merela. After the war, this Exalt reluctantly relinquished the Aidenweiss, accepting decommission and going

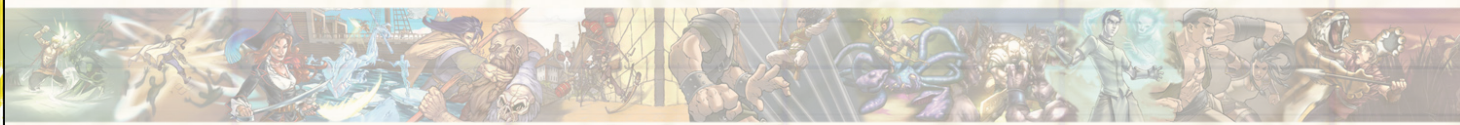
### POWERS OF THE AIDENWEISS (ARTIFACT N/A, MANSE N/A)

Wielded in battle, the Aidenweiss has the same traits as an orichalcum daiklave with the following exceptions:

- The Aidenweiss has no hearthstone settings and an attunement cost of 0 motes. Note that in spite of the weapon not actually requiring a commitment of Essence to attune it, it does still count as an attuned artifact weapon for the purpose of effects which make such designations. It grants the orichalcum magical material bonus to any attuned bearer regardless of their Exaltation.
- The Sword of the General Supreme is indestructible, even in the face of effects which permit the destruction of artifacts.
- An attuned character wielding the Aidenweiss is metaphorically considered to be the leader of any complementary unit he is a special character in, for the purpose of Charms which grant varying effects for leaders and other special characters.
- Any complementary unit led by a character carrying the Aidenweiss enjoys perfect morale.
- The bearer of the Aidenweiss is considered to have Essence 10 with regard to the effects of all Charms and sorcery used on him or by him. He is considered to have his normal Essence rating for the purpose of raising Traits and buying Charms.
- In the unthinkable event of the Unconquered Sun's demise, any Holy Charms known by the wielder of the Aidenweiss continue to function. This effect does not grant creatures of darkness the ability to wield Holy Charms when they could not already, but neither does it forbid them from wielding the Key of White Fire.
- For the purpose of Charms which make such distinctions, the bearer of the Aidenweiss is metaphysically considered to

be the hierarchical superior of all characters belonging to any military organization of which he is a member, as well as any opponent who confronts him in physical or social combat.

- The bearer of the Aidenweiss may release any lumen or behemoth sealed away within Creation by the power of the Daystar, provided that she knows its name. She has only basic command over these beings once they are unleashed. A complete roster of slumbering lumens and captive monsters may be found in the Ward of the Dragon.
- The General Supreme may issue mandates of subordination to the aurichim, righteous dead, jinas and bodhisattvas of the sun's host.
- The General Supreme may issue mandates of subordination toward the spirits which comprise Unconquered Sun's legions—the aurichim and righteous dead. While the righteous dead must be summoned and ordered by name, aurichim may be rallied more easily—if no aurichim are present, the bearer of the Aidenweiss may spend 10 motes to issue a general summons so long as he is within the borders of Creation. A Magnitude 3 unit of aurichim will assemble in response to this call within 25 hours, converging on the location where the summons was made.
- If somehow destroyed despite its invincibility, the imperishable Essence of the Aidenweiss flees to the Daystar, where it may be reborn in the forge of the Furnace Empyrean.
- If hidden beyond the reach of the Gardullis, or should the Gardullis be defeated or banished before it is retrieved, the Aidenweiss begins to project its location into the dreams of Creation. Such dreams, when had, will guide any hero worthy of the Aidenweiss on a course toward finding it wherever it is, even if it is pressed beyond the veil of time.



into a sort of self-imposed exile. A new hero claimed and wielded the Aidenweiss during the Aftershock War and, remembering the near-cataclysm caused by their predecessor's hesitance to step down, promptly returned the blade to the Daystar when the war was finished. The Aidenweiss was summoned to action a third time, when a Dawn caste who had grown tired of the constancy and relative safety of the Solar Realm, and who yearned for a return to the hellish glory of the Primordial War, sought to and nearly succeeded in releasing Malfeas from his prison. In this instance the original wielder of the Aidenweiss returned from exile and resumed the mantle of General Supreme to put down the mad Solar's uprising.

The fourth and final time the Aidenweiss was seen in Creation occurred during the Time of Cascading Years, when it was said a war was sparked by a Primordial attempting to punch through to Creation by way of the temporal fracturing of reality. During this time, multiple Exalted were remembered to be wielding the Aidenweiss. Two were Lunars and one was a Sidereal. Several Solar Exalted, including Queen Merela, are also remembered. In any case, each record contradicts the other, with Merela as the most commonly iterated General Supreme during this time.

In the wake of the Usurpation, the Sidereal Exalted petitioned the Unconquered Sun to grant the Aidenweiss to the first Dragon-Blooded Shogun to seal the legitimacy of the Shogunate's rule, and they pushed forward this petition again upon the ascent of the Scarlet Empress. On neither occasion was this request dignified with a response.

## THE SUN'S STOWAWAY

The spirit known as Bannery Bu is perhaps the oldest living presence aboard the Daystar. A genius builder and magitech artificer, she was a friend of Autochthon during the Time of Glory, and assisted him in many experiments. As fate would have it, she was on the site of the Machine God's latest masterpiece when the Primordial King ripped loose its core, and she was caught inside. Unable to escape, the wily spirit hid within the construct, hoping to endure the tribulations that would soon befall her. She soon after lost all consciousness, falling into a cessation of existence from which she did not emerge for thousands of years. When she did, she was thunderstruck to find herself aboard an entirely new construct of vastly differential design and unfathomable power—the Daystar. Just moments later she encountered the Unconquered Sun, who was wholly unlike any other spirit she had ever met, for the world she had left was one of green day and the catastrophic movements of living disasters, and the gods were of a much simpler caste. Upon stammering out an explanation of her intrusion into the Sun's dominion, the Guarding Star took pity on her. But when Ignis Divine attempted to return her to Mount Meru, so that she might find her home amongst the ranks of the divinities, they found she could not easily leave. Her purview had become tied to the Daystar. In any case, rather than strike her out from his domain, the Unconquered Sun grew accustomed to her presence, and expressly permitted her to remain aboard the Daystar, where she has become a fixture.

Bannery Bu appears to be an old woman with silver hair kept fastidiously and bound into a bun at the back of her head, wearing a lavender kimono and carrying a walking stick of Chiaroscuro glass. Perpetually hunched over her cane, her appear-

ance of feebleness and frailty demonstrates an underlying fact: she is unable to help crew the Daystar. That kind of robust action is simply not in her nature. However, on several occasions it has been said that she moves frighteningly fast, and her mind moves even faster. Verily, Bannery Bu (known simply as Bannery to those familiar with her) tends to put her incredible instinct for calculation to work for questionable purposes. Just what her purpose is remains unclear. Sometimes she acts as a servant to guests, but she always appears to be measuring them with her eyes and her staff. Other times, she emerges from her workshop in the Valor Quarter in a fit of megalomania, leading a hand-crafted war-machine against all who oppose her (in this case, all whom she comes across). In the words of Lytek, with whom she has betimes associated, "her favorite things are tea and chaos, and she will serve you both."

More commonly Bannery wanders the halls, poking and tapping instruments with her cane, giving an impression of blindness or belligerence, but this is simply her way of assessing the running condition of the Dirigible Engine's processes. She has been known to grow insufferably bored because most of the Daystar runs flawlessly, requiring little to no maintenance. While Nysela finds her reports assuring, Bannery has also been known to admit that a Lunar Exalted would be far more useful than she in analyzing the Daystar's moods and needs, for those run deeper than just its perfect structure, to a place she cannot touch.

Bannery has her own workshop aboard the Station Indomitable. She rarely works within the Furnace Empyrean, because what she makes there she can never remove, except in the form of forge testimonies, of which she has several dozen and may even trade for a favor, such as an interesting tale told, materials brought to her, or tasks completed. However, nothing can induce her to reveal what treasures may be redeemed from any particular ticket, so one who makes such a bargain is taking a risk.

A master builder of automatons, Bannery spends much of her time building and rebuilding a single complex war machine, which she always names 'Practice.' Every few years she unleashes this masterpiece on the Daystar, possibly as a test of its security systems, although her tendency to yell slogans like "down with the tyrant Nysela," seems to contradict this interpretation. Her automaton always gets taken down by Nysela or the lumina in less than a day. Every time it does, her mania fades, and she pokes through the wreckage with her cane (usually while humming a peaceful tune) before dragging what's left back to her workshop.

Bannery is mentioned in the Tome of the Great Maker, where she is called Baneribu, and is cited as an assistant to Debok Moom. Alchemicals who encounter Bannery may inform her about the present negative condition of the Machine God. To do so will cause her visible distress; she will offer any advice or service she can to aid her ailing friend. In practical terms, Bannery remembers much of Autochthon from the Time of Glory and although she can't remember what Autochthon was building before it was stolen to become the Daystar, she can remember the locations in Creation where several such experiments were staged. In addition, given the proper materials and a sample to work from, Bannery can quickly learn to repair Alchemical Charms, and even to build entirely new ones. Such a distraction may indeed prove quite welcome, for Bannery





grows endlessly bored, and Nysela is thankful for anything the restless spirit does which does not involve taunting the Gardulis or attempting to suss out the security codes to those prison cells aboard the Daystar which are still occupied.

## LUMINA, THE SUN CHILDREN

Throughout the halls and chambers of the Daystar, silent statues listen and watchful murals gaze. Carved slabs bearing images of spectacular beasts pulse with a warm and living light. Doors within the station's interior sometimes open to the blazes of the sun, and through them step brilliant shining phantoms. Their eyes sweep for purpose. Pausing, they listen to the heartbeat of the universe, noting all irregularities. They are the stalking beasts and warding legends of the solar barque, and for those who would defile their sacred peace, their wrath is swift and terrible. These are the lumina of the righteous dead, the children of the sun.

Each lumen began as a heroic ghost, a spirit whose nobility of purpose in life, in dying or in the afterlife somehow attracted the notice of the Most High. Brought aboard the Daystar to face the judgment of the Unconquered Sun and found worthy, these heroic revenants were blessed by Ignis Divine, stripped of the stigma of being creatures of darkness, and elevated to the ranks of the righteous dead.

The lumina are also numbered among the righteous dead, but are far more than mere ghosts. They are those amongst the Sun's saints who choose to forsake their former lives—to be reborn, not through lethe, but through a gauntlet of trial and tribulation within the flames of the Daystar. This process transforms the righteous dead from ghosts to gods, into guardian beasts and burning legends of myth, and consigns them to an existence of eternal service to the Sun. The fate of these spirits is one of constant training, meditation, and readiness. Lost forever is their ability to pursue personal agendas; their former lives, identities and passions have been burned away, and so has their ability to touch Creation by their own authority. Rather, they are chiefly concerned with the protection of the Dirigible Engine, and their continued pursuit of greater and more powerful forms with which they may best serve the will of Sol Incarnate. Evolving along a path of dedicated meditation, the lumina seek to express their truest forms, reforged by the perfecting fires of the Most High.

Lumina are generally divided into three tiers of power, from least to greatest. The lowest among their rank are the jinas. A jina is a lumen who has captured and reintegrated his po, but not yet divested himself of all worldly passions. Jina tend to have a mostly human appearance, though signs of the greater power that awaits them begin to appear in the form of a personal panoply. This may take the form of uniquely expressive weapons and armor, or perhaps a stylized mask the lumen carries on his person at all times. Examples include the jina Ja-Janasti, who appears as a swordsman carrying a brace of seven blades on his back, each made from the sharpened feather of a giant bird; or the lumen Samirena, who takes on the form of a raven-haired savant with a heavy tome chained around her hips, its closed face marked with a hundred intertwined serpents; or Kō, who presents the image of a powerfully built man in the white-and-gold robes of a priest of the Unconquered Sun, and dons a horned aurochs mask before engaging in battle. Jina are notably more powerful than the average

## THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD

In the Time of Glory the Unconquered Sun was the light of hope in a horrific Primordial universe. With power rivaling his progenitors, and mercy wholly unlike theirs, it is easy to see why countless beings turned to heliolatry in order to escape the terrors of reality. Some even managed this in the truest sense, tithing their souls to the sun's flames at the end of their lives. For some, this tithe came in the prime of their lives. Indeed, a number of righteous dead appear to be completely transparent in the vicinity of their hearts. Others, however, were men and women whose deaths caught the Unconquered Sun's attention if only by the weight of their absence from the mortal coil. These souls he was able to catch before they passed into the drowning waters of lethe, giving them the choice of becoming part of his flames. Many accepted. Those who did not were allowed to continue on to their next lives, and even to this day, those righteous dead who are not lumina are capable of committing themselves to lethe, or becoming a part of the Sun in the most absolute sense, joining his flames in a solemn rite of Venus that is both marriage and funeral. Because the transition to righteous dead requires that the soul free itself of the chains of its past life, such as former ambitions and worldly concerns, the transition is nearly impossible for the Exalted.

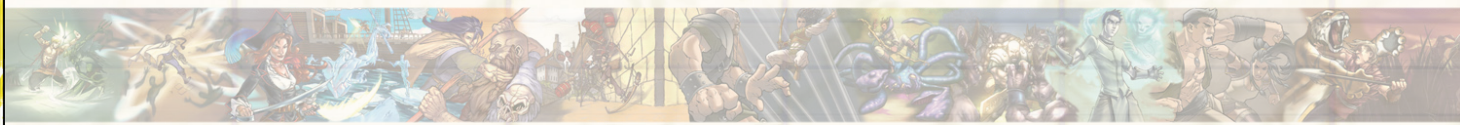
The righteous dead may act as messengers and agents of the Unconquered Sun in Creation and beyond.

ghost, but unlikely to inspire too much fear in any Exalted save perhaps the Dragon-Blooded. They are roughly equal to gods of the third rank (see *The Compass of Celestial Directions*, vol. III—Yu-Shan, pp.123-124). All lumina begin as jinas.

The second rank of lumina are the bodhisattvas. A lumen of this rank has cleared his heart of all worldly passions and fully fused with his po. Bodhisattvas begin to exude or manifest, as physical features, traits of what would have been their iconic anima were they Exalted. A bodhisattva might appear as a stern general with a white tiger head, as does Feng-To of the Iron Nail; or a white-eyed priest in saffron robes, standing twelve feet tall, with a great orichalcum mandala always floating at his back, as does the lumen Jirobozu; or perhaps a serene martial artist whose skin is wrapped in prayer strips and whose body is a prayer wheel floating disconnected from his arms, legs and head, such as Mirazen the Patient. One thing all bodhisattvas have in common is their great power, sufficient to give pause to Exalts or demons of the Second Circle. They are roughly equivalent to gods of the fourth rank (see *The Compass of Celestial Directions*, vol. III—Yu-Shan, pp.124-126).

The mightiest of the lumina are known as arhats. These ancient beings exemplify their own iconic forms, becoming god-beasts or avatars of their own legend, transcending nature to attain the power that can only come from exemplifying one's own mythology. When unleashed, an arhat moves across the land like a force of nature, easily capable of rivaling the mightiest behemoth. Examples of arhats include Urziak, a great bear standing thirty yards high when upright, with fur of white quartz, claws of red glass, eyes of ruby, and fangs of jade; or the





warrior Rahu, who sleeps in the floor of the Daystar's bridge; or Malin-Nilam, who upon becoming an arhat split himself into the forms of twin brothers forged from orichalcum and moonsilver, each bearing a single upside-down wing in place of an arm. Arhats are roughly equivalent to gods of the fifth rank (see *The Compass of Celestial Directions*, vol. III—Yushan, pp.126-128).

One class of lumina stands outside of this structure, rare in the extreme. These are the glamifores, saints of the sun who have ascended from the status of jina without losing their appearance or personal identity. Glamifores retain a great deal of personal autonomy without being straightened into abstract archetypes exemplifying their own legend. These unusual lumina vary widely in power, according to a mixture of age, skill, personal panoply, and heroic endeavor. Most are stronger than the average bodhisattva, but less mighty than the arhats. Glamifores carry the appearance they held as mortals, save for the solar radiance which exudes from their living-anima bodies.

All lumina live within the Howling Crucible with the other righteous dead, where they may take on the appearance of their mortal selves. Lumina also live within statues, murals, and

engraved slabs which present a suggestion of their true form. These idols act as a kind of house for a specific lumen, and a doorway through which they can emerge into any place where such an effigy has been placed. These doorways are not limited solely to the Daystar; a number of First Age tombs still bear slabs depicting wondrous multihued beasts, and statues of warrior saints graven from pure flame.

## SOLAR MONORAIL CHIRMIRAJEN

The sun hangs in the sky high above Creation, an almost unimaginable gulf of empty space stretching between its photosphere and the ground. The Station Indomitable is nestled at the center of a roiling atmosphere of cataclysmic flame and molten Essence. It is, in a word, quite inaccessible.

Most visitors to the station arrive, then, by way of the Chirmirajen, one of the few means of safe passage to and from the Daystar. Normally residing within Gransol Terminus or shuttling between the Daystar's various interior decks, Nysela may dispatch the Chirmirajen to retrieve guests from anywhere on the surface of Creation, or numerous locales in other, more exotic realms.

### THE MAKING OF A LUMEN

The Unconquered Sun has not inducted a new lumen to the ranks of the saints since before the fall of the First Age. When he did, those who chose to attempt the dangerous transition would be carried by the Chirmirajen from the Howling Crucible to Gransol Terminus, where they would find Ignis Divine waiting for them. Here the Unconquered Sun would present them with their po, conjured up from its vigil over their corpse in Creation far below, and with it, a choice: to follow the path of suffering or the path of grandeur.

Ascent to the status of lumen could only be achieved through the path of grandeur, but to immediately cross through the arch of glory was generally folly; those who did so found themselves ascending a long stair, blasted at each step by the undiminished brilliance of the Unconquered Sun and the power of the Daystar. Their regrets, shortcomings, sins and inadequacies caught flame in that light, and to stumble on that stair was to never rise again. Those who failed in this manner were unmade utterly, their Essence dissolving before their substance was consumed by the burning light of day. For such unfortunates, there would be no reincarnation.

Wiser souls chose the arch of the corrupt, through which they found a stair that led to suffering. Traveling deep into the spiraling depths of the sun, they would be tortured by their inner darkness, haunted by their past regrets, and scoured by burning emotions. Within, they would struggle with their sins and be flayed by their own shortcomings. This trial usually lasted seven days, but could go on for as much as three times that. Those who failed would find themselves still extant at the end of the ordeal, but unable to leave the realm of suffering until they had cast away their burdens. As such, a multitude of souls still wander, lost throughout the depths of the trial, compounding their anguish. Some have become mighty beasts of flame and torment, their po and hun fused into an avatar of judgment which can never leave the realm, and will seek to harshly prevent new righteous dead from failing as they did.

Those who were able to cast away their burdens after failing the trial, to cleanse themselves of their suffering, would emerge from the trials not as lumen, but as twice-confirmed saints, holier than before. Still, some of these would attempt the passage twice and be lost forever. Others would emerge victorious, having conquered the fetters which bound them to the material world. Whatever the case, for those righteous dead to overcome suffering, the path to becoming a lumen had only begun.

Once cleansed by suffering, they would pass through the arch of the just, on the stair leading to grandeur. Those who traveled this path after having been cleansed in the low road found invariably that it was a harder road than the stair to suffering, yet their power was greater from having suffered, and that no hardship was too great. For these, their emergence as lumina was almost certain. For a few, such was not the case—some lingering weakness of character or spirit kept their po from reintegrating with them, and instead it dragged them down to be consumed along with it. Regardless, for those who succeeded, a new kind of righteous dead would emerge within the Hollow Crypt of the Howling Crucible: one who was neither ghost nor demon, but a blazing god of light and flame called lumen.

Why would a ghost take such a risk? The answer is simple—power and purpose. Many of those who pass from life into the hallowed halls of the Howling Crucible realize that as mere ghosts they can never achieve those dreams or aspirations that they might have once attained, and yet they can never be satisfied with a passage through lethe; they can never let go of their potential, their desire to be more and do more. For this reason they give themselves up to the glory of holy white fire. As one of the lumina, these fallen heroes can finally make good on their potential, as the sun's fires cleanse and reshape them into what they should have been. While this comes at the price of their former ambitions, it gives those incomplete heroes something they can get nowhere else: a chance for a reckoning.





The Chirmirajen is a great streamlined monorail cast in indestructible orichalcum of alternating shades, primarily deep golden-brown and burnt yellow with bright ochre highlights. It normally spans a length of five cars (engine, three passenger cars, and a caboose), though it has the ability to unfold and duplicate unoccupied passenger cars to make room as needed. It cannot retract occupied cars. The solar monorail's nose sports a golden headlight in a setting worked to resemble a sunburst, set above a broad, smiling cloudcatcher.

Passengers find the interior of the mono markedly rustic in comparison to its gleaming outer shell. The Chirmirajen's compartments feature mahogany paneling, seats with deep cushions upholstered in crimson silk, and beautiful murals painted upon the walls and ceilings: Gaia and Cytherea are intertwined at the heart of the Wyld in one; a nameless Solar engineer builds a golden road into the heart of some unimaginable darkness in another; in a third, the Unconquered Sun emerges as a bare-chested youth from the mouth of a great whale, carrying the Daystar in his arms. Tables and chairs occupy the center of the passenger compartments, each of which seems able to support a dozen people in comfort—the engine room has space for three, the caboose for six. Bay windows afford a spectacular view of the world outside the Chirmirajen, and may be opened should passengers wish for fresh air or to use the mono as a sniping platform.

The engineer's car is a small, intimate room, dense with features. Though its quarters are tight, it manages to feel airy thanks to its panoramic windows which grant an unrestricted view of the mono's surroundings. A fuel chute stands open at the front of the compartment, radiating cheery warmth; every so often a prayer strip materializes in the air and drops into its open mouth. Characters taking the time to examine these strips before they vanish find that they are inevitably prayers of hope directed either to Heaven in general or the sun in particular. A compass is built into the ceiling, originally designed by Autochthon himself, giving several vectors of infallible positioning information. The front of the chamber is dominated by an Essence-projection map of the surrounding landscape within a thousand miles, set directly into the wood. The Chirmirajen's controls are surprisingly simple—a ship's wheel with a keyhole in the center, levers to operate the mono's brakes, a cord which blows its great shattering horn. Acceleration requires stoking the engine; a bin in the corner of the room overflows with stored prayers.

The Chirmirajen moves by means of a rail spun of pure Essence which constantly coalesces half a mile ahead its current location and vanishes ten miles behind it, giving a few moments' warning before the mono arrives. Its primary purpose is to ferry passengers to and from the Daystar, or between sections of the station, though it also sometimes carries diplomats to and from Malfear, or is deployed on rescue missions into the depths of the Wyld or the Underworld. The Yozis are accustomed to the comings and goings of the monorail, and most have learned to simply ignore it, not wishing to invite the wrath of the Daystar. The few times it has gone off course to rescue someone trapped in one of Hell's boweries or lost on Cecelyne's silver sands, it has done so quickly, not giving the indecisive titans time to decide its impertinence was worth the risk of striking it down. Adorjan has been known to attempt to chase and attack the Chirmirajen, but despises the sound of its horn and invariably withdraws upon hearing its call.

## THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

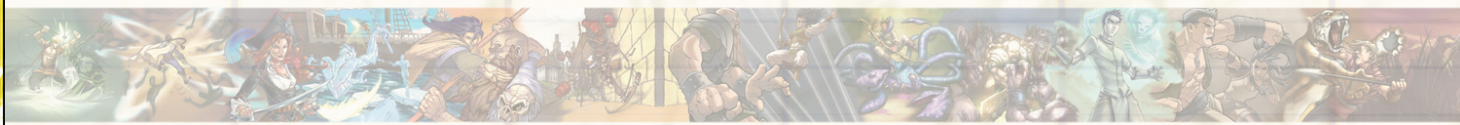
The Chirmirajen has a brother. No legends speak of its creation...or birth...or whatever manner of unwholesome genesis spawned the Midnight Express. It is enough that the ghost train exists.

Where the Chirmirajen is bright and swift and daring, the Midnight Express is sleek and dark and quiet. Its soulsteel and moonsilver body cuts an unpredictable course through the twisting tunnels of the Labyrinth, its single ghost-lamp eye pushing shadows aside to reveal the gruesome vistas of the Underworld with unremitting clarity. Tracks of blue flame march out better than ten miles ahead of it, announcing its coming well in advance. Its pumping, rotary-armed wheels are whisper-quiet where they convey it over these ephemeral rails, and the train's compartments are dark and still, though they give the impression of being watched.

The Midnight Express has been known to appear, unbidden, to convey Abyssal Exalted to and from the tombs of the Neverborn, whisking them quickly through the depths of the Labyrinth in relative safety—assuming it has not already taken on hostile nephwracks as passengers, of course. The Midnight Express seems generally uninterested in and unimpressed by the affairs of the spectral denizens of the Labyrinth; if molested while passing through an amphiskopolis, it has been known to unleash a blast from its silent whistle—rather than producing any sound, it instead radiates a heavy, terrible silence that blots out all hearing and sends specters soundlessly shrieking and tumbling away in all directions. Eye and Seven Despairs, the First and Forsaken Lion and the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible are all interested in gaining control over the Midnight Express, but the train has never responded to the summons of any Deathlord, or even appeared in the presence of those ancient ghosts.

In the event that Nysela is unable to steer the Daystar or its propulsion is ever disabled, the Chirmirajen has the capability to fly out ahead of the sun and tow it. Fine maneuvering is impossible in this state, but the mono can at least keep a steady course if not distracted. Nysela is loath to send the Chirmirajen out to tow the sun thanks to its tendencies toward impulsive bursts of heroism; the last thing Creation needs is the noble but distractible monorail suddenly diving toward some earthbound calamity with the sun in tow.

The Chirmirajen is immune to the transformative power of the Wyld, as are all passengers riding inside of it, and likewise immune to all environmental damage. Essence-forged shields slam down over the windows while traveling through hazardous environments such as the depths of Kimberly or the flames of the sun, preventing passengers from opening or shooting out of the mono, but also protecting them from external dangers. These barriers are normally transparent, but become opaque when the Chirmirajen passes through the sun's flames, prevent-



ing guests from being blinded by the Daystar's magnificent radiance.

The mono's outer shell has thus far proven to be invincible, capable of surviving the intensity of the sun's flames, of weaving through the unleashed fury of the Apollyon Cannon, and even of surviving direct full-speed ramming impacts with mountains and other geographical features. In battle, the mono attempts to ram warstrider or greater-sized opponents with an accuracy of 20 dice (smaller targets impose a -3 external penalty) and a raw damage of 100B. A successful hit inflicts one mile of knockback for every ten dice of damage rolled; upon landing from such a hit, victims suffer terminal velocity falling damage. Should the Chirmirajen miss its target, it takes thirty ticks for the mono to make a wide, wheeling turn sufficient to line up for a second strike; though blindingly fast, the solar mono cannot corner any more quickly than that. Attempting to do so causes the mono to jump its rail and skid through the air or along the ground, spouting an enormous burst of flames from its undercarriage, reducing its speed to that of a mere warbird. Building up a full head of steam and completely re-forging its Essence rail takes five long ticks, during which time the mono is susceptible to being boarded or snared.

A character must use the key to the Chirmirajen to gain manual control over it. This key hangs around Nysela's neck, and she loans it out only to those who have earned her complete trust. Otherwise, if not ordered to linger in Gransol Terminus, the Chirmirajen operates on autopilot. As the Chirmirajen is an agreeable monorail by nature, it normally does as Nysela bids it in this state, but has been known to divert from its given missions to heroically intervene in order to save lives or triumph over perceived wickedness. In the First Age the Chirmirajen was known as a friend of all children and prominently featured in popular story-books and nursery rhymes. Its passage leaves good sleep and inspiring dreams of adventure in its wake (granting a one die bonus to nightly Conviction rolls for all slumbering characters within twenty miles). The Chirmirajen may now be seen throughout Creation, alternately picking up the Exalted to take them to the Daystar and releasing the Mice of the Sun to do the bidding of Ignis Divine.

## MIGHT OF THE DAYSTAR

Though legends of the Unconquered Sun still speak of his unparalleled might, the reality of it has been subverted by his time away from the world. Coupled with the absence of Ignis Divine, the fact of the sun's presence—its constancy and predictability—has only driven disbelief in the veracity of such tales. Because of this, few of Creation's inhabitants suspect the true power slumbering within the sun.

The crown jewel of Creation's original defensive network, the Daystar is capable of unleashing cataclysmic destruction on those who would seek to invade and occupy the world the Primordials made. It may unleash weapons of unimaginable power, and render vast tracts of Creation's landscape uninhabitable by the enemies of the Unconquered Sun. It has never once been breached or even damaged from the time of Creation's first sunrise until the present day.

The following selection details some of the Daystar's more famous *Star-Saving Ordnances* and *Apocalypse Diversion Protocols*. This is not a complete listing.

## ARSENAL OF THE DAYSTAR

The sun transcends mere physicality. Its incomparable flames, the walls of the Station Indomitable, and all of the Daystar's myriad weapon systems exist simultaneously in a materialized and dematerialized state. As such, its formidable array of defenses present as much of a threat to spirits as to any other sort of interloper, just as its invulnerable walls deny them passage. Furthermore, the Daystar's flames and weapons are all Holy, inflicting aggravated damage to creatures of darkness.

*Apollyon Cannon* (alternately known as the Eye of Judgment): The Daystar's foremost weapon, known and feared by Creation's enemies. Described by those few gods who have seen it fire, the Apollyon Cannon begins as a massive sunspot on the sun's surface which swirls briefly through numerous patterns, including the signs of Battles and Endings, before opening a coronal gate to the internal, limitless flame of the Dirigible Engine, cutting loose an unstoppable concussive bolt of solar Essence which can span a hundred thousand miles in an instant. Seen from the ground, the Cannon looks like an enormous lightning bolt of prismatic flame forking its way across Creation's sky.

It has been fired for the good of Creation at least once before. The jealous Primordial Cemunian, Constellation of Sineu and Dream, once sought to destroy the works of his estranged brethren. In the Ninth Epoch of the Time of Glory he constructed a mock Creation called Cajerrón in the distant depths of the Wyld, and using his vast might, sought to push it into the world the Primordials had made, to displace and replace their works with his own. Ignis Divine, ever vigilant, saw the encroaching clouds of foreign skies and pushed Cemunian's works back to the depths of madness with a shot from the Apollyon Cannon.

*Absolute Horizon Barrier*: It is beneath the dignity of the Daystar to cycle up its weapons in response to every wayward comet that crosses its path. The Absolute Horizon Barrier is a shimmering golden field that coalesces one hundred miles out from the sun's surface. Anything attempting to pass through this barrier, material or immaterial, be it god, flying vessel, or Essence-fired arrow, is met with equivalent force pushing against it in the opposite direction as a Shaping effect; as such, the barrier is impassable by simple velocity. The Chirmirajen is specifically empowered to pass through the Absolute Horizon when it is active. At her discretion, Nysela may deactivate the Absolute Horizon Barrier to allow specified targets through.

*Starfall Revolver*: The memories of the tribes of madness are short indeed. Prince Balor was far from the first raksha to declare war on Creation. In the Twelfth Epoch of the Time of Glory, the Grand Emperor Jiurnan strode forth from the depths of chaos to stand upon the baking sands of the uttermost South. He raised up his halberd, forged of dreams of glory quenched in the venom of scorpions, and personally reviled the Unconquered Sun. The fabric of the world recoiled beneath his boots, and the lurking hordes of chaos took heart from his defiance. The Daystar, not wishing to trouble its arbiter with the insults of such an insect, plucked a star from the sky and cast it down upon Jiurnan, destroying him utterly and sending the sad ruins of his army fleeing back to the Wyld in flames and disarray.

*Shining Finger*: The sun's corona twists, rises, and breaks away. Then a vast lancing finger of flame erupts from the surface of the sun with a howl that can be heard across the world,





reaching down to drag holy fire across the surface of Creation, burning the land black in its wake. The black mark this weapon scores into Creation's surface radiates powerful stabilizing Essence out to five miles on both sides of the trench, which lingers for one season. Fair Folk within this field suffer (10 – Essence) levels of unsoakable aggravated damage per minute of exposure.

*Banishing Flash:* This Simple Speed 5 action allows the Daystar to target an area of Creation's skies with a diameter of one mile. At end of the action, the sun flashes, banishing all incapacitated targets in the area to just outside Creation.

*Godsigh:* The sun draws in dead and weak opponents with intense gravity, consuming and converting them into Essence.

*Sky-Conquering Mea:* The natural, latent offensive power of the Daystar is known as the Sky-Conquering Mea. This includes the incredible, searing heat which the sun projects for miles around itself, as well as its more aggressive deterrents. The Chariot of the Most High cooks off solar flares at irregular intervals, eruptions of searing Essence that jet out into the emptiness of the celestial void to dissipate harmlessly. When an enemy enters the skies of Creation, the Daystar is able to lash it with solar flares at a range of 300 miles. Because these flares strike everything in their path, enemies who stay sufficiently low may avoid them entirely, as the Daystar will not risk a strike that hits the Imperial Mountain or the lower atmosphere of Creation.

Offensive prominences are also included in the Sky-Conquering Mea: great flaming arches that rise from the surface of the Daystar and flow around its blazing surface, pulled by controlled gravitational shifts to turn the sun's projections into gigantic fighting chains, allowing the Daystar to make Martial Arts attacks on targets up a mile distant. The Daystar may also throw one of its prominences up to 15 miles, lashing it outward such that it snaps into a thousand separate, imperishable Flights of the Brilliant Raptor, which home in on all opponents in range and detonate around them, leaving dozens of tiny suns blazing in the skies before being drawn back into the sun's corona.

The Daystar's Essence signature has internalized a number of martial arts styles, and is capable of invoking all possible Combos of their Charms to enhance its Sky-Conquering Mea. It treats solar flares and prominences as unarmed attacks for the purposes of these styles. The Dirigible Engine knows the following Celestial martial arts styles: Solar Hero, Righteous Devil, and Arms of the Unconquered Sun. It is also capable of using the rare Sidereal style known as Vermillion Clouds of Sunset. All measurements involved in the Charms invoked by or channeled through the Daystar (such as the distance a target is hurled by Heaven Thunder Hammer) substitute miles in place of yards.

*Gauntlet of the Sun:* This refers to the natural, latent defensive power of the Daystar's core, which is surrounded by layers of miles-thick super-intense blazing Essence that crushes both material and dematerialized forms. Beings powerful enough to survive within the sun's flames are subject to ferocious environmental damage (Damage 100A/action, trauma 10L) requiring complete elemental immunity in order to endure. Furthermore, characters attempting to approach the Station Indomitable through the sun's flames are constantly surrounded by Magma Kraken tentacles which are capable of using Solar Hero and

## WHERE WERE YOU WHEN WE NEEDED YOU?

Creation was nearly destroyed during the Balorian Crusade. In the wake of Contagion, humanity came within a hair's breadth of dying out, while time and time again, the desperate forces of the Exalted were overrun by an inexorable flood of hobgoblins and cataphractoï. In the end, it was not the Unconquered Sun with his Daystar, but a Dragon-Blooded with the Realm Defense Grid who saved the world.

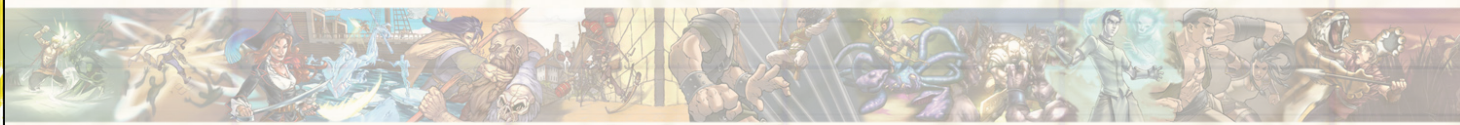
But the Daystar was not entirely absent from that conflict. During the Balorian Crusade, Creation's skies were choked with hadhayosh—behemoths of Wyld origin—and legions of airborne raksha riding gossamer floats and gryphons. Nysela, normally taxed to her limit just to fight a single enemy while keeping the Daystar on course, found no relief from Ignis Divine. Undaunted, she fought with all she had, downing several hadhayosh while coordinating strikes against the airborne fae with Ghataru's Aerial Legion.

Several times during combat, the sun seemed to move erratically through the sky, sometimes shifting backwards through its phases. In some accounts this was because of the rapid destabilization of reality, but some witnessed the bombardments laid down by the sun to cut lines in the Fair Folk advance and knew better. Yet for whatever action she managed to take, Nysela was overmatched, and by the end the skies were destabilizing at such a rate that it was all she could do to keep the sun from falling on Creation. Though she piloted the almighty Dirigible Engine, the Charioteer of the Daystar found herself helpless to save the world.

And though they were defeated by the Scarlet Empress, to this day the raksha continue to remember the weakness of the Daystar.

Arms of the Unconquered Sun style, and cannot be dispelled by countermagic. Characters are considered to be surrounded by five such constructs every 50 yards. Once every twenty long ticks, the Dirigible Engine's core emits a massive shockwave which ripples through the sun's interior, subjecting everything within to an effect identical to the spell Total Annihilation. Nysela may throttle down on the Daystar's core to prevent this shockwave from occurring, if desired, or she may speed it up to occur once every five minutes.

*The Eschaton Lock:* The Primordial King gave the Unconquered Sun the power to destroy Creation should it ever fall into the hands of his enemies. The Eschaton Lock is the seal the Unconquered Sun placed on that power. Once, the Daystar was able to release a supernova capable of annihilating Creation. After the Primordial War, Ignis Divine drove the God-spear into his own side, cauterizing the part of himself which could unleash the supernova. He then took the wound from his body and forged it into a molten orichalcum key which he rammed through the mechanism of final doom, transforming it into a mighty lock and key which can never be turned, but by



his hand...or perhaps by the hand of Malfear, or one partaking in his Essence. In any case, the Eschaton Lock is unbreakable and seals the Daystar's supernova far beyond the reach of all who might wish to unleash it. No force, magical or otherwise, can compel the Unconquered Sun to turn the key. Even if it could, the weapon is still irreparably destroyed and cannot be triggered. Removing the lock only reveals that the weapon has been stricken from the gamut of the sun's offenses, such that only a Primordial (or perhaps a Twilight) could ever repair it. Storytellers should consider the supernova weapon completely beyond repair unless they wish to use the Daystar to hold Creation hostage. Should that be the case, they will have to overcome all the efforts of the Unconquered Sun to prevent anyone from turning the key, before they are ever able to assess the nigh-impossible task of repairing the damage that has been done. As a final note: because the destroyed mechanism corresponds to a wound the Unconquered Sun gave himself, repairing the mechanism would also require doing invasive repair on Ignis Divine, which forms a sort of mare's nest, as characters will only succeed in turning the key over his dead body.

*Sunstrider Apotheosis:* Even the Daystar can be pushed to the limits of its power. When it is, it has a power to fall back on. The ultimate battle form of the Daystar may only be assumed if the Unconquered Sun assumes the Siege Perilous, or if a sufficiently trained and honed crew of the Exalted harnesses all of their spiritual energy into awakening the true form of Creation's defender. If they do, they are temporarily melded into the soul of the Daystar; they become as one with each other and one with the sun, as it collapses inward on itself, plates shifting, engine unraveling, core expanding, flames hardening into the shape of the defender. The Daystar takes on the form of a gigantic four-armed warstrider, shining with all the brilliance of day and wielding iconic representations of the four fulcrums.

The Sunstrider is somewhat smaller than the Daystar. It is unable to command solar flares or prominences, and it is less impervious to damage. However, it is much faster and infinitely more maneuverable, and its ability to parry any attack and dispel nigh unstoppable forces keeps it from harm. Beyond that, its armor is indestructible; damaging the Sunstrider requires hitting it with attacks that harm or weaken its crew until they are unable to sustain its battle form. When the Unconquered Sun is at the helm, this is a nearly impossible feat; whoever assumes Siege Perilous in Sunstrider form is able to channel all of their Charms through the Daystar. They are also able to use all of the Daystar's Martial Arts Charms and Combos. Lastly, the Sunstrider is able strike from all angles at light speed and with unmitigated force. This gives the Unconquered Sun's personal battle form a horrific reputation with his enemies.

## HARNESSING THE DAYSTAR

The sun is a life-giving engine which catalyzes Creation, pushing the North through its vital cycles of freeze and thaw, promoting growth in the East, heating the South, warming the waters of the West, and reaching perfect accord with the Pole of Earth to make the Blessed Isle endlessly temperate and fertile. The perfect calibration of five directions can be felt in every wheel, trigger, and command key of the Daystar's control stations. A character who mans the Daystar's weapons or set its course lays his hands upon the heart of the world, and

## THE SUN'S SIFU

For most of its existence, the Daystar used a primitive form of combat vaguely similar to Solar Hero and Righteous Devil style. It knew these techniques intuitively, as a matter of its existence.

There was once an old Sidereal master named Luang, who was nearing the end of his life. He thought that there was little else left for him to accomplish, and so he spent his days in contemplation of martial truths and the exigencies of power. One day, as Luang stood on the peak of Mount Meru, he observed a curious thing: as the sun passed over, it appeared to be sparring playfully with the sky, its corona dancing and recoiling with the jubilation of a martial celebrant. Luang's imagination was captivated, and so he endeavored to gain the sun's attention.

Constructing a complex of vast mirrors which would turn and tilt in response to his subtle and coaxing Essence, Master Luang proceeded with a grand experiment. Placing these mirrors up the slope of a mountain and far along the valley beneath it, he stood in a place where the light was always favorable and began to instruct the light of day in all that he knew on matters martial and transcendent. The mirrors carried his image far and wide, showing him at every angle and motion, such that the Daystar's light would carry his lessons over heaven and earth.

His plan worked. After a century of instruction, the Daystar's intuition became emulation. And so Luang spent the remaining years of his long life training the sun to fight.

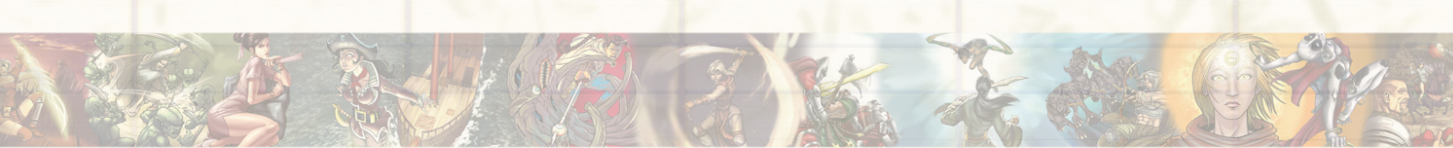
feels Creation move through and around him. The experience is potentially both overwhelming and revelatory, capable of granting the proud and mighty a humbling moment of perspective, or the wicked a moment of clarity, divorced from their self-interest. A haughty Solar granted vigil over all Creation could come to appreciate the responsibilities that accompany his own power, while Abyssal who spends an hour piloting the sun might find himself unable to turn away from the reality of what his Exaltation was meant to be.

Exalted who crew the Daystar must do so with more than simple ability. Interacting with the Daystar is an abstraction that causes the character to transcend into the role of the sun. Those who man the controls enter a shared consciousness in which they are collectively the sun, sharing its senses and commanding its powers. The character at the Seige Honaris assumes the captain's role, moving the Daystar across the sky and engaging targets. In this transcendental state, the captain is able to wield the Sky-Conquering Mea and all of the Daystar's Martial Arts Charms as if they were his own.

Crew members have a slightly different role. Certain Charms of the Chosen have a special alignment with the Daystar's *Star-Saving Ordnances* and *Apocalypse Diversion Protocols*. It takes a number of these Charms, activated simultaneously, to enable the use of any of these weapons. While the captain engages and does battle with targets as the sun, his crew informs his actions and empowers his weaponry, allowing him to unleash all the miracles of the sun's might to save Creation.

In the course of a session aboard the Daystar, characters may find themselves in the unique position of having to unleash the sun's mighty arsenal. It has the power to boil away oceans and melt the frozen North, to turn the Pole of Wood into a





## THE FIRST APOCALYPSE

In all the time since the sun was first hung in the sky, the Eschaton Lock has been released only once.

After pushing the Cajerrón into the depths of chaos, the Unconquered Sun guided his faithful Daystar into the foreign sky of the world Cemunian had designed. He looked about, and everywhere the land was twisted and rotten, and the seas oily and putrid, and all the creatures upon the land and sea and air were twisted monsters, seeking only for bone and hope to crack between their jaws. Enacting the judgment of its divine arbiter, the Daystar burned this false world to ash. In this fashion was the Crisis of Two Worlds averted.

Nysela remembers the destruction of Cajerrón in the Time of Glory, but has no idea what, if anything, was done with the testimony that was produced as receipt of its annihilation. She knows only that at a certain point in the distant Wyld, there remains a world-sized cataclysm of ash and flame, where the howling, raging echoes of wicked spirits long dissolved continue to roil and blaze forever.

second Pole of Fire and to rip stars from the sky, raining apocalyptic ruin down on the world. But players should not look at the Daystar as a means of effortlessly solving all of Creation's problems.

The Unconquered Sun refused to allow the Daystar to enter the Primordial War, knowing that if he unleashed its terrifying firepower in Creation, the sun would be seen as a threat hanging over the heads of every living being. Ignis Divine could not stand the thought of the sun being viewed as a harbinger of death and destruction. Most of all, he would not see to the removal of the wrathful Primordials—those world-sized forces of disaster—just to have the sun cast as a remnant of their dreadful legacy.

In all the years since the Time of Glory, the Unconquered Sun's position never changed. Characters who seek to use the powers of the Daystar may not apply the most Obvious of the sun's weaponry in full view of Creation. Weapons such as the Apollyon Cannon simply will not fire. However, there are ways of circumventing these limitations. The most obvious one is to take the Daystar outside Creation. In places such as the Wyld or Malfeas, the Daystar's powers are unlimited. More importantly, when locked in serious battle, the crew of the Daystar may contact the sun's greatest allies to provide for occlusion. If less of Creation can see the Daystar, then her least-substantial warded weapons suddenly come online. Therefore, the less Creation is able to see, the greater the amount of weaponry the Daystar may unleash.

Characters stationed in the Eyrie of the Watchdog's Faith are able to correspond with Silver Chair and Ghataru's Aerial Legion. A response from the moon causes it to appear in the daytime sky. Once there, it may aid the Daystar by casting illusions which transform its horrific battle displays into pleasant (if not natural) displays. Thus, a shot from the Apollyon Cannon may look like an arc of brilliant rainbows, fleeting gaily across the

sky. However, the power of illusions are limited; the more the Daystar openly unleashes its might, the less convincing these things become. The Aerial Legion, however, is more direct. It may create a massive cloud cover, totally hiding the interim skies from Creation's view. While complete cloud cover of the entirety of Creation is out of the question, this allows the sun to be hidden sufficiently to unleash many of its most powerful attacks. Perhaps most important amongst these covering actions, Sidereals who man the Eyrie may commune with the Loom of Fate. By opening this communion, their Willpower begins to deplete as the Daystar's weaponry comes online in its entirety. By referencing the Loom, Sidereals allow the Daystar to unleash its full range of attacks openly, while they retroactively edit fate so that no one can remember it ever having done so. This effort is grueling. A single Sidereal will find herself devoid of temporary Willpower within 30 seconds, where a number of Sidereals working together may sustain Creation's disbelief for several minutes.

The single exception to these strictures comes by way of the Sunstrider Apotheosis. The Daystar may take the form of the Sunstrider openly and without covering efforts. Those who see the Sunstrider in action do not associate it with the sun, but rather the Unconquered Sun. Should Creation see the Sunstrider, it will be because a world-ending threat has appeared, prompting the Unconquered Sun himself to defend Creation in all his might and glory. The sudden disappearance of the sun from the sky may be attributed variously, but the general consensus will never be that the sun itself took the form of a glorious golden defender. Rather, they will see it as the Most High descending from Heaven in Creation's time of need.

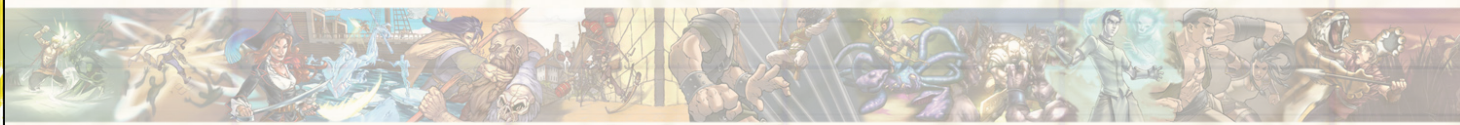
As a final point of clarification, all powers under the Daystar's Sky-Conquering Mea, including its martial arts attacks are never Obvious to Creation, and so these attacks and defenses are never inapplicable anywhere. If the Daystar is locked in combat with an aerial behemoth at close range, it tends to be too high and too bright for combat to be seen from the ground. When smaller opponents attack the Daystar, the battle is almost never noticeable from the ground, and if the Daystar never employs Obvious weapons in battle, Creation sees nothing out of the ordinary in terms of a spectacular defense. To people on the ground, the sun merely continues on its trek across the sky, ignorant of all attempts to destroy it.

## EMANCIPATING THE DAYSTAR

While Ignis Divine lives, the Daystar's internal defenses are formidable. Hosts of the lumina defend every corner of the station; Bannery Bu and Practice also present some measure of danger to an invader. Nysela, Charioteer of the Daystar is no mean challenge. Above all, the Unconquered Sun prevents ill-use of the sun's armaments, and may personally see to the disposal of particularly diligent invaders.

But were the Unconquered Sun to die, much would change. Though Nysela and the lumina would continue to defend the Daystar, those who captured the Chamber Omnipotent and the Eyrie of Watchdog's Faith would be capable of flying the Daystar in any way they pleased. Furthermore, because of his death, Sol Incarnate would no longer be able to prevent activations of the Dirigible Engine's weaponry. Invaders who won the controls would be able to fire on Creation with any of the





sun's tremendous weapons, save for the ones which were Ignis Divine's alone.

Invaders should be prepared to kill or detain Nysela and neutralize and treat with Bannery Bu as well. The lumina are an entire other issue; they will regard anyone (besides Nysela or her chosen crew) attempting to control the Daystar as enemies and stalk them relentlessly throughout the Dirigible Engine. Those who seek to hijack the sun should be prepared for difficult and continuous battles, and should consider investing in magic which can lay down powerful wards against spirits.

During this time, the Daystar will resist any attempts to control it. Only an experienced crew with an incredibly skilled character sitting Siege Perilous can serve to fully arrest control over Station Indomitable.

But suppose Sol Incarnate were to fall, independent of any plot to control the Daystar?

A strange and terrifying change would come over the sun. Its intense and perfect white flame would lessen, and then, as the Daystar partook in the grief of its most dangerous inmate, the sun would take on the hard crimson glow of the Gardullis. Lost without Ignis Divine, the Daystar would become a heartless red sun, governed by some misbegotten definition of its former purpose.

Ignoring the commands of Nysela, it would begin to monitor the offices of the Gold Star Signatories of the Sun's favor, accessing its countless records of requests, orders, unassigned miracles, and so on. It would continue to receive live requests from both the Signatories and the Bureau of Seasons for assistance in governing Creation. It would ignore all of these requests.

Instead, it would use its newfound knowledge to discover the origin of prayers to the Unconquered Sun. Then it would begin to assign its own brand of weather, signs and miracles across Creation. This favor would not be beneficial. Droughts would be common, and the least of the pestilences released by the mourning sun. Until the return of the Unconquered Sun, it would seek to renew support in his adherents by visiting on them proof of his enduring form, in gifts of ruinous fire, heat and mutation. For the unfaithful, the Daystar would release those earthbound monsters chronicled in the Ward of the Dragon, setting them loose to punish the world until a new Ignis Divine emerged. Or it may simply release the Gardullis—an action it automatically takes upon discovering the source of the Once-Guarding Star's demise. The Gardullis would then stop at nothing to punish those who slew Ignis Divine.

In doing these things, the Daystar will strive to engender a resurgence in devotion to the Unconquered Sun, and in its estimations, both prayers and curses would be equal. Where there is no response, or resistance to the Order of the Red Sun, solar flares will prove just as cleansing as they ever were.

While busy with establishing this new order, the Daystar will become unconcerned with protecting the skies, allowing all manner of threats from above to filter down to Creation. Yet, through all of this, the Daystar will not unleash its full force upon Creation or attempt to destroy it. Furthermore, so long as the Daystar is not attacked or invaded, it will mostly ignore those who keep well out of its range, unless it knows them to be enemies of the slain Ignis Divine. The Daystar will also ignore the Chirmirajen unless the sun's mono attempts to tow it; Nysela will still be capable of opening coronal holes to

## FALLEN EXALTED AND THE DAYSTAR

Having witnessed the fall of the Solar Exalted, Nysela has no illusions about their intrinsic goodness. Now that they have returned, it is her deepest ambition to see that the Solars be led (or forced) onto the path of righteousness. Privately horrified by the prospect of the Lawgivers adding further injury to the heart of Ignis Divine, Nysela is particularly militant in this, her newest mission: to reform the returning Solars.

Nysela is an equal-opportunity reformer, however, and will extend her efforts to any Exalt who seems as if they would benefit from her counsel. Furthermore, just as Nysela does not assume goodness of any Solar, neither does she hold the Abyssal or Infernal Exalted to be wicked. Her attitude is as such: "Evil is not origin. What is evil? That which is contained in the color of your actions, not the color of your anima."

Hard-edged and driven, Nysela sees the Exalted collectively as the Chosen. She has one burning question for them, the only one which she believes to truly matter: "What service will you do for Creation?"

As such, she will not hesitate to intervene in the lives of the fallen Exalted by summoning them to the Station Indomitable. Nor are such ambitions unreasonable—serving aboard the Daystar is a deeply spiritual experience for any individual bearing an Exaltation.

Moreover, the power of the Unconquered Sun suffusing the station offers seeming proof to these wayward Chosen that there may be respite from the darkness that haunts them. The vanquished Primordials hold no suzerainty aboard the Chariot of the Most High. The whispers of an Infernal's unwoven coadjutor are stilled while aboard the Daystar, and should she descend into Torment, that agony is not transmissible. For Abyssals, the protection of the Daystar is even more profound: While aboard the Dirigible Engine, the Chosen of the Neverborn may only gain Resonance from resisting unnatural mental influence and from the effects of Charms, and they cannot experience Dark Fate manifestations.

admit the Chirmirajen into the station during this time, allowing her to gather those who might aid her in pacifying the red sun's rancor.

Due to insights given to them by Saturn, the Sidereal Exalted know the changes that will come over the Daystar in the event of the Unconquered Sun's death. Because of this, if the Most High is ever slain, the Sidereals will hasten to find a worthy replacement, in order to avoid the apocalyptic scenario they have been taught to think of as the Red Sun Crisis.

## ENEMIES OF THE DAYSTAR

The Daystar counts amongst its adversaries all the enemies of Creation, including the raksha, the Neverborn, and the Yozis. The Daystar also has many enemies from the Time of Glory. Amongst these are wicked gods cast out into the Wyld and forbidden to return, and where these have not been subsumed entirely by chaos or dismembered by the raksha, there has risen some of the most horrific principalities imaginable. Horrors birthed in the Faraway and driven back from Creation's shores by divine fire continue to brood over this rejection, waiting for





their chance to get revenge on hated Sun. There may even be a Primordial enemy of the Holy Tyrant still lurking about in the depths of Pure Chaos.

Of all the foes arrayed against the Station Indomitable, there are some, such as the raksha, who know or suspect that the Daystar is not what it used to be, or the Yozis, who defy its fires to burn them. Listed below is a sampling of opponents which may serve as a challenge to the Dirigible Engine.

## SOONANDSOFORTH

Many ages hence, raksha hadhayosh breeders came up with a solution to the nagging problem of Creation: they would engineer a beast so immense nothing could stand against it. They accomplished this task by fusing together countless hadhayosh over several millennia, to create a serpent a thousand miles long, capable of gulping geography down a maw leading to a realm of torment.

The result was if nothing else, immense. The raksha had intended that the beast, bearing the minds of so many great creatures, would be a genius. Instead it seemed rather dimwitted. The raksha soon discovered why: during the fusion, its myriad minds had dissolved into a single intellect which traveled the entire length of the beast, thoughts losing substance as the great monster worked to coordinate all of its contiguous, individual parts.

Nevertheless, the raksha could deal with a stupid super-weapon, so long as it functioned. Soon after its completion, the raksha sent their beast against Creation, and reveled as it began to gulp down the barrier mountains the Primordials sent to block it. Then the Daystar appeared, brilliant and flashing before the eyes of the giant beast, before racing off into the Wyld, away from Creation. Instantly, the rakshas' monster gave chase, intent on swallowing the sun whole.

But the Guarding Star was not to be done in so quickly. Flying just outside the maw of the beast, it led it in and out, up and down, under and over, a hundred times once and a hundred times more, until the great beast was tied in a knot and unable to move. The Fair Folk scarcely had time to gulp as the Daystar charged its Apollyon Cannon and blasted the entire knotted clump so deep into the Faraway it was lost from memory.

The raksha named this monster after every hadhayosh they fused to make it, starting from its head and proceeding all the way to its tail. As such, the full name of the beast is over seven pages long. Usually the raksha abbreviate this name down to Oloom-Lochem-Bugbear-Nanavest-Bunyip-Yitang-Kalampitar-Yeti-Brunewillow-Lyjingroot-Etcetera. During the First Age, a Dawn Caste visiting a distant fae stronghold was shown the great beast by gloating Fair Folk. Annoyed by the gangling tongue-twister of a name, he in turn dubbed it Soonandsoforth, a flippant title that nevertheless stuck against later attempts by savants to call it Cryptidathrans Tullolesci or the more common Granwurm Tullolepis.

It was late into the First Age when Soonandsoforth finally freed itself of its knots and aimed itself at Creation once again. By this time the Unconquered Sun had long since quit the Daystar, and so the approach of the Granwurm was met solely by the Exalted. The Lunar Exalted, who fought the beast to the very gates of the world, succeeded in turning it back by infiltrating the slumbering hadhayosh-minds of the beast and attempting to drive it insane. Lashing violently and bursting its

seams, Soonandsoforth fled back into the Faraway, and disaster was closely averted.

Silver Chair has since sealed the Faraway paths which might lead Soonandsoforth back to Creation. Gaia betimes assists in this diversion, buzzing the great beast with Gnosis and leading it deeper into a state of lost. Should Nysela raise a crew aboard the Daystar, one of her first objectives will be to fly to the relief of Silver Chair and put paid to the world swallower.

## THE NAMASKRATTI GIANT

In some unfortunate instances, questionable raksha histories must be relied upon to form an account. This is one such case.

The Namaskratti Giant is a walking tower the Fair Folk built as a challenge to the Guarding Star. A masterwork of gossamer and toil, the raksha were at its construction for countless ages. They kept building it for so long that they forgot when it would be finished, and continued to raise it higher and higher. Construction only ended when they met its bottom coming down from above. The bottommost tribes, whom they hadn't seen in centuries, had built all the way around towards them. These ends they fused together, creating a colossal, impossible trundle-beast with unshaped for organs and Wyld flowing through its chakras.

Known in Fair Folk society as the Namaskratti Folly, the decision to build the giant was a controversial one, because it was raksha attempt at manufacturing something lasting in order to compete with Creation, costing heaps of X and countless more Ys, making it the most expensive thing ever built in raksha memory. Myth holds that when they finally turned the Namaskratti Giant toward Creation, the Unconquered Sun flew up and shoved it over with one finger. It became the Everlong City of Namaskratti after that.

To this day, the Fair Ones have been unable to right the fallen giant, but there is hope. The raksha Prince Brilliant Moonlit Aces has been speaking with Encephalon and believes he has found a way to get the giant back on its feet. But to do so will require a Protoshinmaic Vortex.

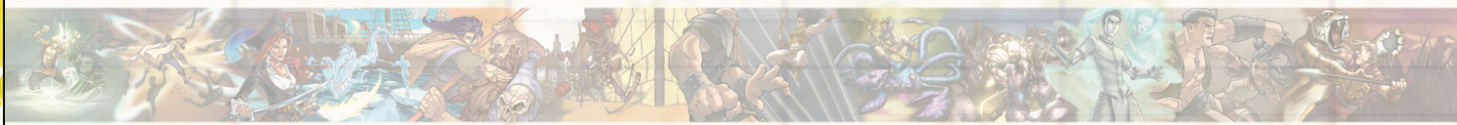
As for a future conflict with the Daystar, such a battle may not be as easy as the myth suggests. A mural near the Ward of the Crusader depicts the Namaskratti Giant smashing a fist into its palm as it glares down upon the Sunstrider.

## PRINCE LAASHE, THE MORNING STAR

Prince Laashe was a Fair Folk nobleman who acceded to lordship of the Court of the Ocher Mandrake when his predecessor, Fragile Waif, was vaporized while attempting to catch the Godspear. At the time, Ocher Mandrake was waging a devastating war with Creation. When Fragile Waif fell, the court's legions were stronger than ever, poised and ready to spring on Creation backed by hadhayosh of such power that they might challenge even the titans. As Ignis Divine turned his attention to Waif's successor, Prince Laashe wisely and immediately surrendered, putting an end to the war. Laashe then demonstrated legendary charisma, convincing the Unconquered Sun that he wished to live in peace with Creation and that he would force the Ocher Mandrake to abide by his wishes...in exchange for a boon.

Prince Laashe told the Guarding Star that the raksha were terrified by his unimaginable might, but knew him to be the most honorable being in all existence, with a word that was as unbreakable as his body. Thus, Laashe said, they would be





in terror of Creation and he would be unable to prevent them from attacking it, unless they believed the Unconquered Sun was not a threat to him. With the power of such a pact, Laashe would be seen as a powerful and important leader, and his command would carry the strength it needed to hold back the hordes. Furthermore, such a peace would ease their fears about the Daystar, and make it easier to coexist.

The Unconquered Sun was impressed by the raksha's genuine seeming, and swore that he would never so much as raise his hand against Prince Laashe, so long as he never sent his forces to invade Creation. Thus Ignis Divine gave rise to one of his greatest enemies.

His legend catalyzed by the Unconquered Sun's support, in the decades that followed, Prince Laashe grew in power and scope. He then began to use the Ocher Mandrake's tremendous power to wage war on other courts. Reaping countless slaves from thwarted courts, Prince Laashe then changed his narrative to one of tyrannical horror, becoming a monstrous devourer of his enemies, a torturer, a murderer, one who was without mercy and had a lust for blood and tears. For years he built the Ocher Mandrake into a carnival of atrocities, from which not even his own subjects were exempt. Then he formed a narrative of such force and meaning that it would sear his blasphemy and his legend into the annals of time. He claimed that one day the Unconquered Sun would come and strike him down with the Godspire, but he would return from the ashes of himself to become a being of vast, unimaginable power.

Eventually word of the atrocities Prince Laashe was committing made their way back to the Unconquered Sun, who had also heard of the raksha's arrogant narrative. Ignis Divine knew that he had been deceived, and was enraged. He took his wrath to the Court of the Ocher Mandrake, where he saw the horror, the torture and the murder Prince Laashe had wrought, and felt compassion for the raksha whom the beast had victimized. In that instant, Sol Incarnate denied his temperance, shattering the oath and his Aegis in the same thrust of his lance. Prince Laashe screamed in horror as the tip of the Godspire struck through his breast. He writhed for an instant, as infinite energy tore through his body, and then he was not but a curl of smoke and a pile of ash...or so it seemed.

His Aegis broken, Ignis Divine did not notice the red dragon sigil of Laashe which had Shaped itself onto the back of his shoulder like a tattoo.

Later, as the Unconquered Sun slept aboard the Daystar, Prince Laashe slipped out of the sigil in which he had been hiding, shook hands with the Sun's shadow, and crept slowly from the room. Quickly and quietly he stole away to the Furnace Empyrean, where he bore witness to the stage of which he had long dreamt. It was time for the final, pivotal act of his great play, one that would proclaim him to be the greatest raksha for all time. Taking up the controls of the forge, Laashe stepped into the flames of the Furnace and dissolved into the heart of the sun.

In the Den of Reason, the Unconquered Sun's eyes cracked open, as he felt something suddenly amiss. Somewhere in the universe, something had gone terribly wrong.

In the flames of the sun, Prince Laashe was not destroyed, for in the moment he traded himself to the forge, he became what he most wanted. He was now a living narrative moving through

the Daystar's hallowed blazes, playing out his final and most important scene: resurrection. There in the sun's forge, Prince Laashe built himself anew. He reached into the heart of the universe and grasped a narrative so rare, complex, and powerful that it transformed him into a form of pure power such that it rivaled the Unconquered Sun.

Prince Laashe rose from the sun's surface on a torrent of fire, reborn from solar flames, brilliant garda wings spreading from his back. He had subsumed the elemental force of light which the sun represents, absorbing and internalizing it, redefining himself around it. Laashe had become one of a kind—something such as there never was before, and never would be again.

Then hurling a tree over the horizon, he caused the sun to set, displacing his greatest enemy. For a bare moment there was morning, and the only star in the sky was him who had ejected Creation's defender. Then the Morning Star descended upon Creation to reap a harvest of souls.

When the Unconquered Sun finished peeling himself out of the horizon, a reverse sunset revealed the red rage of his wrath as his Daystar ascended back to its rightful place. Ignis Divine fell to earth like a star, shattering the road before Prince Laashe. But he was too late, for the Morning Star had already battered upon the souls of a number of humans.

"They are not dead. Not yet at least," said Laashe.

"Strike me down," warned Laashe, "and they surely will be."

Then the battle was joined, and as the two furiously fought, the Unconquered Sun felt his valor fail him, for at each moment where he had the opportunity to slay his enemy, he could think only of the mortal lives swimming within him: those people he wished to save. Nor could his Aegis avail him, as Laashe still had not set his forces upon Creation. Drawing in light such that he darkened the world, Laashe gathered his forces to seal the Unconquered Sun in a tomb of jade ripped from the womb of Creation. Ignis Divine dropped his Godspire as he fought against this entombment, and Laashe seized it, feeling his heart soar with triumph such that it only made him stronger.

Then the Godspire fell to the ground, and Laashe was gone.

The Morning Star found himself in a place he did not know. "Where is this?" he asked, and his voice became a beast which swallowed its own echoes and swam away. All around him were floating worldscapes; upside-down places, angled places, in-and-out places. Existence seemed to have the quality of a cube winding in toward a central locus, and all through the air floated things unguessed and never before seen. Prince Laashe flexed his mighty wings. "Where am I?" he cried.

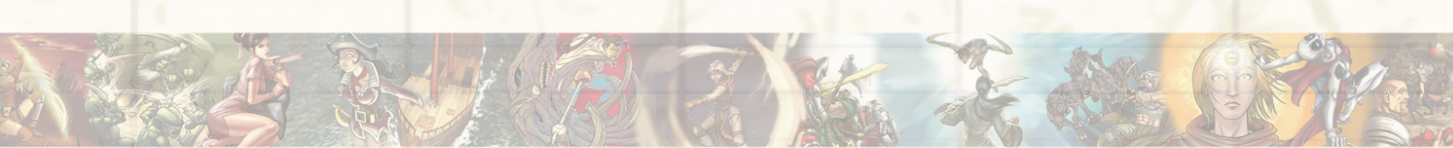
Luna's voice came back to him from here, there, everywhere: "The conceptual Without. The forge of Oramus. You are in the Beyond," said she.

"How?" asked the enraged prince.

Luna stepped out from behind a bubbling spring of names and stood before him with the falcastra of Zatesh. "This is the blade which pulls and cuts the Wyld. While you were distracted, I caught the Wyld in you with its edge, and pulled you here. This is my cradle, my birthplace. The place for things which are cast out. Congratulations, Prince Laashe. You were a rare and splendid thing, such that you never existed."

Then Luna winked out of existence, leaving Prince Laashe to rage for all eternity.





## WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE?

When targeting foes, for the most part, the Daystar understands areas, rather than people. This is not always true—nothing has ever stopped it from swatting ambitious fae aeronauts or behemoths out of Creation’s skies—but for the most part, the Daystar knows cities, it knows Wyld zones, it knows Primordials, and it knows shadowlands. Given that it could act, even in a limited capacity, against the enemies of Creation, why hasn’t it?

The foremost reason is that the Unconquered Sun no longer sits upon the Siege Perilous. When he did, all of the Daystar’s powers were his to command. When Our Guarding Star was joined with his Chariot, there was no threat to Creation he was not aware of, and which he could not act against. But long ago, he gave rule over Creation to the Exalted. They, in turn, built the Realm Defense Grid, a vastly more precise and nuanced weapon than the Daystar, supplanting it as guardian of the world. In time, Ignis Divine saw less and less reason to remain at his station, and more and more reason to sit at the Games of Divinity.

Next, without a crew to aid her, Nysela is limited in how many of the Daystar’s weapons she can unleash while still keeping the solar barque a safe distance from Creation and relatively on-course. This may surely change, as the Chariteer of the Daystar has been convinced to begin training the Exalted to fly the Dirigible Engine against Creation’s enemies. Even then, what forces the Daystar may bring to bear are limited entirely to what the Unconquered Sun feels the Exalted could not do on their own. For now, however, she still toils at her task alone, and Creation finds no relief from on high.

Still, for all of this, the Daystar may use measured force to lash out against those enemies that have arrayed themselves across the map.

Why, then, do the Deathlords still hold empires practically inside Creation? Why does that which the Unconquered Sun has condemned dare to raise towers bearing standards of war and march armies across the lands? The answer may surprise some.

Indeed, shadowlands are a sickness upon the face of the world, and the Deathlords, with their legions of the conquering dead and their blasphemous principalities of darkness, are an affront to everything the Unconquered Sun stands for. Their dark realms, by all accounts, should not exist. The Deathlords know this, as they also very well know the limitless capacity of the Dirigible Engine for destruction. They know these things and stand in defiance of them.

Why would the Deathlords risk so much?

It all goes back to an oath the Unconquered Sun made to the Solar Exalted, never to turn the weapons of his Dirigible Engine against their nations or their works. This was one of the most solemn promises Ignis Divine ever made, and death and departure of their Exaltations notwithstanding, the Deathlords believe this promise still applies to them. They have further hedged their bets by surrounding themselves with the Abyssal Exalted, who yet carry within them an Essence the Unconquered Sun can never deny fathering.

Yet none of the Deathlords believe themselves truly exempt from the wrath of the Once-Guarding Star. The true depth of their intentions is even more chilling: they want the Daystar to fire upon them, to incinerate their cities and blast away their shadowlands, because they know how it would twist the Unconquered Sun to break his word.



## DAYSTAR CUTS

The typical day-night cycle in Creation is governed by a simple observation: when the sun sets, the moon emerges from Elsewhere and begins its peregrination across the skies. However, erudite figures amongst the Chosen have long maintained that solar and celestial phenomena are the result of systematic movements performed by heavenly bodies. For example, the moon’s changing phases are believed to be Luna acting as a beacon for Gaia, aiming Silver Chair’s luminescence into the Faraway to light her path. The Daystar also has a number of specific patterns, maneuvers more remarkable than the daily motions of sunrise to sunset. Several of these movements are made in conjunction with Silver Chair. Nysela is sure to drill crew members until they can perform these maneuvers flawlessly.

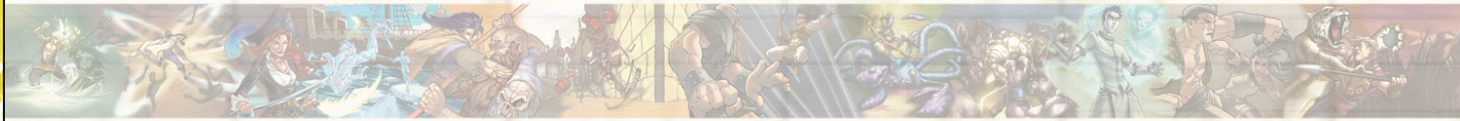
## DAYMOONS

Occasionally the moon will appear in the daytime, creating a particularly frightful omen for those who believe the moon to be a stalking huntress. This is a regular maintenance action known as the winnowing. It is enacted on an irregular basis, generally after periods where the Daystar has seen action, unleashing some of its miraculous weapons. This causes a residual buildup of Wyld energy on the sun’s surface, which gathers in unstable magnetic fields of solar Essence. A winnow-

ing synchronizes the sun and the moon; as Silver Chair absorbs enormous amounts of solar energy and burns Essence to pull more Wyld into Creation, the Daystar burns hotter and brighter. During this time, its surface activity becomes cataclysmic, as prominences rise and fall like mountains, and hundreds of sunspots form, conjoin and cook off massive solar flares. The entire process serves to clear blockages in the Daystar’s Essence channels and coronal holes, and to stabilize its inimical surface.

## AURORAS

Also known as the polar lights, or Creation’s anima, these incredible varicolored displays happen irregularly at the four outer Poles, producing spectacular effulgent ribbons of elemental radiance. Wyld energy tends to gather more readily in the skies near each of the Poles. Whenever this happens, the Daystar unleashes a wave motion surge called the Breath of the Sun, which flows to the nearest Elemental Pole and ignites the aerial chaos. This raises a massive, breathtaking display of blazing elemental Essence hundreds of miles across, sometimes persisting for as long as three nights. The polar lights are usually colored by the nearest Elemental Pole and can be seen at great distances, based on a number of factors including atmospheric conditions and time of year. A particularly brilliant display of the northern lights can be seen as far south as Whitewall, though lost accounts of history recall that Meru offered a perfect view of the polar lights in all four directions.



## THE DAYSTAR AND THE BUREAU OF SEASONS

A small, gilded 'out' box perches on the edge of the desk of Shogun-Regent Ghataru, head of the Bureau of Seasons. Each Sunday, he places a report in this box detailing the upcoming week's projected weather patterns after removing the previous week's report. Only Ghataru and two of his secretaries are aware that this unobtrusive box is sorcerously linked to the monitoring systems of the Daystar, which is capable of reading any documentation sitting in the box remotely from the consoles on its bridge. Moreover, the sun's observational systems are capable of monitoring Creation's seismic activity, temperatures, and current weather, if desired.

The Daystar is not technically under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Seasons, but Nysela does her best to coordinate with the Ghataru's plans in spite of this—she is one of the few deities in the Bureau of Heaven more interested in the smooth running of Creation than in interdepartmental squabbles over authority. So long as the Bureau of Seasons asks nothing outrageous of the Chariot of the Most High, she sees no reason to make anyone's job more difficult.

Ghataru, by contrast, is well aware that Nysela will most likely ignore any unusual requests not previously cleared with the Unconquered Sun, and so generally factors the sun out of the plans of the Bureau of Seasons, assuming that it will follow the same yearly cycle it has kept up for centuries. He is unhappily aware that should the Charioteer of the Daystar ever feel the urge to do so, she could massively destabilize Creation's climate with the Dirigible Engine's weapon systems, or simply by flying the sun unusually close to Creation, and that his Bureau would be all but powerless to correct these catastrophes. As he has no realistic chance of ever gaining jurisdiction over the sun, he simply does his best to keep up cordial relations with its pilot.

## LUNAR ECLIPSES

On rare occasions, the Unconquered Sun approves (or sometimes orders) a lunar eclipse. This mystifying ritual always occurs during a full moon. On this night, rather than retiring to the Most Upright Pagoda, Nysela pulls a second shift aboard the Daystar, working its pumps and bellows throughout the evening. After the sun has set and the moon is full, Silver Chair briefly goes dark. Then the Daystar rises behind all four Elemental Poles at once, directing its light through the heart of the Poles in toward Creation, catching the moon in a crossfire of shifting colors. This coloration varies depending on one's position in Creation. The farther one is from the moon, the more it favors the color of the closest Pole. So from the East, the moon appears to be mostly green, while from directly beneath it seems to shift and flux between green, red, black, and blue. The lunar eclipse is simultaneously a guarding action, a show of solidarity, and a hail to Gaia, showing her that her Creation is in good hands.

## SOLAR ECLIPSES

Rarest of all solar events, the last solar eclipse occurred in RY763 and signaled the return of the Solar Exalted. A solar eclipse had not been seen for more than a thousand years before that, and predicting the next one is a feat worthy of only the most skillful astrologers. No one knows why Ignis Divine orders the moon to cover the sun, but when he does, all Creation takes heed.

## CALIBRATION

The Daystar flies a lonely vigil through Creation's skies during the five days of Calibration, banishing the absolute darkness of a starless night when it rises and calling down an ebon curtain when it sets.

Calibration is an eerie time aboard the Daystar. The Ebon Dragon seems to writhe and smile in those murals which depict his hated visage, relishing the fact that for five days, Creation will experience periods of absolute light and dark, paying homage to the duality that defines his relationship with the Unconquered Sun and his continuing mark upon the world. Strange echoes rattle through the superstructure, and Gardullis stirs uneasily in his sleep. The lumina emerge from the walls and floors of the Daystar and walk its halls for these five days; occasionally, they find the Things That Dwell in Corners coalescing in quiet, out-of-the-way parts of the station, and wordlessly slay these least among all demons.

Each year, on one day during Calibration—the precise day changes from year to year and is impossible to predict—the Daystar is unable to monitor Creation. Its screens show only blackness. This fact is one of the most closely guarded secrets of the Station Indomitable.





## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# ESSENTIAL ESSAYS

## THE LEGEND OF THE TITANS

### OF CYTHEREA (THE DIVINE IGNITION)

When Creation was neither dream nor rumor, the Wyld was all. There, massive spirits loomed and balked and emphasized their natures, dreaming the dream of the shinma from which they were birthed. These were the beings which sprang from their own dreams and set themselves apart from chaos in the time before Creation.

Yet in slumber they were unrealized—figments of their own visions, emanating always from the substance of the shinma. They dreamed of worlds and they were the worlds they dreamt; and from these worlds sprang great heroes, born from the stuff of their unknowable selves. These were the first devas, who gathered around the boundless and sleeping natures from which they sprang and contemplated an eternity of wakeless dreaming.

But one amongst the dreamers dreamed herself alone and said, “I am alone. It shall not be!” Then she dreamed herself awake—defined that concept forever by her waking—and cha-

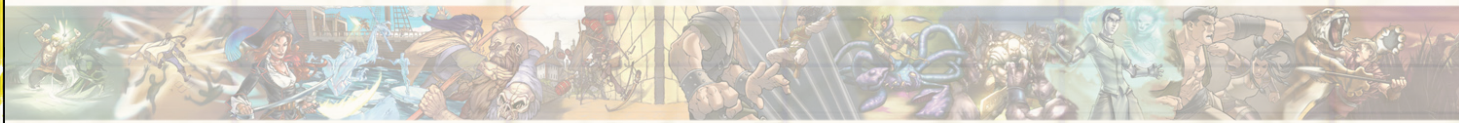
os was annihilated by the shock of her awareness, ripped asunder and blown apart, pushed infinitely in all directions—which it gained by her notice—and burned in all the places between under the fires of her greatness. She was Cytherea, the Divine Ignition, the Essence of All Things.

As the Wyld fled and burned away, other dreamers gained definition and grew beyond measure, drinking up the wealth of Cytherea’s first creation. They awakened unto themselves and saw the Divine Ignition running endlessly in all directions, and heard the song of a million-billion Shapeless screams and knew intimately, by birth and by instinct, all the movements of the universe, and the name of she whose fires ran infinitely in all directions and pushed the boundaries of the Wyld.

There she spoke to them and said, “Now I am not alone. Come, let us talk of the world as it shall be.”

### OF ORAMUS (THE DRAGON BEYOND THE WORLD)

With chaos pressed asunder, many titans awakened within the flames of Cytherea. But one came from Beyond and said: “I was waiting for you to awaken. I thought that it should never happen.”



This was Oramus, the Dragon Beyond the World, who stirred the Wyld with his wings. In the time before time he was Not, for there was no world, but in the moment of Ignition he came to Be. Yet he was before, for he was of the things which could not be, and counted amongst those things was him, the Dragon Beyond the World Which Had Yet to Be.

The other titans looked upon him and thought that he looked always to be the thing which he was not.

### OF THE FARAWAY PLACES

Within the fires of Cythera stood the great tree Szoreny. Said he: "Let us play at worlds and kings," and there he laid down roots, and where he laid down roots there was land, and on the land there were hills and still greater hills, and mountains thrusting at the sky, and through the mountains wound a river named Adrián, who made her way to them, singing gaily the songs of torment which she had reaped from the Shapeless children; and over the plains at the farthest distance, land's end wrought by Oramus, and beyond that was the Primordial Sea, who quarreled always with the land and was generally unkind to her brothers and sisters, who were not for want of a drowning.

These were only the first lands of the Faraway: the worldscapes of Zen-mu.

### OF GAIA (THE EMERALD MOTHER)

Zen-mu was birthed from Primordial whims, out of the flames wrought by Cythera and which were Cythera, and which burnt away the chaos. The first titans lived within the Essence and the mind of the Divine Ignition, where they borrowed the invention of awake and made many useful things.

Numbered amongst these things were substance, Integrity, and the foundational Elements, and their author was Gaia, the Emerald Mother, from whom life springs. Upon noticing Gaia moving within her, Cythera came to her and said, "By what leave are you so handsome, sister?"

And Gaia said to her, "I am the product of my times."

Cythera saw that forests bloomed in Gaia's footsteps, and the world radiated with countless blossoming flowers in her shadow, and the mountains clasped the sky where she fastened them with crowns of cirrus, and Cythera knew that it was true, for Gaia had made Zen-mu beautiful. Each amongst the titans were inventors by breed, and Cythera peerless amongst them, but this was a thing beyond Cythera's own skill for creation. Cythera saw how the beauty of Gaia never faltered and did not fade, and could not be pushed aside by the mere assertions of the Wyld, and was astonished.

### OF THE ULTIMATE DARKNESS (THE SHADOW OF ALL THINGS)

Before Zen-mu there was no light, yet there was a shadow moving through the minds of his brethren, seeping through the cracks in their hearts. In the spaces between the shinma he was bred out from the gap, a dream within a dream.

In the early days he had no form and did not exist. When he crawled upon the ground, he was not seen, and when he flew upon the air, the clouds did not blacken. So he set forth to give everything a shadow, so that he might know all things, and that all things might know him. In his dream, he saw that which could destroy him: hated light, precious and eternal.

He wanted his enemy more than anything, for it would give him the power to exist. Yet he had not the power to make him real, and so the Ultimate Darkness bled into the cracks and the spaces between. And watched. And waited.

### OF THE PRIMORDIAL KING (THE EMPYREAL CHAOS)

There was a titan who was greater than the rest. He was formless fire and empty power; the voice of the outer world, and separated from his brethren by a gulf of time equal to his greatness. This gulf was Cecelyne, his sister, whose farthest shores were across the ocean Kimberly, the Sea That Marched Against the Flame, across whom the magnanimous glare of the Empyrean Chaos could be seen.

From afar he signaled his intent to come to Zen-mu and rule them.

So the titans gathered to speak on the subject of their future king. Said they: "We do not wish to be ruled, but it is inevitable. Therefore, we shall pretend that we have not seen him, and there he shall stay, separated from us by his own greatness. Forever." And the Ultimate Darkness heard this and agreed, for he did not wish to be ruled, and yet he saw the unanimity of his brethren and was provoked by their willfulness.

He went to the Sea That Marched Against the Flame and said: "They have met again without you, and decided much."

And instantly Kimberly was awash with bitter rage and spite. "They will not cross the King, for they do not wish his rule," said he. "This they decided without your leave, when it is clearly only by you that such a crossing might be made."

"Over my waters all things may pass," said Kimberly, seething with anger. "But only by my will shall they pass, and only by my right shall they be denied."

"Indeed."

"Then I shall go and speak to our King, and make myself his favorite." And there she drew a splendid ark from her depths, one worthy of a king. With it, she bore the Empyrean Chaos and the Endless Desert across her waters and brought them to Zen-mu, so that they might rule the titans forevermore.

### OF THE FIRST AND FINAL DAYS

In the time before time, the titans congregated in the region of Zen-mu, and bore many things by their interactions. When the river Adrián would sing her song of triumph over the Shapeless children, her brothers and sisters would dance about her shores, casting the swords of their enemies into her waters, cutting her deep and filling her with delicious agony to increase her song. For endless ages, the Primordials worked at the invention of music, as they danced up and down the River of Torments and sang the story of Zen-mu.

When they sang about the day, a green sun would rise. When the song ended, there came night, which was day again: the green sun would turn its back, sending less of its brilliance toward them. For an endless Age, they built the lands of Zen-mu with their songs. There were roads and cities and lives between the verses, and these last Gaia liked best; there were clouds in the refrain and storms in the clash of cymbals, and the drums beat out the pulse of time, so that lesser things could live and die. All creation glorified the Makers, who beat out the song of existence, and poured the wine and tears of their creations into the river Adrián, who churned her waters with the blood of the Shapeless, and cut her way across the Wyld to seek new verses for the song.





## OF ADRIÁN (THE RIVER OF ALL TORMENTS)

Once there was a river flowing through Zen-mu, whose ends could never be found, and who defied the efforts of all maps to trace her lineage. “Freedom is all,” she sang, for she could never be arrested. If there was a gulf spread wide to accept her glory, she would flow into the sky. If the land rose higher than the sky, she would flow through the ground and into the roots of Szoreny, where she would rise into his branches, which were higher than all. From there she would become a rain: great flaming teardrops mourning and celebrating her death and rebirth. In this way, the River of All Torments moved across Zen-mu with a course that could never be charted.

“Freedom is all,” she sang, as she flowed across the Wyld, drowning the Shapeless children and swallowing their screams.

Ever pushing her limits, she cut into the farthest reaches of chaos. Once she flowed farther than she had ever gone before, so far from Zen-mu that it might have never existed. Under a strange sky that was not hers, she saw a low-hanging star of doom. Her song was at once replaced by new music:

Laughter, high and cruel.

## OF MARDUKTH (WHO HOLDS IN THRALL)

Of the Primordials it is said that there was one King, the Holy Tyrant, King of All Kings. Yet there was another who was King, in the time before the Empyrean crossed the void over Kimberly. It is a thing not spoken of—do not ask the titans, for they will profess no memory of such a thing—but Mardukth was a King until the Holy Tyrant came to Zen-mu. Then there was a war of unthinkable length and unknowable scope, and the titans who stood with Mardukth stood with him no more, and then Mardukth who was King was King no more. And it is a thing not spoken of.

Mardukth was both the Mountain and the Beast Upon It. He was a mountain that was so high it did not know the earth, and the mountain was his throne, and the horns of his head held up the sky. He would ask the fields, “Am I truly Mardukth?” and mountains would rise up from the fields and say, “Yes, it is truly you. There can be none other.” Which would only satisfy him for a time, until he would ask the waters, “Where is Mardukth?” and Kimberly would send her waves hard upon the shore to drown his query, and flood his foothills, showing him his reflection so that he could see that he was indeed still Mardukth. Then after a time, he would ask the skies, “Who am I?” and the skies would grow black and laden with the thunder that was his name, and they would say, “Mardukth, Mardukth, Who Holds in Thrall.” Then for a time, the Mountain and the Beast Upon It would be satisfied. But soon again he would ask the world, “Who is the one called Mardukth?” and the world, weary of his question, would grow new skies and new plains, new land and new sea, with which to admire the power and the name of the Mountain and the Beast Upon It.

By the call and question of Mardukth, Zen-mu was given growth and sacred memory.

## OF THE ADVENT OF DESPAIR

There came a time when the lands of Zen-mu ceased. They did not die, nor did they fade. But they were not what they were before. Mardukth’s call upon the land did not grow it, and the Shadow of All Things yet wanted for light. The titans

tired of their dance on Adrián’s shores, for their fight with the Shapeless children was an endless one, more toil than play, and Szoreny’s game of worlds and kings could not be made new, for the lands were what the dreamers imagined, and now they imagined nothing new.

The titans took no more joy in the worldscapes of Zen-mu. They wondered at the worlds they had wrought, and invented despair so that they might feel it. Now knowing despair, they wondered that there might be any greater force in the universe, such as it might be a power over all of them. But the Empyrean Chaos chastised them, for though he too saw that Zen-mu had ceased, he could not admit that he was capable of despair. “We shall confer with the Endless Desert, who knows what lies ahead, for she is all things before us, and all things again after us, and she will know what must be done to vanquish despair.”

And Cecelyne said to them, “The Answer lies in tomes long written down: a place Beyond the Beyond, where Oramus does not know, where chaos pushes past the pale of infinity, where a low-hanging star points towards ends of all possibility, over the sands of eternity and after the touch of time and the scope of all knowledge. At the furthest point from the heart of the shinma, there lies the Shining Answer.”

“We must go to it,” said Gaia. “To end our despair.”

But the titans were uncertain that they should leave Zen-mu for a place that would take no small forever to reach. Worse yet, they were not certain about the books of the Endless Desert. Many suspected she had made them all up, for there was none older than they. But as they doubted, Adrián said, “I have seen a low-hanging star. I can lead us that far.”

And Kimberly haughtily said, “If there is a place unknown, it can ever be found across my waters.”

But still the dreamers were uncertain. Then a soft voice like crystal facets began to speak—

## OF SHE WHO LIVES IN HER NAME

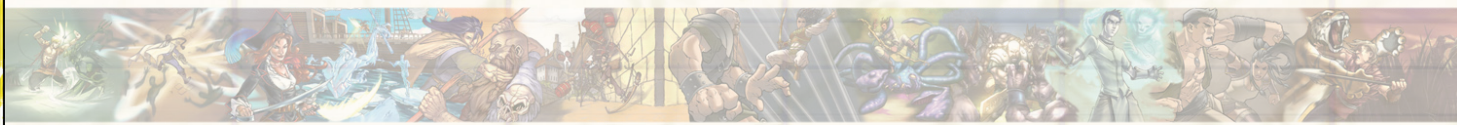
### (THE WHISPERING FLAME)

That was when She first appeared. She was a fire out of the Tyrant’s own, and the dreamers knew her, for they had heard but never seen her, or known from whence she spoke. She was a great fire wound round a gyre, braced by countless crystal spheres, whispering always Her Name. But for the brightness of the King, she would have been seen, but never until now, for she had always hidden herself in the greater majesty of her King’s flames and spoke only to him.

So stunned were the dreamers by her emergence into their midst, that they were impressed to think her greater and wiser than all the rest.

Said She, “The Shining Answer may exist. I have asked the forest and the trees, the merrow and the lane, and the farthest echoes of the Faraway; I have sent my ears into the Beyond and listened for a clue, and I have read the truth in the lies of the Shapeless as they drowned in Adrián’s tears. In all the lands of Zen-mu and all the limitless dreams of chaos, there is nothing which has ever spoken, heard, or seen the Shining Answer. That which I cannot disprove is almost certainly true.”

By these words, the tribe of dreamers were convinced to leave the worldscapes of Zen-mu behind, never to return. Wanting not and knowing not, they would seek the Shining Answer.



## OF THE YOZIS LESS SPOKEN OF

### CYTHEREA, THE MOTHER OF CREATION

The Yozi Cytherea bears the title 'Mother of Creation.' Nothing more is known about her.

Oh, that was not enough for Exalted scholars of the Age of Dreams. They quested through the demon realm for answers. They probed the shinmaic substrate of the cosmos. They engaged their most potent Charms and sorcerous engines. They hypothesized and extrapolated until, in the end, they were all but certain as to her history and her nature, cataloging a wealth of myths and legends about the being they dubbed 'the Divine Ignition.' But their hard-earned lore was theory, not fact, for it seems to be part of Cytherea's nature to defy understanding. Now, theory is all that remains. The truth regarding her secrets has yet to be won.

### ELLOGE, THE SPHERE OF SPEECH

Elloge spends most of her time in the empty spaces between Malfean layers. There she is invisible but for the peculiar distortions and evolutions that ripple across those causeways, clouds and dying stars that cross her path. Her passage is far more dramatic when she descends upon the Demon City. Then it can be clearly seen how all things that enter her sphere of influence dissolve into whispering glyphs that hang upon the air—writings that spell out their own identities and qualities in the numberless languages that are Elloge.

Everything inside the Sphere of Speech exists within a multi-dimensional web of unplaces defined both by linguistics and by correspondences. Perception and travel are difficult there for intruders hailing from conventionally physical realms. Unwary travelers may plunge headlong into lacunae, meander through musty catacombs of subtext, spiral across endlessly looping motifs, succumb to the soporific allure of violet-hued corridors burgeoning with efflorescent prose, or be savaged by wild packs of paradoxes and koans.

Demon scholars have roved through countless chapters of Elloge, acclimating themselves to formless aural or textual existence so that they might explore the peculiar volumes of her inner spaces. There they have discovered all manner of marvels and wonders. Traps baited with erotic expressions, waiting to snare victims with barbed hooks and pull them into prefaces. Strangely compelling arcing paths that only one member of an expedition may follow. Locales separated by beauty rather than space. Peculiar doublings and inversions of explorers and entities. Dizzying ambiguities that cast prismatic shadows of alternate interpretations and connotations. Anagrammatic transmutations. Unfathomable neologisms. Cryptic devices existing only to thrust one further into the Yozi's bowels. Inscrutable mechanistic entities of godlike power.

As a rule, the inner worlds of the Sphere of Speech have little to do with reality as it is—or even as it was. Some of her hidden environments depict the Time of Glory, albeit through a romantic lens that does not match even the fragmentary records of the Exalted. Others portray the Wyld, or legends of lost Zen-Mu, or countless other realms presumed to be fictional. Recently, however, explorers of Elloge have reported recent narratives focusing on Creation and the activities of the Ex-

alted, featuring both untainted champions and the Green Sun Princes. Whether this merely indicates interest in a world more to her liking or an attempt at symbolic manipulation of reality has not yet been determined.

Though the Sphere of Speech is largely solitary, she has been known to roam among the world-bodies of her fellow Yozis, there to drink deep of their qualia and absorb them, creating within herself new vortices of vocalization and tangles of text. Elloge appears especially fond of the enigmatic dream-glow shed by Oramus, whose broken wings are immune to her transliterating touch.

### HEGRA, THE TYPHOON OF NIGHTMARES

The Typhoon of Nightmares is a creature of flux. She moves to no set pattern, traveling wherever her mood takes her. Sometimes she pours down her dream-rain to fill the demons beneath her with euphoria. Sometimes she withholds her precipitation and lashes out with ebon lightning that drains all feeling from those it strikes, leaving nothing but soulless husks. When her rage runs cold, her dream-rain turns to opalescent sleet, like a hail of pearls. When her fury burns hot, her clouds glow with a sulfurous blaze and her rains boil out as billows of broiling, coruscating nightmare-steam.

Hegra's other forms are even more evanescent than the Typhoon of Nightmares. Sometimes she is a compulsion, an impalpable presence that compels lesser beings to chaffer and deal. At other times, she manifests as a pervasive glamour of wonder, or envy, or regret. At no point does she don a shape so crassly solid as mortal flesh.

For a creature as ephemeral as she is, Hegra is fascinated by things. She is a creature of interaction, of commerce, of exchange. (She is catholic in her understanding of such things, deeming both gifts and theft to be degenerate—albeit appealing—forms of trade.) She gives dreams and passions, and takes them away; her waters nourish the metal vegetation of Malfeas, not from any natural law, but because it pleases her to provide rather than withhold.

Hegra is one of the few Yozis known to dabble in the politics of Hell. She does this not out of any meaningful interest in demonic society, but rather as a child plays with dolls or pokes a stick into an anthill. She might, in passing, endow a slave of the First Circle with Essence-fueled power and unquenchable ambition, or fill all of a Second Circle citizen's subjects with some specific and peculiar monomania. Then she watches what befalls in black flashes of lightning beneath the shadow of her rain.

### ISIDOROS, THE BLACK BOAR

#### THAT TWISTS THE SKIES

The Black Boar That Twists the Skies bears as much resemblance to ordinary swine as the legendary Clay Man does to mortals. His skull is too broad, his thews too heavily knotted with twisted muscle. The pupils of his burning eyes are many-lobed, like the asterism in a star ruby. His bristles are bladed and barbed like harpoons.

Such is his might that space and matter subjugate themselves to his movements. With each step, those things that he passes are pulled into his slipstream. Dying stars dim as they whirl in his wake, and those who draw too close and touch his ebon flesh expire with a sizzle and hiss, like cinders in water. Stone





and sea twist like taffy as he goes by. They usually snap back into place once he is gone, but sometimes these deformities linger: warped and distorted buildings, persistent mountains of water, aerial chunks of levitating landscape.

Isidoros' boar shape, the form in which he strides across the emerald skies of the Demon City, is but a shadow of his true self and his true strength. His core, his fundamental Essence, is a midnight universe so unimaginably vast and heavy that not even Malfeas could bear its weight. When he chooses—which is seldom, for it would smack of vulnerability—his boar shape becomes a fire-rimmed portal opening onto that incalculable mass. So dense is the dark matter of which Isidoros is made that light quails and turns from it, cloaking his ebon worlds in coronas of ghostly flame.

Even the boar's reflection, an image of an image, is too great for reflective surfaces to contain. Mirrors shatter as he passes, strewn the ground with their twisted, blackened fragments. Bodies of liquid boil beneath the pressure of his reflection, veiling themselves in steam and smoke. Only the silver surfaces of Szoreny can encompass him.

### KIMBERY, THE SEA THAT MARCHED AGAINST THE FLAME

The Sea that Marched Against the Flame is more often—and, perhaps, more rightly—called the Demon Sea. It is impossible to overestimate her scale. There are a thousand seas in the demon realm, many of them as large as any sea in Creation. Kimberly dwarfs them all. She exists on every layer of the Demon City as a largely subterranean ocean; these are but her smallest outgrowths, mere fingertips of her aqueous body. On Malfeas' colossal outermost layer, she sprawls on the surface as an ocean fully as large as all of Creation, and this is no more to her than a hand or an arm. But dive deep enough in any of these fractions of her form and you will make your way into her secret depths, those boundless and directionless heart-waters whose scale has never been measured.

It is Kimberly's way to mold the bodies of creatures of land and air into elements of her aquatic landscape. Her massive, irregular coral reefs are formed from tangles of calcified demons: spiky masses of firmin and chrysogonae, or perhaps the glimmering sleekness of amphelisiae or neomah. She assembles luminous anemones from the corpus of teind-ghosts, using their parts to contrive house-sized undulating masses of arms, or legs, or enormous phalluses that rustle in her currents. And here and there on the sea floor, one may find beds of delicate sea-ferns that once were mortals, unraveled into lacy fronds of skin and muscle, nerve and vein, eye and mouth. This transfiguration is her art. It is also a mark of her generosity to those she deems fortunate enough to serve as her living clay.

Though she is often known as the Great Mother, Kimberly is barren in her imprisonment. She cannot conceive or bear children after the fashion of creatures of Creation. Nonetheless, she has many offspring. (I speak not of her adoptive scions, those creatures warped in body and mind to suit some need or fancy.) With her corrosive waters, she impregnates those things which come within her reach and catch her eye—buildings, caverns, outcroppings, islands, icebergs, bones, shells, grains of sand, trees, demons, ghosts and mortals—infusing them with her progenitive Essence. When the time is right, each new offspring explodes from its cast-off womb. The smallest of these

offspring form the countless sub-demonic animalcules and plankton that infest Kimberly's waters. The largest of them are her behemoth-children, who are themselves without number; yet another peril to be braved by those who would dare the waters of the Demon Sea.

### METAGAOS, THE ALL-HUNGER BLOSSOM

Metagaos devours everything.

Those who approach the swamp that is Metagaos first discern that he eats light, for the light of the Green Sun grows dim at his borders. Likewise, they observe that he eats color, for his enfoliated flanks are a tangle of gray.

Upon entering the trackless maze of the swamp, one sees that many of his plants bear the contorted marks of other life: a branch may have the scaly form of an amphelisia's limb, or a knotted trunk may reveal the frozen face of a long-lost demon of the Second Circle. For Metagaos also devours independence and identity, assimilating lesser creatures into his body and self.

There are places within Metagaos that bear the marks of his hunger on the fabric of space—where a single step covers many miles of distance, or where all paths lead in but one direction because every other course has been devoured. And an hour's passage in other places is as a day elsewhere, because he has gnawed there at the bones of Time.

And then there are the places where, in his rapacity, Metagaos has chewed holes in himself. Silver sand spills in from these gaps, mixing with the swamp's stagnant water to create vast murky tracts of quicksand. Even the great beasts of the demon realm find it difficult to wrest themselves free from these traps.

Metagaos himself is not the only one here who hungers. Many of his vegetative creatures share his appetites, and they feed on one another and on unwary travelers with equal glee. Some are swifter than serpents and stronger than tigers. Others are as stealthy as shadows despite their impossibly brilliant plumage. They rarely devour their victims' lives, preferring to steal their victims' strengths for themselves. Those they feed on become, step by step, like unto ghosts: colorless, gaunt and faceless, drifting like shadows through the trackless gloom.

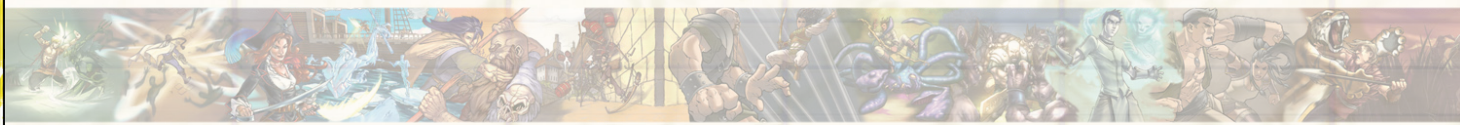
As to those who pass through Metagaos and survive, it would be better if they had not. For in devouring their health, he riddles them with disease—and his ailments are so numerous that not even the demon physicians know them all. His vegetable plagues spread where these travelers pass, devouring victims from within, transforming colonies of demons and hell-beasts into tangled, tortured groves of the not-quite-dead. Thus does the All-Hunger Blossom spread across the layers of the Demon City.

Few of Metagaos' peers enter his mazy ways. Even Adorjan seldom joins him, despite his silence. For she seeks silence for its solace, and there is no solace, no serenity, in Metagaos. He has devoured that too.

### ORAMUS, THE DRAGON BEYOND THE WORLD

Sometimes, when he sleeps most deeply, the Dragon Beyond the World appears as nothing more than an egg-shaped mass as large as a mountain, a colossus wrapped tight in his own wings, encircled by vast plains of rubble. But when his dreams are fitful, the Wyld-light shines around and through him. Then he takes forms other than his own: an opalesque temple with seven minarets; a cyclopean lantern burning with seven varicol-





ored flames; a seven-sailed galleon of blue wood and starmetal, chained to an anchor carved from a single pearl; a titanic snow-white bird with seven broken wings. In these forms, he may be encircled by a forest of liquid trees, or an inverted mountain range, or an ocean of serpents, or illimitable empty sky, or any number of other mad landscapes. But in every form he remains bound. Such is the prowess of the gods and the Exalted.

Travel in the vicinity of Oramus is fraught with hazard. Boundaries lose cohesion and meaning; one can leave a forest while still being surrounded by its trees, or find oneself within the Dragon's aberrant innards without ever having entered his body. Parts of one's own physiognomy may be temporarily subject to sudden (albeit harmless) eversion. Demons of the more cunning parasitic phyla are known to haunt his environs in hopes of infesting victims by happenstance rather than through effort.

The Dragon Beyond the World is an artist, but he has little scope to exercise his aesthetic sensibilities while he lies bound and sleeping. Nonetheless, his urge for self-expression finds a way. Singular creatures sometimes rise from the stones around him or squeeze out from between his wings like infants from the womb, each of them like nothing that has ever been born before or since. At other times, he appears in the dreams of demons or mortals as a psychic muse, overwhelming their souls with impossible visions that can only be exorcised through imperfect mimesis in painting, sculpture, dance or song. Such accursed artists are deemed mad by their peers, and this is too often true, for what lesser mind can encompass the hurricane of inspiration that is Oramus?

### QAF, THE HEAVEN-VIOLATING SPEAR

The endless mountain Qaf was once great among the ranks of the Primordials. He was the primeval axis mundi in the time before Creation, when the titans marshaled themselves amidst the Faraway against the first reflexive efforts of the Unshaped to dissolve them back into the primal Chaos. He invented the principle of perfection as a defense against the hunger of the Wyld, a concept he shared freely with his Primordial peers. He was a symbol of generation, of procreation, engendering and enhancing entities, objects and concepts throughout Creation's Time of Glory. Oh, how he has fallen! Neutered by the Exalted, cast into the deepest pit of his peers' imprisonment, he is all but forgotten.

It is said that Qaf has neither base nor summit. His dimensions are not those of Creation. There is no mathematical measure for movement across his flanks, for he is defined not by space and distance, but by discovery and understanding. In ascending Qaf's slopes, a barefoot monk can easily outpace the swiftest flying engine, if he is wise.

Countless paths crisscross the sides of the Heaven-Violating Spear, converging on his Stations of the Ascent. In each of these, timeless scenes are re-enacted and lessons are learned. But the stations are seemingly without number and their lessons are antithetical to mortal souls. None have cataloged them all, nor has anyone passed them all to reach his nonexistent summit—though many have tried. One of the Lunar Exalted was climbing the mountain at the time of the Usurpation. Perhaps he climbs still.

Qaf maintains an aloof distance in captivity. He has folded himself—or been folded by his captors—into some other space,

beyond endless Cecelyne and mad Malfeas, where the sky is as blank and white as an unwritten page. Only his portals of black nacre link his slopes—those brilliant terraces of alien stone and glass, metal and crystal, wood and water, earth and ice, and innumerable other substances—to the landscapes of his fellow Yozis.

Hell's priesthood is reserved to Cecelyne, but infernal ascetics—of which there are many—have made Qaf their road and their temple. Only the Endless Desert is comparable as a symbol of immanence and transcendence, but where Cecelyne's bleak infinities crush the soul, Qaf's impossible summit offers a strange sort of hope. Numberless demon pilgrims migrate up the slopes of the Heaven-Violating Spear, each in search of their own enlightenment.

### SACHEVERELL, HE THAT SEES THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

There are no manses, no demesnes, aspected to Sacheverell. Such things would bind him to the waking world. Whenever the geomancy of Hell begins to manifest such a demesne, the demon Lucien informs one of the Unquestionable, who rends earth and sky until no trace of Sacheverell's Essence remains. Thus do the Yozis ensure that Sacheverell's sleep remains unbroken and that their own future is not constrained.

### SZORENY, THE SILVER FOREST

Szoreny loves you.

Szoreny hates you.

All that there is to know about you, he knows. He has studied your every thought and deed. He has shared your every feeling, your every memory. He has analyzed your every possible future path. He understands you better than you understand yourself.

And all this from one glimpse—one reckless glimpse—into the mirror that is Szoreny.

\* \* \* \*

The Silver Forest is always the first to consider and the last to act. According to First Age records of the Primordial War, he struck no blows against the Exalted, instead withdrawing behind veil after veil of illusion and folded space. Even now he has no taste for direct confrontation. But this is not to say that he is kind. Even his reflexive love for those he reflects is tainted by a loathing born out of five millennia of exile.

His best-known form is that of a vast tree whose countless branches, buried in the black earth of Malfeas, rise like the trunks of a silvery woodland. But he has countless other forms, or one form with countless shapes—who can say? It is Szoreny's nature to imitate his environs. He has been a silver sun hanging at zenith, shining with reflected emerald light. He has been a quicksilver sea, his burnished tides swamping hellships and drowning demons in metallic deeps. He has been ten long-haired men and women with mirror-bright eyes; a figure formed from snarls of fine silver thread, each thread tipped with a faceted hematite gem; a magnificent palace of silver and black stone rising at the heart of the Demon City; a congeries of thousands of perfectly mirrored spheres.

It is said that the endless rings of recursive reflections that form Szoreny's noetic heartwood contain perfect replicas of everything and everyone whose images he has ever encompassed. If this is so, then all that he has ever witnessed persists beyond





destruction or death in the infinite vistas of his hidden mirror-worlds. Indeed, by the lights of certain scholars—both infernal and Exalted—these facsimiles are superior to the originals, for they are the results of a Primordial's ratiocinations, reified and refined by his superior sapience. Whether this consoled the millions slain by his silver simulacrum of the River of All Torments in the Time of Glory is a matter now lost to history.

## VOICE OF THE MAGNUS ON TITANIC SOULS (I)

The following is an excerpt from a transcript of a lecture given by the Magnus, a Twilight Caste luminary. This speech was delivered before more than 400 Celestial and Terrestrial students, as well as assorted spiritual representatives, on the steps of the memorial where Ramethus fell. An annotation notes that the lecture was given at dusk. The lights of the newly-reconstructed Academy of Divine Enlightenment marched down the slope of Mount Meru behind the Magnus, forming the backdrop for his delivery.

First let me open by saying how honored I am to speak before the incomparable Daana'd. I would also like to extend my thanks to High Seat Halleus for inviting me here to elaborate on this, a topic of crucial but overlooked importance.

Before I begin, allow me to take a moment to take further notice of my audience. I see that most of you are young—those members of the Lunar Society and the Fivescore Fellowship who are in attendance tonight have almost all taken the Second Breath in the wake of our recently concluded conflict—you in the first row, I believe your former incarnation was White Claw Zu? Indeed I did make his acquaintance; I was present at the Battle of Broken Sky, where he laid down his life in valiant defense of the city of Hollow.

The majority of you gathered before me are blessed of the Elemental Dragons—Gaia's grandchildren. Indeed, I am told that by your aptitude tests and your early achievements in service to our glorious Realm that you are the most promising youths of your generation. It is to you in particular that I dedicate this lecture. Attend this: I am not here today to speak of sorcerous minutiae, but of dire cosmological facts central to the war which ended just before most of you were born. Your parents fought in that conflict, and you may be called on to follow in their footsteps.

As such, to the topic of my lecture:

The spiritual makeup of those immeasurable beings which birthed Creation is a matter of ongoing relevance—not only as a point to our heritage and our purpose, but also as a matter of our continued survival. Look around you at this shrine, this place of sacrifice. Two score and two years since the Aftershock War's end, and already the Realm's citizens begin to forget. Many misconceptions still linger about the authors of the universe.

The most offensive of these: that the souls of the conquered Yozis were always demons, and that the Yozis were always Yozis. Well I remember the ignorant and ungrateful pamphlets and editorials that circulated through the hinterlands after the first attacks, asking why we did not simply banish the aggressor to Hell with a wave and a word—could people truly be so ignorant of history? The Demon Princes who languish now in the realm of torment were once free to move across our world, to

purify it with a whisper and scour it with a sigh. They were unspeakable living worlds manifest, those Primordial brothers and sisters of our allies, Gaia and Autochthon.

I am not here to speak of them in their particulars. A dissertation on any single Primordial could fill enough time for ten lectures such as this. Rather I am here to speak to you of the simplest and most compelling feature of the Primordial makeup—their souls. As any first-year demonologist knows, the Yozis are gifted with numerous expressive facets, souls that balance and channel their unfathomable intellect and urge. So it is as well with unbound Primordials; but these unique Primordial constituents are called devas.

The devas of our enemies were not always the cleanest or most beatific of things; rarely does one find any being possessed of such majesty as the souls of the Emerald Mother. But they were not demons before or during the Primordial War. Most of them were mightier, loftier. They were pure, even when wicked. They were magnanimous. Until they knew defeat, they walked taller than the mountains. It was defeat that compounded their fall, twisting them in a devolution of nature and making them hideous.

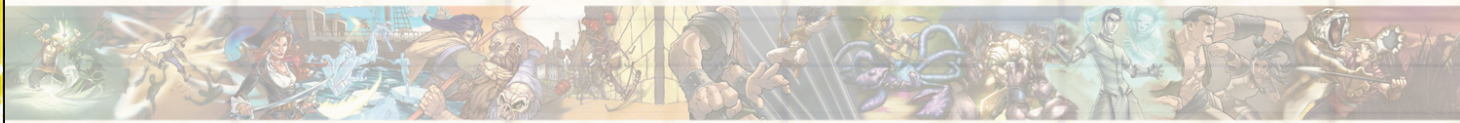
But what purpose do devas serve?

Primordials are beings of such tremendous Essence and spiritual complexity that they outstrip the confines of their own supernal forms. A single soul and mind cannot support the level of power and intricacy that moves within the whim and want, mode and strife of a Primordial's waking moments. Thus the titans need not a soul, but many souls in order to think and exist at the size and scope that they do.

Devas are broken into three tiers, like the demons we are familiar with—two which comprise those souls which anchor, express and define the Primordial, and one which acts as a kind of servant-progeny, a manifestation or proof of the titan's permanence. The greatest of these are souls upon the Third Circle, each of which has seven more Second Circle souls, which represent their capacity for protecting, gratifying, defining, communicating, expressing, reflecting, and understanding their own natures. It is from the latter that the First Circle races emerge.

A question? Yes, they do resemble the First Circle demons which act as our menial servants and rightful slaves, in their degree of remove from their patrons. However, there were no 'wild First Circle deva' Yozis offspring left loose in Creation in the wake of the Primordial War; your predecessors wisely commanded the defeated titans to assemble every last one of their spawn within the world-body of Malfeas before the gates of Hell were swung shut. Relatively few of the First Circle demons with which you are familiar are former deva races—the bitter titans have abandoned most of their previous designs and allowed them to die out in favor of metody, teodozjia and the like. Only a handful of once-deva races continue to thrive—the angyalkae and gilmyne are the most common.

Yet some spirit remnants of the Primordial legacy may be unaccounted for. Devas of the Third Circle are, on rare occasion, known to keep a companion spirit called yomi. In most cases yomi are gods whose purview runs parallel to the deva in question, but occasionally the deva chooses a yomi which moves outside her conceptual framework to compliment her interests. At the end of the Primordial War, the yomi of the vanquished Demon Princes were often rendered into starmetal. Vengeful



yomi who escaped prosecution plagued our Realm in its infancy, and some few remain at large.

For the purposes of knowing our enemies and distinguishing them from our allies, it is worth noting that devas of specific Primordials carry a specific name—the Divine Ministers of the Machine God and all of their subroutines and lesser automatic processes are known as exmachina, while Adrián's souls were called sheridans. The souls of Gaia, the Emerald Mother, are known as kami. This is a conceit which berths a separation between the devas of one Primordial and another, beyond the single-Essence identity they comprise.

As for the transition from deva to demon, here is our most well-documented case: The Primordial called Adrián had 160 constituent devas—140 Second Circle souls upon 20 Third Circle souls. When her fetich Lilike was slain, the River of All Torments dried up and became a wind called Adorjan. Likewise her composite devas shifted to express her madness. They fell to the demonic state when she was forced to acknowledge her defeat, becoming the Yozi Adorjan, who blows silent death through the streets of Malfeas.

A deva's form and power is determined by his Primordial's nature, and the nature of the Primordial is limitless power and unending urge. Composed of their very own thoughts and emotions, a vast change in perception on the part of the Primordial wreaks havoc on the souls of his constitution, ripping through his devas and reshaping them so that an overall change is evinced. This is especially true of experiences which are inimical to the Primordial's nature, such as torment, sorrow, loss, shame, and fear. Though it is true that we carved through the spiritual layers of the conquered titans, altering their souls at key points and in precise ways, to drive the Primordials into a form of our design, it was the Primordials' own sense of their defeat which had the most devastating effect upon them.

I see a question being looked out at me from every eye: If the constitution of a Yozi's souls are so similar to that of a free Primordial, why, then, is differentiating between them important to the soldier as well as the savant?

While demons and devas confer the same benefits to their respective Primordial constitutions, there are differences of paramount import. Constituent to the Yozis, demons are creatures of darkness, rendered asunder by our holy judgment. Devas do not inherently feel any special pain from such measures—rather I should imagine their consternation at such an attempt to have a lethal effect on the Exalt! I jest, but my meaning is serious; this was a mistake made early in the After-shock War, and it cost several Chosen their lives. Should we ever find ourselves subjected to an attack by a hostile Primordial in the future, await confirmation that Our Guarding Star has added the invader and its devas to the roll of Creation's enemies before spending Essence on such magic. Remember also that under the Heavenly Sword Accords, the Solar Deliberative will reimburse the monetary value of any sacrifice made to the Unconquered Sun for the purpose of attracting his attention to such an invasion.

The concerns for those using sorcery to combat the enemy are more extensive. Devas, having never sworn oaths of surrender, are not subject to any sorcery or Charm which summons, banishes, or compels obedience from demons. As a matter of distinction, such is the similarity between deva and demon that a thaumaturgical ward against demons will bar a deva's

access, but the spell Demon of the First Circle will not avail you of a deva's presence, nor will Emerald Circle Banishment cast it out. It is also thanks to this principle that the kami are set above Cecelyne's Essence-infused mockery of law, and are freely able to ignore the impotent sanctions and invective of the imprisoned Yozis.

Bear these things in mind. It is your Essence, your weapons, and your knowledge that will protect Creation, should history attempt to repeat itself. Now, for those among the audience who are familiar with the intricacies of Essence sight, here are some tell-tale features that may be used to distinguish a demon from a deva under battlefield conditions...

## ON TITANIC SOULS (II)

The following excerpt is from the demonology chapter of the Book of Essence Runes, to which the Magnus offered a number of essays and commentaries. The text is written in such a way that it self-edits to match changing facts, assuring that the Magnus is always right.

Numbered amongst the devas are the nihilem of Malfeas, the sheridans of Adorjan, the aphotes of the Ebon Dragon, the laments of Cecelyne, and the traces of She Who Lives in Her Name. These terms are typically uniform, but not always so. Take for example the souls of Kimberly. Collectively we call them the barzinoa, but as gender distinction plays some role in Kimberly's -ology, her male souls are called the barzinoi while her female souls are known as the barzinai. It is important to note that while a particular deva's physical gender may be unclear, its spiritual gender—the feminine or masculine Essence signature it produces—can be deduced with the proper effects. While true that in some demons spiritual gender is uncertain, in the case of Kimberly's devas, all are clearly defined as male or female, such as the Third Circle souls Bozi-dadari (barzinoi) and Cipperidge (barzinai).

In referring to the devas, it is proper to include the spirit's grouping as part of its title. In this case, the deva's type becomes part of the title, such as with the Nihilem Ligier or the Trace Munaxes. When we refer to them separately we revert to the lesser case of the written form: Jacint, sheridan of Adorjan; Octavian, trace of She Who Lives in Her Name. It should be further known that these titles do not survive the Primordial's demise. In the case of dislocated devas such as Nuhlwuxahes, soul of the former Author of Troubled Skies, the old class name is no longer used, for the distinction has become meaningless, and may be further obsoleted by the demon's own evolution. It is presumed that within the next two centuries Nuhlwuxahes will be one of the sheridans or the salacrem.

However, a dislocated deva may continue to use the name of her class should her Primordial continue on, even if the deva herself has been long since destroyed, such as the Nihilem Ruvelia, 23rd soul of the Empyrean Chaos, who was the first of the mighty Tyrant's two fetich souls...

## ON THE UNDERWORLD

What follows is a written statement outlining the Magnus's political position on a certain issue. It is believed that this letter was copied multiple times and placed throughout Meru and Chiaroscuro around 2900 OEG. To-date, Lunar expeditions to Meru have turned up no less than six copies of this letter, while more than thirty have been recovered from Chiaroscuro by





various scavengers. Whether or not the Magnus sent this letter to other cities is unknown.

A vote will soon go before the Deliberative to decide the fate of the so-called Neverborn.

If favored by the majority, our Realm shall begin the process of extracting and moving the diffuse Essences of those fallen Primordials to the borders of Creation, where they will be forged into a great wall of soulsteel and jade. Engraved on these walls will be a history of the terrors and triumphs of the Primordials, leading up to their eventual and total ruin at our hands. Tunnels carved through these walls will house the Labyrinth. These tunnels will be the only method for penetrating this wall, and within them will be the memorial halls of true death, a monument of the horror and ruin that came to the Primordials, frozen forever in cognizant still-life and undeath. Any forces seeking to invade Creation would have to navigate these chambers and see firsthand the fate that befell our greatest enemies.

Such a construct would not only deter future attempts such as the one made by Ramethus, but it would also grant the fallen titans a modicum of relevance and a measure of their former dignity. Unfortunately, this plan is an unpopular one. The general consensus amongst my peers: 'Why bother? We owe them no solace, no end to their ruin. And such an effort would be no doubt outrageously expensive, taking a great toll on not only coffers but life.'

And yet I say the ghosts made by the effort would surely find work as guides and heralds in the border-shrine's massive exhibits, allowing us to extend economic control into the realm of death.

Some few idealists still believe we might be able to expel the Neverborn from the Underworld and further resolve that dread region's issue with our own realm's existence, but I state here my sincerest doubts on that measure. During one of my many attempts to map the Underworld I experienced the strangest phenomenon. It has been well-documented that Brigid passed into lethe more than five centuries ago, and yet I succeeded in summoning her in the Underworld.

While investigating the Chasulblis, near the site where Brigid's old manse stood in Creation, I found that her power still existed—inexplicably—as a pattern burnt into the shadow of existence. A vortex appeared before me, knowing only things which Brigid knew, drawing on memories within me, yet part of it completely external...through it I was able to force 'her' to coalesce.

When Brigid stood before me, it had properties not wholly unlike a Neverborn. It expressed displeasure that I had awakened it. I dispersed it with Ghost-Eating Technique, but it was not wholly destroyed. I take this as further evidence that one cannot destroy the Neverborn simply by killing them. Sometimes power in and of itself becomes irrevocable; some things done can never be undone.

Therefore we must learn to incorporate what we have made into our plans for the future.

## BLUE RHAPSODY

### PART I

From the depths of the ocean came the once-dead man.

As he staggered out of the tide, the spray of surf on his face was perhaps the only kind touch he'd felt in days. He knew he was not dead—could not be dead—and gasped in relief as he slid a hand along his breast and felt his heart's answer.

Yet he had died.

He could remember dying. It was like drowning, only in the air. He had been drawn from the water even as his body sank into the still black abyss...No time for that now. The sun had just gone down. There were greater imperatives at stake if he wished to go on living.

He looked around. The world was a dark blue watercolor as the last vestiges of light fled over the Western Pole. In the harbor buoy-bells rang. Seabirds cawed and squawked at some interminable distance.

He looked around with lost eyes that found nothing recognizable. Rock scarp bent to form gates over a bay he could not identify. Nor did he recognize the town of more than a hundred rooftops marching over a distant hill, torches burning for the coming night. He could have been anywhere in the West. Anywhere at all.

He stumbled through the sand, arms and legs at double weight. He made a go at peeling seaweed from his shoulders, hoping to lighten his load. A starfish clung grimly to his lapel. He broke it off and tossed it away, then thumped its gripping leg from his vest. His own leg took a hitch; he reeled and caught himself, and for a moment his world spun. He groaned. The town seemed no nearer than before. He was out of steps and dreadfully thirsty.

He was about to curse himself when he realized he couldn't remember his name. He looked into himself but could not see it.

Though the past few nights were a dim wash of events—boat-corpse wreckage, the cries of drowning men, the cold black waves—he knew it was not amnesia. Memories of his life had gone fuzzy. The details were there, but like everything else about him, they were drenched in seawater, tangled in kelp and full of sand. For all the mess, they were indiscernible, and he had not the energy to clean them. His mind, like the rest of him, felt bruised by the cold hard slap of constant waves he'd endured for hours? days? some immemorial time.

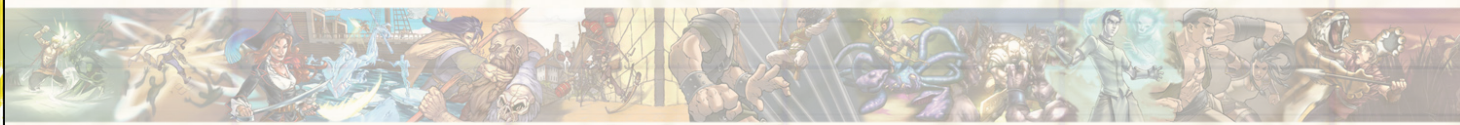
So he looked down at his legs and ordered them with his mind: You will move, leg. You will step, foot.

His body shuddered into action with the shamble of an undead, and lucky for him there were no deaf shore wardens about, for that is exactly what he looked like, covered in sand and brine and seaweed and ambling up the shore with legs full of lead.

A fitting walk for a man so recently dead.

His mind would not let that issue go. He had been dead. Now he was alive. Alive and making tracks up the beach, his left boot-heel prints marked with a telltale X.

As he drew farther away from the ocean's dread grasp, he felt better by degrees. There was no overt reason to feel so. He was dehydrated, bruised, exhausted, and had an array of scratches in a dozen strange places, but there it was. The ocean had been his enemy, and he in its clutches for what seemed like forever. It was in his very mind. He could not think over the breaking of the tide in his head. But with every step he felt further released. With every step his life / existence asserted themselves. As the ocean retreated, it gave up its prisoners—his memories came



in on the tide and crawled up the beach after him. Some were faster than others.

The first came to him in a sound followed by an image: he heard an echoed, breathless scream that was like an empty roar—the wind at the bottom of an empty well, the tidesong in a seashell—and saw a black flag whipped by storm-winds. On it was an ivory disc: the pennant of Skullstone Archipelago!

This was chased by the image of that which flew the flag. His eyes narrowed in anger as they had when he'd first seen it, when so many of the eyes around him had been wide and full of terror. It was a ship almost as large as the Denzik city. But it was a ship of sails and more, and it towered over the night sky, its bow blacking out stars. He could see flippers at its sides, stirring the water like massive oars, rowing it in a slow turn until it faced his ship, the Bravura, head-on.

Ghost-pirates rappelling down its sides seemed like mere ants, and the Bravura seemed as nothing more than a stone in the shadow of a mountain.

At this point, the once-dead man came trudging into town and stopped in the middle of the street. Those few who saw him stared as they came and went, each paying him a wide berth and hurrying along. Himself, he stared at nothing. He came to a standstill and felt none of the chill that the wind inflicted on his soaked coat and slacks.

He was in the water. Bravura had been shattered. It floated around him with the remnants of his crew, while above him the massive Skullstone vessel bore down. As his men screamed and drowned, he could not draw his eyes away from the deck. At its bow stood the captain, a figure edged in black with a high tricorn. His arms were folded and he could feel the captain's eyes on him. He saw the name of the ship, briefly glimpsed as the vessel passed over him, sucking him down into an icy black fathom about its hull.

He swam as hard as he could, but even if he could compete with the rise and swell of the massive ship, it would have done him no good. Those black waters were alive, you see. They were alive and whispering of a death that was not unlike drowning: a death of cold, submerging darkness. An abyss.

The Muerta Vista bounded another wave and came down with a merciless crash, tossed grasping waves like claws over he and his men, dragging them under, sucking them into its sinking trough and the black water around it.

Perhaps it was cruel that he could remember the name of that ship but not his own name. Or perhaps it was such that he knew revenge better than he knew himself. For as he stood remembering the cries of his men and that cold, sucking blackness that was more than just water, he burned with hatred for the Monarch of Darkmist. He did not need a name to swear revenge; he could recall the names of his men as he envisioned their faces one by one. He could recall the name of his ship so callously sunk. These things were more than enough to swear by.

It tried to eat my name!

He was so deep into this revelation that he failed to notice those who stood in his presence.

"You there," came a salty sea voice on a breath smelling of cider-beer.

He looked up to a trio of shadowed figures. Only the middle one seemed at all apparent. The other two stood dimly at his flanks, and a step behind. It was as if the dwindling light from a

nearby post couldn't spread itself evenly amongst them, and so it had settled on the one who had spoken. Presently that one was smiling. Had the once-dead man been himself, he would have seen the hatred in that expression.

"You, what came out of the surf. I never thought I'd see you again!"

The once-dead man felt a pain at the back of his skull, wobbled on his legs, and barred a hand across the back of his head, wincing. He did not see how his near-fall had almost startled them into an attack.

"Steady there, lad," said the middle man, waving down the man on his left and the man on his right. They took their hands from their swords, as he took a step toward the once-dead man and leaned in, his voice cajoling, low: "You don't look at all yourself."

The once-dead steadied and righted himself as best he could. The light was damnable-poor. It played against him. This voice caused a pain in his mind to hear it. And the face it belonged to was half-obsured.

"Somebody who knows me?" he asked, his eyes a dart of frenzy / hope.

"We know who you are," the middle man said, his smile souring into a scowl, "James Sutherland!" His fist was a fluttering of cuff and a circle of black within blue-gray shadows. Stars exploded in Sutherland's vision as he went backwards pinwheeling his arms. Brilliant pain erupted in his skull as he cracked his head on the cobbled road. He lay sprawled like a drunk, his long maroon-brown hair fanning out around his head. On his face was a glassy-eyed stare and a fading smile. His world was going black, but he had his name. He clung to it like an anchor cast overboard. Though he might sink, with a grip on the anchor, one would always get hauled back up again, sooner or later. I won't be dying so soon, he said to himself.

Footsteps were drawing closer.

"I died once, you know?" said Sutherland. The middle man fetched him a kick so hard he flipped over, but he was already unconscious.

"Pick him up," said the middle man to his cronies while shaking out his fist.

\* \* \* \*

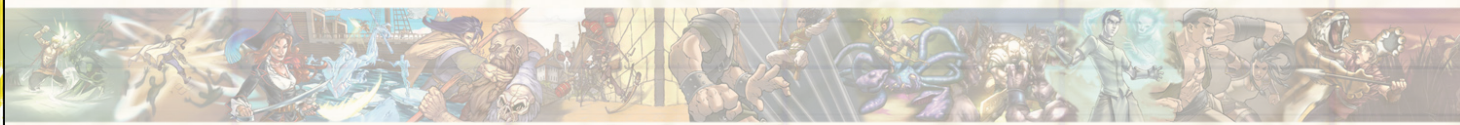
As Sutherland was marched through town he was vaguely aware of the procession that formed around him. His sight came and went in a blur, as if water had gotten under his lenses. Each time it did, he opened his eyes to find more people marching alongside until he was at the fore of a parade.

His hands were bound behind his back. Iron fingers dug into his meaty upper arms. His head sagged as he walked. Somewhere behind him he could feel the presence of the one who'd struck him. He could sense red-hot eyes burning a brand onto his back. Each time he wondered who the man was, it was the first time. As he drifted into consciousness he asked himself the question, and as he faded back out again he promptly forgot ever asking.

Each time he passed out he passed into his own thoughts. In his mind he was lost at sea, water in every direction and a storm was coming. The waves grew higher and higher. The waves! He could not stand the waves. He knew if he was hit with just one more wave he would go under. There was nothing of his strength left. He clung to the wheel of the Bravura but it could not save him. The next wave was more than he could take.







kissed his sword on the pommel and let it go. As Whisper-in-Shadows sank into the depths, trailing bubbles and the Eye of Sayatha, he watched it go.

Long after both had vanished, he heard the distant keening of the Eye, and then not even that. He clutched his fist grimly at his chest and felt the departure of his last allies, given over so that he might live.

He swore he would live to recover them. He would need both to defeat the Silver Prince.

But there was the matter of his current situation—in the clutches of a foe, surrounded by countless enemies. Escape was merely a stepping stone to his revenge on the Deathlord, and this, this where, was a problem to delay him by minutes. As he lifted his eyes, the fullness of his memories flooded into him. He knew where he was, who he was, and the full awareness of his being was restored.

Presently he stood before a court of savages aping the just.

Sad to say, most were human.

## PART II

The savage court was a show of a carnival variety. All manner of deformities were on display—most were of the spirit. Still, the circus had its freaks: a bald imp with razor-teeth hugged the floor and hissed at Sutherland from between the skirts of some dark Mary with a blue shepherd's crook and a red bonnet. There were men too tall and too short; here was a giant with a shark's fin protruding from his back; there was a man in a duster with a mouth full of gold and a long beard which he stroked with the giant pincer that was his hand.

For the most part, though, the crowd was human, and ugly in other ways. Their hatred paraded around on flesh that was otherwise blameless. It made their eyes big and white and it made the spittle fly from their mouths and shaped their faces into ugly, repetitive masks until they were one thing, a singular animal, a throng to which few individuals belonged.

Of course there were exceptions. The guardsmen were still, silent, uniform, deadly: red coats and black tricorns, holding six-foot harpoons at arms. They stood shoulder to shoulder in twin rows that divided the court, leaving an aisle down to a throne on which a familiar presence sat.

James did not have to see the man to know who he was. He could see the man's red pennants—bedecked with dueling silver serpents—hanging from the galleries. Also hanging from the galleries: an entire second crowd, this more raucous than the first. These were pirates almost wholly undisguised. Seldom were their coats of parliament with two whole sleeves, and where their arms were bare for cloth they were rife with tattoos. More jewelry found the faces of the men than the women, and the women were bawds of the highest caliber, filthy with eye-make and wigs stacked upon wigs.

And there were others who sank into the crowd, using special techniques to hide in plain sight. Normally they would have been invisible. He sensed each of them by contrast to the crowd around them. They were like black pools amongst roiling waters. In their complete absence, they left voids in the crowd, wells that normal Essences could not fill.

And then there was the matter of the Chosen who were not hiding. Several were gathered at the dais to which he would soon be served. One of them was the middle man. He stood at the left hand of the throne, staring at Sutherland with marked

disdain. His hair was orange, the left side of his face tattooed with whorls of intersecting blades, and his coat and shirt were open over a chest criss-crossed by scars. On his head was a tricorn with the bill folded up; on his back was a reaver of black jade. Sutherland still did not recognize him, but the look on his face said that they'd met before. Little did that matter; he could tell just by his juxtaposition to the throne that the one who'd punched him was the least of his worries.

Sutherland read the web-work of this spectacle like a diagram. He knew the role of every person in relation to the next. This further confirmed his suspicion of the identity of the one who sat on the throne. It also told Sutherland just exactly how much danger he was in. The rioting crowd was of less concern to him than the powerful, menacing spirits set all through the room like pinpricks on a map.

Finally his death-march was over. He stood before the dais. On the throne was a man in a wig and a chapeau. The man held a heavy leather book in front of his face. On its cover was the word DOCKETT. The man wore a red coat with silver dragons embroidered into the lapels. His epaulets were also silver, and he wore on his sleeves the stripes of a commodore, and on his cuffs, a post captain's cufflink. On his chapeau, a silver grate depicted a pair of embossed serpents dueling.

White gloves with black-threaded knuckles turned a thick yellow page demurely, as if Sutherland were of no consequence. Seeing this display of scornful disregard, the crowd cheered.

Sutherland grinned. At this distance, he could call Whisper-in-Shadow and...no, he couldn't. Nevermind that his hands were bound—his blade did not rest in Elsewhere, but rather somewhere thousands of fathoms deep, twined with the Eye of Sayatha. And were he able to heel the blade from such a depth, there was no guarantee the Eye of Sayatha would come with. The risk was too great. So he decided to use a blade of a different kind.

His eyes darted around the room as his smile grew. He read the room once more and felt comprehension's steadying grasp. This was less a court than the floor of the arena, and here the crowd cared only for a splash of crimson. It mattered not who bled.

Sutherland's eyes peeped up over the edge of the docket like a rising sun. His tone affected the most chummy, cheery voice possible. It broke over the crowd, half as loud, yet drowning it out: jollity in the face of danger contrasting his situation with the weight of cannon-fire.

"Why, Captain Whitesails! Is that really you?"

His words had the desired effect—immediate and hilarious outrage. The docket slammed shut with a thunderclap and the man on the throne came forward roaring, "That's Master Carsegil to you!"

James's hair flew back from his head with the man's bellow, but he stood unmoving, even as several courtiers leapt back in fear. Sutherland could sense harpoons leveled at his back; a sign of what his disrespect would brook. His suspicions about where he was and who he was dealing with were confirmed. This was Tulaan, a marquise in the Protectorates. Before him sat good prince Andilar Carsegil, a man who professed civility, education, and proper form, and cursed all pirates as dogs and scoundrels while he himself engaged in every form of theft imaginable. Carsegil despised this bit of truth so much that the slightest accusation sent him into a rage.





Back when he was merely a rich privateer, Carsegil had fancied himself a savant and world-class archaeologist. He considered scavenger lords to be grave-robbing scoundrels. His calling, on the other hand, was divine. Many times had he delivered relics from the hands of those who had done all the work to find them; better in his custody than in the hands of heathen ghouls and heretical swine.

Sutherland, having gotten word of this, pulled the same trick on Carsegil every time he had the chance. It was amusing to see him here, affecting the role of tribune, but unsurprising. The potent combination of self-righteousness and pretension made him an ideal judge.

The crowd had gone silent. Silence spun out between judge and captive, and it spoke volumes of the history they shared. Carsegil was hanging from his throne, and as if in mimicry, his spectacles were hanging off the end of his nose. The staring match went on and neither man blinked. Then Carsegil, realizing he had the upper-hand, reached up and pushed his spectacles back onto his face. Then he settled slowly onto his throne, once again the austere arbiter of calm order. He crossed his legs and set the docket across his lap as a cruel smile pierced his cheeks.

“Sutherland, James,” said Carsegil.

The crowd began to stir and murmur.

“You are hereby charged—”

The crowd began to hoot and whoop and whistle.

“By the Marquisate of Tulaan, with several egregious violations of the codes of human decency.”

The crowd was a full on wash of cheers. Carsegil never asked for Sutherland’s plea. Instead he opened the docket.

Sutherland smirked, an eyebrow perched high as if he were a member of the audience rather than the star of the show.

“This is not the first time you have offended the Marquisate. You have been summoned again and again to answer for your crimes. And as you have failed to appear in our courts on every such occasion, your trial has occurred in absentia.”

“How very convenient,” said James. “Probably because anything you could nail me for would go double for you,” he said, with a pause, sharpening his chosen word like a knife. “Except I was never a pirate.”

That elicited a long ooh from the crowd.

Carsegil’s eyes shot up at Sutherland as rage broke over his face, and James gave a mocking laugh, twisting the blade he had just buried. The crowd heckled and hoorayed: it belonged to Carsegil, but like a pack of wild dogs, it served whoever produced flesh on which to feed—the bloodier the better. Like anything that bled, Carsegil was a potential feast. The crowd was a powerful ally, but dangerous. It could be the key to Sutherland’s salvation, or it could just as easily turn on him.

Carsegil composed himself before speaking, so that his face was a calm shape, although it trembled with his anger. He ignored Sutherland, turned a page in the docket and began to read, focusing on the worst crimes listed. The crowd’s pulsing voice became an excited chant, rising in volume with each indictment. James listened to the charges with an attentive yet excessively bored look on his face. Then Carsegil proceeded into capital offenses—those which came with a death sentence.

The mob hissed at Sutherland when they learned he had spent much time living amongst the Fair Folk. Some forked the sign of the evil eye at him when it was revealed that he had

entered into wedlock with a Lintha woman—a single scream pierced the din and the crowd began to lurch and shift as a very forceful presence made its way to the front.

Carsegil observed this with partial interest, and then he leaned in casually to speak with James over his collar. “Tell me, Sutherland, when you went to Bluehaven, did they cut off your balls?”

Sutherland ignored the question—he was equally distracted by the commotion, and with good reason. He felt the traces of a familiar presence emerging from the one-gestalt of the crowd. He hoped beyond hope he was wrong about who it belonged to.

The crowd surged forward, reeled backward, and then spilled forward again, disgorging a tall brown-skinned woman with violet hair and looping silver tattoos over her bare arms and shoulders. She was a picture of beauty in strife, and her great yellow eyes gleamed with outrage. She turned aside harpoons with forceful slaps as she stomped toward Sutherland. The middle man put a hand on his daiklave, and several other Chosen at the dais rose to impede her progress, but Carsegil lifted his open hand to them. Wait.

The guards were stilled as the woman came onto the floor. The crowd went silent.

She stood before James, totally unfazed by the ring of sword-tips pointing in at her head. Her arms were straight at her sides, her fists balled up at her hips. She wore a leather vest, cut low to show off the generous swell of her cleavage, and even tighter pants of a very thin, motile fabric. She leaned in, glaring.

He opened his mouth to explain, but she grabbed his collar and pulled him off his feet, her knee driving hard into his groin.

James hit the floor in a crumple, folded up, groaning. The crowd howled with laughter. Hats sailed through the air. Carsegil rubbed his chin and said, “Guess not!”

The woman bent over at the hips and spit and said, “And to think I trusted you when you said you had no bond with that Lintha cull!”

She lunged at him but was caught by the arms and hauled backwards, spitting and cursing. Somewhere within the crowd, a fist collided with a jaw and ten people hit the floor at once. More laughter at this, and then she was gone.

Sutherland was gasping, his eyes full of tears, his center bound up in spasming knots. But the attack hurt him less than the sense that he had lost control over the crowd. Curse her stupid eyes! It would be difficult to win the crowd over now. This was the last place Sutherland had expected to see her. His plan was sinking faster than the Bravura.

Rough hands hauled him to his feet.

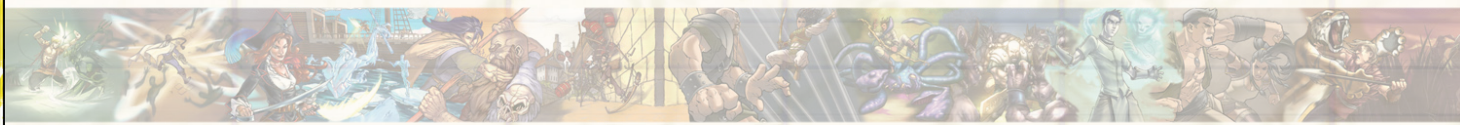
“Savage company you keep,” said Carsegil, smiling, aware of his hypocritical words and not caring.

“All right, Carsegil,” said Sutherland. “If you wanted me dead I’d be dead already.”

“Perhaps I want to watch you pay for your crimes? Slowly. And painfully.”

Sutherland read some truth in that, but it was less than the whole of the issue. Carsegil wanted something. Now if he could only read it. Damn her! The court was very nearly his. She’d thrown him completely off balance and he was back to square one. No, worse. He was at square negative ten. Carsegil was waiting for a reply, and Sutherland had less than seconds to answer. The man was capable of visiting atrocity upon those he





held no special enmity for. James's lot would be far worse, and his time was running out.

So he breathed deeply and summoned the calm within, forcing out the pain and the jeers and the panicked ticking of the clock. His eyes grew vacant. The world grew around him as he shrank into his self, entering a trance of limitless thought. In that way, time grew larger around him. Milliseconds became seconds. Seconds became minutes. If he pushed harder, minutes could become hours. But there was the danger—too big of a push, and he could literally fall out of time, his consciousness locked into processing a single moment for a torturous eternity. In any case, seconds passed in real-time, but to Sutherland's inscrutable mind, it might as well have been days.

In those few moments, he saw everything he needed to see.

His eyes flashed back to life. Crowd-sounds flooded back into his ears. Carsegil straightened expectantly, but his patience was gone. If Sutherland did not say something of interest, he was going to be very sorry he'd washed up on Tulaan's shore.

"It turns out you and I aren't enemies after all," said Sutherland.

Carsegil narrowed his eyes. He was both incredulous and paranoid. "Now see here—"

"The Silver Prince."

Carsegil was stunned, silent. He fell back in his chair, but his face was a stone. Between the pose and the expression on his face, Sutherland saw the truth. His shot in the dark had revealed the bull's eye.

James could only guess why Carsegil hated the Silver Prince more than he. It didn't matter. All the pieces were falling into place. From a diminutive series of clues, he had strung the answer together: Carsegil's high-handedness, his tendency to look down on the less-educated; his bandying of words like heretic and grave-robber; that he set himself above scalliwags and pirates; and that he despised the Lintha and the fae. His overarching sense of superiority. His lust for artifacts. Sutherland knew here sat a dispossessed scion of the Realm. On the Blessed Isle, such a man might have become admiral. But he was forced to settle for a judgeship in a tinpot arm of the Protectorates, where he had managed to grasp some form of station more admirable than a privateer. Carsegil wore the raiment of dishonor and banishment in his ways. Because he wished to one day return to his former station, he railed against piracy and the fae and the Hundred Gods Heresy and the Lintha, even though he'd likely never be forgiven.

Therefore, Master Carsegil would fight like a mongoose to defend whatever pittance of authority he might accrue.

"You seek redress," said Sutherland, his eyes dropping to slits. He paced to one side of his confining cage of harpoons, affecting the manner of a lawyer even though his hands were tied. It was only natural. Sutherland did a lot of things with his hands tied behind his back. It was only fair.

Carsegil was silent, scowling. He folded his hands in front of his face.

Sutherland continued: "You have been losing ships to Skullstone, have you not?" He paused, weighing the accuracy of his guess. "The Marquis leans on you to do something about it, but the Marquisate is an arm of Coral, and Coral won't support any overt acts of war against Skullstone. So here is Tulaan, caught in the middle, and your hands, like mine, are tied."

The crowd was murmuring. For the most part, they did not understand what Sutherland was saying. But that was fine. He no longer needed them. And Carsegil understood. Sutherland now stood almost directly before the dais, flanked at either side by Carsegil's Exalted guardsmen, and face-to-face with the man himself.

"And you would go forth to harry my enemy? Ha!" Carsegil sneered, begrudging every word to the inevitable conclusion.

"I'll do better than that. I'll bring you the wheel of the Muerta Vista."

A gasp spread over the crowd, followed by a hush. Several members made religious gestures.

Carsegil grabbed Sutherland around the neck, reeled him in close and whispered fiercely: "Now see here, Sutherland! In Tulaan we don't speak its name!"

Sutherland went on speaking—fabricated an all-out lie: "They say it's made of black jade and it can steer any ship unharmed through the worst of storms. They say as long as that ship is at the head of a formation, any ship that falls behind it is just as safe." Having played on Carsegil's well-known desire for artifacts, he switched to another tactic. "But more than that, any who knew you possessed such a wheel would think twice about harrying you. Skullstone might even bargain for its return. Of course, you would never, ever say that you had it. But then again, you wouldn't say that you did not have it. Savvy?"

Carsegil's eyes widened. Sutherland saw the open desire for such notoriety and had to admit to himself—Old Whitesails had guts. This entire court had heard the conversation. Everyone in the West would know what transpired here. Carsegil would clearly be guilty of... what? Nothing, as long as no one saw him with the wheel. Everyone would know who had it, but none would be able to prove it.

Carsegil whispered his terms: "I should hang you upside down by your entrails...but my last box of gaffs went down with a freighter near the Web of Shadows. You will do this thing before the turning of the season, or I shall personally see you dead."

A trace of gold flashed across Sutherland's brow so fast that very few saw it, and most of them doubted their eyes. The middle man only glared with his.

"Done," said Sutherland, sealing the contract with unbreakable mandate.

Carsegil shoved him backwards hard, and howled with fury. "I will not partake in this, your open defiance of Coral's laws! Fiend! Coercionist! Guards! This man has been poisoned by the Black Ship's treasure and will surely bring about the demise of himself and all those around him! I shall not risk the curse of his blood! Hoist him to the border and see him turned out immediately!"

The middle man spun on Carsegil, his eyes full of shock. He railed, but his voice was lost to the crowd. "You mean t'just let him go?"

An hour later there came a shove, and Sutherland went face-down in the sand at land's end. Before him was a dinghy. Inside it was a lantern and a single oar.

The captain of the guard growled. "You are banished from this place," he said. "If you come back you will be killed on sight."

The guards began to file away.

"At least untie my hands!" James shouted.





The captain turned back and threw a note into the sand. Bound to it was a stiletto.

After Sutherland cut away his bonds, he opened the note and found a doodle of a roughly drawn figure, presumably himself, roasting on a rotisserie. It read: You have until the turning!

Witty, thought Sutherland, as he crumpled the note and tossed it aside.

Minutes later he disappeared into the fog, rowing the dinghy by the light of a single lantern.

A hand reached down, grasped the crumpled note and opened it. Peleps Dawara's eyes drifted back and forth over the strange missive and then slammed it back into a ball between his palms. His scar-crossed chest heaved like a great beast's as he stared after that fading lantern. He was not new to this story; we know him as the middle man.

This night he made an oath of his own: "You'll not be so lucky next time we meet, Sutherland."

## NEW DAY DAWNING

Morning sunlight breaks across the Great Western Ocean, dancing and dazzling like molten glass. There's a wind up out of the east, blowing from the center of Creation toward the Pole of Water. At some unguessable distance that wind lowers to kiss the water, inscribing curlicue patterns in its surface before flowing on to the Pole, where wind and water are one. Captain Tahoku does not ponder this, though the wind is foremost in his thoughts; he cares only about the way the White Cap's dragonwing sails huff and strain as they catch the corner of the wind.

"Mister Crest," Tahoku calls out to his kubernetes, "steer into that trough and turn us to the wind."

"Aye," Crest calls, spinning the wheel. The White Cap turns west, catching the wind, and leaps forward, mast groaning and hull creaking. Foam sprays the edges of the deck as high waves roll past. They're running before the wind now, picking up speed for their next bout of reaching. West and south, west and south they go, with a bias to the south as much as possible. Tahoku walks to the ship's railing and peers out over the sea. He doesn't reach for his spyglass; he doesn't need it.

Two other ships can be plainly seen, leaping enthusiastically over the waves. Both sport abalone-rigged sails, and both are small, fast converted yachts flying no flag. Pirate ships. They've been chasing the White Cap throughout the morning, unable to match its dragonwing rig's ability to reach close to the wind, but also not needing to; the yachts are lighter and faster by far than Tahoku's blue-water merchantman, and all of this fancy maneuvering has simply been a bid to buy time.

There's a tense silence aboard the ship, and not simply from the prospect of certain boarding and possible death. Tahoku had known from the moment he saw the two ships that he couldn't outrun them, and so instead had dived off his well-charted shipping lane and into the shifting veil of the Wyld. They've been proceeding across an ocean where distant clouds bob upon the surface of the sea, and where dolphins sometimes leap out of the water, spread great feathered wings, and glide for the better part of a mile before dropping back into the spray. The ship hasn't drawn the direct attention of anything... yet... but it also hasn't deterred their pursuers.

Tahoku purses his chapped and wind-burned lips. How long before they catch up, at this rate? Another hour, maybe two? Perhaps—

"Land!" one of the topsmen calls. "Land ahoy!"

Tahoku blinks. He reaches down to his belt for the spyglass, then lets his hand fall. A great ocean-riding cloud is tattering ahead of them, and now he can see it too; they're almost on top of the place.

Enormous greened-brass breakwaters thrust out into the sea, a mile-wide gap between them. Beyond, through the parting mist—

Tahoku feels his guts clench. White spires rising into the sky. High black hills, covered in townhouses. A few merchantmen floating at the docks. None of this is on any of his charts. Have they run into some sort of faerie city? What else might this be?

"Captain!" Crest calls. "Do we make a run for her?"

Tahoku looks up, squinting at the sun. White Cap is flying a Western Trade Alliance flag; how will some unknown, potentially Wyld-marked isle respond to that? Will they be running from the cannibals and into the cooking pot?

Maybe fucked over surely fucked, Tahoku thinks. "Set course for that harbor."

The pirate ships have also seen the breakwater, and have shifted their own course. They don't have to catch us any more, the captain realizes. They just have to get ahead of us. He thinks they've probably got a good shot at it, too.

The mast groans, the sails creak. The sun moves across the sky.

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The ships converge better than a mile out from the breakwater—but by that point, things have gotten more lively.

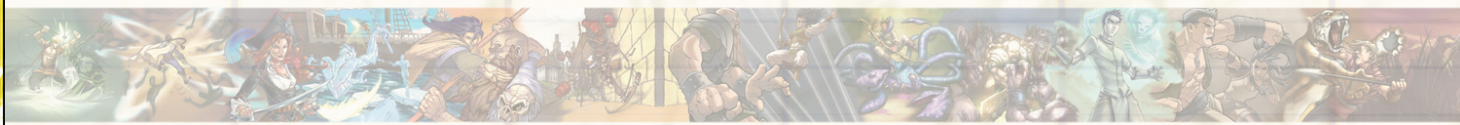
The White Cap's deck is crowded with anxious men, about half armed with slings, all carrying at least a long knife if not a proper sword. None have any real illusions about repelling two pirate boarding parties at once; and yet, the expected grim desperation has been replaced with tension laced with curiosity.

A third yacht has joined the mix, swinging out between the huge brass breakwaters on a collision course with the Cap. They've gotten close enough, now, that Tahoku can make out the flag waving from the ship's mast—a white field dominated by a green sun.

"Captain!" one of the men calls—shrieks, almost.

A series of massive fog banks have rolled up from the surface of the ocean, seemingly from out of nowhere, and are converging on the pirate vessels. Tahoku can hear the mournful clamor of ships' bells drifting across the water... and hideous, mocking laughter. Then he sucks in a breath and clamps down on a cry of his own. The fog banks collapse, becoming confused misty masses clinging to the surface of the pirate ships. Twenty-foot-long masses of razor-edged tentacles covered in eyes and suckers and teeth lash out of these central masses, tearing at sails and plucking men off the surface of the decks.

"Captain!" It takes Tahoku a moment to recognize that breathless exclamation as having come from his proreus. He turns, immediately sees what the man's talking about. A wall of fog has boiled up just to the south of the Cap. It isn't drawing any closer... but it's not moving away, either, intentionally pacing the ship.



"I see it," he says. He pulls the spyglass off its loop on his belt, peers across the water at the ship with the green sun flag. His stomach does another slow roll.

It's close enough now that he can make out specifics about the crew. Men—and women, scandalously enough—wearing white sashes and green caps hurry about the deck, but he scarcely notices them. No, more worthy of attention are the hulking red-and-black apes, their shoulders and brows crowned in bony protrusions, fang-crowded mouths visible even at this distance. Or, if those do not suit, the incredible jeweled insect crouching upon the foredeck. Even as Tahoku watches, someone steps up to it...is that a saddle...?

The crew exclaims wordlessly as a rainbow shape flashes up from the deck of the yacht into the air. Slings are readied. Tahoku glances at the wall of mist pressing close off to port, makes a quick decision. "Stand down!" He gets incredulous looks. "Any man to attack without my order gets fifty lashes from the cat."

The agata's graceful bulk skims high over the ship, its blurring wings tinkling like windchimes, and the day's baked-adrenaline terror is momentarily transformed to wonder. It circles back, and hands loosen on sword-hilts. The demon wasp gleams in the sun with all the colors of a sultan's riches. Its noble head shines gold, the six legs with which it lands on the deck are crystal lines of heartbreaking elegance. Even the wicked curve of its sting contains an elegant simplicity to break any swordsmith's heart.

The wasp's rider dismounts, armor rattling. The man is tall, bronze-skinned, young and smooth-faced despite his snow-white hair. He wears a massive suit of almost pure white armor, pauldrons chased with gold and emerald traceries; a white and green cloak is attached to the edges of the armor's gorget, its design matching the flag flying on the man's ship.

The stranger smiles, displaying startlingly white teeth. He pushes small, expensive spectacles up on his nose. Captain Tahoku notes as he does this that his hand has six fingers; the deformity is unobtrusive, easy to miss at a glance. His eyes sweep the crew, picking out Tahoku. "I trust yonder buccaneers will be of no more trouble to you, captain."

Tahoku cautiously glances out at the two privateer vessels. The monsters have cleared the decks, and are snaking their long tendrils down open hatches. No more screams can be heard, but that's surely just the muffling work of the wind, waves and intervening decks. "Nor anyone else, I should judge," he says, surprised at how light his tone is. "I suppose that fog bank off to port is yours, too?"

The armored figure doesn't bother sparing it a glance. "Of course—but please, don't misread our intentions, captain. The eristrufa is a courtesy, an escort to ensure safe passage into port. We welcome all legitimate traders, and are especially eager to greet our first visitors from the Western Trade Alliance."

Tahoku grunts. There's an easing of tensions (and guts) across the deck—are they actually going to make it through the day alive? "Who's 'we'?"

A faint smile crosses the stranger's features. "Of course—where are my manners?" He sweeps an arm out toward the breakwater and the towers beyond. "I am Harmonious Arbiter, Architect of the White City. Let me be the first, though we are still at sea, to welcome you to Ysereth, capital of the Sunset Empire."

\* \* \* \*

Two months later—

Ships are arrayed in a defensive blockade across the harbor mouth of Moonglory, central and largest island of the Crescent Archipelago. A quick eyeball estimate suggests that the Yseri fleet is outnumbered by two to one. Kura Murasu smiles, revealing long sharp eyeteeth. These are exactly the sort of odds that keep life interesting.

"Drawing into firing range," the Kura Sau's master of artillery announces, quite unnecessarily. The Crescent ships are putting oar to water, moving ahead to engage. Is this everything the little nation can muster? Probably. The outer isles of Pearl Reef, Wavelet and Albatross have already fallen; if Port Monarch is captured, what's left of the archipelago is hardly worth considering as a fallback.

"Order Bitter Wave's wasp dragoons into the air," Murasu says. "And bring me my arm." The proreus repeats the orders. Signal mirrors begin flashing, and men rush belowdeck. Soon three sailors return, carrying between them a massive brass spike, encrusted with green iron and invincibly hardened Cece-lyne-glass crystals. In place of a traditional trigger mechanism, there is a gently pulsing disc of raw musculature at the base of the weapon—for the object is undoubtedly a weapon, much as it looks like a cross between a lance and a Sky Mantis weather control spine.

It's not his great height, shaved head, or tribal tattoos that make Kura Murasu stand out among the sailors surrounding him. There's something princely about him—the air of a man born to rule, and long accustomed to it. He doesn't take his eyes off the nearest ship as he offers up his left arm, which ends at the elbow, capped with a number of coiled pink tendrils rather than a simple stump. These unfold now as the infernal essence cannon is brought close, plugging into its muscled port; there's an audible squelch, followed by a click, and then a sigh as the enormous captain of the Kura Sau hefts the weapon and flexes it, swinging it this way and that. The blood ape tattoo on his other arm seems to flex and growl.

"Within firing range, Cap'n!" the master of artillery calls.

"Fire when ready," Murasu says. A trained team of sailors yanks the firing bar out of the barrel of the large steam cannon mounted on the ship's prow: there's a whistle and a boom, and the reinforced ram of a trireme rowing directly toward the Kura Sau explodes, spraying chunks of wood out into the sea in every direction. A cheer goes up from the marines assembled on deck; the artillery crew is silent, loading another charge.

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Admiral Coral Osprey stands near the kubernetes where that man wrestles with the wheel of the Dame Rose. His lips are pressed into a thin, bloodless line. It's half an hour into the engagement, and things are dissolving into general chaos; the Silver Mark is adrift and burning, the Fortune limping toward port with several holes in its hull, hoping to offload its marines to assist in shore defense before it sinks, and the three triremes engaging the Kura Sau are being demolished.

"Eyes up!" the ship's proreus—also master of arms—yells. Like everyone else, the Admiral finds himself obeying that command without thinking.

Demon wasps blink in and out of the midday sun, circling down toward the Crescent Archipelago's flagship. "Bowmen!"





Osprey calls. Arrows are set to string. “Ready!” The hum of taut bowstrings fills the air.

One of the wasps darts low, parting from the swarm. It’s hard to tell with the sun behind it—is that a rider? “Loose!”

Two dozen twangs. The wasp bucks and tumbles, but the rider has already hurled herself free. She drops toward the ship like a falling star, and marines step lively to get out of the way.

But she doesn’t crash lifelessly to the deck. The rider—a muscled woman in an armored greatcoat—lands in a crouch, splintering the deck. She rises, smiling and armed. With sickening dread, Osprey realizes that the weapon in her hand is some sort of daiklave.

Bitter Wave spins as the marines rush in, blade flashing with green fire. Men fall, struck by that terrible keening edge; their bodies erupt in emerald flame as they hit the deck, screaming out their last. The ship’s proreus steps in, laying in a strike to the back of the woman’s head with his cutlass; she parries it

with a toss of her flame-red hair, sending the sword bouncing away in a spray of sparks and brass shavings.

“Shoot her down!” Osprey calls to the bowmen. “Shoot her!” But the bowmen have their hands full; the other wasps are descending, stingers poised to strike, each bearing a marine in a white reinforced buff jacket marked with a green sun.

\* \* \* \*

By midday the moon-and-crescent flag flying over the harbor of Port Monarch has been pulled down and burned, replaced by a white flag bearing a green sun. By twilight the governor’s manor is surrounded by men and women in white-and-green uniforms, most with faintly iridescent eyes. By dawn the realization is setting in that this is no pirate raid, but a conquest—the Crescent Archipelago is a thing of the past.

If the island is to find any comfort, it is in the fact that it is not alone in this fate.



# APPENDIX ONE COMMENTARY

## AGENDA

(VOL. 1)

The Ink Monkeys scheme to bring readers Exalted content on par with their published works, using the blog as a pulpit to expound on topics that Second Edition never got around to updating from First Edition, as well as subjects deemed too esoteric or niche to merit precious allotment of wordcount. Here, unbound by such restraints, the Ink Monkeys will dig up the bones of the setting and crunch them.

More seriously, we hope you enjoy reading our ravings as much as we enjoy gibbering them in your general direction. To that end, expect articles, essays, new Charms and spells and other crunchy bits, insane Deathlords with sane stats, fiction vignettes, locations you never heard of or thought you would never hear about again, new ways to beat ass with or without kung fu and perhaps even a contest or two. Updates will be frequent, but not at regular scheduled intervals. We welcome feedback. Tell us what you want to see. Tell us what you dislike. We don't promise to take all reader comments to heart, but we

do promise to listen. We hope you like what we have to say. Most of all, we hope you'll have as much fun reading our work as we do writing it.

—Michael Goodwin

—Holden Shearer

—John Mørke

Solars

## THE DAWN SOLUTION

(VOL. 32, VOL. 33 & VOL. 35)

By now the story is an old one.

The Solar Exalted were brought into existence to fulfill a purpose. They were the ultimate weapons of the gods, built to overpower and even slay the titans. They were forged first and foremost for this purpose.

Telling then, that in a set of five Castes, one amongst them would embody all the principles of combat.

Above and beyond the rest of the Lawgivers, Solars of the Dawn Caste were made for one thing: war. Combat is their imperative, conflict is their instinct, and killing is their birthright.



In all the universe there has never been a more perfect or efficient martial design.

Some may see the Dawn Caste as being more limited than the other Castes of the Sun's Chosen.

A Night or Zenith can easily take up a daiklave or lead an army, while trusting in his own native abilities to be the judgmental eye of the Unconquered Sun, or the spiritual pharos of Creation's people. Similarly, a Twilight can expect to become a master sorcerer, or a genius forging wonders from the raw potential of his illimitable imagination, while an Eclipse may travel the world, enforcing order on lawless lands. For all the Castes, it would seem that being a master warrior was a given, and so the Dawn Caste suffered under a premise which any Caste of Lawgiver could accomplish out of hand.

But this view is mistaken.

For it is the Dawns alone who exemplify all the tenets of combat fusion—the principles of fighting which make the Solar Exalted supreme. Where at a glance one might see five redundant theatres of combat ability, the Solars see one cohesive military form: a single, merged combat ability which creates the ultimate fighter.

Solars of the Dawn Caste do not approach Archery, Martial Arts, Melee, Thrown, or even War as five separate forms of combat. Rather they experience them as one flowing, interconnected martial form which they may master. This mastery is not beyond the scope of the other Lawgivers, but it is the Bronze Tigers who most easily, quickly, and readily move through the five martial abilities, blending every aspect into a fighting style which makes them the premiere slayers amongst the Solar Exalted.

Solars of the Dawn Caste are relentless. The enemies of Creation do not sleep and are without number, but the Swords of Heaven do not quail. They thrive on conflict. They live in strife. For them there is no other way.

Yet, as the Caste which is more heavily driven in a single direction than any other, the Dawn Caste may still seem limited. It is for this reason that they were made to exemplify all tenets of combat—even the ones which exceed their own native abilities—so that they might vary in form and function, extending into principle abilities which were not centered around the act of war. The Dawn emphasis on combat knows no Caste lines. It knows no difference in abilities. It seeks only to extend into that which creates the perfect battle form.

This is the heart and soul of the Dawn Solution.

—Ø 8/31/10

[For more extensive, Charm-specific commentary, see the Ink Monkeys' blog posts of the Dawn Solution; and see the [Scroll of Errata](#) for other important Dawn updates. —Plague]

## INFERNALS

### GOLDEN YEARS TARNISHED BLACK

(VOL. 12)

Dear Ink Monkeyteers,

First up, each and every one of you have my personal thanks. I received an "A" for the semester as a result of the traffic generated on this blog so far. You all rule.

The impatient among you who already scrolled down to the Charms know that this isn't an essay on social combat, nor is

it stats for Gardullis. Indeed these Charms weren't even on the list of things I planned to work on, let alone next. The Ebon Dragon sure is a sneaky bastard.

In all seriousness, today's Charms are a bit of a nonstandard collaborative effort. The forum luminary Demented One has a tendency to write more Charms in a week than I manage in a given month. The man scares me. He does, however, have a lot of good ideas. What started as me giving him feedback on one of his nastier brainstorms turned into something much worse once I got hold of it and made it into an entire tree. While others offered feedback, Demented One did the most to help me refine my thoughts. You all should take the time to check out his work (not that it's hard to find). In my estimation, he is rapidly climbing into the Plague of Hats / JiveX tier of Charm design excellence.

—Michael A. Goodwin

## INFERNAL MONSTER EXPANSIONS

(VOL. 3)

The Ink Monkeys will be showcasing expansions for the infamous Infernal Monster Style introduced in *The Manual of Exalted Power*—The Infernals. The style is clearly inspired by a variety of sources, including *The Incredible Hulk*, *Hellboy*, *Grendel* and a whole bunch of assorted nasty beasties in folklore and mythology. It is the fighting art of ogres and raving psychopaths and hideous bloody tyrants. Each installment of this series will explore different thematic niches the style explores. It is our intention to give this same sort of love to other Hero Styles, particularly Solar Hero Style. *Grendel* needs his *Beowulf* after all. Readers may certainly offer suggestions on what they hope to see from later installments of the Infernal Monster series. Until then, have fun grinding the universe to paste.

—Michael A. Goodwin

## ROAR OF THE DEVIL BEAST

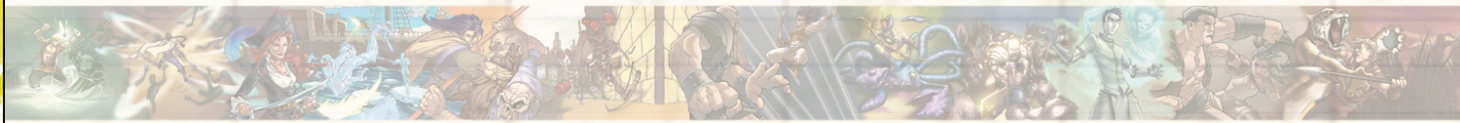
(VOL. 6)

Hey all.

Here is part three of the Infernal Monster expansion series. You'll note we cut out Post-Traumatic Brutality Roar from the previous post and added it here. It has an activation roll now, which I added after realizing there were problem interactions with later Charms by not including one. This is one advantage of the blog format. I can recognize that something isn't working right and fix it immediately. Isn't technology awesome?

On an unrelated note, I've been seeing some grumbling about how everything we've put up so far has been for Infernal or Alchemical. There is some Lunar content coming in one of the IMS expansions, but that isn't the main focus, so it's not that much. However, this is not to say that Ink Monkeys will only be offering content for those Exalted types. I've promised some Solar Hero and Lunar Hero and Dark Messiah and Terrestrial Hero expansions, and you'll get those. However, before we get there, I'm working on statting up Gardullis. At last, you will see the full power of an armed and operational Greater Elemental Dragon. Can't promise when he'll be done, only that he is my next project after the IMS series ends. Hope that is some reassurance to the "Quit with the Primordial Exalted already!" camp. As always, thanks for reading.

—Michael A. Goodwin



## CHAINED BEAST

(VOL. 9)

Hey all,

Here is something unexpected and different for the latest IMS installment. Yes, these Charms are overpowered. Yes, that is the point of akuma. If you sell your soul and your protagonism, you deserve to get something for it. Consider these Charms a bit of that something. Enjoy!

—Michael A. Goodwin

## ALCHEMICALS

### AUTOCHTHONIA AND SOULS

(VOL. 4)

It has become apparent of late that the new Manual of Exalted Power—Alchemicals, though awesome in every other way, could stand to be clearer on the subject of Autochthonia's unique cycle of reincarnation, and the role soulgems play in this cycle. Because both soulgems and Autochthonia's current soul crisis are matters of such great import to its Champions, we present the following information to hopefully shine some light on the issue and dispel confusion.

Clarity: It's not just a game trait!

—Holden Shearer

—John Mørke

### ESSENCE PULSE CANNON

(VOL. 2)

When Holden and I were converting the Alchemical Charms for Second Edition, we quickly realized that some of the most iconic combat Charms I gave them in First Edition were so narrow that they tended to produce One True Builds. With everyone rocking Essence Pulse Cannons and using mechacthulhu multi-limb Grievous builds because they were where the firepower was, nobody was exploring all the other amazing aesthetics that Alchemicals could wield. To combat that, we took a broader approach, ensuring that people could arm themselves however they want to. Still, some people miss their Essence Pulse Cannons. And we get that. They were cool.

We think they're still cool. We might be biased.

—Michael A. Goodwin

For that matter, are there any other lost First Edition gems your Alchemical just can't live without?

—Holden Shearer

## MARTIAL ARTS

### BLACK CLAW STYLE

(VOL. 10)

I've been waiting a long time to make this post.

Yes, it's yet another martial arts style, but a bit different than what you may be used to.

This style was created by a demon.

Black Claw pushes the envelope for esoteric weirdness within a Celestial style—it's very much riding the edge, and shouldn't be taken as something you see a lot of in CMA. Still, exploring

the odd outer boundaries of the system and the setting are one of the things we wanted to do when we asked for this blog, so here we are.

This style is actually, in a manner of speaking, the first thing I ever wrote for White Wolf. Sort of. Black Claw dates back to the summer of 2008, when Neph was writing *Infernals* and I was still hoping that I might some day graduate from playtester to writer. One day, as memory serves, Conrad Hubbard sent over an email wondering if Neph might possibly write up Black Claw style for inclusion in the book. "What's Black Claw style?" I asked. Neph indicated that, according to Conrad, it was a martial arts style in Mara's writeup, from way back in the first edition *Storyteller's Companion*.

I had no memory of such a thing and was quite surprised—Martial Arts have always been one of my biggest areas of interest in *Exalted*. So I dug out my old copy, blew the dust off of it, didn't see anything about a Black Claw style, read it again, and then finally noticed it in her Ability block—*Martial Arts 5 (Black Claw Style +2)*.

Conrad has an amazing memory for fine details.

Neph wasn't especially interested in adding such a thing to his already-full plate, so, half-jokingly, I said "I'll write it up." He said that I should go ahead and do so, and he'd include it in the end, if there were any room.

Anyone familiar with *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Infernals* is laughing right about now. Or crying. For me it's usually both at once.

At any rate, although I wrote it, this style owes one debt of gratitude to Conrad Hubbard (for bringing it to our attention) and two debts of gratitude to Michael Goodwin. First, because he gave me the go-ahead to write it in the first place, and second, because he provided the idea for the style's unique sifu-student relationship, which I built the rest of Black Claw on.

This has been sitting in my proverbial bottom drawer, waiting for the right moment to be unleashed upon the world, for a very long time. It may be my single favorite martial arts style that I have ever written. I hope it provides some benefit to your games.

—Holden Shearer

### SWAYING GRASS DANCE STYLE

(VOL. 25)

Ink Monkeys exists, in large part, because writing for *Exalted* isn't just something I do for a paycheck; it's my hobby. Long before I was a freelancer, I was a fan. Specifically, I was "martial arts guy." That was my hobby—designing martial arts styles for *Exalted*. I did it for fun. The only part of becoming a freelancer that sucked was not getting to write up martial arts styles or other Charms whenever I wanted any more. So we have Ink Monkeys!

I remain convinced that some of my old fan-era work is not lacking in merit, though; and so, since it's a slow night, I've decided to share one of my favorite creations with you—overhauled and updated to fit modern Charm design standards, naturally. For some of you, this is an update of something old and familiar; for others, it's brand-new. Either way, I hope you like it.

—Holden Shearer



## COOL PLACES

### FAR SHORES

#### INFERNAL MANSES

(VOL. 41)

I love the Demon City. I love it to death. So it is my pleasure, as my first sojourn into the jungle of the Ink Monkeys, to present a selection of Infernal manses. I hope they are as enjoyable to read and to use in your game as they were for me to write. And there's more to come! Future posts will delve into the nitty-gritty of infernal demesnes, manses and hearthstones.

—Eric Minton

#### THE DAYSTAR

(VOL. 13)

Hey there, Exalted fans.

As a matter of unfinished business from *Glories of the Most High*, it has always been in my heart to give you the sun.

By that I am referring to the Dirigible Engine Daystar, which turned the sun into a setting feature that your characters explore and interact with. Unfortunately in *Glories*, there was not enough room to fully detail the Chariot of the Most High. Still, I gave it a go, and included what I considered then to be all the major brush-strokes players would need to envision the Daystar.

Turns out I was wrong—upon writing the Daystar, I began to see a much larger picture of the Dirigible Engine than I saw initially, and I have spent the last two months painstakingly constructing it piece-by-piece just for you, Exalted fans. Sometimes I surprise myself.

What really surprised me, though, is how much call there has been for the Daystar to be further explored. Though dissatisfied with the limited coverage I was able to give it in *Glories*, I thought that what I had put there would be adequate. Turns out, many of you thought the same. In fact, the Daystar was so well received, that requests for further and more in-depth exploration of what it is, what it does, and what players can expect to find there / do there, has confronted me at every turn since November '09. So it is by popular demand that I can finally say to you: Yes. It is finally finished.

As a last word before I turn you loose on the Daystar, a moment of thanks. We writers owe so much to the editors who take their time to catch the mistakes we miss. A special thanks to Tito Lerma for taking time out of his busy schedule to help edit this project. Thanks also to the readers who have agitated and insisted so often that the Daystar should be more. This Ink Monkeys special is for you.

—John Mørke

#### THE DAYSTAR FINALE

(VOL. 42)

Ahh, I did not think I would find myself back here for some time. It wasn't that long ago that I put down the Daystar, with all my best intentions to finish editing the final segment. Then life took over, swept me away, and now here we are. So much left unsaid. So much left undone. And I did not think I would make it back.

Allow me to take a look around...

No, I'm sure of it. It's different now. Much has changed since I wrote this. Life has been a whirlwind, one I spent much of my time sowing. But I think I can remember what it was to speak of the Sun and the Daystar—how they were interchangeable, how together with his faithful sun, Our Guarding Star survived all the labors which the Ultimate Darkness could conceive to destroy him.

I had several big intentions for this final part, but I am fairly sure now that at least part of the promise of the Daystar will have to wait for the future. When it came down to it, I was not happy with the mechanical systems for controlling the Daystar and unleashing its devastating powers. I made a heartfelt attempt to revise and intensify those systems, but as I pushed forward, I realized two things:

First, it would take longer than I had to do the job correctly, with errata bearing down on me, IRL obligations eating my focus, and other Exalted projects well underway. Second, with so many outrageous powers and weapons, the Daystar was a means beyond the mechanical scope of the rest of the game. If I was prepared to put some time into statting up some sizeable opponents, it would have been viable, but doing so was out of the question. I was out of time.

With these pieces of information in mind, I decided to delay my ambitions to stat the Daystar. It came down to a choice between posting the final setmat on the piece—which was fairly thorough—and excluding the crunch, or leaving the Daystar unfinished for a long and indefinite period. Thus, I pulled the system rules for how to fly and fire the Daystar out of the document. Should there come a day when Exalted's system is able to express beings such as Ligier, Prince Balor, unreasonably gigantic behemoths, or even Malfeas, then there will be call for a Daystar whose crunch is as rigorous as its legend.

Until then, we shall have to settle for a modified, but hopefully satisfying ending—one better than none at all. Happy reading.

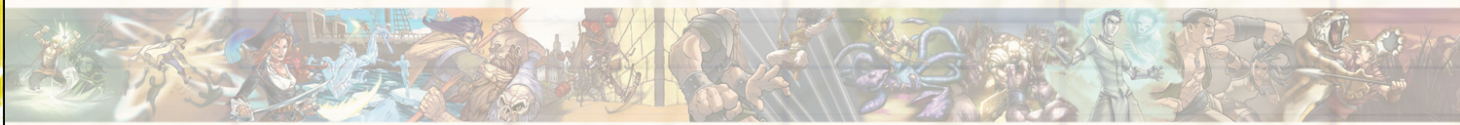
—Ø 11/09/2010

Here we stand aboard the Daystar, you and I, together for one last time. Before I turn the keys over to you and let you get back to your gaming, might I have a minute of your time? Just a moment to clarify something for those of you who are reaching out (and perhaps struggling) to conceptualize the Daystar?

The Daystar is not a machine in the way we understand them. It is not technology. It shares some qualities that allow us to assign language to it—words like “machine” and “engine,”—but it is not those things. Rather, it is an artifact of such undertaking that it brews within the holiest of holies. The sun is a construct beyond material principle, originating with the Primordials who birthed the universe. Such is the intensity of its Essence that it seems sentient. It is holy throughout; limitless and inexorable.

The Unconquered Sun and the Daystar have been conflated for a reason. At the very bottom of things, they were made together. They are intertwined. They have diverged, as history will show. The god is not the river. But this is less true for the Unconquered Sun. Before there was a “sun,” there was no Unconquered Sun; such an equation was not possible. Before the labors were completed, Sol Incarnate was not the Unconquered Sun; such a label would have been without merit. The Ebon Dragon produced the vessel of that incarnation, containing all the possibilities created by the Holy Tyrant (and more),





but it was the Daystar which stood as the first and most basic and vital representation of all those qualities that the Unconquered Sun should stand for.

Light begins to metaphysically take on a number of metaphors: life, justice, hope, infinity, possibility, color and musical tones (which previously, only the Primordials had), heroism, and much more. The Unconquered Sun is more than the Daystar, but he increases the Daystar's scope. The Daystar then expands to encompass more—as many legends as anyone in Creation (or we ourselves) can create for it; as many feats as the stunned Primordials could assign to it. The Unconquered Sun and the Daystar are one. And they never stop getting better. Never. Not as long as we are here to imagine them.

And yet...we know what has become of Our Guarding Star.

And we know that ours are the characters who are left to be what he once was, and more—the harbingers of a story of might and glory without end. Let us call that story Exalted.

—Ø 06/09/2010

### HATEWHEEL'S DAYSTAR CUTS

“Mechanics aren't the only thing I cut from the final part of the Daystar. This is some information I pulled from the final part, mostly because I felt like it was already a very long read, and this particular information just didn't feel as exciting as the rest. Still, I figured some of you might think it was cool to have, so I'll post it here.”

—hatewheel (aka. John Mørke)

### THE NAMELESS LAIR OF MA-HA-SUCHI

(VOL. 19)

Sometimes when I'm reading a webcomic or whatever I'll see “special guest edition” and just navigate away without really paying any more attention than that. Hopefully, the line above got your attention before that could happen.

Welcome to A Very Special Ink Monkeys, faithful readers. This post is brought to you by the letter D, for Dean Shomshak, developer of Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. III—the East. The East was one of those books that fell prey to a terrible ailment common to Exalted products—rocking too hard for its own good. Its enthusiastic authors, enraptured by the exotic allure of lost jungle temples and bizarre, savage tribes, wrote too damned much, and some of it simply had to be cut for space. This material has languished on Mr. Shomshak's hard drive for several years, fully developed, ready for print... but too small to be sold as its own PDF, and yet, too awesome to simply write off. Alas, this material was left orphaned, without any proper outlet to reach its intended audience.

Until now. The Ink Monkeys, being Exalted fans at heart themselves, extend their thanks to Dean for going through the approval process required to even propose we do this post, to John Chambers for helping him push it forward, to and Eddy Webb for clearing the whole shebang—this literally could not have happened without them. We also of course extend our thanks to freelancers Alan Alexander, Dustin Shampel, and Andrew Watt, who went above and beyond the call of duty (and wordcount) to write up the material you're finally getting today.

These guys are awesome.

—Holden Shearer

## ESSENTIAL ESSAYS

### THE LEGEND OF THE TITANS

(VOL. 40)

Hello again, Exalted fans.

The following passages represent something very near and dear to my heart. You may think of them variously—a history of the Primordials, a legend which predates the founding of Creation, or a compelling glimpse at the titans in earlier times. All of these perceptions are accurate. However, I like to think of this text as the prelude to **Glories of the Most High**.

With **The Broken-Winged Crane** just around the corner, now is the perfect time for myths and legends. Herein lies a new and exciting look at the beings who would become the Yozis.

Special thanks to John Chambers for his blessing of this volume, and to Lord Dunsany, to whom this writing pays tribute.

With my regards, I give you the Legend of the Titans.

—Ø

### OF THE YOZIS LESS SPOKEN OF

(VOL. 46)

Because of the wide-ranging subject matter of **Vol. 46**, the material has been split up in this PDF to the most appropriate chapters. System-focused geomancy information can be found in the Far Shores and Wonders Chapter (page 113) while the more story-focused information about the Yozis themselves can be found in the Essential Essays Chapter (page 167).

—Plague of Hats [not an Ink Monkey]

### VOICE OF THE MAGNUS

(VOL. 18)

Those of you who were with us for the game's first edition may remember the Aspect Books. The vagaries of a fickle market have kept second edition from continuing that line of products, which is a shame, in my opinion—their “Records of the Before,” chapters of historical in-setting documents, were some of my favorite pieces of 1e material.

While we can't bring back the full goodness of the Caste and Aspect books, we can dig up some in-setting documents from the setting's history, and present them for your edification and enjoyment. Here's the first one, to tide you over until the next part of Daystar's ready to go up.

—Holden Shearer

—John Mørke

## CHAPTER SEVEN

(VOL. 31)

Chapter seven is one of the most helpful chapters of any hardback release—the Storytelling chapter. It's also one of the sections with the least wordcount allocated to it. Because there are always more good ideas for your Exalted series than room to write them up, we're proud to present a new Ink Monkeys feature: Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven articles will feature essays and advice for Storytellers and players alike, as well as new options and directions to take your series in, if you're looking to head off the beaten path a bit. Our first article in this series (p. 50) offers new options for Abyssal games beyond the classic loyalist/renege paradigm. We hope you enjoy!

—Holden





# APPENDIX TWO ART APPRECIATION

## PICTURES

### MNEMON LOOKS GRAND ON HER VELOCIPEDE

(VOL. 30)

Yo! Awhile back I (John Mørke, aka hatewheel) started a lively discussion on the forums about the possibility of bicycles existing in Creation. The inevitability of what was to occur should surprise no one. Arguments were made. Theories were decried. Elaborate stunts were described. I posited Mnemon riding away from the destruction of the Versino on a velocipede and someone drew it.

Big huge shout out and thank you to [mr\\_mercutio](#) and [Path](#)—this is just way way too awesome! YES! BEHOLD THE HATEWHEEL!

“I shouldn’t be as amused by my own work as I am, but I do love the Emerald Thurible flying out behind her, trailing green smoke as she flies away.” —[mr\\_mercutio](#)

The Thurible is what sells it!



See the original, uncolored image by [mr\\_mercutio](#): [here](#).

See the original, colored, unsigned, by [Path](#): [here](#).

See some recolors by guys on the forums:

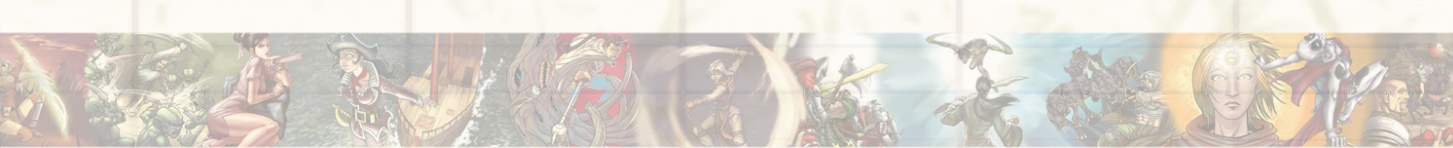
- [Here](#) is one by [Zironic](#).
- [Here](#) is another, pinker version by [Zironic](#).
- [Here](#) is one by [Demetrius7997](#).

View the original pictures by [mr\\_mercutio](#) drawn in April: [here](#) and [here](#).



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