
EX3

Dragon-Blooded

What Fire Has Wrought



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RY 718

The last wagon trundled away, bearing with it the daiklave of River's former commander. The blade would return to House Peleps accompanied by a letter describing Peleps Lazurin's brave last deeds, and conveying River's sincerest condolences at the lack of a body. A short train of carts, wagons, and sledges wended away down the road, leaving their Wyld Hunt's once-bustling camp little more than an empty stretch of road just north of the River Province. Birdsong was already replacing the ring of weapons on the air, and the last cookfire had dwindled down to embers.

The carts contained the weapons and armor of the slain — at least what River, Eshuvar, and Kingfisher Swift had been able to recover. A scant handful of monks' and soldiers' bodies were being shipped home, but the Anathema had reduced most of them to splintered bones and stinking offal. Far too many families were receiving only letters.

River's hands ached from writing them, but she'd taken on the responsibility while the servants and retainers she'd dismissed packed their dead masters' things. It was the least she could do.

There wasn't *time* to be writing missives — every hour's delay let the two Anathema who'd laid waste to their Wyld Hunt slip farther away. But the survivors who hadn't fled needed time to regroup, to tend to their wounds, to figure out what came next.

All three survivors.

Sesus Eshuvar stood in the middle of the road, watching the wagons go. He'd been only a few months out of the Heptagram when they first set out on the Hunt. River had noticed how young he'd seemed, then: tall and gangly, practiced but not yet polished, trying to find the proper line between self-assured hauteur and polite deference. Now there was a slump to his shoulders, as though he'd aged twenty years overnight. *We all have.*

Next to Eshuvar, Kingfisher Swift leaned heavily on her mace, her unit's standard propped beside her. Her legion's talon had made up the bulk of the Hunt's forces, and now she was all that remained. Swift was a lost egg who'd taken the coin; she couldn't be more than a dozen years into her service. River might have asked if Swift wished she'd taken the razor instead, but, well. That wouldn't necessarily have kept her away from this disaster. River herself was proof of that.

The Immaculate Order had arranged this Wyld Hunt, mustered the might of the Realm and sent them on the trail of two Anathema who were preying on the people north of the River Province. The Order had provided the intelligence and placed one of their most promising monks in charge of the expedition. He'd been a solid leader, brave and competent, right up until the Wretched slew him.

Now River was the last Immaculate still breathing, and it fell to her to finish the Hunt.

She straightened her robes, thankful that if she'd gotten ink on her sleeves it didn't show against the black fabric, and joined the others. "We have to find them."

Eshuvar and Swift turned toward her as one. "We three?" asked Eshuvar. "You don't think we should wait for reinforcements?"

"They won't come in time," said River.

"If we wait," said Swift, "the Anathema have time to recover from their wounds. We can't waste the opportunity our companions died to give us."

For a moment River thought Eshuvar might argue — it was in the way his jaw settled into a stubborn line, how his chin lifted just a hair — but he closed his eyes and breathed deep, and merely nodded.

• • • • •

Two figures approached, one on horseback, the other keeping up on foot with the steed's steady trot. The mounted one wore steel armor and a horned kabuto helmet, and had the air of Lookshy about him. A splash of red at his shoulder broke up the armor's grays. When they drew closer, River realized the red was a robin, perched and alert on its master's plate.

His companion, a heavyset woman, was dressed plainly, her clothing neat but threadbare from travel. Two flamepieces were tucked into her belt, a

daiklave strapped to her back. She kept her hands well away from the weapons, as if attempting to reassure the Dynasts she meant no harm.

"We're looking for Righteous River Overflows Its Banks," said the Lookshyan. "One of the cart-bearers said she was in charge." He wore an easy smile, taking in all three of the survivors. Beside River, Eshuvar straightened up and smiled back wanly.

"I'm River," she said.

"Ah, perfect," he said, and slipped from his saddle to come take her hand. "I am Yushoto Mathar, and my friend is Left Hand Chalima. Word reached us of a Wyld Hunt and we came to offer our services." He paused and looked back the way they'd come, then back to River, the smile faltering. "Are they still needed?"

River glanced at Eshuvar, who already seemed heartened by the newcomers' presence. Swift gave her a short nod. "The Anathema are wounded, but not dead. What you passed just now were our own casualties. If you're still willing, in the face of that—"

"We are." Chalima stepped forward, grim but eager. "They need to be dealt with."

"I've been tracking them," said Mathar. "Until recently they'd roamed far enough from the River Province's borders, and I had more immediate threats to worry about. But now…." He gestured toward the dwindling train of the dead. "If they're allowed to recover, they'll be looking for retaliation. Or *liberation* for our smaller territories, if what they preach can be believed. I have some ideas where they might have fled. If you have maps, I can show you."

• • • • •

The command tent had been packed up and sent home with the wagons, but River had kept the table covered with Peleps Lazurin's maps and markers to study. The place where they'd planned to draw out the Anathema and overwhelm them with a show of Terrestrial might still held its formation on the largest of the maps. It seemed wrong, somehow, like the markers ought to have at least all fallen over when the Dragons they represented died.

Mathar waited for her nod of permission before removing the markers from the map. One by one, he laid them down in their lacquered case. In the end, all that remained were the two representing the Anathema. "There are settlements here and here," he said, pointing at spots deeper in the forest. "They might seek shelter there, but it would put the people at risk."

On the journey there, River had read report after report from the Wyld Hunt's informants, discussing the number of mortals under the Anathema's thrall, how many believed their promises to protect them from the ambitions of Lookshy and the Realm, how the two had ambushed trade caravans and traveling dignitaries and laid claim to their goods and valuables. "Would they hurt the people they've been rallying to their cause all this time?"

"They're not in danger from the Anathema," said Chalima. "It's from you. From us."

River bristled, but it wasn't a point she could argue too fiercely. If a village were destroyed in the pursuit and elimination of an Anathema, many would consider it an acceptable loss.

"They won't hide there." Swift came over to study the map. "When we fought, they were leading us *away* from the village we'd tracked them to. Could've run back to it, made the people stand between us and them. They didn't. Where else?"

Mathar pointed at a third spot, half a day's ride away: a low valley whose only good entrance was a narrow road between two steep rock ledges. "Here, then. If I were going to make a last stand, it's where I'd go."

• • • • •

"We should swear an oath," said Swift. They were by the side of the road, finishing a meal scraped together from what the retainers had left behind. For Chalima, who grew up in poverty in the Scavenger Lands, it was a feast. Eshuvar made comments about missing this or that side dish, or wishing for a

glass of some expensive wine to wash it down, but subsided at a glance from River. Mathar lifted the young sorcerer's spirits when he shared out a packet of seasoning he'd brought from Lookshy. Swift had finished her plate quickly, a habit formed in the Legion. It meant she missed out on Mathar's spices, but she'd had time to think while the others ate.

During the planning, River and Chalima shaped the strategy while Mathar and Eshuvar chimed in with recommendations. Swift had remained quiet, trying to figure out what had gone so terribly wrong on the Hunt. Now she stood, meeting each of their gazes, ready to defend her declaration. She wasn't one for pretty words and inspiring speeches, but River had listened this morning when Swift suggested they push on. She might listen now. "The bond will strengthen us. It's what we should have done before."

To Swift's surprise, it wasn't River who rose first in support, but Chalima. The hand she held out was already warm with Essence. "I swear," she said, "by Earth, by Wood, by Fire, by Air, by Water…."

The other three were standing before Chalima reached the last element, their animas flaring to life as they recited their oaths. The words differed — the Realm and Lookshyan versions were more intricate, more poetic, than Chalima's short declaration — but the *intent* was the same. Their banners flared as their voices rose, the five elements twining together and climbing toward the sky. As they stated their purpose to hunt down the two Anathema, all five stood straighter, resolve swelling in their hearts. They recited one another's names, each one a promise to the others.

Then it was done, and the oath settled deep, coming to rest in their very bones. Swift felt it not like a restraint, but an expansion. Her companions' vitality sang with her own, and she felt, for the first time in days, like they might survive what was to come.

• • • • •

The Kinship passed through the place where the Hunt had failed with little comment. The survivors grew solemn, and River uttered prayers for the dead as they passed, but otherwise they pressed straight on. The fleeing Anathema had followed the route Mathar predicted. The ranger picked up the trail quickly. His robin flew ahead a little ways, returning now and then to chirp at them and take off again. "We'll catch up to them by daybreak," he said. No one wanted to stop and rest. No one even had to ask.

• • • • •

Later, River would recall the battle in flashes.

She remembered the woman towering above them, the blazing silver circle on her forehead terrible to behold. Her voice was a roar in River's ears. River might have given into instinct and fled, if it weren't for Swift at her side and the knowledge of her companions behind. Then came the brittle flapping of obsidian wings and the sharp acrid smell of a flamepiece, and that awful need to *run, go, get out* stopped buzzing in her head.

She remembered the thrum of Mathar's bow. The steady rhythm of his arrows kept the howling Wretched from reaching Chalima. Gave River and Swift the opportunity to get within striking distance.

She remembered losing the Anathema in a swirl of darkness. He'd reappear, strike, then fade again. Swift's mace passed through where he'd been only a moment before, and River thought *we're done.*

She remembered Swift's gritted teeth; Eshuvar's clear, certain voice as he cast his spell; the dry, reassuring *k-chak!* of Chalima reloading her flamepieces; and Mathar's laughter ringing out over it all. She remembered how her heart lightened as they made their final push.

She remembered how they stood together after, one Anathema dead, the other their captive. Chalima propped up a wounded Swift. Mathar slung an arm around Eshuvar's shoulders. Though their Kinship had fulfilled its purpose, no one spoke the words to disband it.

River prayed no one ever would.



Introduction

"The peach trees in the orchard behind the house are just in full flower. Tomorrow we will institute a sacrifice there and solemnly declare our intention before Heaven and Earth, and we three will swear brotherhood and unity of aims and sentiments: Thus will we enter upon our great task."

– Luo Guanzhong, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

Though the sun and moon and stars have their champions, though little gods call upon the Exigence and deathknights stride forth from the Underworld, the people of the Realm and the Threshold know but one sort of Exalted. These are the Dragon-Blooded, Chosen of the Five Elemental Dragons, and by divine mandate the Princes of the Earth.

Kindled from a single ancient bloodline spread throughout Creation, the Dragon-Blooded trace their descent back to the Elemental Dragons. That lineage marks them with elemental power. Moreover, in a world where other Exalted have been driven to the ends of the world, it anoints them as Princes of the Earth, rightful rulers of all Creation.

In the wake of the Great Contagion, the Scarlet Empress gathered the surviving disparate Dragon-Blooded and forged from them a sprawling dynasty. As their immortal god-matriarch, she ruled the world from the Blessed Isle at Creation's heart. Legions marched at her command; queens and despots bent the knee, sending rivers of silver and jade to fill her treasury. Her descendants, thronging in their bejeweled thousands, served as her generals and her ministers, her spymasters and her chaplains.

Now the Empress is gone, and her descendants turn away from the Threshold to battle for the vacant throne. But as the Scarlet Dynasty stokes the fires of civil war, outcaste Dragon-Blooded burn brighter in the shadows of the Threshold, taking advantage of the chaos to hammer out their own destinies upon the anvil of the world.

This Book at a Glance

Chapter One: The Dragon-Blooded touches on the history of the Dragon-Blooded, how they experience Exaltation, and the furious elemental nature of their Essence.

Chapter Two: The Great Houses details the Ten Great Houses of the Scarlet Dynasty — and one fallen house that lives on in its shadow.

Chapter Three: Life in the Scarlet Dynasty elaborates on the society and culture of the Realm's ruling Dragon-Blooded families.

Chapter Four: Beyond the Realm covers Dragon-Blooded living outside the Scarlet Realm, from the Shogunate successor state of Lookshy and various lesser groups to the thousands of individual Dragon-Blooded heroes scattered across the Threshold.

Chapter Five: Character Creation lays out the rules for creating a Dragon-Blooded player character.

Chapter Six: Traits presents the five elemental Aspects, as well as anima powers, unique Merits, and other traits important to Dragon-Blooded characters.

Chapter Seven: Charms catalogues the innate elemental and martial magics of the Dragon-Blooded Host.

Chapter Eight: Martial Arts and Sorcery introduces several new Martial Arts styles, including the puissant Immaculate Dragon styles, as well as elemental spells wielded by Dragon-Blooded sorcerers.

Chapter Nine: Heirlooms of Power offers a selection of artifact weapons available to champions of the Scarlet Dynasty.

Chapter Ten: Princes of the Earth depicts an array of noteworthy Dragon-Blooded NPCs for use in your chronicle.

Lexicon

All-Seeing Eye, the: The *Scarlet Empress'* secret police and intelligence agency.



Blessed Isle, the: The island-continent at the center of Creation, which the *Scarlet Empress* governed directly.

cadet house: A self-perpetuating Threshold clan of *Dragon-Blooded* tied to the *Scarlet Dynasty* by marriage, but not a part of or beholden to a *Great House*.

dominie: Headmaster of a *primary school* or *secondary school*.

dominion: One of three especially large *prefectures*, carved from the lands of the old Shoguns.

Deliberative, the: The *Realm*'s legislative body, made up of the *Dynast* senators of the Greater Chamber and mortal delegates of the Lesser Chamber.

Dragon-Blooded, the: Exalted who've inherited the divine power of the Elemental Dragons and reign across Creation as Princes of the Earth.

Dynast: A member of one of the *Great Houses* of the *Scarlet Dynasty*.

gentes (singular: gens): The aristocratic *Dragon-Blooded* families that rule Lookshy, after the fashion of — and in many cases tracing their origins back to — the ruling *Shogunate* clans of the same name. Includes five leading Gentes Major, and many lesser Gentes Minor.

Great House: A *Dragon-Blooded* lineage, typically descended from the *Scarlet Empress*, who've been elevated to a paramount position within the *Realm* by Imperial decree. There are currently ten Great Houses, although others have risen and fallen over the centuries — and one fallen house still haunts the *Scarlet Dynasty*.

Immaculate Order, the: The religious institution of the *Realm*, which enforces and spreads the teachings of the *Immaculate Philosophy* throughout its territory.

Immaculate Philosophy, the: The state religion of the *Realm*, which teaches that the *Dragon-Blooded* are the rightful rulers of Creation and its mortal peoples.

Imperial Service, the: A collective term for the *Realm*'s executive, administrative, and judicial arms, comprised

of the Imperial legions, Imperial Navy, Merchant Fleet, *magistrates*, the *Thousand Scales*, and *All-Seeing Eye*.

Lookshy: Fortress-city of the *Seventh Legion*, built upon the *Shogunate* city of Deheleshen. The *gentes* of Lookshy form the Scavenger Lands' bastion against the *Realm*.

lost egg: An *outcaste*, particularly one from the *Blessed Isle*'s lower classes, who has yet to be brought into the service of the *Realm*. Lost eggs who enter the *Realm*'s service are sometimes called "found eggs."

magistrate: One of the *Scarlet Empress*' investigators plenipotentiary, empowered to battle corruption in the *Realm* on her behalf.

outcaste: Within the *Realm*, any *Dragon-Blood* who isn't part of the *Scarlet Dynasty*.

patrician: A member of the class of gentry who oversee the peasantry of the *Blessed Isle* on behalf of the *Scarlet Dynasty*.

prefecture: A province of *the Blessed Isle*, administered by a prefect appointed by one of the *Great Houses* at the behest of the *Scarlet Empress*.

primary school: One of hundreds of boarding schools on the *Blessed Isle* attended by young *patricians* and *Dynasts* from ages 9 to 14.

Realm, the: The greatest empire in all Creation, encompassing both the *Blessed Isle* and the conquered *satrapies* of the Threshold.

Realm Year (RY): The Imperial dating system of the *Realm*, starting from the coronation of the *Scarlet Empress*.

satrapy: A province in the Threshold that has pledged fealty to the *Scarlet Empress*, sending her tribute. Overseen by a satrap chosen from one of the *Great Houses*.

Scarlet Dynasty, the: The *Dragon-Blooded* of the *Great Houses*, the ruling elite of the *Realm*.

Scarlet Empress, the: The most powerful *Dragon-Blood* in Creation, who ruled the *Realm* from its birth until her disappearance five years ago.

secondary school: One of the *Realm's* rigorous academies of higher learning, attended from ages 15 to 21. *Dynasts* typically attend either the Cloister of Wisdom, the Heptagram, the House of Bells, or the Spiral Academy, while *outcastes* attend either the Cloister of Wisdom or Pasiap's Stair. *Patricians* go to other, lesser schools.

Seventh Legion, the: The *Dragon-Blooded* military of *Lookshy*, which traces its lineage and authority back to the *Shogunate*.

shikari: A *Dragon-Blooded* participant in a *Wyld Hunt* officially sanctioned by the *Realm*.

Shogunate, the: A world-spanning *Dragon-Blooded* empire predating the Great Contagion and the rise of the *Scarlet Empress*.

Sworn Kinship: A group of *Dragon-Blooded* bound together by a mystical oath of camaraderie. Also called a Hearth.

Thousand Scales, the: A colloquial term for the ministries of the *Imperial Service*.

Wyld Hunt, the: A group of *Dragon-Blooded* gathered to destroy one of the Anathema. This ancient tradition, rooted in the *Immaculate Philosophy*, is followed by *Dynasts* and *outcastes* alike.

Suggested Resources

Classics

***Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, by Luo Guanzhong:** Three heroes swear the Oath of the Peach Garden — a key inspiration for Sworn Kinships — in their efforts to stave off the collapse of a decaying empire.

***Water Margin*, by Shi Nai'an:** An excellent primer for iconoclast Dragon-Blooded, the preternatural rebel heroes of *Water Margin* are caught in a web of destiny as they take up arms against a corrupt imperial government.

***Mahabharata*:** This epic tale follows the Pandavas, a Kinship of royal brothers blessed with supernatural might, and their struggle against their likewise supernaturally potent cousins, the Kauravas, who seek to destroy them and seize the crown.

Fiction

***Amber*, by Roger Zelazny:** Though the supernatural protagonists use their power to tread worlds beneath their feet, ultimately their contests and struggles are driven by family strife as they battle to claim their father's throne.

***Codex Alera*, by Jim Butcher:** An element-bending Romanesque fantasy empire whose adepts don't merely control the elements literally, but also conceptually, such as enhancing strength with Earth or stoking passions with Fire.

***The Kouga Ninja Scrolls*, by Futaro Yamada:** Against the backdrop of an imperial succession crisis, the Iga and the Kouga — two ninja clans who've mastered deadly supernatural arts — pursue a generations-long vendetta to its bitter end. Adapted to manga and anime under the title *Basilisk*.

***A Song of Ice and Fire*, by George R.R. Martin:** The continent of Westeros spirals into civil war after its monarch's demise. The various aristocratic protagonists engage in power plays worthy of Dynastic scions, while largely ignoring supernatural threats from beyond their borders.

Television

***Avatar: the Last Airbender*, created by Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko:** Although the magic on display draws less on the metaphorical qualities of the elements than do Dragon-Blooded Charms, it's still an incredible source of inspiration. The Fire Nation shares the Scarlet Realm's propensity for world domination, while its royal family is Dynastic politics writ small.

***Avatar: the Legend of Korra*, created by Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko:** While it may not be quite as strong as the original series, *Korra* still has some great examples of the elemental power the Dragon-Blood wield. The third season in particular has fight scenes that inspired numerous Dragon-Blooded Charms.



Realm Year 718

Swaddled in the silks and cloth-of-jade of her darkened bedchamber, she stares at the stone that has defined much of her life, that orb of smoky quartz sparkling with golden light. The light dances across the ceiling, warm in her hand, and even after seven centuries it enthralls her like a mere child. Is it dimmer than yesterday, she wonders?

The sun rises, though she cannot see it. She will not rest where the sun's light can touch her. She stands, more perfect than any statue, leaving her soldier bedmate snoring softly in the resplendent nest of a true Dragon. The woman is ageless, ancient, but in truth she has never grown beyond the flame of her youth, and immortality has taught her to properly bank the embers of humanity. Her bedmate is a Tepet, all hard curves and scars and queer innocence. The woman idly ponders making her a magistrate. The Tepet has the temperament, and did her duty with loyalty and zeal.

Padding across the chamber, the woman passes through heavy doors of perfect construction, walks unseeing past the wealth of nations, past murals of herself and her deeds wrought in jade and orichalcum, with moonsilver designs twisting slowly through them. The light of the stone catches the murals, making the orichalcum sun shine on her reign, making the jade of her skin and crown and blade seem purer and stronger, making the moonsilver of her greatest enemies, Anathema all, dance in malevolence.

Her servants await her in the next room, as does the Realm. Here, alone and naked before her deeds, a single sob escapes her lips. She pauses before the stone doors that separate her from them. For a moment, her bland perfection falters, her perfect vision clouded by salt and sorrow. She presses the stone to her forehead, hoping it will cool, but it never has — it burns her hands, her forehead, her Essence, and she can never let this burden go. Her Essence is stone and flame, and the fire is ever upon her within her depths. Yet embers can grow cold, she fears, and even mountains can fall to the inexorable sea.

It is a moment, though. The seas recede, salt and water vanishing into air.

The woman straightens and pushes past the next row of doors, into a room ever-lit, full of fragrant incense and waiting attendants. They swarm about her, careful to never touch the stone nor even glance upon it for long. Her robes wrap around her, perfectly tied, the scarlet mantle of rulership lowered over her shoulders. She steps forward as the attendants prostrate themselves and avert their eyes, for she is not to be seen grasping her heavy crown. She slides the stone into the central socket, a priceless treasure nestled between two other stones that her kin would otherwise kill and maim for.

The throne isn't far from her chambers. She sees her children and grandchildren awaiting her, knows all of their names, knows their hearts and their dreams and their petty schemes in her shadow. They stand behind the soldiers guarding them from the dread prize in the center of court, two of the heroes of the hour standing sentinel beside it. This room, too, dances with golden light, and it plays uncomfortably across the faces of the Dynast and the outcaste presenting their fallen foe to her

Five sculpted dragons of jade curl around her as she sits, resting comfortably in authority. She examines the Anathema's grand golden axe, but her eyes flit over to Sesus Eshuvar, making sure that he notices her focusing more on him than the orichalcum. A small part of her derives great satisfaction in seeing him redden almost imperceptibly. Behind him, the Anathema's Essence strains against the poison coursing in his veins. His head lolls to the side, a chalky line of toxic saliva hanging from his lips. Needles of white jade pierce all his chakras, guttering and grounding his power in the elements of the world.

She smiles a perfect smile, the merest sliding door into the desperate joy she feels. "Your Hearth has done their duty to the Realm and to me," she says. "You will be rewarded."



Chapter One

The Dragon-Blooded

History of the Dragon-Blooded

Ten thousand dragons rule the world. But it was not always so.

In the Time Before, when the Incarnae raised up champions to wage war against their creators, the Five Elemental Dragons likewise shared their power with mortals, creating a great host of elemental heroes to serve as officers and champions in the armies that battled the enemies of the gods. These were called Dragon-Blooded because their power was borne in their blood and passed on to the next generation, and those who survived the Divine Revolution begat lineages of power that grew and spread across Creation.

The Dragon-Blooded served many roles in the Exalted courts of the First Age. Often they were courted by the Celestial Exalted and other great powers to serve as generals, adjutants, bannerets, governors, and emissaries. But the world was wide and filled with places where the blood of the Dragons could take root unchallenged. Some joined together as oligarchs; others began their rule alone, only to become matriarchs or patriarchs to extended broods of Exalted offspring.

Fragments of that era still linger in hidden corners of the world. The art of the Zebremani people of the South traditionally depicts their heroes as crowned with fire or mantled with storms. The vast undersea palace ruled by the storm mother Konobala was once home to the Water Aspect princes of the Nine-Eyed Throne. The Sliver-of-a-Dream Pagoda, perched high upon the sheer southern face of Wujun Mountain, is still accessible only by the handholds that the hermit Love-is-Lightning carved into the living rock with his bare hands.

As the Celestial Exalted warred against one another, especially amid the Great Interregnum of the First Age, so too did the Dragon-Blooded first do battle with their own kin. But this was nothing compared to the Usurpation, when — heeding the prophecies of the Sidereal Exalted — thousands of Dragon-Blooded gathered to strike down their corrupted Solar masters, even those who'd been as mothers and fathers to them. Many who remained loyal to the Solars fought to the death, and much of the Dragons' blood was spilled.

With the Sidereals withdrawn to Heaven, the Lunars fled to world's edge, and the Solars buried, the Dragon-Blooded became Princes of the Earth, and Creation was theirs to command — insofar as their strength and will allowed. They raised cities and nations, tamed jungles and watered deserts, and raised jade swords against monsters and Fair Folk that would molest the world they ruled. This was the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate.

Their power might have sufficed to protect the world, had not their struggles torn it apart. Gentes that had fought at each others' sides were soon enough at each others' throats. Only one Prince of the Earth could be Shogun — a role some sought out of principle, others for ambition, and still others for fear of what harm might come to them and theirs should a rival take the throne. The glass towers of Chiaroscuro toppled; the island cities of Karai sank into the sea; the flying fortress Godswatch fell from the sky.

But for all their feuding, the daimyos and Shogunate gentes came together to face true threats to the world. And when decades of escalating Fair Folk assaults culminated in an overwhelming tide on the eve of the Great Contagion, the surviving Dragon-Blooded gathered en masse to oppose them. They died and they died, but while their defense may have seemed hopeless, it wasn't fruitless, for they bought time. With that time, a Sworn Kinship of Dragon-Blooded infiltrated the sealed manse controlling the Sword of Creation — which would come to be known as the Realm Defense Grid — and that Kinship's sole survivor wielded its powers to shatter the Fair Folk invasion.

With that power in her hands, she never let go.

Styling herself the Scarlet Empress, she built a Creation-spanning empire in the ruins of the old world. She had many children; through careful marriage, she brought the surviving gentes of the Blessed Isle into her sprawling dynasty. Outcastes of less certain lineage she gathered into her legions and the Immaculate Order.

Today, her Scarlet Dynasty is divided into ten Great Houses: extended families each comprised of hundreds of Dragon-Blooded, all tangled in a web of alliances and feuds based on marriages, friendships, contracts, grudges, vendettas, and ambitions both familial and personal. Mortal patrician families carry enough of the blood of the Dragons that their children occasionally Exalt; cadet houses in the Threshold marry into the Great Houses and swear allegiance to the Scarlet Throne; and peasant outcastes swear fealty to the throne and join the Imperial legions, or set worldly things aside to enter the Immaculate Order. From their seat on the Blessed Isle, ten thousand dragons rule the world.

But the Dynasty is only half the story.

Thousands of Princes of the Earth hold sway in distant Prasad, in name a Realm satrapy, in effect an independent empire encroaching on the shores of the Dreaming Sea. Thousands more command the battlements of Lookshy, settled after the Great Contagion by a Shogunate legion. Lookshy's ancient gentes protect the Scavenger Lands from the Realm's territorial ambitions, and fan the embers of a dream of a Shogunate reborn.

Here and there amidst the Threshold, beyond the Realm's reach, smaller cabals of Dragon-Blooded hold sway. In the East, the poisoner-assassins of the Grass Spider clan spread terror beneath the aegis of the Three Elite Fiends. In the South, the rogue Imperial legion of Saloy Hin gathers outcastes to its banner. In the West, the heretical Sisterhood of Pearls offers community to those willing to accept its austerities. In the North, the blood of the Dragons mingles with that of the fae in the Cult of the Violet Fang.

And everywhere there are outcastes born to mortal families, sparks fallen far from the great Dragon-Blooded flame. Discovering their Essence and their might in isolation, each is a lone hero, making her mark on her own small corner of the world.

Dragon-Blooded Exaltation

Unlike the Solar Exalted, who inherit the legacy and memories of past heroes with their Exaltation, the Chosen of the Five Elemental Dragons have no



A TERRESTRIAL CENSUS

No one knows the exact number of Dragon-Blooded in Creation today. Approximate numbers follow:

Dynasts: 10,000

Dynastic outcastes: 4,000

Cadet house members: 750

Patricians: 250

Prasadi: 2,000

Lookshyans: 3,000

Foreign outcastes: 5,000

THE IMMACULATE TEXTS

Though it traces its intellectual roots back to the works of First Age philosophers, metaphysicians, and priests, Immaculate doctrine as Creation knows it was constructed by the Sidereal Exalted as a tool to support Dragon-Blooded hegemony under the Shogunate. A few texts in the Immaculate canon were wholly fabricated. Most, however, originated from a variety of ancient creeds, being subsumed into Immaculate doctrine after being subtly altered where necessary by Bronze Faction savants. Still, the Dynasty and Lookshy sincerely believe in the veracity of the Immaculate Texts and regard them as a valuable resource in understanding their history.

previous incarnations nor memories of past lives. But the Dragon's blood can pass to their offspring, a wellspring of elemental power that grows with each new generation of Exalted. Within the blood of their first Chosen, the Elemental Dragons created an inexhaustible lineage of Dragon-Blooded, a potentially infinite host of Princes of the Earth.

Awaiting Exaltation

Not every mortal who carries the blood of the Dragons will Exalt. There's no reliable method to tell whether or not a child will, but the strength of her parents' pedigree will increase or decrease her chances, as will their accumulated progenitive Essence (p. 97) and myriad other factors, including simple luck.

Terrestrial Exaltation typically occurs during childhood or adolescence. A scion of an exceptional family might Exalt as young as nine, though the early teen years are far more common. No one on record older than twenty has ever Exalted as a Chosen of the Dragons, and past the age of seventeen the odds worsen with every passing year.

Dynastic children spend their childhoods anticipating the moment that will change their future, or dreading the day they become too old for their chance. Their Exaltations are expected — maybe not with confidence, but certainly with passion. They know well that they have two possible futures ahead: one marked by Exaltation and success, another by the limitations of mortality — albeit adorned with wealth and power to beggar the imagination of most in Creation.

Outcastes are a different story. Some may have dreamed about becoming Dragon-Blooded, but in the same way they might wish to find a lost treasure in the field, or catch a visiting merchant's eye and marry rich. It's the stuff of childish fantasies. But for a rare few, those fantasies come true.

The Moment of Exaltation

As a Dragon-Blood Exalts, her Essence and nature become unmistakable. Her anima flares to life as the power within her bloodline becomes more than mere potential. Within her body, Exaltation awakens as she takes her Second Breath. Peril cannot coax Terrestrial Exaltation out of blood without potential, nor can a life of leisure keep someone with the right blood from attaining her birthright, but Exaltation does tend to find the Dragon-Blooded while they're facing adversity, challenge, or change. This is often quick, the catalyst of disaster igniting Exaltation in an instant, but can occur gradually, building over hours before culmination.

Pushed to the ground one too many times by the city guard, a street urchin finds unexpected strength within his blood. He stands up as tall as he can manage and feels as though a great pillar has grown within him; the hard ground below is no longer uninviting. When the guard strikes again, the boy cannot be moved.

Faced with expulsion for anything less than a perfect grade, a patrician's lazy daughter is finally afraid enough of losing her family's respect to study long into the night. The swirling winds that keep her company grow stronger with every



passing hour, and her mind seems to expand into something new and infinite. The gathering storm breaks at dawn, and with it comes a sudden flash of insight and power.

The Elemental Dragons don't speak to their Chosen during Exaltation, but the Dragon-Blooded experience a great connection to their elemental Aspect, pulling them out of themselves and into something greater.

Running away from home in a fit of defiance, a child of Lookshy soon realizes her folly. But something beckons her forward, deep within the Eastern woods, calling her name in a way she cannot explain. She'd always been a city girl, fond of tidiness and wary of dirt, but she comes back with flowers in her hair and wildness in her veins.

He never believed his mother's wild claims about his heritage. A secret affair with a Dynast? Surely that only happened in stories. But when the merchant caravan turns the corner and he sees the base of the Imperial Mountain for the first time, his heart leaps and he understands. The pole is pulling him home, has always been pulling him back to a family he never knew. The caravan jerks to a stop under his sudden, certain weight.

Raw and uncontrolled, a Dragon-Blood's Essence at the moment of Exaltation can be dangerous. Deaths from the fallout of Terrestrial Exaltation are uncommon — most people have the sense to leave the area as soon as a child begins to glow with power — but property damage and injuries are almost guaranteed.

At first he takes the news of his sister's death well, but she was always the strong one. He sinks deeper and deeper into depression, until one night his parents find him, half-drowned, in his third-floor bedroom. Water drips down through the floorboards, drenching the manor in his endless tears.

Tied for top marks in swordplay, she will stop at nothing to defeat her rival. The mock battle has already lasted twenty minutes, but the other girl is just as relentless. Their wooden practice swords catch fire at the same instant, burning hot with their wielders' ferocity. Panicked teachers start clearing the building, hoping that both girls survive their Exaltations so their respective families might split the cost of repairs.

Elemental Aspects

Just as Creation is anchored by the five Elemental Poles, when a Dragon-Blood Exalts, her strength is anchored by a single element. Although all five elements

ELEMENTAL TEMPERAMENT

A Dragon-Blood's Aspect influences her personality, but doesn't override or control her mind. Its effects could be compared to making a new group of friends: A gang of eager peers might make certain courses of action more tempting and easy, and others harder or less interesting, but they can't turn her into a completely different person. A quiet and meek young man who Exalts as a Fire Aspect might become more passionate and confident, but he wouldn't become a hotheaded zealot if that wasn't in his nature.

In Dragon-Blooded cultures, the heritable nature of Aspects reinforces their importance, as the influence of someone's Exaltation is coupled with the influence her relatives have on childhood. Stereotypes about the Aspects, built upon the deeds of past Terrestrials, offer further encouragement to conform to the expected niche. Outcasts, orphans, and those who Exalt out of Aspect with their households often stray further from their Aspect's leanings.

are part of every Dragon-Blood's power, her Aspect's element is the most important, its powers the most natural. It lives within her, awakening new potential and influencing every moment of the rest of her life.

A Dragon-Blood's Aspect isn't a reflection of past deeds, secret strengths, or personality, but rather a product of her blood alone. Like Terrestrial Exaltation itself, Aspects run along bloodlines. The child of two Water Aspects is likely to be the same, and the child of an Air Aspect and an Earth Aspect will probably be one of the two. Through this tendency, the Great Houses of the Realm have maintained their elemental lineages over the centuries. But the elements aren't completely disparate. Every Dragon-Blood contains the potential for all five Aspects, ready to be passed down to future offspring. Especially in places where Dragon-Blooded are common, society loves to gossip when one Exalts out of Aspect — looking back at her childhood for "proof" her Aspect was always the most fitting, or even suggesting that her parentage might not be as claimed — but the difference is a matter of chance.

Each Aspect is only part of a whole, with its own strengths and failings. A Dragon-Blood's Aspect influences not only what skills come most naturally to her, but also how she approaches life. A young Terrestrial might develop new interests and new ways of thinking and speaking in the months after her Exaltation, impelled by her elemental Aspect. Her body changes even more profoundly, gradually coming into alignment with the power inside her.

The Five Elements

Air is subtle, invisible, and impossible to pin down or contain. It steers its Chosen towards seeing the big picture from a bird's-eye view, constructing plans and solutions that are as complex as they are grand. The Children of Mela often become great scholars, incredible spies, and masterminds who plan ahead for centuries — or head-in-the-clouds elitists who detach themselves from the repercussions of their actions in the world below.

Earth is sturdy, patient, and unchanging. It grants certainty, centeredness, and a fondness for strong foundations in tradition. Very little can deter the Children of Pasiap from getting where they want to be; rather than giving way or changing course, they'll simply endure all obstacles and challenges. The strength of their convictions and the patience of their thought make them calm and stable generals, talented artificers, and pious monks. They can also become entombed by old ideas, unable to see the need for change and growth.

Fire is passionate, bold, and temperamental. It makes its Chosen impossible to ignore, whether they're the life of the party or the decorated general who's leading the charge. The Children of Hesiesh are driven by larger-than-life passions, experiencing ecstatic joy and furious rage in equal measure. They make charming socialites, and excel at armed combat. They also make fearsome monsters, prone to fits of destruction and rage when things don't go their way.

Water is flowing, unpredictable, and unrelenting. It grants its Chosen a terrible patience, like the crashing of tides that tear apart a shoreline piece by piece over centuries. The Children of Daana'd are nonetheless adaptable, fitting their skills to a wide variety of roles. As bureaucrats and social problem-solvers, they strike a careful balance between respectful diligence and the flow of new ideas, carrying things forward on a gentle current of progress. Their natural grace also makes them well-suited to martial arts, and they

make exceptional sailors. At their worst, they can be fickle and underhanded, hiding treachery beneath a mirror-calm surface.

Wood is growing, nurturing, and vivaciously alive. It makes its Chosen an integral part of Creation's living world, pushing them to spread and reach and grow into their complete selves. Poison, disease, and predation are as much a part of the natural world as healing and rebirth, and the Children of Sextes Jylis learn to master both. They excel as doctors and animal handlers, and thrive in wild places. Some become hedonists, living only for pleasure without regard for others, while others form complex webs of social interconnections.

Essence Fever

The blood of the Dragons doesn't course idly through the veins as mundane blood does. It *races*, every drop alive with the vitality of Creation itself. The rush of elemental power within a Dragon-Blood feels as though she's just woken from the sleep of the dead, brimming with raw, untamed power. Like all Essence, it yearns to be used, and it drives the Dragon-Blooded to greatness.

Essence drives the Chosen to powerful, reckless deeds. A young Terrestrial Exalt not only has to contend with the unfurling power within her, but also the mundane changes she's undergoing. The Essence of the Dragons is volatile, capable of passionate love and tempestuous rage. A newly Exalted Dragon-Blooded is encouraged to spar and roughhouse to vent these passions. Her Aspect shapes not just her body, but her mind and emotions. She is a tempest, a bonfire, a tsunami, *a force of nature* given flesh and walking among mortals. Essence seethes and thrashes within her, driving her to be as aloof, passionate, or nurturing as her Aspect dictates.

Ten Thousand Dragons Fight as One

The Dragons' Essence urges its possessors to band together and form families and clans. In this regard, most Dragon-Blooded have an advantage over many other Exalted. A newly fledged Solar struggles alone to master her towering, heroic might. A neophyte Dragon-Blood of the Realm, however, has her family to consult about the radical changes she undergoes — not to mention the close friends she'll make in primary and secondary school. Though she may choose to seek solitude, she's never alone.

Beyond family, a Dragon-Blood seeks the mutual bond of elemental Essence among her peers. Comrades formed in battle may then undertake the rite of Sworn Kinship (p. 104). At a smaller, more intimate level, she also forms close relationships with Dragon-Blooded friends and lovers — partnerships kindled by the mutual Essence of the Dragons within them.

On a grander scale, the Dragon-Blooded band together to establish societies. Almost any native of Creation knows of the Scarlet Dynasty and many have heard tales of Lookshy. These are the largest, most prominent examples of Dragon-Blooded societies, but they're not the only ones.

The Scarlet Dynasty



Ten Thousand Dragons Rule Creation

Civilization springs up in their wake. Monarchs kneel before them. The Anathema flee their might, or face judgment in reincarnation. All glory to the Princes of the Earth.

The children of the Scarlet Empress embody nobility in the Second Age. Born into affluence and raised to command, Dynasts lead lives of grand adventure and intrigue. Generations of Dynasts have built the greatest military machine in all of Creation.

The Heart of Civilization

All bounty flows from the Blessed Isle, and to it all wealth returns. This is the Realm of the Scarlet Empress: a beautiful, temperate continent blessed with abundance and kept by the Princes of the Earth. Here the Dragon-Blooded have created a stable home with unparalleled standards of living and education, where even mortals may labor in safety and comfort.

The Realm also commands the fealty of a vast empire of Threshold nations. These satrapies seek to appease the Scarlet Dynasty with tributes of wealth and piety, seeking protection in turn. The Dragon-Blooded tame Creation, kingdom by kingdom, crushing any who stand against their progress.

Houses of the Dragons

Dynasts draw their identity from the tangled bloodlines of the Great Houses. These sprawling noble families jockey against each other for advantage, wielding nations as cat's-paws. Thick with the blood of the Five Elemental Dragons, each house boasts a multigenerational legend of heroism and nobility. The Exalted Dynast carries all the weight and promise of this inheritance.

Since the Scarlet Empress' disappearance, the Great Houses have turned their attentions toward succession. Each house champions one or more would-be heirs to better control the future of the Realm. They hoard power, cannibalizing the empire to prepare for a war over the throne.

Due All Wealth and Glory

Centuries of Dragon-Blooded plunder, trade, and tribute from across the Inland Sea have brought the Realm immeasurable wealth. Though young Dynasts grow under impossible pressure, those who Exalt may claim all of Creation's wonders as their own. The Princes of the Earth live in opulent splendor, and claim servants, jade, and priceless artifact heirlooms as a matter of course. This standard of living is the Dynast's just reward for her holy responsibilities.

A Perfected Philosophy

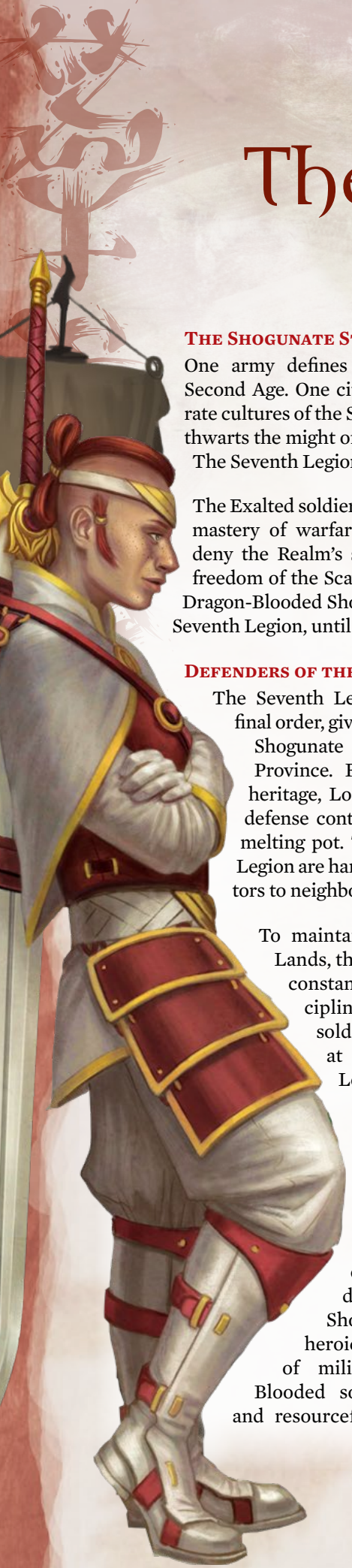
The Immaculate Order is the official religion of the Realm and all its satrapies. Monks of the Order enforce a strict social and spiritual hierarchy, with the Dragon-Blooded at its apex. The Princes of the Earth command lesser beings as a holy duty, and worship as they wish. Dragon-Blooded monks wipe out heresy and humble recalcitrant gods through potent martial arts. When Anathema threaten the security of the empire, Dynasts work together in a deadly Wyld Hunt.

Play a Dynast if you want

- to wield influence in Creation's mightiest empire.
- to champion your house through heroism and intrigue.
- to live in affluence, and wield heirlooms of elemental might.
- to spread the Immaculate Philosophy through word and deed.
- to hunt the Anathema to the edge of Creation.



The Seventh Legion of Lookshy



The Shogunate Still Stands

One army defines martial excellence in the Second Age. One city binds together the disparate cultures of the Scavenger Lands. One enemy thwarts the might of the Realm, again and again. The Seventh Legion of Lookshy endures.

The Exalted soldiers of the Seventh Legion seek mastery of warfare and of themselves. They deny the Realm's sovereignty and defend the freedom of the Scavenger Lands. The long-lost Dragon-Blooded Shogunate lives on through the Seventh Legion, until the day it rises anew.

Defenders of the Scavenger Lands

The Seventh Legion honors and obeys its final order, given centuries ago: to preserve Shogunate governance in the River Province. Forever honing its warrior heritage, Lookshy has built a system of defense contracts throughout Creation's melting pot. The soldiers of the Seventh Legion are hard-nosed, scrupulous protectors to neighbors who pay their dues.

To maintain order in the Scavenger Lands, the Seventh Legion maintains constant vigilance. Lifelong discipline shapes Dragon-Blooded soldiers capable of waging war at any time, against any foe. Lookshy fields forces across the Scavenger Lands, forging alliances against aggressive invaders and Anathema insurgents.

Blood of the Daimyos

Lookshy's most honored bloodlines trace descent back to the ancient Shogunate. These gentes build heroic legends through centuries of military excellence. Dragon-Blooded soldiers uphold the worth and resourcefulness of their bloodlines through service to the Seventh Legion. Pedigree may provide opportunities, but cannot purchase victory.

The Seventh Legion derives authority from dedication to the fallen Shogunate, and views the Scarlet Empress as a usurper. Lookshy's gentes believe a worthy Shogun will one day appear and restore the Shogunate's full glory across Creation. The soldiers of the Seventh Legion faithfully prepare for that day.

Wonders of a Lost Age

The Shogunate spanned all of Creation, using weapons and infrastructure preserved from the First Age. Many such wonders are lost or broken, but a precious sliver of First Age weaponry remains active in Lookshy's stockpile. The Seventh Legion uses these wonders sparingly, for many are fragile or limited in use, and all are irreplaceable. Highly prized sorcerer-engineers maintain this stockpile and strive to restore lost wonders.

War Without End

As constant warfare tempered the Shogunate, so does it refine the righteous warrior. Lookshyans view martial readiness and service as lifelong spiritual duties. Dragon-Blooded and mortals cultivate spiritual perfection together through military excellence, shared dedication, and personal responsibility. Lookshy's Immaculate sohei forgo evangelism and forced conversion in favor of individual guidance. They often serve in the military, to address spiritual challenges in the field and lead soldiers toward righteousness by example.

Play a member of the Seventh Legion if you want

- to serve in Creation's most renowned warrior culture.
- to embrace the ancient legacy of the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate.
- to claim the Scavenger Lands as your home and your charge.
- to discover and explore lost secrets of First Age artifice.
- to explore spiritual self-refinement through duty.



The Empire of Prasad



All Things Bend To Divinity

Living gods carry the blood of dragons. Forgotten empires tremble at their ambition. Their lives trace an intricate dance of caste and clan, of body and soul, across lifetimes. All hail the Dragon Caste of Prasad.

The Dragon Caste were once Dynasts who embraced new life in the distant Southeast. Now they live as gods, worshiped by mortals under the philosophy of the Pure Way. Prasad expands aggressively, claiming ever more of the bountiful Dreaming Sea.

Jewel of the Frontier

So storied was the wealth of Prasad and its capital Kamthahar, enriched by trade along the Jade Road, that word of its treasures soon reached the Imperial City. Two Great Houses once competed to pacify Prasad in the name of the Scarlet Empress, then conspired to claim it themselves. They installed themselves as Prasad's highest caste, then expanded outward with Kamthahar as their new capital.

The Empire of Prasad remains a satrapy in name and sends yearly tribute, but it doesn't serve the Realm. The Dragon Caste treats with Dynasts as distant cousins. Dynasts occasionally visit Prasad for an "exotic, yet civilized" getaway, or to experience the thrill of conquest in a younger empire. Prasadi Dragon-Blooded sometimes travel to the Blessed Isle for education, trade, or diplomacy.

By Caste and Clan

Prasadi citizens belong to discrete groups with complex, overlapping relationships. Castes define Prasad's hierarchy, from the meanest laborers to the holy Dragon-Blooded. Prasadi clans determine lineage and inheritance, while a person's tribe informs their talents and purpose in society. Social groups live in specific, traditional neighborhoods and enclaves, leaving casteless untouchables on the edges of society.

Twin Dragon-Blooded clans control Prasad: Burano, traditional and wise; and Ophris, sensual and clever. The ruler of the empire invariably descends from one of the two clans, while her elected heir descends from the other. Would-be heirs run lavish campaigns to win votes from upper-caste citizens.

Manifest Destiny

The Dreaming Sea offers immense wealth and ancient mysteries to any with the strength to claim them. With abundance comparable to the Blessed Isle, and the confidence of a young empire, Prasad grows by leaps and bounds. Beyond the edges of known civilization, the Dragon Caste leads a holy war of expansion against primal monsters, Fair Folk, and the sorcerous prodigies of older nations.

Spirit And Flesh Made One

The Empire of Prasad follows a syncretic Immaculate heresy, the Pure Way, which views Dragon-Blooded as gods and encourages their direct worship. According to the Pure Way, gods and elementals fall within the cycle of reincarnation, and even Anathema may earn a place in the cycle. Prasadi Dragon-Blooded seek out reincarnated comrades, forming Sworn Kinships said to persist across lifetimes.

Play a member of the Dragon Caste if you want

- to be worshiped as an elemental god.
- to politick with gods and their offspring.
- to explore exotic locales, and conquer them.
- to live in splendor beyond the reach of the Great Houses.
- to champion a philosophy of purifying reincarnation.



The Forest Witches



One Does Not Claim A Place By Conquest

They carry beauty in their hearts and eyes. They know no fear of death. They are criminals, gurus, and revolutionaries. The Forest Witches rule without name.

In an Eastern wood where outsiders dare not tread, a commune of Dragon-Blooded have built for themselves a paradise. Free of conventional mortality, the Forest Witches expand their influence both subtly and brutally. They are beyond doubt, beyond fear, and beyond understanding by lesser minds.

Beyond Memories of Hardship

The woods contain many wonders, all laid at the feet of the Forest Witches. Oreithyia, the soul of the living forest, serves the Witches' needs, and all its creatures obey them. Homes grow from flora as needed; game seeks out the hunter; babes entrusted to the woods return as hardy adolescents. With their earthly needs cared for, the Forest Witches focus on grander things.

Deep in the forest, a pool gives new eyes to those who peer within. This pool contains the Sea of Mind, a beautiful reflection of true Creation. Here, the dead live on in the paradisiacal city of Atsiluth Eternal. Living Forest Witches partake of this utopia at the sufferance of the dead, and walk through the Sea of Mind wherever they travel.

In Defense of Atsiluth Eternal

Oreithyia and the Sea of Mind satisfy worldly needs, but these wonders have limits. The Forest Witches forage beyond their home for beauty to appease the woods and for occult power to feed the pool. Many Forest Witches engage in banditry, or proselytize to draw wealthy pilgrims to the Sea of Mind. Others infiltrate and influence far-flung communities.

Regardless of method, the Forest Witches practice caution. They know that neighboring nations would covet the wonders of the forest, and that the Immaculate Order would punish their transgressions against mortality. They expand their power anonymously, ruling without name.

Beyond Life and Death

The Forest Witches aren't immortal, yet they do not fear death. Those who die while connected to the Sea of Mind may retire to a rewarding afterlife in Atsiluth Eternal, or continue to explore Creation through the Sea of Mind. They may even inhabit specially made armors to affect true Creation. Some Forest Witches use unique magics to direct their own reincarnations, or cut away their humanity to become mist-born spirits called numina.

A World More Beautiful

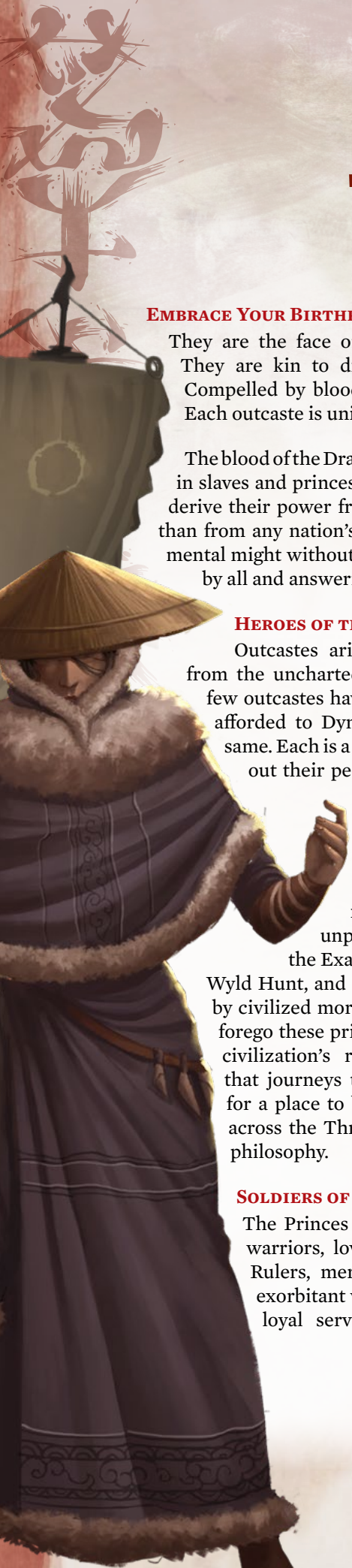
Forest Witches who've seen the Sea of Mind need never leave it, unless exiled by the dead. No matter where a Witch roams, she sees a world of glorious wonder and thrilling shadows. Frustrating details fade from awareness, providing a continually satisfying experience, free of the inconsequential. To a Forest Witch, dangers seem more exciting, tragedies more heart-wrenching, and opponents more sinister.

Play a Forest Witch if you want

- to wield the keys to paradise.
- to stride like a giant in the Sea of Mind.
- to adventure beyond death as a living memory.
- to infiltrate other societies across successive reincarnations.
- to sacrifice form and join the numina.



The Outcastes



Embrace Your Birthright

They are the face of heroism across Creation. They are kin to dragons, beholden to none. Compelled by blood, they rise from obscurity. Each outcaste is unique, and each is connected.

The blood of the Dragons awakens unexpectedly in slaves and princes across Creation. Outcastes derive their power from this blood alone, rather than from any nation's authority. They wield elemental might without fear of persecution, sought by all and answering to none.

Heroes of the Threshold

Outcastes arise from every nation and from the uncharted spaces between. Though few outcastes have the resources or training afforded to Dynasts, their potential is the same. Each is a warrior born, driven to seek out their peers, to define themselves in love and war, in service and command.

For all the advantages that other Dragon-Blooded may claim, outcastes enjoy unprecedented freedom among the Exalted. They need not fear the Wyld Hunt, and may expect good treatment by civilized mortals. As well, outcastes may forego these privileges and explore beyond civilization's reach. For every lost egg that journeys to the Blessed Isle looking for a place to belong, another adventures across the Threshold, guided by her own philosophy.

Soldiers of Fortune

The Princes of the Earth are legendary warriors, lovers, and monarch-makers. Rulers, merchants, and generals offer exorbitant wealth for a Dragon-Blood's loyal service. Wealthy families pay grand dowries to infuse the blood of the Dragons into their own. Even other Exalted may seek the support and protection of a Prince of the Earth. Opportunity abounds for an open-minded outcaste.

The Realm hungers for outcastes most of all. Dragon-Blooded born to wealthy patrician families may expect offers of adoption or fosterage from the Great Houses. To common- or foreign-born outcastes, the Realm offers position and purpose in the Imperial legions and Immaculate Order.

No Lords, No Masters

Not all lost eggs were born in obscurity. Inevitably, some who are born to greatness scorn their place or disgrace it. Monks lose faith; scions of the Great Houses turn away from rulership; Lookshyan soldiers desert, and forsake their names in shame. Creation holds vast spaces for those who've lost their homes. Ronin, retirees, and atoners seek freedom and anonymity in the Threshold, and often find new purpose, identity, and allies.

A Legacy in the Making

Outcastes don't always know how the blood of the Dragons entered their family line, but each may pass that blood on. Every outcaste carries the potential for a new heroic legacy, unique in all Creation. Prominent bloodlines draw more Dragon-Blooded, eager to build a brood that may one day rival the Great Houses.

Play an outcaste if you want

- to be your own elemental hero.
- to explore the length and breadth of Creation.
- to bring an outsider's perspective to Dragon-Blooded society.
- to stand apart from what you once stood for.
- to build a legacy all your own.



Realm Year 748

"Filthy merchants, profiting off the risks others take."

Nellens Leferi turned to see who'd tossed the comment her way, her waiting horse forgotten. Sesus Daral fixed her with a cruel smirk, all muscle and chiseled features and swooning entourage. Leferi's bodyguards bristled, but she waved them back with her free hand, her prized drinking horn in the other.

She didn't have to look up to know the entire guest list of the gala she'd just left would be watching how this little drama played out. House Peleps was playing host tonight, which meant short of preventing a death neither side would be getting any favors.

"You've correctly identified my profession," she said, casually sipping her drink. "Yet it seems your tutors were remiss in properly explaining how it works." She tilted her head to the side. "Probably several tutors. Speaking slowly."

"You thin-blooded Nellens cur!" The young talonlord punctuated his remark with a dazzling and textbook-perfect spinning roundhouse. That's the problem with textbooks, though — anyone can read them. Leferi had.

She caught his foot neatly with her free hand and jerked it skyward, then delivered a swift kick to his other knee that sent him sprawling. Laughter came from the terrace above, though Daral silenced most of it with a glare.

"Merchants understand three things above all else," Leferi continued, unperturbed. "The first is to read the market." She hopped back over a foot sweep and sidestepped a punch, still not spilling a drop of wine. "Fortunately, it doesn't always take very long."

"You dishonor yourself and your house with this clowning," Daral hissed, and Leferi felt the rush of Essence as his skin shifted to match the stones beneath their feet, his anima flaring. "I won't brook such an insult to the name of Sesus' father."

"It seems the House of Bells regrettably neglected the theatrical arts," Leferi mused, letting her eyes drift skyward in mock contemplation. "Or am I mistaken in remembering that the clown is generally the one being laughed at?"

"We'll see who's laughing in a moment," Daral spat. This time he chose his strikes cautiously, fists and feet chipping stones when they missed her, but Leferi was patient. She ducked and weaved, then slid around a savage punch and boxed his ear. Daral staggered back, dizzy, while Leferi took yet another sip.

"The second thing a merchant learns is risk," she continued, as if chatting over drinks and not brawling in the street. Perhaps she was, even if he wasn't. "You? Pretty, perhaps, but rash. Definitely low risk."

"For the honor of my house!" Daral yelled, flaring anima and rushing at her like a boulder crashing down a mountainside. The crowd gasped, but Leferi just sighed and leaned into the charge. He glanced off her hip, and as he fell she came down on top of him, neatly locking his wrist into a painful hold. She took another sip of her drink.

"You, on the other hand, calculated poorly." She shifted her weight, getting a pained yelp, and tightened the hold further to discourage his struggles. "To open trade routes, I've killed monsters that would send you screaming back to your wet nurse. I've swallowed poison to seal bargains with barbarian chieftains. I've explored ruins where past expeditions vanished without a trace, and held parties on their stones."

Leferi twisted his hand even tighter, drawing a cry of pain. "Now, last lesson, so listen well. A good merchant learns to find profit in anything." She released him and rose smoothly to her feet, stepping away as he groaned and clutched his injured hand. "For example, by showing mercy to an unworthy opponent, I've raised my status among the esteemed worthies watching. Which in turn means more lucrative contracts for my house."

She finished her drink and saluted the assembled guests on the terrace, to polite applause from the gathering above. As she mounted up, Leferi at last permitted herself a small smile. "Thank you, Sesus Daral. It's been a pleasure doing business with you."



Chapter Two

The Great Houses

Ten Great Houses form the Scarlet Dynasty, each bearing the name of the legendary ancestor who founded its lineage. In the earliest days of the Realm, the Empress adopted powerful and influential Dragon-Blooded as her daughters, elevating their families to Great Houses. As she consolidated her rule, she rewarded those of her own children who proved their worth and won her favor with the right to found a Great House. The ten that stand today aren't the only houses ever raised — the Realm's history is littered with the bones of fallen houses, struck from the Imperial ledgers as punishment for failure or treachery.

The houses are more than mere families. Each has spent centuries amassing not just glory and jade, but also relationships, traditions, and vendettas. Likewise, their numbers have grown; even the smallest house counts hundreds of Dragon-Blooded in its ranks, and most have well over a thousand. Each house's scions fight side by side in house legions and garrisons, join forces in the intrigues of the Thousand Scales and the Deliberative, and cooperate in business ventures throughout the Blessed Isle and across the Threshold. Each Great House forms a nation unto itself, embedded into the Realm's body politic. And while many deem themselves patriots, others — perhaps most — are members of a Great House first and Dynasts second.

While the Great Houses have ever vied against each other for power, influence, and wealth, the stern hand of the Scarlet Empress bent their conflicts to serve her will. With her disappearance, their ambition is unchecked, and all eyes turn to the empty throne.

Major Bloodlines

When a Dynastic household produces multiple Dragon-Blooded offspring and garners significant wealth and prestige, its renown rubs off on its scions. A house matriarch may recognize such a lineage once it's grown sufficiently prominent by elevating it to one of the major bloodlines of the house. Members of a major bloodline take the name of its original matriarch after their house's name. For instance, Mnemon Rulinsei Ghova takes his name from his great-grandmother Mnemon Rulinsei. (An especially prestigious husband married to a less noteworthy wife may bestow his name upon the bloodline instead, but this is highly unusual.)

A house bloodline might have its own particular propensities distinct from the parent house — dedication to a particular branch of the Imperial Service, perhaps, or a different elemental Aspect. By and large, however, they're as much a part of the parent house as any other scions.

FADING BLOODLINES

A household's bloodline can grow so thin through intermarriage with mortal lineages that it largely stops producing Dragon-Blooded scions. Such households live in fear of being stricken from the house's ledgers. They make wild efforts to find better marriage prospects for their children, often putting themselves deep in debt to House Ragara or other lenders in order to offer sufficient sums at the marriage table.

The House Matriarch

A Great House matriarch commands enormous wealth, power, and respect. But she has little opportunity to exercise it on her own behalf, for her responsibilities to the house are numerous and onerous. She arranges scions' schooling and marriages; manages businesses, properties, and other assets; oversees the house treasury; and gives marching orders to the house's loyal senators, ministers, and the like. She's also responsible for mediating conflicts within the house and with other houses — while meeting with generals, admirals, and strategists to orchestrate military operations.

DYNASTIC NAMES

The Shogunate gentes named their children in the tongue of the Old Realm, a language of alternating consonants and vowels. Dynastic names typically follow that pattern — C-V-C-V-C or C-V-C-V-C-V — though most names are chosen for euphony rather than meaning. Patrician and cadet house scions often follow the same pattern, whether from parallel Shogunate origins or in emulation of the Great Houses, but this isn't universal.

To accomplish these goals, the matriarch has access to the house's treasury, legions, fleets, and its greatest asset — the scions themselves. These tools can twist in her hand should the house's loyalties shift. Struggles for dominance rarely escalate to open conflict, lest the matriarch strike traitorous family members from the house rolls. But in this time of turmoil, that might not suffice to protect a hated or incompetent matriarch.

Some houses have multiple leaders, wherein the matriarch shares power and responsibility with other family members, whether out of need or tradition. The Imperial Service looks only for the matriarch's seal in official matters, but in other affairs, the balance of power varies by house.

A Dynastic household's matriarch has similar powers and responsibilities. She is a Great House matriarch writ small.

House Property

The Great Houses leased their lands from the Empress, who owned all real estate on the Blessed Isle. While the house matriarch holds onto most of the house's land-lease deeds, she may transfer individual leases — such as those for manses — to specific scions or households for a time. Similarly, the matriarch commands the house's treasury, whose revenues she allocates as she sees fit.

The house's hearthstones and artifacts are likewise the matriarch's to apportion. However, bonding with artifacts takes time and a compatible disposition. Once a loyal scion awakens an heirloom's Evocations, the matriarch typically allows him to retain it for as long as it's of use to him.

House Cathak

Fire That Marches Against the Tide

The Cathaks are possessed of a fire that drives them forward. Generals, soldiers, leaders, and strategists par excellence, the house boasts many of the Dynasty's greatest military icons. Only the falling Tepets rival them for martial prowess. But there's more to Cathak's children than warfare alone — the legions are the spine that holds them together, but few scions of this Great House are content to be only one thing. Passion and discipline defines them, and military service provides unique opportunities for adventure and learning.

HOUSE SYMBOLOGY

Each of the Great Houses is signified by a mon — a heraldic emblem within a circle. These are borne aloft on war banners, blazoned on garments and household gates, and embossed on wax to seal a house matriarch's official correspondence. Some trace back to less aniconic periods in Realm artistic history, but are too entrenched for the Immaculate Order to uproot. There are also other mons, from the Empress' Imperial mon to the mons of prestigious patrician families.

Every Great House also has a set of emblematic colors. Sometimes in vogue, their use is currently out of fashion. Today, wearing one's house colors — especially on a regular basis — is a sign of a traditionalist, though it's also a useful way to curry favor with elder Dynasts who might be a bit set in their ways.

Cathak: Red and gold

Cynis: Green and gold

Iselsi: Black and silver

Ledaal: Blue and gray

Mnemon: White and purple

Nellens: Brown and silver

Peleps: Blue and black

Ragara: White and gold

Sesus: Red and black

Tepet: Blue and white

V'neef: Green and purple

Social Standing

The legions come first for this house, and rare is the Cathak scion with no tours of duty behind her. But their military focus doesn't mean they're uncultured. Many Cathaks can debate art and relate anecdotes from the most exotic places Creation has to offer, and few lack for invitations to social gatherings.

Cathak scions devote themselves to all manner of competition — team sports used to drill legionnaires; dueling; and strategy games such as Gateway, which a Cathak scion invented. Once pragmatic in matters of religion, House Cathak has grown more devout since command of the house fell to Cathak Cainan. His personal piety has bled over onto the house's policies and attitudes, such that younger members feel it's always been this way.

The house takes a military approach to politics as well, applying battlefield stratagems and tactics to intrigue. This makes the house something of a blunt instrument, politically speaking — the Cathak manual of political maneuvers, the *Silken Blade Codex*, is taught to children of the house as a companion volume to *The Thousand Correct Actions of the Upright Soldier*. Still, predictability doesn't make the Cathak political machine any less formidable.

House Cathak strongly encourages daughters to join the military. This creates a need for husbands skilled in finance, administration, and the like. Cathak marriage negotiations are tense affairs, but because they value skill over status and pedigree, they offer lowborn sons of Dynastic families fallen on hard times the hope of improving their station. Such marriages are thought to be warmer and more passionate than most, contributing to the starry-eyed way in which many young male Dynasts dream of marrying into this house. Poetry and romances about the impoverished son of a falling branch being swept off his feet by a Cathak officer of wide experience and taken off to a life of luxury and adventure are popular.

By contrast, military husbands find little welcome. Many Cathaks look down on other houses' soldiers as unrefined, undisciplined brutes. As such, a soldier who marries into House Cathak, if he wishes to kindle respect, must carefully tend its sparks, and he can expect his new wife to put him through an unforgiving regimen of tests and training until he passes muster. If he's from a house that doesn't enjoy a sturdy military reputation in Cathak eyes, such as Cynis or Nellens, the tests are harder still. He must be twice the soldier as a Tepet to earn a place beside his wife in the Cathak legions.

House Economics

Like the other houses, Cathak engages in diverse business ventures, from salt pans to jade mines to grain shipping, but the bulk of the house's income centers on its legions. Before the Empress vanished, the right to keep house legions was restricted to the military houses: Tepet, Sesus, and Cathak. Any other house requiring soldiers beyond their allowance of guards and paramilitary forces needed to either call in the Imperial legions and face heavy censure for their failure to handle things themselves, or hire the services of one of the military houses.

The services of House Cathak's legions have never been restricted to the Dynasty, however — anyone with resources to spare and a cause that doesn't oppose the Realm may hire Cathak soldiers for wars and ventures. When it suited the Empress, she deployed the Imperial legions alongside the Cathak forces in unstoppable conquest. While the house couldn't keep the lands it conquered, such conquest was still lucrative. Cathak usually got the dragon's share of the new satrapy's resources — establishing businesses to exploit them, then selling those businesses to the incoming satrap's house at a premium.

The legions also fatten House Cathak's coffers by providing escort services for goods and personnel throughout the Threshold, exacting fees that, while far smaller than what House V'neef earns from escorting tribute shipments, are nevertheless significant. The house usually has a few such assignments in progress at any time, and they provide an excellent excuse for a young Cathak to see Creation. The Cathak legions also survey all terrain they traverse, recording valuable natural resources and military concerns.

The house has committed much of its formidable military to securing its most valuable satrapies, letting less profitable ones slide from its grasp while still maintaining much of its satrapial income. While this strategy earns less than the desperately thrashing Peleps behemoth, it's more controlled and sustainable, for a certain value of "sustainable" — the house's grip on its satrapies is more like a grape press than a vise, but it still squeezes the lifeblood from the unfortunate tributaries. It simply isn't as fast.

House Cathak has recently tapped a new vein of revenue. When the Imperial legions devolved to the Great Houses' control, Cathak Cainan arranged a gala to honor the new Cathak legions, and invited some of the Dynasty's most notorious gossips and rumormongers. There, he hinted that he'd support the first claimant

for the throne who seemed likely to win, to ensure that the Empress' absence wouldn't tear the Realm apart. The next month, Cathak bureaucrats noted total income twice that of the month before, stemming from bribes, dowries, gifts, trade agreements, concessions, and promotions.

Altogether, it's enough to ensure Cathak's economic stability and independence for the time being. It's deeply in debt to House Ragara, but the gifts and bribes it's received from its newfound position as queenmaker currently suffices to handle the interest, and the family's other income, while diminished, suffices to maintain the Cathak legions and lifestyle with only modest cutbacks.

House Military

The Cathak military juggernaut stands ready to erupt like a volcano and consume whatever stands in its way. Once, its four mighty legions were surpassed only by the Imperial legions and matched only by the Tepet forces. Now, House Tepet is a ghost of its old glory, and the Empress is gone, her legions picked apart and scattered like so many dried bones in the desert sun. House Cathak itself received four of the Imperial legions. With eight full legions, trained and led by the martial paragons the house produces so reliably, it's a force to be reckoned with for the other Great Houses.

House Cathak's military doctrine emulates Hesiesh, focusing on discipline and careful management of resources, while Cathak legionnaires learn to revere the Fire Dragon. Each dragon of troops has an Immaculate monk attached who, on each inspection, expounds upon the virtues and vices a recent battle or exercise has revealed. These passionate sermons teach the value of restraint, the joy of well-timed action, and the rewards of being part of a greater whole, but also that life is a parable, and the lesson is always to know right from wrong. Hesiesh provides the mold, a mythical archetype, and the soldiers must aspire to mythical status themselves — the warrior always falls before the soldier, and individual heroism is no match for the coordination of armies. The legion, the dragon, the scale: Each of these must be a hero in their own right, and worthy of legend.

Military service of any kind is considered admirable. Cathaks earn their family's acclaim as soldiers or generals, by training or arming troops, or by working a bureaucratic position in a military organization. House orthodoxy favors direct confrontation under carefully chosen circumstances, ending in glorious combat against the Empress' enemies. Clever tactics and strategies are valued, but Cathak generals view the overwhelming deployment of their forces at the perfectly chosen moment both as a means to win the immediate conflict and as a long-term plan to make their legions seem invincible to other foes. Thus, today's victory forestalls countless future conflicts.

Enemies and Alliances

House Cathak's military power and financial stability allow it to play queenmaker, a formidable neutral party that controls the path to the Scarlet Throne without having the wherewithal to seize it wholesale — which is more than satisfactory to the house, and its leader. Either House Cathak will stand unbowed until a credible claimant appears, or someone will finally attack them to remove the greatest obstacle to claiming the throne, giving House Cathak their excuse to join the fray.

As a military house, the Cathaks are natural rivals of House Sesus and House Tepet. Sesus sees Cainan's house as a major threat; the Cathaks see Sesus as an inferior house, focused on dishonorable espionage and harebrained schemes instead of shoring up their seemingly ramshackle legions. The grave danger of Sesus spies and saboteurs is often overlooked.

The Cathaks view House Tepet as a tragic house, fallen but still struggling in a poetic way. But practicality outweighs sentiment, and Tepet's political position is dangerous, so Cathak waits and watches, ready to extend the hand of friendship if the smaller house can ever regain lost ground.

House Cathak doesn't trust House Ragara, wary of the rumors of occult impropriety that cling to its reputation, but its debts to Ragara are nonetheless substantial. Consequently, House Cathak makes intermittent noises of support for House Ragara's bid for the throne to placate its lenders, but commits few resources to aid it.

Major Holdings

Myion Prefecture, on the Blessed Isle's southwestern coast, is an ancient and sacred site. In the First Age, the city of Myion was dedicated to the Unconquered Sun, and reconsecrated to the Immaculate Dragons after the Usurpation. It's a sweeping vista of flying buttresses and light, airy structures, transcending the stone it's carved from. Here sits the Fortress of the Greatest General, an ancient manse and one of the Blessed Isle's mightiest redoubts, which has served as House Cathak's prime bastion for centuries. The breathtaking beauty of its architecture inspires a reverent



silence in many visitors, and the house boasts that more than one unbeliever has repented their sins and returned to the Immaculate Philosophy on the spot.

The house maintains other fortresses throughout and beyond the Blessed Isle, and has extensive satrapial holdings in the South. These include **Harborhead**, the seat of Ahlat — Southern god of war and cattle — and source of fine auxiliaries and legionnaires. Cathak satrapies are typically run with strict discipline for both satrap and populace, but Ahlat's presence requires a delicate touch. As such, Harborhead is where the house's finest administrators are sent, to maintain the house's strict and unmistakable grip on the nation and discourage rebellion, while also keeping Ahlat placated.

Once the gateway to the Realm's trade with the West, **Fajad** has fallen in importance since House Peleps navigated the Western sea routes, and become a troublesome territory for House Cathak to manage. To keep the Fajadi people placated in the face of ever-increasing demands for tribute, House Cathak allows them to practice their indigenous faith. This arrangement has drawn no small consternation from the Immaculate Order, and even Fajad's Cathak satrap considers giving the monks free reign to suppress the heresy. And above them all, the ancient sorcerer Aqadar sits atop his tower, where no Dynast has set foot and survived.

Scions of Note

Cathak, a great swordswoman and general adopted by the Empress, founded the house that bears her name. Cathak was also a famed ascetic plagued by doubt and dark thoughts, spending months in seclusion writing military treatises and contemplating spiritual matters, then emerging for days of wild debauchery. Many annotations to *The Thousand Correct Actions* were Cathak's, and many areas solidly under the Realm's control today were counted its greatest enemies before her time. She didn't allow her private troubles to seep into her public demeanor. Commanding armies and administering her house, she was strict and disciplined — preferring planning to improvisation, always maintaining a calm air of confidence. To her, this was no more than a Fire Aspect's duty, in Hesiesh's image. When she died, she was interred beneath the Fortress of the Greatest General.

The house's current matriarch is a man, **Cathak Cainan** (p. 345), a veteran shikari and officer educated in the Cloister of Wisdom. He secured a relatively unprestigious match with Cathak Urima — a sterling but unproven young Cathak officer — thereby remaining a Cathak after marrying. In the legion, he proved himself an inspirational leader, and caught the jaundiced eye of

his ancestor Cathak. As she was dying of Yozi venom, she summoned him to her deathbed. There she listed his many and varied flaws before naming him heir, as the only scion she deemed to share her temperament. Ever since, he's striven to live up to that legacy, hoping to prove Cathak's faith in him wasn't misplaced. Now he sees the Realm fall to pieces around him, and has committed his house to holding the old empire together, no matter the cost. His virtues are well respected in the Dynasty, and many might hold him as a candidate for the throne but for his declining years; no one wants a new ruler whose imminent death from old age would touch off another succession crisis.

Cathak Garel is Cainan's younger sister and commander of the Cathak legions, a position to which her brother appointed her nearly a century ago. She's an accomplished strategist and tactician, but her true passion and genius lies in logistics. She spends most days poring over legion records with the indefatigable intensity of someone who loves her work, while her husband, **Peleps Kozurin**, debates economic policy with her. She has a talent for estimating the long-term effects of specific losses on the legions, and applies her soldiers with frugality and good judgment, to conserve them and their resources as much as possible. When engaged in politics, she's unswervingly honest, seemingly unable to tell a lie even out of politeness. In person, she's honorable and disciplined, keeping herself to the highest standards. She is Cainan's expected heir, a situation she's less than comfortable with. Though younger than her brother, she's also entering old age, and privately wonders how long she has left until her aching spine forces her into retirement.

Cathak Elanda is used to adversity. Cursed with a malady that caused her body to grow out of control, her health started failing in her teenage years. Combined with abuse from her peers, she became quiet and soft-spoken, hiding a keen intellect behind awkwardness. But the Dragons' Essence is strong — her Exaltation saved her life and allowed her to adapt to her illness, and while she's slow and clumsy, she's strong beyond belief. She graduated from the House of Bells and joined the legions, happy to escape social events and erstwhile classmates. There, she proved adept at war's physical and intellectual aspects alike, and over the course of several campaigns, rose through the ranks to the station of general. She learned resilience from her ordeals, but she also learned one thing she keeps very quiet: Dynasts are cruel, and the Realm is a broken society. She's thoroughly disillusioned with the Dynasty, but knows of no serious alternatives — those she's seen turned out worse than the Realm in the end.

House Cynis
Wood Nourished on Tears of The Fallen

While House Cynis many not be known for martial triumphs or scholarly achievements, being glamorous among the Scarlet Dynasty is no easy feat. Knowing which color to wear can be a matter of dishonor or death. Comfort and humor, even in the face of scandal, isn't an exceptional trait — it's essential. Style isn't just about being primped by slaves, it's about knowing which slaves are fit for the job, where to find them, and how to get them. Using blackmail, rumor, and poison to achieve ends others consider impossible is a basic skill. The scions of House Cynis have mastered all these and more.

Social Standing

Of all the Great Houses, Cynis may be the most popular — and may have the most notorious reputation. Cynises don't just throw parties, they host decadent galas that last for days. They don't just sell slaves, they offer trained majordomos, odalisques, musicians, acrobats, and chefs. They don't just grow food, they produce the finest crops and most exotic drugs from their mother prefecture of Pangu, their satrapies and prefectures across the Realm, and from trade with faraway nations such as Gem and Halta. They don't just bathe, they construct elaborate, ornate bathhouses wherein they relax, gossip, and even conduct business meetings. Their standards are high, at least so far as their own happiness and well-being is concerned. For a Cynis to take many lovers, even after marriage, is common. Marriage is for procreation. Love is for pleasure. So long as the Cynis is happy with her lot, the rest of the house is pleased for her. Cynis respects perfection in all shapes, be it aesthetic, sensual, military, physical, or otherwise.

Perfection doesn't necessarily mean saintliness. House Cynis is the Realm's foremost purveyor of slaves and intoxicants. Its scions tend to be lax or leisurely in their adherence to the Immaculate Philosophy. Though their Dragon-Blooded status makes them holy by definition, few expect a Cynis to act like it. They've built their reputation on scandal, to the point where hearing of their debauches, salacious affairs, or ill-conceived experiments is unsurprising. While Cynis' scions are neither atheists nor overtly blasphemous, few make a point of righteousness, if they give the Immaculate Philosophy much thought at all. While it's not unusual to see a Cynis paying tribute at a shrine, it's often as much a lavish show of piety as a matter of

genuine devotion. This irreverence is a major obstacle for House Cynis. The Immaculate Order has no small voice in the choice of the next ruler of the Realm, and their disdain for the house prevents them from backing any Cynis candidate while there are much more pious houses in the running.

The other houses underestimate Cynis. They buy their wines and drugs and slaves, feast at their tables, and relax at their bathhouses. Cynis smiles, plays along, and holds out both hands for the wealth of jade and information that falls into their grasp as a result.

House Economics

House Cynis is the Realm's largest purveyor of luxury goods. Narcotics from An-Teng, sealskins from Fair Isle, beautiful and strange crafts from Nexus — all of these are within Cynis' grasp. All can be attained — for those who can pay the price.

The house is most famous for its monopoly on the slave trade within the Realm, awarded by the Empress at the house's founding to put it on a solid financial footing. Cynis takes pride in finding and selling slaves specialized in difficult trades and practices. Merchant or artisan families give up young children who show promise in some skill in exchange for cancellation of debts. Other slaves expert in that field train the child until he's ready to sell. Unskilled labor, conversely, is easy to find, and Cynis buys or takes as much of it as can be packed into a ship's hold, whether prisoners seized by military adventure, dissidents from Threshold satrapies, or dream-eaten victims of the Fair Folk.

House Cynis' Imperial monopoly also extends to slave rental. Extremely skilled or specialized slaves are often only needed for a specific task; the house draws up extensive contracts to protect their interests in such agreements. More often, large groups of unskilled slaves are rented for construction projects.

While Cynis buys a significant number of its slaves from the Guild, indebted families, or other traders on the Blessed Isle, the house isn't above launching raids into "uncivilized" territories beyond the Realm's borders. Since the Empress' disappearance, Cynis grows more willing to extend this to other houses' ill-defended satrapies.

House Cynis also does a brisk trade in drugs and intoxicants, from simple opiates to more exotic hallucinogens and narcotics. Cynis has a standing agreement with the Guild regarding drug trade, and extraordinary quantities of jade pass through the house each year for purchasing and selling addictive substances. Many hard drugs can only be purchased legally with jade, which nominally limits access to the Dynasty. This doesn't stop the Cynises from engaging in illegal enterprise. While they cannot control the entire Realm's black market — they'd like to, but there are far too many pressing issues demanding their attention — they have enormous influence within the Blessed Isle's criminal underworld.

Cynis physicians and chirurgeons are among the finest on the Blessed Isle. These tend to the wealthiest, commanding steep fees for their services. The house sells medicinal tinctures and concoctions — many of them proprietary, the results of Cynis experimentation — but never the recipes, and always for an exorbitant cost, either monetary or political. Other houses are both resentful and grateful for this service.

House Military

Cynis' military is unimpressive at best. Troops posted at public affairs and assigned to guard duty are selected for their pleasing appearance as much as their skill, while their traditional paramilitary forces in the Threshold are brutes and slave-takers first, imperial garrisons second. Slaves taken by the house as children may be conscripted as adults into procuring more slaves. Mutiny is common, though usually put down quickly. Discipline isn't a strong suit among the house's troops.

During the parceling-out of the Imperial legions, Cynis laid claim to three. They're also secretly negotiating with certain Guild members to exchange appointments to the Deliberative's Lesser Chamber and influence over Cynis ministers' policy decisions for a massive discount on Nexus mercenaries.

War By Other Means

The danger of House Cynis lies not in armies, but in pervasiveness. Everyone who's anyone attends Cynis parties. Every Dragon-Blooded household worth mention buys slaves. Everyone needs to eat. House Cynis has inroads everywhere on the Blessed Isle and places beyond, and the amount of knowledge it possesses on the activities of Dragon-Blooded great and small would have caused the Empress herself to pale.

House Cynis is under no illusions that it can take the throne through force. The Cathak legions alone could wipe out its entire army, plus any mercenaries it hires. Instead, the house has decided to fight for the throne on its own terms. It offers friendship in one hand while holding a dagger in the other. Those who've accepted

Cynis hospitality — and there are few who haven't — know that the Cynis reputation for discretion is well earned. No matter how great the improprieties committed at a Cynis gala, a Dynast may rest easy knowing that her reputation is safe. Of course, House Cynis watches, reports, and records. There's no piece of information too small to be used.

Using this information, however, is an option of last resort. Release news of a scandal too publicly and no one will ever let loose at a Cynis celebration again. There's no way to tell how the information will spread once released, so most play their cards close to their chest and work through insinuation. But if a particular political rival needs to be burned, a Cynis scion might mention something to an Immaculate monk, who'll discreetly censure the blackmailed party while leaving House Cynis blameless of any breach of hospitality.

Some Cynises keep ciphered dossiers or sorcerously sealed ledgers; others train themselves to memorize decades' worth of indiscretions with eidetic clarity. The house maintains no central register of blackmail material, but trading juicy facts with one's kin is a common pastime, while providing an elder with especially scandalous information can greatly enhance a scion's prospects.

Experimenting with Creation's flora and fauna in search of the next high or cure has given House Cynis an unparalleled knowledge of toxins, venoms, and other deadly substances. Many compounds in the house vaults cannot be replicated without their massive trade network, nor can their antidotes. House Cynis discreetly offers these poisons to Dynasts and criminals willing to pay, and uses its extensive information-gathering network to ascertain the victim's identity to determine their next step. If it's someone the house wants gone, nothing further needs doing, and they've been paid for the privilege of having an enemy assassinated. If they'd rather see him live, they arrange for him to meet a Cynis physician, who'll cluck her tongue and talk of summer fevers or winter chills while administering antidotes made from ingredients plucked from gardens and grottoes thousands of miles away. The value of the patient's gratitude is equaled only by the steep cost charged for the service.

Enemies and Alliances

House Cynis enjoys good-natured, if shallow, relationships with many other houses. House V'neef buys slaves for its vineyards and marries Cynis sons to its daughters, while Cynis buys V'neef wines for salons and galas. House Mnemon requires large amounts of slave labor



for construction projects. And households and individuals from every house have financial arrangements with Cynis, or simply enjoy attending Cynis social events.

House Cynis' biggest obstacle to the throne is Mnemon herself. The eldest daughter of the Scarlet Empress believes it's her divine right to take her mother's throne, and the idea of anyone else challenging her is laughable. The idea of House Cynis contesting her claim, however, is an insult. They may have a bloodline worthy of marrying her daughters to, but as Mnemon sees it, no Cynis hedonist, whoremonger, or slavetaker is fit to sit upon the throne. House Cynis fears that she'd seize their lands, ships, slaves, and legions in the name of piety and virtue. Should she come close to taking the throne, the house might be compelled to move directly before they lose everything.

House Ragara has become an issue for Cynis of late. Cynises have always spent lavishly on their lifestyles and their galas, and all too many have gone deeply in debt to the so-called Imperial Bank. With civil war in the offing, Ragara is calling its debts due, and threatens to suborn a whole swath of Cynis scions. The house is faced with the need to employ blackmail more directly than is their wont as a counter to Ragara extortion.

House Sesus is closely related to House Cynis through marriage and dalliance. Sesus provides Cynis with information gathered by its extensive intelligence network. Cynis provides Sesus with the highest-quality goods, both legal and otherwise, and information gathered by its blackmailers. Many children of Sesus are addicted to some Cynis-procured substance or other, their continued supply only ensured by their loyalty. This loyalty is often fully secured through intermarriages between the two houses. Which house has a stronger hold on the other is difficult to ascertain.

Major Holdings

While Cynis' nominal stronghold is the House of Trees, a beautiful castle woven from living wood atop their founder's crypt, their heart is in **Pangu** city. This city, the prefecture's namesake, houses Cynis scions of all ranks, their courts, their lovers, and their slaves. There's always some party or another going on in Pangu's grand houses, and tribute flows through the city like a river. Pangu's palaces have pleasantly open, airy layouts with rich carpets and sensuous baths, reflecting this love of pleasure and luxury.

At the other end of Pangu Prefecture is the **Tourmaline Monastery**. So called for veins of semiprecious stones running through its walls, it's the single largest Immaculate stronghold in the prefecture. For many years, abbot Cloud Lotus has given sanctuary to the few escaped slaves who've found their way here, allowing them to remain as lay worshipers and shielding them from their Cynis owners. Should war come to Pangu, the monastery's neutrality and political immunity may cease to protect it.

The satrapy of **Greyfalls** is the Realm's easternmost bastion in the Scavenger Lands, named for the tremendous waterfall that cascades down the cliff side. A recent Cynis acquisition, it's the site of one of the war manses that channels Creation's geomantic Essence into the Realm Defense Grid, and as such an invaluable strategic holding. It also serves as the Realm's gateway to Eastern trade with Ixcoatli, spider-ridden Kubal, the Jaguar Principalities, and other nations along the Golden Road trade route. It's a lucrative satrapy, but the sheer distance between it and the Blessed Isle poses a substantial obstacle to collecting tribute and maintaining control. As House Cynis prepares for the prospect of civil war, some within it wonder whether they'd be best served by simply cutting Greyfalls loose, leaving its satrap to fend for herself.

Scions of Note

A trailblazing explorer, master merchant, and inveterate hedonist, the Empress' daughter **Cynis** died centuries ago of an overdose of heroin laced with dreamstone dust. The house takes great pains to keep her crypt beneath the House of Trees decorated with fresh-cut flowers and beautiful works of art.

A triumvirate of Cynis' daughters leads the house. The eldest, **Cynis Belar**, is the matriarch. She's a renowned socialite, with a reputation for worldly sophistication and rapier wit. She's also a celebrated painter and sculptor, her pieces taking center stage at family galas and celebrations. Behind the scenes, Belar is secretive and ruthless. Dedicated to House Cynis' welfare and her descendants' future, she deploys the house's connections and espionage resources to ruin potential threats. Though she makes a great show of her sisters being her peers, they ultimately defer to her, to the point where other Cynises presume that she holds unshakeable blackmail material on them both.

The second sister, **Cynis Falen**, is the financial mastermind controlling the family's purse strings and the slave trade. Though personable and easygoing, she's also the most unabashedly cold-blooded of the sisters, finding great satisfaction in maximizing house profits with little consideration for morality. She's also the best-traveled, spending months at a time on business in the Threshold.

Once as hedonistic as her siblings, she's lost much of her taste for wine and debauchery over the centuries.

The youngest sister, **Cynis Wisel**, is a talented poet. Her frail, orchid-like appearance and wide brown eyes hide a master poisoner who craves the stability and safety that power affords. The drug trade is her bailiwick, and she has many contacts in the Blessed Isle's criminal underworld. Her husband is a Sesus, more often than not found in his cups at some wineshop or another.

Cynis Petalin, Wisel's lover and second cousin, is well over six feet tall and musclebound, with a laugh as loud and sharp as any Imperial firework. Petalin commands the house legions, who love her for her sense of humor and dedication to both tactics and morale. Wisel intends to place Petalin on the throne and set herself up as the trusted vizier, ascending to prominence within the triumvirate.

Directly under Petalin is **Cynis Laseral**. She has a reputation as a brilliantly successful soldier and teacher, adored by her Dynastic kin but feared by her soldiers. She's lectured at the House of Bells and the Spiral Academy, and her seminars on how to best profit from a conflict are well attended. She treats her soldiers like Gateway pieces, winning against overwhelming odds at the cost of significant casualties. The only thing that could undermine her ruthless reputation for triumph at any cost is the deep romantic love that she and her husband, **Mnemon Oroth Takor**, share, and she goes to great lengths to conceal it publicly. She's a master of realpolitik and a favorite of many younger Cynis scions, who believe her worthy of the throne for her ruthlessness and her tactical skill — if her own soldiers don't kill her first.

Cynis Umara and **Cynis Cerise** are twin daughters of a famous Cynis procurer by one of his Haslanti bed slaves. Umara is one of the house's best physicians, rumored to be able to replace a missing soul — for the right price. Umara never takes payment in jade, only in replacement of her medicinal stock, which can sometimes only be found in remote corners of Creation. Cerise was much less lucky. Her growth stunted by an accident in her youth, she stands only four feet in height. Still, she makes the best of it. Dressed in a dozen pounds of jewels and a pair of moonsilver-heeled shoes, she continues her father's procuring business, selling only the finest in imported jewelry, slaves, wine, and more illicit substances.

Once an ambitious captain in the Merchant Fleet, **Cynis Falen Parda** now commands his own squadron of the house navy, escorting Cynis merchant ships across the Inland Sea. A brilliant naval tactician and shrewd judge of character, Parda prefers words to blades, and more than once has persuaded a pirate captain to yield without coming to blows. His persuasive talents come into their full flower in salon and gala, where his good looks and rakish air have made him many friends and many lovers — and made no few enemies of his lovers' spouses.

House Ledaal
Air That Raised the Bones of Giants

With a murky history rooted in a terrible betrayal, and a steadfast vigil that spans centuries, House Ledaal is the icy fang of the Realm's shadow-hunting wolf. Its scions scent the signs of impending disaster on the wind and know the time for action is nigh, but with the Empress' children positioning daggers at each other's backs, it must fight a war on two fronts.

Ledaal herself passed away centuries ago, leaving the Flashing Tempest Council — a clique of worthy elders — to guide the house's path. Its members include figures such as the house matriarch, Ledaal Yasmet; Ledaal Sivarin Vanek, scarred veteran of a dozen successful Wyld Hunts; and Ledaal Zenitar, the daring sorcerer who plumbed the depths of Hell. Historically a tight-knit team, the elders now differ on urgent issues, each taking steps toward the means they think best for the Realm's stability and what they see as the house's rightful authority. As they work at cross-purposes, spreading resources too thin, even the youngest Ledaal can sense the disagreements within their house's leadership. The council juggles politics, inquisition, and planning for war. Whether it can keep its balls in the air long enough to see the Realm — and itself — through the Time of Tumult remains to be seen.

Social Standing

No one questions House Ledaal's loyalty, brilliance, or peerless vigilance. Dynasts and patricians alike do business with Ledaal, and trust its spears at their backs against what lies beyond the Realm's borders. At the same time, its relentless obsession with hunting in dark places leaves a sour taste in others' mouths. Delving fearlessly into forbidden texts and mentored by enigmatic mystics from far-off shores, Ledaal scions often seem to care more for distant threats than homegrown politics. While others trust in Ledaal's competence, marrying one sounds like someone else's job.

Despite the stereotypes, Ledaal's brood has as much eye for strategic marriage as anyone — perhaps more.

They're raised to believe that falling in love is something barbarians, fools, and Cynises do. If you dally, the house should get something out of it, whether a potential Dragon-Blood, political relationship, or First Age tome. Ledaal sons are married off to wives with interests and talents aligned with the house's goals. Ledaal daughters take husbands whose areas of expertise complement their own. But since the Empress' disappearance, household mothers can't afford to be choosy, obliged to cement the house's standing whenever possible.

However, the elders have no plans to put a Ledaal on the throne. They claim their authority as a Great House by their self-described role as Realm watchdogs and view themselves as invaluable through it. They would only seek to orchestrate a Ledaal Empress if they thought it necessary to secure the empire against a tide of darkness.

Shadow Crusaders

The Realm protects Creation from the Wyld's ravages, the depredations of Anathema, and the hunger of the walking dead. But who protects the Realm? The house has taken that mantle for itself, quenching its blade of zeal in the icy wind of knowledge. This is the Shadow Crusade to which Ledaal's descendants devote their lives.

The founder Ledaal was the Empress' granddaughter, scion of House Jurul and daughter to Jurul herself. Ledaal exposed a conspiracy led by her own mother within the house, whose traitors forged pacts with a Lunar Anathema and lords of Hell to fuel their ambitions. She personally led the Wyld Hunt that destroyed the Anathema and brought her evidence directly to the Empress. For her loyalty and vigilance, the Empress rewarded Ledaal by adopting her as daughter and founder of a new Great House, while striking House Jurul from the Imperial ledgers.

Ill-content to simply distance themselves from the debacle, Ledaal and her descendants took up the banner of foe to Anathema and other fiends, that such betrayal might never again threaten the Realm that safeguards the world. A long line of demon-hunters, scholars of forbidden lore and ancient history, and crusaders has followed. Ledaal encourages its scions to train as Anathema-hunting shikari, and contributes jade and supplies to support Wyld Hunts.

In recent years, devotion to duty has become a desperate struggle. The turning seasons and threat of civil war have rendered Thorns' fall a mere footnote in the Dynasty's power-play saga. So far, Ledaal's horrified warnings and numerous proposals to rally other houses in reclaiming Thorns and other Anathema-tainted kingdoms have gone unheeded in the face of each house's immediate troubles. But the council can't bury its nose too deeply in its Shadow Crusade, lest other houses rip it to shreds while it's not looking. Thus, it dedicates resources to playing the game, while watching the shadow loom nearer.

House Economics

Arjuf Dominion is the house's ancestral home, and holds one of the most important ports on the Blessed Isle. The Ledaals are painfully aware that a Peleps or V'neef blockade would spell disaster — they have a modest private navy for shipping cargo and soldiers, but nothing approaching an effective maritime force.

In Arjuf city, the house's un-Exalted members keep fingers in every pie so the dragon's share of incoming foreign revenue enters Ledaal coffers. The house benefits from a healthy cut of every tariff and docking fee that merchant ships bring in, and owns or sponsors businesses along every pier.

Ledaal ships home significant wealth from its satrapies, taking an active hand in their rulership. The house sees knowledge as key to strategy, in peace as in war. Many households reside in the Threshold, soaking up local culture and bringing back wealth and craftsmanship. It doesn't endear them to the locals, though — tributaries under Ledaal's thumb know they represent nothing more than a resource and a staging ground for the Shadow Crusade. Constant vigilance against the rising dark makes Ledaal satrapies among the safest places for citizens of the Threshold to live, but in exchange they sacrifice privacy and autonomy. The yoke of Imperial oversight grows heavier as the house scours its holdings for Anathema sympathies, and demands increasing resources to shore up its grip on Arjuf and fund Wyld Hunts.

A smaller portion of the house's assets take the form of unearthed relics and volumes of First Age lore, which it acquires voraciously, seeking weapons against Creation's unnatural threats. Many of the Realm's foremost experts on ancient history, Anathema magics, and stranger things are Ledaal; the house hires them out as translators and archaeologists for a hefty fee. Lately, however, other houses keep finds secret in anticipation of turning them against their rivals.

House Military

Before the Empress' disappearance, Ledaal kept a sizable force of paramilitary troops trained to root out Threshold

cults, battle creatures of darkness, and supplement the Wyld Hunt. Ledaal's specialized military tradition was never meant to defend its homeland from invaders.

Now, though, Arjuf Dominion — with its substantial trade ports, prominent land routes, and easy access to the Realm's most prestigious academy of war — is ripe for plucking by other Great Houses, and Ledaal feels exposed. It claimed three legions, but every member of the Flashing Tempest Council has their own opinion of where to deploy them. The generals have sent soldiers to Faxai, hoping to help take back the Caul — a long-time Ledaal obsession — and have trained more strike teams for the Hunt. They bicker over whether to shore up the satrapies' defenses against the Anathema, since heavier tribute demands have weakened satrapial militias. The elders worry that without their full strength at home, Arjuf's defenses are paper dolls compared to Cathak's legions and Peleps' warships.

Thorns is a popular rallying cry for the house, following the total destruction of its garrison and the deaths of several scions when the Mask of Winters took the satrapy. Ledaal generals lack a suitable staging ground, though, and can't convince other houses to provide one. The Flashing Tempest Council made overtures to Peleps after Thorns fell, proposing a joint venture to rout the Mask with a sea approach from Ledaal's holdings in Incas Prefecture, but the naval house refused. Now, fearing Peleps will take any excuse to get its hooks into Arjuf, the elders hesitate to try a meatier proposal.

Enemies and Alliances

Though Ledaal has no particular enemies among the Dynasty, its reputation for zealotry and close proximity to the unnatural has earned it no long-standing allies. With Nellens territory just across the river, some think Ledaal would be best served crushing it under its heel and absorbing its resources — and Ledaal would like nothing better than to show those weak-blooded upstarts what a true Great House can do — but most agree it would leave the house vulnerable.

Ledaal scions with their ears to the ground at home harbor a deep suspicion of House Ragara. In their vigilance, they see patterns in Ragara's commercial dealings, archaeological expeditions, and military maneuvers that seem designed to cover something more sinister. They quietly gather evidence of the financial titan's misuse of occult secrets and relics from Anathema history to build a case against them, hoping to one day soon have enough proof to expose treason and take down the debt collectors before civil war makes them too valuable to die. Some Ledaals seek allies in their investigation from the All-Seeing Eye or magistrates with the gift of subtlety.

Mnemon is Ledaal's top choice for a strong alliance and for the Scarlet Throne. Her bold move against Jiara earned the house's grudging respect, and the elders think the devout sorcerer would have the power and willingness to support the Shadow Crusade. They've made gestures to gain her goodwill, but with her military forces on the other side of the Imperial Mountain, some question the potential return on investment for such an open admission of need.

Major Holdings

Arjuf Dominion is Ledaal's largest and most crucial holding. Encompassing the west bank of the Caracal River down to the Inland Sea, it's a rich region with fertile soil and a tradition of skilled artisanship, and its coastal region holds multiple ports that trade with the wealthy city-states of the South. The greatest of those ports, the city of Arjuf, may be the richest and most cosmopolitan metropolis on the Blessed Isle after the Imperial City. The dominion is the center of Ledaal wealth and power, and the house jealously guards its authority there.

Howling Heart Prefecture in the northwest is a sprawling mountainous region. Jade mining towns use Ledaal artifacts and innovations to mitigate danger to workers. The prefecture is named for the sound the high-altitude winds make passing through the region's many mine shafts and tunnels, but peasants and patricians quietly use the name to evoke dark experiments the Dragon-Blooded run in remote Howling Heart city.

The city's elite shikari training ground is built on a puissant demesne. Ledaal expects its shikari to study at Howling Heart, learning Anathema magic's devious ways and spectral armies' fell tactics from house scholars and retired hunters. But the city's underside hosts cabals of occultists who've been running experiments for centuries, pushing the limits of Terrestrial power however they can. They aim to produce shikari capable of standing toe-to-toe with Solar demon-queens and Lunar warlords; ever since the Tepet legions' disastrous failure, they've picked up the pace. Through sorcery and reverse-engineering ancient artifacts of Anathema make, they've developed a still-theoretical protocol to dramatically amplify a Dragon-Blood's Essence for a short period, at the cost of major decreases in lifespan and blood potency. They haven't deployed it yet, for it carries the risk of inciting Essence fever nigh unto madness, but the resurgence of the Solar Anathema may force their hand.



Incas Prefecture, House Iselsi's erstwhile seat, came under Ledaal control when the Empress snatched it from the dying house. Ledaal holds Iselsi in contempt for its treachery, and does its best to further marginalize its remnants. The council hoped to gain a freer hand to call and direct the Wyld Hunt by taking over the home of the Palace Sublime and Cloister of Wisdom. Unfortunately, between the remaining Iselsi households and Mnemon's maneuvering to relocate the Order's heart away from the Iselsi, Ledaal has done little more than gain more bills to pay. Still, some elders are glad to control a prefecture so close to Thorns.

The city-state **Perch**, in the Southern land of Zephyr, sprawls along the east bank of the Elidad River, whose rich soil yields fine harvests. But the west bank hosts only the Twilight Grove, Perch's shadowland necropolis. There, the dead keep their hearts close at hand to better recall the passions of life, and spectral princes called aeons ride sphinxes that are their own hungry ghosts. The satrap, Ledaal Yasmet Imara, treats as an equal with the seven archaeons that rule the dead city, bargaining for occult secrets and Underworld gossip. Other than burial rites, she forbids intercourse between the two cities, but turns a blind eye to the many little flowerings of Perch's ancestor cult. Though she'd love to extirpate the cult root and branch, Perch has seen too many uprisings in the past, and Imara does not dare tempt another at this delicate time.

Scions of Note

Ledaal herself is gone, but she wrote her legacy in bold strokes across her descendants' lives. The house extols her as a hero to emulate in courage and integrity. Elders remember her as a stalwart, inquisitive woman who would stop at nothing to uncover the truth, and a decisive leader who brooked no compromise. Her ravenous curiosity about all things mystical, paired with her steel backbone, led her to keep many secrets, not all of which she passed down; many Ledaal scions dream of being the one to discover hidden journals or messages she left as tests for future house prodigies.

Ledaal Yasmet, a powerful sorcerer and house matriarch, spends enormous sums of house money on ruins-delving expeditions far afield. She believes the Realm's only hope for survival lies in occult might, and wants Ledaal at the forefront of whatever ancient power she finds. She hires Liminal and Exigent mercenaries and secretly reads tomes on the art of necromancy. The other members of the Flashing Tempest Council have noticed a recent marked pessimistic streak in her and blame her second husband, the reclusive philosopher **Ragara Gaiban**, for her odd behavior.

Ledaal Rae, a longtime diplomat who stayed within House Ledaal by marrying a patrician, argues that the

house must put aside its grievances with the Scavenger Lands and forge an alliance against the Mask of Winters. His daughters both perished in the Thorns garrison's destruction; those who oppose his call to action whisper that his thirst for vengeance and masculine intemperance interfere with his judgment. With the Empress gone, Rae insists, the Seventh Legion could be persuaded to sign a treaty. Meeting resistance, he's sent his own grandson to the Realm embassy in Lookshy for preliminary talks with the General Staff, unbeknownst to the other elders.

Ledaal Kebok Coren is young and untested in the field, but her swordsmanship is beyond reproach and her uncanny command over the weather makes would-be rivals nervous about questioning her prowess. Uncharacteristically passionate for a Ledaal, Coren has trouble reining in her strange powers, which wreak havoc with the skies according to her mood. Her great-grandmother Sulco has confided that they originate from Coren's great-grandfather, the storm-demon Yan. Coren is wary of her inheritance and keeps the secret desperately, terrified that her family's Shadow Crusade might turn on her if she revealed it.

House Mnemon
Earth Carved in the Image of One

Priests. Poets. Lovers. Builders. Of the Great Houses, the Mnemons are deemed most devout and closest to the Immaculate Order. Their eponymous founder — alive and well, scarcely aging despite her 398 years — established the house three and a half centuries ago, relying heavily on devotion to the Order, and strong public emulation of Pasiap through construction of some of the Realm's greatest temples. Since then they've sheltered the Order, offering it protection and support amid dire straits, and used their pious reputation to rise almost as far above reproach as the Order itself. House Mnemon hopes these advantages will carry it through the Time of Tumult.

Mnemons pursue construction, religion, and sorcery under the family business' umbrella. A slim majority of scions receive Immaculate training at the Cloister of Wisdom. But while some grow rigid in their piety, others study at far-flung Threshold temples and cities, exposing them to many of Creation's most outlandish and enthralling aesthetics, cultures, and spiritual paths. As a result, they have a distinct flair of exoticism bordering on salacious, and a wisdom bordering on heretical. Yet they renew their dedication to Pasiap through their works.

Social Standing

House Mnemon swings wildly in popularity with other Great Houses. Truly religious and deeply spiritual, its elders drive a hard line when the Philosophy is flouted — particularly Mnemon herself, who strides like a colossus over the perilous waters of Dynastic politics. Junior Mnemons are charismatic, full of dreams and artistic vision. Young and old are renowned for erudition — from knowledge of dead languages to mastery of erotic arts — and devotion to family, whether spouses, offspring, or Mnemon kin. Some Mnemons court notoriety by practicing the uncouth art of sorcery.

Above all, Mnemons are known for pride. Their progenitor is among the greatest scions the Dynasty has ever produced, and she continues to tutor her descendants in secret techniques of architecture, construction, artifice, and sorcery. Through her, they know themselves to be the preeminent bearers of the Empress' lineage, and they've kept their blood strong through numerous favorable marriages. Driving a hard bargain at the marriage table, the Mnemons have a history of snubbing other Great Houses to keep the bloodline pure.

House Economics

House Mnemon's Imperial remit is construction, a skill that Mnemon developed in her youth, taking refuge in the hinterlands while evading her brother Ragara's assassins. Today, the house has right of first refusal on all of the throne's building contracts. Architecture is the foundation of the house's fame and wealth, and the most visible, enduring proof of their closeness to the Dragons.

Mnemon architects designed many of the Isle's grandest structures, particularly manses — the house has spent centuries mastering geomancy. Mnemon overseers direct work crews constructing and repairing buildings, roads, tunnels, bridges, levees, wells, reservoirs, and aqueducts. A fraction of the funds invested in these projects — by landholders, governors, prefects, and the Throne itself — flows into the house's coffers.

House Ragara is a necessary business partner; major construction projects demand sizable outlays of funds, and unforeseen delays require loans to complete an undertaking. Mnemon has always resented her house's dependence on Ragara credit, and she doesn't trust the honor of a family whose founder tried to murder her in her youth. Today, this relationship is complicated by several Mnemon satrapies withholding tribute, without which the house is in danger of defaulting and coming further under Ragara's power — a nightmare scenario for the house and its founder.

House Military

Before the Empress' disappearance, Mnemon had no house legions and employed only a small paramilitary as a security force. During the military reformation of the Imperial legions, House Mnemon took control of five, providing ample proof that it had generals to lead them and money to maintain them, and vowing that the Realm's interests would be defended abroad against incursions by the Anathema.

Predictably, several satrapies openly rebelled after the Great Houses recalled most of the legions from the Threshold. One was Jiara, an Eastern satrapy under House Mnemon, which yielded food, textiles, and sorcerous antiquities. Jiara was particularly troubling as the stronghold of a circle of Solar Anathema who raised the countryside in revolt against the Mnemon garrison. This wasn't the distant threat of the Bull of the North, but a full-fledged Anathema outbreak on the Realm's doorstep.

After much deliberation, Mnemon moved the bulk of her forces away from defensive positions in Dejis Prefecture and other house strongholds to personally reclaim Jiara from the Anathema. In doing so, she delivered a blistering condemnation of the other houses for their indolence in such matters elsewhere in the Threshold, a valedictory that drew many unaffiliated Dragon-Blooded to her cause.

Mnemon left approximately one and a half legions to protect her home interests. She invited the Immaculate Order to use many of her family's homes, temples, and manses for festivals in the coming months, in hopes the Immaculate presence would cause predatory houses to hesitate in launching an attack.

Enemies and Alliances

House elders favor a Peleps alliance. In addition to naval might, Peleps' reputation as exemplars of Dynastic virtue dovetails with the Mnemons' pious magnanimity to guarantee popularity with the Realm's mortal populace, which Mnemon's inner circle believes will decide the war. But stable alliances demand intermarriage, and while Mnemon herself respects their houses' shared values — sophistication, ambition, resolve — she disdains the Peleps' pedigree. She also undervalues the peasantry's love because they've never loved her. Mnemon would rather wield Peleps against V'neef in the coming war, though not at the cost of promising them the Merchant Fleet.

House Mnemon also favors alliance with Cathak, a devout house commanding the Realm's most formidable army. Mnemon knows gaining the throne requires treating with the Cathaks eventually. But she hopes for an angle allowing her to present herself as the only legitimate contender, or else delay a falling-out with Cathak long enough to deal with the other houses.

Unexpectedly, Ledaal has come forward as a potential ally. The Ledaals respect Mnemon as a powerful, adroit leader, and admire her taking the fight to the Anathema despite risk to herself and her house. As candidate for Empress, they deem her sympathetic to their intent to eradicate Threshold threats to the Realm. But their major holdings and militaries are on opposite sides of the Isle, limiting their ability to cooperate in the coming war.

The house's most abiding support comes from the Immaculate Order. Mnemon famously committed one-third of her own children to the Order, a tradition her house follows — though not all to the same extent. Donating public works to the Immaculate Order's care, and repairing temple structures for little to no cost, has further cultivated the Order's affections. Though the Order maintains studious neutrality in conflict between Great Houses, its hierarchs privately consider her one of the few candidates spiritually fit to take the throne, and pay vast sums for ecclesiastical construction projects with the quiet understanding that the money will, for the moment, be used elsewhere.

The remaining houses are rivals to House Mnemon at best, enemies at worst.

A nominal ally, House Sesus nonetheless stands between Mnemon and the throne. Though intermarried with her own house, she has no illusions about their loyalties, and knows better than to try goading them into fighting her battles. House Mnemon is willing to retain the alliance as long as possible, but Mnemon knows she must humble the mighty Sesus family at some point. Conversely, House Cynis has Sesus wrapped around its finger and is using that house to fulfill its own ambitions, bringing Cynis and Mnemon into conflict.

Mnemon hates V'neef — the woman, not the house — for embodying all of the Scarlet Empress' beauty, charm, and joie de vivre, undercutting Mnemon's public reputation as the very image of the Empress. However, Mnemon has largely restricted this grudge to the political arena, acting against V'neef interests in the Deliberative and sabotaging the careers of promising V'neef ministers.

Mnemon's main grudge is against House Ragara. Though Ragara himself is ailing and retired, Mnemon never forgot how many times he tried to kill her. Mnemon also rankles against her house's centuries of accrued debt. Younger scions are in particularly dire straits. While House Ragara eagerly extended them credit with good terms while the Empress lived, now creditors squeeze them financially and try to suborn them. No matter the circumstances, Mnemon won't seek alliances in the coming war that align her with the Ragaras. She intends on decimating their house, and forcing them to pay war reparations and cancel her family's debts.

Major Holdings

The Mnemons have settled thickly in **Dejis Prefecture**. Dejis encompasses the mountains immediately northeast of the Imperial Mountain, whose foothills form the prefecture's southwestern border. Once it was rife with weak demesnes, but the Mnemons carefully transformed the region's geography to cultivate stronger demesnes, and thus built greater manses throughout the hills and cliffs. The mountains of Dejis are known for temples, manses, and other scenic and majestic holy structures raised by House Mnemon.

Dejis Prefecture's capital is **Mnemon-Darjilis**. Mnemon restored the city of Darjilis from the ruins of the First Age, and it began accepting residents and generating taxes under its savior's name. Other Dejis cities include breathtaking **Chainbright**, its buildings carved deep into cliff faces between cascading waterfalls, and museum-riddled **Ajakai of the Jewels**, where Mnemon raised tombs for siblings Ragara slew centuries ago.

Vacationing Dynasts and patricians flock to the beautiful beaches and villas of **Halcyon Prefecture**. In the hills, shepherds driving flocks through picturesque First Age ruins exchange gossip of nightly bacchanals in such fashionable resort towns as **Iru-by-the-Sea**, hosted by Mnemon husbands and widowers — that passionate, less-disciplined gender — of Houses Cynis and Sesus. Painters and poets look out across blue waters, where fishing boats make way for Dynastic yachts sailing to the nearby island **Aura**. House Mnemon tamed the island's spirits and dragon lines, constructing a Wood manse — the House of Violet Pergolas — that bathes the entire island in salubrious energies. A magnificent spa and baths complex encircles the manse, accessible only to Mnemons and their personal guests.



MNEMON'S INNER CIRCLE

The house founder only trusts a handful of people sufficiently to value their counsel and to grant them responsibility over the house's business and military interests. These are almost always at least a century old — Mnemon gives little heed to the young and inexperienced — and are usually blood relatives, though a lover or a descendant's spouse occasionally earns her respect. Moreover, each is bound to her by ties of fear or obligation; Mnemon knows better than to trust anyone who could entertain thoughts of betraying her without suffering immediate and devastating reprisal.

Mnemon's inner circle isn't an official body. Its members don't have formal meetings, but they're aware of one another's identities, often gathering informally at family galas or corresponding to discuss matters of import. Rarely do they overtly work at cross purposes; Mnemon has little patience for such feuds.

Notable members of the inner circle include the sour-faced senator Mnemon Oroth, who conceals beneath her balding pate a litany of scandalous facts concerning almost every member of the Greater Chamber; Cynis Solado, master physician and poisoner, who fathered one of Mnemon's daughters; and the sagacious monk Mnemon Caras Farim, who watches for signs of Iselsi subversion within the Order and keeps a close eye on a particular assistant to the Mouth of Peace.

Groves of almonds and olives grow near the confluence of two rivers in the satrapy of **Paragon**. Merchants ply their trade without fear of thieves or dishonest customers; magisters in robes of bright reds, deep blues, and exotic greens walk the city streets alongside citizens in dull and muted colors; visiting Dynasts sup on dates and coffee. Its buildings are of greenish-black basalt and white marble, laid out in a grid centered on the mosaic-adorned palace of the aging Perfect of Paragon. Once a scavenger prince and wandering archaeologist, he rose to power after unearthing a relic of the First Age that prolongs his lifespan and binds the satrapy's citizenry to its ironclad laws. His rule over the city-state's people is absolute, but he's shown no sign of disobedience to its Mnemon satrap, knowing that for all his excavated power, he has no hope of standing against the Realm's legions.

Scions of Note

Mnemon (p. 351) is often regarded as the very image of the Empress. She is brilliant, determined, and ruthless, and her sorcerous skills are unmatched within the Dynasty. For centuries she's labored to build the prestige and wealth of her Great House, and now she stands ready to step into her mother's place. If only the rest of the Dynasty wanted another Scarlet Empress, she'd sit upon the throne right now.

Despite her age, Mnemon looks scarcely older than thirty. She attributes her extraordinary vitality to the practice of Immaculate martial arts and attunement to specially cultivated Earth manses, though deeper secrets of sorcery are doubtless involved. Dressing richly but severely, she favors a spartan lifestyle, having grown accustomed to austerity in her years with the Immaculates. She disdains flattery, deeming actions significant where words are empty air.

Withered and wry, **Mnemon Rulinsei** looks older than Mnemon, but is actually her younger sister. Having lost a hand and eye to Ragara's assassins centuries ago, Rulinsei joined Mnemon's household under her protection as an adopted daughter. After outliving two Cynis husbands, she's retired to Mnemon-Darjilis as matriarch to her sprawling household, and a member of the house founder's inner circle. A master geomancer and middling sorcerer, she's walked strange realms, debating heterodox philosophies with ghosts of Shogunate savants and studying sorcerous architecture with princesses of Hell. Ultramarine glyphs shine upon her black jade hand, Demon Strangler. A patch covers her starmetal eye, its power to see the unseen magnifying her own second sight. Rulinsei is placing her affairs in order; utterly loyal to the sister who shielded her, she's ready to sacrifice anything — including her own all-but-spent life — to place Mnemon on the throne and ensure the supremacy of their mutual brood.

Though a skilled officer and effective swordsman, dragonlord **Mnemon Pallan** of the Sesus legions is best known as a poet. His verses — compiled and published by his wife, **Sesus Elissa**, earning him fame among Realm literati — laud the legions' might and honor,

the majesty of the Realm they guard, and the glory of death in the cause of victory. Sung at military banquets or chanted by troops on the march, they inspire officers and soldiers alike to heroic effort. He likewise cuts a swath off the battlefield, where his good looks, eloquent manner, and generous nature have won him many lovers — even one night with the Empress herself, though he doesn't speak of it. Pallan's longest-running affair, with **Ragara Sarisan**, has lasted well over a decade. His blood-kin hide their disapproval lest they break the fiction of fidelity. Real trouble looms from another quarter; Sarisan's firstborn may be Pallan's — a grave offense to his wife's house, squandering potency belonging to Sesus.

Mnemon Rulinsei Ghova is among the Realm's most gifted armorers, but few desire his wares. He adorns his work with phantasmagorical imagery — storms riddled with eyes, beasts with flames instead of heads, vines whose flowers are human hands. Some reject his work's heretical iconism; others simply find it bizarre. He draws inspiration from opium dreams and traumatic memories of the bordermarches, where he and his Hearth quested for the irreal Noumenon and battled the raksha prince Llirian-Llai, She Who Drinks the Wine of Light. Only the Wyld Hunt draws him away from salon, temple, and forge. Ghova wears a veil, an affectation tied to a private heresy; he believes the Immaculate Dragons have withdrawn beyond time's veil as bodhisattvas, still living, ready to return in the Realm's time of need. In doctrinal debates with aunts and uncles, he supports his position with scripture and the apocryphal *Hollow Codex*; they disagree, but respect his views so long as he raises no awkward questions through proselytization. Recently, he's seen the Immaculate Dragons in an opium stupor, instructing him to seek their glory-crowned reincarnations amid the Threshold.

House Nellens

Dragons of the Blood Resurgent

In a tavern in Juche, just outside Nellens' sprawling ancestral home, the story of the house's august ancestor is told once a year on the date of his birth. Like most epic songs, it's full of flowery verses, spinning the tale of a pious warrior and the queen who captured his heart, of love that transcended social distinction only to end in tragedy. The best renditions include war, assassins, and selfless sacrifice. Like most epic songs, it's almost entirely fictitious.

The Scarlet Empress had many lovers and consorts over the long centuries of her reign, and few were as controversial as Nellens. A politician instead of a warrior, Nellens' time as a mortal delegate to the Deliberative's Lesser Chamber was marked by his advocacy for un-Exalted Dynasts under the Empress' rule. He insisted that the blood of the Dragons in their veins marked them as more spiritually advanced than peasants and patricians. As such, they should be valued for more than their role in birthing future generations of Dragon-Blooded, and elevated above the patriciate in the Realm's laws and administration commensurate with their Dragon-proven enlightenment. It was a wildly unpopular stance amongst Dragon-Blooded senators. Though Nellens crafted every speech on the subject carefully, he enraged and offended many, and it was assumed that one of his political rivals — or perhaps the Empress herself — would have him assassinated in due course.

Instead, the Empress took him to her bed. Centuries after his death, she founded a Great House in his name, uniting several patrician houses and outcaste Dragon-Blooded families under the new aegis. Whether this was intended as an honor for his siring Sesus, or a political move intended to throw the more powerful Great Houses off balance, only the Empress knew.

The house is overseen not by a single leader, but by an assembly collectively known as the Most August Conclave. Three of the Conclave are Dragon-Blooded, including the house matriarch, the ever-calculating Nellens Gazal; four are mortal. Other members include the famed orator and rare mortal senator of the Deliberative's Greater Chamber Nellens Odem; the Dragon-Blooded merchant Nellens Ikona, beloved by patrician and peasant businesswomen across the Blessed Isle; and Nellens Sabine, a young mortal sorcerer who oversees the house's matchmaking efforts. So far as the rest of the Realm is concerned, the three Dragon-Blooded are the house's leaders, but Nellens is in fact ruled by all seven.

Social Standing

Thin-blooded. Dilettante. Mongrel. Dynasts have a thousand and one epithets for House Nellens' scions, and those scions have heard them all a thousand times. As early as primary school, the house's children must learn to cope with disdain and condescension from ignorant Dynastic peers. Hailing from Nellens presents a significant social handicap, but canny Dragon-Blooded learn to take advantage of such dismissal and outmaneuver their detractors.

Nellens is unique among the Great Houses in that its highest ranks are largely filled by mortals. Seeking to

improve the rate of Exaltation within the house, the Most August Conclave designed and implemented an aggressive matchmaking campaign for its members. This program is considered so vital to Nellens' interests, the Conclave will occasionally reject marriage proposals from outcaste Dragon-Blooded — or even thin-blooded scions of other Great Houses — in favor of stronger blood matches from un-Exalted Dynasts. The house has no strong elemental expression, preferring matches that strengthen the puissance of the Dragon's blood over attempts at cultivating a singular elemental Aspect.

Nellens is heavily invested in the Blessed Isle's bureaucracy and commerce, with the bulk of their mortal members groomed from birth to fill positions in the ministries, offices, and trading houses that keep the Realm running smoothly. A Nellens child is tested at the age of five for her aptitudes, and a three-year program devised to strengthen those raw talents before she enters primary school. By the time she graduates from secondary school, the scion is well prepared to become a merchant, bureaucrat, historian, artisan, or other professional.

A child blessed with Exaltation is expected to perform above and beyond examples set by other houses. Though some achieve high-ranking positions in the Thousand Scales, most Dragon-Blooded scions are expected to serve the Realm as heroes and exemplars. Many find honorable service in the legions or amongst the ranks of the Immaculates. Others serve within their house, acting as surrogates for un-Exalted elders or providing the public face of House Nellens in the Realm's galas and salons.

House Economics

Nellens is wealthy. It's one of the only houses to avoid heavy debt with House Ragara, and among the few whose wealth continues to grow, despite the tumultuous times currently afflicting the Threshold and the Blessed Isle. Its success is aided by the many Nellens positioned within the ranks of the Thousand Scales, making it infinitely easier to push permits, applications, and financing agreements through on the family's behalf.

Every house diversifies its investments, but Nellens redefines the term "diversify." No single venture serves to make Nellens rich; most of Nellens' investments are in the minor industries of the Blessed Isle. It's the sheer *number* of those investments that fill the vaults. Their portfolio is spread across virtually every enterprise and community on the Blessed Isle. Farming and mining communities, Northern whaling fleets, fish-processing plants, salt mines, textile operations, fruit groves, shipping routes, and trading houses all fall under the Nellens umbrella. Their foreign portfolios are no less varied. Nellens scions roam every direction except the West, buying and trading in almost every major metropolis and many minor settlements.

Nellens' greatest strength, however, is their unparalleled ability to trade in favors from other Dynasts, patrician families, foreign nobles, and mercantile consortiums. Using their influence in the financial, commercial, and political sectors, Nellens can make life very easy for their allies. Less flaunted is the Nellens ability to hinder and, sometimes, ruin their enemies.

House Military

Nellens has never been a military-oriented house. Despite prolific success in politics and business, Nellens has always felt the lack of house legions to be a deficiency needing correction. The house appealed frequently to the Scarlet Empress for a grant to raise a house legion, going so far as to build an entire garrison complex and outlying barracks near the city of Juche, but such appeals proved futile.

The Empress is gone, and her legions divvied up amongst the houses. Through judicious favor-trading, well-placed bribes, promises to forgive debt owed to the house, and generous private donations, Nellens has acquired two legions, housed in the Juche garrison.

Both legions are shoddily equipped, understrength, and without adequate command staff, no doubt a driving reason Nellens could acquire them at all. But Nellens plays the long game, seeing its purchase of the legions as an investment for the future, and a foundation upon which to build more forces. Nellens is currently engaged in negotiations with several other houses, attempting to secure the release of their scions serving in other legions. Intolerant commanders within other house legions have seized the opportunity to arrange transfers for outcaste subordinates into Nellens' ranks, and Nellens is happy to accept. Nellens even approaches disgraced outcaste officers, discharged or dismissed from other legions, to fill their command staff, enticing their loyalty and service with offers of money, support, and marriage.

Enemies & Alliances

There's a philosophy every Nellens child is taught as soon as they learn to talk: If a woman is your enemy, you haven't found the proper leverage. It's this philosophy that drives Nellens ambition, allowing them to bear social slights



and veiled insults without flinching. Though Nellens considers every Great House a rival, that's never deemed an acceptable reason to shun a profitable alliance.

Only a few houses are worthy of Nellens' official enmity. House Sesus is notoriously antagonistic towards the house. The children of Sesus consider the fact the house named for her father has so many mortal members an insult, and view its matchmaking program as an attempt to usurp House Sesus' lofty pedigree. Since the earliest days of the house's existence, Sesus has waged political, economic, and social warfare against the Nellens, sending spies, infiltrators, and occasionally assassins into their territories to disrupt, upset, and stymie the Nellens' agenda.

Though the Nellens have done nothing to outright earn the enmity of House Ledaal, their neighbors across the river nonetheless resent them for their closeness and for Juche's wealth, which they believe has grown at the expense of Arjuf Dominion's northern reaches. The Most August Conclave has made overtures to Ledaal's leadership, but negotiations are delicate and often temperamental.

Nellens wealth is a constant thorn in House Ragara's side. Ragara financiers resent their inability to indebt Nellens' scions, while more entrepreneurial Ragara chafe at the ease with which Nellens scions challenge their dominance in business and trade. Individual Ragaras seek solutions to this vexation, whether proposing partnerships and alliances in business opportunities; undermining Nellens trade ventures in the Threshold; or seeking to suborn a disaffected or disinherited scion, purchasing his loyalty with Ragara coin.

When the Empress elevated House V'neef, she awarded it assets stripped from House Nellens, sowing the seeds of rivalry between the two youngest houses of the Scarlet Dynasty. Over the decades, each house has sabotaged and undermined mercantile ventures of the other, repaying slight for slight in a cycle of feuding that has so far gone unbroken. While an alliance might prove advantageous, the Most August Conclave is fiercely split on their opinion of V'neef.

Nellens has made recent overtures to House Tepet. Knowing the vexations of being a scorned family, the Most August Conclave believe Tepet's leadership might appreciate their gestures of empathy and alliance. The enticement of the Nellens legions is no small temptation; Nellens might be able to finance and supply their military forces, but the family strength isn't in military command. Out-of-work and disgraced Tepet commanders, on the other hand, might be amenable to

lending their expertise to the Nellens, if only to regain some of the respect lost with their failures in the North — though they'd prefer more respectable patrons.

Nellens has befriended numerous patrician families and wealthy mortal households, cultivating relationships much closer than those between other Great Houses and patricians by funding projects, doling out financial assistance to struggling merchants, and smoothing permits and authorizations through the labyrinthine channels of the Thousand Scales. Nellens may not be able to compete with the strength of blood and influential positioning of other Great Houses in the war for the throne, but with the weight of millions of un-Exalted citizens behind them, the Most August Conclave believes they might achieve a position of influence and importance with whoever succeeds the Empress.

Major Holdings

Nellens calls **Juche Prefecture** home, and most family members maintain townhouses within Juche city's walls. The Most August Conclave dwell within the Villa of Seven Doorways, a palatial manse housing the Nellens libraries, treasuries, and private offices, and much of the family's Isle-based business is conducted within the city. Nellens invests heavily in the infrastructure and financial stability of both prefecture and city. The centuries-long cold war with House Sesus has left the prefecture's borders lined with fortresses and backroads known only to the units that patrol them. The city of Juche, sprawling at the head of the Caracal River, has become one of the Isle's prominent centers for trade and religious pilgrimage. Many of Juche prefecture's teahouses, libraries, farmsteads, artisans, and merchant houses boast a Nellens partner, and Juche city's many shrines are tended by Nellens monks.

Despite its ambitions and wealth, Nellens controls few holdings. While rival houses perceive this as a sign of weakness, it's how Nellens prefers it. Nellens agents excel in locating troubled satrapies, to which they quietly offer assistance in meeting their tithes. The house's deep coffers have helped pay many tributes over the years. As a result, they have eyes and ears in every direction except the West, and are well informed on the workings of the other Great Houses in the Threshold.

Scions of Note

Centuries after his death, **Nellens** himself remains a controversial figure with the power to inspire or inflame his descendants. His advocacy for the un-Exalted children of the Dynasty earned him the enmity of many, but he was also a key figure in advancing significant pieces of legislation through the Deliberative, such as the yearly limit on emancipating slaves — a compromise that stemmed the threat of a short-lived abolitionist movement. Fiery, forthright, and a cunning broker of compromises, it's easy to see how he caught the Empress' eye.

At the age of 28, **Nellens Sabine** became the youngest sitting member of the Most August Conclave in Nellens history. Born with an intuitive grasp of complex occult concepts and ingrained with ambition and perfectionism by her parents, Sabine's sorcerous skills opened a door often closed to the Nellens. Now in her sixties, Sabine has taken charge of Nellens' matchmaking program, and works tirelessly to improve the rate of Exaltation amongst her relatives. Privately, she also seeks methods to awaken the dragonfire within her own blood. Though her lineage is impeccable and her blood amongst the purest Nellens has produced, the Second Breath didn't come for her, and she finds this a deficiency within herself. Though her quest is quixotic and borderline heretical, she persists — if not for her own sake, then for her nineteen-year-old daughter's.

Nellens Leferi has carried out business transactions with petty Threshold despots, barbarian warlords, and the subterranean artificers of the Mountain Folk. When she's not adventuring throughout the Threshold and beyond in search of profitable ventures and trading partners, she acts as a proxy for the Conclave's commercial interests, putting both her business acumen and her formidable martial arts prowess to use bargaining with those too proud to palaver with mortals. Recently, she's set out for Great Forks, seeking to recruit Exigent mercenaries to reinforce the Nellens legions.

Nellens Uliya holds a modest position within the Righteous and Accountable Ministry of Weights and Measures, the bureau tasked with enforcing standardized measures of distance and weights. Though un-Exalted, her ingenuity is matched only by her audacity, and she wields her position as a weapon against the other Great Houses — rooting out Cynis drug peddlers who weight their scales, surveying satrapial boundaries to bleed House Sesus of territory inch by inch, and levying fines against Mnemon architects for the slightest discrepancies in their blueprints. She's a marked woman, of course, and more than one assassination attempt has come too close. She's survived this far with the help of her god-blooded bodyguard and lover, Seventh Winter.

House Peleps
Water That Wreathes the Crown of Centuries

The dashing captain astride a ship's deck in a storm, calmly shouting orders as the vessel heaves and rolls; the incorruptible judge, refusing to pass judgment until her investigation finds the truth; the daring adventurer who always arrives just in time — these archetypes represent House Peleps in the Blessed Isle's hearts and minds. An ancient house, Peleps carries an air of romanticism, danger, and adventure in distant lands, returning home to honor and respect from the rest of the Dynasty.

Theirs is a nautical family, sailors and admirals with few peers, and the Peleps mon decorates more sails than any other symbol in Creation. The Blessed Isle, encircled by the Inland Sea, is a maritime power; the ships that ply its harbors, its lifeblood. The Imperial Navy is a military behemoth, an unmatched fighting force, and it belongs to House Peleps. Peleps scions travel Creation's oceans and waterways, bringing back tales and artifacts that excite and intrigue.

Worldliness and virtue define the house in the eyes of polite society. Unshakable beacons of imperial glory and honor, they also carry the thrilling touch of adventure. Reliable, steadfast, and honorable, most other houses cannot help but look up to them, even if grudgingly.

The truth is more complicated. For every dashing, daring hero, there's a disgraced scion whose family stuck her somewhere out of sight. Peleps is a romantic house, but it's also ruthless — even to its own children, even by Dynastic standards. Success is everything, and what members of other houses expect as their birthright is parceled out to Peleps scions only when earned. Those who succeed have opulence showered upon them, and find the house more than willing to throw its weight behind their schemes.

Success cannot be bought in House Peleps. Merit conquers all; even the most inauspicious child can climb high with sufficient skill, connections, and conviction — and a bit of luck. "The trade winds" is a Peleps idiom for the vagaries of fate, and it's commonly accepted that the results of luck are well-earned — to be foiled by the trade winds is a sign of unworthiness, while taking unexpected advantage of them is lauded. It makes for a cold, lonely, and often hostile upbringing, but the rewards for those who thrive are the stuff of legend.

The house's main concerns are the Navy and the judiciary; careers in these fields are the fastest way to win accolades. House Peleps, with its focus on merit over nepotism, produces particularly competent judges. Peleps judges command dread and respect, and less scrupulous ones take full advantage of it.

House Economics

Tribute comes across the Inland Sea escorted by the Realm's Merchant Fleet, which is repaid with a fraction of the wealth it guards. This was always House Peleps' main source of wealth, defraying the costs of constructing, supplying, and maintaining the gargantuan Imperial Navy. Peleps' wealth was an accepted fact, and few stopped to think that the giant might starve. That certainty is giving way.

In RY 754, the Scarlet Empress stripped the Merchant Fleet and the lucrative duty of escorting tribute ships from

THE RIGHTLY GUIDED ADMIRALTY BOARD

Governing body of both the Imperial Navy and House Peleps, the Rightly Guided Admiralty Board comprises fifteen high admirals elected for 25-year terms. Its current roster includes house matriarch Peleps Lai, the self-proclaimed judge of pirates Peleps Orimu, and the firebrand senator Peleps Mulat Kai. Every Peleps who's either Dragon-Blooded or holds the rank of captain or higher in the Imperial Navy can vote. In theory, any Peleps is eligible to sit on the Admiralty Board, but in practice, only Dragon-Blooded women are elected. To guide House Peleps within the treacherous waters of Realm politics, only the shrewdest minds will do — the vote isn't so much to ensure the house's scions have a say, as to prove that the winner has the scheming prowess to outwit rival houses.

The Admiralty Board has been logjammed regarding the matter of the throne, but spurred on by the house's declining fortunes, it's seeking potential Peleps candidates for the throne — whether the Scarlet Throne or a new throne in the West.

House Peleps and granted them to the nascent House V'neef. The dragon's share of Peleps' income vanished, and to make matters worse, went into the pockets of upstarts.

Now, the house must rely on other sources of wealth to meet the mammoth cost of funding the world's largest navy. It retains a substantial stipend from the Imperial Treasury, despite constant maneuvers in the Deliberative to reduce this. It's also cracked down heavily on its satrapies, reasoning that it's better to strip those bare than cut the military budget — after all, once fighting starts, it can conquer V'neef satrapies to replace its own failing ones. Now House Peleps rakes in more tribute than ever, but at a devastating cost to its holdings. It's encouraged scions to increase their personal financial ventures, while reserving the right to tax them. This has met with some success, and spurred many scions to greater focus on business. Lastly, the house has aggressively stepped up its fight against piracy, selling captured contraband and ships to bolster its finances. With house coffers at an all-time low, the Admiralty Board's definition of a pirate vessel grows more lenient.

Ultimately, it's not enough. Tuition for Peleps children is harder to find, and other houses are both disappointed and gleeful to see the famed Peleps galas — with their intricate marvels of Southern craftsmanship, rare Western spices, and Haltan acrobats — decline in number and opulence. Donations from Dynastic admirers hoping to earn the house's favor still flow in, but that's only a trickle compared to the river of Imperial Navy expenditures. The house bleeds money, and the Admiralty Board is considering desperate measures, from raiding other houses' satrapies to demanding tribute from every merchant ship they come across. In the most desperate case, they may have to sell off pieces of the Imperial Navy to stay solvent.

The main measure House Peleps plans to employ is conquest. It's aware that control of the Imperial Navy draws scrutiny, and open aggression will rally the Dynasty against it. So it moves slowly, establishing a trading post here and a hidden naval base there, while looking for any legitimate pretext under which to expand its power in the West without drawing the Dynasty's suspicion. With enough time, it could establish a Western Empire, more true to the Empress' legacy and the Immaculate Philosophy than the increasingly corrupt one that presently exists.

House Military

When the legions were divided among the houses, Peleps claimed four by dint of its high standing in the



Dynasty and plethora of Deliberative seats. Since then, these legions have seen their officer ranks seeded with Peleps scions, bolstering loyalty to the house, but at great cost to morale and effectiveness. Many junior officers, or even would-be officers, now find themselves in prestigious command positions. Though the house's more traditional members are repulsed by this nepotism, the Admiralty Board has — with some distaste — approved the process. Three legions drill at the Isle of Wrack, while the fourth has been trickling to the West a few hundred soldiers at a time over the last year.

But House Peleps' true military power is the Imperial Navy, a behemoth without compare, consisting of thousands of triremes, biremes, carracks, and support vessels, divided into five fleets named for the elements. While sailors and marines are largely peasant volunteers, the officer class consists of patricians and Dynasts, who attend prestigious military academies and then apprentice to an officer for a few years. Most Dragon-Blooded Peleps officers graduate from the House of Bells, with the occasional outcaste alumnus of Pasiap's Stair marrying into the family and earning a commission. Almost all admirals are Peleps women. Dragon-Blooded rise higher and faster than anyone else, and they enjoy more leeway than their mortal colleagues, but when they do fall, they fall harder and faster. A disgraced Dragon-Blooded officer is often shunted none-too-gently into some other profession where he can be useful without being seen.

House Peleps' fighting force is massive, with naval manpower alone possibly equaling all the legions combined. The other houses are acutely aware of this, casting a wary eye at Peleps maneuvers near their coastal or island holdings. Should the house employ its ships unwisely, or its reputation for upright dealings falter, the Imperial Navy is one of the few things in Creation that can unify the Realm again — against House Peleps. The Admiralty Board knows this, and it discourages brash young scions from bluster and idle threats of naval intervention. The Navy must be wielded delicately, because the house is already in uncertain waters.

But there's a third aspect of Peleps military power, often overlooked. It's a prestigious house, admired and respected — feared, even — by many in the Dynasty. Many young Dynasts see the nautical house as the pinnacle of the Realm's glory. War against House Peleps must be carefully orchestrated, because an attack could easily resemble a direct assault on Imperial virtue and ideals. That could provoke idealistic Dragon-Blooded to flock to the Peleps banner, defending the venerable house against those who'd destroy it. However, the house's dreams of a Western Empire risk compromising its admirable reputation if exposed, which has been a source of internal conflict and debate within the Admiralty Board.

Enemies and Alliances

House Peleps has no end of admirers among the Dynasty, but few firm allies. House Mnemon is its closest ally, more out of convenience than true conviction, but each shares a warm, if distant, regard for the other's virtues. Like all houses, Peleps is indebted to House Ragara. Houses Nellens and Cynis are held in quiet contempt, but where Peleps does brisk business with Cynis, preferring it over Ragara, it's disgusted by Nellens. House Tepet once had House Peleps' deepest respect; now, the opinion among Peleps scions is that Tepet has shown weakness and should have the decency to die quickly. Then they can eulogize the fallen house, remembering its greatness, instead of having it hang onto the Realm like a lamprey.

House Cathak is the other preeminent juggernaut of Imperial military might. Both houses are keenly aware that together, they could seize the throne — and thereby unite the rest of the Dynasty against them. Though Cathak fears the consequences for the Realm, Peleps savors the challenge. As Cathak Cainan has announced neutrality for the nonce, relations between the two houses are marked by careful, cordial distance, each aware that if war comes, they may find themselves standing on opposite ends of the battlefield. With each stationing forces to watch the other, both are aware that a simple misunderstanding could start a war neither side wants.

Two houses are already arrayed against House Peleps. House Sesus fears that Peleps will cut off its passage to their wealthy Northern satrapies, while Peleps is tired of peeling Sesus spies and saboteurs out of the Imperial Navy's ranks.

House Peleps' main enemy is the upstart House V'neef, which fills many Peleps scions with humiliated fury. V'neef herself is young, daring, ambitious, and competes directly within House Peleps' spheres of advantage and expertise. While V'neef lacks the sea power to contest the Imperial Navy in battle, an open war would risk destroying Peleps' finances and reputation even in victory. Instead, the two houses engage in brinkmanship in the West, sailing circles around one another while scooping up valuable resources and strategic locations, and trying to find legal excuses for sinking the other house's vessels. Eventually, one side will slip or find itself sufficiently threatened to leave pretenses behind. Then there will be war.

Major Holdings

Voice-of-the-Tides Prefecture is the house's primary holding on the Blessed Isle, a craggy, storm-scarred coastal province on the far western shore. Here lies **the Isle of Wrack**, where the ancient Peleps estate sprawls, perched precariously among broken cliffs, overlooking massive drydocks on the Blessed Isle's shore on one side, and open sea on the other. Here, the Admiralty Board holds court, entertaining envoys from Dynastic families seeking their favor, along with Peleps scions.

Sarkarn has been a Peleps satrapy for centuries. A wealthy island of pearl divers and fishermen west of Thorns, Sarkarn supplies exotic fish and fine pink pearls. With the Thorns trade failing, though, and Peleps extorting ever-greater tribute, this sleepy, respectable community is sliding into poverty and despair. As livelihoods vanish and sickness sets in, Sarkarn's queen, in desperation, entertains envoys from Red Iron Rebuke, autocrat of Thorns, offering the Mask of Winters' protection.

The Wavecrest Archipelago in the West is the jewel of House Peleps' holdings. The islands' rich black volcanic soil supports harvests of breadfruit, mangos, guavas, taro root, and bananas, exotic luxuries in high demand at Dynastic dinner tables. Shipyards house efforts to replace aging and damaged vessels of the Imperial Navy's Water Fleet and expand its deep-water contingent, but recent sabotage suggests that V'neef agents may have compromised this secret. Increased tributes leave poorer residents malnourished as the harvest is hauled back to the Blessed Isle. The archipelago's royal families pressure their leader, the Feathered One, to abate this by raiding neighboring islands, while some whisper of outright rebellion. And the fiery hero-priestess Kamach Aki, self-proclaimed Chosen of Hamoji, sermonizes against the Immaculate Order, enjoining her people to return to their old worship of the volcano-god.

Scions of Note

Peleps was the Empress' second daughter. Perhaps the most widely traveled of all her siblings, she visited the farthest reaches of every Direction, and walked Lookshy's streets and the Imperial Mountain's slopes. Everywhere she went she left behind admirers and enemies, for her spirit was adventurous, righteous, and rapacious, but her greatest rival and lover was the ocean. When she died, she was interred in her beloved ship, the *Spear of Daana'd*, which was scuttled in a trench off the Isle of Wrack to be one with the seas. Peleps scions still pay homage at her tomb on the first day of Ascending Water. The tomb's seals are tended by Dragon-Blooded monks of a dedicated Immaculate shrine on a nearby islet. Some say they hear banging noises from the sunken ship during Calibration.

The house matriarch and unofficial head of the Admiralty Board is the ancient, legendary Admiral **Peleps Lai**, daughter of Peleps herself, whose exploits are recounted in plays and books across Creation. She's now mostly retired, only speaking up from her sour reverie when she feels the need to correct younger colleagues. She still believes the Empress will return, and won't entertain the notion of another monarch until convinced otherwise — and while she's not as spry as she once was, her martial skills remain sufficient to trounce the occasional upstart who'd defy her. She supports the notion of a Western Empire, though, and dreams of personally presenting this new conquest to the Empress.

Peleps Aramida, an admiral of the Realm's Water Fleet, is a deeply spiritual woman with a knack for bringing lofty concepts down to earth for her sailors to appreciate. Her sermons for the dead are heartfelt, and she loves her crew like a mother — stern, distant, never stingy with the lashes, but caring — and they repay her in kind. A brilliant tactician, well-known for outwitting enemies of superior power, her victories against Fair Folk and sea-demons have made her the very image of the dashing Peleps officer — a darling of the courts, admired for gall and cleverness. She supports alliance with House Tepet, deeming it more fallen on hard times than defeated, and potentially a strong right hand for a Peleps Empress — a role she's not averse to claiming if she can obtain sufficient support.

Peleps Sepeta Zurin is among the most celebrated of the Immaculate Order's missionaries. He crossed the Glassblack Wastes to bring the Immaculate Texts to the tribes of distant Porphyry; discovered the lost temple-city of Azal-Mog and toppled its blasphemous altar to make way for an Immaculate shrine; and overthrew the tyranny of the maize-god Hundredth Harvest. He rarely stays on the Blessed Isle for long before setting off on his next expedition — much to the chagrin of Peleps elders who believe he could help rally the Order and peasantry to the house's side in the event of civil war. He's recently set out for Thorns in hopes of converting its dark lord.

House Ragara
Earth Slaked on the Blood of Dragons

The Imperial Mountain towers majestically on Corin Prefecture's horizon, a revered symbol of the Realm's power, implacable and eternal. But its roots go deep indeed, and beneath it are hidden wonders and horrors of surpassing power and mind-searing blasphemy, stretching back to the eldest of times and before. Long has House Ragara viewed the mountain as the symbol of everything they try to be. Few recognize how apt that comparison is.

"The Imperial Bank" is the nickname that the other Great Houses bestowed upon the Ragara family, as much in resentment as in genuine recognition of the house's financial might. House Ragara owns a piece of every other house, has scions from each so indebted that they're lifelong servants of the Ragaras, and has a finger in every major line of business in Creation. Nearly all Dynasts are rich beyond a mortal's wildest dreams of avarice, but House Ragara is the very richest — an opulence bordering on vulgarity that would make a Guild factor turn to stone with envy. Within this wealth nest the house's members, and at the center sits Ragara Banoba and his scheming inner circle. House Ragara will see one of its own claim the Scarlet Throne, but their hunger goes beyond simply controlling the Realm. House Ragara wants everything.

Craving more than simple wealth, the house hoards power in whatever form it may take, and its network of sorcerers and artifact-thieves ranges through the Threshold, taking whatever they can find. "Everything belongs to the Empress, and House Ragara is her vault," they say, using this as pretext to seize anything worthwhile, caring little for the Threshold's stability or prosperity. The Realm Before is a favored subject of study, and many of the Dynasty's most distinguished scholars of Anathema artifice bear the name Ragara. But this fascination goes beyond the bounds of acceptability or health, often delving into outright forbidden subjects.

Entire households have been cast off and sacrificed for heresy and diabolism, but these were scapegoats — the rot goes deeper. The inner circle of occultists and politicians, though they see nothing wrong in their activities, nevertheless realize that the tragic fate of House Jurul is possible for their own house. To sacrifice oneself and one's family is sad, but if it protects the house entire, it's something most Ragara matriarchs would gladly accept. To reclaim the power of the Realm Before and its Solar devil-queens would secure House Ragara's future, and the Realm's with it. So some sacrifices are required. In this interest, they delve into the secrets of Hell and the Underworld, bind raksha and stranger spirits to their souls to infuse their lineages with unhale power, and compete with the Wyld Hunt for Anathema to experiment upon — or recruit.

Social Standing

To most of Creation, House Ragara is a family of investment bankers and jade moguls. Few suspect otherwise — not even its younger scions. Those who do are brushed off as harmless conspiracy theorists, obsessed with this or that Ragara censured for blasphemies against the Immaculate Philosophy.

While the house itself has an artfully stodgy and conservative reputation, individual Ragaras tend to be urbane, well educated, and familiar with most vices and virtues. They're charismatic natural leaders, possessed of easy professionalism that many members of wilder houses quietly envy.

House Economics

Ragara grew his financial empire by locating and seizing undiscovered jade mines, using pre-Contagion

BANOBA'S INNER CIRCLE

Ragara Banoba keeps half a dozen other Ragaras as his advisors, and they have as much power over him as he has over them. This group isn't chosen by prominence or position, but by pure talent. Here, some ancient and mighty Dragon-Blooded mingle with fresh-faced youths who possess the appropriate level of callous genius. Members include Ragara Falik Udonai, who made her fortune combing the chaos of the Wyld for lost relics and alien treasures; the young Ragara Vena, a Spiral Academy graduate whose talent for mesmerism has suborned several Thousand Scales bureaucrats and low-ranking delegates of the Deliberative; and the blind physician Ragara Madoq, whose laboratory holds strains of diseases that have not blighted Creation since the First Age. These people are responsible for managing House Ragara's darker, illicit projects — the ones that nobody else can be trusted with, such as Anathema sorceries, blasphemous studies of Exaltation itself, and the search for the Final Realm-Controlling Utterance.



documents as clues. He also established the Learned Bastion, a small school in Corin Prefecture that provides adult Dragon-Blooded an education in geology and geomancy to rival even the Heptagram. Each graduate consents to five years of service with House Ragara's Unclouded Stone Savants, locating further deposits of valuable minerals, especially jade. The Bastion has enjoyed five centuries of distinguished — albeit highly specialized and low-profile — service, educating some of the Realm's finest geologists.

Using these methods, Ragara claimed many of Creation's deepest, oldest jade and silver deposits, establishing his house as an economic juggernaut. While the jade mines still provide one-fourth of the house's income, the bulk comes from loan and investment interest — including from other houses' coffers, courtesy of Dynasts whose debt has grown insurmountable. Under Banoba, the house spends this wealth to acquire artifacts and finance occult studies, ranging from public to blasphemous.

The Empress condoned House Ragara's predatory lending practices. The house was closely tied to her, and so long as they didn't stray into military pursuits, little regulation was enacted. The Empress personally entered into business with the house time and again — most notoriously, in the interest of conquest. The house would offer loans to nations in desperate need, then exact extravagant interest, selling the loan to the Empress when it clearly wouldn't be repaid. The Empress then used non-payment as a pretext for invasion.

Every house owes Ragara money, ranging from significant but ultimately minor loans to extravagant, potentially crippling sums. Interest on these loans is sufficiently lucrative that the Ragaras are hardly eager to see the principal repaid. Few care to find out what would happen to a house that defaulted on its loans.

House Military

When the Imperial legions were parceled out, House Ragara focused on the most poorly trained, underequipped, and short-handed legions, and gained control over three without needing to write off much debt in return. Since then, large sums of jade have been poured into improving these legions, leaving them fully staffed and stocked with all the equipment a soldier can dream of. But they've also been stripped of experienced officers, leaving troops demoralized and disgruntled. Ragara Banoba is aware of their weakness, but hopes a few years' deployment to the Threshold will forge them into strong fighting forces. Results are

mixed thus far, and if war breaks out, the new Ragara legions will be punching below their weight.

Ragara scions of poor business acumen have traditionally been pushed into military service to recoup the investment their house has made in them — a practice that's led many to high rank and distinguished service throughout the centuries, and now feeds the house legions.

Enemies and Alliances

A house standing alone, Ragara has no true allies or friends among its ostensible peers. Other houses may preen and brag and look down on the "Imperial Bank" — but eventually, all roads lead up the dread stairs to Ragara Banoba's office, and all the other houses debase themselves in the end and come to him for money. Thus, House Ragara finds it difficult to view fellow Great Houses as equals. This grates on other houses, especially prouder ones such as Peleps or Cathak.

Two exceptions remain: Houses Nellens and V'neef have labored to remain out of Ragara's debt, and for that, they're the closest thing the house of bankers has to equals — making them its enemies by default.

House Cathak shows support for House Ragara's ascent to the throne, but this is a polite fiction born out of debt and convenience. The Cathaks won't be Ragara puppets, and House Ragara has no intention of canceling House Cathak's debts.

House Ragara's greatest enemies are Houses Mnemon and Ledaal. Mnemon has a personal death-grudge against Ragara himself, and wants nothing more than to provide his house's eulogy. In turn, Banoba works to prevent her ascent to the Throne.

Only House Ledaal nourishes serious suspicions towards House Ragara. They're aware of the Ragaras' accumulation of ancient relics, and while they wish to prevent damage to the old sorcerous defensive structure of the Realm Before, they're also concerned with House Ragara's motivations; they know well the temptation that power can bring. The fate of House Jurul reminds them that heresy and worse can spring up even among Exalted.

But to stand completely alone is unworkable. Ragara Banoba makes overtures towards House Sesus and House Cynis, plying them with rare and expensive luxury items and favorable loan terms. Cynis debts are quietly slashed, and Ragara scions attend more Cynis parties than ever, while Sesus finds itself lauded by Ragara speechmakers in the Deliberative. Banoba also takes care not to offend Houses Peleps, seeing it as a potential ally.

The current crisis is a time of opportunity that House Ragara has wholeheartedly embraced. The house is more excited by the prospect of civil war than it lets on, eager to expand its power, and it's currently in a political struggle to take as many of House Tepet's old holdings as possible under the pretext of reinforcing them and filling in for Tepet's decimated administrative structure. This is completely illegal, but the other Great Houses have allowed it because Ragara is theoretically taking on debts that House Tepet can no longer repay.

In this endeavor, House Sesus is a powerful rival, likewise seizing satrapies under the pretext of fulfilling Tepet responsibilities and debts. Banoba is doing his best to call in favors from House Peleps and other allies to swing the Deliberative in his favor, while being careful not to undermine the house's economic ties with Sesus. If he gets his way, House Ragara's newfound troops will be spread thin, and they may have to illegally hire mercenaries to hold territory in their stead.

Major Holdings

House Ragara is seated in **Corin Prefecture**, a coastal province in the southern Blessed Isle noted for its barren, rocky landscape and rich jade, silver, and tin deposits. Here, Ragara Banoba and the family council reign in the Stepped Palace, a massive structure handling jade and silver smelting as well as banking, storage, and administration. It lies just outside the city of **Riven Quay**, where other Ragaras keep townhouses. At the top of the Stepped Palace sits Banoba's audience hall, where the council meets and hears requests for perilous or extravagant loans. "To walk the long stairs" is a saying among the Dynasty for taking out a loan from House Ragara.

From here, Banoba presides over the house's extensive holdings, which stretch throughout the Threshold. Ragara administers these satrapies with a fairly light hand, tribute exacted and minimum standards of loyalty enforced but little more. The house has a knack for snapping up the leases of minor, undesirable satrapies and then unearthing mineral wealth or First Age ruins.

Across the strait from Arjuf, northwest of the Lap, sits **Jau Dei**, a land underneath the mountains producing marble in many unusual colors; a little white jade; and the tartelian, a small crustacean whose powdered shell is prized by sorcerers as a component for alchemical

suspensions. The main cavern is lit by an ingenious network of sunlight refraction crystals — once, these relayed daylight into the deeps, but they've cracked and dimmed with age, providing now a full moon's light when the sun is at zenith.

Jau Deians are accustomed to the deeps, moreso than House Ragara's garrison. As such, Realm rule has always been tumultuous; rebellion spreads like cockroaches, hiding in natural caves or mining tunnels. While this tendency has been kept to a simmer by diligent Ragara measures in the past, the Empress' disappearance has led to a resurgence of firebombings, mass poisonings, and other insurgent tactics. It's a thorn in the house's side, a literal hole into which they can pour as many resources as they want yet never kill the rot. At present, Banoba only bothers to fight the rebellion instead of making a gift of a troublesome satrapy because it serves to hide the darkest conspiracies of the Ragara inner circle. Even jaded Ragara scions shudder at rumors of a laboratory experimenting on captive outcastes somewhere in Jau Dei's depths.

Scions of Note

The Empress' oldest living child, **Ragara**, was always ambitious. Early on, he learned to hate his mother and siblings with passionate fury, hidden like magma beneath the earth, and began a campaign of assassination against his siblings while amassing his fortune. His intent was to become the only possible heir to the empire. The Empress saw through the stratagem. When she gave birth to Sesus, she charged Ragara with the child's protection, informing him that if the younger sister died, his life would be forfeit. Ragara had no choice but to keep Sesus safe from harm. Ragara is an old man, sustained beyond his years by his daiklave Blood Zenith as it feeds him the last stolen dregs of a Solar Anathema's soul. Even so, his days are running out. He's retired to Pneuma, attended by his well-worn Hearth and a few favorite descendants. He left his house in the hands of his second-oldest surviving son, Ragara Banoba. While publicly offering heartfelt praise for his successor's wisdom, Ragara's true reasons for choosing Banoba had more to do with the stewardship of the house's occult enterprises.

Ragara Banoba is a fit, handsome man in his middle years, immaculately groomed and charismatic. He keeps his hair short and his small moustache impeccably trimmed. He's rarely seen without his consort, his distant nephew Ragara Heral, who is Banoba's greatest weakness. He truly loves the man and would do anything to protect him, a fact that Banoba is painfully aware leaves him vulnerable.

A talented battle sorcerer and a resourceful merchant, **Ragara Szaya** is a consummate chance-taker with a history of dangerous risks and wild behavior falling just short of completely acceptable. No one would expect someone like her to be an agent of the All-Seeing Eye, which is only part of what makes her such an effective one. Her hard-won commercial contacts span the Threshold, feeding her information from across the Realm. She's married to **Ledaal Kes** (p. 348), a fellow agent of the Eye, and though both are homosexual, their decades-spanning friendship is unshakable.

A mediocre sorcerer with a knack for ancient lore, **Ragara Iuna** is one of the house's most talented archaeologists, which has bought her a great deal of autonomy. She's an idealist and adventurer, traveling the Threshold alone, recovering everything from artifacts to scraps of art and writing for her house. She wants to preserve and study them so future generations may benefit. She returned from one such adventure accompanied by her new sifu, Red-Gloved Master, who has taught her sorcerous martial arts thought lost in the Second Age.

House Sesus
Fire That Makes the Shadow Strong

Armies can be starved or defeated. Strongholds can be sieged. Money can be stolen. Land can be conquered. Knowledge, though — knowledge cannot be defeated. Knowledge will always exist, as long as there as someone to know it. That's what makes it House Sesus' greatest weapon. A family of spymasters, assassins, and saboteurs, Sesus hides its strength in shadows until the time comes to burn bright.

Social Standing

The founder Sesus, child of the Scarlet Empress and her mortal consort Nellens, took quickly to the dangerous life of the courtier. House Chanos owes its destruction to Sesus' own hand, and she claimed that fallen house's ancestral seat as her own. Her children are as skilled as their progenitor — perhaps more so.

Sesus has the most elaborate spy network in the Realm next to the All-Seeing Eye, headed by the secret cabal of house elders called the Masked Council. By the time a child learns to walk, she's started training in the games of Dynastic intrigue. Before entering primary school, she's studied the fundamentals of subterfuge and tradecraft. By the time she enters secondary school, once she's been sorted from the house's chaff — those too slow-witted, guileless, weak-willed, soft-hearted, or principled for



the espionage game — she's begun reporting on the activities of her fellow classmates to a Dragon-Blooded handler working for the Masked Council.

The other Great Houses have little idea of the extent of Sesus' intrigues, though it has never enjoyed a pristine reputation. Rumors of blasphemy, deceit, and vice follow all but the most upright Sesus scions, whether justified or not, and they're seen as honorless and thuggish by the Realm's other military houses. On the other hand, such is the charm of a gifted Sesus socialite or artist that her peers often disregard the rumors in

THE MASKED COUNCIL

The Masked Council coordinates and controls House Sesus' espionage network through layers upon layers of misdirection. Sesus scions at the lowest level don't receive instructions directly from the council; some don't even know that it exists until they've been serving it for years. Instead, they report to handlers, seasoned Sesus spies and intelligencers who provide assignments and ensure that success is well-coordinated. The handlers, in turn, report to the house's nine spymasters, each of whom is the trusted and handpicked agent of a single member of the Masked Council.

The Masked Council itself is made up of nine Sesus elders — at least, presumably. The council meets in namesake anonymity, allowing them to coordinate the house's intelligence network while ensuring that no one member knows the activities or identities of all of its spies. Gossip concerning the identities of the Masked Councilors is a frequent pastime within the network; most agree that at least one member is the assassin responsible for a spree of poisonings among the Deliberative and the ministries of the Thousand Scales, while signs point to the presence of at least one demonologist on the council.

The only way to join the council is to accept the mask of a member who wishes to retire. With it comes that elder's personal spymaster and the portion of the Sesus intelligence network under the elder's control.

her case, esteeming her all the higher for seeming to rise above her house's disrepute.

House Economics

House Sesus' military might and mastery of espionage enables it to claim the dragon's share of trade opportunities in newly conquered satrapies, snatching opportunities out from under the claws of other houses. Centuries of intermarriage with House Cynis have brought many gifted merchants and financiers into the house, offering commercial acumen that Sesus has made its own. This has made Sesus a fiscal powerhouse competitive with its rival House Nellens, but the prodigious sums expended in funding covert operations — and in pursuit of its scions' vices — keep it from equaling the likes of House Ragara.

House Sesus makes a useful knife in the back of interests opposed to the Realm's in the Threshold, and profits nicely thereby. The Guild finds itself confronted with an army of commercial spies and saboteurs, and Sesus continually blocks their intrusion into Realm affairs. Its house legions serve as mercenaries for Threshold warlords and petty despots, and occasionally compete with Guild mercenaries to offer their services in brushfire wars.

House Military

House Sesus controls one of the largest militaries in the Realm. They were among the three houses permitted to maintain legions before the Empress vanished, and managed to bring four Imperial legions under their control, bringing their total to seven.

Even at their best, the Sesus house legions were never as well-honed as those of Tepet and Cathak, and their new once-Imperial legions are no better. But Sesus officers are best known not for discipline nor for compendious knowledge of *The Thousand Correct Actions*, but for dirty tricks — assassination, false intelligence, subversion, and the like.

House Sesus can't quite match House Cathak's army in sheer numbers, and it doesn't like its odds against Cathak's better-trained legions in a head-on fight. Instead, it seeks protection and alliance with Cynis, and plays other houses against each other, hoping to whittle down the other Great Houses' militaries while building up its own.

Enemies and Alliances

The Blood of the Dragons is exceptionally strong in House Sesus, rivaling even Mnemon and Cynis, with whom the house's bloodline becomes more and more entwined through marriage. Other houses, though they don't like or trust Sesus, will marry their daughters into the line in hopes of securing more Dragon-Blooded children.

House Cynis is Sesus' strongest tie, bound by debts as well as blood. Members of the two houses frequently take each other as companions, lovers, and spouses, and the result is a blissful (if debauched) relationship. Cynis provides the exotic delicacies, intoxicants, and companions that Sesus scions so crave. In exchange, Sesus military forces protect Cynis interests. However, when it comes to their covert pursuits, the relationship between Sesus spymasters and Cynis blackmailers is complex, manipulative, and distrustful.

Sesus is likewise entangled with House Mnemon by blood, marrying into that house as often as Cynis. Politically, however, their relationship is strained at best. While the more romantic or iconoclastic Mnemons find the Sesuses alluring, the upright Immaculate streak in House Mnemon causes most to look down on the spymaster house. Moreover, Mnemon herself has her gaze set on the Scarlet Throne, and the Sesus elders know she sees them as a potential obstacle to her accession.

Sesus' greatest enemy was House Tepet. House Sesus helped engineer the Tepet legions' downfall and profited from claiming satrapies Tepet could no longer control. Sesus hasn't moved against Tepet since; what more is left to do?

The house now focuses its ire on House Cathak and House Nellens. House Cathak is a military rival. Sesus resents the Cathaks for their military might and would like nothing more than to ruin them as thoroughly as Tepet. House Sesus despises House Nellens as thin-blooded upstarts whose very name — taken from Sesus' father — insults the Sesus lineage.

House Sesus is one of the few Great Houses aware that House Iselsi is still active. They keep close tabs on any Iselsi agents they can identify.

Major Holdings

House Sesus' seat is the Palace of Burning Wind in **Chanos Prefecture**. The chill, rainswept city of Chanos is among the northern Blessed Isle's most

important ports, and home to the oceangoing Air Fleet of the Imperial Navy. Relations with House Peleps are prickly; the Sesuses maintain a military presence against the threat of a decapitating strike against their house by the ever-present Imperial marines.

Ventus Prefecture, to the west of Chanos, is even more rugged and wild. Ventus winters are fierce, and travelers without adequate protection risk dying of exposure. The prefecture's saving graces include lumber, furs, and herbs gathered from the wooded highlands of the Skyhewn Mountains, and ores extracted from mines among the icy peaks. Among those peaks stands the mountaintop gaol **Ice-Above-the-Water**, used to house dangerous criminals, political prisoners, rebellious mortal nobles, and other undesirables.

At the far end of the Skyhewn Mountains from Ice-Above-the-Water stands the lavish palace-manse **Silken Diamond**. Here, Sesus scions can let their hair down in luxury, safety, and privacy. But the manse also doubles as the house's spy-training academy. In hidden chambers deep within the mountain, vacationing Sesuses meet as master and student to practice every aspect of tradecraft and to master devious schools of martial arts.

Off the western coast of the Blessed Isle, amid the Tongma Archipelago, rises **the Isle of Smoke**. Not actually a single island, but a series of smaller ones divided by shallow channels of ocean water, the atoll is constantly shrouded in a thick white fog that smells vaguely of charred cedar. It's here that House Sesus trains its best legionary officers and naval captains. Mock battlegrounds, obstacle courses, and target ranges dominate the Isle of Smoke. A small village sits on the largest islet, with housing for trainees, visiting Dynasts, and the crew of slaves and laborers that maintain this vital training facility.

Saltbreak is a Tepet satrapy on paper, but it all but belongs to House Sesus. The coastal Northern nation thrives off the White Sea whaling trade, paying its tribute to the Realm in meat, oil, scrimshaw, and ambergris, along with mined diamonds, silver, and copper. Since the downfall of the Tepet legions, the house has been forced to withdraw most of its Saltbreak garrison back to the Blessed Isle, and Sesus has been more than glad to "reinforce" the satrapy in exchange for an inordinate share of its tributes. Saltbreak's satrap has sent furious missives to the Deliberative over this illegal practice, but the other Great Houses have been willing to turn a blind eye in exchange for Sesus shouldering debts that House Tepet can no longer repay. However, Sesus shows signs of reneging on these debts, which may ignite a firestorm of Dynastic power plays.

Scions of Note

Sesus, the founder, died a glorious death in battle a long time ago. She was a master general, but also a genius at spycraft and mind games, and the creator of her house's intelligence network. She's buried in a hidden crypt beneath the Palace of Burning Wind; discovering the crypt's location and paying her respect is a rite of passage for many Sesus scions.

The matriarch is Sesus' daughter, retired general **Sesus Raenyah**. She focuses on the house's military and mercantile interests, and it was her influence as much as the Masked Council's espionage that tipped the scales in favor of Sesus obtaining four additional legions. While aware of her house's shadier activities, she chooses not to engage in them, instead occasionally teaching at the House of Bells and Pasiap's Stair, and sponsoring the Immaculate Order. Sesus has put her forward as a candidate for the throne, but as she refuses to rely on spycraft and subterfuge, much of her support comes from outside the house proper. Some believe she can be easily controlled; others are partisans of her husband **Oban**, a charismatic son of the Empress.

One of the major powers in the shadows is **Sesus Agelin,** also known as Lady Smoke. If someone says they've spoken to Sesus Agelin, they're probably lying. Her own children don't know for certain what she actually looks like. Lady Smoke is perhaps the single most accomplished student of Silken Diamond, which is both boon and bane for her house. She both aids and terrifies those who actually lead House Sesus, and several have unsubtly made it known that they'd like her dead. The trouble is that Agelin is a mistress of disguise and mimicry. Her kin presume that she sits on the Masked Council, but how would they ever know for sure?

Sesus Rafara is a major problem for her house. When she was twelve, her mother slaughtered her beloved nursemaids and tutors in a fit of rage while Rafara watched — the trauma provoked her Exaltation. The house then sent her to Silken Diamond and put her through rigorous training to become one of Sesus' deadly weapons. Rafara still plays the role of the loyal Sesus spy, but she works only for herself, and trusts no one. She's since warned the Roseblack of an assassination attempt and covertly thwarted military operations by her house in the Threshold. She's still useful to Sesus — but she might be more useful to the Realm instead.

Sesus Raenyah Terel is a graduate of the House of Bells, and a clever swordsman and duelist. Extremely

popular among his classmates, he has a great deal of hangers-on and many lovers — to say nothing of those he keeps dangling on a thin string of hope — and he reports back on all of them to his house. A bit of a libertine, he enjoys indulging in all that his house and his sycophants' houses have to offer. He's also a bully, however, and while he excels with the sword, he's never given himself the chance to test against someone who might be his equal. He's witty and charming, but his smile is bladed and his jokes are cruel. Terel is noted for taunting those who annoy him into fights where he knows he has the upper hand. His friends and lovers all cheer when he inevitably wins, and he goes back to celebrating with them.

House Tepet
Air Stained by the Blood of Legions

House Tepet is a house of heroes, born from the Scarlet Empress' blood, but named for her consort Tepet. He was her enemy before he was her lover, a warrior-poet and heir to a fallen Shogunate kingdom that took up arms against her early in her reign. He sought to prove his claim as shogun through conquest of the Imperial City, and asked only that the Scarlet Empress spare his soldiers after he failed. Impressed by Tepet's bravery, strategic insight, and unshakable honor, she took him as her consort instead, and adopted his kin into the Realm. In time, she elevated his family line into a Great House with him at its head.

The house's martial triumphs stand testament to the Empress' wisdom. Its Melaist traditions and spiritual practices were passed down from their founder, teaching that the warrior's path is the road to enlightenment. The house's scions strive not only for strength, but excellence, distinguishing themselves from Dynastic peers through military leadership. The Tepet legions were deemed mightiest in the Realm, rivaling even House Cathak's and the Imperial legions themselves, and celebrated for defeating many of the Empress' greatest foes. When they marched against the Anathema called the Bull of the North three years ago, they expected another shining victory. Instead they suffered a devastating defeat, losing many of their greatest heroes and a full quarter of their Dragon-Blooded scions.

Any respect owed House Tepet died with its legions. Now, the idiot Tepet Fokuf sits as regent, a cruel reminder of the house's chances at the throne. Defeat has left them weak; that weakness hangs over the house like a curse. Many await the house's fall, like Manosque or Akiyo before it. Others sympathize with House Tepet, but sympathy begets no alliances. Taking a Tepet husband is akin to taking in a mangy stray; marrying into the house incites wild rumors of covered-up scandals or hidden depravities.

Raised from childhood expecting to attain positions of power and martial glory, House Tepet's scions now belong to a house that might not exist tomorrow. They face this perpetual doomsday as their bloodline always has: as warriors.

House Economics

The Tepet legions were the house's greatest source of wealth. The Empress rewarded House Tepet for imposing peace on unruly satrapies and securing the Realm's Northern holdings with a sizable stipend, the dragon's share of which was invested in the legions' upkeep and expansion.

House Tepet never fielded its legions as mercenaries, but their prowess was famed across Creation. Tepet generals and strategists charged hinterland nations heavily to train, arm, and advise their armies. The ghost-faced warriors of Ithen marched with the Imperial legions against the Weeping Princes; the traitorous Five Thrones Hearth was brought down by Tepet-trained resistance fighters within their own capital; Mogg the Devourer and her crocodilefolk brood were turned back by the Devil Quag marsh tribes before they reached the Empress' soil.

Now, House Tepet's economy is in ruin. Their stipend has been slashed to a pittance. The Great Houses

ANCIENT WAYS

House Tepet follows a martial tradition older than the Realm, preserving spiritual disciplines of the Shogunate lost in other histories. The two most prominent of these are the sublime armigers and the yamabushi. Its sublime armigers draw power from the history and legacy of House Tepet's heirlooms, taking up a revered ancestor's legendary artifact in emulation of her virtues. Yamabushi scout ahead of legions on the march, striking pacts with local gods to secure strategic advantages. Most armigers and yamabushi served within the Tepet legions, leaving few surviving practitioners.

divided Tepet's most valuable satrapies up amongst themselves in exchange for debts forgiven or under the pretense of compensating for Tepet's military absence. While House Tepet still administers these satrapies on paper, their tributes are reaped by other houses, chiefly Sesus and Ragara. Of Tepet's holdings, only Medo still pays their tribute of janissaries, largely because of satrap Tepet Niruz's bloody-minded persistence. The rest have fallen to other houses, who mistakenly believe the mighty warriors subdued by the Tepet legions have lost their will to resist.

House Tepet made few investments in non-military ventures. When the cost of maintaining its legions rose higher than its stipend could support, it resorted to taking sizable loans and conceding lucrative enterprises to other houses. The few it still controls include metal-works, silk farms, and almost-exhausted mines of marble, gems, and jade. House Tepet clings desperately to these, knowing that if they're lost, so is the house.

House Military

Tepet scions strive to emulate the mythical warrior-hero Mela in their earliest childhood sparring bouts. They're trained in weaponry from an early age, often by mortal veterans who served under their mother or an aunt. A Tepet learns to read from the pages of *The Thousand Correct Actions*, and trains for command through conducting war games and riding alongside older relatives. A Tepet formally concludes her childhood study of war when she chooses a code of honor exemplifying her warrior's path — whether an extant code or one of her own devising. Many aspire to the house's valor and selflessness, but a warrior's code is ultimately hers to choose.

Once a Tepet chooses her code, it's not enough to simply fight — she must *lead*. She's expected to epitomize her code through martial attainments, inspiring her soldiers with her virtue just as Mela illustrates the nature of the ideal warrior to the Dragon-Blooded. Tepet parents once put considerable effort into securing their child an officer's rank in the house legions or the Imperial legions when a position opened.

The Battle of Futile Blood left House Tepet only half a legion's worth of rank and file soldiers, and fewer officers. When the Great Houses partitioned the legions, they salted the wound by burdening Tepet with the Vermilion (or "Red-Piss") Legion, an army of bandits, criminals, and drunkards. Only House Cathak objected, respecting the prowess of Tepet's leaders enough to recognize the threat posed by even a single legion.



MANY PATHS TO HONOR

Tepet children are raised as warriors, but aren't forced into military service. A sizable minority seek other vocations — bureaucrats, artisans, savants, sorcerers. There's no shame in this, so long as they aspire to preeminence, but their kin will always hold them to a warrior's standards. A poet earns acclaim if her words command the hearts of disciples, but even the most puissant sorcerer invites disdain if his triumphs come without honor and leadership. Since the fall of the Tepet legions, many of the house's most prominent scions are those who turned their talents to vocations outside the military, whose efforts to secure the house's future have won them acclaim approaching that of its fallen war heroes.

Command of the Red-Piss Legion was given to Tepet Ejava, the Roseblack. Once an Imperial legion officer, she resigned that commission to serve her house. Under the Roseblack's leadership and training, the Red-Piss Legion has hunted pirates, subdued rebellions in the few remaining Tepet satrapies, and fought the mindless puppets of Kejiza the Centipede Witch. Outmatched by the other houses' sheer numbers, it may yet be House Tepet's salvation.

Enemies and Alliances

Each Great House played a part in the downfall of House Tepet, plotting its demise or profiting from its ruin. House Tepet knows it cannot survive if it opposes the entire Realm. Marriages have become scarce, save for the occasional outcaste and with House Nellens, whose matchmakers delight at procuring scions of refined pedigree without competition from other houses.

House Sesus profited most from House Tepet's decline, gaining lucrative access to Tepet's Northern satrapies. This is no coincidence. Sesus spymasters undermined the legions marching against the Bull. They've continued sabotaging potential alliances between Tepet and other houses to ensure Tepet remains powerless. The other houses tacitly approved of this, with the expectation that House Sesus would shoulder debts that House Tepet can no longer repay. Whatever backroom dealings secured thusly may soon fall through, as House Sesus covertly plans to refuse to acknowledge the Tepet loans in the expectation that civil war will erase the consequences.

House Cathak and House Tepet shared mutual respect based on military might, but this ended when the Cathak legions failed to march to House Tepet's aid against the Bull once the true danger of the Anathema's forces was revealed. House Sesus' scheming was expected, but for Cathak to prove honorless was a much more profound betrayal. House Cathak has refused all overtures of alliance from the Tepets and has blocked all efforts to rebuild Tepet's military forces. If a Tepet were to make a bid for the throne backed by house legions, Cathak would be the first to move against them.

House Tepet has been an ally of House V'neef since the latter's inception, owing in part to V'neef's own Tepet husband. Before the Tepet legions' downfall, House Tepet might have relied on House V'neef to support a bid for the throne, but now, only a pretense of allegiance remains.

House Tepet isn't completely alone. House Nellens has made tempting overtures of a military coalition, providing the troops and financing that House Tepet so desperately lacks. More gravely, senior military officers, house matriarchs, and other influential Tepets have received entreaties from the fallen House Iselsi, presenting a straightforward offer: Join forces against the other houses and claim bloody revenge. Such an alliance would be abhorrent to all notions of honor, but there are grudges to settle and deaths to avenge. Some Tepets may not let the chance for a final reckoning slip from their hands.

Major Holdings

House Tepet's family stronghold sits in the ancient Shogunate capital of **Lord's Crossing**. House leadership is confused and unstable after the disastrous campaign against the Bull. Tepet Usala, then commander of the Tepet legions and house matriarch, fell at the Anathema's hands. The Tepet family heads have formed a ruling council that meets in Usala's manse, the owl-haunted Pagoda of Blood and Pearls. The council's power is shared, but only because no one has risked a decisive grab for power. They play subtle games of influence through younger scions instead, maintaining their honor even as they plot each other's betrayal.

West of Lord's Crossing, **the Vale of Reverie**'s unspoiled wilderness, touched by primeval magic, is a place where the world of spirits draws closer to that

of mortals. Small gods drift through the wild as luminous, ephemeral presences, while packs of elementals flourish. Dragon-Blooded are welcome in the Vale by ancient edict of the Worm-Eaten Woman, an ancient and enigmatic spirit who claims kinship with them. Tepet children are brought here for their first lessons on spirits, and return throughout their lives to meditate, pray, and pursue spiritual cultivation.

Most of House Tepet's satrapial holdings have been lost to other houses. The fortified capital city **Dezsofi** still juts from the heart of Medo, its gates held by mixed regiments of Tepet soldiers and Medoans, but other satrapies offer meager tribute at best and outright rebellion at worst.

Faraway **Ithen** remains independent from the Realm, but agreed to treaties of non-aggression and commercial exchange after Tepet military advisors coordinated the overthrow of the Weeping Princes and restored their hereditary tyrant to power. In the Empress' absence, House Tepet hopes to secure Ithen's loyalty and might for themselves.

Scions of Note

Tepet lies buried at Lord's Crossing in a tomb of unmelting ice. His deeds are legend among his house — a warrior so noble he won the Empress' heart even in defeat; the greatest general to test the Imperial City's defenses; a pious devotee of Mela respected by god and devil alike.

Tepet Corino, a muscular, black-skinned Dynast, is the woman people go to in order to make things happen. Supreme quartermaster of the Tepet legions during their doomed campaign in the North, the devastation of the high command and the respect given her by the rank and file left her the de facto house matriarch and the best candidate to take control of the house legions' finances. They're the dregs of a fortune, but nevertheless represent one of the house's greatest assets. Corino is hell-bent on rebuilding the house legions, but can't force a majority in the council of house elders. She relies on traded favors, seeking out young Dynasts whose ambitions for glory align with her agenda.

Tepet Arada, the Wind Dancer, has gone from living legend to black sheep of the house. He rose through the Tepet legions to the rank of general, an exemplar of both ideal soldier and ideal warrior. Arada survived the Battle of Futile Blood and slew the Anathema Fear-Eater, but returned changed. Some thought he might take up leadership of the house. Instead he's grown cynical, taking up a gourd of rice wine in place of a daiklave, his belief in the Realm shattered. However, Arada's withdrawal shouldn't be mistaken for weakness. Should civil war break out, he'd tear the Realm apart to protect his family.

Satrap **Tepet Niruz** holds Medo with a cornered wolf's ferocity. House Cathak's offers to "reinforce" the satrapy and House Sesus' subterfuge would long since have wrested it away from House Tepet were it not for this tenacity. A deadly archer, Niruz openly forswears gender, neither man nor woman, and has sworn to a warrior code that emphasizes truth to one's self above conforming to the expectations of others. While scions of other houses find this strange or scandalous, Niruz's oath legitimizes their identity in the eyes of Tepet kin.

Tepet Berel Gadurin is one of the Realm's most celebrated playwrights. He won his reputation with passionate romances and cleverly crafted comedies, but since the Battle of Futile Blood, he's turned his attention to creating works of propaganda, seeking to influence prominent figures in the Realm with a predilection for drama with heartbreaking tragedies of warriors sacrificing themselves in the name of love and honor.

House V'neef
Wood That Tenders the Garden's Grace

Youngest of all the Great Houses, composed of adopted daughters of a woman only six decades old, its greatest protector vanished for five long years, beset upon on every side by elder siblings resentful of its very existence. House V'neef nevertheless endures, not with the stoicism of the earth but with the grace of the willow that bends with the storm. Despite its youth, House V'neef is well-liked, its founder a charismatic and dignified woman with all of the Empress' social savvy and beauty who charted a course to power that stepped on as few toes as possible. House V'neef maintains a diverse business portfolio, and has earned a reputation for boldness. Its members are young, dynamic, and ever seeking new horizons to plant their flag upon, literally as well as metaphorically, not least because it's the only way the house will survive the coming storm.

V'neef has only a few children of her own, and only the eldest are starting their own families. The vast majority of House V'neef consists of hundreds of lost eggs and Exalted patricians — from the newly Exalted to aging retirees — elevated to Dynastic status by the Empress' legal and spiritual fiat. For her generosity, the house's rank and file practically worship the Empress — V'neef

herself commands no small amount of reverence as well, as the Empress' favored daughter (to their mind, at least).

But popularity isn't enough. V'neef jealously guards the military experience of her adopted daughters, keeping them close to home rather than risking them in battle, while pursuing advantageous marriages for her adopted sons and consolidating what power she can. With her closest advisors, she lays plans for the future. Her house stands at a crossroads — one path leads to the throne, the other to her entire line's ignominious demise.

House Economics

Her initial fortune made in Eagle Prefecture's wines, V'neef has since diversified. Now, her house profits from horse-breeding, breweries, tobacco and qat plantations, and even safaris for those eager to hunt the Threshold's strange and exotic game. But House V'neef's most important source of income is the Merchant Fleet, awarded by the Empress upon the house's creation to undercut the rising power of House Peleps. House V'neef is responsible for transporting tribute from the Threshold to the Blessed Isle, and entitled to a percentage of all tribute delivered, as well as the right to claim as prizes any hostile ships taken by force of arms. As the satrapy system is the financial lifeblood of the Realm, even a tiny cut of the take is staggering, and V'neef has invested well.

For a time, this revenue stream was stable, even growing, but the Empress' disappearance and the ensuing crisis has thrown the system into disarray. As tribute dries up, the Merchant Fleet's maintenance expenses outweigh its income. House V'neef has since pushed West, relying on luxury imports and pirate-hunting outside its traditional convoy routes to make up the loss of stability. House Peleps, still furious over losing the lucrative Merchant Fleet, makes life as difficult for House V'neef's ships as it can short of outright war — every obol V'neef brings home, to House Peleps, is an obol stolen from their coffers. The West is a firedust magazine, and these two houses put off plenty of sparks as they cross swords.

House Military

V'neef commands only two legions, one stationed full-time in Eagle Prefecture. Blessedly, her house's many outcaste veterans offer the V'neef legions uncommonly good leadership and morale, though a far cry from the well-polished machine that the Imperial legions once were.

Though its land forces are small, V'neef has a naval advantage. Less and less of its well-established Merchant Fleet continues to escort tribute fleets in the Inland Sea; today, most of its ships now jockey for position with the Peleps-controlled Imperial Navy in the West. While House Peleps overwhelmingly outnumbers V'neef on the high seas, this is in some ways a boon — the other Great Houses know that the Merchant Fleet doesn't have the ships to blockade the whole of the Realm. The Imperial Navy, however, does. While Peleps must tread carefully to avoid alarming the other houses with its fleet movements, House V'neef has a freer hand, so long as they don't run into a Peleps armada.

Enemies and Alliances

V'neef anticipated decades of support from the Empress as her nascent house gained strength. Now that the Empress is gone, the house is in troubled waters.

House V'neef's only solid support comes from the broken and dying House Tepet, from which her husband hails. Tepet respects the many graduates of Pasiap's Stair among V'neef's ranks, and V'neef had subtly expressed interested in backing Tepet for the throne before the loss of the Tepet legions. Now V'neef sees Tepet as little more than an anchor tied to her throat. But she cannot afford to alienate such a constant ally, to say nothing of the fact that it would break her husband's heart. The two houses are, on paper and to all appearances, closely tied, but V'neef hasn't finalized a single betrothal with House Tepet since the rout of their legions.

Meanwhile, House Ragara constantly undercuts House V'neef in the name of securing debt, as the prospect of a Great House that cannot be leaned on financially gives them cause for alarm. Virtually every financially significant V'neef property on the Blessed Isle has been targeted by Ragara, either through leaning on the Honest and Humble Assessors of the Imperial Tax to adjust value estimates, or through less subtle means such as arson or the careful use of various pests.

Of all her sisters and cousins, V'neef fears Mnemon most of all. Her elder-by-centuries sister is a powerful sorceress, commands a strong house, and has spent her entire life preparing to take the throne — one many other houses would prefer to see V'neef on, if only to deny it to Mnemon. V'neef knows this makes her a target, and that Mnemon isn't one to suffer a threat at her back for long — she fears her sister will crush her house, seizing her satrapies and wealth to turn them against the other houses and hunting down her children the way she still hunts the Iselsi. For this, if for no

other reason, V'neef seeks the throne; it may be the only way to keep her family safe.

House Peleps, of course, has an immediate reason to stamp out House V'neef, but ironically this rivalry strengthens V'neef's position, giving Houses Ledaal, Cathak, and Sesus (among others) reason to provide limited support to counterbalance the naval titan. Eventually, these houses must commit to a side, and a messy power struggle will doubtless ensue. V'neef strives to ingratiate herself with these houses to influence their final decision.

House Nellens has long been a mercantile rival of House V'neef, though neither side has ever escalated their commercial feuding to open conflict. Even if they could end old grudges, V'neef is wary of her house's reputation should she side with such a widely disdained house. The wealthy, debauched House Cynis maintains strong trade relations, stocking its galas with V'neef wines — and has numerous marriage ties from V'neef's efforts to propagate her own Aspect throughout her nascent house's lineage — but cannot be relied on for meaningful support.

More than ties of blood, V'neef seeks out ties of convenience and need — in particular, she's made Eagle Prefecture a safe haven for the Empress' magistrates, and hopes that protecting these visible symbols of the Empress' enduring power will pay off in the end.

Major Holdings

House V'neef's holdings on the Blessed Isle are concentrated on the western coast, in Eagle Prefecture. The city of **Eagle's Launch** is growing rapidly, competing in the popular imagination for the title of "gateway to the West" with Bittern, held by House Peleps. So many travelers and so much money flowing into and through the city attracts more than its fair share of smugglers and spies, to say nothing of Dynastic intrigues using this background noise for cover. Multiple magistrates live in Eagle's Launch, using the city's activity and excitement to mask their connections to their spy networks. The magistrate Seven Cardinals, an outcaste Water Aspect with a penchant for knifeplay, has made "harassing the opposition" his forté — House Sesus has lost three operatives to him in the last year alone, and are quietly putting together a larger operation designed to root him out.

The Sideshores, off the Isle's northwestern coast, hold many V'neef estates, all being quietly fortified as its people cast nervous glances at Peleps-held islets easily visible from their own shores. Those unable to afford conventional means of defense seek out alternatives. V'neef Ostoka has quietly cut a thoroughly impious deal with the court of water elementals dwelling by **the Isle of Salt-Spray**,



and teardrop-shaped wind-chimes are appearing in the fishing villages and towns that support his estate. Should worst come to worst, he thinks, his island and its people will be safe, so long as none of them are foolish enough to reveal his plot out of misplaced religious zeal. After all, he's a Prince of the Earth; treating with spirits is his privilege, and if the Immaculate Order wouldn't approve of his amendment to the local prayer calendar, well, what they don't know won't hurt him.

The treaty port of **Nansha**, which sprawls across an entire atoll south of Wavecrest, is a key Western staging ground for the house. Here, buildings compete for each inch of dry land, while ships do the same in Nansha's warm lagoon. Tremendous wealth passes through this port, and it shows — each night, the city comes alive with music, dance, and entertainment from across the West. Satrap V'neef Savatera maintains the discipline drilled into her at Pasiap's Stair, descending into the frantic and often hedonistic streets only when she must. She acts as patron to the more refined arts, particularly the theater company imported from the Realm. Her chief difficulty, beyond overindulgent subordinates, is the urban underclass that constantly demands the Imperial garrison's attention. Once, fishing villages occupied the surrounding cays, only occasionally feuding. Now, their descendants labor in the gargantuan port that's devoured their home whole, and gangs regularly engage in vicious running fights that the V'neef garrison is all but powerless to stop. Still, while the Nanshanese fight amongst themselves, they reserve their true loathing for the Dynasts, whose frenzied preparation against attack by the Imperial Navy offers the locals an opening to finally fight back.

Many scions of House V'neef call **Faxai-on-the-Caul** home, though most are un-Exalted. The house is in desperate need of new blood, and prizes the prospect of pilgrimage to the Last City. Most of all, they hope to prevent House Peleps from seizing the city, which would cut off access to the West through the Southwest, diminishing House V'neef's revenues and access to its Western territories at the worst possible time. The House of the Rootless Tree is its public-facing stronghold in Faxai, a dockside structure that extends out over the water on heavy pilings. The interior, a maze of blind corridors and stairways to nowhere designed to disorient intruders, is well-stocked with weapons, supplies, and armor. If necessary, the entire structure can be sorcerously decoupled from the pilings and dropped into the harbor, frozen solid by spell-wards to deny it to V'neef's enemies. V'neef Lanusa, a formerly patrician Water Aspect, is the house's personal representative in Faxai, charged with overseeing its interests in the Caul.

Scions of Note

At the heart of her house is **V'neef** herself, her husband **Tepet Igan**, and her handful of offspring; legally siblings, the outcastes of House V'neef know full well that a great gulf remains between them and their founder's blood children. V'neef herself is still young by Exalted standards, only sixty — some of her adopted children are far older. Igan, for his part, is only a decade older than V'neef, but seems far more aged. The deaths of his cousins, sisters, and most especially his own mother has left him broken; he remains in mourning even after three years. He and V'neef dwell almost full-time in the Imperial City, where she puts charm and wit inherited from her mother to great use; even her foes respect her as a dynamic, driven leader. She's beloved by her house, and more than one of her adopted family have commissioned ballads or epic poems in her honor.

The blind swordswoman **V'neef S'thera** lost her fiancé Tepet Kedus at the Valley of Shards. S'thera wants nothing more than to meet the Bull of the North in battle and kill him, but V'neef refuses permission each time she asks to raise a Wyld Hunt. To V'neef, S'thera's blood is better spent on daughters than on the snow, and she hopes to entice House Cathak into an alliance through her daughter's marriage, so far without success. Robbed of vengeance, S'thera now drowns her sorrows with drink and attractive young women.

V'neef Dancing Boar is a former outcaste and dragon-lord in the Imperial legions, adopted into House V'neef on its formation. His skill with the lance is impeccable, and he's renowned for his wing's triumph over the rebels of the Six Amethysts Coalition. He, however, finds nothing glorious about the slaughter he committed, hoping to never again raise arms in violence. Instead, he trains House V'neef's new legions and its marines in the Merchant Fleet, drilling them in the fundamentals of combat to hold their own against pirates or Peleps scions.

V'neef Agayo is a minor sorcerer and a master shipwright, entrusted with overseeing the repairs and construction of ships for the Merchant Fleet. House Peleps makes much of the demon workforces she binds to man the house's docks and her consultation of demonic savants and architects, insisting she lacks the caution necessary to treat with the forces of Hell. She takes such talk in stride as a sign that Peleps envies the ships she's raised. However, her real unwise dealings are not with demons, but with scions of House Ragara, whose pursuit of First Age artifice has led them to

discover lost secrets of building wondrous ships. Agayo has been paying princely sums under the table for ancient blueprints they've unearthed, and may soon find herself crushed beneath personal debts.

House Iselsi
Water That Hides the Deepest Dark

There is no House Iselsi. This remnant holds no seats in the Deliberative, claims no prefectures nor satrapies, administers not a single legion, and is only spoken of by its hale and healthy cousins to deride it. This is House Iselsi — it is nothing. But once, it was something grand.

In RY 643, House Iselsi's elders conspired to assassinate the Scarlet Empress, launching an attempt on her life that failed spectacularly. The Empress made a public example of the house, taking almost a century to carve it up bit by bit before finally striking it from the Imperial ledgers in RY 740. The other Great Houses didn't stand idly by; they fell on House Iselsi like wild dogs — whether to pursue profit, advancement, or personal grudges — tearing it apart. Only a few households remain, clinging desperately to what few scraps of wealth and privilege they can afford, little better than Threshold clans, certainly beneath even the dull, weak blood of House Nellens.

This was the Empress' will. There is no House Iselsi. All the better that their cousins should believe it, for the truth is that House Iselsi lives on, forged into a weapon that only the Empress' hand could hold back. That hand is gone now, and soon House Iselsi will pay back the blood debt, the Vendetta, in full.

There is no House Iselsi. There is only its hungry ghost.

Shrouded Dragons of the Scarlet Empress

The public work of dismantling House Iselsi was primarily carried out by the other Great Houses; after the first few blows, the Empress merely sat back and watched her children kill their cousins. It was the Empress' hand that stayed the last blows, the ones that would have snuffed out the Iselsi forever, and it was her hand that gathered those she found most useful and scattered them far and wide across Realm and Threshold, gifting them new identities and esoteric training foreign to the Dynasty, turning them into her hidden eyes, ears, and daggers.

For those not so chosen, and who were fortunate enough to survive the other houses' depredations, there were other tasks. One-fourth of the surviving Iselsi drifted into the Immaculate Order, publicly resolving to atone for the sins of their elders while in truth becoming yet another arm of the house's gutted but once-venerable espionage machine. The rest either took on new identities of their own manufacture or carried on the charade of the broken, bankrupt, disgraced husk that was House Iselsi.

The hidden children of House Iselsi go about their false lives, laughing and fighting alongside their cousins in the

THE VENDETTA

A girl is ushered into an atrium in the House of Black Waters by her mother. She has never seen this room or any of the others like it, and this occasion marks only the fifth time she has shared her mother's presence. The room is dimly lit, and as her eyes adjust she begins to make out faces on the wall — masks, eyes closed and features serene, wrinkles tracing their contours.

Her mother speaks, telling the girl of her ancestors, of their deeds and accomplishments, their honors and titles. Closer, now, the girl can tell that the wrinkles on the mask are not wrinkles, but intricately carved words, words that her mother is reciting from memory. She does not omit a single mask, and the litany takes hours, but she does not permit her daughter's attention to wander. The girl learns of her house's history piecemeal, of the greatness that once was, of the betrayal by her cousins, of the mercy of the Empress, and of the great Vendetta that each Iselsi carries forever in her heart.

When her mother is finished, she stands beside an empty stretch of wall, and turns to her daughter. "This is where your mask will rest," she says. "What will be written upon it?" Without another word, she turns and walks away, leaving her daughter in the shadowy room.

She is six years old, the traditional age at which Iselsi children learn of the Vendetta.

other houses while desperately waiting for the order to cut their throats. It can be hard to hide such murderous intentions, but the Iselsi worry more that they'll come to genuinely care for their targets. The bonds of Hearth and marriage are strong, and while no handler wants to kill a fellow Iselsi, better a quick death than the shame of losing sight of the Vendetta. Several Iselsis wear two masks: one for their targets, and one for their kin.

It was the Empress' will that her other children, confident in their grasp of the dark underbelly of the Realm, would watch their daughters fall without knowing from where the dagger between their ribs came. The Empress turned an entire lineage into a hidden, bloodstained hand to match even the feared All-Seeing Eye. Then she vanished, leaving a house of living weapons to manage itself.

House Economics

House Iselsi is all but penniless. As patricians, the Iselsis administer no satrapies, collect little in the way of taxes, and are barred from the generous stipends their cousins receive from the Imperial Treasury. What few holdings remain under the Iselsi name are privately leased — paid for by personal business ventures, lucky strikes in the Threshold, and an Imperial grant for upkeep of shrines and temples in Incas Prefecture, the last place on the Blessed Isle that might be called House Iselsi's stronghold. Mnemon, for her part, has taken a personal interest in erasing that grant, and her allies in House Sesus are only too happy to assist her. While still blessed with wealth unimaginable to the peasantry, Iselsi's scions deem themselves impoverished, an insult they mean to repay in blood.

House Military

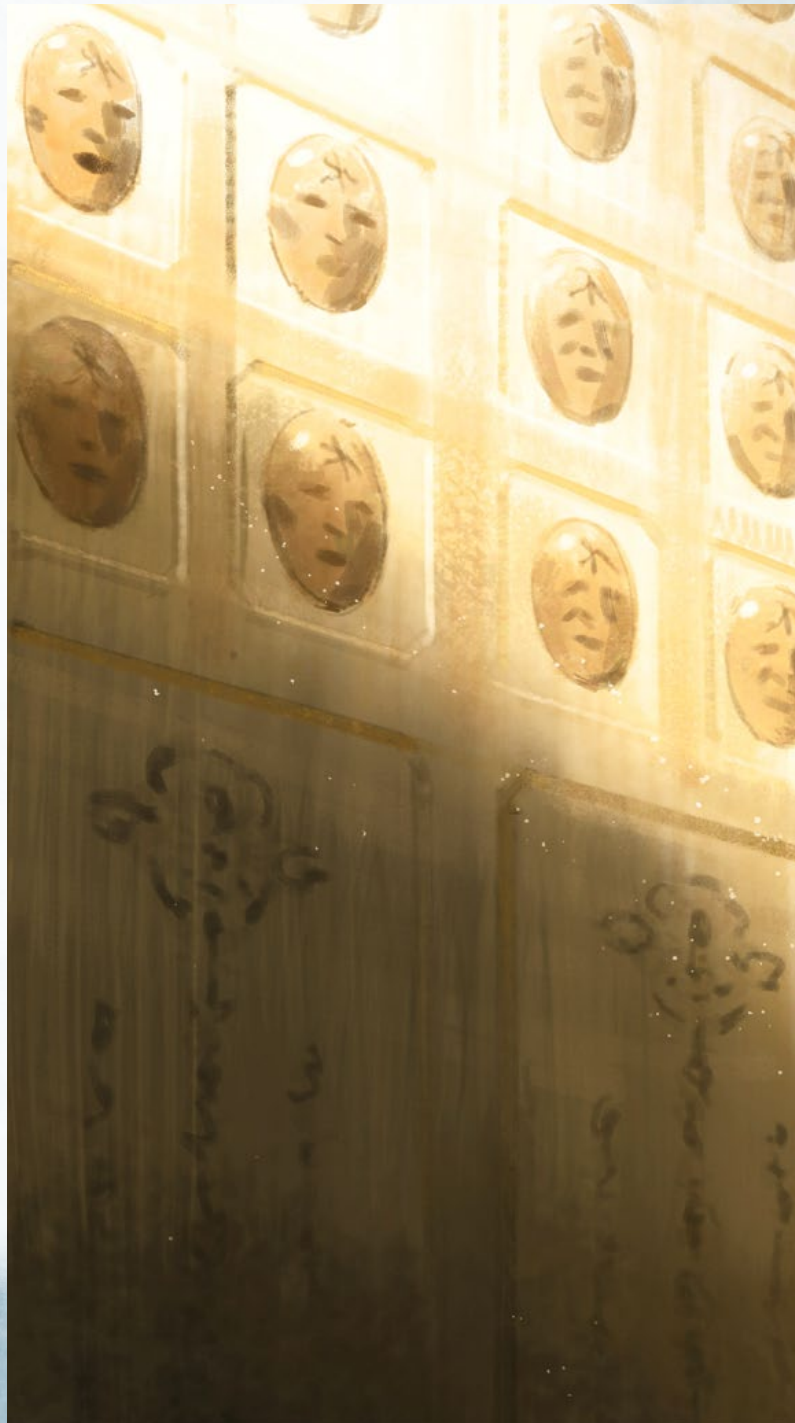
House Iselsi has no legions, not even in name alone. Yet House Iselsi is far from toothless. They need no armies because their hidden children sup with generals under assumed names, share beds with senators whose husbands are away on business, and perch like vultures in the heart of the Thousand Scales, watching for documents that betray the plans of others. Once, this was House Iselsi's specialty — their scions infested the Imperial Service, and pen couldn't be put to paper without their notice, or so they believed. Their web has been battered and torn, but it still clings, here and there, to things others thought unseen.

Enemies and Alliances

Many houses, given the opportunity, would gladly stomp on every last ember of House Iselsi. House Sesus in

THE VOICE OF DARK WATER AND THE DAUGHTER OF MIST

Missives from Iselsi elders often indicate marching orders from these two leadership figures. However, the Voice and the Daughter don't exist; they're merely fabrications to distract and confuse rival agents, such as from House Sesus and the Eye, who might make inroads against Iselsi secrecy. By and large, the elders work alone, each pursuing her own approach to the Vendetta with her own resources on her own terms.



particular devoted itself to destroying its traditional rival-in-espionage with gusto, and still keeps an ear to the ground for stragglers. Mnemon, for her part, would see the Immaculate Order purged of treacherous Iselsi, and has sponsored multiple bills in the Deliberative undercutting what little remains of the fallen house's influence. Every house save V'neef, though, played an immediate role in House Iselsi's destruction, and even V'neef exists at Iselsi's expense, raised up to fill the vacancy among the Great Houses. Any of them would gladly take the chance to purge one more of Iselsi's progeny from the face of Creation.

While the Iselsi rank and file shuns even the idea of affiliating with their despised kin, the house's elders know that if it's to survive long enough to see the Vendetta through, it will need protection should the Empress fail to return. House Nellens thinks to turn House Iselsi into a sword of its own by dangling hope of having their name reinstated, but no Iselsi scion would take such an offer at face value. Covert overtures to House Tepet — brought nearly so low as Iselsi itself by the catastrophe in the Valley of Shards — are seen by house elders as a mere vehicle to fulfilling the Vendetta. When the others have fallen beneath Iselsi blades, House Tepet will still be there, ripe for the picking.

Where the Iselsi find allies, such as they are, it's amongst those who nurse a grudge of their own, or those whose ambition overtakes their good sense. Such assets are often found in or near positions of power, and the Iselsi rarely have difficulty ensuring that those assets'



competitors are removed from consideration, one way or another. Outcastes, shunned by Great Houses, often serve as allies of convenience for the Iselsi, who — even if disgraced — can offer marriage into a potent lineage, and wealth and political power beyond what most outcastes know. For Iselsi agents within the Immaculate Order, suborning gods by bribing them with subtle alterations to the prayer calendar is standard operating procedure — a few deities, particularly gods of revenge and feuds, serve as divine patrons for the fallen house.

Major Holdings

Iselsi manses and holdings, many officially overseen by House Ledaal, still dot **Incas Prefecture**'s countryside — including the family's ancestral seat, the House of Black Waters, where Iselsi herself was laid to rest. Here the house lives openly, all the better to convince their cousins that this is all they have left. Elsewhere, in the Realm and the Threshold, they conceal themselves in boltholes and hidden fortresses, awaiting the day when their long-honed skills will be called upon by their house.

The Imperial City is thick with Iselsi agents, but their favored site for dead drops is paradoxically open — **The Last Little Sapling**, a teahouse of some repute with a riverfront view. Its proprietor Kiera, an affable middle-aged woman (and loyal Iselsi cousin), exchanges messages on notes left under teacups, or speaks in code when she calls on the table with a fresh kettle. All messages she hears, she passes along to their intended recipients. She knows much, perhaps too much, but she's earned the house elders' trust. Many speculate as to how, but she simply smiles and refills their cup.

In the mountains of Dejis Prefecture, heartland of House Mnemon, the inhabitants of tiny **Ditola Village** scratch at the earth and send cartloads of ore down to the smelters, as peasants should. But this isn't their true purpose. Deep in mines where not even the most ardent tax inspectors delve, they meet with their Iselsi masters and train, dust and darkness blinding them slowly but surely. It matters not — when the time comes, when smoke chokes the city of Mnemon-Darjilis, they'll have no more need of sight than the dead Mnemon scions they'll leave in the streets. This is their only purpose, a single decisive blow when the forgotten house calls. Until then, they train. Until then, they wait.

Scions of Note

The founder **Iselsi** was a brilliant mathematician and economist who won the Empress' favor by ruthlessly manipulating and outmaneuvering her rivals for power in the nascent Imperial Service. A woman of quiet graces and subtle genius, she died on a Wyld Hunt centuries before the fall of her house. Her name is spoken in reverent whispers by Iselsi scions as they swear themselves to a Vendetta she never imagined.

Iselsi Dileko lives under an assumed name, as do many of his family, and like them he belongs to a Sworn Kinship. This band of V'neef, Sesus, and Mnemon scions think Naret Kikela an outcaste swordsman, and have welcomed him with open arms. He reports their movements, plans, and ambitions to his house, but his standing orders are to wait for the signal to slay the lot in their sleep — standard procedure for undercover assets in such a position. Privately, he hopes the order never comes. Playing the sworn brother has cut deeper into his hate than he thought it would.

Moonless River is an Immaculate monk stationed in Pneuma, with a decades-long history of advising those who hope to emulate Pasiap as she does. She's gained such renown that she receives regular invitations to dine with Ragara himself, and the two have built an amicable relationship. She truly loves the Immaculate lifestyle, and feels personally elevated on a spiritual level by the practice. When she drives her stone-hard fingers through Ragara's skull on her house's orders, it won't be in the name of hate, but of ridding the Realm of the greed that hangs about its neck like a millstone.

Iselsi Takora has just returned from the Threshold, having ventured there for a decade to seek magical arts unknown in the Realm. Her face, name, and even gender are new, the legacy of sorcerous alchemy she learned in the far Southeast. She's an invaluable asset to the Vendetta, supplying House Iselsi with toxins the Blessed Isle has never seen: poisons that slay passions, venoms that erase thoughts, panaceas that stop death in its tracks for a day and a night. She's risen high in the house's esteem, and none yet suspect that she serves a master other than the Iselsi.

Iselsi Shenesh, Minister of the Imperial Gardens, is the last Iselsi to retain high standing in the Imperial Service since the house's fall from grace. Old and gray, leaning on a cane, he retains an air of dignity and grandeur, though he also wields a charming smile and ingratiating wit when the occasion demands. He's a divisive figure in the family. Most assume that he's one of the house's high-ranking assets in the All-Seeing Eye, and thus crucial to the house's future. But he was also a member of the Council of the Empty Throne that sundered the Imperial legions. Suspicions that Shenesh betrayed the house's attempted coup against the Empress all those years ago are largely kept unspoken.

Cadet Houses

On occasions when a Dragon-Blooded family native to the Threshold rejected the opportunity to relocate to the Blessed Isle and join one of the Great Houses — out of love for their homeland, perhaps, or preferring an arena they could dominate to one where they'd struggle as minor newcomers — the Empress often found it expedient to bind that family into the Dynasty by marriage. On other occasions, Dynasts marrying mortal Threshold royal families proved prolific in generating Dragon-Blooded offspring. And when the Empress eliminated the Shogunate gentes' privileges five centuries ago, she encouraged them to establish Threshold colonies, especially in Northern provinces whose bitter climate impaired recovery from the Contagion.

As members of Great Houses are forbidden from ruling Threshold states, these families were kept distinct from their parent houses, retaining their own surnames and maintaining political independence. Such families are called cadet houses — descended from the Empress and thus part of the Dynasty, but not part of any Great House. Granting or removing recognition of cadet house status, as with Great House status, was the prerogative of the Empress alone.

Members of cadet houses receive all rights and privileges accorded to Dynasts, but lack the power and support networks of the Great Houses. While some can afford to send Dragon-Blooded scions to the Blessed Isle's secondary schools, they aren't immersed in Dynastic culture to the same extent as those born and raised on the Isle. Dynasts of the Great Houses see cadet Dynasts as bumpkin cousins — charmingly rustic, but lacking in sophistication, and without the influence to be useful allies. In practice, their refinement, wealth, and power vary widely. Their numbers especially so; the smallest cadet houses count Dragon-Blooded scions in the single digits, but the mightiest number over a hundred apiece.

The Empress used cadet houses as one of many checks on Great House power in the Threshold. She cultivated their independence from their parent houses' bloodlines and political ambitions — guiding them into business and marriage relationships with rival houses and outcastes, and otherwise taking steps to prevent their being wholly suborned by any one house. (Some cadet houses never had specific parent houses to begin with, having married into multiple Great Houses from the beginning, or been adopted outright by the Empress.) Compliant cadet houses received various benefits, whether additional seats in the Deliberative or lenient terms on loans from House Ragara.

Some cadet houses have fallen over the years, whether through electing to migrate to the Isle at last and join a Great House; destruction by misadventure; earning the Empress' disapproval; or thinning bloodlines depriving them of sufficient Dragon-Blooded scions to retain their status. Nonetheless, a few dozen cadet houses remain scattered throughout the Threshold. These include:

House Ferem governs the Northern coastal satrapy of Cherak, between Pneuma and Medo. Descendants of a relict Shogunate legion akin to Lookshy, their burgeoning power was broken by the sorcerer Bagrash Köl centuries ago. They still cling to fragments of their old military culture — and to remnants of its armory. In neighboring satrapies that the Realm carved from Grand Cherak centuries ago, other cadet houses share Ferem's ancestry and maintain familial ties.

House Desai commands great wealth and influence in Gulmohar and Rook, city-states that are longstanding rivals of neighboring Jiara. Merchants and landed gentry, House Desai has traditionally eschewed involvement in the travails of government in favor of leisure and patronage of the arts. Now it find itself divided between its own ambitions, the demands of princes and satraps, and the call to the Wyld Hunt.

Clans Burano and Ophris of Prasad were once Great Houses of the Realm. Though stricken from the Imperial ledgers after their legions went rogue, the Empress eventually acknowledged their authority as lords of Prasad. Although as local rulers tied by blood to the Dynasty, they're technically cadet houses, their practical status is idiosyncratic.

House Yueh rules Nai Lei, one of several city-states of the maritime Baihu people in the island satrapy of Nandao north of Goldenseal. The Lamenting Stone Assembly, a council of oligarchs that supplanted an overthrown Yueh monarchy, draws heavily from their ranks. Descended from the marriage of a Tepet scion and a Baihu prince, the Yuehs long considered themselves devoted clients of their parent house. They also profited from the construction of a Merchant Fleet depot in Nai Lei after House V'neef's elevation. Now, fearful of being caught up in the strife between Peleps and V'neef, they stand divided between old loyalties and a pragmatic search for new patrons.


The Blessed Isle
500 Miles
The Sideshores
Storm Coast
Howling Heart
Fields of Rue
Nuva Plains
Skyhewn Mountains
Eagle's Launch
Bright Obelisk
Tongma Archipelago
Eye of Creation
Lord's Crossing
Silk-and-Pearl Peninsula
Serpentine River
Bittern
Justiciar
Ashara
Tarpan Wastes
Gulf of Daana'd
Plains of Rusted Iron
Kissed-with-Jade
Daoshin Peninsula
Pendant Isles
Myion
Arjuf and The House of Bells
Jora
Porcelain Coast
Great Western Ocean
Cartography by Ed Bourelle


Pneuma
White Coast
The Heptagram
Shadowed Coast
Chanos
Sanqu
Dragon's Blanket
Fallen Wing
Xianyu Coast
Mnemon-Darjilis
Imperial River
Blue Flag
Pangu
Numinous Rolling Wave Dominion
Imperial River Basin
Tierce
The Imperial City
Juche and The Obsidian Mirror
Raiton's Perch
Star-of-Prose
Iron Scripture
Sdoia
Gloam
Waiting Pagoda
Mhaltin Mountains
Pasiap's Stair
Caracal River
Dhorash Mountains
Luo-Han Plains
Sion and The Palace Sublime
Jade Coast
Noble
Dragonsnrath Desert
Empress Mercy
Riven Quay
Jiara
Radimel's Seat
Tassel
Kirighast
The Inland Sea

Realm Year 758

Rainwater ran in torrents down the elaborate stonework and made glittering trails along the ivy-covered trellis. Thunder pealed; Eshuvar felt its resonance in his bones. If not for the heaviness of his heart and the uncomfortable cling of his soaked clothing, he would have found it invigorating. Above him, the lamps in his lover's room flickered invitingly.

Eshuvar had been seeing him for several months now, each time after a disagreement with his own wife. Her status increased since marrying him, as she'd carried children with the Dragons' blood. Thanks to him, of course — she'd not been so blessed. He did as he pleased to spite her; he was Exalted and she was not. A few more yards and he'd be in his lover's arms. He'd make sure she knew the next morning, too. What could she do about it? The deed would already be done, and she'd have to shoulder the embarrassment that her husband was a disobedient, philandering playboy. There was little her powerful mother could do about that, either. That thought brought a bitter smile to his face.

He paused on the trellis, slicked his saturated hair from his face, and stared at the distance stretching below him. It seemed an apt metaphor for his life: climbing upwards out of pettiness and spite with darkness yawning beneath, all to avoid a fall. That's all any Dynast did — climb, fight, spite each other, and avoid a fall. He'd done all these things, as his mother had taught him: Reach for every advantage, edge out those who could outdo you.

How had he reached this point, driven onwards by the corrosive bite of bitterness, envy, and displeasure? Compared to those of lesser wealth and status, was his Dynastic life not perfect — free of pain, illness, and hunger? He enjoyed wealth and privilege and all the power afforded to him as a Prince of the Earth. He'd invested wisely and made valuable connections. His bureaucratic peers spoke highly of him at all their meetings. He could have any woman or man he desired and enough drugs to threaten even his Exalted health. Yet he remained unsatisfied.

Why?, he thought, and turned his face upwards to the storm. Was he not respected by his Hearth's leader, River, a fierce woman and an Immaculate besides? Was he not like a brother to Kingfisher, a warrior of unquestionable skill? Was he not worthy of them, or their love? Eshuvar slammed his fist against the trellis and spit into the rain. He hadn't asked the Dragons to be born a man and his mother's only son!

The sound brought his lover's silhouette to the window. Against the warm light, the youthful mortal's slender, half-naked form cast a pleasing shadow downwards. Eshuvar thought he heard his lover's voice above the wind, asking if Eshuvar was there. They'd planned this encounter at the last fête Eshuvar had attended, slipping each other covert notes on scraps of paper and sharing longing looks — while in sight of his wife, of course — over the dining table. The youth was unmarried, on the cusp of maturing without Exaltation, and so beautiful. Eshuvar knew the young man would consent to lie with a Prince of the Earth.

Climb. Fight. Spite each other. Avoid a fall.

"Eshuvar?" His lover's warm basso voice breached the roar of the wind and the hiss of rain on stones.

Eshuvar's breath caught and his heart fluttered. All things aside, he cared for the man. The Dragon-Blood pulled himself up another rung, then another, then another, ignoring the coldness of the rainwater on his hands. He swallowed the weight of his dissatisfaction and climbed upwards again, into his lover's waiting arms.



Chapter Three

Life in the Scarlet Dynasty

Childhood

The Scarlet Dynasty's matriarchs teach that the strong mother raises her child to excel. The weak mother raises her child to be happy; this makes the child weak, and is self-indulgent and cruel. Few would disparage a Dynast for taking no personal hand in her child's rearing so long as the parents still diligently choose the child's tutors. To love one's child is neither expected nor frowned upon, but is considered irrelevant to the responsibility of raising capable young prospects for Exaltation.

Most Dynastic childhoods are marked by absent or cold parents. Instead, the child comes to self-awareness in a world where she's surrounded by inferiors. She witnesses her parents disciplining the servants in accordance with their inadequacies, from gentle verbal admonishments to breaking on the wheel of correction. Initially, the child must submit to household servants' commands, for those servants follow the parents' instructions and are thus vessels for Dynastic will. Over time, she's taught to command those selfsame servants. This power is initially tightly circumscribed — and is temporarily revoked if used foolishly or abused — but expands as she matures.

A good nanny is obedient, quiet, and caters to the child's needs. The nanny is the child's first teacher and provider, and if affection enters the average Dynastic childhood at all, it's likely to come from here. Many love their nannies dearly, and remember them fondly even after Exalting. Others treat them cruelly, though such behavior is considered uncouth in Dynastic society, and likely to incur punishment from parents who have no desire for a reputation as a household where awful things happen to their staff.

Tutors are the rod to the nanny's soft embrace. For the very young, tutelage often takes the form of regimented play until they're capable of more advanced study. As the child matures, the areas of tutelage increase steadily — coordination, combat, command, history, politics, geography, the Immaculate Philosophy, and more.

A Dynastic child typically has young slaves as playmates who participate in his lessons and play with him. Favored childhood playmates sometimes follow a young Dynast as she grows up, becoming her most trusted servants. Siblings are rarely close enough to the child in age to play with her. When they are — whether in the form of twins, leftover children (p. 98), or adoptees — the relationship often plays out in hierarchies, with one sibling asserting status and authority. Children from other Dynastic families, such as cousins, neighbors, or the offspring of a parent's Hearthmates, are usually introduced to the child's play as she matures, to ensure she's properly socialized in how to treat fellow Dynasts. Her parents also make sure she encounters plenty of Dragon-Blooded, for inspiration and education.

DYNASTIC ORPHANS

A young Dynast whose mother dies — or who's otherwise unable or unwilling to rear her — is typically taken in by a relative of the mother's house, even if her father survives. Same-sex couples or those otherwise infertile frequently adopt their house's orphans, providing the child with parents and the couple's marriage with greater legitimacy. An orphan's childhood is often indistinguishable from that of her peers, as few Dynastic children spend much time with their parents.

HOME SCHOOLING

Infrequently, rather than sending a child to primary school, the mother and house matriarch elect to continue the child's education at home. The advantage to this is the continued and personalized attention of numerous tutors and savants. In rare cases, this continues through secondary education, though it robs the student of the opportunity to establish lasting friendships and connections, something that no amount of adult socialization can ever compensate for. If a young Dynast's mother and house matriarch do so, it's almost always because they have a specific role planned for her, and either don't trust educators to properly mold the child, or because they don't want her forming connections that will only trouble her when the time comes to do what she was born to do.

Education

The Realm's educational system is second to none, endowed both by the Scarlet Empress and through generous donations that frequently accompany applications for Dynastic children to study at specific institutions. The system aims to inculcate selected virtues in successive generations of Dynastic scions who'll one day hold the levers of power themselves. The four secondary schools that predominate today exemplify these qualities best — moral leadership and piety; occult insight and the wisdom to use it appropriately; courage and military excellence; and understanding of the mechanisms of rulership itself. The Cloister of Wisdom, Heptagram, House of Bells, and Spiral Academy exist to train the scions of the Dynasty, those enlightened few who will go on to do great things in the Realm's name.

Tutoring

Education begins early in life — typically between ages two and three — when the house matriarch, in concert with the scion's mother, chooses an appropriate series of tutors for early schooling. These are typically patricians, though young Dragon-Blooded fresh from secondary school occasionally spend time on sabbatical tutoring younger relatives. Here, the basics are taught — proper speech, literacy, arithmetic, moral education, and other topics that vary by house. House Tepet begins martial education early; many of their scions enter primary school with significant advantages over their peers in roughhousing. House Cynis prefers a more sybaritic education, focused on inculcating appreciation for fine art and music, as well as a keen eye for gathering lackeys. House Mnemon favors tutelage in mathematics, Immaculate doctrine, and the Realm's history, beginning with the life of the house's founder. All houses teach basic medical treatment, as well as how to recognize the odors and flavors of common poisons — a regrettably necessary precaution.

The goal of this intensive early education is to instill the child with discipline, obedience, respect for superiors, and the ability to be quiet and to learn quickly. They know from a very early age that they're only the latest in a long and honorable line, and that the dignity of the house is in their hands. Should the dominie of the young Dynast's primary school demand anything of her, the child must be ready to respond accordingly — and this capacity is tested at salons and galas throughout her childhood.

Primary School

Patricians and Dynasts are sent off to primary school at the age of nine, already having been through an intense, high-pressure learning environment. Once there, they must cope with no longer being the sole focus of attention for multiple servants and compete with their fellows for their instructors' attention. Class sizes are small, but it's still a ratio of students to teacher rather than tutors to student, and this transition is stressful.

The small minority of Dynastic students are quick to establish hierarchies among their classmates. Staff — from administrators to teachers, from servants to guards — are accustomed to dealing not only with mortal scions of privilege but with fledgling Dragon-Blooded as well. They're polite but firm, and don't allow Exaltation to go a student's head (at least, no more than is appropriate).

As the years mount and pressure grows to prove oneself worthy by taking the Second Breath, the simple friendships and grudges of childhood often give way to ambition and cold cunning. Primary school is likened to a sieve in the Realm, separating chaff from wheat — though in this case, both are children below the age of fourteen, and the wheat is Exaltation separated from the chaff of mortality. It's impossible for the young students to be unaware of the importance of the next few years, especially as classmates Exalt and come to dominate the student body.

Mortal fourth- and fifth-years in particular obsess over Exaltation. Every primary school has strange, secret traditions and rituals intended to ignite the Dragon's blood, handed down from student to desperate student since time immemorial. Some are dangerous, and students sometimes die trying to force Exaltation. In truth, Exaltation cannot be forced in those lacking it — but the peril and stress faced in such foolhardy rituals triggers the actual moment of Exaltation just often enough to keep the legends alive. Teachers and parents alike do all they can to dissuade it, but the stakes are simply too high — immortality and greatness, or a short life of mediocrity.

When students Exalt in primary school, their lives change fundamentally — young Dragon-Blooded are separated from the student body until they can learn to control their newfound abilities, and when they return, they find themselves an ill fit with un-Exalted friends. Some become bullies, tormenting those who'd picked on them before; others drift away, forming new friendships with older students who understand what it's like to be Exalted. Others retain mortal friends as sycophants, sidekicks, or dependents.

There are hundreds of primary schools located around the Blessed Isle, plus a few of lesser quality in satrapies with sizable Dynastic populations or cadet houses. These boarding schools are where children of privilege and power are sent to experience their first taste of the world outside their family's compound. Depending upon the primary school and the family in question, this may be a significant step down in standard of living, but is still suitable for the student's high social rank. Uniforms are laundered each night and ready each morning, filling and nutritious food is served thrice a day, and school grounds are guarded by professionals, typically mustered-out legion veterans.

Even the least prestigious primary schools are walled compounds with courtyards used for exercises; dormitories where students live for most of the year, barring occasional holidays; a dining hall large enough to accommodate the entire student body; classrooms; and a small temple, usually with a resident monk. Wealthier schools boast elaborate gardens, menageries, pools, and the like. The more prestigious the school, the greater the proportion of the student body are Dynasts. Primary schools in isolated backwaters may have only patrician children enrolled — and may be inadequately prepared when one of those children Exalts.

The core curriculum at primary school — mandated by the Illustrious Compilers of the Perfected Curriculum — ranges from geography and culture to hand-to-hand combat. Every student is required to complete at least one advanced course in political or religious studies. This syllabus has scarcely changed over the past few centuries. Tradition is the bedrock of empire, and for all that the Dynasty and the patriciate crave novelty and respect innovation, they maintain a firm view on the importance of the classics. The eldest minister and the most fresh-faced graduate share the same worldview, founded on the same intellectual canon.

In addition to this core curriculum, primary schools often specialize in fields ranging from architecture to naval strategy to poetry to make themselves more attractive to parents and houses of prospective students. A school might specialize in the finer points of the satrapy system, including the economic and spiritual reasons for the Realm's foreign policies, and even organize field trips to satrapies to give students a closer look at their inner workings. On rare occasions, the most prestigious schools may find a Dragon-Blood taking time from her sabbatical to teach a course or two.

The school day begins with devotions, led by the resident monk (if any) or the dominie. Following breakfast, the morning is consumed with intensive study in the core curriculum: history, religion, mathematics, strategy, and the like. The afternoon classes, smaller and more individually focused, are segregated between Exalted and un-Exalted students (as is dining hall seating for all three meals). Afternoon classes cover practical knowledge, including music, public speaking, riding, martial training, and so on, based on

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

Some students are simply uncontrollable, even with Dynastic discipline and the know-how of primary-school educators. In such cases, when parents admit that their children are beyond the help of the usual system, two options remain: the House of Ancient Stone and the Palace of the Tamed Storm. These institutions resemble prisons more than schools, and the harsh punishments they employ will either mold the student into a stern martinet who will excel in positions of rigid authority, break them such that they cannot serve in any but the most restricted of tasks, or kill them. If a child is so unruly as to be fit to attend these institutions, it's a risk their mother and house must be willing to take.

individual students' talents and predilections. Exalted students typically begin their training in mastery of their power here. After dinner, tutelage continues with metaphysical and natural studies, including astrology and geography, until curfew is called. Studying past curfew may be lauded as a sign of diligence, or derided as a mark of poor time-management skills, depending on the student's performance the next day.

Secondary School

As those fortunate few who Exalt approach their fifth year in primary school, the house matriarch meets each scion's mother personally, this time to decide the future course of the child's life. At their disposal are reports from servants, teachers, and spies, detailing every moment of the young Dragon-Blood's life — the choices she's made, her proclivities and talents, and what deficiencies remain to be corrected. Together, they arrange for the child to attend one of the Realm's four great secondary schools: the Cloister of Wisdom, the House of Bells, the Heptagram, and the Spiral Academy. The choice they make is for the good of the house, the Dynasty, and the child, in that order.

Acceptance to a secondary school isn't guaranteed, though matriarch and mother take great pains to ensure that the child stands out. Secondary schools don't charge tuition, but rely on "generous donations" provided by the prospective student's house and family. While this largesse may not influence admissions on paper, in practice, the best way to ensure one's child is accepted is to promise the largest donation.

Each of the four schools has a specialized curriculum, focusing on a specific approach to power and rule. But each nonetheless provides tutelage outside its primary focus, for every Dynast must be well rounded. A great general must be able to charm and mingle, both for diplomacy and marriageability; sorcerers and bureaucrats alike require training in self-defense; even abbots need to know how to manage a budget.

In addition to the skills and knowledge needed to rule, secondary schools also provide fertile ground for the development of social networks. Young Dragon-Blooded who meet in secondary school often become fast friends. The connections they make here and now will serve them throughout their careers, wherever they may take them; decisions are far more often made among old school friends at salons and galas than amid bureaucratic offices and legislative chambers.

Alternatives

Not all Dragon-Blooded are destined for these august institutions. Some lack the advantages of birth or wealth; some are considered uneducable by decent institutions; some are simply guided to such ends by the whim of the house matriarch. For these scions, a handful of lesser institutions exist to serve their educational needs.

Most of these lesser secondary schools educate students destined for the legions, the navy, or the Thousand Scales — several ministerial schools cluster around the Spiral Academy in a conglomeration called the "Outer Coil" — and most of their students are mortal Dynasts or patricians. One or two instructors at the most prestigious of these schools will be Dragon-Blooded, but the vast majority are mortal. Dragon-Blooded Dynasts who attend such schools — either by design, because

MORTAL STUDENTS

While most students who attend these four august institutions are Dragon-Blooded, each school does, with some regularity, admit highly exceptional mortal students. To even be competitive, such a prospective student must demonstrate excellence throughout her primary school career and have a motivated mother and house matriarch able to work back channels to ensure their scion isn't dismissed out of hand. As a result, almost every mortal secondary school student is an un-Exalted Dynast — only the most influential Thousand Scales patrician families have the resources and connections necessary to manage such a feat.

Even after being accepted, the mortal student must continue to excel. Unlike primary school, there's no separate mortal standard to meet — she must hold her own against Exalted students or be dismissed, a great shame that forever tars her with the stench of hubris. Dragon-Blooded students are rarely accepting of mortals who dare to compete with them, and so the mortal will endure a double measure of hazing from fellow first-years as well as senior students. If she runs this gauntlet and graduates successfully, she's proven she can keep up even with her spiritual deficit, and her house is certain to make good use of her.

they washed out of somewhere more prestigious, or because they Exalted late and failed to transfer to one of the four greater schools — may be preeminent among their peers during their education, but after graduation, they often lack many of the high-society connections enjoyed by attendees of the major schools. On the other hand, the connections they've formed with their less-distinguished classmates are assets that their Great House can lean on for decades.

Below these less-than-august institutions is a third tier of schools scattered throughout the Threshold. These are attended by members of cadet houses and the children of satrapial advisors, alongside scions of the province's wealthy and powerful mortal families. Dynasts rarely attend such schools, and those who do are loath to admit it.

Aside from all these alternatives stands Pasiap's Stair, the military academy for lost eggs (p. 101) who take the coin. Its highly focused curriculum is extremely challenging, and a rare few Dynasts enroll to test the limits of their stamina.

The Cloister of Wisdom

Clarity, tranquility, and purpose. Master yourself, master your Essence — from this, all else flows. This is the first lesson students at the Cloister of Wisdom receive, and it may take some time for it to settle in, but the faculty here is nothing if not patient. First-year students spend much of their time in meditation. Other aspects of the curriculum aren't neglected — as they advance, students will study the Immaculate Texts and commentaries thereon, ethics, rhetoric, oratory, and a host of other subjects both mundane and esoteric. But first priority is given to ensuring that students cultivate a proper meditative state and master their Essence, which the Cloister holds as fundamental to all education.

The Cloister of Wisdom is an unassuming-looking monastic compound in Incas Prefecture, located near the Palace Sublime. Here, the students — fewer than at the Spiral Academy or House of Bells, many of them lost eggs who've taken the razor — live as monks do, sleeping on bamboo mats and eating only rice and vegetables, rising with the sun for prayer before spending day and evening in study and meditation. The faculty are nearly all Immaculate monks. It's the greatest honor for a lay expert to be invited to a teaching position here.

Monks enforce the same discipline that they themselves follow. When young Dragon-Blooded arrive at the Cloister, they're fresh from the dizzying heights of Exaltation and often drunk on their own power. Here, they're treated as the lowest novices, even by mortal monks who — though eminently respectful — don't hesitate to inform their spiritual betters of how the students err. It's not uncommon for unruly students to be set to hours upon hours of meditation to calm their furious Essence; if their disposition doesn't improve, this vigil stretches into days or even weeks. The monks are practiced at taming prideful young Dragon-Blooded. Woe betide the young Prince who responds to discipline by lashing out, for though she is mighty, her instructors are mightier still, capable of martial feats she can scarcely imagine.

Exposure to such prowess is one of the benefits of the Cloister's monastic education. All students receive combat training alongside their mental and spiritual curriculum, instructed in martial arts — both the Immaculate Dragon styles (p. 286) and secular alternatives — by the finest the Realm has to offer. Studying the martial arts cultivates mental and physical discipline, serves as a means of self-defense, and helps young Dragon-Blooded master the inner mysteries of their Essence.

When they graduate, students of the Cloister of Wisdom carry with them — more than the knowledge and skill they gained in study — a serenity unseen outside the most remote Immaculate monasteries. Though the world around her may rage and the storm may lash at her, a Cloister graduate's innermost Essence is calm, centered, and aware. She's ready for anything — even the quiet work in the shadows that a few graduates of this hallowed institution are earmarked for. An Immaculate monk is visible at a glance, but one who carries out the Order's work without taking monastic vows can walk unseen even by the most impious and wicked of eyes, passing on what she learns to her superiors. Less than half of all Cloister graduates take vows and join the Immaculate Order, but those who graduate to a secular life frequently remain sympathetic to the Order's aims. The Order prides itself on being well informed, and those students they've taken on to mold in their own image are many individual streams that feed a great river.

The Heptagram

Wisdom, fortitude, and drive. All these are necessary to become a sorcerer, for the way of pure Essence isn't easily trod, nor is it for the faint of heart. For those with the aptitude, and whose families allow them to study such arts, the Heptagram beckons. Those accepted journey to the Isle of Voices for seven years of

personal tutelage from what the Dynasty deems the finest sorcerers of not only the Realm, but all Creation, and when they emerge, they're never quite the same. Sorcery occupies a curious place in the Realm's estimation, being both a questionable practice and a great boon that none can truly ignore. Only at the Heptagram is it wholeheartedly celebrated.

Cold, windswept, and isolated, the Heptagram occupies much of the Isle of Voices, a craggy outcropping of rock off the Blessed Isle's northern coast. Approach is impossible save by a preordained path and with the appropriate mystical seals — bound demons, elementals, and other occult wards drive away any who come to the Isle under false pretenses. The school itself consists of six towers encircling a seventh in perfect geomantic harmony. Outer towers are filled with laboratories, summoning circles, and rare equipment and materials necessary for magical practice. The central tower contains faculty and student lodgings and the Heptagram's only lecture hall, wherein each student holds an assigned seat. Food is prepared and the lands maintained by bound elementals and demons, weighted down with wards and geasa to ensure their obedience.

No more than a few dozen students are enrolled at the Heptagram at any given time, while more than half as many sorcerers and savants make up the faculty — among them the occasional visiting Sidereal Exalt, her identity concealed from all but a handful of other residents. Study is at once carefully guided and autodidactic, with students pursuing their own chosen course of study once the basics have been impressed upon them. No sorcerer truly treads the same path as any other, despite the unified design of the Heptagram's curriculum; the faculty allows students to find their own way, advising them individually as needed. Classes aren't kept to a fixed schedule — lectures on specific subjects are announced well in advance, and frequently the entire student body attends them. Practical courses follow the same routine, convening when the master sorcerer teaching it chooses to. Vast libraries of approved material, organized into tiers based on utility and danger, are at the disposal of students who've qualified to read them — one entire tower is occupied by nothing but books, scrolls, and ancient tablets, each floor a new series of mysteries, each tome a lifetime's study rendered in ink.

This autodidactic tendency doesn't mean that study at the Heptagram is easy or lackadaisical. Students have seven years to master the art of sorcery — seven years, no more, for what many spend a mortal lifetime attempting. Despite the high teacher-to-student ratio, professors find themselves swamped with requests for notes on a thesis, assistance in a summoning ritual,



THE QUIET ART

Sorcery occupies a curious place in the popular imagination of the Realm. Dynasts find sorcerers off-putting, wary of their strange powers and frequent congress with demons and other spirits. Sorcerers have powers that others simply cannot understand or predict, especially as much of the Realm's body of sorcerous knowledge is carefully concealed. Sorcerers, therefore, aren't trusted. Patricians follow the lead of their social betters, while peasants harbor any number of suspicions regarding sorcerers and their unnatural servants.

But by the same token, sorcery is such a valuable asset that no house will willingly forsake it. Sorcerers can expect to have all their needs provided for, but they'll never be popular. Much of society is highly inconvenient for a known sorcerer to navigate. The stereotype of the sorcerer locked in her high tower, conducting the-Dragons-only-know-what rituals, isn't always an artifact of a sorcerer's natural studiousness, but often of her peers ostracizing her. Visitors invariably come wanting something from the sorcerer, and leave as soon as they've secured it. The life of a Dynastic sorcerer is almost always a lonely one.

or any number of other tasks. Independent study and experimentation must be carefully balanced with lecture and practical course attendance, and there's never enough time in the day.

Graduation from the Heptagram isn't assured. Not all have the ephemeral natural potential to initiate into sorcery's mysteries, let alone the self-discipline or desire to meet their teachers' high expectations. While most students drive themselves to successfully complete their course of study, a handful return home in disgrace — or don't return home at all. The graveyard beyond the school's walls, carefully tended by spirits, serves only to drive the others ever harder.

The House of Bells

Courage, strength, and discipline. These are the watchwords of the legions, and so too are they the watchwords of the House of Bells, the premier military academy in the Realm, dedicated to training the next generation of Dynastic officers who'll rise through the ranks to command troops in the Empress' name. The curriculum isn't easy, but the end product is a well-rounded commander who'll earn the respect of soldiers beneath her even as she obeys her superiors' dictates.

Sprawling over hundreds of acres in the countryside near Arjuf city, the House of Bells has by far the largest campus of the four schools, consisting of massive fields, forests, marshes, and other arenas of warfare, all carefully managed to replicate potential battle conditions. At the heart of the grounds are the barracks, communal mess hall, classrooms, and faculty residence. To the south, along the coastline, is an artificial bay used to train students in naval maneuvers and boarding in combat. Nearby villages offer environments for urban warfare training, housing for the school's staff, and limited recreation opportunities for students. The school's grounds are encircled by a low wall that serves only to mark the boundary — students aren't permitted to leave the grounds without special permission from the dominie, and requesting permission usually earns a student her fellows' disdain.

Hundreds of students, spread out over seven years, attend this institution, divided into fangs of five who sleep in the same barracks and are graded as a unit. This promotes communal responsibility, and ensures that candidates not ideally suited for the House of Bells usually make it through alive. Accidents happen even in the safest of places, though, and it's a rare year without at least one cadet suffering serious injury or even dying — those who do so are given a reverent memorial ceremony and summarily listed as graduating with honors. Failing out is much more common, for the House of Bells doesn't wish to have a reputation as an abattoir. Traditionally, the Imperial legions rejected House of Bells dropouts from ever holding any officer's post. The new house legions, desperate for loyal officers, are less picky, but still much prefer a proper graduate, sometimes to the extent of promoting them above those whose mothers paid handsomely for their position. Graduation from the House of Bells remains a mark of distinction and merit, and anyone who can claim that honor will be welcome in any army.

Study at the House of Bells is grueling, taking its toll on body, mind, and spirit all at once. Cadets rise before the sun for physical training, including calisthenics, stretches, and a three-mile run, the older and more seasoned often driving the younger before them lest they fall behind and the faculty catch them flagging. The remainder of the day is spent either in intense and unforgiving study or on maneuvers.

Cadets must prove themselves capable in such subjects as small-unit tactics, strategy, military history, logistics, and command ethics. Older cadets specialize, training closely under faculty whose experience matches their ambitions. A budding naval commander may train under Peleps Nalani, whose belt is notched seven times, once for the head of each Lintha captain she personally took on a pirate-hunting campaign in the West; a would-be cavalry commander might study with Iruga Nagor, an outcaste who literally wrote the book on countering Marukani tactics and who, it's whispered in the barracks, hides a shrine to Hiparkes in his study. The academic day ends well after sundown. Students collapse into bed exhausted, only to be driven from their beds a few hours later to begin the cycle once more.

Two days out of seven, the classroom is left behind and cadets take the field. They're typically divided into two armies, with older cadets taking command positions and squads of younger cadets filling out the rank and file. (Other field trials include free-for-alls, naval and shipboard combat, and hunting condemned criminals offered their freedom if they can escape the school grounds.) While these armies have no official name, squads often have a preferred title for their ersatz legion, and should the commanding officer come from that squad she'll make damned certain her subordinates know under what banner they fight. These titles have a habit of following squads even after they graduate, occasionally serving as a name for a Sworn Kinship.

The Spiral Academy

Knowledge, subtlety, and precision. The Spiral Academy teaches one lesson, and teaches it well: One cannot rule without understanding what one rules. The Realm is as complex as any living entity — flows of commerce, information, and power stand in for blood and Essence, and the myriad ministries of the Thousand Scales form its heart and mind. The Spiral Academy, largest of the four great secondary schools by student enrollment, trains its students in the Imperial Service's workings not because they'll inevitably serve as functionaries within its endless, winding corridors, but because if they wish to rule, they must understand this beast whose reins they hold.

Seated in the heart of the Imperial City, the Spiral Academy is surrounded by tall walls — though the campus isn't closed, students are frequently so besieged with work they find little time to take advantage of this. Students are put through the scholastic wringer, studying culture, forms of government, moral theory, and — most importantly of all — the mechanics of rulership. What time isn't spent in study is spent processing paperwork for "apprenticeships," usually that of the Thousand Scales or local mercantile concerns. The Spiral Academy takes a modest commission for the labor, making it by far the wealthiest of the four great secondary schools — it uses this wealth to secure the very best faculty available, who might otherwise enrich themselves by following their own careers. Even a few years on the staff of the Spiral Academy can make a teacher wealthy.

Many students believe they're being trained to push paper and nothing more, and a few in every graduating year find themselves doing that, but most graduates from this august institution find themselves moving not into the ministries of the Thousand Scales, but into satrapial governance, prefectural and gubernatorial posts, or administrative roles within their houses. For the finest, it meant elevation into the Empress' personal circle of

SECRET SOCIETIES

While every secondary institution has some form of secret society culture that's passed on from elder students to younger, the Spiral Academy has the most extensive such social network, with no fewer than seven active, major secret societies. The Sorority of Dutiful Beheaders is pledged to uncovering corrupt judges and officials, while members of the Jewel-Strung Web coordinate to ensure each other's mutual benefit and prosperity. Secret codes, handshakes, even entire languages are used, all of which contribute to a society's mystique and camaraderie.

After the social meat grinder that is primary school, most Spiral Academy attendees are ready to see others, even fellow Dragon-Blooded, as stepping-stones to personal power and prestige, and these secret societies are perfect vehicles for their ongoing ambitions. To their elders, who maintain ties through faculty and staff at the Spiral Academy, these youngsters are extra bodies in their personal struggles, and students frequently find themselves caught up in various officials' schemes, skulking through the vast imperial archives or attending exclusive tea houses in those elders' names for reasons the students can only guess at.

ministers, who had the duty of translating her edicts into law and passing it down to the rest of the government.

The Spiral Academy serves one additional purpose — a finishing school for spies. All students learn the basics of cryptography, observation, and other essential forms of tradecraft as part of basic diplomacy courses. Ostensibly these skills are meant to be used against native governments in satrapies, but even the dullest student by now understands that every Great House spies upon every other as a matter of course. In addition, a secret curriculum of advanced classes in espionage and subterfuge known as the Garden of Unheard Whispers exists within the school, to which students are only admitted if they discover that it exists.

Pasiap's Stair

Outcastes destined for service in the Imperial legions train at the specialized secondary school called Pasiap's Stair. Like the House of Bells, it's known for its grueling, even torturous curriculum. Unlike the House of Bells, however, the Stair cares not for the largesse of the Great Houses. Pasiap's Stair occupies an ancient fortress-manse in the Mhaltin range northeast of the Dragonswrath Desert, atop the jagged slopes of Gray Mask Mountain.

The Stair announces its nature the moment it appears on the horizon: You will find no comfort here. The eponymous stairs of the academy wend their way up the mountain's face, just wide enough for two to walk abreast, and both storerooms and barracks are hewn deep into the cold, dark stone itself. For classes and field exercises, the cadets descend the stairs to the desert's edge. Life at the Stair is unpleasant at the best of times, intolerable at the worst, but such is the ten-year crucible that refines rough and diverse outcastes into a disciplined, unified fighting force that has held the world in thrall for seven centuries.

A few hundred students reside in the Stair at a time, with a like number of faculty and support staff — other services for the institution are based in the nearby town of On-Sha. Students are grouped into fangs of five, and all punishments are collective. They drill morning and night, and spend the intervening hours studying tactics, mathematics, the Immaculate philosophy, and other subjects intended to compensate for their lack of Dynastic upbringing. Older students pair with their juniors as advisors and trainers, passing along valuable skills and inculcating them with the Stair's esprit-de-corps.

DROPPING OUT AND SABBATICALS

Failing to complete secondary education limits a Dynast's options, restricting her from holding important offices in the Thousand Scales and staining her reputation. If she pursues further education and a career, her family won't entirely ignore her, but she'll still miss out on important social functions — no one wants to show off the daughter who didn't quite make it.

More often, a better path is to eschew the main track of Dynastic life entirely, traveling and socializing not simply within the Realm but throughout the Threshold. A Dynastic dropout who does well for herself on her own terms can win acceptance from her family and peers, and once she settles down will find a great many more doors open to her.

Similarly, though most Dynasts have a position within the family and possibly within the Thousand Scales lined up for them upon their coming of age, many choose instead to delay entry into these careers, enjoying life after a childhood of grueling training and study. This is practically expected of all young Dragon-Blooded, and no shame is attached to doing so — no one offers a post to a recent graduate without understanding that it might be a few seasons before they turn up.

While most families lean on young Dynasts to end a sabbatical after a year or two, those who travel far and wide as part of their sabbatical are given a much longer leash. Dynastic families believe that broad experiences are healthy and important for the young, and may be willing to hold off for a decade or more, knowing that when their scion returns, she'll be far more capable than if she'd simply toed the line all the while.

Of course, with the threat of civil war looming, a great many messengers have been dispatched across the Threshold and the Realm — healthy experiences mean nothing next to the approaching struggle for the throne.

Studies at Pasiap's Stair revolve mainly around strategy, tactics, and the logistical realities of warfare. Entire courses exist to drill students on the proper way to swing a sword or negotiate unfriendly terrain in combat. More advanced students move on to drilling green cadets, the better to prepare for training the enlisted once assigned to a legion, which they almost certainly will be. One either graduates Pasiap's Stair or dies in the process — occasionally, murdered by one's comrades for holding them back and thrown from the edge of the fortress. Such deaths, generally put down as sleepwalking accidents, are known by the euphemism "walking off the mountain."

Outcastes at the Stair with a talent for sorcery receive training in battle magic. The school has no sorcerers permanently on staff, instead borrowing faculty from the Heptagram, or sorcerers on sabbatical or retired from the legions.

The end of each term is marked by the Feast of Spears, a final exam where students are pitted against one another in an enormous battle, serving as officers in armies staffed with slaves or soldiers on loan from legions stationed nearby — tenth-year students serve as generals, with younger students occupying suitably lower officer ranks. A grand feast follows the battle, and graduating students are finally allowed to relax for a moment —the next day, they leave for the Imperial City to be sponsored into the legions.

But the legions aren't what they were. Now owned by the Great Houses, the quality of leadership in the legions has plummeted as unqualified scions of privilege are promoted over time-tested officers, and the purge of outcastes from the ranks of house legions bodes poorly for graduates. Where the commissioning of graduates was once a formality, it's now a bureaucratic and social nightmare as representatives from the house legions find excuses to reject every outcaste who passes through the Stair.

Coming of Age

When they graduate at the age of twenty-one, Dynasts (both Exalted and un-Exalted) are considered adults and full members of their respective houses. This both grants privileges and imposes responsibilities — far more of the latter, most Dynastic youths would say.

A young Dynast's coming of age is always marked with a gala, though galas for the un-Exalted are less lavish and well-attended than those for Dragon-Blooded. The latter are grand displays, celebrating the addition of a new Prince of the Earth to the house's rolls. Indeed, part of the ritual of this celebration is the public amendment of the family register to formally signify the new Dynast's status. All eyes will be on her — secondary school was but an introductory course for the pressure that starts to weigh on the young Dynast.

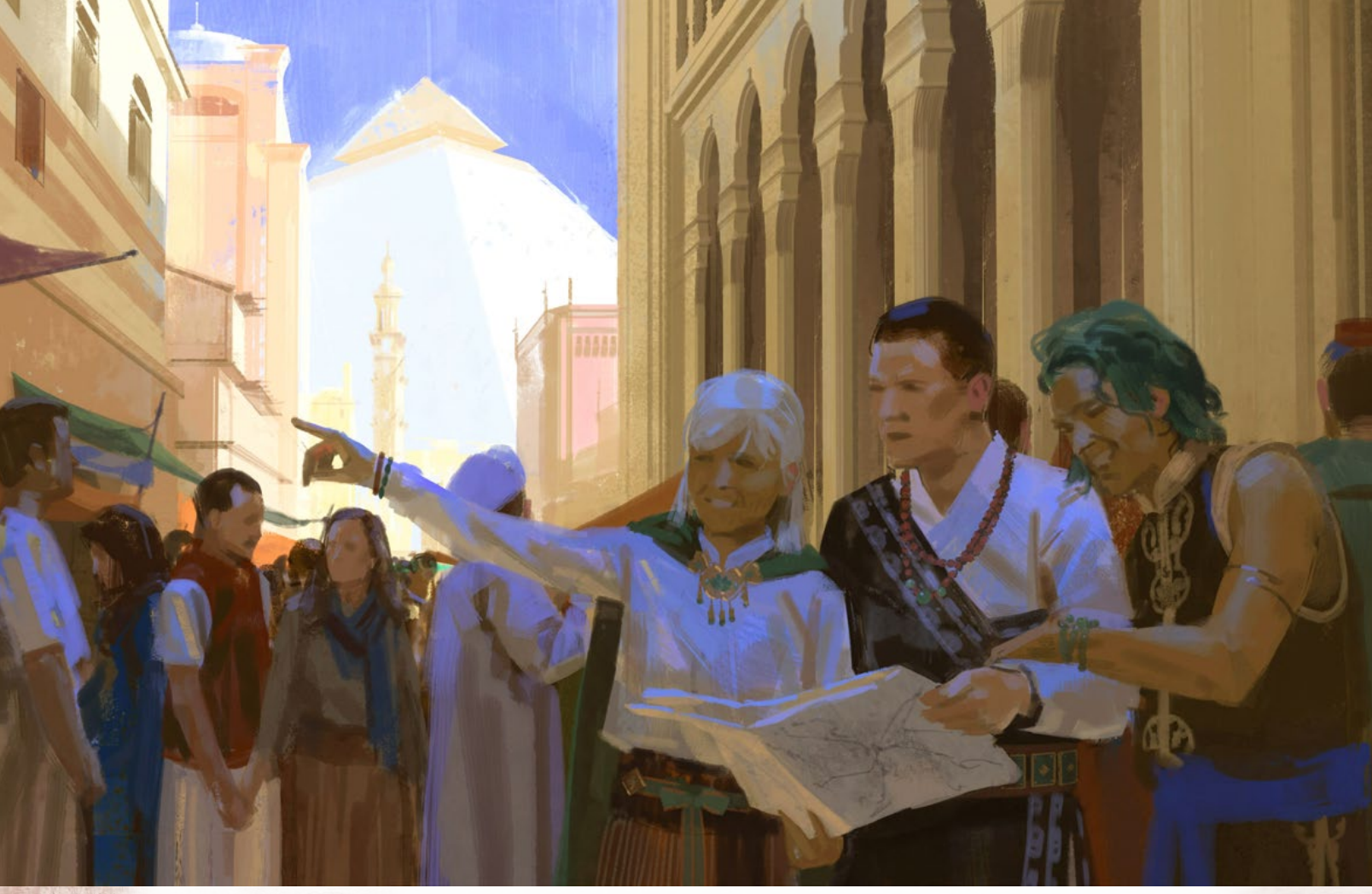
Part of the attention she receives is from Dynastic parents sizing her up as a potential fiancée for their children. The coming-of-age gala marks the opening of marriage negotiations between the Dynast's family and other houses, which typically go on for a decade. Arranged marriages are complicated bargains between the parents' houses, not to be embarked on lightly, and certainly not without a clear sense of how each affianced partner's career will progress.

Following the gala, young Dynasts are often given leave to truly relax for the first time in their lives. During this time, consultations take place regarding the future of the newly minted Dragon-Blood, with her mother and the matriarch weighing every factor, every report from every member of faculty from primary school on up. Sometimes, the Dynast herself will even be allowed input — a sign of great trust, but also of great expectations.

A Dynast graduating from the House of Bells has traditionally been all but assured a commission in the legions or her house's paramilitary forces. This post would usually be as a scalelord, but the mother and house matriarch would pull what strings they could, and the children of the well-connected were occasionally promoted beyond their level of experience — such are referred to by their more experienced subordinates as "unhatched eggs." A martially inclined Dynast unable to secure a satisfactory position in the legions and uninterested in a less-prestigious post in the house's private forces would often take a sabbatical and travel, either for pleasure or as part of a Wyld Hunt, until either an appropriate post opened up or she impressed an officer with sufficient pull to bring her on as a staff officer.

The situation has changed much in the last five years. A Dynast with military training will almost always have a post secured by her mother waiting for her in one of their houses' legions. Once given leave to improve themselves, Dragon-Blooded with even a sliver of military experience are now being jealously hoarded by the Great Houses, for while each knows that swords will inevitably be drawn, none can say when.

Those without military training, and particularly those with business acumen, are often put to work overseeing the house's commercial interests. This may or may not correspond with the individual Dynast's interests, and it's unlikely that said Dynast's mother consulted her about the post ahead of time. Those who display a particularly astute sense of social and political matters are often guided towards the Deliberative or the Thousand Scales.



A Dynast who masters sorcery receives from her house everything she needs to practice her art. She's unlikely to be called upon save when the family has need of her services, or when she's about to be married — rare is the Dynast who can shake the Realm's distrust of sorcerers, even relatives beholden to the same house.

Marking Time

The Great Houses bide their time assessing marriage options for their scions, taking years to press for the best possible match. In the interim, many young graduates (or dropouts, for that matter) spend their time adventuring in the Threshold. Others move immediately into careers in the Imperial Service, or find roles in the house's business interests or other familial projects.

When an unmarried Dynast stays in one place, she's rarely on her own. Instead, it's normal for her to attach herself to an existing household run by an older relative. There she lives as a member of the household, attending social events and making her particular talents available to the house matriarch as needed, whether by tutoring younger relatives, training the household guard, or spying on a rival household.

THE GRAND TOUR

It's common practice for young Dynasts fresh from secondary school to tour the satrapies, the better to understand the world they command — and to taste its pleasures. There are many traditional routes; the most oft-followed leads Dragon-Blooded youths down the Caracal to the cosmopolitan port of Arjuf, and thence to the wealthy, storied city-states of the South and to the worshipful lands of the Southwest. Travelers wonder at the cryptic orreries of Varangia, admire the glass towers of Chiaroscuro and the sand-worn stelae of Zephyr, delight in the aromatic cuisine and obedient youths of An-Teng, and hunt the weird jungle beasts of the Silent Crescent. This is both a time for recreation and a chance for Dragon-Blooded to test their Exalted prowess outside of an academic setting. They return home more experienced and cosmopolitan, bearing mementos plundered from exotic lands and trophies of daring adventures — often along with a supply of foreign luxuries they've grown accustomed to.

DUELING

Formalized combat over matters of pride is an ancient, albeit somewhat informal, tradition of the Scarlet Dynasty. However, the Empress forbade duels to the death between Dynasts, preferring that her children shed their blood against her enemies rather than against one another; she personally tasked violators with difficult, prolonged, and humiliating responsibilities as punishment. However, since her disappearance, violators with powerful family or friends have been able to secure pardons the Empress would've never permitted, leading to a resurgence of lethal duels.

Income and Spending

Dynasts need not labor for their coin. The Great Houses are astonishingly wealthy, a fortune dwarfed only by the Empress' own.

Every Dynast, when she comes of age, receives a stipend from her house that would boggle the average patrician, let alone a peasant — though for her, it's just enough for her to live on in a manner that isn't a total embarrassment to her and her family. It might buy a small manor in the country, or a modest townhouse in a city (or a yet more modest one, more akin to a sizable apartment, in the Imperial City, where costs are far higher). This stipend increases for married daughters, who are expected to support their husbands, and increases further for every child the daughter bears, Exalted or un-Exalted, until they come of age. The stipend may also be increased after the Dynast performs a particularly noteworthy task or service, or for spending a decade or more handling house business, so elder Dragon-Blooded frequently draw a significant income from their house alone.

Dynasts who find work — either independently or in the Imperial Service — can supplement their stipend with an income, giving them breathing room and allowing them to spend far more lavishly than their peers. Dynasts almost never carry cash; when they take what they will from a shop or teahouse, their stewards and seneschals arrange financial compensation. This is rarely as much as shopkeepers normally charge — they should be honored to receive the patronage of a Prince of the Earth. (And the prestige of a Dynast's repeat custom can be worth its weight in jade.)

And what wonders they can afford! Shops in the Imperial City and prefectural capitals carry handwoven silks dyed in Southern cochineal or Tyrian purple from the West; exotic drugs such as peyote from the South, salvia from the far East, and kava root from the Wavecrest Archipelago; and intricate clockwork timepieces and trifles of Varangian make. Food stalls offer the cuisine of countless satrapies — fried yucca from the Lap, Prasadi curries, candied hawthorn from Goldenseal, Saltbreak caviar — as street food for shopping Dynasts.

In addition, a Dynast rarely travels alone. She's accompanied by aides, bodyguards, valets, and other flunkies, and often gathers an entourage of cronies and hangers-on, stretching her stipend to cover their various needs and entertainments in exchange for their service, talents, and company. These are typically patricians, although a peasant or foreigner who catches a Dynast's eye can easily become a favorite. Even the most sycophantic of these generally has some combat training or practical experience; one never knows when they'll have to fend off an assassin or join an impromptu Wyld Hunt.

Dynasts who travel or adventure can survive on their stipend quite easily, assuming they live relatively modestly. Many supplement this income through service to others, though no self-respecting Dragon-Blooded will take on menial labor — carving the pillars that will hold up a temple's roof is one thing, but tiling that roof is quite another.

Of course, even with their house's stipend, and even with supplementary income, Dynasts often outspend their means. No house wants a debtor on their hands — it's an easy way for an unscrupulous third party to pressure Dynasts to pull strings, take direct action, and even work against house interests. House Ragara in particular thrives on the debt of their cousins, but they're far from the only financial actors in the Realm to do so; Imperial courts are known to place heavily indebted Dragon-Blooded at the disposal of the state, assigning duties to them that they might work off their debt. Houses therefore curtail the stipends of spendthrift scions, assigning them seneschals who control their finances to ensure that while they maintain Dynastic standards, they're unable to continue spending themselves into a hole. For truly legendary cases of indebtedness, a debtor might be encouraged to spend a few years "traveling" in the Threshold while their house settles accounts and smooths over frayed relationships.

IMPERIAL AND HOUSE PATENTS

The Scarlet Empress rewarded businesses in the Imperial City whose proprietors she wished to raise to prominence or whose goods earned her favor by issuing them Imperial patents. These businesses are permitted to display the Empress' personal mon beside their door, proclaiming to their customers that they're doing business with the same merchants as the Empress herself. Matriarchs of the Great Houses and the heads of major bloodlines (p. 34) have followed her example, issuing house patents to businesses both in the Imperial City and in prefectural capitals. Everyone in the Realm knows that the number of house mons displayed by a business' door is a sure indicator of quality — and the owners of such stores know they can afford high markups on prices. The penalty for using the Imperial or a house mon for business without a patent is death.

Society

In any city on the Blessed Isle, there's always a party going on somewhere. High society is the glue that holds the Dynasty together. The Realm even has its own taxonomy for different types of party, though these are descriptive rather than prescriptive.

Salons are informal private gatherings — at least, informal for Dynastic high society; attendees are often dressed to the nines and doing everything they can to show off. Typically arranged by a single Dynast, a salon may run for days on end, and can be for any purpose: recounting war stories, Gateway tournaments, gossiping about the current workings of the Deliberative, poetry-writing competitions, and so on, almost always with ample time for attendees to relax and overindulge in food, drink, narcotics, and each other. Business is sometimes transacted at salons, but it's almost always informal backroom deals. Salons are, by and large, for cutting loose, away from the prying eyes of the peasantry and patricians, away from the demands of house and family — at least, on the surface. Few can ever *truly* forget what their house's interests are, or what's required of them, but they dearly love to pretend that they can.

Galas, by contrast, are *very* formal, typically arranged either by a house or by a group of Dynasts. They tend to begin early and end very, very late — sometimes days later. No one ever brings less than her best to a gala (and never the same best twice!), unless it's to flaunt her provocative disregard for what her peers think, or the product of hopeless social ineptitude. The hosts likewise spare no expense; these parties are the epitome of conspicuous consumption. A gala is such a massive social occasion that politeness dictates inviting every Dynast in the region, whether one wants to or not — the best means of avoiding an undesirable acquaintance is to arrange the affair for a date they're unavailable, and lament the misfortune loudly when it's "discovered."

The smallest galas, for personal events such as birthday celebrations, are somewhat more private. In such cases, the guest list can be restricted to family and confidants, and invitations to such events are usually reserved for those the host is trying to build connections with.

Some Great Houses (particularly House Nellens) make a habit of inviting the occasional patrician to galas, while others (particularly House Mnemon) are loath to do so. It's unthinkable to refuse such an invitation — for a patrician, the chance to rub shoulders with Dynasts can change the course of her career.

Galas aren't typically a venue to openly transact business. However, they may celebrate transactions that have already taken place, especially in the case of the wedding gala. These highly ritualized galas, wherein an Imperial judge registers two betrothed Dynasts as a married couple, are perhaps the height of Dynastic conspicuous consumption, with both Great Houses (or households, if the marriage is within the house) competing to outdo the other. A monk is traditionally a part of this ceremony, but her presence isn't legally required. The presiding Imperial judge has little opportunity to enjoy the wedding gala at leisure, as attendees throng her in hopes of persuading (or bribing) her to favor them in upcoming cases.

Celebrations are public festivals, open even to the peasantry. For this reason, Dragon-Blooded rarely spend much effort on them, and they're often instead planned by patricians or un-Exalted Dynasts. Celebrations are less lavish than other parties, and Dynasts follow suit, wearing less ostentatious fashions. Dynasts mind their behavior at a celebration — the peasants are watching, and no Dynast's parent wants to be called up in front of their matriarch to explain how they failed to instill a sufficient amount of decorum in their offspring. Assassinations are especially rare at these events; when they do happen, they're usually disguised as an accident or rely on slow-acting poison.

Visits cover all the various circumstances where Dynasts play host to others. This may concern intimate

business between Dynasts, which may be financial, political, or personal in nature. At other times, visitors are simply in the area on other business — such as a hunting trip, negotiating with foreign merchants, or investigating corruption in a ministerial office — and visiting fellow Dynasts is the most suitable option for lodgings.

Usually arranged in advance, a visit begins with leisure: hunting, enjoying a private performance or a collection of art, and the like. If there's any prosaic business at the heart of the visit, the day goes by without a word of it, and only after the last meal of the day do negotiations begin. If the visit stretches for several days, the formula repeats itself. A day of leisure ends with dinner before negotiations resume; only the most gauche or desperate of Dynasts will discuss business before dinner. This doesn't mean the day is wasted — coded language, oblique references, and the like are often used to set the stage for open negotiation, and frequently both partners come to the table fully aware of what's about to be discussed.

Sometimes, of course, Dynasts just visit each other without any political or financial purpose — to spend time with an old friend or distant cousin, for instance, or to court a potential lover. If there's no business to be discussed, a visit is more akin to a small, exclusive salon — the two Dynasts (and their families, if present) will simply enjoy themselves, or at least pretend to do so.

Traditionally, a host must accept a guest without complaint, and provide for her every need. To fail in this charge is a considerable mark of shame not only on the host but upon her house. There's no question of restitution, but the visitor will commonly make some manner of gift to the host. Only if he *greatly* overstays his welcome, egregiously violates rules of hospitality, or refuses to provide an appropriate visitor's gift, may the host withdraw her hospitality, and even then an appropriate excuse for the house being unlivable must be found. Conversely, those who abuse the rules of hospitality surrounding visits may well find their house finding reasons to keep them at home full-time to avoid embarrassment.

Marriage & Children

The blood of the Dragons is the most sacred trust given to the Princes of the Earth, more precious than artifacts or titles. Only the preservation of Creation itself weighs as heavily on the Dragon-Blooded host as the duty to pass on this gift. It's a religious and moral obligation to Realm, house, and all living beings to ensure that the blessing of Exaltation doesn't die with the individual Dragon-Blood. Furthermore, it forms webs of political connections and personal obligations between fractious Dragon-Blooded families, reinforcing the stability of the Realm (and incidentally benefiting the households and houses involved). As such, marriage was traditionally a duty matched only in solemnity by the Wyld Hunt, and in these fallen days, the Great Houses value it far above hunting Anathema.

GATEWAY

The game of Gateway is the favorite pastime of the Scarlet Dynasty. It's a complex, strategy-based board game played on a tiered board with a variety of distinct pieces — animals carved from gemstones or ivory in most Dynastic households, or abstractions of wood and metal for lesser sets. Gateway has between two and five players; depending on the number of players, their level of skill, and the depth of their tactics, a single game can last hours, days, or even weeks. Students in secondary school, especially the House of Bells and Pasiap's Stair, will play prolonged games a few moves at a time, honing their strategic thinking, while it's a mainstay of Dynastic social events.

Legionnaires, children, and foreigners often use Gateway sets to play other, less intricate games. These include quick, aggressive Hunting Cat; Guardian Gate, geared for alliance-building and treachery; and the allegorical solitaire game Spirit-Frog.

A young Dynast can expect years to pass between graduation from secondary school and marriage. During this time, the scion's family negotiates and schemes to find the best possible match for her, often of a similar age. Each family attempts to get the better end of the deal, looking for matches above their station for sons, and for husbands who can bring in strong blood for daughters.

Both families gain political connections they can draw upon, but only the wife's house will gain Dragon-Blooded children. In exchange, the bride's house pays the husband's stipend for the duration of the marriage. This is generally considered a poor trade, however, so a bride's family must typically find a groom of slightly lower status to compensate. Extremely prominent sons of the Great Houses often have problems finding suitable matches, as nobody wants their daughter overshadowed by her husband. These sons often end up marrying women of significantly lesser status, for whom the alliance involved is a great boon, and from whose family a sizable dowry is required.

The vast majority of Dynasts accept these arranged marriages, never considering alternative matches outside of idle daydreams of what might have been. Even those few who seek to marry for love are rarely able to convince their elders to accept the love match over their carefully planned and negotiation selection. A handful succeed, either through clever negotiation with both families or because they're too insignificant or stubborn to be worth pressing the issue. In these cases, the young couple must usually make do with the explicit and exasperated withdrawal of their families' protests.

Especially reckless Dynasts sometimes elect to marry without their family's permission. Dynastic marriages must always be overseen by an Imperial judge — or by three judges if the other partner is a peasant or foreigner. This is normally inconsequential, but without familial permission, one faces the difficult task of finding judges willing to risk retaliation from one or more Great Houses. Marriage between a Dynast and a slave or one of the dispossessed is wholly illegal, short of an edict from the Deliberative or the Empress.

Dynastic Dragon-Blooded marriages usually last until one partner dies, but they can be ended by agreement of both parties' house matriarchs or an Imperial judge if the couple has failed to produce offspring after twenty-five years, or if one partner is found guilty of a serious crime such as attempting to harm or kill their spouse or children, murdering a Dragon-Blood, or committing treason. Beyond that, the only end to marriage is the death of one partner.

Matrilineality

The Realm is primarily a matrilineal society. The child belongs to the mother, partaking of her social class and family name. When a man marries a woman, he becomes a part of her family, and is expected to show respect and obedience to his mother-in-law, or "second mother."

Husbands normally retain their family name when they marry. However, since peasants and outcastes largely lack family names, one who marries a patrician or Dynast takes on their spouse's family name. When people of different social classes marry, the lower-class spouse is elevated to the higher-ranking spouse's social class — at least officially. Some snubbing can be expected.

A husband who outlives his wife returns to his birth house after a suitable mourning period. Any children the couple had remain with the wife's house, typically to be



SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE

Same-sex couples face stigma over matters of reproduction, but little else. If a same-sex marriage does produce a child — whether through adopting a patrician outcaste (p. 100) or an undesirable or orphaned child of a Dynastic relative, employing a surrogate parent, or turning to sorcery — then their duty to house and Realm is fulfilled, and they become as socially acceptable as any other couple, the circumstance of their genders no more than a trifling quirk.

The Dynasty accepts these marriages because it understands that the passions of the Terrestrial Exalted run hot. History records many tales of Dragon-Blooded who, when pushed, chose their beloved over house and tradition — quite a few of these tales are bloody affairs. Sometimes, it's better to keep one Prince of the Earth and hope for children against the odds than to demand more than she'll bear and lose the one the house already has. Even so, failure to follow the house's expectations isn't something the family forgives, any more than disobeying the matriarch in another matter affecting the future of the house, and a Dynast seeking a same-sex marriage must fight for the privilege every bit as hard as any other Dynast seeking a love match. Many are unwilling or unable to risk this conflict, or simply uninterested.

In a same-sex marriage, the younger partner usually marries into the elder's family, and carries the masculine role in the religious and legal capacity, although a mortal marrying a Dragon-Blood assumes the masculine role regardless of age.

adopted by her kin. A widower may remain in his wife's house with her matriarch's consent — a common practice for patrician and peasant husbands — but a Dynastic man who does so incurs the opprobrium of his own family.

Sometimes, a talented Dragon-Blooded man is married off to a mortal so that he returns to his house after a mortal lifetime, ready to assume important house responsibilities. Others are married to members of their own house — or to Dragon-Blooded from client cadet houses or patrician families — to avoid questions of divided loyalties.

The Loyalty of Husbands

When a man marries, he's expected to transfer his personal loyalties to his wife, her household, and her Great House. But a man is raised in his mother's house and bears that house's stamp on his psyche. Now, in this time of tumult, a Dynast might find himself pressed to oppose his birth house directly, whether on the floor of the Deliberative or on the battlefield.

Some husbands go to great lengths to prove their loyalty to their wife's house or to their mother's house. Others prefer not to make waves, avoiding situations where their loyalties are tested. And historically, many husbands in the Imperial Service made a point of placing their devotion to the Empress above their loyalties to either house — an approach that's causing them difficulties since the Empress' disappearance.

Social expectation still demands that, say, a Cathak officer with a Sesus wife will serve in the Sesus legions. But now, such an officer might find himself cashiered from the Sesus legions lest he side against them in a crisis. Conversely, if he serves in the Cathak legions, he could someday find himself facing his wife across the battlefield.

Bloodline & Potency

The Dragon's blood is not a physical trait but a spiritual quality of its bearer's Essence, a part of the miracle of Exaltation. One who lacks it cannot gain or pass it on by any means, not even shapeshifting or Solar Circle sorcery.

PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH

Pregnancy has little effect on an Exalt's day-to-day life. Signs of pregnancy typically first appear within the third or fourth month, but only become especially obvious after seven months. Pregnant Exalted usually remain physically active up until several weeks before giving birth in the ninth month.

Due to their superhuman vitality and healing, it's all but unheard of for an Exalt to die in childbirth. Stillbirths and miscarriages are rarer than among mortals, but they do happen.

MARRIAGE AND PLAYER CHARACTERS

Marriage is a fundamental part of Dynastic society, but not always a comfortable one. While some players may be interested in roleplaying the stresses and perils of an unwanted marriage, others won't want to for any number of valid reasons. The Storyteller should never force marriage or betrothal on a character whose player doesn't want to take part in it. Instead, give the player an out, and let the fallout of their refusal drive the narrative of the game forward.

The Dragons' blood doesn't pass on casually. In Dragon-Blooded, its progenitive potential starts at nothing and builds up slowly after the Second Breath and, once expended, takes years to attain its peak once more. Progenitive potential remains constant in mortals, neither waxing nor waning, though weak, fickle, and unreliable compared to that of Exalted parents, especially with another mortal partner. No child's Exaltation is guaranteed, but the more potent the parents' blood, the more likely their offspring will receive the Dragons' gift.

If it's only been a few years since the Exalt last lent her vitality to conception, then the child is exceedingly unlikely to become Exalted. Such a child will also face prejudice from classmates, who call these Dynasts "leftover children" — that is, made from their older sibling's leftovers. Even if she Exalts, the stigma remains to a lesser extent, with her bloodline baselesly considered inferior to that of her more esteemed kin. The parents also face social consequences for wasting their precious Essence — this is a mark of irresponsibility, and a juicy subject for gossip.

Progenitive potency passes on involuntarily at conception, not birth or Exaltation. This exhausts the parents' potency entirely; it must renew itself from nothing. Potency accrues slowly at first — the first few years after conception accumulating almost none — and accelerates as the Dragon-Blood's potency approaches its maximum. The gathering and expenditure of progenitive potency is a mystical process applying as much to a magically created child as to one formed in the usual manner.

Because male Dragon-Blooded can sire children often and easily compared to women, a promiscuous or unfaithful man draws more censure from the Dynasty than a woman who partakes in the same actions. Taking lovers is all but expected from the Dragon-Blooded, so for a man to do so isn't particularly remarkable — indeed, even the most faithful man will find that women assume him incapable of fidelity. A woman can less easily hide a pregnancy, so female Dynasts are generally considered above reproach in this matter — after all, if she wasted her Essence, everyone would know.

Because same-sex or sterile paramours usually can't sire or conceive, they're considered a natural, beneficial part of Dynastic society. While having an opposite-sex paramour is shameful — albeit politely ignored if discreet or in barbarian lands — same-sex activity only earns remark in exceptional indiscretion. Preferring the same sex mostly or exclusively is unworthy of comment unless the Dragon-Blood's marriage fails to produce children, in which case tongues begin to wag. A fresh couple can expect a grace

TRANSGENDER DYNASTS

Within the Scarlet Dynasty and other Dragon-Blooded cultures that adhere to the Immaculate Texts, it's axiomatic that a transgender individual's self-identified gender is her true gender. The Immaculate Dragon Danaa'd was a transgender woman, and to be such is proper and holy. Thus, transgender Dynasts marry according to their gender identity. Although such marriages are often incapable of producing heirs through procreation, the expectation that they'll have children is by no means diminished.

Adoption and surrogate parents are commonly used by such couples, as well as others unable to have children conventionally. Additionally, while the Realm regards the use of sorcery to beget children warily, the Empress carved out a notable exception when she employed sorcery to bear children — including Mnemon and Ragara — with her first husband, Rawar of Arjuf, a transgender man. Since then, transgender Dynasts have held Imperial sanction, called the Precedent of Rawar, to make use of sorcery or stranger magics to have children — summoning neomah, conceiving within enchanted dreams, growing heirs from plants watered with the couples' blood, and the like.

period of twenty years before their lack of children becomes remarkable.

Leftover Children

Any child born within a decade of his nearest older sibling is considered a leftover child and faces all the prejudice and discrimination the title implies. If it's been less than a decade since the last child's birth, the parents are considered to be reckless with their Essence, and if more than twenty have passed, they'll start getting hints that maybe it's about time again. The ideal Dragon-Blooded marriage produces five children before the parents reach one hundred years of age, if they live that long. (Twelve to twenty years is widely regarded as how long it takes for the procreative Essence to peak.) Beyond the fifth, more children aren't necessary, but are always welcome.

Twins, triplets, and so on occupy an unusual position. Only one receives the parents' progenitive potential, but there's no way to discern which. If one child Exalts, any others born at the same time are treated as leftover children; but it's not unheard of for more than one of them to Exalt, especially if born to parents of outstanding pedigrees.

Legitimacy & Consorts

When a woman bears a child, there's no question as to its parentage. It doesn't matter who the father is, even if that's clearly someone other than her husband — or if she's unmarried, for that matter. Her child is always legitimate, and belongs to her and no other. Likewise, a man has no claim on any child he might sire outside of marriage.

On occasion, a female Dynast will publicly acknowledge a lover she hasn't married as her officially recognized partner. Such a consort is legally acknowledged as the father of children he sires (if male) and may establish as much of a relationship with the child as Dynastic society permits. Unmarried men may take patrician or peasant consorts, but outside House Cynis, it's seen as a sordid and desperate affair, a reminder of masculine intemperance. They're expected to cut ties with these consorts before marriage and avoid siring children by them.

Should a Dragon-Blooded man father a child on a patrician or peasant woman, this complicates matters. Thus originates the practice of an extended fictitious pregnancy — complete with padding intended to simulate a belly swollen with child — or a visit to the Threshold away from prying Dynastic eyes. Most often, the father secretly informs the matriarch of his birth house, who'll choose a female scion of the house — often one in a marriage incapable of procreation — to wear the pillow. This adds another potential Dragon-Blood to the ranks of his house, and, if the father is married, lets him evade the wrath of his wife and her family as long as the deceit isn't found out.

It's less common for a dallying husband to inform his wife of his infidelity, but in such cases, she or another member of her house wears the pillow. In these cases, the foolish husband bears the brunt of his wife's displeasure. For the duration of the fictitious pregnancy, he has every menial task of household management thrust upon him, while carefully watched over by a family seneschal; this is punishment, not opportunity. His travel and social engagements are heavily restricted, not just for the duration of the pregnancy but for years thereafter, and whenever he's permitted to participate in wider society he's watched like a hawk. Some wives — unwilling to be burned twice — assign a valet to accompany him indefinitely, carrying a quantity of maiden tea, so that in the future he will have no excuses.

A young Dragon-Blood who becomes pregnant out of wedlock will often work with her household matriarch to conceal the pregnancy, lest perceived intemperance damage her marriage prospects. In such cases, another member of the house wears the pillow and adopts the child as her own.

Parenthood

Dragon-Blooded parents are typically cold, distant, and rarely there. Many children grow up knowing their tutors and servants better than their own parents. This is normal in the Realm, but it doesn't mean that the Dragon-Blooded don't love their children. The greatest gifts a loving mother can pass on to her daughter are a strong house and a respected lineage — the memory of a mother's voice simply cannot outweigh pragmatic concerns.

To sacrifice relationships with children is considered a solemn and melancholy duty in the Dynasty, and is most commendable. It's a common topic of poems and songs, often ending with the satisfied parent realizing it was all worth it when she sees her child benefit from her hard work in adulthood. Most Dragon-Blooded parents make this sacrifice, but not all. Those who don't are considered lazy or self-indulgent. That said, Exalted parents — having passed along the Dragon's blood — have no further responsibility to their children beyond necessities and tutelage.

Outcastes: Exalting Outside the Dynasty

Not every Dragon-Blood can trace her ancestry back to the Scarlet Empress. A significant population of Dragon-Blooded, even inside the Realm, cannot call themselves Dynasts (at least, not without marrying into

GENERATIONS IN THE DYNASTY

While Dragon-Blooded can live for centuries, few Dynasts actually reach this advanced age. Most of the Realm's Exalted die on the battlefield or of misadventure before their hundredth year. At any given time, the majority of Dynastic Dragon-Blooded are young members of the current generation, outnumbering a smaller population of middle-aged Exalted and a handful of elders.

a Great House). The Scarlet Empress called them "lost eggs" — prodigal daughters and sons, found by the grace of the Dragons that they might be brought "inside the nest" of the Realm and guided rightly by the wisest of all living Dragon-Blooded, the Empress herself.

Outcastes are, by Imperial law, considered distant kin of the Empress, and thus wards of the state, which represents the Empress' interests and authority over them. They occupy a curious niche in the Realm's society, above mortals but below their Dynastic fellows.

The Realm recognizes three vastly different categories of outcastes: Exalted patricians; lost eggs born into the peasant, slave, and dispossessed classes; and foreign Dragon-Blooded arising outside the Blessed Isle. Each category receives different treatment by the Scarlet Dynasty.

Exalted Patricians

Dragon-Blooded patricians occupy an unusual place among the Realm's Dragon-Blooded. Educated in the same primary school system as Great House scions, they're capable of making the jump from their own class into the Scarlet Dynasty. Two profitable paths are open to them: adoption and fosterage.

Adoption

Adoption, the more common option, is a slow and deliberate process. The newly Exalted youngster's family negotiates a sponsorship agreement with a Great House — often a long-term patron of the patrician family — wherein the family receives some combination of wealth, immediate favors, and assurance of future favor in exchange for a nascent Prince of the Earth. The Exalt is sent to secondary school, and there faces the challenge of outdoing her Dynastic peers, who are better prepared, receive better treatment, and look down on patrician children. Only after graduating from a prestigious academy will her sponsor house accept her into the fold.

If the Dragon-Blood graduates from her chosen secondary school, the house adopts her with no fuss. Whatever her personal circumstances may be, such a protégée never quite shakes the stigma of her less-illustrious background, and can expect to spend the rest of her life suffering the brunt of minor snubs and deliberate faux pas. She has to work twice as hard as other family members, and is given half as much leeway, though few would throw her past in her face directly — such a crude display would cause the offending party to lose face. Her marriage prospects are more difficult due to her non-Dynastic bloodline.

A young Terrestrial who fails to attend or graduate from such a school will find herself accepted into the house as a client, rather than as a family member. (Only extraordinary incompetence or rebelliousness will cause a sponsor house to pass up the boon an additional Dragon-Blood represents.) A client Dragon-Blood must earn adoption instead, though in most cases barely adequate behavior is enough to achieve a place in some Empress-forsaken minor branch-of-a-dying-branch of the house within a couple of decades. If she does impress the house, she's welcomed into it as any other adoptee would be, with only minor additional stigma as "a practical sort with no head for books."

On the rare occasion that a client Dragon-Blood proves utterly undesirable, the sponsorship agreement is rescinded and her family reclaims her, with the expectation that they'll repay the adopting house for everything they offered in the sponsorship negotiations, and more. Even if they can make good on these payments, such a failure is a massive disgrace for both the patrician family and the outcaste Dragon-Blood, and poses a major obstacle to both any subsequent adoption sponsorships the family seeks and the Dragon-Blood's own marriage prospects.

Fostering

Fostering is the sister to the client system, occurring when a patrician family is powerful enough to hold its

PATRICIANS AND THE ORDER

On rare occasions, a devout patrician family will donate an Exalted child to the Immaculate Order. Such an extraordinary show of piety doesn't go unrecognized. While the Order won't show overt favoritism, should the family ever be in placed at a disadvantage through no fault of its own, the local abbots and archimandrites will take a keen interest in the situation. A child thus donated to the Order is treated exactly as any outcaste who takes the razor (p. 101).

FOSTERING AND CADET HOUSES

Fostering is also an option for cadet house members, who are commonly able to foster with a parent or sponsor Great House. The costs are much the same, as are the benefits — the privilege and distinction of a full Dynastic upbringing, which is superior to what the cadet house scion's own family could likely offer, and eases the stigma of belonging to an inferior family.

own in negotiations with a Great House. The cost the young Dragon-Blood's family incurs to arrange such an agreement is great, matching the expected value of a lifetime of service. Depending on the patrician family's finances and business interests, they might pay steep fosterage fees, contract to supply the Great House with goods or commodities, promise political favors, cede land leases, or arrange marriages between desirable men of the patrician family and un-Exalted daughters of the Great House. If a family can't afford these, they can always promise the fostered Dragon-Blood's services to their patron house for several decades. Nearly any agreement will include at least a few years of service to the house — incidentally providing additional education in the rights and responsibilities of the Exalted.

In return, the young Dragon-Blood obtains sponsorship and funding to attend one of the Realm's four great secondary schools, while retaining her own family name. This offers her both an education equal to that of any Dynast, and the opportunity to share in the web of personal and political contacts that Great House scions develop in school and leverage to their advantage throughout their lives.

In addition, the patrician family gains the loyalty of one of the Exalted, and — just as importantly — the blood of the Dragons. Many patrician families dream of strengthening their blood to such potency that their whole lineage is adopted into the Dynasty. This is rare, but not unheard-of, so many of the mightiest patrician clans aim towards this goal. However, with the Empress' disappearance and the consolidation of power under the Great Houses, the fostering system is in sharp decline; few patrician families have sufficient clout to arrange it.

Lost Eggs Among the Common Folk

As Dragon-Blooded, lost eggs have a number of privileges not afforded to mortals in the Realm. In many ways, they're treated as equal to Dynasts, at least on paper. Each is considered, by decree, to be the adopted daughter or son of the Empress herself, legitimizing them within the Realm. This status doesn't come without a price, however — a found egg must obey his foster mother, and in her wisdom she decreed that all such children of hers must make a choice: take the razor, or take the coin.

When a lowborn outcaste — peasant, slave, or dispossessed — makes herself known on the Blessed Isle, the Splendid and Just Arbiters of Purpose take charge of her, willing or not. They hold authority over the new recruit until she moves on to either the Cloister of Wisdom or Pasiap's Stair. They send a delegation to bring her in; the ministry maintains offices across the Isle for this purpose, and only in remote corners of the Blessed Isle does this take more than a week from her Exaltation. They take her back to their headquarters, the Obsidian Mirror, in Juche Prefecture.

There she's schooled in the fundamentals of Dynastic society and discusses her two options for the future with fellow Exalted: Take the razor and join the Immaculate Order, or take the coin and serve in the legions. By forcing this choice, the Empress guided them to two of her most powerful organs of control, both at home and abroad.

After their first full year, they must attend the grandest feast of their young life, the Feast of the Elect, which is held annually. It's here that the Humble and Munificent Master of Orphans offers each child in turn two silver platters. One holds an elaborately filigreed razor of jade, symbolizing the bald head of an Immaculate monk; the other, an ornamental jade obol, stamped on one side with the image of the Empress to symbolize personal loyalty to the throne — representing payment for military service. In the morning, the young outcastes leave for their destinations, and the future that awaits.

A child unable to choose in the moment may be given a few days' grace, but if she proves unable or unwilling to decide, the Master decides for her.

Taking the Razor

Lost eggs who take the razor are sent to the Cloister of Wisdom (p. 86), where they're treated like any other initiate. They dine alongside daughters and sons of the Dynasty, and though their fare may be simple, this first meal is often among the most elevating and energizing of their lives, for they've been accepted as equals of Princes of the Earth. Unlike these Dynasts, however, they cannot withdraw from the school, nor can they direct their education toward secular ends. Each is destined for a life of service in the Immaculate Order, exemplifying the enlightenment displayed by their Exaltation.



Lost eggs typically receive specialized instruction beyond that of other students, and in their final year are officially admitted as acolytes (as are Dynastic scions who wish to join the Order directly after graduation). Unless they fail their tests and require more training, they become monks of the First Coil immediately upon graduation.

Outcaste monks ejected from the order were traditionally remanded to the Empress for punishment or the assignment of alternative duties to the throne.

Taking the Coin

For lost eggs who take the coin, a symbol of their commission as a legionnaire, a less subtle, more brutal life awaits. Pasiap's Stair (p. 90) looms over the Dragonswrath Desert, a hall of pain and misery that will forge the lost egg into a weapon in what was once the finest fighting force in the world. Once, each surviving graduate was assigned to a legion — usually as a scalelord, though a particularly promising greenhorn might be commissioned as talonlord as a favor — then shipped out to whatever miserable satrapy her legion was assigned to, there to slog and toil and crush the Empress' enemies. But all too many promising officers were summarily dismissed from their posts in the wake of the Great Houses' partition of the legions, and now the legions have little room for outcaste officers whose loyalties are to the throne rather than to the Dynasty.

Unlike mortals, lost eggs must give fifty years of service rather than twenty, their long span of life (to say nothing of their power) obliging a greater commitment to the Empress' service. But, though they suffer more than lost eggs who took the razor, those who take the coin have one great advantage.

ONLY THE RAZOR

In the rising chaos since the Empress' disappearance, Immaculate monks who encounter newly Exalted youths have been quietly sending them directly to the Cloister after preliminary training at a local temple or monastery, rather than reporting them to the Arbiters. The Order's leadership deems this justified; the work of the Arbiters is the law of the land, but as law gives way to anarchy, the Order will need all its strength to stem the tide.

OUTCASTE MARRIAGES

Without a matriarch, there's no one to tell a lost egg who to marry. This is one of the few advantages of being an outcaste in the Realm. She still needs to find an Imperial judge to approve the marriage — or three if she marries a peasant — which may prove inconvenient, and marrying into a Great House is especially difficult due to her lack of political leverage.

Patrician families have traditionally been more eager than the Great Houses to gather outcastes into their ranks by marriage. Patricians have so few Dragon-Blooded in their ranks that each is precious, and they're typically less concerned with purity of bloodline than the Dynasty. An outcaste who marries a patrician is a big fish in a small pond; she doesn't gain the status she'd obtain from marrying into a Great House, but can expect to be lauded by her new kin and to hold high rank in the family.

Once their fifty-year term of service is up, they may elect to retire from the legions rather than making a career of it.

Traditionally, lost eggs cashiered from the legions were penalized or assigned other services by the Empress. In her absence, their fate is unclear.

Entering the Dynasty

Outcastes who do well for themselves in the legions may find marriage opportunities among the Great Houses. Their weak bloodlines make for poor marriage prospects, and when such a wedding does occur, it's often because the Dynastic partner is either disgraced or in love. However, senior officers and rising stars alike can leverage their abilities and status to earn a place at the marriage table — though the latter will wring out fewer concessions from Dynastic matchmakers. Once the ceremonies are concluded, the lost egg is a lost egg no longer, but a Dynast — though she must remain in the legions until her term of service concludes, and suffers a stronger version of the stigma faced by adopted patrician Dragon-Blooded owing to her low birth and the lack of an upper-class education's connections and social graces.

Marriage, household responsibilities, and every other facet of Dynastic life come under the control of the outcaste's adoptive mother and the house matriarch, just as if the outcaste were born into the family. This is complicated by the necessity of adapting to Dynastic rules and mores as quickly as possible without a lifetime's preparation, lest she disappoint her new family.

Alternatively, an outcaste can be formally adopted by a Great House. This has always been rare. Power over adoptions was vested in the Empress, who used the Deliberative to rubber-stamp her decisions, whether gifting Great Houses with promising heirs to provide an edge or saddling them with goldbricks and the dissolute. In the Empress' absence, the power has devolved upon the Deliberative alone — a squabbling collection of arrogant Dynasts and prickly patricians, largely serving the interests of Great Houses that would adopt every lost egg in the Realm as expendable soldiers for the oncoming civil war.

Today, adoption requests are subject to much intrigue and political maneuvering. New Dragon-Blooded become bargaining chips in the struggle between houses, offered up to one house or another to sweeten the pot on a compromise bill, or left unclaimed because senators refuse to allow other houses to claim more Princes of the Earth in the run-up to war. Even in the case of a deadlock, dangling the prospect of adoption before a lost egg may well influence her loyalties in the coming conflict.

Outcaste Households

Outcastes who conclude their service in the legions without marrying into the Realm's aristocracy are elevated into the patrician class. Such outcastes often take patrician, peasant, or foreign spouses. Thus, over time, the number of households led by lost eggs steadily increases, until a major event clears the ranks somehow. The most recent of these was the formation of House V'neef, which swept up a great swath of the Realm's outcastes and blessed them with Dynastic status.

Since then, the population of outcaste households has been slowly rebounding, as outcaste legion officers muster out and take their pension, and now form a potent wild card that every Great House seeks to control. Most were unbound by the patronage of the Great Houses until very recently. When it became clear that the Empress wasn't returning from her unannounced sabbatical, the Great Houses began frantically trying to enlist every outcaste they could to their cause — even those who were previously beneath their notice — who could be swayed to place loyalty to the house above all other allegiances.

PAPER DAUGHTERS

Adoption is a lengthy and politics-laden process, and some Dynastic households seek swifter ways of recruiting lost eggs. Formerly a nearly unheard-of curiosity — and even today a rare and desperate measure — the grossly illicit trade and exploitation of Dynastic identities involves forgery, subterfuge, cunning, and an almost pathological courage, for Dynastic birth and death records are the foundation of inheritance and legacy in the Realm, and falsifying these important documents is grounds for entire households being stricken from the Imperial ledgers. With the Empress gone, however, and with her the sole authority to enact such punishments, the trade has begun to flourish.

The first step in the process of unofficially "adopting" a lost egg is to have an identity for them to occupy — typically a scion who died in youthful misadventure, left unmourned. Once the name is free, and a lost egg fitting the rough description of its previous owner secured, all that remains is to train up the new Dragon-Blood until she can pass herself off as a Dynast from birth — and as the specific Dynast whose name she's taking up.

Foreign Outcastes

A foreign outcaste is said to have "fallen outside the nest," and her lot in the Realm is often worse than the Blessed Isle's lost eggs. She may be fêted and celebrated in lavish style, but when she presses what she thinks are mutual connections, she'll find that she's little more than an exotic prop to her peers. Joining the Immaculate Order in the same manner as any other postulant, joining the Imperial legions by serving as a scout or auxiliary for a few years until found fit to serve as an officer, or marriage into a Great House or cadet house are the only paths by which a foreign outcaste may find a place in the Realm.

Dragon-Blooded from Lookshy or other foreign lineages rarely defect to the Realm. Though viewed as more cultured and capable than a foreign-born lost egg, they're also less trustworthy, and must pursue the same opportunities as any other foreign outcaste.

Foreign outcastes are barred from both adoption into the Great Houses and cadet houses, and from adoption or marriage into patrician families. A quick marriage to a less prestigious Dynast is the most common method for inducting an Exalted foreigner, though the outcaste will likely have trouble acculturating to the complexities of Dynastic life, and will be stigmatized for her background. If an outcaste wishes to join the Realm but is unwilling or unable to find a Dynastic spouse, her only remaining options are entering the Imperial legions or the Immaculate Order.

Sworn Kinships

Central to adventuring and relationships among the Dragon-Blooded stands the Sworn Kinship. It's at the heart of Dragon-Blooded heroism, a completed state that brings the strength of many heroes together into a perfect union, the whole elevated beyond its individual members in the Perfected Hierarchy. No single Elemental Dragon sustains Creation, but rather the five of them acting in harmony, and the Essence of their champions reflects this truth.

A Sworn Kinship is family, above and beyond house and blood. The blood of the Dragons and the spiritual fulfillment of the oath transcend other familial connections, placing one's Sworn Kin as close as one born of the same mother, if not closer. Sworn Kin are invited into the innermost sanctums, to share repast with their sworn siblings' parents and children.

Hospitality is both expected and demanded, and to throw Sworn Kin out of one's house is akin to throwing them out of their own. It's for this reason a Sworn Kinship is also called a Hearth. The Hearth is warm, a place where familial love and closeness are expected and not discouraged. Hearthmates may fight and disagree, but it's a rare Sworn Kinship where true acrimony exists without affection.

The Hearth is often named for the place it was sworn, such as the Hearth of Eastern Faxai, or the Shrine of the Gardener's Grace Hearth. But a variety of other names mark the pages of Realm history, such as the Three Winters' Hearth, the Hearth That Slew Roaring Mantis, or the Blood-Stained Lotus Hearth.

Hearths form bonds of camaraderie that transcend the lines between houses, dividing a scion's loyalties between the family of her blood and the family of her oath. The Empress found this a useful source of conflict for her to wield, and so helped enshrine the tradition in the Realm's culture. To betray one's house in service of one's Hearth is a tragedy, not a treasonous disgrace.

The oath of kinship is mystical, a bond born from Terrestrial blood and elemental Essence. It's a sacred

birthright of the Dragon-Blooded, and the greatest boon the Dragons bestowed upon their children, that they might fight as one. It's a grave responsibility, undertaken only with the most serious of minds.

An oath sworn properly, with the right concepts and intent in the right order, is binding when the circle is sealed with anima and a statement of finality. In the Realm, an oath of kinship is legally binding as well, and oathbreakers face censure from their own house as surely as from the throne. As Hearthmates are sworn to be kin, a house considers betraying a Kinship to be a sign of a treacherous and untrustworthy personality, one that might turn against the house if it hasn't already.

The Life of a Kinship

Most Sworn Kinships are formed early in life, often while adventuring after graduation. A Hearth arises when friends become allies, forged in battle or hardship. This is rarely a hasty decision, though history is littered with notable exceptions, especially among the very young. Dynastic parents treat the matter in different ways, but central to it all is the knowledge that the Hearth is a sacred and solemn thing. To swear into one rashly is to accept a heavy obligation without truly knowing one's new sisters and brothers. To renounce the oath is a grave decision — to lose the connection to the others' souls is to lose a part of oneself.

Sworn Kinships may spend years or decades together, facing peril with none but their Hearthmates at their backs. They travel, fight, and seek glory together. They often roam the Realm or the Threshold promoting a specific cause, whether searching for Anathema, hunting occult secrets, protecting villages from ravening monsters, or sampling dinner tables of various eminences.

Later in life, Hearthmates often see very little of each other, drawn apart as they are by careers and obligations, remaining connected only by correspondence and the occasional visit. They regard active Hearths with wistful eyes, looking back longingly to their days of carelessness and freedom.

Breaking a Sworn Kinship is uncommon, though it happens often in plays and literature, where it serves as an appropriately tragic element of the tale's climax. More commonly, Hearthmates drift apart over time as they become tied down, one by one, by duty and honor and the various connections that accumulate with age, coming together every so often to fight in a client-state's minor war, join the Wyld Hunt, or reminisce about glory days. In everyday life, this sort of Hearth provides a refuge — someone with whom to relax and chat, play Gateway and discuss poetry and warfare, or spend a few months in An-Teng.

But retirement can come to the Realm's Exalted while they're still physically able, and it's a fairly common and oft-celebrated occurrence when retired Hearthmates reunite to partake in travel and adventure. When the Sworn Kinship so reforged is especially well remembered, it's not uncommon for a heartfelt oath of rededication (whose significance is personal rather than mystical) to be witnessed by joyful crowds, even moving spectators to tears.

SWEARING THE OATH

The oath of kinship can take many forms, but always involves a recitation of the names of those forming it, a statement of intent, and a vow of dedication, spoken as the participants' animas flare. When the ritual is complete, the newly sworn companions know it deep in their bones. Hearths typically cannot have more than five members; the Storyteller may make an exception for games with more than five Dragon-Blooded PCs. A Dragon-Blood may join an existing Hearth by swearing loyalty in the presence of all its members.

A Dragon-Blood can sense the presence of her Sworn Kin (p. 154), and some Dragon-Blooded Charms confer additional benefits when used with one's Hearthmates. The death of a Hearthmate is felt as a sharp shock to the soul, sure and unmistakable.

A Dragon-Blood may rescind her oath by informing every other member of her Sworn Kinship, whether singly or in a group, that the oath is no longer valid. "The Hearth is shattered" is the most common way to phrase it in the Realm. Her bonds to her former Hearth are severed, giving her an instinctive sense of finality, and leaving nothing where her Sworn Kin could once sense her presence.

If a Dragon-Blooded deliberately betrays one of her Sworn Kin or her entire Hearth, her treachery shatters her tie. She loses all temporary Willpower. Unlike formal renunciations, the members of a traitor's Hearth don't automatically realize the bond has been broken, and can sense the traitor's presence until the story's end.

Retirement

A Dragon-Blood's life is full of danger. For most, unexpected death — whether through battle, misadventure, or murder — concludes a lifetime of service. Indeed, most Dragon-Blooded perish before their hundredth year, long before they grow old. Still, for those Princes of the Earth who live to see it, retirement can be quite rewarding.

Generally, before a Dynast starts thinking about retirement, she should have accomplished enough to distinguish herself and bring some measure of fame or prosperity to her house. Most will have established enough personal wealth to support themselves long after they've stopped earning a salary, especially since the stipend they receive from their house is drastically reduced once they retire.

Most Dynasts who live long enough to retire choose to do so while they're fit enough to enjoy it. Travel is a popular pastime, and many retirees use the opportunity to see Creation and spend time with relatives and friends they've lost touch with over the years. Those who enjoyed a more active life may try to recapture more exciting times and set out with old comrades in search of new adventure. They might hunt the many-headed boars of the unearthly Forest That Marches, sightsee in the phantasmal ruins of Yrn, or dare the subterranean cities of the Mountain Folk.

Still, many Dynasts prefer a quieter, more leisurely retirement. They find ample opportunities to focus on hobbies or projects they haven't been able to pursue for lack of time — or because of the watchful eyes of their houses and rivals. Those who can afford it may relocate to remote areas where they can continue their work undisturbed.

For others, projects take the form of protégées. These retirees seek out promising young Exalted pupils to offer their wisdom and to shape the next powerful member of their house — or occasionally another house, tutoring a Hearthmate's descendant or a young stranger with exceptional talent. A pupil's successes are also his mentor's, and it's a matter of friendly competition among certain retirees to see whose protégée goes the farthest. For young Dynasts, this can be an excellent opportunity to benefit from a successful elder's wisdom and resources, and the desire to snatch up the most respected mentor has led to fierce competition among up-and-comers looking to get ahead.

Some Dynasts delay retirement as long as possible, either because they still believe themselves capable enough to handle their jobs, or because they've been reckless with their savings and can't afford to maintain their lifestyle without a salary and full stipend. This is accepted for a time — few would presume to tell a Dragon-Blood how to live her life. However, if increased age or diminished mental sharpness makes them more risk than boon to their house, certain measures exist to encourage retirement. Such Dynasts who cling to diplomatic positions find their workload increasing exponentially, while those still serving the military may be sent on increasingly dangerous assignments. An aging Dynast usually chooses to retire, or perishes — either way, she's relieved of her obligations. Occasionally, Great Houses offer financial incentives to retire, and many Dynasts hold out as long as possible in hopes of a big payout. This is risky, lest a callous house matriarch decide that assassination is the more cost-effective solution.

INHERITANCE AND WILLS

Imperial law governs inheritance among Dynasts. Half the decedent's wealth and assets are passed to her spouse, if he survives her, or to her eldest Dragon-Blooded child otherwise. The remaining half is portioned into shares that are divided among the decedent's children — Exalted children receive four, while mortals get only one. Few Dynasts rely on inheritances in planning their finances — with long-lived Dragon-Blooded parents, it may be centuries before they receive it.

A Dynast may instead draw up a will to allocate her assets however she pleases after her death, though the practice isn't customary. Typically, if the division of assets specified in a will denies any heir a substantial portion of the inheritance that would otherwise be hers, she'll either conspire with other heirs to forge the will and bribe any witnesses to it, or contrive to have it conveniently lost, and have an Imperial judge pronounce it invalid.

Funerary Rites

The body ages. The body grows frail. The body dies. The soul moves on, either for rebirth or union with the Immaculate Dragons. As with so many things, the theory is simple, but the practice is complex.

Most peasant, slave, and dispossessed funeral rites are perfunctory affairs, short ceremonies ending in cremating the deceased on a simple wooden pyre and erecting a small monument atop the bones and ashes to placate her lower soul. Hesiesh is said, for a brief moment, to be incarnate in the flames, and to take the higher soul on to its next life.

Dynastic funerals, by contrast, are truly grand, often lasting for weeks before the body is disposed of to allow the soul to move on. The skills of Dragon-Blooded physicians or sorcerous measures prevent decomposition, but, with one exception, embalming is eschewed as a disruption of the natural cycle. Commemorative hero's plaques carved from jade are reverently displayed, later to be enshrined after a solemn procession, and the youngest Chosen in the house are often called forth to recite the lineage of the deceased. Patricians and wealthy peasants emulate Dynastic funeral practices, though their efforts are plainer and less well-attended.

Mourners come from across the Blessed Isle, and even across Creation, to pay their respects, and the house commissions grand works of art and poetry to commemorate their fallen sister's deeds — and to embellish them. Aside from purely political considerations, there's a persistent but not entirely orthodox belief among the Dynasty that the Immaculate Dragons observe funerals of the fallen, and may be swayed by such accounts to bring the deceased into union with them rather than guide them to reincarnation. Flattery also helps to mollify the lower soul, a wise precaution when it's swollen with an Exalt's power.

Vigils are commonly held over the body, some lasting days at a time. An especially bereaved family member or Hearthmate may exert herself to the limit, staying by her fallen kin's side for days until she passes out from fatigue — a dramatic show of lamentation. Fasting is another common show of grief and respect.

Once the vigils have been completed and the quiet political deals found at many Dynastic gatherings made, the body is readied for its final disposition. Most Dynastic funerals follow the common cremation rite, though much more lavish and elaborate, with a cenotaph naming the deceased — and frequently, her greatest accomplishments in life — erected in her honor. The remains are often interred within a cinerary urn, but some Dragon-Blooded prefer that their ashes be scattered in a place that was important to them.

Unlike most peasants and patricians, Dynasts don't commonly enjoy the privilege of dying from advanced age. Rather, they fall in battle, or in some intrigue or adventure, before their allotted span. For those unfortunates whose bodies cannot be transported home for the ceremonies described above, it falls to their Hearth, legion, shipmates, or other available comrades to care for the body. A field burial is most commonly a cremation, as it disposes of the body quickly, though a sky burial can be conducted nearly as swiftly, the bones collected for transport back to the Realm for a proper funeral. In any event, a funeral is held in the Realm when word arrives of their demise, which follows many of the same forms even without the body, including the erection of a cenotaph bearing the deceased's name.

DEVOTED FAREWELLS

A few Dynasts prefer other means of shedding their mortal form and passing on, especially if they're devoted to one Immaculate Dragon in particular (other than Hesiesh, of course). Such practices are much less common than cremation, except among Immaculate monks, but virtually every Dynast knows of someone who departed for her next life in a ceremony honoring a specific Immaculate Dragon.

Devotees of Pasiap elect for mummification, the only Realm funereal practice that relies on embalming — the body is seen as the final great work, a physical monument that their soul leaves behind in Creation. The body is prepared by experts, usually Sijanese, in a process that can take weeks. Ultimately, it's is entombed within a grand mausoleum, whether a personal one or, in the case of House Mnemon, a sprawling complex in Mnemon-Darjilis.

Danaa'dists prefer burial at sea, sewn into a canvas (for mortals) or silk (for Dragon-Blooded) shroud that's weighted and lowered into the water with great reverence. House Peleps in particular maintains a long-held tradition of naval burials, even for those who die on land.

Great, vibrant gardens are cultivated for those who emulate Sextes Jylis. The body is prepared and laid to rest within a mound of fine composting mulch, always harmoniously placed according to geomantic calculations. When the funeral is complete the mourners depart, leaving only an honor guard. After some months the mound is gently and reverently dispersed, revealing only fresh soil — of the body, not even bones remain, the process of decomposition hastened by the suffusion of Essence. This soil is scattered across the garden, joining it in celebration of the Essence of life itself.

Rarest of all Realm funereal practices is the Melaist sky burial. The deceased is left to the scavengers of the air, which descend and pick her bones clean. Special towers are preferred, but any space open to the sky will serve. The skeleton is then collected, broken up, and ground into dust, which is mixed with wheat meal before being scattered for smaller birds.

Realm Year 765

Yushoto Mathar's kabuto helmet sat beside him on the bench. It felt good to take it off after a long day's ride, to let the sounds of teahouse gossip surround him and the warm mug ease fingers cramped from holding his reins. In better times, he'd be inclined to retrieve his biwa and pluck out a bawdy tune to amuse himself and his fellow patrons — "The Satrap's Lockbox," perhaps, or "Never In Nexus." The latter had once even drawn a chuckle out of somber Kingfisher Swift. But the wary looks on the other guests' faces made him decide against it. Too many haunted pairs of eyes in the crowd; too many refugees from villages that had been sacked and burned.

There'd been more and more skirmishes out here on the borders of the River Province since the Realm had recalled its legions to the Blessed Isle, and it worried him. Bandits grew braver by the month, attacking caravans along their trade routes, while river pirates ventured farther along the waters than ever before. Mathar received reports of assassinations and coups daily from all across the Scavenger Lands. As satrapies fell apart, their soldiers came to the River Province and harried the people. Political factions in Lookshy disagreed — vehemently if not yet violently — on how foreign policy should shift in response to the Blessed Isle's misfortune. Murmurs of sorcerers at Valkhawsen Academy poring over tomes of battle magic had reached Mathar's ears, and he suspected someone was confirming the inventory of First Age weapons beneath the Lookshy Manse, just in case.

A woman joined him at the table. She was dark-haired and slight, reminding him of Sesus Eshuvar. How much easier this all would be if he could send a letter to Eshuvar and ask for his help! But Eshuvar was no fool: he'd know Mathar was asking for information the Realm wouldn't want divulged, and Mathar had long ago decided — to his cost — that using his Hearthmates to spy on the Realm was akin to betraying them. Besides, from what his eyes and ears on the Blessed Isle suggested, Eshuvar, Swift, and River had plenty of their own troubles to attend to.

"Well?" asked his companion, helping herself to a cup of tea. The silver raiton pinned to her shoulder declared her part of the Bonepickers, a local mercenary company.

"I need a favor," said Mathar.

"I don't deal in favors." She grinned at him over the lip of her cup. They'd spoken these words before, whenever Mathar hired her for a job.

Mathar laughed and tapped a pattern on the table: his opening offer. "I'm looking for a contact of mine. She went missing when Ragara withdrew its garrison." He might not use his friends to gather intelligence on the Realm, but Mathar had other agents in place. If his Realm-based Hearthmates knew about his spies, they politely didn't mention them. He needed to know if this one had simply gone to ground, or had been caught trying to confirm rumors of Ragara Kiel's correspondence with Berit.

"Even without their garrison, it's still Realm territory you're asking me to sniff around in." The mercenary's mouth twisted. "Anyone you talk to nowadays, from slaves to satraps, seems they think even their teacups are listening."

"If you don't think you can do it…."

"I said harder, not impossible." She tapped out a new number, three times her usual rate.

The ripples from the Empress' disappearance could be felt even here, Mathar thought, destabilizing power structures, affecting trade… and driving up mercenaries' prices. He signaled for a fresh teapot as he settled in to negotiate.



Chapter Four

Beyond the Realm

Lookshy

Once, humanity stood upon the edge of annihilation.

It began when the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate, weakened by decades of internecine warfare, was dealt a killing stroke by the Great Contagion: a civilization-ending disaster from which it had no hope of recovery. Upon its heels, untold numbers of the Fair Folk poured into Creation past the unmanned defenses at its borders, to finish what the plague had begun. The denizens of the Wyld wrought widespread havoc before an ancient Anathema god-weapon turned the tide to send them back to the chaos that had spawned them.

Although the Shogunate lay in ruins, it wasn't destroyed so utterly as the world had assumed. The Seventh Legion under Taimyo Nefvarin Gilshalos, beleaguered and vastly outnumbered, made its way westward while gathering together as many survivors as it could find within the husks of once-great cities across the River Province. From the far East, this patchwork army made its way towards the ancient city of Deheleshen, counting the days and the steps between the burning corpses of entire villages and the crystalline blades of fae skirmishers. When they reached the city, they found the daimyo long dead and Deheleshen itself ruined almost beyond hope of repair. Nefvarin had his orders, however, which he intended to follow to the letter: Until the day came when the Seventh Legion was utterly destroyed and its ranks broken, it would act as a provisional governing body in the shogun's stead.

This, the gentes teach their descendants, is the tale of Lookshy's founding.

In the centuries since, Lookshy has risen from the ashes of a bygone age to become one of the most influential and powerful city-states in the River Province. Although change has come to Lookshy over the years due to outside

LOOKSHY, THE CITY

Built on a rocky headland jutting from the mouth of the Yanaze, Lookshy is as much fortress as city. Massive walls, patrolled by garrison forces commanded by Dragon-Blooded officers, guard against intrusion from both land and sea. Deep wells and granary-vaults can hold out against prolonged siege.

A secure harbor at the base of the promontory boasts the Lower City, home to Lookshy's navy, and where foreign merchants and sailors ply their trades. From here, one can ascend via lift tubes and guarded posterns to the city's numerous other districts. These are divided into four major quarters, each at a higher altitude — and less amicable to outsiders — than the last:

The Fourth Ring, whose outer gates open inland on Lookshy's farms and pastures, is a center for crafters, mercenaries, and caravaneers.

The Third Ring hosts the city's more refined artisans, its academies, and heavy industry.

The Second Ring supports residences, military barracks and warehouses, and administration buildings.

The First Ring — also called the **Old City** — at the headland's peak contains most of Deheleshen's remaining First Age structures, including the ancient and seemingly unbreachable Lookshy Manse. Here the city's leadership and the relict Shogunate Bureaucracy (p. 120) maintain their offices and domiciles.

influence (and the obsolescence of the city's remaining First Age wonders), its Dragon-Blooded masters have maintained its reputation as stewards of ancient tradition and a fighting force to be reckoned with.

The Gentes of Lookshy

Outside the Realm, Lookshy is the largest Dragon-Blooded enclave in Creation, with an unusually high ratio of Exalted among the general populace. Where it comes to children, the General Staff's incentives targeting the city's families are as aggressive as its recruitment — above all, Lookshyans are pragmatists, and large numbers of Exalted are greatly preferred to a smaller number of Dragon-Blooded scions with pristine bloodlines. Unlike the lengthy marriage negotiations in the Realm, Lookshy encourages its Dragon-Blooded to marry and begin having children at as young as a decade after Exaltation.

The most influential of Lookshy's Dragon-Blooded are descended from old, highly respected military families with a great deal of political clout. These families are known collectively as gentes. In theory, all trace their lineages back to the Shogunate's aristocratic families, although several don't. Some are of modest means; others are quite wealthy, especially by the region's standards. Some are relatively recent additions to the city's rolls, while others can be traced well before the days of Lookshy's founding.

Members of Lookshy's gentes are all citizens, and while their status only confers some small additional privileges — for instance, should a citizen with no immediate kin pass away without a will naming an executor of their estate, their property reverts to their gens should they belong to one; otherwise the Seventh Legion claims it — their status alone is prestigious. Officially, Lookshy is a meritocracy, and the Legion works to curtail the most blatant forms of nepotism, but members of the gentes undeniably benefit from the influence their family's standing confers upon them.

Whether a given family might be considered a gens is ultimately determined by the General Staff. A group of Dragon-Blooded immigrants might be offered such status as a bargaining chip, or a household of minor citizens might be awarded this acknowledgement in recognition of some great service performed to the city, producing significant numbers of Dragon-Blooded heirs, or accumulating enough wealth and influence to attract the Legion's notice. It's not legally required for Dragon-Blooded to formally join a gens, but in practice almost all do.



THE GENERAL STAFF

Lookshy's governing body, the General Staff directs military strategy, oversees and implements policy, and enforces Shogunate law. The General Staff proper consists of the chumyo — the general of the Seventh Legion — and six of the most senior officers. It's supplemented by the Administrative Staff, a fluctuating group comprised of roughly two dozen respected officers, Directorate heads, and other noteworthy Lookshyan personages. While this is an advisory body, a sensible chumyo weighs their advice carefully — and recognizes that the General Staff has the authority, with a majority vote, to remove him from his post.

The current chumyo is Maheka Dazan, a brilliant strategist and inveterately traditionalist Mercenary. Since the fall of Thorns, he's faced increasing opposition from Interventionists on the General Staff and Administrative Staff, and fears that they may oust him to advance their agenda.

The Gentes Major

The gentes are further divided into the unofficial but well-established categories of Gentes Major and Gentes Minor. While there are currently five families that enjoy Gens Major status, there have been in the city's history as many as eight and as few as three, and they haven't always been the same families throughout the years. Gentes are patrilineal, but this doesn't impede women in any meaningful way; Lookshy is generally egalitarian in its treatment of the sexes, including the most senior military posts. The most prominent elder of each gens is known as its imperator, a position similar to the Realm's house matriarchs, though not limited by sex.

Major gentes are deeply entrenched in Lookshy's hierarchies. Dragon-Blooded senior officers from the Gentes Major account for the overwhelming majority of the General Staff, and the gentes use the positions held by their members to advance their political agendas. Should the administrative head of the Intelligence Directorate, for example, hail from a gens with a strongly Interventionist outlook, she's more likely to allot discretionary budgets that encourage covert operations with that outlook in mind, even if she doesn't make her personal opinions a matter of public knowledge.

This state of affairs creates a perpetual power imbalance, in that once a gens obtains a seat on the General Staff, the family has a tendency to leverage that position for its own advantage. Conversely, it finds itself as a disadvantage should it lose that seat. Most legal adoptions on the rolls are disproportionately funneled into the Gentes Major.

Gens Amilar — Air That Rushes Towards Tomorrow

Amilar is a relatively recent addition to the ranks of the Gentes Major. The bloodline's founder, Vondy Beulen, was a former general of the Scarlet Realm who denounced his commission and defected to Lookshy with the bulk of his forces during one of the Realm's long-ago attempts at invading the River Province. His descendants to this day remain the preeminent scholars of the Seventh Legion, and Amilar has produced numerous renowned strategists, engineers, Immaculate theologians, and teachers.

Gens Amilar's intellectual curiosity and penchant for careful planning have been vital to upholding Lookshy's legacy and ensuring its continued growth, providing its scions valuable insight into peril and opportunity alike. While Amilars are often brilliant, analytical thinkers willing to approach old problems in new ways, they have a reputation for eschewing tradition simply because they find it restrictive, and for compromising their morals in pursuit of knowledge. Amilar strategists sometimes propose tactical application of poison and disease, both to achieve military goals and to further the gens' studies in toxicology and epidemiology, and tactical demon-summoning is a forte of Amilar sorcerer-engineers.

The gens has also produced numerous savants and occultists willing to venture into the field. These scions can be found exploring the ruins scattered across the River Province, seeking First Age weapons and ordnance to replenish the Seventh Legion's stockpile. Equally valuable in their estimation are rare tomes and other lesser wonders they collect for continued study and, perhaps, to gain insight useful in the modern age.

Amilar is the gens least politically invested in the maintenance of the Seventh Legion's status quo. Many Amilars follow the Interventionist philosophy: They have far-reaching plans for the future of the River Province as a whole, and if seeing those plans to fruition means they must sacrifice their commitment to archaic traditions in order to take a more direct role in Scavenger Lands affairs, so be it. Others are Isolationists, seeing the region's wars as a wasteful distraction from important researches.

Amilar's sohei have often been of an intellectual bent, concerned more with the ideology of the Faith than

THE FIVE FACTIONS OF LOOKSHYAN POLITICS

Mercenaries — the most conservative and currently the most politically powerful faction in the Legion — are largely content with the current state of affairs and consider it the optimal path forward for the city as a whole. While they desire the return of the Shogunate as much as anyone, they're willing to wait until a proper heir appears to take action. In the meantime, they rely upon the strength of the field forces and short-term contracts with other nations, and feel that the best means of protecting the River Province is to stay the course.

Interventionists feel that Lookshy should take a more active role in regional politics, interpreting Nefvarin's Directive to mean that the Seventh Legion's role isn't merely to protect the River Province, but to use its power to establish a hegemonic role, strengthening the Seventh Legion's position both politically and militarily. They're considered to be slightly radical, but less so than the Isolationists, Imperialists, or Purists — in many cases their policy decisions overlap with those of the Mercenary faction, and seem at most times to be a natural extension of the army's existing structure. It's certainly true enough that Lookshy's doctrine allows the Legion to proactively intervene in foreign affairs if it believes that there will be consequences for the River Province as a whole, and it has never been shy about the fact that it trains the armies of other peoples in the region.

Isolationists believe the intent of the founders of Lookshy was misconstrued, deliberately expanded to include all of the River Province as part of the Shogunate, or misguided. They contend that Lookshy cannot effectively police the entirety of the region, and in fact shouldn't be expected to do so; the General Staff have enough issues to contend with behind the city walls. Many of their number would take it even farther, shifting the Seventh Legion away from a hypervigilant standing army on a wartime footing in favor of a peacetime economy, as they feel Lookshy would be better off in the long run if it focused more on commerce and other pursuits. Most support for this stance comes from merchant families within the various gentes, as they have a vested interest in increased trade and normalized relations with traditional enemies such as the Realm.

Imperialists see opportunities for Lookshy in the extended absence of the Scarlet Empress and the turmoil she's left behind, and would use the chaos to their own ends in order to advance Lookshy and its ideals via expansion and annexation. A few have even put forward the notion of alliance with amenable Dynastic houses to seize Realm lands for the Legion. Simply put, they wish to transform the Seventh Legion into an empire, founding a new Shogunate. However, they currently have little support for their ideas.

Purists are primarily religious zealots. They believe that Lookshy has stagnated due to the General Staff's pragmatic willingness to overlook moral corruption in the name of survival, and that the River Province can only truly be protected if it's saved from itself. To that end, they seek to cleanse what they see as rank depravity, such as spirits openly ruling humans in cities like Great Forks, and the hive of scum and villainy that is Nexus. Currently a fringe group, they're gaining ground with the sudden resurgence of the Solar Anathema.

with its effects on real people. The Purist philosophy has found this attitude to be fertile ground, and many Amilar sohei have taken up the faction's banner in recent years. They wish to increase Lookshy's clout in the River Province not to benefit the city itself, but to use the Legion as a sword to enforce Immaculate doctrine and uproot perceived heretics.

Gens Karal — Fire Burning Brightest

Perhaps the most well-known of the modern Gentes Major, Gens Karal has become a symbol of Lookshy and the ideals it represents. If the city were a house, the Karals would be the hearth fire around which its inhabitants gather to seek warmth and safety. This gens traces its beginnings all the way back to the Deheleshen camp's first liaison officer, who instilled his strong sense of duty in his descendants. There are certainly wealthier and more powerful families to be found in Lookshy, but none are more respected. Even the gens' enemies speak well of them, as their conduct both on and off the battlefield is largely beyond reproach. The Karals are also known to possess quick tempers, and they're very protective of their prestige.

In a city known across Creation for its martial prowess, more of Karal's scions are career soldiers and ranking officers than in any other gens; pressure to excel is high for all, but particularly so for those who choose a military career. Karals in general are straightforward about their intentions for Lookshy's future. However,

they possess a degree of political astuteness that serves them well in negotiating the politics of the Seventh Legion and the River Province. Karal officers negotiate truces with the same skill that they enact stratagems, and the Operations and Liaison Directorates are the most common vocations for scions who don't remain in the military after finishing compulsory service.

Karals are passionately dedicated to the needs of the city's inhabitants and the greater good of the River Province. But they're often the source of equally passionate debate regarding what those needs truly are and where the Seventh Legion might best address them — when and how Lookshy should intervene in Vanehan aggression against the Hundred Kingdoms, for example, or which side of a trade war between rival city-states the Seventh Legion should support.

A number of Interventionist Karals have voiced interest in extending the Legion's reach and authority throughout the region, although they're prone to disagreement when the specifics become a topic of discussion. The majority of the family remains staunchly traditionalist, satisfied enough with the status quo and the current stability of matters as they stand to remain Mercenary — but while sparks might fly within the relative privacy of family gatherings whenever various political discussions reach an impasse, Gens Karal has always been skilled at presenting a unified front to the rest of the city.

Gens Maheka — Earth Unbroken by Armies

Maheka is the rock upon which Lookshy can always depend even in the most tumultuous times. A gens of builders and makers descended from a combat engineer, its architects design the city's fortifications, its artisans earn renown throughout the River Province and beyond as crafters of elaborate mechanisms and artifacts, and scions of a more commercial bent oversee the family's foundries and smithies that produce armor and weapons for the Legion.

Mahekas approach all angles of a problem with utmost care, often taking a great deal of time to choose a course — but when they strike, they do so with the crushing certainty of a toppling mountain. On occasion, Mahekas are slow to act at inopportune moments, and if pushed on an issue beyond the limits their moral code imposes, their famous tenacity can cause them to dig in their heels and refuse to act at all. Other gentes find this tendency immensely frustrating, especially when a given situation calls for an urgent response.

Maheka is well known for its conservative outlook. Its members consider bluntly announcing their political opinions to be gauche. Instead, they let other families argue the finer points of such matters while quietly adhering to the Seventh Legion's ideology and the Immaculate Faith. Out of the five Gentes Major, they're perhaps the most respected for their unflagging loyalty and their insistence upon showing Lookshyan traditions proper respect. Many of the city's sohei and sorcerer-exorcists hail from Gens Maheka.

The gens are enthusiastic supporters of the traditional Mercenary ideology, considering it the best approach to reinforcing the ideals of the Lookshy Directive: it's worked for centuries and generations of officers have dedicated their lives to this goal, so the family sees no need to fix something they feel was never broken. Undoubtedly some Mahekas hold differing opinions as how Lookshy is best governed, but they wisely keep their own counsel lest they earn the disapproval of the gens' imperator.

Gens Teresu — Water Flowing with Jade and Silver

Gens Teresu's dominance over matters nautical was established early in the city's history; the family is descended from a Shogunate admiral who led the remnants of his command in the frozen North to the open waters of the Inland Sea to the camp at Deheleshen. The gens maintains its wealth through investments designed to expand both Lookshy's maritime trade and the Seventh Legion's influence, resulting in a family legacy vital to the city's operation. Teresu is the wealthiest and most cosmopolitan of the Gentes Major. Its shipping empire is the lifeblood of Lookshy, providing sustenance and resources to the Legion from the bounty of the Yanaze and the Inland Sea.

The Teresus are on friendly terms with the Guild and work extensively with its factors, as their elders are confident in their ability to maintain the upper hand in bargains with the mercantile empire. They're not necessarily as bothered by scruples as some of the other gentes, particularly where it comes to business matters, and perhaps not as circumspect in their dealings as might be considered prudent — but this is also reflected in the gens' tendency to obsess over its standing in the eyes of others. Indeed, the prevailing opinion of those outside the family is that Teresus can be obsessive about keeping up appearances to the point of flaunting their wealth in improper ways.

Politically, the house is split between the naval branch and the commercial branch. Career naval officers within the gens lean decidedly Mercenary in outlook, as they find themselves satisfied with the current state of things and see no need to change course. The

merchant princes of Gens Teresu, however, are strong advocates for a more Isolationist approach: they wish to see Lookshy withdraw from its stance as the River Province's main peacekeeping force in favor of an increased focus upon building the city's economic power.

Gens Yushoto — Wood Whose Roots Grow Deep

Gens Yushoto, which traces its roots back to a sorcerer-engineer from the early days of the city's founding, sees itself as the roots of the city, nurturing not only its own growth but that of others wherever possible, and contributing to the welfare of the whole in ways largely unseen, and — occasionally — underappreciated. They're known amongst their peers for generosity and humility, a family of even-tempered and socially adept individuals often called in to mediate disputes, albeit inclined to be softhearted at inconvenient moments.

Yushoto elders encourage scions to seek their own paths in life and contribute to Lookshy's greater good in their own individual ways. The gens sees personal growth and self-improvement as the best means to uphold the stability and goals of the city and its rulers. This has the added benefit of ensuring that Yushoto's scions excel in all manner of professions, and thus reflects well upon the gens itself. With that in mind, Lookshy is a martial culture, and most Yushotos find that they truly shine when serving the Seventh Legion. They can be found throughout the ranks as infantry, strategoi, justiciars, sorcerer-engineers, and other military vocations as readily as any other path. They're most predominant among the ranger corps — a role that benefits greatly from the Yushoto inclination toward a broad skillset.

Given their open and relaxed approach to most things, Yushoto as a whole has no strong political leanings. The majority support the Mercenary ideology, but others can be found in every political faction. Unlike Karal, however, Gens Yushoto is more inclined to let its members do as they will, so long as their choices aren't detrimental to the Seventh Legion.

The Gentes Minor

In addition to the well-known families of the Gentes Major, there are over a dozen minor gentes. The numbers of these families have ebbed and flowed over the centuries, some lost to history altogether, some fading in and out of prominence. In many instances, a sponsor-client relationship exists between major and minor gentes, creating a patronage system leading to a cycle of continuing obligations and further debts owed, influencing Lookshyan politics at multiple levels.

A handful of these families are discussed below.

Gens Kiriga — Earth That Upholds the Shogun's Bastion

Tracing its lineage back to a distant cousin of the Daimyo of Deheleshen, Gens Kiriga has a far-reaching ambition of empire: a new Shogunate that rules the entire River Province by steel and will, rather than a city of glorified mercenaries. Once a Gens Major influential among rank-and-file officers, the family is still recovering from heavy losses suffered in wars across the middle of the current age, which led to its being supplanted by Gens Maheka. Kiriga scions remain commonplace among the infantry, and are well respected for their loyalty and fighting spirit. They're outspoken Interventionists and Imperialists, which often pits them against their conservative rivals.

Gens Nefvarin — Air That Fills the Wings of Dragons

Descended from Lookshy's founder, this family was heavily invested in Lookshy's Sky Guard. In its golden

THE GUNZOTA INCIDENT

In RY 615, the General Staff and other high-ranking officers met at Gunzota Redoubt, a Seventh Legion outpost near Greyfalls, only to perish at the seemingly accidental activation of a dread weapon of the First Age. The result of a conspiracy opposed to increasing nepotism and cronyism in the Legion's upper ranks, the Incident decimated the corrupt elements of the administration, incidentally decapitating those gentes most involved. Gunzota Redoubt remains abandoned, its walls and inhabitants — and anyone who's entered to investigate since — transformed to violet crystal by the still-active First Age device.

The truth of the incident remains a secret within Lookshy. The conspiracy remains active, however, and its surviving members have largely curtailed a return to the previous centuries' misconduct. But they remain cautious; it's possible that any unrelated investigation might touch upon the transfers that preceded the Incident, and even at this late date, revealing the truth would send shockwaves through Lookshyan society, placing the current General Staff's legitimacy into question, and potentially triggering a cascade of vendettas.



years, Nefvarins were skyship officers and sorcerer-engineers specializing in skyship maintenance. But as the Legion's fleet of skyships dwindled over the years, the gens' prominence dwindled with it. The final blow was the loss of its highest-ranking officers in the Gunzota Incident, from which it never recovered. So far has Gens Nefvarin fallen that it's gone from being Gens Yushoto's patron to being its client.

The gens continues to produce skilled sorcerer-engineers, and is responsible for maintaining the last few decrepit, mothballed skyships against whatever emergency might send them aloft once more. Most are Interventionists who wish for a more aggressive foreign policy, while a handful entertain notions of meddling in the imminent Realm civil war to seize the Imperial Palace for the Seventh Legion. The latter faction lacks support, but Nefvarin remains a respected name; should they produce a legitimate strategy, they might find an audience.

Gens Nerigus — Wood Whose Roots Clutch Riches

An offshoot of Gens Teresu, this merchant family considers itself the Seventh Legion's quartermasters. They devote themselves to overland trade and have strong — albeit complicated — ties to the Guild, working with its factors to supply foodstuffs, timber, and Nexus steel, while fencing with those same factors over contracts, tariffs, trade routes, exchange rates, and the like as each side tries to gain the upper hand. Its members hold important posts in the Stores Directorate; although they strive to avoid the impropriety of obvious favoritism toward Nerigus-owned businesses, they nonetheless profit from the arrangement. Generally they lean Interventionist, believing that Lookshy's increased involvement would mean greater economic leverage in the family's commercial contracts.

Gens Sirel — Water of Distant Shores

Sirel descends from a Blessed Isle gens that defected to Lookshy five centuries ago during the rise of the Realm, angered by the Empress' dismantling of the old Shogunate social structure. Distant relatives in Teresu vouched for them, and they've remained staunchly loyal ever since; in the modern day they're a client family to Gens Teresu, and back the Mercenary politics of the Teresu naval wing. Sirels are generally driven to excellence, perhaps overcompensating in their efforts to come out of Gens Teresu's shadow; some few of their number have even held the admiralty of the Lookshy Navy. Others take a different direction, rebelling

SOCIAL CLASS IN LOOKSHY

Citizenship in Lookshy is divided into a handful of castes.

Citizens have full rights: land ownership, the power to vote in district councils, and the ability to leave Lookshy once their military service is complete. All members of the gentes are citizens. Noncitizens promoted to an officer's rank in the Seventh Legion or inducted into the Shogunate Bureaucracy also gain citizenship, which they retain even after retirement.

Helots form a hereditary underclass. They draw salaries and can own property, but can't own land; they can attend district councils, but can't speak or vote; and they can request work transfers, but ultimately must go where assigned. Devoted or heroic service can earn citizenship. Most enlisted soldiers are helots.

Metics are foreign residents of the city. Their rights are circumscribed — they may only rent land, and are subject to travel restrictions in the city — but they suffer no particular social onus, and may leave at any time.

Indentured servants are those who voluntarily accept up to five years' indenture to a citizen to pay off debts or wipe away criminal charges. All such contracts are handled by the Directorate of the Adjutant General (p. 120).

Slaves are owned by the Seventh Legion rather than by individuals. They're usually prisoners of war unable or unwilling to be repatriated at war's end. They receive room and board and can own nonland property, but otherwise have few rights, undergo close supervision, and are subject to harsh punishment for disobedience. Their children are typically manumitted as metics upon adulthood.

against the family's excessive pressure and ending up on the fringes of society as layabouts and heretics. In rare instances, this is cover for membership in the Intelligence and Security Directorates.

The Sirels maintain ties with Realm patrician families and cadet houses with which they share descent, providing a useful entrance into diplomatic or commercial negotiations, as well as a source of vital intelligence on the Realm's internal affairs. However, many in Lookshy regard Sirel's Realm ties warily, impugning the gens' loyalty.

Gens Taroketu — Heirs of the Wandering Blade

This gens takes its name from the famous outcaste "One Cut" Taroketu, whose unexpected arrival at a key battle helped turn the tide against the last Realm invasion. The gens produces few Dragon-Blooded offspring, but has amassed considerable wealth by marrying into wealthy merchant families; between that and the legends surrounding its founder, Taroketu remains influential. Living in the shadow of the Dragon-Blooded gentes, mortal Taroketus often feel driven to keep up. For some this means grand, dramatic gestures; for others, unorthodox and creative strategies; and for some, unethical or illicit schemes. Additionally, they have a good working relationship with the Guild and have quietly served as middlemen between Guild merchants and the Realm's Great Houses. While the gens has little interest in upending the status quo, the founder's wife was an exiled Vanehan noble, so it does maintain a distant, theoretical claim to Vaneha's throne — and with the Realm in chaos, the gens' Interventionist wing sees an opportunity to pursue that ambition through conquest.

Gens Toriki — Five Dragons Guard the City's Walls

This family has no predominant elemental aspect, and claims descent from various Deheleshen survivors under the old city's last garrison commander. As such, it doesn't truly consider itself part of the Seventh Legion, concerning itself almost exclusively with the city's defense and internal day-to-day governance. While the Torikis serve the Legion loyally, they consider the defense of the River Province to be a waste of blood and resources. They're influential within the Shogunate Bureaucracy and the Justice and Security Directorates, and maintain the city's temple to Tu Yu, the old god of Deheleshen. The gens is also a focal point for the Isolationist faction — hardly a surprise, given its conservative outlook.

Gens Yan Tu — Fire That Sheds a Thousand Sparks

Descended from Taimyo Nefvarin Yan Tu, this gens considers its legacy to be the art of battle. Those with sufficient talent study sorcery; otherwise, the family leans toward various military professions, especially

combat engineering and cavalry roles. Yan Tu has a reputation for exuberance and for theatrics, both on the battlefield and in the salon. They like to portray themselves as direct and ingenuous, but in truth, the family often uses frontal assaults and battle sorcery — or insults and seduction, in less martial settings — as ruses to distract opponents from their true goals. Yan Tu tend to be Mercenaries and Interventionists, but politics are always secondary to a good fight, preferably as over-the-top as possible.

Life Among the Gentes

The Seventh Legion of Lookshy sees the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate, and especially the Shogunate legions, as its cultural foundation. As such, while it upholds the Dragon-Blooded as its leaders in matters both mundane and spiritual, its focus is primarily military. Due to the circumstances surrounding its history and governance, it's even more martial than the Realm — for all intents and purposes, the Seventh Legion *is* Lookshy, and it's both a civic responsibility and a sacred duty for all Dragon-Blooded under Shogunate rule to commit themselves utterly to the charge laid upon them centuries ago by the city's founders. This charge is known in official terms as the Lookshy Directive: Maintain Lookshy as a Shogunate city under Seventh Legion authority, and hold their post until a new Shogun emerges.

Lookshyan Dragon-Blooded are thus brought up from an early age as soldiers and officers. They're taught that their utmost duty and their destiny is to work and to fight for the greater good of Lookshy and the Seventh Legion. Rather than focus on individual puissance or personal glory, emphasis is placed upon values such as honor, moderation, and consideration of others, to produce adults who can join the ranks of one of the most highly disciplined fighting forces in the world.

Education

Training starts early in life, with children as young as five beginning formal education through private tutors. At age eleven, most are enrolled in academies. There are over a hundred academies throughout the city, with a range of specialties. Academies teach fighting techniques, weapons proficiency, and battle tactics, as well as core subjects such as modern and ancient literature, the River Province's history, and mathematics. The most desirable academies consider proper decorum and social presentation as vital to one's success in life as military training and scholarship. Many elective courses aim to refine students' social graces. For example, the art of hosting tea ceremonies might be offered alongside lectures on statecraft and the complex workings of the Shogunate Bureaucracy.

Immigration and Adoption

The General Staff welcomes outcastes who wish to enlist in the field forces, compensating them generously. Lookshy allots a large portion of its budget to recruitment efforts, and bonuses granted to successful recruiters of fresh talent are attractive. This welcome isn't limited to armed combatants; Lookshy accepts any outcaste willing to labor in its defense, whether that be prodigious field cooks, powerful sorcerers, or enterprising merchant princes.

Outcastes are strongly encouraged to undertake sponsorship and eventual adoption by a gens. This helps them acclimate to Lookshyan life and secures them proper training. In the past, groups that immigrated together sometimes leveraged their numbers to be recognized as a Gens Minor (for example, Gens Taroketu) rather than dispersing themselves among the city's various gentes. If petitioning for permanent residency status on her own, an outcaste immigrant is encouraged to join an existing gens through adoption or marriage. No official penalties exist for Dragon-Blooded who choose not to pursue these paths, but they face limited social mobility.

The Directorate of the Adjutant-General presides over adoptions, but final approvals must go through the General Staff, and they're heavily inclined to place outcaste Dragon-Blooded among the Gentes Major. This practice is intended as a screening process, filtering out potentially problematic or dangerous outcastes, because the gens into which they're placed would be held responsible for their actions.

Military Service

Lookshy's social hierarchy centers around citizenship status. Citizens hold all high offices within the Seventh Legion, which is the backbone around which the entire city-state operates. Military service is compulsory amongst citizens and helots for a minimum term of five years. Service doesn't end with a compulsory five-year tour of duty, even for those Dragon-Blooded who don't elect to pursue a dedicated military career. All Lookshyans not on active service are considered part of the reserve force, and regular training, practice drills, and war games are held throughout the year to ensure the entire city's readiness.

A plethora of opportunities await Dragon-Blooded citizens after their five-year terms end, most notably voluntary reenlistment with the Seventh Legion. Its rank and advancement structure have deviated little from its original Shogunate roots. Some changes have been made out of necessity over the years; the Sky Guard has been relegated to ceremonial status for centuries, its

SEVENTH LEGION MILITARY RANKS

Nitei: Soldier.

Gochei: Corporal. Leads a fang.

Haichei: Military specialist or technician, including novice sorcerer-engineers.

Gunchei: Sergeant. Leads a fang, although typically only veteran nitei.

Sochei: Senior sergeant. Leads a scale.

Shonai: Specialist professional such as an artillerist, sorcerer-engineer, shipwright, or surgeon, who oversees haichei.

Chozei: Subaltern officer who oversees the training of sochei, gunchei, gochei, and nitei. Occasionally leads scales under the supervision of a senior gunchei.

Chuzei: Lieutenant. Leads a scale or talon.

Taizei: Captain. Leads a talon or wing.

Shozei: Major. Leads a wing or dragon.

Kazei: Colonel. Leads a dragon. Almost all kazei are Dragon-Blooded, though a handful throughout Lookshy's history have been mortal.

Taimyo: General of an entire field force or administrator of a Directorate. All taimyo are Dragon-Blooded.

Chumyo: The leader of the Seventh Legion. In the Shogunate, each legion was led by a chumyo.

few remaining airships mothballed and restricted for use only in dire emergency. Otherwise, it follows a unit composition based upon multiples of five: Five soldiers make a fang, five fangs make a scale, five scales make a talon, and so on. While mortals rarely rise beyond mid-tier officer postings, an ambitious, intelligent, and particularly skilled Dragon-Blooded has every reason to expect that he could sit on the General Staff one day, if he dedicates himself to upholding the Legion's ideals and exemplifying its leadership.

Most missions and assignments are outsourced through contracts between the General Staff and various River Province polities. The type of action a legionnaire might see depends upon her posting and the field force to which she's assigned. The First Field Force, for example, is geared toward reconnaissance and quick-response units, and tends to be dispatched to the most hazardous environments.

While citizens of Lookshy must serve their compulsory service in the field forces, metics who wish to fight for Lookshy join its foreign field forces alongside former janissaries, ex-mercenaries, runaway slaves, and criminals and bandits fleeing justice, most of whom have never seen Lookshy itself. Recruits receive a year of intensive training, a regimen which both raises them to meet the Seventh Legion's exacting standards and weeds out those unfit to serve. The foreign legions are typically neither as well-equipped nor as disciplined as Seventh Legion field forces. They operate on the outskirts of the River Province and throughout the East, occasionally posing as independent mercenary companies.

Military-minded Dragon-Blooded often remain in the Legion for many decades, and there are a number of career paths open to them. Some become strategoi — the Legion's premier tacticians — dictating the approach that must be taken to each mission. Others are invited to join the ranger corps, the Seventh Legion's special forces units who enter dangerous territory on highly classified missions — usually matters which Lookshy doesn't care to publicly acknowledge, such as assassinations, state sabotage, infiltration, and deep-cover assignments. Dragon-Blooded trained in sorcery, artifice, and First Age lore might serve as sorcerer-engineers, responsible for maintaining Lookshy's First Age

weaponry and ordnance; they're vital to the continued operation of the city's armory. Seasoned infantry officers often accept assignments outside Lookshy proper to train armies in other city-states within the River Province, or take command posts among the string of redoubts maintained across the Scavenger Lands.

Like the Realm, Lookshy has a long and rich magical tradition. The Valkhawsen Academy of Sorcery is among its most famous schools, teaching a Shogunate-era sorcerous discipline that employs ritualized meditation, poetry, and formal ceremonies to empty the mind and achieve unity with Creation. The city makes far more everyday use of sorcery than most places in Creation; it's second only to the Realm in numbers of Dragon-Blooded sorcerers. Sorcerers are fully integrated at all levels of command throughout the field forces, and it's common for special forces units in particular to be assigned at least one sorcerer. Summoning demons and elementals, however, is the province of the elite cadre of sohei (p. 122) known as sorcerer-exorcists. While most sorcerers are treated as battlemasters rather than pariahs, the Legion treads carefully around sorcerer-exorcists.

Nonmilitary Service

Service to Lookshy need not fall under the auspice of the blade alone. Seven directorates form the Seventh Legion's support apparatus and ensure that the Legion and Lookshy are properly supplied. The administrators in charge of these bureaus share the title of taimyo with the field force commanders, and although their responsibilities see a degree of overlap, each is responsible for different types of support missions. Together, they form the underpinnings of much of the city's civil society.

The Directorate of the Adjutant-General handles personnel issues. This includes administrating the academies, assigning and reassigning soldiers to various units, helping retired soldiers find civilian careers, and looking after older soldiers.

The Intelligence Directorate deploys its agents to obtain information on the capabilities of potential enemies and to assess what threat they pose to Lookshy.

The Justice Directorate enforces the Seventh Legion's statutes, both in Lookshy itself and accompanying its field forces. White-robed justiciars keep the peace, while judges investigate crimes and oversee tribunals.

The Liaison Directorate negotiates with foreign governments on the Legion's behalf, from the grand political scale to the nitty-gritty of renting land for a field force's encampment.

The Operations Directorate deals with military strategy and tactics, coordinating the Legion's campaigns and analyzing the results of its engagements.

The Security Directorate handles counterintelligence and military security, from arranging guard assignments to tracking down agents of the All-Seeing Eye.

The Stores Directorate organizes the acquisition, storage, and disbursement of the Legion's resources, from field kit to grain stores to rare First Age artifact weapons.

A few find employment with the Shogunate Bureaucracy, whose functionaries make up the last remnants of the official Shogunate government. While their position is largely ceremonial, they hold enormous symbolic authority, as the Lookshy Directive invests them with the cultural weight of the lost Shogunate. Should a bureau gainsay the General Staff within its

THE ARMORY

The Seventh Legion's armory contains artifact arms and armor, arcane siege machines, and hearthstones retrieved from the city's four manses as well as from River Province demesnes and manses under Lookshy's control.

The armory also houses Creation's largest supply of the nigh-legendary gunzosha armor of the First Age. Elite mortal soldiers who've undergone ritual blessings and surgical modification can attune to these powered armors and wield their Evocations, at the cost of vastly shortened lifespans.

The contents of the Seventh Legion's armory aren't free to be requisitioned by just anyone; access must be earned through service. Rare and powerful First Age weapons, including the city's bare handful of functioning warstriders, are only available at the discretion of the General Staff.



administrative sphere of influence — by refusing to sign off on a military budget, for example — the Legion would lose face in the eyes of the Lookshyan public. On the other hand, the Legion can take direct action (such as military reassignment) against the bureaucrats should it be too hard pressed, so by and large the two organizations stay out of each other's way.

Economics

The gentes of Lookshy aren't completely analogous to the Great Houses of the Scarlet Dynasty. For example, members of the gentes don't receive a monetary stipend from their families, although all of their essential needs are met, and scions may petition for additional resources when circumstances warrant or in exchange for a favor owed to the imperator (to be paid back at the gens' discretion). In Lookshy, one's contribution to the Legion is more important than Exaltation. Even the Dragon-Blooded are expected to make their own way for their daily bread.

The most readily available source of income in Lookshy is service to the Seventh Legion proper, the directorates, or the Shogunate Bureaucracy. One may find more profit in owning a business or plying a skilled trade; Lookshy derives almost as much revenue from commerce as it does from military contracts, while the gentes maintain a web of ongoing business enterprises and support promising new ventures. But commercial income isn't as reliable as a soldier's pay, and while basic living expenses and discretionary pay from the military aren't taxed, any monies made from trade and other sources are subject to a flat-rate tax set by the Legion's Liaison Directorate.

Retirement

Few Dragon-Blooded live long enough to reach old age, but the handful who do typically retire either to their gens' compound within the city walls or to a private estate near the city. Even then, they often remain active — involving themselves in their descendants' lives, networking with other elders, and calling in their remaining favors on behalf of their families before they pass.

The Immaculate Faith

Worship of the Five Immaculate Dragons is common amongst the Dragon-Blooded, dating back to the Shogunate. However, the Realm's Immaculate Philosophy and the old Immaculate Faith as practiced by Lookshy are very different. Some differences, such

as the Philosophy's aniconism versus the vividly illustrated decks of cards common to Seventh Legion barracks, are more minor than others. Both denominations emphasize the proper role of spirits as part of the Perfected Hierarchy, although the Faith is somewhat less rigid in this matter.

The most profound difference is that the Immaculate Faith isn't a state religion. It doesn't exist to justify the Seventh Legion's rule, but to provide a guiding path for mortals and their Exalted leaders towards spiritual enlightenment. Lookshy's Dragon-Blooded consider the Faith a vital part of their spiritual lives, but one that's generally unrelated to matters of politics and governance. The Faith itself has no governing body beyond the Shogunate Bureaucracy's administration of temples and academies, and the Seventh Legion's chaplains — or sohei — exert no temporal authority.

The Immaculate Faith also states that while Exaltation can be a reward for excellence and leadership, it's not in itself deserving of respect from others. A Dragon-Blooded warrior must be judged by her own deeds rather than the blood in her veins or her soul's elevated position.

Most modern sohei explain that everyone travels the path of enlightenment at a different pace. Just as one cannot drag a recalcitrant mule to a stream to drink, so one cannot force one's beliefs upon others. Some sohei advocate a more direct approach, feeling that wider acceptance of the Faith outside Lookshyan circles would bring increased stability to the River Province and beyond, but by and large they take a pragmatic view towards their neighbors' propensity for worshiping specific gods.

However, for all that the Faith's mainline practitioners describe such tolerance as a principled stance, it's rooted in political compromises necessary for Lookshy to cooperate with the god-ridden principalities of the Scavenger Lands. The Purists reject this approach as corrupt, and would force the Faith upon the River Province at spear's point if they could.

Within the Faith

Sohei begin their training in academies owned and operated by various temples. These provide students with a classical Lookshyan education, centered on Immaculate theology, including the history and tenets

THE CODE OF THE RIGHTEOUS WARRIOR

The Code of the Righteous Warrior is an old Shogunate doctrine. The Righteous Warrior is the pinnacle of the Faith's teachings, an enlightened soul that lives his life by the five Immaculate Pillars of Honor, Loyalty, Prowess, Conviction, and Compassion. He is the ultimate warrior: one who can win any battle, but understands that drawing his blade isn't always a solution. Some believe that not even the Immaculate Dragons themselves were Righteous Warriors, but they came within arm's reach of that peak. Dragon-Blooded believers strive towards this ideal, believing that excellence will come with their efforts.

The Pillar of Honor: Impeccable actions and honest words are the hallmark of the Righteous Warrior. Honor demands a strong sense of personal dignity: the word of the Righteous Warrior should always guarantee the truth of an assertion, and, for the weight it carries, should never be given cheaply. Mela demonstrated with her actions that only through honor is true victory attainable.

The Pillar of Loyalty: The Righteous Warrior's loyalty must be unwavering. His first loyalty must be to the ideals of the Shogunate, followed by loyalty to one's commander, then by filial piety. Pasiap taught that loyalty is the foundation of all things, be it a peasant family, a legion, or the Shogunate itself.

The Pillar of Prowess: The Righteous Warrior's actions must be executed with both faultless skill and faultless timing. He dispenses death upon his enemies only at the appointed hour, forgoing needless attacks. Hesiesh epitomizes this conception of prowess, his almighty power tempered by wise restraint.

The Pillar of Conviction: When the Righteous Warrior raises his blade, he cannot doubt that his cause is wholly just in the eyes of the Dragons. To choose one's actions without conviction is to risk the stain of death in the name of an unworthy cause. Danaa'd showed that conviction can triumph over even the greatest of foes through her persistence in swimming to the sea's depths to seal away the Anathema.

The Pillar of Compassion: Brotherly affection for one's fellow man, sympathy, and noble charity — these virtues ennoble the soul of a Righteous Warrior. Sextes Jylis taught that the compassionate warrior will always triumph over a heartless foe, for he has something greater to fight for.

of the Immaculate Faith, its Shogunate roots, and its interaction with the spirit courts. They also pursue a training regimen designed to cultivate and tame their Essence, including meditation and Immaculate martial arts. Only those who've gained basic mastery over themselves can advance their training far enough to master spirits. While this can include subduing them through combat, a sohei's job when dealing with the supernatural is to act as intercessor, which need not end in violence.

Many sohei commit themselves to the Faith's temples — found mostly within Lookshy proper, with a handful scattered elsewhere amid the Scavenger Lands — or to tending their flocks within the Legion, but there are tales aplenty of wandering monks who take to the countless roads of the Scavenger Lands with their ofuda and their texts, bringing the Faith to civilization's outskirts and smiting demons and rogue gods that terrorize mortal villages.

Lookshy and the Wyld Hunt

Despite the numerous religious and political differences between Lookshy and the Realm, the Wyld Hunt is one of the few things on which they both agree. Lookshy views Anathema as an intolerable threat to the security of the River Province. The Seventh Legion regularly intercepts the Wyld Hunt when the Realm sends shikari into the region, but doesn't turn it back. Instead, the mortal forces of the Wyld Hunt are replaced with troops from a field force on active duty in the area. The shikari are then escorted to their destination with all due respect and the full assistance of the Legion's military might.

Before the Empress' disappearance, Lookshy and the Realm would undertake joint operations to dispatch particularly dangerous or intractable Anathema, with the All-Seeing Eye sending word ahead of the Hunt's arrival. Today, a Wyld Hunt is often formed in haste, leaving no time to contact the General Staff before it arrives, so collaborations on this scale have become rare.

Politics of the Seventh Legion

As a group, Lookshyan Dragon-Blooded present a unified front to the rest of Creation; it's rare to see open political maneuvering, whether in the name of personal beliefs or the advancements of one's gens. Usually the game takes the form of favors and debts owed, and plenty of avenues exist for Dragon-Blooded who wish to support their gens or influence a given policy. A senior officer, seeing a promising Exalted youngster fresh from the academy with similar ideas and ideals, might put a good word in the right ears; a seasoned bureaucrat whose niece seeks a transfer into the Intelligence Directorate could arrange for her name to come up in discussions over a key mission. Such acts arguably fall short of outright nepotism, but the young Dragon-Blooded appointed to his new post will remember the officer who put in a good word for her, and she's likely to reciprocate when the opportunity arises.

While members of the various factions are prone to lively debates, and some will escalate differences of opinion into personal grudges, outright political violence or blood feuds are almost nonexistent. Beyond the Seventh Legion's prohibition on dueling, Lookshyans' pragmatic attitudes discourage actions — such as sabotage or assassination — that would cause unacceptable losses to the Legion.

Thus, those seeking to rid themselves of a hated rival attempt to do so through bloodless means. Bureaucratic spite — someone "losing" important documentation and causing that individual loss of face — or other methods such as spreading rumors in order to goad one's opponent into revealing their hand are common tactics. Masterful schemers can diminish or destroy their targets without doing anything remotely illegal.

Lookshy and the Realm

The Seventh Legion and the Scarlet Dynasty have been at odds for centuries. They've clashed over politics, religion, and everything in between, but only those who've witnessed firsthand some of the Realm's most egregious cruelties truly hate its rulers. Lookshy's policy towards the Realm is to avoid direct confrontation, while remaining vigilant against Realm puppets and spies.

Visitors from the Realm are allowed in the city, provided they keep to designated areas and don't try to instigate trouble. Immaculate monks find themselves restricted to the foreign quarter of the city along with merchants and tradesmen (where most Lookshyans feel they belong). The General Staff allows only one exception to this rule: Dynasts bearing diplomatic protection may travel — under strict escort — as far as the Second Ring, where their embassy is headquartered.

Realm ambassadors to Lookshy have traditionally been retired outcaste officers loyal to the throne, appointed by the Empress as a reward for decades of legionary service, and accompanied by four handpicked advisors, like a satrap's. House Ledaal recently claimed the post through trading favors in the Deliberative, hoping to better coordinate Wyld Hunt activities with the Seventh Legion against the resurgent Anathema threat — and to wreak revenge against the Mask of

THE BATTLE OF MISHAKA

Eighteen years ago, the armies of Thorns — backed by Realm military advisors — invaded the Scavenger Lands. Fourteen years ago, the armies of the Confederation of Rivers, led by the Seventh Legion, broke the back of Thorns' forces at the Battle of Mishaka. Most Lookshyans lost a friend or relative in that conflict. Although passions have had time to cool, the youngest generation has an instinctive mistrust of Realm scheming, and they cast a suspicious eye on any Dynastic presence in and around the Scavenger Lands. Likewise, while they recognize the threat of the Mask of Winters, they harbor little sympathy for fallen Thorns itself.

Winters for the Ledaal scions who perished in the fall of Thorns.

Lookshy and the Guild

Lookshy's relationship with the Guild has always been somewhat tense. Its seasoned military tacticians recognize the mercantile syndicate's activities for the economic warfare it is, and the Guild understands that its mercenaries and bodyguards are outmatched by Lookshy's regulars, let alone its special forces. However, the General Staff is well aware that the Guild could cause significant economic distress to the city and its trade if it wished — its contracts with the gentes be damned — which would impede Lookshy's ability to maintain operations elsewhere in the River Province. Thus, while neither side trusts the other, their mutual unwillingness to confront each other and risk their respective power bases — especially in the current climate — has resulted in a grudging understanding.

Outcastes

Many outcastes never set foot on the Blessed Isle. Indeed, rare is the Dragon-Blood born far beyond the Realm's satrapies in the Threshold who ever joins forces with more than her Hearth. Some few never find another to share their long lives with. But even a single Exalt suffices to change the course of a war, to shift the fortunes of an entire kingdom, to dominate a region's trade — they're heroes, one and all, and when the blood of the Dragons stirs, none can ignore she who bears it.

A Spark on the Wind Ignites a Hundred Wildfires

The Threshold is replete with tales of wandering sellswords, martial artists, champions, and culture heroes. More often than not, the kernel of truth at the heart of these tales is that once, long ago, a wandering outcaste passed through.

There are many reasons a young Dragon-Blood, fresh from Exaltation, might forsake the comfortable life of home and set out to seek adventure or fortune. For one thing, the vast majority of Creation's inhabitants are peasants who live a life practically identical to that of their parents and grandparents. Exaltation marks the young outcaste as destined for greater things — most can only bear so much of village life when they can bend the forces of nature to their whim, when all of Creation seems within their grasp. Others know no such comforts, born into a harsh life or shackled in slavery. Captors or abusers stand little chance of preventing a new Dragon-Blood from claiming her freedom, and few can withstand her should she pursue vengeance.

Even those who linger overlong in their birthplace find reason to leave, sooner or later — the most common being nothing more than mortality. Their friends, family, and lovers are all mortal, aging as mortals do, departing for the next life only six or seven decades

GODS OF LOOKSHY

Tien Yu, Lookshy's city mother, takes an active role in spirit court politics throughout the River Province, tirelessly advocating in Lookshy's interest. She appears as a soldier with jet-black skin and silver hair, wearing dragon armor of moonsilver and black jade.

Tien Yu's predecessor — and, some say, her father, son, brother, or lover — is **Tu Yu**, Deheleshen's city father. Once a sage tactician and battlewise scholar, he lost much power and prestige when the Old City fell to the Great Contagion and rampaging Fair Folk, and his former duties have largely been shouldered by Tien Yu. He seems little more than a doddering fool at times. His pride, however, is undiminished, and he owes a debt of gratitude to the Seventh Legion for reviving fallen Deheleshen.



after entering it. Their filial obligations spent, their wedding vows ash in the wind, their grandchildren grown and with families of their own, there's nothing left to hold a Dragon-Blood back.

A rare few are thrust from their old lives by force. Though the Exalted are known across Creation, kin to the mighty Scarlet Empress, many powers resent their presence. The god who dominates a village may cast a young Exalt out, rather than watch her grow to rival him, while a warlord might send underlings to kill the young Dragon-Blood for much the same reasons. Even mortals can threaten the Exalted, and some would rather cut down an outcaste while she's still fresh from her Second Breath than risk being subjugated by her might as she matures. Rather than fight and risk destroying everything they've ever known, many an outcaste bows out and rides across the horizon — often planning her return and vengeance, when she's grown powerful enough.

An Empress in Miniature

As the Scarlet Empress is known across Creation, so too is the legend of her rise to power — quelling rebels, crushing potential rivals, and bringing stability and peace to Creation. Drunk on the power coursing through their veins, more than one outcaste has taken this tale as inspiration, and sought to replicate the great successes of that semidivine figure of legend. None have yet succeeded, but every corner of Creation knows of a conqueror who, in her private moments, compared herself against the Scarlet Empress and wept to find herself wanting.

Power naturally draws followers, and Dragon-Blooded are blessed with power, leaving their mark on the world as they pass whether they mean to or not. Whatever draws them to war and conquest — be it desire to overthrow a cruel tyrant or desire to be one — the Exalted find willing accomplices in droves, seeking to better their stations through proximity to true power. One outcaste and her retinue of exiled nobles and wandering swordsmen might make a citadel of an ancient, shattered fortress in the hills. Another might sweep across village after village at the head of an army of bandits and raiders, putting the fields of any who resist to the torch with his bare hands — champions and villains alike are blessed by the Dragons.

A Family Chosen

The outcaste's lot is lonely at first, for she's often the only Dragon-Blood she or anyone she knows has ever

seen. Elders, perhaps, remember a hero who rode through the town once, decades ago — a rare town boasts of a Dragon-Blooded residing within a few days' ride. When a young outcaste meets another like herself, it's often a jarring moment fraught with emotion. The encounter may well end with swords drawn or a night of frantic passion — or both — but it won't be easily forgotten.

Even more than Dynasts, outcastes thrive in the company of their peers. Some outcastes seek out and become a part of a Sworn Kinship with Dragon-Blooded

OTHER OUTCASTES

The following outcaste cultures, as well as the more detailed ones that follow, provide players with potential cultural backgrounds for their characters, Storytellers with possible groups for her players' characters to conquer, and inspiration for other outcaste cultures to serve whatever purpose may be necessary.

The Cult of the Violet Fang: Out of the inhospitable icy wastes of the Northwest rises a resplendent cathedral, its stained glass windows cut from gemstones and its gargoyles hewn from opal. This is the home of the Cult of the Violet Fang, the children of a strange armistice between a decimated Shogunate-era bastion and the invading Fair Folk. Dragon-Blooded members of this reclusive culture devote themselves to honing body and Essence, preparing themselves for a ritual quest into the Wyld against the cult's raksha ancestors every seven years. Those who return victorious bear alien blessings and otherworldly treasures; those defeated return with their mind and soul in tatters. It's not always easy to tell which is which.

The Grass Spiders: Hidden at the edge of the River Province, this clan of assassins is composed of Dragon-Blooded and mortals alike. Some seek out such a life; others are kidnapped shortly after Exaltation and indoctrinated. Of course, as with any secret sisterhood of killers, more than a few have fallen in love with one another, and occasionally a child is born and raised within the clan's very heart, the hidden fortress-manse called the Unrepentant Sinner Palace. Here, the Three Elite Fiends — believed to be elder outcastes, though no one knows for sure — train their subordinates in every manner of killing, but most especially in the use of poisons. When they strike down their targets, they do so with subtlety, grace, and most importantly art.

Heaven's Dragons: When the Exalted threw down the enemies of the gods from their thrones in Heaven, not all returned to Creation. A small population of mortals and Dragon-Blooded, in the service of gods forgotten or absent, live on the periphery of Yu-Shan to this day. Dwelling in tight-knit extended families within tenements carved from subdivided palaces or divine slums teeming with unemployed gods, a few rise to prominence as freelance agents of Heaven, gaining employment in the celestial bureaucracy or carrying out the agendas of a divine patron. Some fall afoul of Heaven's law, and are exiled to Creation, where they bitterly plot their return.

The Khamaseen Battalion: When the Contagion swept the world and the Shogunate tottered and fell, its legions were spread across Creation. General Khamasi Tala, seeing a city dying around her, deserted her post, fleeing with her garrison into the isolated steppes of the far Southeast. The descendants of that lost and forgotten legion still walk the steppe and the Summer Mountains' foothills, passing from village to village, speaking a language long dead anywhere else in Creation. To enter service with the Shogunate's successors in the Realm or Lookshy is unthinkable to them — they know only one punishment for desertion — and instead devote themselves to mercenary work in service to far Southeastern peoples.

The Rogue Legion of Saloy Hin: Seven Imperial legions disbanded rather than let themselves be divided up among the Great Houses. Rumors in the South tell of one such legion wandering the deserts, seeking out unclaimed manses and amassing stores of firedust under the leadership of Saloy Hin, an outcaste graduate of Pasiap's Stair. Once renowned for the daring tactics and rigid discipline of his legion, he recruits Dynastic exiles, outcastes, Exigents, and God-Blooded into his legion while selling firedust to Southern cities, seeking to destabilize the region and establish a foothold as a stepping stone to bringing the Realm under his bootheel.

Yatani's Children: Their manner of dress and speech may be strange, but the stories they tell are stranger yet, for the Children of Yatani claim to hail not from Creation, but from another world, from which they were separated in a terrible, ancient cataclysm. A diaspora culture of savants, they comb through every scrap of lore they can find, hoping to find any evidence of home — and maybe even a way back.

MASTERLESS DRAGONS

The ranks of the outcastes also include Dragon-Blooded cast out from the Realm and Lookshy. Some are military deserters; others are exiles, sentenced for high crimes or cast out by a political rival's machinations. Some are ideological dissidents who strike out on their own rather than live in a society they find contemptible.

of the Scarlet Dynasty, becoming heir to the intrigues of their sworn kin's houses but able to call upon Dynastic resources to aid their own struggles. When outcastes come together to form a Hearth, however, often the only desires and needs they're beholden to are their own and those of their sworn kin. Along with camaraderie, they also earn the freedom to pursue goals previously beyond their reach.

The Wanasaan

The story is the same across Creation — the unquiet dead rise to bedevil the living, dominate them with arcane powers, or prey upon their flesh, and communities make provision against such things. Chiaroscuro has its enormous salt lines; in Great Forks, the dead are pacified by worship alongside gods, one cult among many; and in the Realm, the Immaculate Order crushes any hint of ghostly insurgency with stunning force. Along the Whispering Coast of the far Northwest, beyond distant Fajad — where tiny fishing villages huddle in the lee of rocky coves, wreathed in thickest fog amidst snow and stringy, weathered pine — communities lack such resources, but have recourse nonetheless. When ancestors grow unquiet, when hungry ghosts stalk the night, or when other, darker things well up from the Underworld, they need only build a great bonfire and cast something precious into it, whispering the name of the Wanasaan.

The first sign their call has been answered is always the mist that rolls in off the sea, blanketing the area in a fog thick enough to make the world all but vanish, thick enough to dampen the loudest of shouts to a whisper. Only when the fog snuffs out the bonfire does the exorcist show herself, wrapped in thick cloaks and wearing a wide straw hat to hide her eyes. Moisture drips from every surface in her presence, and when she lifts her arms the various totems and talismans hanging from them jangle discordantly. She is fêted, given the best of everything as she's told of the problem the community faces. When the elders are finished, she'll pause, consider, and nod — this, too, is part of the ritual. Then she'll name a price. The price is always paid, for to refuse the Wanasaan once is to refuse them forever, and the Wanasaan are loath to tolerate a competitor to their services.

A Drowned and Frozen Heart

The Wanasaan tread the line between the living and dead, not only figuratively, but literally. Every Dragon-Blooded member of the family, upon reaching her twenty-fifth year, is ceremonially drowned in a freezing cold spring on the Silent Isle that's forever enshrouded in the unmistakable Wanasaan fog. On occasion, an initiate proves too weak to survive the rite, but it's the only way to ensure the family's preeminence. Mortals born to the family may petition to do so as well (though they're much less likely to survive), as may prospective adoptees. A survivor, when resuscitated, brings a measure of death back with her, a chill spike of ice in her heart from the water she inhaled. This is a source of sorcerous enlightenment (p. 309), and an ever-hungry pit that consumes the souls of the dead.

A Bloodline Touched by Frost

Over two centuries ago, or so family legend has it, Wanasaan Adiura happened upon the Silent Isle. Whether she fell into the Spring of Echoes or drowned herself of her own volition, none can say, but the terrifying enlightenment she brought with her has spoken for itself over many generations. Her descendants, more mercenary than Adiura herself, still hold the Isle in a kind of possessive reverence as the cornerstone of their monopoly on exorcism in these cold waters. The Wanasaan have built it into a citadel over the centuries, and while not all dwell here, enough do to make it the heart of their tiny, insular culture, a home filled with mist and sorcerous knowledge in equal measure with secret ambitions and bloody plots. For the sake of fresh blood, they marry outside the family at least a few times in every generation, courting in a manner almost as perfunctory as their business dealings. Those who sail away with the Wanasaan rarely return to their families thereafter.

The current head of the Wanasaan family is Kemra, an aged but still vital Wood Aspect who took the Isle from



her brother, Shiga, in a bloody coup that decimated the family some thirty years ago. Custom would have her direct the family business from her heavily guarded retreat upon the Silent Isle, not venturing forth to conduct exorcisms herself. But with scarcely a dozen Dragon-Blooded Wanasaan remaining, the family is strained in its efforts to retain its old monopoly. Much of Kemra's time is spent recruiting outcastes for marriage into the family lest its diminished bloodline dwindle to nothing, and she fears she might be forestalling the inevitable. Even her most loyal partisans wonder whether the cost of victory over Shiga was too great.

The Sisterhood of Pearls

A century ago, two Immaculate missionaries came ashore on the Isle of Fevers. They hoped to spread the faith and cultivate a proper society on the island, where a few thin-blooded families of outcastes dominated a sprawling undercaste of farmers, fishermen, and artisans. The passionate rhetoric of Rising Flame and the bounty provided by Willow's Strength won over some of the population, little by little. Within the year, they'd assembled a humble temple — within five, children were being taught to read within it. All the while, Flame and Willow conversed with one another to deepen their understanding of the Immaculate Philosophy.

Year by year they argued, slowly refining the wedge that separated them from their old faith — the Five Insightful Criticisms that redefined the way they saw the world. With religious fervor driving them, they redoubled their efforts, and their new message of absolute equality won them followers without number from the undercaste of the island's native society. Soon, the old order had been abolished; those of the ruling caste either converted or fled the island in exile.

Sister Flame and Sister Willow rebuilt the island in the image of their perfected community, driven by a new faith that guided them ever further. To them, they're the cycle of rebirth itself responding to the excesses of the Dynasty, as a pearl forms to protect a clam's interior from grit. This convenient example, used frequently in sermons, became so popular with the community that they chose it as a name. The Sisterhood of Pearls has, ever since, sought to perfect themselves, as a pearl is mere sand perfected and made beautiful.

The Five Insightful Criticisms

The First Insightful Criticism is: *All souls are part of the cycle of death and rebirth; all souls are therefore equal.*

Unlike the Immaculate Order, the Sisterhood holds that all beings with a soul are equally worthy of respect and compassion, and to kill any being interrupts the lesson that life is meant to teach the soul within. All members of the community are therefore vegetarians, and vastly prefer nonviolent solutions — though, if need be, they'll defend themselves or others.

The Second Insightful Criticism is: *The Essence of the Immaculate Dragons is the Essence of enlightenment, but though the enlightened may be wise, and may help to guide others, their souls are no greater in worth.*

Rising Flame and Willow's Strength may lead the community, but it's not because of their blood; nor may the Isle's other outcastes treat the mortal population as inferior as they once did. If all souls are equal, none should be treated as greater than another. In practice, the Dragon-Blooded are still very much respected, and their word given much weight, but any mortal may speak against or criticize them if that mortal finds them wanting of enlightenment according to their station.

The Third Insightful Criticism is: *To divide the community according to place and purpose is to ignore the fundamental equality of all souls; abolish, therefore, all divisions.*

The Sisterhood retains the Immaculate belief that the purpose of life is to instruct the soul, but fundamentally disagrees regarding the organization of society. In the Sisterhood, all but a few personal possessions are held in common, and none are permitted to accumulate wealth or power over others — those who join the community must give up their valuables as part of the process of conversion, either throwing them into the sea or donating them to the Sisterhood's arsenal, a choice that depends largely on the object's utility. The Sisterhood doesn't consider men to be inferior to women, or vice versa. Decisions are made by the entire community after extended religious debate, and anyone may argue what they believe best aligns with the Five Criticisms.

The Fourth Insightful Criticism is: *Dragon-Blooded who squander their enlightenment on the material have turned aside from the True Way; they imperil their souls in doing so.*

Rising Flame and Willow's Strength had always shared a fundamental disgust with Dynastic society and its excesses, which each had joined the Immaculate Order to escape. Seeing how the Order's strictures have utterly failed the Dynasty, they were determined not to let their new, perfected society fall prey to the same petty ambitions. Labor is done in common, and duties are rotated; in this society, all hands are rough from work. Dragon-Blooded in the Sisterhood are, if anything, expected to live in a far more ascetic fashion than their mortal comrades, rather than to surrender to the torpor of luxury.

The Fifth Insightful Criticism is: *The path to enlightenment is not a straight road but a turning wheel; the most high may be reborn as the lowest.*

The Sisterhood doesn't teach that Dragon-Blooded Exaltation is a reward for enlightenment in past lives, but a transient state of grace. Upon death, the soul might be reborn as mortal, Dragon-Blooded, or even wretched Anathema, all in accordance with the greater harmony of Creation. Mortals ought be treated with respect, lest a cruel Dragon-Blood find herself suffering the same treatment in her next life. The Anathema are wicked, and the Sisterhood forgives the sin of killing one when the Wyld Hunt is called, but they too are deserving of compassion.

Trouble in Paradise

For all that Flame and Willow have come to rely on one another over the last hundred years, and for all that they each do their utmost to support the community they serve as prophets and mystics, for all that they passionately love one another, the two are divided over a question that has consumed their arguments for decades — the matter of the yet-unwritten Sixth Insightful Criticism. Rising Flame submits the following: *Even a pearl was once a grain of sand; so too must the Sisterhood soothe the ache of the Dynasty's misrule*. Willow's Strength's counterpoint: *Even a pearl was once a grain of sand; so too must the Sisterhood be complete in itself.* Their disagreement ripples throughout the Sisterhood as a whole, as disputes previously smoothed over by Flame and Willow make themselves manifest, and nascent factions begin to coalesce.

Rising Flame and her closest adherents seek to proselytize, first across the West and then (in Flame's vision) the whole of Creation, and to replace the Order with the Sisterhood for the betterment of all souls. Flame finds Willow's objection a betrayal of the First Insight, placing the enlightenment of the Sisterhood above the needs of Creation. For Willow's Strength's part, she sees in Flame the seeds of ambition, and though it be for a noble purpose, she cannot bring herself to allow her beloved to imperil her own soul. She and her inner

circle strongly condemn any expansion beyond the Isle of Fevers in communal debates.

Flame and Willow know the argument is at a deadlock, and both know that an implacable divide between each other is certain. The only thing keeping them from taking the final step is their love for one another, and for the family they've built for themselves on this remote island — each weeps to think that she may be the one to destroy everything they've sought to build together, but neither can turn aside from their faith. Yet in the end, the decision may not be theirs to make, as the factions that follow them grow increasingly radical in their convictions.

The Temple of the Reverent Whisper

At the confluence of two rivers sits the city of Great Forks, a city that never truly sleeps, that celebrates into the wee hours each and every night. By day, these celebrations favor gods and goddesses without number, who descend upon the City of Temples in their thousands hoping to build a cult of their very own. By night, the mortals of Great Folks take their own pleasure, seeking the blue lanterns that mark the city's profusion of bordellos and pleasure houses.

But one temple turns this arrangement on its head, displaying blue lanterns and streamers at its door by day and night alike, sating divine rather than mortal hungers. This unassuming building of polished stone is the Temple of the Reverent Whisper, and it's dedicated to all gods and none, for here the inhabitants of Heaven may come to have whatever manner of reverence they choose — provided they can pay for it.

Faithful Service

A woman, stripped of her clothing and ceremonially bathed in river water and oil, sits atop the mountain. She does not move, she does not speak, and if she breathes she gives no sign of it. The wind whips around her, driving her long hair across her face like a lash. Her skin goes white in places, yet still, she does not move. She composes a mantra in her mind, five times five times five lines in length. She commits this mantra to memory, but does not recite it until the twenty-fifth day on the mountain. She recites it only once, and then never again.

A man shaves his head — this isn't his act of reverence, but preparation for it, for he doesn't wish his hair to smolder and give off an offensive smell when he lies back in a bed of hot coals. He endures the heat, the burning, the pain, his skin supernaturally tough but not proof against flame. When he rises, the hot coals, artfully arranged, have seared a sutra into his body, writ in reddened skin. He will heal, in time, but until then he wears not even a scrap of clothing, that others might read the book he's made of himself.

Some acts are small, but still deeply meaningful and incredibly dangerous. Gods of poison, for example, have notoriously subtle and deadly tastes — Whirling Lady Koro-Bana prefers to take tea in high ceremony with her favorite priestess at the Temple of the Reverent Whisper once each week, for she's the only person the goddess has ever found who can appreciate the taste of hemlock.

A Business Most Divine

While some gods seek tantric rituals comparable in scope and kind to the pleasure mortals prefer, far more hunger only for worship, for reverence, for the jolt of power and ego that comes of being the focus of a sentient being's obeisance. Worship varies, and some forms are more puissant than others, in proportion with the strenuousness or austerity of the practice in question. Mortals cannot endure the most exotic and demanding forms of worship without risking life and limb, so the Temple of the Reverent Whisper only accepts Dragon-Blooded (and occasional Exigents) as priests and priestesses, for only they're resilient enough to serve its clientele. Popular and in-demand as they are among the various deities of Great Forks, outcastes who serve the Temple are recognized throughout the city, enjoying a status only slightly lesser than that of the gods they serve.

The Temple of the Reverent Whisper sees nigh-constant traffic, not only from local gods, but divinities from far and wide. Occasionally — once a year or so — a god will even descend from Heaven itself for the sole purpose of attending the Temple and calling upon its services. Such an exclusive clientele lends itself exceptionally well to networking. Priests and priestesses engaged in service overhear all manner of gossip between deities, taking note of who's talking to whom and who's most definitely on the outs. Information, too, is valuable, but discretion is what makes that information valuable, and the Temple doesn't speak of its clients' secrets with outsiders. Rather, they merely "advise" what actions may be auspicious and which may not be — an entire wing of the Temple, and the only one in which mortals are permitted, deals exclusively with this arm of the Temple's business.

Such a thriving business model has inspired much jealousy — even in a city where gods regularly walk

amongst mortals, such intimate and personal ties are rare and valuable. The Temple of the Reverent Whisper has historically tolerated no competition in its particular idiom, and thus far it has successfully leveraged its enormous wealth and the favors owed it — by mortals and spirits alike — to ensure that misfortune befalls any who hope to seize a portion of this market for themselves. The current Headmistress of the temple, the outcaste Riela Tenan, has seen no less than three such endeavors ground beneath her heel in the hundred years she's managed the Temple's affairs. She is wise, still very beautiful despite her advanced age, and utterly ruthless when it comes to protecting what she calls her own.

The Seven Storms Brotherhood

Innumerable traders ply Lake Makrata in the Southeast, in the shadow of mountains that conceal countless thieves and bandits. The most dangerous and tenacious of these are the Seven Storms Brotherhood, led by several outcastes. They've terrorized the region for over a decade, and now their attacks grow in audacity and ambition. Local governments and Guild merchants can neither appease nor capture these bandit lords, so they offer increasing bounties for the Brotherhood's heads.

History of the Seven Storms

Long before the Seven Storms Brotherhood's arrival, low-level banditry and piracy plagued the Lake Makrata region. Guild trade ships and wealthy caravans offer tempting targets to unemployed mercenary groups, barbarian tribes, and desperate farmers. The region's mountains and natural cave systems provide ample hiding places, frustrating soldiers and trackers tasked with capturing outlaws. Traders navigating Lake Makrata must often use narrow channels, valleys and bridges, any of which can hide deadly ambushes.

A decade ago, two outcaste Dragon-Blooded came to Lake Makrata. They called themselves Sky-Choking Sirocco and Spring Squall. Bitter exiles from a foreign shore, these brothers-in-arms saw opportunity there to live in wealth, free of commands from any higher power. They forged a reputation as daring robbers whose audacity and success exceeded anything seen in generations, attracting followers from among the ruthless and the disenfranchised. As they gained Exalted lieutenants, the outcaste bandit lords named



themselves the Seven Storms Brotherhood, each claiming a type of baleful weather as their title.

Since then, the Brotherhood has gorged on the region's wealth, poisoning its waters with the blood of rich and poor alike. Villages offer tribute and regional governors send armies, but the Seven Storms won't be calmed. Cities struggle to accommodate refugees from abandoned farmlands. Immaculate temples petition the Breath of Mela — the Immaculate Order's administrative wing for military training and defense — for Dragon-Blooded monks capable of defeating or converting the unruly outcastes, while merchant princes funnel resources into peacekeepers, caravan guards, and food imports to avert the possibility of financial collapse. The region's wealthiest Guild factors have offered a legendary bounty for the Seven Storms, backed by contributions from regional leaders. Desperate merchants and nobles pool dwindling resources to hire mercenaries, strategists, and explorers capable of flushing the Seven Storms Brotherhood out of hiding.

Methods and Resources

The Seven Storms Brotherhood is famous for descending upon villages, ships, and caravans without warning, vanishing well before any organized response can be made. Its outcaste leaders enforce military precision and obedience, masterfully predicting the movements of those who'd cage the Seven Storms. When pressed, they retreat into mountain hideouts, protected by treacherous terrain, cunning traps, and camouflage.

Once the Seven Storms have occupied a village or boarded a merchant ship, they brutalize and rob the population as they see fit. When incensed, the Dragon-Blooded may order other crimes, like kidnappings and mass executions. Hostages are guarded by trained mountain hyenas — some refugees swear that these hyenas are men and women forced into animal form, for they cry and shout like humans. Others believe that the Seven Storms are Anathema who've avoided capture by taking the shapes of beasts and hiding among the packs roaming the mountains.

The Brotherhood has many hideouts and an extensive knowledge of the cave networks riddling the mountains. Their primary base of operations is a Shogunate-era relay tower overlooking a collapsed pass on the road to Varangia. Once, the bell at the tower's apex would resonate with elementals bound in the mountains' depths, a complex chorus audible for hundreds of miles. After centuries of disuse, the bell has been warped: its tolling enrages local elementals, often resulting in deadly rockslides and avalanches.

The Seven Storms

Like pack hunters, the Seven Storms prey relentlessly on the weak and vulnerable. Bounty hunters and heroes seeking to return peace to the region find the Brotherhood a persistent and vicious enemy. Would-be allies must show enough power and ruthlessness to earn the Seven Storms' respect, or experience bloody betrayal at the first opportunity. The Seven Storms Brotherhood's leadership is open only to Dragon-Blooded who show the will to take what they want, without apology or regret. This is their current roster:

CHANGING WEATHER

Who are the remaining leaders of the Seven Storms Brotherhood? The answer depends on your campaign's needs. They may be canny rivals, unforgivable foes, or resourceful allies. Players may play current or former members of the Brotherhood, or seek entry to their ranks during play. Here are four potential Storms for use as player characters or NPCs:

Depths That Betray is a spoiled, arrogant offspring of privilege who creates clever contraptions to entrap the Brotherhood's victims and evade its pursuers.

Rain of Ashes is a cruel, aggressive warrior concealed in heavy armor, so none may guess their shameful past.

Cold Harvest is a thrill-seeking assassin and martial artist whose loyalty was won in a duel with Sky-Choking Sirocco, and who aims to surpass him.

Heady Monsoon is a rowdy youth who emulates the older Storms, to better conceal any doubt that they're suited to banditry.

Sky-Choking Sirocco is the Seven Storms' leader, an Earth Aspect with a dusky complexion and a quiet air that demands silence in return. His tactical acumen and merciless reputation fostered the discipline necessary for the Seven Storms Brotherhood to become Lake Makrata's dominant bandit gang. He's defeated most of his lieutenants in single combat, through mastery of Steel Devil style and his affinity with the Dark of the Earth, an ominous pair of jade daiklaves. He's also managed the gang's size and appetites, to keep their lifestyle sustainable. This last task has become more difficult following the recruitment of several impetuous younger Dragon-Blooded.

Every member of the Seven Storms Brotherhood forswears their past, following Sky-Choking Sirocco's example. His followers observe that he's an educated man who gains more excitement from bedeviling soldiers and Guild merchants than from exploiting defenseless villages. Some speculate that when the gang's power and influence are sufficient, Sky-Choking Sirocco will reveal ambitions beyond banditry. When he approaches, stones shivering with his footsteps, all speculation ceases.

The gang's second founder, **Spring Squall**, is a tanned Wood Aspect who carries with him the constant smell of poppy flowers and hyena musk. Spring Squall has trained the hyenas of the mountains, teaching them to mimic human voices. He uses them to stage ambushes and diversions, and to discourage escape from occupied villages. Though he's a skilled wielder of the longspear, these vicious pack-hunters are his greatest weapon.

Spring Squall's appetites have influenced the Brotherhood's choice of targets since their founding. He seeks pleasure in all its forms, treasuring novelty. Sometimes he travels the Lake Makrata region in disguise, to experience a change of pace or to scout an area for a future raid. His genial attitude allows him to fit in nearly anywhere, but he has no patience for those who frustrate or insult him. He fancies the idea of claiming nobility, and pushes Sky-Choking Sirocco to consider taking some territory to rule together.

Blinding Bolt is an Air Aspect and the unofficial second-in-command of the Brotherhood. Before her induction to the band, she'd already earned infamy as a ruthless pirate and menace to Lake Makrata. Bald and pale, with numerous piercings and tattoos, Blinding Bolt's presence strikes terror into the region's populace, who believe her to be a wraith or death-omen.

The former pirate studied tactics and leadership under Sky-Choking Sirocco, and improved upon those lessons with her natural charisma. Many of the bandits she commands are more loyal to Blinding Bolt than to the Brotherhood as a whole. Her own loyalty has never been questioned, but she disdains the idea of claiming or ruling territory. She believes such aspirations will only weaken the Seven Storms Brotherhood, and may challenge Sky-Choking Sirocco's right to command if he decides otherwise.



Realm Year 765

I've a soft spot for fellow soldiers, and I suppose you did come all this way. Fine. I'll tell about killing Anathema. Not Jochim — I'll wager that copy of *The Thousand Correct Actions of the Upright Soldier* in your pack is dog-eared on that section. Wipe that look off your face, Swift. I don't need Mela's wisdom to know your type.

Fear-Eater was a Deceiver. He didn't have the talent Jochim or the Bull had, of training men to be fierce and fearless in weeks, so he took a more literal view of things. Fear-Eater was a shaman before he was Anathema, well-versed in the language of spirits. They taught him some of their tricks, including one he showed off to me during a parlay, where he reached into a man's head and heart and actually drew out the fears in bunches of spiked purple fruits on twisted vines. Take a guess as to what he did then. When he smiled, his teeth were lacquered a dark purple.

The Anathema's real skill as a general lay in building coalitions. Fear-Eater cut deals with forest gods, spirits of disease and murder, and the Mammoth Avatar. He was damn subtle about it — we didn't know about the Bull's alliances until a hundred-foot mammoth god charged our lines. We'd have days of hit-and-runs from hostile spirits before Dragon-Blooded could respond and fight them equally. Our quartermasters spouted wounds in their sleep and our supply trains fell to improbable sickness, rotting in the sun. I pulled the Tepet yamabushi together, told them to show the Deceiver we could play that game better.

The year after Fear-Eater loosed his allies on us, we knew the campaign was lost. We'd smashed the Bull's van at Fallen Lapis, led him and that witch through that city (which we then burned to the ground), took her arm and broke the back of their supply lines. It was a bloody nose to save face, and we all knew it. After that the Bull relied on the spirit alliances to harass us while we withdrew. Fear-Eater pinned down our rear guard at Futile Blood. The moment I was on the scene, the Bull slammed our front and flanks with a fresh van.

I saw Fear-Eater, eclipse-mark flaring on his brow and body lit by a corona, fetishes orbiting him in a whirl, throwing his facial scar-tattoos into sharp relief. He relied on sheer power to fight, but he'd never faced the hurricane before. He saw me, ducked past the fire-wreathed blade of my Hearthmate, and smiled that sly purple smile of his. "Doesn't matter what happens now," he said. "Yurgen will snap your soldiers like dead branches." He pinned Tepet Nezurin with subtle magics, punched through jade armor like water and consumed her heart with a fiery mandala of sunlight. "Maybe," I answered through the sorrow of losing a Hearthmate, "Jochim said that before I took his head, and he was twice the fucking soldier you are. How will you fare?"

My other Hearthmate was on the scene then, whispering Essence and giving me back the strength of the Dragons I'd lost twisting Fear-Eater's words to his army. He tried to catch the blade, but Jochim tried the same trick once, and it didn't work then either — they both had spent too much killing my Hearthmates, and I made them pay for it. Air finds a gap, and my grandfather's daiklave found the one between tendon and bone. I buried the blade in his clavicle, wrenched it free easy as a summer's breeze, then ruined the lovely view of his surprised face with my fist. Then I took his head, stopped to savor the look of fear in his eyes after his flaring anima guttered and winked out in death.

Then I heard the roar from the front, turned to see our lines shattering in the light of three suns, and truly I wish I'd had his damned fruit trick then.





Chapter Five

Character Creation

By default, starting Dragon-Blooded characters are experienced characters who've been Exalted for several years: Dynasts who've graduated from one of the Realm's secondary schools, trained soldiers of Lookshy, or outcastes with plenty of adventures behind them. These rules allow you to create such characters.

Step 1: Concept and Aspect

Start character creation by talking with your Storyteller about her plans for the game, and discussing character concepts with your fellow players.

Think about your character's origin, personality, skills, and the heroic archetypes that inspire them. A Dragon-Blood's origin is of great importance in character creation — if your character is from the Realm, you should decide whether she's a Dynast or a lost egg, which of the Great Houses (p. 34) she belongs to, and which secondary school (p. 85) she attended. Alternatively, you might play a Dragon-Blood that belongs to one of the gentes of Lookshy (p. 112), one of the clans of Prasad (p. 26), another group of outcastes, or no group at all. Once you have a rough idea of the details, sum up in your *concept* — a brief description of your character.

Once you have your concept (or while you're still figuring out the details), determine which of the five elements is your character's Aspect (p. 145). Unlike Solar Castes, Aspects aren't archetypal roles, instead reflecting the influence of the chosen element on your Dragon-Blood's personality and skills. Your Aspect also determines your anima powers (p. 154).

Step 2: Attributes

Each Attribute (**Exalted**, p. 148) begins with one free dot. Next, of the categories of Attributes — Physical (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina), Social (Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance), and Mental (Perception, Intelligence, Wits) — choose one as primary, another as secondary, and the third as tertiary. Distribute eight dots between your primary Attributes, six dots between your secondary Attributes, and four dots between your tertiary Attributes. Attributes can't be raised higher than five.

Step 3: Abilities

Each Aspect has five associated Abilities (**Exalted**, p. 150). Mark them as your Aspect Abilities.

- **Air:** Linguistics, Lore, Occult, Stealth, Thrown
- **Earth:** Awareness, Craft, Integrity, Resistance, War
- **Fire:** Athletics, Dodge, Melee, Presence, Socialize
- **Water:** Brawl (and Martial Arts), Bureaucracy, Investigation, Larceny, Sail
- **Wood:** Archery, Medicine, Performance, Ride, Survival

Next, pick five Favored Abilities in addition to your Aspect Abilities.

Divide 28 dots among your Abilities. **Each Ability starts with zero dots, and no Ability can be raised above three dots without spending Bonus Points.** Abilities can't be raised higher than five. **Each Favored Ability must have at least one dot assigned to it.**

Finally, assign three specialties (**Exalted**, p. 123) among your Abilities. **You must have at least one dot in an Ability to take a specialty in it.** You also receive additional specialties based on your Dragon-Blood's background.

Dragon-Blooded of the Realm assign two specialties among three Abilities, based on the secondary school they trained at:

- The Cloister of Wisdom (p. 86): Integrity, Lore, Martial Arts

- The Heptagram (p. 86): Craft, Lore, Occult
- The House of Bells (p. 88): Archery, Melee, War
- The Spiral Academy (p. 89): Bureaucracy, Presence, Socialize
- Pasiap's Stair (p. 90): Athletics, Resistance, War

Lookshyan Dragon-Blooded (p. 112) assign two specialties among Integrity, Lore, or War.

Prasadi Dragon-Blooded (p. 26) assign two specialties among three Abilities based on clan:

- Clan Burano: Bureaucracy, Integrity, Resistance
- Clan Ophris: Athletics, Performance, Socialize

Forest Witches (p. 28) assign two specialties among Integrity, Occult, or Survival.

The Storyteller may create similar lists of three Abilities to reflect the background and training of outcastes or members of other Dragon-Blooded cultures. Alternatively, if none of the options above fits your character's background, you may assign one specialty in any Ability of your choice.

Note that specialties add to the maximum amount of bonus dice from Charms that a Dragon-Blood can benefit from.

Step 4: Merits

Choose thirteen dots' worth of Merits (**Exalted**, p. 157). In addition, Dragon-Blooded who belong to the Scarlet Dynasty, Prasad's Dragon Caste, or Lookshy's gentes may distribute five additional dots among the Backing, Command, Contacts, Followers, Influence, Language, Resources, and Retainers Merits, representing the benefits of her privileged position in society.

Step 5: Charms

Choose fifteen Charms (p. 162) from any Abilities, plus an additional five Charms with the Excellency keyword from any of your Aspect or Favored Abilities, that express your Dragon-Blood's supernatural might and elemental power. Dragon-Blooded Charms each require a minimum rating in their associated Ability — if you don't have enough dots to qualify for a Charm you want, you'll need to spend Bonus Points to raise that Ability's rating.

You may choose Martial Arts Charms (**Exalted**, p. 426) or Evocations (**Exalted**, p. 611) in the place of Dragon-Blooded Charms. If you choose Terrestrial Circle Sorcery as one of your starting Charms, you may also learn spells (**Exalted**, p. 471) in the place of Charms.

Step 6: Intimacies

Choose Intimacies (**Exalted**, p. 170) to represent your character's beliefs and relationships. Intimacies can represent a Dragon-Blood's motivations, relationship with her Great House, religious beliefs, worldview, friends and enemies, moral code, personal idiosyncrasies, or other important parts of her life.

There's no maximum on how many Intimacies you may choose. Starting characters must have at least four Intimacies. At least one must be Defining, and one must be Major. Likewise, at least one must be positive, and one must be negative.

Step 7: Bonus Points

You have 18 Bonus Points that can be spent to raise any of your character's traits.

TRAIT	COST
Primary or Secondary Attribute	4 per dot
Tertiary Attribute	3 per dot
Aspect or Favored Ability	1 per dot
Non-Aspect, non-Favored Ability	2 per dot
Specialty	1
Merit	1 per dot
Aspect or Favored Charm	4
Non-Aspect, non-Favored Charm	5
Spell (Occult Aspect or Favored)	4
Spell (Occult non-Aspect, non-Favored)	5
Evocation	4
Willpower	2 per dot

It's most cost-effective to use Bonus Points to raise your Aspect and Favored Abilities, while using them to buy Charms, Evocations, or spells is the most expensive option.

UPGRADE!

Some Dragon-Blooded Charms have elemental variants that cost three experience points. These variants can be taken at character creation for one bonus point apiece.

Step 8: Finishing Touches

Starting Dragon-Blooded begin with a permanent Essence of 2 (**Exalted**, p. 174). A Dragon-Blood's pool of Personal Essence equals (11 + Essence), while her Peripheral Essence equals (23 + [Essence x 4]), for a total of 13 personal motes and 31 peripheral motes at Essence 2.

You begin with five Willpower (**Exalted**, p. 169), which can be raised by spending Bonus Points.

You begin with seven health levels (**Exalted**, p. 171): a –0 level, two –1 levels, two –2 levels, a –4 level, and an Incapacitated level. You may purchase additional health levels by learning the Charm Ox-Body Technique (p. 246).

Character Creation Summary

Step 1: Concept and Aspect

- Consult with the Storyteller and other players, and come up with a concept for your character.
- Determine your Dragon-Blood's origin, including Great House and secondary school for Dynasts, gens for Lookshyan Dragon-Blooded, or clan for Prasadi Dragon-Blooded.
- Pick an Aspect, and note its anima powers.

Step 2: Attributes

- Mark down one dot in each Attribute.
- Divide 8 dots among primary Attributes, 6 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Step 3: Abilities

- Mark your Aspect Abilities.
- Select five Favored Abilities, which cannot be the same as Aspect Abilities.
- Divide 28 dots among all Abilities. None may be raised higher than 3 without spending Bonus Points, and each Favored Ability must have at least one dot.
- Assign three specialties among any Abilities, and two specialties based on your Dragon-Blood's background.

Step 4: Merits

- Spend 13 dots on Merits.
- If appropriate for your background, spend 5 dots between Backing, Command, Contacts, Followers, Influence, Language, Resources, and Retainers.

JUST HATCHED

The rules above are for creating experienced Dragon-Blooded. If you want to play a game featuring newly Exalted Dragon-Blooded, such as one set in a Realm secondary school, make the following changes to the default character creation:

- Your permanent Essence is 1.
- You don't receive bonus specialties from your background.
- Choose ten dots of Merits. You don't receive bonus Merits from your background.
- Choose ten Charms and five additional Excellencies.
- Spend 15 Bonus Points.

Step 5: Charms

- Select 15 Charms and 5 additional Excellencies.

Step 6: Intimacies

- Choose at least four Intimacies, including at least one Defining Intimacy, one Major Intimacy, one positive Intimacy, and one negative Intimacy.

Step 7: Bonus Points

- Spend 18 Bonus Points.

Step 8: Finishing Touches

- Record Essence rating (2), Personal Essence (11 + Essence), Peripheral Essence (23 + [Essence x 4]), Health Levels (-0/1x2/-2x2/-4/Incapacitated) and Willpower (5).

Aspects

- **Air:** Thoughtful, creative, and visionary, skilled in subtlety and scholarship.
  Aspect Abilities: Linguistics, Lore, Occult, Stealth, Thrown

- **Earth:** Strong-willed, traditionalist, and meticulous, possessed of great endurance and skilled in shaping things that last.
  Aspect Abilities: Awareness, Craft, Integrity, Resistance, War

- **Fire:** Passionate, hot-blooded, and contentious, excelling in physical activity and social interaction through boundless energy.
  Aspect Abilities: Athletics, Dodge, Melee, Presence, Socialize

- **Water:** Shrewd, mercurial, and adaptable, able to navigate complex problems or improvise effective solutions.
  Aspect Abilities: Brawl/Martial Arts, Bureaucracy, Investigation, Larceny, Sail

- **Wood:** Ever-changing, nurturing, and sensual, with strong ties to nature and the cycle of life and death.
  Aspect Abilities: Archery, Medicine, Performance, Ride, Survival

Bonus Point Costs

TRAIT	COST
Primary or Secondary Attribute	4 per dot
Tertiary Attribute	3 per dot
Aspect or Favored Ability	1 per dot
Non-Aspect, non-Favored Ability	2 per dot
Specialty	1
Merit	1 per dot
Aspect or Favored Charm	4
Non-Aspect, non-Favored Charm	5
Spell (Occult Aspect or Favored)	4
Spell (Occult non-Aspect, non-Favored)	5
Evocation	4
Willpower	2 per dot



Realm Year 765

Tereya Kingfisher Swift had never felt at home in the Tereya family's study, and she had always appreciated that. It was an honest place, with its functional chaises, its austere writing desk, and, of course, its mechanical clock. The clock was a Varangian import that had been in this study when Swift married into the Tereya family, and it had faithfully ticked across the decades since. Other patrician families now displayed clocks, but Swift judged them mere status symbols. She had always viewed the Tereya family clock as a reminder that time was too valuable to be wasted. Doubly so for a family that was mostly mortal.

Swift sat across from her niece by marriage, Tereya Seren, teacups steaming between them. When Swift's nuptials were new, and she had been a proud young officer in the Empress' legions, Seren had been a promising mortal newcomer to the Imperial Service. Now Seren was the gray-haired matriarch and grandmother of a powerful patrician family, and the study was hers to command. And what had happened to Kingfisher Swift?

"Insubordination." Swift hadn't repeated the word since it was spit in her face by a Cathak winglord half her age. She washed the taste down with bitter tea. "Charged, tried, dismissed… in one afternoon. My career's over."

Seren nodded without surprise. Of course she had already known, thought Swift, but what Seren said was: "You did not deserve this, auntie."

It wasn't kindness or reassurance. It was an admission of what they both knew: that the Empress' legions had been hobbled and picked apart by the Great Houses. That the Realm's promise of an honest living for every lost egg had been broken. Swift couldn't imagine the ramifications of this for the empire, didn't really want to. So she just nodded.

"There is, of course, a place for you here," continued Seren. "Tereya's household guard would be peerless with your experienced leadership. But…"

Swift frowned. She hadn't expected a "but."

Seren sipped her tea across several ticks of the clock. "I fear that it may not be the comfortable retirement you've earned. There is uncertainty, here in the Imperial City, with the legions so close by." Seren looked from her tea to meet Swift's eyes. "If the unthinkable were to occur, it may fall to families like ours to maintain stability. To defend the capital, and the Scarlet Throne."

The ticking of the clock seemed to slow as Swift considered the full implications of the offer lurking behind Seren's warning. Defending the capital was the legions' job, and the legions answered to the Great Houses now. To defend the Imperial City from its rightful protectors, the patricians would need to conquer it themselves. And as the financial and administrative backbone of the capital, perhaps they could. They would still need private armies, led by… people like Kingfisher Swift.

Swift felt a rush of ambition and pride at the idea of proving her worth against the legions she'd loved for so long. But could she help upend eight centuries' worth of social order for love of battle? Swift was grateful to her family, but she did not fully trust them. She warred with herself for one tick, until the battle was decided.

Swift had sworn to serve the Scarlet Empress. Not the Great Houses.

"Thank you, niece. Your offer is fair."

Seren inclined her head, an acknowledgement or slight bow, as she poured Swift more tea. Swift listened to the clock, and wondered for the first time what her life was ticking toward.



Chapter Six

Traits

The Dragon-Blooded largely use the same traits detailed in **Exalted** — Attributes, Abilities, Essence, Willpower, and the like. This chapter describes how their traits differ from those of the Solar Exalted, and introduces new Merits and Flaws, some unique to the Dragon-Blooded. Finally, the end of this chapter provides rules for Dragon-Blooded character advancement.

New Merits

Sobriquet (••) — Purchased

Prerequisite: Influence 1+

Many Exalted and other great figures are known across Creation by their titles and epithets, as much if not more than by name. Tepet Ejava is the Roseblack; Yurgen Kaneko is the Bull of the North; Sha'a Oka is the Black Lion. This Merit represents a character whose title carries great weight in her dealings with others. Upon taking this Merit, her player should specify both her character's sobriquet and the reputation that it carries. Once per story, when she's awarded a stunt on social influence that benefits from this reputation, she may increase the stunt's rating by one.

Well-Bred (••) — Innate

The character has an exceptionally refined pedigree. The blood of the Dragons runs strongly within her and her offspring. Her children are significantly more likely to Exalt as Dragon-Blooded than those of characters who lack this Merit. This is a prized commodity within the Realm and throughout Creation. Whenever she makes a bargain roll in which her bloodline is a factor, such as negotiating a Dynastic marriage contract or bartering with the noble families of Nechara, she adds an automatic success. Conversely, she gains +1 Resolve against bargains in that context. Neither of these count as a bonus from Charms.

EXISTING MERITS

Backing: Common sources of Backing for Dynasts include the Thousand Scales, the Immaculate Order, their house's legions or business interests, the Imperial Navy, the Magistracy, the Deliberative, and the All-Seeing Eye. Common sources for Lookshyan Dragon-Blooded include the field forces, the Lookshyan navy, the directorates, the gentes' business interests, and the Shogunate Bureaucracy.

Cult: Both the Realm and Lookshy forbid the direct worship of Dragon-Blooded, making this Merit unlawful and heretical to possess. Prasadi Dragon-Blooded and outcastes face no such restrictions.

Influence: Dragon-Blooded most often hold Influence within their family, be it a Great House, a Lookshyan gens (p. 112), or a Prasadi clan (p. 26). It's also common to have Influence in the locale where they reside or somewhere they've performed great deeds in the past, or via their Immaculate denomination.

Resources: The typical Dynastic stipend is represented by Resources 3, with more successful or prominent Dynasts having Resources 4-5. If a Dynast has Resources 0-2, it might represent her being disfavored by her house or coming from an impoverished household, or might be the result of her falling into debt, making unwise investments, or living far beyond her means.

New Flaws

Thin-Blooded

Prerequisite: Dragon-Blooded

The Dragon-Blood's pedigree is diluted by mortal blood, making her children less likely to Exalt as Terrestrials than those of her better-bred peers. Outcastes typically possess this Flaw. She suffers a −3 penalty on all bargain rolls where lineage is a factor, and suffers −1 Resolve against such rolls, such as the marriage proposal of a patrician family.

BREEDING AND EXALTATION

There's no dice roll to determine whether a Dragon-Blood's child draws her Second Breath. In general, a Dragon-Blooded couple of average pedigrees can expect around half their children to Exalt, while even the best-bred couples can expect one in five of their children not to. However, wild deviations from these norms are frequent enough to make even the best genealogical estimates imprecise. While the Well-Bred Merit and the Thin-Blooded Flaw contribute to or against the chances of this happening, it's ultimately up to the Storyteller to determine if and when a child Exalts.





JESUS ESHUUAR

My plans will sweep away my enemies like a tornado does a twig. Beware you aren't caught in the gale.

air aspect

Air is the breath of Creation, all-encompassing and ever-present. It's the subtlest of the elements, unseen and untouchable. It can be felt but never grasped. Yet those who overlook the air that surrounds them are fools. Its wrath may strike swiftly, the tempest and the thunderbolt, or it can kill slowly, the wind that scatters sands and the chill that leeches away heat.

Exalting as an Air Aspect often leads a Dragon-Blood to take on a new perspective. Her thoughts turn from mundane details to lofty thoughts, seeing Creation with a bird's-eye view. She eschews conventional wisdom to pursue grand dreams and high-minded idealism, forsaking the obvious for the subtle and the inspired. Short-term goals become trivial and unimportant in her estimation, as she focuses on what her actions may accomplish in the long run.

The lofty idealism and boundless creativity of the Children of Mela inspires their endeavors. On the field of battle, Air Aspect generals are tactical geniuses and strategic masterminds. They're as elegant as the breeze and as deadly as the thunderbolt in battle, but such is their subtlety that few have the opportunity to appreciate it. Amid society, they're visionaries and schemers whose plans extend countless steps ahead of their rivals and untold years into the future. They have the greatest natural affinity for the spiritual world and sorcery of all Dragon-Blooded, cultivating wisdom and power in pursuit of greater enlightenment.

An Air Aspect doesn't see her Sworn Kin as they are, but as they could be. Hers is the voice that inspires them to greatness, teaching them how they might improve on their flaws and showing them what their deeds might accomplish in the long run. They play much the same role within Dragon-Blooded societies, innovating solutions to the problems they face and devising plans for how they might become greater. Air Aspects blow the dust off of forgotten ideas, and sweep away long-held beliefs that no longer hold use.

Aspect Markings: Air Aspects tend toward a bluish or whitish tinge to their skin, which is cool or cold to the touch. They can smell of fresh breezes, new-fallen snow, or the ozone scent of lightning. Some have eyes that crackle with lightning at moments of inspiration or strong emotion, or are surrounded by a mild breeze even amid perfect calm.

Anima Banner: The anima banners of the Azure Dragons shimmer with pale blue or white light, whirling like gusts of wind or rolling clouds. Some gleam like light reflecting from ice, while others are jagged and erratic like lightning. They may give off the sound of screaming wind, or roaring thunder may accompany them. Their iconic animas might depict air dragons, whirlwinds and cyclones, thunderclouds that flash with lightning, falling snow or hail, or winged animals.

Anima Effects: Air Aspects call on the wind to speed them and deflect harm, and draw power from their ideals (p. 154).

Aspect Abilities: Air Aspects excel at scholarly pursuits and the subtle arts. Their Aspect Abilities are Linguistics, Lore, Occult, Stealth, and Thrown.

Associations: The color blue, the Maiden of Serenity, the monthly cycle of Air, and the northern direction.

Sobriquets: Children of Mela, Azure Dragons, Tempestuous Knives.

Concepts: Renowned savant, idealistic monk, visionary senator, criminal mastermind, military philosopher, seeker of forbidden wisdom, political puppetmaster, languid dreamer, earnest bureaucrat.

Kingfisher Swift

I am the stone upon which my
Kinship stands, surefooted
and unyielding.
This Anathema shall
not move us.



Earth Aspect

Earth is the foundation of Creation, the mighty pillar that upholds all things. Earth is unassailable, enduring both physical force and the taint of chaos. Its stability keeps the balance of the world, from the mountains that have weathered centuries unchanged to the purity of cold iron. When storms fade, rivers dry up, fires burn out, and forests die, only the unforgiving earth remains.

Those who Exalt as Earth Aspects inherit the stoic calm and enduring stability of their element. They turn their minds from trifles and ill-conceived dreams as they come to appreciate the importance of ritual and tradition, the tried and tested wisdom passed down across generations of Dragon-Blooded. They value that which lasts, whether it's a long-standing relationship with a lover or friend, constructing a manse that will weather the passing of ages, or inflicting a total defeat from which a foe can never hope to recover. They're slow to make up their minds, but unshakable in their conviction once they've done so.

The Children of Pasiap stand firm in body, mind, and soul, enduring the waves of adversity without bending or breaking. They're capable of withstanding both immense physical pain and temptations of the will, refusing to yield in defense of their allies on the battlefield or the traditions they've devoted themselves to upholding. As generals and tacticians, the foundation of their battle plans is ancient wisdom such as *The Thousand Correct Actions of the Upright Soldier*. As architects and artisans, they create long-lasting marvels, and sense those flaws that are in need of repair.

An Earth Aspect is a pillar of strength to her Sworn Kin, supporting them with her iron will and the firmness of her convictions. She understands the value of the ancient tradition of the Sworn Kinship, and strives to uphold harmony and balance within it. She may be called on to play the part of arbiter, judge, or disciplinarian when her Hearth is shaken by strife. So too do they maintain the strength and stability of Dragon-Blooded societies, upholding those traditions that have seen it prosper through the ages and mending those things that are flawed.

Aspect Markings: An Earth Aspect's skin can be pale like marble, brown like soil, or gray like stone. They smell of moist clay or freshly turned loam, and their eyes can take on a gemlike appearance, sparkling like sapphires or emeralds. Some have hardened or textured skin, ranging from chalky to exceptionally smooth to rough and pebbled. Dust may rise from their footfalls.

Anima Banner: Earth Aspect animas burn with a steady white or yellow light that might shift like rolling sands or glimmer like a perfect diamond. Some rumble with the earthshaking might of a landslide or earthquake, or pulse like the heartbeat of a volcano. Their iconic animas often take the form of earth dragons, mountains or stone towers, or animals like badgers or bulls.

Anima Effects: Earth Aspects are resilient against attacks, persist through ailment or injury, and channel seismic force through their anima flux (p. 154).

Aspect Abilities: Earth Aspects favor talents grounded in tradition, discipline, and endurance. They build things up to last, including themselves. Their Aspect Abilities are Awareness, Craft, Integrity, Resistance, and War.

Associations: The color white, the Maiden of Battles, the monthly cycle of Earth, and the central direction.

Sobriquets: Children of Pasiap, Ivory Dragons, Stone Fists.

Concepts: Master architect, craftsman, hidebound minister, itinerant monk, military strategist, historian, spycatcher, city protector, dedicated magistrate.



Left Hand Chalima

You dare take advantage of those who can't defend themselves? Pick up your sword. I'll show you what fear tastes like.

Fire Aspect

Fire is the energy of Creation, the dynamic power that is ever restless, never satisfied. It engulfs all that it touches, consuming to burn brighter and hotter, spreading beyond control until there's nothing left to burn. It knows no restraint, no half-measures, and even when reduced to nothing more than smoldering coals, it can still ignite a deadly wildfire. But it's not wholly without subtlety, for there would be no shadow without the light of the flame, and no smoke without the ferocious heat of its blaze.

Exalting as a Fire Aspect intensifies every feeling and emotion, kindling the flames of passion in even the stoniest hearts. Those who were serene or stoic before Exaltation learn to embrace the spontaneity of their emotions, while those who were already passionate grow more so, perhaps even hot-headed. When they love, they love with all their hearts. When they hate, they hate with the burning intensity of an inferno. No action is meaningless to a Fire Aspect — everything they do, they believe in whole-heartedly.

The Children of Hesiesh exult in battle, cutting down foes with deft grace or brutal force and flickering across battlefields untouched in ceaseless movement. Their passions overflow in inspiring speeches and heartfelt actions, drawing every eye at the gala or spreading their views like wildfire in the chambers of the Deliberative. Yet they're also talented intriguers, concealing their true hearts amid shadows and gleaning the hidden truths of other's passions. As generals, they lead from the front, inspiring their soldiers with their intensity. As savants or sorcerers, they're driven to put what they've learned into action, not satisfied with abstract contemplation.

A Fire Aspect who joins a Sworn Kinship is passionately loyal even as she might conflict with her Hearthmates, challenging their assumptions or playing devil's advocate in argument. If she invites strife, it's only because she knows she must renew the passions of her Sworn Kin and remind them of their purpose. In Dragon-Blooded societies, they're driving forces of social change, attacking hallowed traditions that have ceased to be useful and challenging prevailing beliefs that have led their peers into error. Once the old ways have faced their scrutiny and burnt to ash, greater freedoms can prevail.

Aspect Markings: Fire Aspects tend toward a constant flushed tone to their skin. Many radiate more body heat than most people, making them hot to the touch. They can smell faintly of smoke, fragrant incense, or ash. Some have eyes that glow like embers, or emit puffs of smoke when they speak or exhale.

Anima Banner: Fire Aspect animas leap and surge in red, orange, or yellow hues, shimmering and blazing like a bonfire or smoldering like the subtle heat of still-burning coals. Some give off the crackling roar of a forest fire, or the dull scream of a stoked blast furnace. Their iconic animas are spectacular displays: fire dragons, erupting volcanos, perpetual explosions, or animals like tigers or falcons made of flame.

Anima Effects: Fire Aspects are unburnt by flame while immolating their foes with anima flux, and draw power from their passions (p. 155).

Aspect Abilities: Fire Aspects take well to talents that let them draw attention, go where they please, and get what they want. Their Aspect Abilities are Athletics, Dodge, Melee, Presence, and Socialize.

Associations: The color red, the Maiden of Journeys, the monthly cycle of Fire, and the southern direction.

Sobriquets: Children of Hesiesh, Crimson Dragons, Burning Swords.

Concepts: Master duelist, irrepressible socialite, righteous crusader, passionate musician, devoted legionnaire, social critic, warrior monk, dedicated scholar, notorious libertine.



RIGHTEOUS RIVER

Have faith, friends.
The odds are against us, we're outmatched,
and there's no help coming...
but I have an idea.

Water Aspect

Water is the flow of Creation, descending from Heaven and travelling to the corners of the world. It clings to neither shape nor form, shifting and changing to adapt to its surroundings. It's not stopped by dams, but merely diverted, finding another path to the goal it inexorably seeks. It needs only the slightest crack to permeate any barrier, and with time, it will wear the mountains down to dust. Its depths conceal many things, whether the glinting treasures of sunken ships or the unseen menace of the riptide.

Exaltation as a Water Aspect breaks down fixed and stagnant ways, suffusing the Dragon-Blood with the mercurial adaptability of water. She learns to see things from many perspectives, pursuing countless paths until she finds the one that leads to victory. If conventional methods prove unsuccessful, she tries the unconventional. If honorable means are unavailing, then underhanded ones must be employed. Challenge and conflict is the wellspring of all growth, and the only sin is conceding failure.

The Children of Danaa'd navigate the treacherous waters of uncharted seas, government bureaucracies, and criminal underworlds with equal ease, unstymied by seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Every battle is a chance to learn and grow, whether it's adapting one's fighting style to counter that of a superior opponent or drilling green troops in battle strategy through practical experience. Every social interaction is one step closer towards accomplishing their goals or schemes, even if they may not understand how at first. Their dogged persistence sees them to the end of unraveling mysteries, solving academic challenges, or resolving social disputes.

A Water Aspect shares her persistence with her Sworn Kin, helping them to adapt and grow stronger in the face of adversity. When her Hearthmates would resign themselves to failure or fall into despair, it's she who encourages them to find wisdom from their defeat. Within Dragon-Blooded societies, they're problem solvers who offer practical solutions to all difficulties, great and small. Conflict, be it military, political, or economic, is a chance to move forward, and they guide their people through times of trouble to see the other shore, or instigate such competitions when necessary to avoid stagnation.

Aspect Markings: Water Aspects tend toward a slight blue-green tint to their skin, sometimes a deep green-black or ebony in those of refined pedigrees. They can smell of fresh running water, salty ocean spray, or of the earth after rainfall. Some are marked by watery eyes or perpetually damp hair. Their clothing might billow as though soaked in water, and their presence can leave surfaces covered in condensation.

Anima Banner: Water Aspect animas are dark blue, tinged with green or black, rippling like pools of water or rolling like ocean waves. Some give off the roar of the pounding surf crashing to shore, while other are accompanied by an eerie silence like the stillness of the ocean depths. Their iconic animas swell into impressive displays of water dragons, whirlpools, tsunamis, schools of fish, or siaka and other great sea beasts.

Anima Effects: Water Aspects move with fluid grace, and are as at home beneath the water as they are on dry land (p. 155).

Aspect Abilities: Water Aspects favor talents that keep their options open and allow them to navigate complex systems, problems, or environs with ease. Their Aspect Abilities are Brawl/Martial Arts, Bureaucracy, Investigation, Larceny, and Sail.

Associations: The color black, the Maiden of Secrets, the monthly cycle of Water, and the western direction.

Sobriquets: Children of Danaa'd, Sable Dragons, Drowning Hands.

Concepts: Renowned ship captain, martial arts sifu, political fixer, ruthless magistrate, master spy, diplomat, wealthy crime lord, information broker, dilettante artist.

Yushoto Mathar

I'll compose a song for
your defeat, Anathema.
Of our glorious battle,
and how your death nourishes
the lives of all who come after.



Wood Aspect

Wood is the life of Creation, that which changes in the bloom of birth or the rot of death. It lives, grows, and dies to make way for new growth, the only element that undergoes the cycle of life and death. Wood is life-sustaining, nourishing man and beast with fruits and grain. Wood is life-ending, its thorns dripping with deadly poison. The five elements are intricately interwoven, and wood is that which unites them. It lays its roots in the earth and draws nourishment from water, air, and the light of the fiery sun, bringing them together as it reaches full bloom.

To Exalt as a Wood Aspect is to blossom with sensuality, developing a newfound appreciation for each and every experience. This need not be hedonistic or lascivious (though it certainly can be). There's as much satisfaction to be had in the profound epiphany of spiritual enlightenment or the exhilaration of feeling a hated foe's blood splatter against one's face as there is in banquets, wine, or sex. Every experience and sensation is an opportunity for growth and self-discovery, if only one will take the time to properly notice it.

The Children of Sextes Jylis pursue this sensuality through every part of life. Every battle teaches harsh truths about one's strengths and weaknesses, whether it ends in defeat or triumph over arrow-strewn corpses. Every love affair teaches new lessons about the heart. Every performance offers a deeper understanding of the rhythms and melodies of a song. Wood Aspects have a strong affinity for the cycle of life and death, as both master healers and master poisoners. They have an almost instinctive understanding of animals and plants, taming deadly beasts to ride into battle or navigating bramble-choked wilderness with effortless vigor.

A Wood Aspect tends to her Sworn Kinship as though it were a garden, nurturing her Hearthmates' growth as warriors and heroes while pruning back their weaknesses and flaws. Each of her Sworn Kin is an irreplaceable part of a greater whole, and the bonds between them must be nourished so that they might together reach their fullest potential. Wood Aspects likewise devote themselves to the growth of their Dragon-Blooded cultures, nurturing the people and places with the potential to benefit the whole while weeding out those things that have no place in their perfect society.

Aspect Markings: Wood Aspects tend toward a greenish tinge to their skin, hair, lips, or even blood, and often have green eyes. They may smell of flowers, pine, fresh fruit, or other plants. Some have leaves or flowers growing in their hair, or even grow a light layer of bark on their skin, typically along the back and shoulders.

Anima Banner: Wood Aspect anima banners burst with bright green light, waving like meadow grasses, spreading like tree branches, or blossoming like flower petals. Some are wild and untamed, while some seem dappled like a forest in sunlight. They may be accompanied by sound like a strong wind moaning through dense forests, or the scents of living foliage. Their iconic animas frequently depict wood dragons, writhing tangles of thorns, massive trees, giant flowers, vines of ivy rising skyward, or forest animals such as wolves, bears, or foxes.

Anima Effects: Wood Aspects need not fear poison, even as their venomous anima flux weakens their foes. They can also embody the lithe grace of plants (p. 155).

Aspect Abilities: Wood Aspects are naturals at skills that support others, ensure survival, and involve the cycle of life and death. Their Aspect Abilities are Archery, Medicine, Performance, Ride, and Survival.

Associations: The color green, the Maiden of Endings, the monthly cycle of Wood, and the eastern direction.

Sobriquets: Children of Sextes Jylis, Emerald Dragons, Ashen Bows.

Concepts: Master healer, cunning courtier, traveling performer, assassin, Immaculate inquisitor, explorer, worldly epicure, woodland outlaw, meticulous merchant prince.

Anima Banner

The anima banners of the Dragon-Blooded manifest their elemental puissance as they expend Essence. **For every five motes of Peripheral Essence a Dragon-Blood spends in an instant, her anima banner rises by one level.**

ANIMA LEVEL	EFFECTS
Dim	The Dragon-Blood's anima is invisible to all senses. This is the default level at which it resides when she's not spending Essence.
Glowing	The Dragon-Blood's anima outlines her body in the glowing colors of her element, and her aspect markings become more pronounced. Any attempts at stealth or disguise suffer a −3 penalty.
Burning	The Dragon-Blood's anima burns brightly in an aura around her. Stealth becomes impossible.
Bonfire/Iconic	The Dragon-Blood's anima erupts into a shining pillar of elemental force that stretches high into the sky, visible for miles around. Upon reaching this level, and at suitably dramatic moments, her anima manifests an iconic display of elemental power or other personal symbolism chosen by her player, such as an erupting volcano or a snow leopard carved from ice. The area out to short range of the Dragon-Blood is completely illuminated. Stealth is impossible.

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It takes fifteen minutes for the Dragon-Blood's anima banner to recede from the bonfire level to burning or from burning to glowing, and half an hour for her glowing anima to recede to dim.

Anima Flux

When a Dragon-Blood's anima banner rises to the bonfire level, her untamed elemental power spills from it as pure destructive force, called *anima flux*. At the bonfire level, she rolls one die of **withering** damage against all non-Dragon-Blooded characters within close range of her (including allies) at the start of each turn. She doesn't gain Initiative from her anima flux. Crashed characters and trivial enemies instead suffer one die of **decisive** lethal damage. Outside of combat, anima flux inflicts one die of lethal damage each minute. Characters with Hardness 1+ are unaffected by anima flux.

Anima flux may damage scenery if dramatically appropriate, setting cloth tapestries ablaze or shattering wooden walls with seismic force. For this reason, Dragon-Blooded favor sturdy stone architecture in their homes or other places where their anima banners might flare.

Anima Effects

A Dragon-Blood's anima powers are considered to be of her own elemental Aspect for purposes of her Elemental Aura (p. 162).

By spending one mote, a Dragon-Blood may use one of the following effects:

- She may perform minor manipulations of her Aspect's element: cooling herself with a light breeze, igniting a fire without flint or tinder, causing a flower to blossom early at her touch. These never carry mechanical effects, but provide minor utility and can be incorporated into stunts.

- Once she's joined a Sworn Kinship (p. 104), she may sense the direction and approximate distance to another member of it.

Air Anima Effects

- For five motes, the Air Aspect can use her reflexive move action to leap an entire range band vertically or horizontally without needing to roll, and suffers no falling damage for the rest of the round. At bonfire, this power is free.

- For three motes, the Air Aspect may deflect projectiles with a gust of wind, imposing a −1 environmental penalty on all ranged attacks against her until her next turn.

- Once per day, when the Air Aspect takes a non-extended social or mental action to uphold a Principle, she adds (Intimacy) non-Charm bonus dice on the roll.

Earth Anima Effects

- For five motes, the Earth Aspect adds (higher of Essence or 3) natural soak and +1 Hardness until her next turn, as well as gaining +1 Defense against smash attacks and grapple gambits as a non-Charm bonus. At bonfire, this power is free.



- For three motes, the Earth Aspect ignores one point of penalty from wounds, poison, or crippling for a single tick.

- The Dragon-Blood may spend two Initiative when she rolls anima flux to either knock all damaged foes prone or knock them one range band away from her.

Fire Anima Effects

- For five motes, the Fire Aspect becomes completely immune to mundane environmental hazards based on fire or heat for a scene. She adds (Essence) natural soak and gains Hardness 2 against fire-based attacks like firewands. She gains these benefits for free while at bonfire.

- Once per day, when the Fire Aspect takes a non-extended action to uphold an emotion-based Intimacy, she adds (Intimacy) non-Charm bonus dice to the roll.

- A Fire Aspect's anima flux deals (higher of Essence or 3) damage to characters without Hardness instead of one die.

Water Anima Effects

- For five motes, the Water Aspect may use her move action to cross the surface of water as though it were solid land, and ignores the −3 penalty for rushing or disengaging across difficult terrain. She gains these benefits for free while at bonfire.

- For three motes, the Water Aspect adds a non-Charm success on a roll to disengage, withdraw, or resist being grappled.

- Water Aspects may breathe water as though it were air, and suffer no penalties for being submerged in water.

Wood Anima Effects

- For five motes, the Wood Aspect becomes immune to mundane plant-based poisons, and doubles 9s on rolls to resist other poisons and diseases for the scene. She gains these benefits for free while at bonfire.

- For three motes, the Wood Aspect becomes flexible as a sapling in the wind, ignoring one point of penalty to Evasion or (Essence) points of penalty on a movement action for an instant.

- A Wood Aspect's anima flux is laced with toxic power. A character that takes damage from it is exposed to a poison with Damage 2i/round, Duration (Essence + Stamina) rounds, and a −1 penalty.

Character Advancement

Dragon-Blooded earn five experience points at the end of each session, which can be spent immediately or saved for later.

Trait	Experience Cost
Attribute increase	current rating x4
Non-Aspect, Non-Favored Ability increase	current rating x2
Aspect/Favored Ability increase	(current ratingx2) – 1
New Ability	3
Specialty	3
Purchased Merit	new rating x3
Willpower	8
Dragon-Blooded Charm	10 (8 if in an Aspect/Favored Ability)
Martial Arts Charm	10 (8 if Martial Arts is an Aspect/ Favored Ability)
Spell	12 (10 if Occult is an Aspect/ Favored Ability)
Evocation	12

Dragon Experience

In addition to the normal experience awarded at the end of a session, players of Dragon-Blooded have the opportunity to earn special points called Dragon Experience. Dragon Experience can be spent to gain any trait (or on any other experience point cost, such as that to perform sorcerous workings), *except* Dragon-Blooded Charms.

Players have two opportunities to earn Dragon Experience per session. They may earn one Expression Bonus and one Role Bonus, each of which grants two Dragon Experience, for a maximum of four Dragon Experience per session.

Expression Bonus

Characters can gain 2 points of Dragon Experience by fulfilling *one* of the following criteria per session:

- Expressing, supporting, or engaging a Major or Defining Intimacy such that it reveals something about the character, develops her personality, or provides a character moment that everyone at the table enjoys.
- Facing significant challenges, danger, or harm in the course of protecting or upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy.
- Being significantly impeded, endangered, or harmed by a Flaw.

Aspect Bonus

Characters can gain 2 points of Dragon Experience by fulfilling one of the following criteria per session:





- Intentionally ceding the "spotlight" of the scene's focus to another player's character to set them up for an exciting and dramatic moment, or directly supporting them in such a moment.

- Roleplaying the effects of the Great Curse (p. 159) in a way that reveals something about the character, develops her personality, or provides a character moment that everyone at the table enjoys.

- **Air Aspects:** Accomplishing a long-term plan that upholds a Major or Defining Intimacy; uncovering knowledge through study or subterfuge that furthers the character's or an ally's goals; solving a significant problem through the application of knowledge; guiding an ally in using his talents or abilities to advance his or the Dragon-Blood's goals.

- **Earth Aspects:** Defending, supporting, or expanding an institution or tradition in support of a Major or Defining Intimacy; enduring significant peril to defend an ally; creating a lasting and meaningful institution, tradition, or work of craftsmanship or mystical power; resolving a meaningful dispute between one's allies or a group one belongs to.

- **Fire Aspects:** Defeating a powerful enemy in a way that upholds an emotion-based Major or Defining Intimacy; taking needless risks or plunging into unnecessary danger to uphold a Major or Defining Intimacy; inspiring others to uphold one of the character's emotion-based Major or Defining Intimacies in a significant way; directly furthering the character's or her allies' goals by causing another character to question one of his Major or Defining Intimacies.

- **Water Aspects:** Solving a significant problem or defeating a powerful enemy using a new approach after failing before; removing a major impediment to the character's or her allies' goals using unconventional or underhanded means; exploiting the rules or customs of a government, bureaucracy, or criminal association to support a Major or Defining Intimacy; helping an ally recover or learn from a major defeat or setback in a way that grants a significant advantage.

- **Wood Aspects:** Learning something from firsthand experience that helps advance or protect a Major or Defining Tie; navigating geographical obstacles or curing dangerous ailments preventing the character or an ally from achieving a significant goal; upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy by pursuing a new experience; helping an ally cultivate a strength or remedy a weakness in a way that grants a significant advantage.

Training Times

Raising traits with experience points isn't an instant process. These training times are rough guidelines for how long it takes, assuming that a character spends a significant portion of that time (but not all of it) training, or gleans significant experience from practical application of her skills. A character can train multiple traits at the same time if it makes sense — a rigorous course of academic study could count toward the times required to raise Intelligence, gain a Lore specialty, and learn a Lore Charm.

The listed training times can be reduced if a character is trained by a talented mentor, or devotes her time fully to training.

Trait	Training Time
Attribute	(new rating) months
Non-Aspect, Non-Favored Ability	(new rating) weeks
Aspect/Favored Ability	(new rating) days
Specialty	Two weeks
Purchased Merit	(new rating) weeks
Willpower	One month
Dragon-Blooded or Martial Arts Charm	(Ability + Essence minimum) days, or (Ability minimum) days if Aspect/Favored
Spell	Two weeks
Evocation	(Essence minimum x 4) days

Raising Essence

A Dragon-Blood's Essence rating rises as she grows and matures as a hero, increasing automatically once she's earned and spent a certain amount of experience (Dragon Experience doesn't count towards this total). Once she's spent sufficient experience, the Dragon-Blood must generally meditate on her elemental Essence or seek enlightenment in seclusion before attaining the next dot of Essence, although it's possible for it to increase instantly in a dramatic, character-defining moment.

Dragon-Blooded characters made using the default character creation rules (p. 136) must attain the following totals to raise their Essence:

Essence Rating	Experience Points
Essence 3	75
Essence 4	250
Essence 5	325
Essence 6+	Only available at Storyteller's discretion

Dragon-Blooded characters created with the alternate rules for beginning at Essence 1 must spend 50 experience points to reach Essence 2, after which they add 50 to the values on the above chart.

The Great Curse

When the slain enemies of the gods pronounced their death-curse against the Exalted, the brunt of it fell upon the Solars who led the Divine Revolution. The Dragon-Blooded were still accursed, but to a much lesser degree.

Consequently, unlike the Solars and other Exalted, Dragon-Blooded don't possess a Limit track or experience Limit Break. While the Great Curse still influences their behavior, its manifestations are determined solely by the player of a Dragon-Blooded character.

Roleplaying the Great Curse well is rewarded with Dragon Experience (p. 156). However, while a Dragon-Blood's excesses or warped judgment might cause problems for her fellow characters, it's never an excuse to ruin other *players'* fun at the table. **If a dramatic moment caused by the Great Curse isn't something that the *entire group* can appreciate, it doesn't award Dragon Experience.**

The Great Curse manifests differently in each elemental Aspect of Dragon-Blooded:

- **Air Aspects:** An Air Aspect's Great Curse can lead her to react with excessive anger, frustration, or despair when the world fails to live up to her idealistic visions of it. She may become so caught up in her high-minded idealism that she ignores the consequences it has for others or the suffering that it causes, or hold such confidence in her intellect and vision that she'll brook no insult without retribution, or take truly foolish risks not believing that she could be wrong.

- **Earth Aspects:** An Earth Aspect's Great Curse may render her ruthless or cruel in defense of her cherished institutions and traditions, or leave her single-minded and immutable, refusing all counsel and closing her heart. She may respond to any insult or challenge to an important tradition with earthshaking anger or abject despair.

- **Fire Aspects:** A Fire Aspect's Great Curse intensifies her emotions and desires to the point of dangerous excess. Depending on the circumstances, she might be overcome with overwhelming zeal for her cause, self-hatred over any imperfection she displays, reckless fury against hated foes or in defense of those she loves, or self-sacrificing despair when those she loves suffer.

- **Water Aspects:** A Water Aspect's Great Curse makes her perseverance a liability as she goes to unnecessary extremes to overcome obstacles or protect allies, or faces down impossible obstacles refusing to believe she can be defeated. She might take any underhanded shortcut or employ any plans, no matter how convoluted, in the pursuit of her own triumph.

- **Wood Aspects:** A Wood Aspect's Great Curse might intensify her sensuality into hedonistic excess, dangerous thrill-seeking, or wild binges that leave her overcome by guilt, regret, or the desire to atone. She may instead become overzealous in her attempts to nurture the people and societies around her, becoming overbearingly controlling of that which she protects or mercilessly pruning away undesirable elements.



Realm Year 768

Mnemon's carriage rolled down the central boulevard of Jiara's grand, damaged acropolis. Her passage drew hawking merchants, praises from nervous Jiaran nobles, and respectful bows from her legionnaires. Mnemon noticed them all, and was untouched. After centuries, the actions of mortals had lost meaning, uniqueness. Yet mortals followed patterns, and patterns held true.

Once, the palaces on Jiara's plateau had competed to reach the sky in an unseemly display of mortal ambition. In the Scarlet Empress' absence, Anathema dissenters fanned ambition into rebellion. It fell to the Empress' eldest surviving daughter to correct the wayward satrapy. Jiara's grand towers crumbled before Mnemon's legions. The Anathema fled the city with the Jiaran royal family in tow.

Jiara was all but tamed now, and House Mnemon's reputation had grown for the conquest. It was nearly time for Mnemon to bring the spoils of her victory home to the Blessed Isle, to claim the throne she deserved. One task remained.

Mnemon signaled her driver to stop, and stepped onto the boulevard's cobblestones. She directed her personal guard to follow one hundred paces back, and then walked, as alone as she ever was, until she reached the rocky edge of the plateau. The lower half of the city stretched out below, and Mnemon listened for its patterns in the wind and stone.

The city's song was familiar. River traders shouted and monks preached. Construction crews rebuilt the war-torn city while legionnaires drilled in battle maneuvers. Mnemon allowed herself to feel pride in the flow of civilization working as it should, of every creature filling its proper role. All except for the shadow the Anathema left behind.

Mnemon felt a weight on the stones behind her and spun, grabbing the blade meant for her back. She looked past the facade of a harmless merchant and took in the assassin's true features — yellow eyes, dark skin, red hair — before twisting her wrist. The sword tumbled down the cliffside.

"Do you think I can't feel an assassin's breath on my neck?" asked Mnemon as she trapped the assassin's arm in a joint lock. "I've outlived a hundred like you."

The assassin gritted her teeth. "Tell them Novia Claro took the prize." A golden ring flared on her forehead, and she slipped bonelessly from Mnemon's grasp. Novia spun, opened her hand, and unleashed a spray of blades, dozens of daggers fanning outward.

With nowhere to flee, Mnemon went through. Blades pierced her flesh in a dozen places, but she found the assassin's chest with the heel of her palm, and unleashed a pulse of seismic force. Novia tumbled backward across the ground as Mnemon fell to a knee. The two women were still for a moment.

"I have a few ribs still unbroken," said Novia. She drew another dagger. "How do you fare on blood, dragon?"

Mnemon was a bloody mess, but she'd felt worse. She laughed, light-headed. "The Dragons provide."

And by her will, Mnemon's wounds erupted. Blood streamed down to pool beneath her, until something began to reach out from the gore. It had gangling limbs, a curved spine, and flesh writhing like ants. The demon Glafira, the Zodiac of Blood, stood and turned its rune-face toward Novia Claro.

The assassin grimaced at the demon, then glanced back to see Mnemon's guards rushing to her.

"…Let me just get my sword," she said. She dashed around Mnemon and Glafira, and hopped over the cliff's edge. Glafira scuttled after her immediately, fearless and tireless.

Mnemon ignored her guards' shouts and turned to look down upon the Anathema, the demon, and the city below. Her anima flared as her hands wove sorcerous Essence. Jiara was not yet perfected.



Chapter Seven

Charms

The might of the Dragon-Blooded is depicted through their Charms. Each Terrestrial Charm is an expression of elemental power channeled through the Dragon-Blood's superhuman mastery of an Ability. Like Solar Charms (**Exalted**, pp. 250-251), Dragon-Blooded Charms aren't codified techniques or known entities within the setting of the game. Dynasts of the Realm understand the shared nature of their power, and may be familiar with the feats of legendary elemental prowess that a particular Dragon-Blood is known for, but there are no books compiling lists of all known Charms, and some Charms might come as a surprise to even the most experienced Terrestrial.

Adding Bonus Dice

Unlike the Solar Exalted, the Dragon-Blooded don't have generic Excellencies. Instead, each Ability has its own Excellency Charm. At character creation, a Dragon-Blood gains five Excellencies from any of her Aspect or Favored Abilities for free; the rest must be purchased normally.

A Dragon-Blood cannot add more than (Ability + Specialty) dice to a roll. Automatic successes count as two dice each towards this limit. Static values such as Evasion or Resolve can be raised by half this amount, rounded down. **The only exceptions are rarer "non-Charm" dice or successes, which don't count towards the limit at all.**

Example: A Dragon-Blood with Melee 4 and a specialty of (Spears) could add up to five dice on an attack roll or raise her Melee Parry by 3 while wielding a spear, but only add four dice to a roll or raise her Parry by 2 with any other weapon.

The Elemental Aura

The apex of Dragon-Blooded elemental power is the Elemental Aura, a state in which she centers the totality of her Essence around a single element. Dragon-Blooded of any Aspect are capable of entering all five Elemental Auras. The Aura manifests visibly through the Dragon-Blood's anima banner if it's above the dim level. If she's in the Aura that matches her Aspect, her anima intensifies dramatically — the flames of a Fire Aspect's anima might burn blue-white, while an Air Aspect's cloudy anima might grow dark and begin to crackle with lightning. In other Auras, her anima becomes a hybrid of two elements — an Earth Aspect in Fire Aura could manifest an anima banner of flowing lava, while the anima of a Water Aspect in Wood Aura might be filled with writhing kelp.

To enter an Elemental Aura, the Dragon-Blood must use Charms and/or anima powers of only one element during her combat turn (or a similar narrative interval outside of combat, such as an action in a scene of social influence or a round of naval combat). At the end of her turn, she enters the appropriate Aura. The Elemental Aura lasts until the end of the scene, but ends early if the Dragon-Blood uses a Charm or anima power of another element at any time. When the Dragon-Blood's anima banner reaches bonfire level, she becomes unable to enter the Aura of any element except her Aspect. If she's in another Elemental Aura when her anima reaches bonfire, it shifts to match her Aspect's element.

The Aura affects Charms in multiple ways:

- Some Charms become more powerful in the appropriate Elemental Aura.
- Charms with the Aura keyword can only be used in an Aura that matches their aspect.
- Some Aura Charms require the Dragon-Blood to expend her Aura as part of their cost.
- Some Aura Charms have "Duration: Aura," indicating that they last only as long as the Dragon-Blood remains in that element's Aura.

Charms with the Balanced keyword harmonize with the Dragon-Blood's Aura regardless of their aspect — they neither prevent her from entering Elemental Aura when used alongside Charms of another element, nor do they ever

BUT WHAT ABOUT...?

The Elemental Aura flows from the intrinsic power of Dragon-Blooded Charms. Martial Arts, Evocations, and sorcery never impact the Dragon-Blood's Aura either positively or negatively, even if they're elemental in nature — they're extrinsic power, a step removed from the core of Dragon-Blooded Essence. The one exception are the Immaculate martial arts (p. 286), styles uniquely designed to harmonize with the Elemental Aura.

cause her Aura to end. **Spending motes on Charms that lack an elemental aspect never prevents the Dragon-Blood from entering Aura, nor does it end her Aura.**

Example: On her turn, Tepet Jalena attacks using two Air-aspected Charms. At the end of her turn, she enters Air Aura. Later in the round, she reflexively uses a Fire Charm to defend against an attack, instantly ending her Aura.

Signature Charms

Each Ability has five puissant elemental Signatures. **A Dragon-Blood can only learn one Signature Charm per Ability.** She doesn't have to pick the Signature Charm that matches her own elemental aspect. At Essence 5, she unlocks the potential to learn one more Signature Charm from each of her Aspect and Favored Abilities. She must use her second choice to learn the Signature Charm that matches her own Aspect if she hasn't already done so.

New Keywords

Air, Earth, Fire, Water, Wood: Every Dragon-Blooded Charm has an elemental aspect, typically marked by these keywords. Dragon-Blooded Charms without these keywords specify what aspects they can take on in their text.

Aura: Aura Charms can only be used while the Dragon-Blood is in the Elemental Aura that matches its aspect. An Aura Charm can't be used in the same instant with Charms of other elements, unless those Charms have the Balanced keyword.

Balanced: Balanced Charms don't interfere with the Dragon-Blood's Aura even if they don't match its aspect — they won't prevent her from entering an Aura at the end of her turn if used with Charms of another element, and never end her Aura. If she uses only Balanced Charms on her turn, she may enter the Aura of any of the elements whose Charms she used.

Excellency: This keyword indicates Dragon-Blooded Excellencies.

Signature: This keyword marks an Ability's five elemental Signatures.

Archery

Unobstructed Hunter's Aim

Cost: 1m per die; **Mins:** Archery 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Uniform, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Sighting along the flow of living Essence, the Dragon-Blood unleashes a flawless shot. She may add bonus dice to an Archery roll for one mote each. As long as she attacks a living target — or an undead one, which stands out as a void in the Essence of the world — each added die negates one point of penalty from visual obstruction such as poor lighting or smoke.

Sky-Calming Draw

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Archery 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental

MULTIPLE ASPECTS

Some Dragon-Blooded Charms have multiple elemental aspects. Some have different effects for their multiple aspects and require the Dragon-Blood to choose one; these Charms will be keyworded as, e.g. Air *or* Earth. Others belong to two or more elements simultaneously, and are keyworded as, e.g., Air/Earth. For purposes of the Dragon-Blood's Elemental Aura, the latter Charms count as whichever element is most advantageous to her — she could enter Water Aura using a Charm that is both Air and Water, and using a Charm that is both Fire and Wood would not disrupt her Fire Aura.

Keywords: Air, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's focus quells the wind that would divert her arrow, ensuring her shot flies true. She extends the range of a **withering** or **decisive** attack by one range band, maximum long (including those made with Flame weapons), and ignores penalties from wind or inclement weather. If her weapon already has long range, she instead adds an automatic success on the attack roll.

Death From Nowhere

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air/Water, Balanced, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Sky-Calming Draw

As the Dragon-Blood draws back her arrow against her bowstring, she withdraws and disperses its weightiness, sending it flying like an ephemeral phantom to pierce her foe's heart. Her **withering** attack ignores (lower of Essence or Perception) points of soak from armor. If her attack benefits from aiming, she ignores (higher of Essence or Perception) soak instead.

Harvest of the Hunter

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Archery 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood may go to hunt with an empty quiver yet never lack for arrows. Anything that grows will yield up arrows to the archer's gathering hands. She can create useable ammunition for a bow or crossbow from any kind of plant, whether it's a marsh reed or a stalk of corn. In combat, she doubles 8s on an ammunition check for an Archery weapon (**Exalted**, p. 202). As long as she rolls a single success, she's guaranteed to scavenge a single arrow. Outside of combat, she may use this Charm to gather enough arrows to fill her quiver as long as there's sufficient plant life to draw her harvest from, although the Storyteller may require a special ammunition check to create arrows in barren deserts or other areas devoid of plant life.

Arrow Thorn Technique

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Dual, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Harvest of the Hunter

Thorns grow to wreathe the shaft of the Dragon-Blood's arrow in flight. On a **withering** attack, she adds +1 Overwhelming, or (Essence) Overwhelming if the attack benefits from aiming. **Decisive** attacks add (Essence/2, rounded up) threshold successes on the attack roll as dice of damage, or (Essence) threshold successes if she aimed.

Boughs of Burning Autumn

Cost: 2m, 1i; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire/Wood, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Harvest of the Hunter

Flame is born from wood. The Dragon-Blood may reflexively reload a firewand or similar flame weapon with the Slow tag on her turn. This permits her to use it in combination with Charms that make multiple attacks, such as Seven-Year Swarm Volley, as long as she pays this Charm's cost before each additional attack past the first.

Life-Swelling Sap Strike

Cost: 3m (+1wp); **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Harvest of the Hunter

The Dragon-Blood's arrow bursts into a crush of ever-growing roots or vines in midflight, entangling her enemy in thick plants. She makes a distract gambit (**Exalted**, p. 200). On a success, her projectile bursts into growing vines, inflicting a –1 mobility penalty on the distracted character — which stacks with penalties from armor — for the rest of the scene. He or one of his allies can cut away the vines with a difficulty 3 gambit using an edged weapon, or the Storyteller might deem other actions or conditions sufficient. At the end of each round in which he remains entangled, he loses a point of Initiative (which the Dragon-Blood doesn't gain). Battle groups lose one Magnitude instead.

If the Dragon-Blood pays a one-Willpower surcharge, an undead crashed by this attack is incapacitated, crumbling into soil. This surcharge is waived against trivial foes. This doesn't apply to stronger undead, such as nephwracks, Deathlords, or undead Exalted. The body of any living mortal slain while covered in vines won't harbor a hungry ghost. Outside of combat, the Dragon-Blood may use this Charm on dying mortals to ensure they leave no hungry ghosts, waiving the Willpower cost for willing targets.

In Wood Aura, the Dragon-Blood may use this Charm to make a standard **decisive** attack instead of a distract gambit.

Arbor Sentinel Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Life-Swelling Sap Strike

As the Dragon-Blood lowers her bow to the ground, its once-living wood remembers what it once was, sprouting roots that dive into the soil. In a matter of seconds, the weapon grows into a small tree, less than a range band high, its branches replete with arrows. It's still perfectly curved and weighted to allow the Dragon-Blood to attack with it, provides her with the benefits of heavy cover (**Exalted**, p. 199), and cannot be disarmed. It provides a never-ending supply of ammunition, ensuring she won't run out of arrows even in a daylong battle. However, she cannot move the weapon in its tree form, and this Charm ends if she moves further than close range from it.

Drawing Lightning Style

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Aura, Perilous, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Death From Nowhere

As the Dragon-Blood takes aim, her arrow crackles with gathering lightning, shining as a glowing anima banner (p. 154). On her next turn, she may make a **decisive** attack, adding the bonus from aiming to her damage roll instead of the attack roll.

An Archery 4, Essence 3 repurchase lets the Dragon-Blood expend her Aura to apply the aim bonus on both the attack and damage rolls.

Spring Follows Winter

Cost: 2m (+1i per die); **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Aura, Perilous, Uniform, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Death From Nowhere

Like green leaves reborn after the harshest winter, the Dragon-Blood's arrow must inevitably strike its mark. After an attack roll, she can reroll up to (Essence) non-1 failures for one Initiative each. This Charm must be declared before the attack roll, but the Initiative isn't paid until after the roll.

Horizon-Spanning Arc

Cost: 4m, 1wp, expend Air Aura; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Air)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood bends the winds to her bowstring, loosing a shot that could fly from heaven to earth. After spending two consecutive rounds aiming, she makes a **decisive** attack out to extreme range (**Exalted**, p. 197), converting the bonus dice from aiming to non-Charm successes. She must be able to clearly see her enemy, and cannot attack a foe from more than five range bands away. If she hits and incapacitates her foe, she may reflexively take aim at another enemy within long range.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by crashing an enemy whose Initiative was higher than the Dragon-Blood's.

Earth's Judgment Awakened

Cost: 6m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Counterattack, Decisive-only, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Standing calm and centered on the earth, the Dragon-Blood rebukes an attacker with an arrow weighted with the unrelenting force of her will. When she's standing on an earthen surface and successfully dodges an attack from an enemy within her weapon's range, she may unleash a **decisive** counterattack, rolling against the lower of her target's Defense or Resolve. It deals (Presence + attack roll threshold successes) dice of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. It doesn't include her Initiative or reset her to base. This counterattack is incompatible with any effect that lets her move away from her attacker, such as Hopping Firecracker Evasion.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by successfully disengaging from a nontrivial foe and beginning her next turn at short range or further from all enemies.

Blazing Phoenix Pinion

Cost: 8m, 1a, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

I'M ON FIRE!

Several Dragon-Blooded Charms, as well as other effects, set an enemy ablaze until he extinguishes himself. A character might do this by dousing himself with a bucket of water, smothering the fire by covering it with earth, or similar methods. This is typically a miscellaneous action (**Exalted**, p. 196), but not always — plunging into a lake only requires a reflexive move action.

Threading incendiary anima through her arrow, the Dragon-Blood unleashes a shot that erupts in a glorious blaze upon impact. After spending a turn aiming, she makes a **decisive** attack, adding (Essence) dice of damage. On a hit, as long as she rolls at least one 10 on her attack or damage roll, the arrow explodes in an unblockable blast that extends out to short range from her target. All characters caught within it, including allies, must dodge her original attack roll or suffer dice of Hardness-ignoring lethal damage equal to the total 10s on both her attack roll and the original damage roll. The original target of her attack cannot dodge the blast. Any character that takes damage from the explosion is knocked prone and catches fire, suffering (Essence) further dice of lethal damage each turn until he extinguishes himself.

Fang-of-the-Depths Draw

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Signature (Water), Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Lurking beneath her victims, the Dragon-Blood unleashes death from the depths. She ignores penalties for firing into water or similar liquids, or for firing while submerged — she may even discharge a firewand while underwater.

In Water Aura, if the Dragon-Blood uses this Charm to attack while underwater after aiming, she may reflexively roll (Wits + Stealth) against her target's (Perception + Awareness) roll to establish concealment against him before she attacks, rendering her attack unexpected (**Exalted**, p. 203) on success. Once she does so, she cannot use this effect for the rest of the scene unless reset by landing an attack using any combat Ability against a nontrivial foe at close range.

Heartbeats Before Death

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Wood), Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Sensing the interconnected web of life that surrounds her, the Dragon-Blood opens her eyes to deal out death. She may reflexively aim against a living or undead enemy before attacking it, and ignores any light or heavy cover it benefits from. If she already aimed the previous turn, she may attack an enemy behind full cover, though it grants him +3 Defense.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by aiming normally against an enemy before hitting him with a **decisive** attack.

Dragonfly Finds Mate

Cost: 5m, 1i; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Clash, Perilous, Withering-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spring Follows Winter

Sensing the path of an enemy projectile, the Dragon-Blood strikes it aside with an arrow of her own. She may reflexively clash any ranged attack against her with a **withering** attack, without needing to aim. Winning the clash knocks the enemy's attack away harmlessly, but doesn't roll damage. She still gains Initiative from a successful attack, and her attacker suffers both an onslaught penalty and the −2 Defense penalty for losing a clash.

Salamander Swallows Flames

Cost: —; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Clash, Fire
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Boughs of Burning Autumn, Dragonfly Finds Mate

Catching her enemy's flame with the barrel of her own firewand, the Dragon-Blood steals it for herself. When she uses Dragonfly Finds Mate with a firewand, she adds (Essence) dice to clash attacks made using another firewand, a fire-based attack, or a magical attack made of pure Essence or other energy such as Blazing Solar Bolt, and may do so even if her weapon is unloaded. Winning the clash reloads her weapon, which visibly burns with stolen flame until she discharges it. Such uses of Dragonfly Finds Mate are both Fire- and Wood-aspected.



Seven-Year Swarm Volley

Cost: 6m, 1wp, expend Wood Aura; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dragonfly Finds Mate

The Terrestrial's hands move to swiftly nock and draw as Wood Essence strengthens her sinew and toughens her ligaments. She makes ([lower of Dexterity or Perception] / 2, rounded up) **decisive** attacks distributed against one or more enemies. Each attack has a base damage of (Essence – 2), and she divides her Initiative evenly among each of them, rounded up, to determine their total damage. Once she's completed these attacks, she resets to base Initiative, even if they all missed.

Sparrow Dives at Hawk

Cost: —(1wp); **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 4
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Aura, Clash, Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Dragonfly Finds Mate

The Dragon-Blood strikes down arrow and archer with a single shot. When she wins a clash with Dragonfly Finds Mate while in Wood Aura, she may spend one Willpower to send her arrow flying toward the enemy who attacked her as a **decisive** attack that uses the same attack roll.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by using Dragonfly Finds Mate to successfully clash a **decisive** attack made by a nontrivial foe with 15+ Initiative.

Swallows Defend the Nest

Cost: 8m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Clash, Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Sparrow Dives at Hawk

The Dragon-Blood sights along every possible line of attack, readying her arrows to strike anywhere and everywhere in defense of her allies. Whenever an enemy makes a ranged attack against the Dragon-Blood or one of her allies within her weapon's range, she may reflexively clash it with a special **decisive** attack, without needing to aim. Unlike a normal clash, success doesn't prevent the enemy attack from hitting, nor does it deal **decisive** damage or reset the Dragon-Blood's Initiative. Instead, every threshold success subtracts one success from the enemy's attack roll against his original target. The attacker still suffers the onslaught penalty of her attack, and if he misses his target, the −2 Defense penalty for losing a clash. The Dragon-Blood gains three Initiative if the clash removes all successes from the attack, or one Initiative if she lowers the attack successes from an amount the original target couldn't have dodged or parried to one that he can. This doesn't count as her combat action, and she may clash any number of attacks each round.

This Charm ends if the Dragon-Blood attempts to dodge or parry, or if she makes an attack on her own turn (although she may use other Charms to clash, counterattack, or make reflexive attacks normally).

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Arrow Rain Tempest

Cost: 6m, 5i, 1wp, expend Water Aura; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Swallows Defend the Nest

The Dragon-Blood fires a volley of arrows skyward, each one doubling and redoubling to unleash a descending storm of death. They hang fixed at the apex of their arc for a moment before falling in a storm of flashing blue streaks of light. To use this Charm, she must spend two consecutive turns aiming and maintain her Initiative at 12+ throughout. She targets a point within her weapon's range, and rolls a single undodgeable **decisive** attack against all characters within short range of it, even allies. Each enemy hit suffers the Dragon-Blood's full Initiative in damage dice. Battle groups instead take levels of damage equal to her Initiative.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Athletics

Effortlessly Rising Flame

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Athletics 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Fire fills the Dragon-Blood's body, suffusing her with power. She may add automatic successes to an Athletics roll for two motes each, and rolls an additional non-Charm die for every 10.

Bellows-Pumping Stride

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood darts forward with an explosive burst of speed to pursue her foes. She rolls an additional non-Charm die on a rush for every 1 that appears in the rushed character's opposing roll.

With Athletics 5, Essence 3, the Dragon-Blood may expend her Fire Aura when she reflexively moves to pursue an enemy after successfully rushing him with this Charm to ignite a fiery trail behind her, an environmental hazard with difficulty 3 and Damage (Essence/2, rounded up)L/round. It burns until the end of the round unless the Dragon-Blood crossed over a flammable surface such as a wooden floor or grass, which ignites until extinguished or end of scene.

Verdant Dragon's Footsteps

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Bellows-Pumping Stride

The pulse of life bolsters the Dragon-Blood's endurance. She may move through plant-based difficult terrain, such as dense forests or brambles, unimpeded, and ignores fatigue penalties on a single movement-based Athletics roll.

In Wood Aura, this Charm's duration is extended for as long as the Dragon-Blood remains in Aura.

Soaring Leap Technique

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood takes to the air in a single bound, letting the motion of wind around her guide her leap. Every 10 on an Athletics roll to jump (including rushing or disengaging with a leap) rerolls a single non-1 failed die.

Strength of Stone Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood reinforces her body with unyielding Earth Essence to accomplish mighty deeds. She gains one bonus dot of Strength as long as she remains standing on the ground or a natural stone surface. This increases her effective Strength to determine what feats of strength she can attempt, as well as adding one bonus die on Strength-based rolls and to **withering** damage rolls.

Grandmother Oak Exertion

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 4, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Strength of Stone Technique

The Dragon-Blood's strength is inexorable, finding points of leverage like an ancient tree digging roots into stone. She adds a bonus success on a feat of strength, and may use her Stamina in place of her Strength rating to determine if she qualifies to attempt it. If she has Strength of Stone Technique active, she counts the dot of Strength it grants as a dot of Stamina for the purposes of the feat.

In Wood Aura, the added success is a non-Charm bonus.

An Athletics 5, Essence 4 repurchase lets the Dragon-Blood spend one Willpower to add her Stamina to her Strength to determine if she may attempt a feat, rather than substituting it.

Perfect Climbing Attitude

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Athletics 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood scales sheer rock faces and perilous mountains with effortless grace, her fingers carving handholds from unyielding stone. She may use her reflexive move action to climb a single range band up or down a stone or earthen surface without needing to make an Athletics roll, and can even ascend sheer surfaces.

Any handholds carved with this Charm close as soon as the Dragon-Blood has moved on from them, denying the advantage to her pursuers. With Athletics 3, Essence 2, she may choose to leave them in place, acting as exceptional equipment (**Exalted**, p. 580) for any others who wish to climb up that path.

Incense Smoke Ladder

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air/Fire, Balanced
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: Bellows-Pumping Stride, Soaring Leap Technique

Like a burning ember, the Dragon-Blood drifts upwards through the air. She can run up walls and other vertical surfaces, even upside-down along a ceiling, as long as she maintains constant movement. However, she cannot disengage or withdraw up walls. If she ends her movement somewhere she couldn't normally stand and then fails to renew this Charm on her next turn, she falls and suffers damage normally.

Mountain-Toppling Might

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Strength of Stone Technique

The Dragon-Blood is capable of hefting huge boulders or toppling wagons, drawing from the strength of the earth. She adds (Essence/2, rounded up) to her Strength rating to determine if she may attempt a feat of strength.

Soaring Zephyr Flight

Cost: 5m, 1wp (4i per round); **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Perilous, Signature (Air)
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Incense Smoke Ladder

Outracing even herself, the Dragon-Blood surpasses the bounds of gravity. She moves two range bands upwards with a mighty leap, hovering in place at the apex of her jump. She can subsequently fly through the air with her normal movement actions, moving vertically or horizontally, and hover in place while not moving. In combat, each round after the first that she maintains this Charm, she must pay four Initiative to remain in the air. This Charm ends if she's crashed or incapacitated, leaves Air Aura, or ends her mote commitment, causing her to drift harmlessly to the ground.

Unshakable Mountain Spine

Cost: 5m, 1wp, expend Earth Aura; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Mountain-Toppling Might

The Dragon-Blood braces her muscles with the strength and solidity of earth, becoming an unshakable pillar of stone. To use this Charm, she must be in contact with the earth — she could use it while standing on the lowest floor of a building that's directly atop earth, but not on that building's upper stories or roof. She doubles her Strength rating to determine whether she qualifies to attempt a feat of strength, and doubles 9s on the roll. If this would raise her Strength above the necessary minimum, each excess point adds a single non-Charm die.

This Charm may only be used once per day.

Inescapable Blazing Advance

Cost: 5m, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Bellows-Pumping Stride

As the Dragon-Blood runs, flames streak behind her like scarlet ribbons as she builds to her utmost speed, incinerating those left in her wake. She adds (Essence) non-Charm dice on a rush. (Essence) 1s on the opposing character's roll strip one point of Initiative each from him, which the Dragon-Blood gains.

When this Initiative loss crashes an enemy, the Dragon-Blood's speed is such that her fiery wake literally sets him ablaze. He catches fire, suffering (the Initiative he lost) dice of Hardness-ignoring lethal damage on each



of his turns. This lasts until he successfully extinguishes himself.

Dragon Surmounts the Waterfall

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood is a legendary swimmer, drawing on both her body's well-honed strength and unyielding endurance and on her affinity for the elemental flow of Water Essence. She doubles 8s on movement rolls while swimming, and may ignore any penalties or difficult terrain from swimming against the current, through waves, across whirlpools, or through similar obstacles. She may even ascend waterfalls and similar vertical flows of water, though she treats these as difficult terrain.

Any feats of strength the Dragon-Blood attempts while underwater, such as dragging the survivors of a shipwreck to safety or breaching the hull of an enemy warship, benefit from double 9s. She adds (Essence/2, rounded up) to her Strength to determine what feats she qualifies for.

Graceful Dryad Dance

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood moves through forests with unfettered grace, scaling the highest trees and dancing effortlessly along the leaves of the canopy. She can walk on branches, leaves, or similar living plant-based surfaces with perfect balance, able to stand and cross over them even if they couldn't normally bear her weight and never needing a roll to maintain her balance no matter how narrow they are. As long as she's standing on such a plant-based surface, she gains +1 Evasion. In addition, she may use her reflexive move action to move one or two range bands up or down a tree or similar plant-based surface, as long as there's a horizontal surface on which she can stand at the end of her movement (or if she uses Incense Smoke Ladder to continue moving up it).

Dancing Ember Stride

Cost: 4m, 2i; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Incense Smoke Ladder

The Dragon-Blood is as inevitable in her pursuit as a raging wildfire, yet elegant as a dancing tongue of flame. She rolls to rush an enemy from short range with double 9s. On a success, she instantly moves into close range with her foe, instead of the usual effect of a rush.

The Dragon-Blood may pay one Willpower and expend her Fire Aura when she uses this Charm to rush a foe from medium range.

Seething Dragon Footprint

Cost: 5i; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dancing Ember Stride

The Dragon-Blood's burning footprints burst into a roaring conflagration, drawing in the light and heat of her anima as she speeds away. When she ignites a trail of fire with Bellows-Pumping Stride, she may use this Charm to stoke it into a bonfire (difficulty 4, Damage 5L/round). Essence fuels the bonfire for the scene even if there's no flammable material underfoot.

Falling Star Maneuver

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 5
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dancing Ember Stride

The Dragon-Blood's speed builds into an all-sundering force, burning red around her as she crosses the battlefield. She may use this Charm when she successfully rushes an enemy with Dancing Ember Stride, or when she descends from the air into close range with an enemy, to make a reflexive **decisive** attack at close range with Brawl, Martial Arts, or Melee. This counts as her combat action for the turn. A successful attack creates a shockwave as a one-time environmental hazard stretching out to short range from her foe. Its difficulty is (Strength), and its Damage is equal to the total levels of damage she rolled on her attack, to a maximum of (Essence)L. The Dragon-Blood is immune to this hazard, but other characters, including her allies, are subject to it. A character that takes damage falls prone and is knocked one range band away from the Exalt.

Awareness

Precision Observation Method

Cost: 1m per die *or* 2m per success; **Mins:** Awareness 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Earth, Excellency
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The serenity of earth focuses and heightens all of the senses. The Exalt may add dice to an Awareness roll for one mote each, or automatic successes for two motes each.

Cloud-Piercing Focus

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Awareness 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Earth *or* Fire *or* Water
Duration: One tick
Prerequisite Charms: None

Neither ocean depths nor raging flame nor swirling sands can hinder a keen Terrestrial eye. As an Earth Charm, this negates visual penalties from dust storms, sandstorms, or similar obstructions. As a Fire Charm, it negates such penalties from smoke, fire, or volcanic fumes. As a Water Charm, it negates penalties from mist, rain, or being underwater. Regardless of the version used, the Dragon-Blood's sight is extended to its full normal range.

Deep-Listening Palm

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Awareness 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

Touching a surface, the Dragon-Blood displaces her sense of hearing through the Essence of earth. She can listen through that barrier as though it weren't there. Obstructions made of stone, wood, or weaker materials don't require a roll to hear through, while metal or similarly durable materials may require a (Perception + Awareness) roll at difficulty 3+. On a failed roll, she's only able to hear fragments of conversation or certain noises determined by the Storyteller with this Charm for the rest of the scene.

All-Encompassing Earth Sense

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Deep-Listening Palm

The Dragon-Blood can sense the vibrations that move through the earth when a soldier takes a step or a leaf falls from a branch. When she comes within short range of a hidden enemy or danger, she rolls (Perception + Awareness) with double 9s to detect it. In order for her to perceive concealed characters, they must be standing on the same surface that she stands on, or no more than one vertical range band up on structures or scenery that rest on that surface (such as the roof beams of a low ceiling or the understory of a forest). She cannot sense enemies who are airborne, in or on water, or taking other measures to avoid moving across a solid surface. If she fails her initial roll, she may reactivate this Charm once per subsequent round to detect the same threat.

With Awareness 4, Essence 2, the Dragon-Blood may purchase elemental variants of this effect for three experience points each.

Air: The Dragon-Blood can sense hidden threats through air motion out to close range while in an enclosed space such as a room. This extends to short range at Awareness 5, Essence 5.

Fire: The Dragon-Blood can sense hidden threats out to long range while both are standing in a fire, a burning building, or similar circumstances, sensing their cooler temperature against the heat of the flames.

Water: While submerged in water, the Dragon-Blood can sense hidden threats that are at least partially immersed out to medium range. In driving rain or similar weather, she can sense hidden characters out to short range.

Wood: While in undergrowth, foliage, or similar vegetative terrain, the Dragon-Blood may sense hidden threats in the same terrain out to short range. This extends to medium range at Awareness 5, Essence 5.

Dragon's Crushing Gaze

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Earth *or* Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Cloud-Piercing Focus

The Terrestrial's attention falls on thieves and cowards like a lead weight dropping into one's stomach. She may use this as an Earth Charm when she rolls to oppose a character's Stealth, or as a Water Charm against a disguise. She subtracts one success either from the total successes of the opposing character's concealment as the crushing weight of earth pins him down, or from



his disguise successes as the pounding force of the tide washes away his facade.

In Earth or Water Aura, using the appropriate elemental variant strips an additional success from the opposing character for every two threshold successes the Dragon-Blood rolls.

Hesiesh's Discerning Tongue

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

When the Dragon-Blood places potentially harmful food or drink in her mouth, she may roll (Perception + Awareness) to detect poison or other harmful ingredients. Most common poisons are difficulty 1-3 to detect, while an odorless or tasteless poison would be difficulty 4-5. Successfully identifying the danger immediately ignites the offending item in the Terrestrial's mouth, letting her spit it out before it can harm her.

With Awareness 5, Essence 3, if detecting a poison causes the Dragon-Blood to roll Join Battle against a foe she believed poisoned her, she adds any threshold successes from her (Perception + Awareness) roll as non-Charm dice on her Join Battle roll.

Feeling the Dragon's Bones

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: All-Encompassing Earth Sense

The Dragon-Blood extends her senses through the earth, constructing an accurate image of her surroundings from vibrations. The Dragon-Blood rolls (Perception + Awareness) to sense characters and objects out to medium range, even things that are behind walls or underground. A single success is sufficient both to hear and to visualize a black-and-white image of anything that is moving or creating vibrations, such as a person walking or an underground spring's water. In underground locales or structures made entirely of stone, this extends to long range.

In Earth Aura, the Dragon-Blood may commit this Charm's mote cost for as long as she remains in Aura state. Doing so waives the mote cost of All-Encompassing Earth Sense.

Horizon-Spanning Echoes

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

Closing her eyes to the world, the Dragon-Blood casts her senses out onto the winds. Upon using this Charm, she specifies either a specific individual whose voice she wishes to listen for, or a specific sound to search for such as a particular phrase being spoken by any individual, a wagon's wheels moving across a road, or a sword being drawn. She enters a trance in which she can hear the specified sound from (Essence) miles away, or (Essence x5) miles if it's extremely loud, such as a tyrant lizard's roar or an army on the march. If the specified sound occurs, she rolls to detect it with double 7s. Even on a failed roll, she's able to hear the sound; success pinpoints its exact location. The Charm ends after she rolls.

One-With-Earth Embodiment

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Earth)
Duration: One round
Prerequisite Charms: Feeling the Dragon's Bones

At one with Creation, the Dragon-Blood may flow through earth unimpeded. Touching an earthen surface, she may move into and through it as though moving in water. This counts as her movement action in combat. If she doesn't emerge from the earth upon completing her movement, she must either use this Charm again on her next turn, waiving its Willpower cost, or be ejected from the earth at the point where she entered, falling prone and suffering an unpreventable level of bashing damage. However, while moving through stone, she gains the benefit of full cover (**Exalted**, p. 199) against all attacks unless an enemy uses a feat of strength, gambit, or appropriate stunt to create an opening through the stone.

Eye of Blazing Truth

Cost: 4m, 2i, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's eyes burn with intense flame, incinerating shadows and whatever hides within them. When she makes a vision-based Awareness roll, she rolls an additional non-Charm die for each 10 that appears, and ignores penalties from poor lighting, seeing even in total darkness. If she succeeds on a roll opposing the Larceny or Stealth of an enemy within medium range, she may send twin lances of flame streaking from her eyes to strike him, rolling (Essence) dice of lethal damage against him, ignoring Hardness.

If a hidden enemy takes damage while hiding in an area of low lighting, his concealment is disrupted as flame illuminates him, forcing him to change hiding places, making a new Stealth roll subject to the −3 penalty for moving. This doesn't require a move action if he can find new concealment in the same range band; if not, he must reflexively move, consuming his movement action for the round (or his next turn, if he's already moved this round). If his hiding place is flammable, such as a tree or wooden crate, it's set ablaze, likewise forcing him to make a new roll. Mundane disguises burn away if any damage is dealt, laying bare the impostor's identity.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by beating a hidden opponent's Stealth roll and subsequently, while he's still in concealment, either landing a **decisive** attack against him or crashing him with a **withering** attack.

Serpent-of-the-Depths Discernment

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

Attuning her senses to the subtle flow of water and Essence, the Dragon-Blood spies from the depths. While submerged in a body of water such as a lake or river, she may displace her sense of hearing to another point within the same body of water no more than (Essence) range bands away from her. She's able to hear everything around the chosen point as though she were physically there. She doubles 9s on Awareness rolls she makes through the water, as well as on Socialize rolls to read the intentions of characters she's eavesdropping on.

This Charm doesn't enable the Dragon-Blood to breathe underwater, requiring her to hold her breath or use magic such as the Water Aspect anima power (p. 155) or Unbreathing Earth Meditation (p. 248) to make extended use of it.

Dragon's Flaring Nostrils

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Signature (Wood)

Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's keen nose can pick out the fragrance of a lone rose in a field of lilies, or the poisonous scent of hemlock diluted a hundredfold. She doubles 9s on scent-based Awareness rolls, as well as Survival rolls to track by scent, Medicine rolls to diagnose diseases or poisons, and Socialize rolls to read the intentions of a character she can smell. The range of her sense of smell extends to (Essence) range bands. She can distinguish individuals by scent, and can gauge how recently a scent was left. In combat, successfully scenting a concealed enemy or danger grants her two Initiative.

Dragon's Twitching Whisker

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon's Crushing Gaze, Feeling the Dragon's Bones

The Dragon-Blood's senses are keenly attuned to the presence of those she disfavors, piercing their deceptions to reveal them to all. When a character that the Dragon-Blood has a negative Major or Defining Tie to comes within long range of her, she may automatically activate this Charm to strip away a single success from any Stealth or disguise rolls that character has made and then make a (Perception + Awareness) roll against him.

An Awareness 5, Essence 4 repurchase of this Charm extends this Charm's effect to (Essence) range bands.

Sense the Hidden Ember

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Feeling the Dragon's Bones

The Dragon-Blood can feel the lingering traces of supernatural power left by the might of gods and Exalted. When she comes within close range of a location where an Exalt's anima has reached the bonfire level or where a spirit has used one of its greater miracles (**Exalted**, p. 311) during the current story, she may use this Charm to roll (Perception + Awareness), gaining information based on the number of successes.

1-2 successes: The Dragon-Blood gains a general sense of how long ago the trace was left — minutes, hours, days, months, or longer.

3-4 successes: The Dragon-Blood can determine precisely how long ago the trace was left.

5+ successes: As above, and the Dragon-Blood can determine whether the trace was left by a spirit or by an Exalt, as well as whether its Essence rating is greater or lower than her own. If she's personally witnessed an Exalt or spirit of the type that left the trace using its overt supernatural power, she recognizes its nature, able to identify the anima of a Solar Anathema or to tell the greater miracles of a god from those of a demon.

Sense-Riding Technique

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: (Essence + Manipulation) days
Prerequisite Charms: Feeling the Dragon's Bones

The Dragon-Blood etches an imprint of her Essence onto another living character's consciousness, riding his senses from afar to see what he sees and hear what he hears. The Dragon-Blood touches a character and rolls (Manipulation + Awareness) against his Resolve, unmodified by Intimacies. Success establishes a link, allowing the Dragon-Blood to ride the target's senses by meditating. While using his senses, she may make Perception-based rolls using her own dice pools and Charms, but benefits from any of the target's Merits that enhance his senses. Depending on her rolls, she may notice details that the target overlooked, or vice versa. This Charm ends if the sense-ridden character goes more than (Essence x5) miles from the Dragon-Blood.

Sense-Destroying Method

Cost: 5m, 2i; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: Sense-Riding Technique

The Dragon-Blood may cast down her enemies into a void as dark as the earth's depths, stripping them of their senses. Like its prerequisite, this Charm requires her to touch her target and roll (Manipulation + Awareness) against his Resolve, unmodified by Intimacies. In combat, touching an unwilling character is a difficulty 1 Brawl or Martial Arts gambit. On a success, she may seal away one of the following sets of senses as a crippling effect. Every two threshold successes on her (Manipulation + Awareness) roll allow her to seal an additional set of senses.

Sight: An enemy stripped of sight suffers blindness (**Exalted**, p. 168).

Hearing and Touch: In addition to deafness (**Exalted**, p. 168), the victim cannot make touch-based Perception rolls. He can still feel pain, although in a numbly debilitating way.

Smell and Taste: The character cannot make Perception-based rolls to discern any level of detail with his senses of smell or taste. He also takes a −3 penalty on Awareness rolls to detect tainted food or drink, poisonous vapors, or similar harmful substances.

Essence Disruption Attack

Cost: 5m, 1wp, expend Earth Aura; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Sense-Destroying Method

Having mastered disruption of the five mortal senses, the Dragon-Blood now learns to strike at the spiritual faculty that allows gods and the Exalted to sense and channel Essence. Like its prerequisite, this Charm requires her to touch her target and roll (Manipulation + Awareness) against his Resolve, unmodified by Intimacies. Success seals the target's Essence. Whenever he spends Essence to use Charms or other magic in a single instant, the total cost is increased by (the Dragon-Blood's Perception + threshold successes). The seal breaks once the target has paid this surcharge (6 − his Integrity) times, or a day passes.

Brawl

Become the Hammer

Cost: 1m per die *or* 2m per +1 Parry; **Mins:** Brawl 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental *or* Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Uniform, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Force flows through the Dragon-Blood with every strike. She may add bonus dice to a Brawl or Martial Arts attack or the control roll of a clinch for one mote each, and deals lethal damage unarmed. She rerolls 6s on the damage roll until they cease to appear. Alternatively, she may raise her Brawl- or Martial Arts-based Parry by two motes per point, and block lethal damage unarmed.

Pounding Surf Style

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Brawl 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Water, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Water strikes with inexorable power, like pounding waves that erode stone. The Dragon-Blood adds her opponent's current onslaught penalty to the Overwhelming value of a **withering** attack.

In Water Aura, this bonus also adds to the attack's raw damage.

Water Dragon's Coils

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Brawl 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Balanced, Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's grasp is as sudden and inescapable as the riptide. She makes a grapple gambit, rolling (Strength + Brawl) to attack. Bonus dots of Strength granted by magic such as Strength of Stone Technique don't add to her attack roll. Every two threshold successes on her attack roll add a bonus die to the gambit's Initiative roll.

Inescapable Whirlpool Hold

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Water Dragon's Coils

The Dragon-Blood's grasp is a prison that brooks no escape. She rerolls 6s until they cease to appear on both the Initiative roll and the control roll of a grapple.

In Water Aura, succeeding on the control roll of a grapple refunds the gambit's Initiative cost.

Oaken Thew Exertion

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Dual, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Pounding Surf Style *or* Water Dragon's Coils

The Dragon-Blood channels her boundless vitality into her limbs as she strikes. She adds (Stamina) either to the raw damage of a **withering** attack, or as bonus dice to the control roll of a clinch.

In Wood Aura, if the Dragon-Blood reaches her dice limit (p. 162) on a grapple control roll, she adds an additional non-Charm success.

Blade-Deflecting Palm

Cost: 1m per die, 1i; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Uniform, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood channels Water Essence into her defense to disperse even the deadliest blows. When she uses Brawl or Martial Arts to block, after the attack is rolled she may pay one mote per 1 in the roll, maximum (Essence), to reroll that many of the attacker's successful dice, beginning with 7s and moving up.

Crushing Avalanche Grasp

Cost: 5m, 1i; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Until the grapple ends
Prerequisite Charms: Inescapable Whirlpool Hold

The Dragon-Blood's grip is sure and unshakable as stone. If she hits an enemy with a grapple attack roll and successfully establishes a clinch, she doesn't lose rounds of control over it from attacks against her that miss.

In Earth Aura, attacks that hit her but fail to deal any damage also don't cause her to lose rounds of control.

Currents Sweep to Sea

Cost: 4m (+1a); **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Water Dragon's Coils

The Dragon-Blood reaches through water, shaping it into a flowing torrent that can constrict foes and drag them across the battlefield. As long as there's a source of water on the battlefield, such as a small pool, cistern, river, or recent rainfall, she creates a grasping limb or tendril of water, rolling a grapple gambit against an enemy at short range. If she wins control of the grapple, her foe is dragged into close range with her. If there's no source of water to use, she may expend a level of her anima instead.

In Water Aura, this Charm's range extends to medium.



Entangling Roots Embrace

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Until the grapple ends
Prerequisite Charms: Oaken Thew Exertion

Like a sapling whose roots draw sustenance from the soil as it grows skyward, the Terrestrial's hold saps the strength of her foe, breaking his fighting spirit. If a grapple enhanced by this Charm succeeds, she steals one point of Initiative from the clinched enemy at the end of each of her turns.

Hammering Wave Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Dual, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Pounding Surf Style

The Dragon-Blood batters her foe like a wave hammering against the shore. She doubles her Strength to calculate the raw damage of a **withering** attack, or doubles 10s on a **decisive** damage roll.

In Water Aura, if the Dragon-Blood deals 3+ **withering** damage or 1+ **decisive** damage, the onslaught penalty inflicted by her attack doesn't fade on her enemy's next turn, but the turn after.

Stone Fist Strike

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Dual, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Seizing on martial instinct, the Dragon-Blood hardens her limbs with Essence. She grants an unarmed attack the Smashing tag (**Exalted**, p. 586). An unarmed **withering** attack roll adds an automatic success on the attack roll and (Essence/2, rounded up) Overwhelming.

In Earth Aura, the Overwhelming bonus increases to (Essence).

Rolling Boulder Blow

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Stone Fist Strike

The Dragon-Blood strikes with the force of a falling mountain, sending her foes flying. She adds (Strength) threshold successes on the attack roll of a **decisive** smash attack as dice of damage, and may both knock her enemy prone and send him one range band back.

Flying Whirlwind Razor

Cost: 5m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Air)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood becomes one with the unseen flow of air that moves through Creation, unleashing a chop or kick that hones the wind into a swirling vortex. She makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy within medium range. She may choose to unleash the wind in a blast, remaining where she is, or to throw herself into the whirlwind as it flies towards her foe, instantly moving into close range with him. The latter counts as her movement for the turn. The damage of the attack equals (Dexterity + attack roll threshold successes)L, ignoring Hardness. It doesn't include her Initiative, nor does it reset her to base.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by crashing an enemy whose Initiative was higher than the Dragon-Blood's with a single **withering** attack.

Crater-Making Impact

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Sensing the seismic forces that move beneath Creation and aligning her martial prowess with them, the Dragon-Blood unleashes devastating force upon a foe, sending him flying like a meteor crashing down to earth. She makes either a **decisive** smash attack against a crashed enemy or a **decisive** throw against a clinched foe. Success allows her to both fling her foe one range band back and knock him prone, shattering the ground where he lands to create difficult terrain and/or smash through destructible scenery.

If she deals 3+ levels of **decisive** damage, she may hurl her victim to medium range, causing him to take damage as though from a short-range fall (**Exalted**, p. 232). With 7+ levels of damage, she may fling him to long range, causing him to take damage as though from a medium-range fall.

Erupting Fury Barrage

Cost: 10m, 3i, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood erupts into a swift barrage of violence, her fists burning with raging Essence. To use this Charm, she must have Initiative 15+. She unleashes a rapid series of strikes, making a single **decisive** attack roll to launch (1 + the number of 10s on the attack roll) attacks against a single enemy, using the successes on her roll to determine if each attack hits. She doesn't reset to base Initiative normally — instead, each successful attack reduces her Initiative by one for each die that shows a success on the damage roll, to a minimum of (Essence). Once she's completed making all attacks, she resets to base Initiative, even if they all missed.

Every hit the Dragon-Blood lands inflames its victim's Essence with inward fire, creating an *ignition point* that lasts until end of scene. Once the barrage of attacks has been completed, the Dragon-Blood or any of her allies can detonate a single ignition point by landing a **decisive** attack against this enemy. The first ignition point detonated deals one die of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness, the second deals two dice, and so on.

If the Dragon-Blooded subsequently uses this Charm against an enemy still carrying undetonated ignition points, she cannot inflict any new ignition points on him. Once all his ignition points have been ignited, the damage of ignition points from a subsequent activation starts at one die, as usual.

Embracing the Violent Flow

Cost: 10m, 1wp (+1a); **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Dual, Signature (Water)
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's violent prowess is fluid and formless, matched only by that of her weapon — the water itself. As long as she's within short range of a large source of water such as a river or a cistern, she may draw it to herself, engulfing her body in a fluid mantle. If no source of water is available, she may expend a level of anima instead. With a thought, countless lashing tendrils of water extend to strike, allowing her to make unarmed attacks out to short range, adding a non-Charm success on both attack and damage rolls, and adding (Strength) Overwhelming. The water tendrils also grant her natural attacks the Disarming and Flexible tags (**Exalted**, p. 586). The Dragon-Blood takes no penalties for flurrying unarmed attacks with other physical actions using the tendrils, such as scaling a palace's walls or using a feat of strength to lift a portcullis.

This Charm is compatible with Martial Arts styles that use unarmed attacks.

Body of Deadly Thorns

Cost: 10m, 1a, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Wood)
Duration: Until the grapple ends
Prerequisite Charms: None

As the Dragon-Blood seizes her foe, she draws her anima banner into her body and lets it bloom from her limbs into a hedge of barbed thorns, skewering and impaling her victim. She makes a grapple gambit, doubling 9s on both the attack roll and the control roll. The thorns burrow into her foe's flesh as she wrestles him, allowing her to combine a restrain action with a **decisive** savaging attack against him on each round of the clinch. Additionally, the thorns deflect attacks away from her, negating the grappling-induced Defense penalty to her Parry and granting her bonus soak equal to the successes she rolled on the (Strength + Brawl) roll to establish control of the clinch. This counts as soak from armor, and doesn't stack with any armor she's wearing.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by incapacitating a nontrivial foe by landing a **decisive** savaging attack, slam, or throw against him.

Become the Wave

Cost: 2m, 2i; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Perilous, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Hammering Wave Technique

The Dragon-Blood lunges for a foe in the same instant that her ally forces him off guard with a feint or harrying strike, turning her ally's stillness into her speed. Upon receiving the benefit of a successful distract gambit from an ally who hasn't used his movement action, the Dragon-Blood may reflexively leap one range band towards the gambit's victim. If she's already in close range with another enemy, she must reflexively roll to disengage in order to take this reflexive movement. This doesn't count as her movement for the round, but it *does* count as the movement action of her ally.

Swift-Striking Tide

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Become the Wave

The Dragon-Blood's fluid offense constantly tests her enemy's guard, waiting for him to show weakness. At the opportune moment, she flows into a deadly swift strike. Once per round, if an ally uses a distract gambit to benefit the Dragon-Blood, she may reflexively make a **decisive** attack against the gambit's target. This doesn't count as her attack for the round.

Waves Swallow the Mountain

Cost: 2m, 1i, one round of control; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Water
Duration: One tick
Prerequisite Charms: Currents Sweep to Sea

The Dragon-Blood uses her hold over an enemy to wear down his defenses, leaving him vulnerable to attack. She expends one round of control over a grapple to set the clinched foe's Hardness to 0 for a single tick.

Fist-Spinning Maelstrom

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Water, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Hammering Wave Technique

The Dragon-Blood moves with the fury of the waves to strike away enemies on all sides. She rolls a single **withering** attack against up to (Essence) enemies in close range, moving through a fluid sequence of blows to attack and pummel them all. If her Initiative is higher than that of at least one target, she can instead attack (Essence + 2) enemies.

She rolls **withering** damage separately against each enemy, but only gains Initiative from the single highest damage roll. If she crashes at least one foe, a geyser of water erupts from beneath her feet and traces the arc of her blows, knocking all crashed enemies hit by the attack prone.

Drowning Embrace

Cost: 5m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Dual, Perilous, Water
Duration: Until the grapple ends
Prerequisite Charms: Waves Swallow the Mountain

The Dragon-Blood wrestles foes into submission, breaking them with a powerful hold whose intensity and pressure can drown men on dry land. Upon successfully grappling a crashed foe, or crashing an enemy she's clinching with a **withering** savaging attack, she may overflow his lungs with Water Essence, causing him to begin asphyxiating (**Exalted**, p. 232) and subtracting one success from all actions he takes for as long as she maintains control over the grapple. Even if he recovers from crash, he continues to drown. She may choose not to kill a foe who runs out of breath, leaving him unconscious instead.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by successfully grappling a nontrivial enemy with 5+ threshold successes on the control roll.

Hanging Tree Technique

Cost: 10m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Until the grapple ends
Prerequisite Charms: Entangling Roots Embrace, Fist-Spinning Maelstrom

Arms and legs twist as the Dragon-Blood throws her entire body into an attack, lunging with each of her limbs to grapple and pin down foes. She makes a grapple gambit against up to (Dexterity) enemies in close range, clinching one or even two foes at a time with each of her limbs. She makes only one attack roll and Initiative roll against all enemies, but rolls (Strength + Brawl) separately to establish control against each enemy.

On each turn of the clinch, she may either restrain all foes, expending two rounds of control over each of them; make a **withering** or **decisive** savaging attack against all foes; or release all foes. **Withering** savaging attacks use a single attack roll, but roll damage separately against each grappled foe. Only the single highest **withering** damage roll awards Initiative to the Dragon-Blood, although she can receive Initiative Breaks for crashing multiple foes. **Decisive** savaging attacks divide her Initiative evenly among all foes (rounded up) to determine the damage rolled against them, ignoring Hardness.

Smashing Tidal Wave Technique

Cost: —(8m, 1a, 1wp, expend Water Aura); **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 5
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Drowning Embrace

The Dragon-Blood pins her foes beneath the weight of the seas, crushing them under a torrential cascade of water. When she uses Currents Sweep to Sea, she may unleash a flood of water from the depths of her anima banner, amplifying the tendril of water she creates with both intense pressure and incredible size. She can grapple a foe within long range, and doubles 8s on the control roll.

If succcessful, the Dragon-Blood may choose to drag the clinched enemy one or two range bands towards her, pinning him beneath a high-pressure downpour or entangling him in giant coils of water. She still takes the normal penalties of grappling regardless of the distance between them, as she must maintain focus to control it. Restraining him with this mighty downpour only costs one round of control. If she savages, slams, or throws him, she adds (Strength/2, rounded up) automatic successes on **withering** damage rolls, or (Strength/2, rounded up) dice on **decisive** damage rolls.

Bureaucracy

Geese-Flying-South Administration

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Essence of a bureaucracy is flow — the flow of a leader's orders to her subordinates, the flow of wealth in and out, the flow of information, the flow of progress and delay. The Dragon-Blood may add automatic successes to a Bureaucracy roll for two motes each, and rerolls 6s until they cease to appear.

Confluence of Savant Thought

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's understanding of bureaucracies is vast, encompassing the myriad ways in which mercantile and administrative tasks pool and eddy like water. She rolls (Intelligence + Bureaucracy) to introduce a fact (**Exalted**, p. 237) about a bureaucratic or mercantile organization that she belongs to or is familiar with.

Finding The Water's Depths

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood attunes her senses to the tides of desire that govern markets and negotiations. She reads a character's intentions with (Perception + Bureaucracy) to determine what it would take to entice him to perform a specific course of action with a bargain roll (**Exalted,** p. 216). Success reveals a general description of the quantity and quality of payment, monetary or non-monetary, that he'd consider for a bargain roll — for example, "he'd do this for free," "he'll demand exorbitantly high payment for it," or "he wants you to owe him a favor." A successful roll also reveals his strongest Intimacy relating to the price he'd place on the deal, if any.

Testing the Waters

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Finding the Water's Depths

A slick political dealer, the Dragon-Blood understands the motives of officials better than they do themselves. This Charm functions identically to its prerequisite, except that a successful read intentions reveals how the target plans to vote on an upcoming issue before a governmental, bureaucratic, or mercantile organization. It also reveals the strongest Intimacy motiving that character's vote, if any.

A Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3 repurchase of this Charm lets the Dragon-Blood pay an additional point of Willpower once per scene to apply her read intentions roll against the Guile of all voting characters she can perceive. She doesn't learn Intimacies for each individual voter whose Guile is beaten, but is able to discern the major factions within the group and which one each character whose Guile she beat belongs to, as well as an Intimacy driving each faction's agenda.

Benevolent Master's Blessing

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood marks a subordinate with a sign of her authority, often handing out a badge or token, or leaving a swirling black tattoo of Water Essence on his hand. If the subordinate presents the token or mark,

all who see it know instinctively that he's the Dragon-Blood's servant (or, if they don't know of her, the servant of a Prince of the Earth), and that he carries authority to negotiate on her behalf. In addition, that character gains a temporary Bureaucracy specialty that applies on rolls to follow the Dragon-Blood's orders or pursue her best interests.

Dashing Brook Method

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: One task
Prerequisite Charms: Benevolent Master's Blessing

The Dragon-Blood clears the obstacles that impede the flow of her bureaucracy, channeling its labor into efficacious speed. This Charm enhances a project (**Exalted**, p. 226) or other bureaucratic task, multiplying the speed at which the organization makes progress by (highest of Charisma, Manipulation, or Intelligence). The Attribute she uses must match her leadership style. This Charm cannot speed a bureaucratic task that would normally take more than (Essence) years.

Unshakable Mountain Management

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Testing the Waters

By her very presence, the Dragon-Blood guards the harmonious stability of bureaucracy against the disharmony of corruption and disloyalty. She may invoke this Charm whenever she perceives another character's social influence that would cause characters to betray or sabotage an organization that they belong to, or abuse a position of power they hold within an organization. All members of that organization within medium range targeted by the influence gain +1 Resolve against it.

In Earth Aura, this bonus rises to (the Dragon-Blood's Essence/2, rounded up).

Water-Stained Ledger

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Confluence of Savant Thought

The Dragon-Blood's reckoning of accounts is as perfect as the calm of a still lake. Within its depths, she conceals bureaucratic intrigue and financial maneuvering. She rerolls 5s and 6s until they cease to appear on a Larceny roll to conceal evidence (**Exalted**, p. 224) of bureaucratic misdoing such as embezzlement or abuse of authority. A character attempting to discover the hidden evidence must roll (Perception + [lower of Bureaucracy or Investigation]).

Shells-for-Silver Ruse

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Water
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Water-Stained Ledger

The Dragon-Blood adopts a deceptive bearing that suggests illusory wealth or squalor, deceiving thieves and merchants alike. She can use this Charm to conceal her economic status in one of two following ways. She can take advantage of this deception with social influence as though it were a Minor Intimacy.

Poverty: Those who see the Dragon-Blooded perceive her as utterly destitute, with Resources 0. If she's wearing finery, exquisite jewels, artifact weapons, or anything else incompatible with total poverty, her Resources rating instead appears one dot lower than it actually is.

Wealth: Those who see the Dragon-Blooded assume that her Resources rating is one dot higher than it actually is. If she has Resources 5, she appears wealthy beyond all dreams of avarice.

Thoughtful Gift Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Finding the Water's Depths

The Dragon-Blood has an uncanny sense for the perfect gift, favor, or bribe to grease the wheels of a bureaucracy. To use this Charm, she must first use Finding the Water's Depths to confirm that an offer she intends to make will be acceptable to her target. She doubles 9s on the bargain roll, which can be made with any social Ability.

Humble Exemplar Attitude

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple



Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: One task
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood evinces the conviction of her beliefs through work, encouraging her subordinates to follow her example and inspiring shame in those who fail to live up to her standards. She undertakes a project (**Exalted**, p. 226) or bureaucratic task that upholds one of her Defining Principles, adding (Essence) non-Charm bonus dice on all Bureaucracy rolls that she makes as part of the task.

Once the project begins, the Dragon-Blood's Principle becomes apparent to all members of the organization as though they'd read her intentions. Upon the completion of the project, she gains three points of Willpower and instills her Principle by example in all organization members as a Major Intimacy. Subordinates cannot apply their Resolve or spend Willpower to resist this influence — the only way to avoid it is to resign their membership in the group.

Graven Stone Edict

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

Words written in stone aren't easily disobeyed. The Dragon-Blood imposes a binding edict, engraved onto a stone tablet or monument, upon an organization that she either leads or holds rulemaking authority within. The rule she imposes must be a singular task or requirement, and must be related to that group's bureaucratic function. The prohibition or requirement carves out a place in the memories of the organization's members. When a character is faced with the prospect of breaking the rule, it becomes an overwhelming duty, forcing him to comply unless he enters a Decision Point and calls on a Defining Intimacy to spend one Willpower resisting this influence. Once a character has resisted, he's freed from the compulsion to obey that particular rule. Characters may also disobey the rule if they resign or otherwise formally leave the group.

The promulgation of harmonious rules with this Charm fortifies a bureaucracy against the influence of the Wyld. Any member of an organization acting in his official capacity is treated as wielding or touching iron so long as he abides by the Dragon-Blood's edict.

Seething Firebreak Technique

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Fire)

Duration: One story
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood fans the flames of dissent and unrest within her own organization, forcing traitors and conspiracies out into the open. She makes passionate speeches, spreads propaganda, or carries out strict disciplinary measures, rolling (Charisma + Bureaucracy) with double 9s. Any member of the organization whose Resolve is beaten is suffused with Fire Essence. For loyal members, this manifests as a passionate enjoyment of their work. Conversely, members who plan to betray the organization or conspire against its leadership experience intense passion surrounding their dissent. They're unable to take covert or stealthy action against the group, its membership, or its leaders — instead, their passions drive them to be open, overt, and honest. They can enter a Decision Point and call on a Defining Intimacy that justifies discretion to pay one Willpower to resist for the rest of the story.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by completing a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) through bureaucratic means.

Distraction of the Babbling Brook

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Thoughtful Gift Technique

Suffusing her language with the fluid ambiguity of water, the Dragon-Blood ensnares business partners or customers in labyrinthine contracts. She makes a bargain roll using any social Ability, concealing one condition or requirement of the deal from the target. If the deal is verbal, the hidden words slip past the target's attention; if it's written, his eye slips over the obfuscated terms. Because the target isn't consciously aware of this part of the bargain, he cannot call on Intimacies that oppose it to bolster his Resolve or spend Willpower in Decision Points. Similarly, his Resolve isn't penalized by Intimacies that support it.

The Dragon-Blood's influence roll subtracts a number of *successes* based on the severity of the clause. If it's comparable to an inconvenient task (**Exalted**, p. 216), such as a hidden fee, it suffers –1 success. If it's a serious task, such as committing a serious crime or making payments that risk bankrupting the target, it suffers –3 successes. If it's a life-changing task, such as convincing someone to sell himself into slavery or trading a queen a horse for her palace, it suffers –5 successes.

The target may pay three Willpower to resist, becoming aware of the hidden clause and able to call on any applicable Intimacies in response. Resisting renders him immune to this Charm for the next (his Essence + Integrity) days. Otherwise, he's bound to the term — once he becomes aware of it, his mind rationalizes an explanation for how he could have accepted it voluntarily and why he must honor it, despite having no memory of doing so. He must comply with the bargain, no matter how harsh, unless another character overturns the Dragon-Blood's influence (**Exalted**, p. 221).

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by achieving a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134) through negotiation, dealmaking, or other bureaucratic means.

One Forest, Many Trees

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute, Signature (Wood)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood cultivates interpersonal relationships and spreads her roots through society. This Charm depicts an Exalt whose mastery of networking ensures that she always knows just the person for a job. Once per story, she may make an (Essence + Bureaucracy) roll that cannot be enhanced by magic. She immediately gains a number of dots equal to the successes on the roll to divide among the following Merits. These Merits depict new Storyteller characters who have some past entanglement with the Dragon-Blood, perhaps impressed by her bureaucratic prowess or indebted to her for a past favor.

Allies: The Dragon-Blood calls on the assistance of a noteworthy character.

Contacts: The Dragon-Blood gets in touch with a character that can provide access to the intelligence gathered by a group of contacts.

Followers: The Dragon-Blood recruits a large volunteer workforce.

Mentor: The Dragon-Blood requests the guidance of a more experienced character.

Retainers: The Dragon-Blood obtains the services of mortal experts.

At the end of the story, the Merits are lost as the recruited characters return to their lives, unless the Storyteller deems that the Dragon-Blood's treatment

of them qualifies to retain them long-term as Story Merits (**Exalted**, p. 158).

Bestow the Saffron Mantle

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Benevolent Master's Blessing

The Dragon-Blood bestows her favor upon one of her subordinates with a gift, kiss, promotion, or the like, promoting him to her proxy in all bureaucratic matters. This must be done in person. She insinuates her own Essence into his, allowing him to call upon her judgment and expertise. To become a proxy, the subordinate must have a positive Major or Defining Tie toward the Dragon-Blood. He gains the following benefits:

- He gains the benefits of Benevolent Master's Blessing at no additional cost.
- He intuitively understands how the Dragon-Blood would act in any bureaucratic context or market venue. This doesn't increase his Bureaucracy rating, but it does allow him to know what the Dragon-Blood would ask him to do in such a situation.
- He adds +1 to the Resolve bonus against contrary social influence provided by his Tie towards the Dragon-Blood. Social influence cannot completely erode his Intimacy, although it can weaken its intensity.
- Once per day, he may ignore one point of the Willpower cost to resist any influence opposed to his Tie.
- If the Dragon-Blood knows Sense-Riding Technique, she waives its Willpower cost when she rides her proxy's senses, and the maximum range of the Charm is extended to (Essence x50) miles.

Blazing Hoard of Hesiesh

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Thoughtful Gift Technique

Flaunting her wealth, the Dragon-Blood cows those beneath her into submission. She gains (her Resources – target's Resources) non-Charm bonus dice on instill, persuade, and threaten rolls made with any Ability. This bonus doesn't stack with any bonus dice from her Appearance (**Exalted**, p. 218).

If the Dragon-Blood uses Shells-for-Silver Ruse to increase her apparent Resources, this increases her rating, up to a maximum of Resources 6, for this Charm's purposes.

Following the River's Course

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dashing Brook Method, Finding the Water's Depths

It's easier to understand the tides that bring every piece of flotsam and jetsam than to understand the forces that govern the flow of money, but the Dragon-Blood does both. When she receives payment as part of an economic transaction, she gains a flash of insight into the flow that brought it to her, rolling read intentions with (Perception + Bureaucracy), doubling 9s. If she's paid in hard currency or physical goods, success lets her discern how the payer obtained them. If she takes payment on credit, success lets her evaluate the actual quality of the payer's credit and whether or not he intends to fulfill his promises.

A Bureaucracy 5, Essence 4 repurchase allows the Dragon-Blood to use this Charm on any payment she observes being made.

Thrashing Carp Serenade

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dashing Brook Method, Water-Stained Ledger

The Dragon-Blood impedes the flow of an enemy organization with frightening efficacy, whether by sabotaging a rival's commercial contracts, sowing discord among ministers of a foreign government, or bringing about a bureaucracy's ruin from within. After at least one scene spent sabotaging a project or bureaucratic task, she rolls ([Manipulation or Intelligence] + Bureaucracy) with double 9s. The difficulty is (the project leader's higher of Essence or Bureaucracy). A successful roll doubles the time needed to complete the project. Every threshold success increases this multiplier by one, up to a maximum of (the Dragon-Blood's Essence). This can be negated by magic such as Bureau-Reforming Kata (**Exalted**, p. 286).

The Dragon-Blood cannot use Thrashing Carp Serenade against the same organization more than once per story, even if its projects are led by different characters.

Sea-Changed Secrets

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Water-Stained Ledger

Dredging up her foe's deepest secrets, the Dragon-Blood confronts him with a secret he'd thought forgotten. The Dragon-Blood rerolls non-1 failures on a threaten roll made with any social Ability to intimidate a character with blackmail, compromising information, or evidence of his criminal misdeeds. Resisting this influence requires entering a Decision Point and calling on a Major or Defining Intimacy that supports refusing to be blackmailed.

Sprouting Bamboo Cultivation

Cost: 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dashing Brook Method

The Dragon-Blood cultivates the growth of an organization as though it were her garden. This Charm supplements any project or other bureaucratic task that has the primary goal of amassing wealth or manpower: recruiting a work force, collecting taxes, selling goods at market, and similar tasks. She doubles 8s on any Bureaucracy roll necessary to complete the project, and gains five motes that can be spent on other Charms that enhance it.

Drowning in Negotiation Style

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Distraction of the Babbling Brook

Calling upon the endless Essence of the depths to stand witness to a contract, the Dragon-Blood binds all parties to it to their words. This Charm may be invoked when the Dragon-Blood witnesses a verbal or written contract being made. If any party to the contract willingly violates it, he drowns on dry land as water appears inside his mouth and lungs. This deals (Essence x2) dice of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness, and leaves ink-black stains dripping from his mouth that are visible only to the Dragon-Blood and other parties to the sanctified contract, marking him as an oathbreaker for (Dragon-Blood's Essence + Charisma) years.

Flowing Authority Insinuation

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Water
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Thrashing Carp Serenade

Creation itself confers its authority upon the Dragon-Blood, turning even the most meager scrap of paper into proof of her bureaucratic mandate. She may invoke this Charm whenever someone challenges her authority to be in a location, access an organization's resources, or take some form of bureaucratic action. She rolls (Manipulation + Bureaucracy) as she brandishes a blank sheet of paper or other putative token of authority, suffusing it with Water Essence. If the roll suffers any penalties due to her looking out of place, those penalties subtract successes instead of dice.

A character whose Resolve is beaten by this roll perceives this document as bureaucratic credentials or permission from an authority he respects. This authorization counts as a Major Intimacy when it's exploited. In addition to functioning as an Intimacy, it also prevents affected characters from challenging the Dragon-Blood over the same reason for the remainder of the scene, including through social influence. Resisting this effect requires a character to enter a Decision Point, invoking at least a Major Intimacy and paying three Willpower to resist.

Sowing the Dragon's Teeth

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Sprouting Bamboo Cultivation

Battles may be won by force of arms, but wars are won with logistics. To use this Charm, the Dragon-Blood must have first completed a challenging project relating to establishing supply lines, stocking supplies, or other logistical matters. When she or one of her allies makes a Strategic Maneuver roll that somehow benefits from that project, such as using supply lines to keep an army fed on a long march, she may use this Charm before the roll to grant it double 8s.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by completing a project or other bureaucratic task that fulfills a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134).

Craft

Masterful Dragon-Artisan Expertise

Cost: 1m per die; **Mins:** Craft 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Earth, Excellency
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood labors with hands steady as stone. She may add bonus dice to a Craft roll for one mote each. If she's awarded a stunt on the supplemented roll, she gains one silver craft point, maximum one per scene.

Stone-Carving Fingers

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Earth
Duration: One project
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood can split stone with her bare hands, delivering a series of precise strikes that carve it from within, shaping it to her will. She may undertake a basic or major project to craft stone or earth (but not metal) without needing tools or a workshop. If she uses tools to assist the project, such as striking a boulder with a chisel, she multiplies the rate at which she works by (Essence + 1), reducing the time to complete the project to a minimum of one minute.

Flaw-Finding Examination

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's careful scrutiny discerns any flaw that undermines the harmony of a project's design. She undertakes either a basic or major repair project (**Exalted**, pp. 242-243) or a feat of demolition, making a (Perception + applicable Craft) roll before doing so. She multiplies the rate at which she works by her successes, and gains a temporary Craft or Athletics specialty that lasts until the task is completed, which she adds to her total Strength to determine what feats she may attempt. If she already has an applicable specialty, she converts the die it adds to a non-Charm success. If she also uses Stone-Carving Fingers to speed a repair project, her total speed is multiplied by (her Essence + rolled successes).



Shaping Hand Style

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 2
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Stone-Carving Fingers

The Dragon-Blood may use Stone-Carving Fingers to manipulate the raw materials of any Craft that she has 4+ dots in. Such uses take on an elemental aspect determined by the Storyteller based on the nature of the project: Forging metal is fire-aspected, as furnace-heat radiates from the Exalt's bare hands; spinning silk is wood-aspected; carving an ice sculpture is air-aspected; mixing an alchemical reagent by hand is water-aspected; and so on. This doesn't apply to crafting artifacts or manses.

Stones-from-Rubble Restoration

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Earth
Duration: One project
Prerequisite Charms: Flaw-Finding Examination

The Dragon-Blood knows where each fragment of a broken object belongs. After using Flaw-Finding Examination on a damaged object, she may use this Charm to supplement each roll of a repair project with (Essence/2, round down) non-Charm successes.

Touch of Unmaking

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Stones-from-Rubble Restoration

Tracing her fingers over an object's surface, the Dragon-Blood discerns its weakest point. After using Flaw-Finding Examination on an object, she may use this Charm to supplement a feat of demolition, adding (an applicable Craft/2, round up) to her effective Strength rating to determine if she may attempt the feat (**Exalted**, p. 229). If this would raise her above the feat's Strength minimum, any excess points are instead added as non-Charm dice on her roll.

Flawless Facet Realization

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Shaping Hand Style

Honing her skill with a gem-cutter's precision, the Dragon-Blood perfects her handiwork. She rerolls (Essence) non-1 failures on a supplemented roll. For each rerolled die that shows a success, the Dragon-Blood gains one silver craft point in addition to any rewards from the project itself. Rerolled dice that show 10s grant gold craft points instead.

Strike the Dragon-Anvil

Cost: 1m, 1wp, 1gxp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flawless Facet Realization

The Dragon-Blood's forge imparts a portion of her mighty Essence into the outcome of her craftsmanship, suffusing it with perfection. She doubles 9s on a single Craft roll.

An Essence 5 repurchase of this Charm allows the Exalt to use it for ten motes, one Willpower, and one white craft point to double 8s on a Craft roll.

Passion-Inflaming Artistry

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's labors are suffused with the passionate Essence of fire. She undertakes a basic or major project to craft a painting, sculpture, meal, or similar art object that's primarily aesthetic or ornamental in function. Major projects benefit from (Essence) non-Charm dice. She chooses an emotion to be conveyed through her craftsmanship, and treats the Craft roll used to complete the project as an inspire roll (**Exalted**, p. 217) to spread that emotion to any character who engages with the object if his Resolve is beaten by her successes — a painting of a historic battle could inspire courage in those who gaze upon it, while a bowl of noodles flavored with sorrow could bring tears to the eyes of anyone who eats it. This effect lasts (Essence + Charisma) days from the project's completion, after which its supernatural potency fades.

Talents-to-Obols Refinement

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Craft 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth

Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood may exchange her craft points for those of a lower tier: she may convert one white craft point to two gold craft points, or one gold craft point to two silver craft points. Each use can only convert one type of craft points, although there's no limit on how many can be exchanged.

At Essence 4, the Exalt may pay one Willpower when she uses this Charm to convert silver craft points into gold craft points at a four-to-one ratio, although she cannot create white craft points.

Ephemeral Form Composition

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: One project
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood pores over her blueprints, drawing the lines up from the page with wisps of Air Essence into a shimmering three-dimensional mirage of anima. She can refine and perfect this ephemeral design with thought alone, her creativity unbounded by the material world's limitations. This Charm can be used before beginning a major, superior, or legendary project. The Dragon-Blood must spend ten hours preparing the design in her workshop, rolling (Intelligence + Craft). The craft point cost to complete the project or roll an interval is reduced based on its tier and her rolled successes, as follows:

Major: Rolling to complete the project costs (10 – successes) silver craft points, minimum one.

Superior: Rolling an interval costs (10 – [successes/2, round down]) gold craft points, minimum one.

Legendary: Rolling an interval costs (10 – [successes/4, round down]) white craft points, minimum one.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding a Defining Principle by either completing a crafting project or giving or selling an object the Exalt has crafted to another character.

Eternal Omphalos Forge

Cost: 15m, 1wp, 15gxp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: One project
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood feels the world turn on its axis as she labors over the forge, affirming her will and genius with every fall of her hammer as she shapes a world-shaking treasure. She begins a superior or legendary project, adding one to the project's terminus. If the Exalt completes the project before its terminus has elapsed, she gains one point of Willpower for each unused interval, in addition to her normal craft point reward. This can raise her above her permanent Willpower.

This Charm can only be used once per story. The Exalt may reset it by spending five white points.

Blazing Dragon-Smith Arete

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Fire)
Duration: One project
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's genius is explosive, as powerful and dangerous as an erupting volcano. She undertakes a superior or legendary project, enhancing all of her rolls with (Essence) non-Charm bonus dice and rolling a non-Charm die for each 10, but at the cost of lowering the project's terminus by one. If she completes the project successfully, she gains one white point in addition to the normal crafting reward.

Fortune-from-Flotsam Ingenuity

Cost: 15m, 1wp, 5sxp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's fluid ingenuity adapts to her circumstances, turning whatever materials she can find into exactly what she needs. This Charm is a (Wits + Craft) roll to undertake a major project in a matter of seconds, jury-rigging it together. It can even be used in combat on the Dragon-Blood's turn. The Charm's cost replaces the normal craft point cost of the project. The Dragon-Blood can accomplish projects that would normally be impossible in the brief instant she uses this Charm, whether it's fletching enough arrows to supply an army in a whirling maelstrom of craftsmanship, or lashing together a raft from palm trees in a single flowing motion.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset when the Dragon-Blood or one of her Hearthmates achieves a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) with the assistance of an object that the Exalt crafted this story.

Imago-Hatching Realization

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 5gxp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Cultivating the Essence of her work as though it were a living thing, the Dragon-Blood guides its growth from raw materials into a fully realized whole, letting the project flourish in accordance with its own strengths. She undertakes a Craft project, and may reroll all dice that show non-1 failures on a single roll of that project. If this increases the successes on the roll, the project manifests a single unexpected but useful feature determined by the Storyteller. A longbow might have the perfect composition to also function as an exceptional flute; a river-spanning bridge might attract local honeybees to build hives underneath it. The Storyteller might choose to hold off on determining this quality, instead revealing it later at a dramatically appropriate future time.

On an artifact, this introduces a new but related theme from which Evocations can be drawn — the Exalt might discover that a white jade daiklave she forged to slay raksha also has an unexpected proclivity for controlling cold iron through magnetic force.

This Charm can only be used once per story. The Exalt may reset it by spending one white craft point, though she can still only use it once per project.

Forge-Hand Prana

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: One project *or* One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Shaping Hand Style, Touch of Unmaking

The Dragon-Blood takes the destructive power of fire into her own hands, tempering it so that it will burn only what she wishes it to. She needs no tools to undertake any basic or major project for which a forge or similar source of flame would normally be used, such as smithing a sword or fire-hardening a wooden spear, as well as superior projects to create artifacts from jade (but not other magical materials). The rate at which the Exalt completes work on the project is multiplied by (Essence/2, round up).

Alternatively, the Dragon-Blood may use this Charm to channel the blaze through her hands offensively for one scene. Any barehanded attacks she makes using Brawl or Martial Arts set their Overwhelming value to (Essence/2, round up), and double 10s on **decisive** damage rolls.

Stoking Inspiration's Forge

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Talents-to-Obols Refinement

The Dragon-Blood husbands the flame of her genius, sparking greater heights of creativity. Whenever she'd gain silver craft points as a reward for completing a crafting project or at the end of a story in which she completed a project (**Exalted**, p. 240), she may instead roll that many dice, rolling an additional die for each 10. 10s grant two silver and one gold craft point; 9s grant one silver and one gold craft point; 8s and 7s grant one silver craft point each.

Dodge

Threshold Warding Stance

Cost: 2m per +1 Evasion *or* success; **Mins:** Dodge 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental *or* Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Fire, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's body is as light as flames, skimming over the ground as she moves to evade. She may raise her Evasion for two motes per point, or add automatic successes on a Dodge roll for two motes each. She ignores environmental penalties to her Evasion or to the Dodge roll.

Flickering Candle Meditation

Cost: 1m, 1i; **Mins:** Dodge 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire, Perilous, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood dances like a flame around the flaws in her enemy's attack. (Essence) 1s on her enemy's attack roll allow her to ignore that many points of penalty to her Evasion.

Heat-of-Battle Advance

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Dodge 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None



When the Dragon-Blood recedes from her enemies, she doesn't retreat, but rather burns a new course. She waives the Initiative cost of disengaging as long as it moves her into close range with another, nontrivial opponent, and rolls an additional non-Charm die for each 10 she rolls.

Hopping Firecracker Evasion

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Dodge 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire, Perilous, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flickering Candle Meditation

The Dragon-Blood's feet strike sparks from the ground, finally igniting in an explosive leap When she dodges an attack that misses her Evasion by at least two successes, she may move one range band in any direction.

Virtuous Negation Defense

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Uniform, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Hopping Firecracker Evasion

The Dragon-Blood twists to interpose herself between an ally and an incoming attack to guide it off course. When an ally within close range of her is attacked, she may interpose her Evasion against that single attack as though with a defend other action (**Exalted**, p. 196). When used to protect one of the Dragon-Blood's Sworn Kin, this Charm costs only two motes.

In Wood Aura, the Dragon-Blood may protect an ally within short range once per round, reflexively moving one range band to cover him. This doesn't count as her movement action for the round.

Ember-Amid-Smoke Misdirection

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Fire, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flickering Candle Meditation

Striking at smoke only leads one closer to the flame. The Dragon-Blood gains +1 Evasion. On a successful dodge, her attacker overextends, suffering (Essence) dice of unsoakable **withering** damage. She doesn't gain Initiative from this.

With an Essence 4 repurchase, the Dragon-Blood may expend her Fire Aura after successfully dodging to gain all Initiative lost by her attacker.

Safety Among Enemies

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

Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Perilous, Signature (Air)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

As the Dragon-Blood spins or swoops around an attack, she twists the wind around the blow to redirect it. Successfully dodging a **decisive** attack allows her to redirect it to another character within range of the original attack. To do so, her Initiative must exceed (attacker's Initiative + new target's Initiative). The attack and all effects enhancing it are then rolled again, using the same dice pool, against its new target.

Unmoving Center Enlightenment

Cost: 5m, 1wp, expend Earth Aura; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood settles into a rooted stance of evasion through non-evasion, unleashing a seismic wave of spiritual force. It's not she who recedes, but her foes. She rolls her (Stamina + Dodge) against the Resolve of all enemies within close range as she unleashes incredible spiritual pressure. Each enemy whose Resolve is beaten must immediately make a disengage roll opposing her at a −3 penalty. On a success, an enemy must immediately use his reflexive movement to move away from the Dragon-Blood. On a failure, the only action he can take on subsequent turns is to continue disengaging from the Dragon-Blood until he succeeds, even if subsequently forced beyond close range. Characters may resist this for one Willpower and five Initiative.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless the Dragon-Blood resets it by beginning her turn at medium range or further from all enemies while in Earth Aura.

Unassailable Body of Fire

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Counterattack, Decisive-only, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Hopping Firecracker Evasion

The Dragon-Blood's body dissolves into an untouchable blaze, incinerating those who dare strike her. When she uses Hopping Firecracker Evasion to leap away from an enemy at close range, she makes an unblockable **decisive** counterattack with the flames of her leap, rolling (Wits + Dodge). The counterattack deals ([Essence + base Evasion]/2, rounded up)L damage dice, ignoring Hardness. This doesn't include her Initiative or reset her to base Initiative. An enemy that takes 3+ levels of damage from the counterattack is set ablaze, suffering (Essence) dice of lethal damage each turn until he extinguishes himself.

Flow With Strife

Cost: 3i per level of damage, expend Water Aura; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Perilous, Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's movements are fluid and shapeless, adapting to whatever force is directed against her. Even when struck she may be unscathed, flowing with her enemy's attack rather than against it. After the damage roll of a **decisive** attack that the Dragon-Blood attempted to dodge, she can use this Charm to negate damage successes at a cost of three Initiative per level of non-aggravated damage. If she completely negates the damage of an attack, it seems that she was struck, but she flows away from the attack at the last second; this counts as dodging the attack.

The Initiative cost of this Charm is discounted to two Initiative per level of damage while the Dragon-Blood is at least ankle-deep in water or fighting in driving rain.

Swaying Grass Elusion

Cost: 2i per +1 Evasion; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Perilous, Signature (Wood), Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood bends and sways under an enemy's attack, letting the force of his strike blow past her like the wind. She may raise her Evasion for two Initiative per point, and adds two to the maximum amount she may raise her Evasion with Charm bonuses (p. 162).

Upon successfully dodging an attack made by a non-trivial enemy with lower Initiative, the Dragon-Blood may expend her Wood Aura to regain half the Initiative spent on this Charm, rounded up.

Ebbing Tide Recedes

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Heat-of-Battle Advance

Like water trickling away through a drain, the Dragon-Blood extricates herself from melee. When she disengages, (Essence) 1s on her enemies' opposing rolls add that many non-Charm bonus dice to her roll.

In Water Aura, the Dragon-Blood also doubles 9s on her disengage roll.

Elusive Crosswind Defense

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Aura, Perilous, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Hopping Firecracker Evasion

The Dragon-Blood's dodge unleashes a swirling vortex of air, turning aside her enemies' arrows. She gains +1 Evasion against a ranged attack from medium range, or +2 against an attack from long or extreme range. This doesn't count as a bonus from Charms.

Bonfire Shadow Evasion

Cost: 6m, 1a; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire, Perilous, Uniform
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: Ember-Amid-Smoke Misdirection

The Dragon-Blood's evasive instincts urge her towards impossible motion, dodging her own anima banner to disperse it in a blinding flare. She must be at bonfire anima to use this Charm. When enemies with lower Initiative attack her, (Essence) 1s on their attack roll subtract successes. If this removes all of an attacker's successes or he botches, he's blinded (**Exalted**, p. 168) until the scene ends.

Coiling Dragon Dance

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Dual, Fire
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Bonfire Shadow Evasion

Subliming her presence into shadow and smoke, the Dragon-Blood dares her foes to strike her. She gains one Initiative when she successfully dodges an attack, and adds her Evasion to her soak against **withering** attacks she attempts to dodge. If a **withering** attack hits her but deals no damage, it counts as her having dodged it. Additionally, when using Flickering Candle Meditation or Bonfire Shadow Evasion, she counts her attackers' 2s as well as 1s, although the maximum remains unchanged.

Elusive Dragon-God Dispersion

Cost: —; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 5
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charm: Unassailable Body of Fire

The Dragon-Blood unleashes a seething furor of elemental Essence in her wake, forcing her enemies to plunge through flames, brambles, storms, and all Creation's fury in pursuit of her. She may use Unassailable Body of Fire while in any Elemental Aura, changing the aspects of that Charm and Hopping Firecracker Evasion to match her Aura and enhancing her counterattack based on its element.

Air: The Dragon-Blood dissolves into gusting wind. As long as she deals any damage, she may force the enemy to move one range band horizontally in any direction.

Earth: The Dragon-Blood counterattacks with a blast of sand, sediment, or dust, adding one bonus success to the damage roll. On a successful attack, this either knocks her enemy prone or blinds him (**Exalted**, p. 168) until he spends his whole turn clearing his eyes.

Fire: The Dragon-Blood doubles 10s on the **decisive** damage roll.

Water: The Dragon-Blood becomes a torrent of water in motion, knocking her enemy off balance. The counterattack deals bashing damage, and if it hits, her attacker takes a −3 penalty on all physical rolls for his next three turns.

Wood: The Dragon-Blood counterattacks with tangling brambles that deal no damage, but instead grapple her attacker on a hit without need for an Initiative roll. The brambles use the Dragon-Blood's (Stamina + Dodge) to establish control of the grapple, and can only take restrain actions. The Dragon-Blood can act normally while the brambles maintain the clinch.

Integrity

Granite Curtain of Serenity

Cost: 2m per +1 Resolve *or* success; **Mins:** Integrity 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental *or* Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Earth, Excellency
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Taking on the stoicism of stone, the Dragon-Blood stands unmoved by honeyed words or ferocious threats. She may raise her Resolve or add automatic successes to an Integrity roll for two motes each. In addition, she ignores a single point of penalty from wounds, deprivation, or poison.

Frozen Heart Prana

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Integrity 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Icy reason prevails over specious arguments or seductive wiles. The Dragon-Blood may use Intelligence in place of Wits to calculate her Resolve against a single influence roll. In addition, the opposing character must compare his Appearance to the highest of her Intelligence, Lore, or Resolve to determine how many bonus dice it adds to his influence roll (**Exalted**, p. 218).

Slippery Thoughts Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Integrity 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

A consummate liar, the Dragon-Blood deftly negotiates intrigues and galas. She may use Manipulation in place of Wits to calculate her Resolve against a single influence roll. Alternatively, she may substitute her Manipulation-based Resolve for her Guile against a single roll.

Oath of the Ten Thousand Dragons

Cost: 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood swears a vow of personal fealty to a character she holds a Tie of loyalty towards, or swears to complete a task at the request of such a character. She gains +2 Resolve against any influence that would weaken or alter that Tie (if she promised personal loyalty), or that would dissuade her from completing the task.

This Charm can only be used once per story. If the Dragon-Blood maintains it through multiple stories, she cannot use it again until she's ended it and a new story begins.

Heart-Hardening Meditation

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Integrity 2, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The mountain sheds no tears for those who die upon it. The Dragon-Blood gains +2 Resolve against inspire rolls, as well as any influence that leverages either an inspired emotion or a Tie based on strong passions.

In Earth Aura, this doesn't count as a bonus from Charms.

Inviolate Dragon Spirit

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Hardening Meditation

The Dragon-Blood's mind and soul are an unassailable tower of pure will. In a Decision Point (**Exalted**, p. 219), she may call upon the same Intimacy she used to bolster her Resolve to resist that influence.

Unquenchable Battle-Passion

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Inviolate Dragon Spirit

The Dragon-Blood's fierce spirit is undaunted by threats and unmoved by pleas for mercy. Against influence that would cause her to refrain from hostilities or impair her ability to fight, she may use this Charm to automatically inspire herself (**Exalted**, p. 217) with an emotion to bolster her Resolve against the influence for one scene. If the opposing influence beats her Resolve

and she spends Willpower to resist, she gains (Essence) Initiative for each Willpower point she spends.

Chaos-Warding Prana

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: (Essence) hours
Prerequisite Charms: None

Centering her mind and spirit, the Dragon-Blood embodies the stability of the omphalos, walking unscathed through the chaos of the Wyld. She and any items she carries are impervious to physical transformation or addiction caused by Wyld exposure, as well as similar environmental effects that warp mind or body. This doesn't protect her from shaping magic used by other characters or from non-transformative perils of the Wyld.

An Integrity 5, Essence 3 repurchase lets the Dragon-Blood pay a five-mote surcharge to extend this Charm's effects to her Hearthmates out to medium range.

Ten Thousand Dragons Fight as One

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Oath of the Ten Thousand Dragons

The bellicose temperament of the Dragon-Blooded has set them against each other throughout the ages, but in times of crisis, the bonds of shared blood are stronger than any division of house against house or nation against nation. When the Exalt witnesses another Dragon-Blood in risk or danger — physical, social, or otherwise — she may use this Charm to instantly form a Minor Tie of loyalty towards him, or to strengthen such a Tie by one step. For the rest of the scene, that Tie benefits as though she'd used this Charm's prerequisite to swear an oath to assist him. If she Joins Battle or makes an influence roll in this pursuit, she adds (Intimacy) non-Charm bonus dice on the first such roll she makes.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Wound-Denying Dragon Faith

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Ten Thousand Dragons Fight as One

Unwavering in her dedication, the Dragon-Blood won't yield even to mortal injury. As long as she's striving to pursue or uphold an Intimacy to which she's sworn herself with Oath of the Ten Thousand Dragons, Ten Thousand Dragons Fight as One, or Unflagging Vengeance Meditation, she ignores up to (Intimacy/2, round down) points of wound penalties.

In Earth Aura, she ignores (Intimacy) points of wound penalties instead.

Ascendant Ideal Inspiration

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

Rising above the turmoil of the world, the Dragon-Blood dedicates herself to a Defining Principle that represents her ideals. Any character who attempts to either weaken the chosen Principle or cause the Dragon-Blood to act against it must make two separate influence rolls, using the lower result. Additionally, the Dragon-Blood doubles 9s on influence rolls with any Ability to either instill the chosen Principle in others or persuade them to act by appealing to it.

If the Dragon-Blood acts against the chosen Principle or voluntarily weakens it in any session where this Charm was used to empower it, she loses all temporary Willpower, and this Charm ends if still active. Likewise, she cannot use it to empower a Principle she's acted against or weakened earlier in the same session. If influence weakens it below Defining, this Charm ends, but the Dragon-Blood doesn't lose Willpower.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding a Defining Principle the Exalt wishes to devote herself to in a way that either fulfills a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) or makes significant narrative progress towards such a goal. If the Dragon-Blood maintains it through multiple stories, she cannot use it again until she's ended it and either a new story begins or she resets it.

Flawless Diamond Heart

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Unfaltering in her convictions, the Dragon-Blood embodies the unbreakable strength of earth. When her

Resolve is beaten by influence that opposes one of her Major or Defining Intimacies, she lowers the cost to resist by (Essence/2, round up) Willpower, minimum zero. If she enters a Decision Point, she must still call upon a valid Intimacy to use this Charm.

This Charm may only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding the Intimacy this Charm was used to protect.

Immolating Phoenix-Soul Fury

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Signature (Fire)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The soul-twisting lies of Anathema and the curses of sorcerers cannot hope to tame the boundless fire of the Dragon-Blood's heart. If a Psyche effect (**Exalted**, p. 253) would cause her to act against one of her Intimacies, she may instead use this Charm to enter a berserk state in which her will cannot be constrained. The Psyche effect is completely suppressed for the duration, but she cannot take any actions except to engage in hostilities. She may fight as best she sees fit, including using disengage actions to tactically reposition herself, but cannot withdraw from combat or accept an enemy's surrender. The only social influence she may attempt is threatening foes. If she's not in combat, then she must either devote herself entirely to seeking out a specific enemy, or provoke other characters into hostilities. She cannot end this Charm voluntarily.

If the Dragon-Blood defeats the character responsible for inflicting the Psyche effect on her while in this rage, the unnatural influence is permanently broken, and she gains two Willpower. This can raise her above her permanent Willpower.

This Charm may only be used once per story, unless reset by subsequently upholding through violence or intimidation the Intimacy it was used to protect.

Waves-Swallow-Mountains Persistence

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Against the persistence of the tides, even the mightiest arguments crumble into dust. When the Dragon-Blood asserts her Resolve against an influence roll, up to (Essence/2, round up) 1s on the opposing character's influence roll each subtract a success. If the Dragon-Blood uses this Charm multiple times in the same scene against a single character's influence, each subsequent use increases the maximum penalty by one, to a maximum of (Essence), and counts the next-highest number towards the penalty. On her second use, 1s and 2s would subtract successes; on the third, 1s, 2s, and 3s would.

This Charm can only be used against a single character each scene, although there's no limit on how many times the Dragon-Blood may use it against him.

Roots-of-the-World Meditation

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: Until meditation is completed
Prerequisite Charms: None

Communing with the endless flow of Essence through every living thing, the Dragon-Blood draws up this boundless vitality to sustain herself. She must spend (10 – Essence) hours in meditation, at the end of which she rolls (Essence + current temporary Willpower). She may spend her successes on one or more of the following:

1 Success	Heal a level of bashing or lethal damage.
1 Success	Convert a level of aggravated damage to lethal.
2 Successes	Halve the duration (round up) of a poison she suffers from.
3 Successes	Cure herself entirely of a disease or Derangement at Minor intensity.
5 Successes	Reduce a disease or Derangement from Major intensity to Minor.
7 Successes	Reduce a disease or Derangement from Defining intensity to Major.

This Charm can only be used once per story.

Thicker Than Stone

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Inviolate Dragon Spirit, Ten Thousand Dragons Fight as One

One could sooner grind a mountain to dust than turn the Dragon-Blood against her allies. Against influence that opposes one of her positive Ties to another

WHAT CAN I DO WHILE I'M MEDITATING?

When an Exalt meditates to use Charms like Fivefold Resonance Sense or Mind-Cleansing Prana (**Exalted**, p. 306), the range of actions she can take without ending her meditation is limited.

The only Physical or Social actions (based on Strength, Dexterity, Stamina, Charisma, Manipulation, or Appearance) that can be taken while meditating are those that are completely passive on the Exalt's part, like rolling Resistance to resist poison or asserting Resolve against influence. Otherwise, even reflexive actions will end meditation.

Mental actions (based on Perception, Intelligence, or Wits) are generally unrestricted. However, a meditating character cannot roll to shape sorcery or take other sorcerous actions, or any other non-reflexive action the Storyteller deems incompatible with meditation.

Dragon-Blood, a family member, or a subordinate under her command, she add (Intimacy/2, round down) Resolve as a non-Charm bonus. Successfully resisting the influence grants her a point of Willpower.

This Charm can only be used to protect a given Tie once per story.

Unflagging Vengeance Meditation

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Ten Thousand Dragons Fight as One

The Dragon-Blood swears vengeance on a character that has harmed the subject of one of her Major or Defining Intimacies, instantly forming a Major Tie of hatred towards him, or strengthening such an existing Tie by one step. She gains +2 Resolve against any influence that would weaken this Tie, or that would deter her from her chosen course of revenge. For the duration of her vendetta, she waives the cost of Uneating Earth Meditation, Unsleeping Earth Meditation, and Untiring Earth Meditation (pp. 247-248). In battle against the object of her vendetta or his allies or minions, she adds +(Intimacy) natural soak and gains (Intimacy) Hardness.

If the Dragon-Blood goes a day without pursuing her vendetta, she loses two Willpower. If she has no Willpower remaining, she suffers a level of unpreventable aggravated damage. Upon successfully concluding her vendetta to her satisfaction, she sheds the Intimacy formed by this Charm and gains two points of Willpower. This may bring her above her permanent Willpower rating.

This Charm can only be used once per story. If the Dragon-Blood maintains it through multiple stories, she cannot use it again until she's ended it and a new story begins.

The Mountain Still Stands

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Thicker Than Stone

When the Dragon-Blood successfully asserts her Resolve against influence that opposes one of her Defining Intimacies, or successfully instills a nontrivial character with one of her Defining Intimacies using any social Ability, she gains a single point of Willpower.

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Investigation

Indisputable Physical Analysis Technique

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Investigation 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood refines her attention to the pristine clarity of water, washing away false leads and red herrings. She may add automatic successes on an Investigation roll for two motes each. She rerolls 6s until they cease to appear.

Tampering-Detection Technique

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Investigation 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Even the slightest disturbance at the scene of a crime can have consequences that ripple throughout an entire investigation. Success on a case scene roll reveals whether any attempt has been made to conceal evidence (**Exalted**, p. 224), although not the identity of the character responsible.

Alternatively, this Charm can be used when the Dragon-Blood examines an item for signs of tampering. She can automatically tell if any character has used Larceny to interfere with that object in the last (Essence + Investigation) hours — picking a lock, forging credentials, hiding contraband inside a barrel, and so on. This reveals the nature of the tampering, but not the perpetrator's identity or the time it occurred.

With Investigation 4, Essence 3, the Dragon-Blooded can detect tampering that has occurred in the last (Essence + Investigation) days.

Permeating Insight

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Deceit, lies, and obfuscation won't avail fugitives from the Dragon-Blood's justice. Their sins are pellucid as crystal in her eyes. She adds (Essence) non-Charm dice on a roll to profile a character (**Exalted**, p. 225). If she succeeds, she gains a temporary Investigation specialty in the profiled character. She retains the specialty indefinitely, but may only have one specialty granted by this Charm at a time.

Scent-of-Crime Method

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Permeating Insight

Even if a murderer washes the blood from his hands, the smell of iniquity that clings to his heart draws the magistrate to him. The Dragon-Blood doubles 9s on an Awareness, Investigation, or Survival roll to detect the presence of a character that has made a Larceny roll in the last (Essence) hours. She can determine whether or not a given individual is the source of the guilt by successfully profiling him.

Heart-Maze Navigation

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Scent-of-Crime Method

The Dragon-Blood can test the composure of even the most practiced liar, discovering the path that leads to the truth. When she makes a profile character roll, her target's Guile can be penalized by any of his Intimacies that would support revealing information to the Dragon-Blood, lowering it as though it were his Resolve.

While the Dragon-Blood is in Water Aura, she can use this Charm to profile a character instantly.

Revelation-of-Associates Hunch

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Scent-of-Crime Method

Criminals surround themselves with cronies, accomplices, and hirelings like a bonfire wreathes itself in cast-off embers, leaving behind a trail for an intrepid Dragon-Blood to follow. She rolls an additional non-Charm die for each 10 on an Investigation roll. If she successfully uncovers evidence of crime, she experiences a sensation of flashing heat. Based on the intensity of this heat, she can gauge roughly how many individuals were involved — a lone offender's crime barely registers as heat at all, while a conspiracy of hundreds roars like a bonfire.

With an Investigation 5, Essence 3 repurchase of this Charm, the Dragon-Blood can detect that a character is connected to the crime with a successful profile character roll enhanced by Revelation-of-Associates Hunch, recognizing an all-too-familiar heat rising off of the suspect. This doesn't reveal the role he played in the crime.

Bloodhound's Nose Technique

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water/Wood
Duration: (Essence) days
Prerequisite Charms: Scent-of-Crime Method

The Dragon-Blood smells the sin on a criminal's back, pursuing him through city and wilderness alike by the scent of his iniquity. She makes a case scene roll with double 9s to investigate a piece of evidence. The base difficulty of this roll is 3, although the Storyteller may increase the difficulty based on the length of time since the object was left, any exposure to the elements, or supernatural concealment. On a success, the Dragon-Blood is able to pick up the scent of the character who left the evidence. If she's already familiar with that individual, she identifies him immediately.

The Dragon-Blood doubles 9s on rolls to track that character by smell, and can recognize his scent without needing an Awareness roll upon coming within medium range of him. In addition, the Storyteller may inform her player, through the Exalt's keen sense of smell, whenever a case scene or profile character roll would turn up information relevant to that character.

Tenacious Flowing Truths

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Tampering-Detection Technique

Attuning her senses to the ebb and flow of truth and lies, the Dragon-Blood can solve even the most challenging cases. She ignores (Essence) points of penalties on rolls to case a scene, as well as on Awareness rolls opposing Larceny.

In Water Aura, the Exalt also adds an automatic success on all rolls that benefit from this Charm.

Warrant of Divine Safety

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: (Essence) hours
Prerequisite Charms: None

Dragon-Blooded magistrates may bind the wicked to their words, capturing a carelessly offered oath or negotiated concession from the air into which it's spoken and sealing it with Essence. She can use this Charm to sanctify any spoken offer made to her of hospitality or of invitation into a building. The invitation must be made by a character with customary authority to do so, even if informal — a guest at a noble's court could extend hospitality to a stranger, and even a palace servant might welcome her in discreetly, but a thief or trespasser cannot give a valid invitation.

As long as the Dragon-Blood and her companions take no hostile actions, other characters cannot violate the guarantee of hospitality without incurring Heaven's wrath. An attacker's knife might be blown from his hand by a sudden gust of wind, elemental spirits might appear to restrain an oath-breaker from violence, or a bolt of lightning might strike a would-be poisoner on his way to the kitchen. Whatever consequences the Storyteller introduces should be commensurate to the violation and sufficiently dire to negate most oathbreakers' attempts at harming those under this Charm's protection. Characters with an Essence higher than the Dragon-Blood's can attempt to fight despite these consequences, but still face significant obstacles — large penalties, environmental hazards, or similar.

This protection is limited to the premises on which she was offered hospitality. It doesn't extend beyond the bounds of that location — offering no protection for those outside — and ends if the Dragon-Blood leaves the premises.

Echoes Caught in Stone

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Bloodhound's Nose Technique

Taking a piece of evidence in hand and meditating on it, the Dragon-Blood rolls (Perception + Investigation) against a difficulty equal to the number of days since that evidence was placed. On a successful roll, she hears a relevant conversation that occurred near that object sometime in the last (Essence) months. A murder weapon might reveal the last words between killer and victim, a carelessly abandoned sandal could uncover good-humored banter between thieves, or a hidden switch in a manse might repeat the words of the last person to operate it.

To use this Charm, the Dragon-Blood must first have identified an object as evidence with a case scene roll. She may listen through the conversation once, and may need to make hearing-based Awareness rolls to discern very faint or obscured sounds. She doesn't control what period

in time she listens to, but the Storyteller should select the conversation most relevant to her current investigations.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding a Defining Intimacy in the pursuit of investigating a crime or bringing a criminal to justice.

Shadow-Immolating Talon

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Maze Navigation

Her claws unsheathed, the Dragon-Blood brings fire down into the shadows and returns with truth. She can use this Charm to enhance a **decisive** attack made with any Ability, confronting her enemy with a question or accusation as she attacks. She adds (Essence) bonus dice on the attack roll and doubles 10s on the damage roll.

If the Dragon-Blood's successes on her attack roll exceeds her target's Resolve, he's compelled to answer her question or accusation honestly, without deception or half-truths. Even an enemy incapacitated by the attack has time to answer in his final moments. If this would oppose one of his Defining Intimacies, he may pay a point of Willpower to give an answer that is cryptic, half-true, or incomplete. If a character doesn't know enough to give the Dragon-Blood an answer, the attack gains no benefits and the cost of this Charm is refunded.

Shadow-Immolating Talon can only be used once per scene, unless reset by incapacitating a significant enemy that the Dragon-Blood knows has committed a crime that offends one of her Major or Defining Intimacies. It doesn't need to be reset if its target is unable to answer.

Clear Water Prana

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Tenacious Flowing Truths

As flowing water erodes dirt and stone to reveal what hides beneath, so too does the Dragon-Blood's Essence wash away attempts at concealment. The Dragon-Blood focuses her attention on a small area, out to close range from a single point. She rolls to case the scene with double 7s; this requires only one minute of concentration to complete. In addition to any clues she finds, she also detects any items that have been hidden in the area as long as she rolls a single success. This doesn't reveal items that are concealed on a character's person, or that have been lost rather than purposefully hidden. The Dragon-Blood's case scene roll is capable of contesting magical concealment such as Eye-Deceiving Camouflage (**Exalted**, p. 412).

Clear Water Prana can only be used once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) by successfully concluding an investigation or using the information gained from one.

Death-Unraveling Eye

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The ravages of decay and deterioration fall away from the Dragon-Blood's perspective as she looks on the dead through eyes lit with Wood Essence. She can examine a corpse that has been dead for no more than (Essence + Perception) years with a case scene roll, ignoring penalties from the decomposition of the corpse or any dismemberment inflicted on it.

In addition to any information turned up by the case scene roll, the Dragon-Blood is capable of mentally rewinding the corpse's decomposition, allowing her to view it as it was at the time of death and potentially identify him. She can analyze the state of the corpse's injuries or diagnose any conditions present at the time of death with a (Perception + Medicine) roll, doubling 9s.

Additionally, by viewing the entire process of the corpse's decomposition in reverse, she automatically notices any conflicts with information she's already turned up. For example, if a criminal hid a corpse in an ice chest to slow its rate of decay, the Dragon-Blood would be able to notice the slowed progress of deterioration and infer that the victim has been dead longer than he appears.

A Face in the Fog

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Revelation-of-Associates Hunch, Tenacious Flowing Truths

The Dragon-Blood draws information from the flow of Essence through a crime scene, calling up a vision of her suspect from the murky depths of the past. When she

succeeds on a case scene roll opposed by another character's attempt at concealing evidence, she may activate this Charm. For a moment, her perception of the space around her is filled with a thick, heavy mist. She catches a glimpse of the perpetrator in the mist — not enough to recognize him, but sufficient to convey some combination of height and build, gender, age, or other distinctive features.

If the Dragon-Blood encounters the perpetrator, a successful profile character roll allows her to confirm that he's the one she saw. Upon doing so, she gains a point of Willpower.

Falsehood-Unearthing Attitude

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Maze Navigation

Even an honest man can lie, and the Dragon-Blood knows why. She makes a profile character roll with (Essence/2, rounded up) bonus successes, requiring only a few seconds. Success reveals one of that character's Intimacies that he'd be willing to lie to protect. If the character has multiple such Intimacies, the Storyteller should choose the one most directly relevant to ongoing events. For example, if she profiles a character while investigating embezzlement from the Imperial Treasury, she might discover his Defining Principle of unscrupulous greed. Using it against the same character amidst a murder mystery might reveal a Tie to someone else who could be a potential suspect in the case.

Foul Stench of Lies Discernment

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Falsehood-Unearthing Attitude

To speak lies before a Dragon-Blood is to foul the air with one's breath. The Dragon-Blood may reflexively roll to profile a character when she hears him make a statement, adding (Essence) non-Charm bonus dice. A successful roll reveals whether that character was attempting to be deceptive or misleading with his statement. It doesn't reveal what parts of the statement are untrue.

Once the Dragon-Blood has caught a character lying, she waives the Willpower cost of any subsequent activations against that character in the same scene.

Scent of the Stranger's Threshold

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Bloodhound's Nose Technique

The Dragon-Blood can tell outsiders from locals with a glance, picking up on the subtle cues woven into the living web of society. While she's in a city, village, or similar settlement, she can determine whether a character she perceives lives in that location, no matter how humble the place he calls home. Outside of a settlement, she instead discerns if a character is a resident of the largest nearby settlement she's aware of. Fair Folk always appear as strangers, no matter how integrated into society they may be, but this doesn't reveal their true nature.

If the Dragon-Blood uses this Charm against a character in disguise or employing a similar magical deception, and learning his residence would compromise his ruse, she must roll (Perception + Investigation) with double 9s against his Guile. On a failed roll, the Dragon-Blood receives a result that conforms with her target's cover.

If the Dragon-Blood has memorized a character's scent with Bloodhound's Nose Technique, she can use this Charm to see if he calls a place home without needing him to be present.

Homeward Trail Discovery Method

Cost: —; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Scent of the Stranger's Threshold

Both dragons and thieves take great interest in tending to their lairs; neither can hide from the vigilant magistrate. Once the Dragon-Blood has used this Charm's prerequisite to determine that a character lives in a location, this Charm activates when she comes in sight of a door or other entryway into his home. In her perspective, the entryway briefly flashes blue with the Essence of air, automatically revealing it to her. If she rolls to pick a lock, force a door, or otherwise secure her entry by physically manipulating an entrance, she doubles 9s on the first such roll.

River-of-Memory Meditation

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: A Face in the Fog, Bloodhound's Nose Technique

The Dragon-Blood knows the criminal underworld as an angler knows the sea. After uncovering evidence or a clue that a crime has been committed, she rolls (Perception + Investigation) to correlate the details of the crime with what she knows of any character that she's successfully profiled during this story, at a difficulty of (higher of his Essence or Larceny). Success reveals whether that character has a Major or Defining Intimacy that would have supported committing the crime. This doesn't reveal what his Intimacy is or whether he's guilty, only that he has a compelling motive.

This Charm can also be used to recognize the signature method or calling card of a criminal, allowing the Dragon-Blood to instantly recognize a crime committed in the style of a character she's profiled, and to distinguish his work from that of a copycat.

Inescapable Wave Insight

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: One investigation
Prerequisite Charms: River-of-Memory Meditation

The Dragon-Blood builds her case day by day, every piece of evidence or witness questioned adding another drop to the rising tide of her investigation. As she completes her case, these waters overflow their banks in an overwhelming torrent of revelations. After uncovering a number of clues equal to (higher of her target's Essence or Larceny) through case scene rolls, profile character rolls, or roleplaying, the Dragon-Blood gains the following benefits until she's conclusively closed the case:

- She adds (Essence) bonus dice on Investigation rolls against her suspect, Awareness rolls opposing his Stealth or Larceny, and on Join Battle rolls against him.
- When she uses one or more Investigation Charms targeting him, the total Willpower cost is reduced by one point and their mote cost is muted.
- She may treat any social influence that requires her to end the investigation as unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220). Once she apprehends the suspect and decides on how best to do justice, any influence to deter her from that course is likewise unacceptable.

Inescapable Wave Insight can only be used once per story, unless reset by witnessing a serious crime that offends against one of her Defining Intimacies.

Larceny

Underground River's Flow

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Larceny 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Mute, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Adept at criminal ways, the Dragon-Blood moves effortlessly within criminal underworlds. She may add automatic successes to a Larceny roll for two motes each.

Flowing Body Disguise

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Larceny 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's subtle arts make her appearance as fluid as water. She ignores (Essence) points of penalty on a disguise roll from impersonating a specific character, or disguising herself as someone of another sex, body type, or similar physical traits.

If the Dragon-Blood impersonates one of her blood relatives, she adds a non-Charm bonus success on her roll.

Nimble Thief's Fingers

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Larceny 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

No one can follow the sinuous, fluid motions of the Dragon-Blood's hands as she enacts her sleight. She

rerolls 6s until they cease to appear on a roll to steal an object, pick a lock, poison a meal, cheat at cards, or any other use of Larceny that involves manual dexterity or sleight of hand.

Resetting Tumblers Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Mute, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood washes away all signs of her trespass, doubling 9s on a roll to conceal evidence (**Exalted**, p. 224).

Naked Thief Style

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Stackable, Water
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Resetting Tumblers Technique

The Dragon-Blood is a master of concealing small items, whether smuggling contraband through a port or concealing her lock picks in her coiffure. She rolls ([Dexterity or Appearance] + Larceny) to conceal on her body a single item small enough for her to hold in one hand, or an entire set of thieves' tools, such as a roll of lockpicking equipment or a disguise kit. Characters cannot roll (Perception + Awareness) to contest this concealment unless they're within short range of the Exalt or use magic that extends the range of their senses. She may stack up to (Dexterity) uses of this Charm to conceal multiple items.

Observer Awareness Method

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Larceny 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Even the slightest ripple of attention is perceptible to the savvy Dragon-Blood. When her suspicions are roused, she may invoke this Charm to roll (Perception + Larceny). As long as she rolls a single success, she can intuitively discern whether she's being watched and by how many people.

With Larceny 4, Essence 2, the Dragon-Blood may identify the precise location of an observer if she beats (the higher of his Stealth or Guile).



Rose-Among-Thorns Distinction

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Observer-Awareness Method

The Dragon-Blood weaves herself seamlessly into the company of thieves and gangsters. After spending at least an hour interacting with a particular criminal society, such as "the Nexus crime underworld" or "the Lintha family," that she's interacted with in the past, she may gain a temporary Larceny specialty in interacting with it. The specialty also applies on any influence rolls she makes to convince others she belongs to that criminal group or to exploit that belief. She retains the specialty indefinitely, but may only have one specialty granted by this Charm at a time.

Whispering Thief Technique

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Observer Awareness Method

A subtle current of wind carries the Dragon-Blood's words through the air. This Charm lets her throw her voice, making it seem to come from a character or object within short range. This ventriloquism supplements a single influence roll or about ten seconds' worth of ordinary dialogue. While in stealth, she can use this Charm to speak without breaking concealment.

Artful Flowing Theft

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Nimble Thief's Fingers, Observer Awareness Method

The Dragon-Blood's wandering fingers strike suddenly and without warning, wresting away treasures like a riptide. She doubles 9s on a roll to pickpocket or steal from a character, and increases the difficulty of noticing the theft for all characters other than the victim by (Essence) unless they use magic or superhuman senses to oppose her roll. Even if she fails, her target doesn't realize she was trying to steal from him unless he beats her roll with (Essence) threshold successes.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Dragon's Hidden Treasure

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Naked Thief Style

The Dragon-Blood strikes the earth or an earthen structure with precise deliberation, attuning herself to the flow of Earth Essence. She may cause a held object to vanish into soil, stone, or similar materials, submerging into them without displacing or increasing the earth. She cannot store an object in something that is smaller than it — she could hide her daiklave in a brick wall, but not in a pebble, coin, or gemstone. A second use of this Charm allows her to retrieve the embedded object.

This Charm can also be used to steal objects that other Dragon-Blooded have hidden using it. Finding the location of a hidden cache usually requires both Investigation and Awareness rolls. The hidden object also reappears, intact, if whatever it's embedded in is destroyed.

Face-Stealing Reflection

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Body Disguise, Observer Awareness Method

Flowing from one identity to another, the Dragon-Blood reflects the desires and expectations of those around her. She rolls read intentions with (Perception + Larceny). Success reveals the identity of an individual her target has a Tie towards that the Dragon-Blood knows well enough to attempt to disguise herself as, as well as the nature of the Intimacy. If no such individual exists, she learns that instead.

In Water Aura, the Exalt doubles 9s on the roll.

Bramble Purse Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: One hour
Prerequisite Charms: Observer Awareness Method

It's easier to pluck a jewel from within a briar hedge than from a Dragon-Blood's pocket. All rolls to pickpocket the Exalt or disarm her from close range lose

(Essence) dice. On a failed roll, the would-be thief suffers a single level of lethal damage as invisible thorns of Essence pierce his hand, visibly marking his crimes.

Evidence-Erasing Tide

Cost: 4m, 1a; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Resetting Tumblers Technique

The Dragon-Blood's anima banner overflows, rushing across a crime scene to wash away all signs of her presence. She completes a conceal evidence roll instantly, and adds a non-Charm bonus success.

Instant Disguise Prana

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Body Disguise

The Dragon-Blood can roll to disguise herself in a single minute, and does so without any need for makeup, props, or other equipment. If she does have suitable equipment for her disguise, her roll benefits from double 9s.

Waters-of-Honesty Method

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Observer Awareness Prana

No one outcheats a cheater. Whenever a character the Dragon-Blood can perceive attempts to cheat in a game or use the Larceny Ability, she may read intentions with (Perception + Larceny) against the perpetrator's Guile. Success reveals the identity of the perpetrator and the nature of his misdeed. On a failed roll, she's aware that some wrongdoing has occurred, but not who did it or what it was.

Disguises don't trigger this Charm, unless the Dragon-Blood witnesses a character disguising himself.

Vault-Emptying Whirlwind Heist

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: (Essence) days *or* Until crime is completed
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's foresight envisions countless possible scenarios that might occur in a crime, planning out contingencies and countermeasures for any obstacle that she can conceive. Invoking this Charm requires spending an hour casing the site of a planned heist, planning out the steps of a crime, consulting with various criminal allies, or other activities taken in preparation of a crime. She rolls (Intelligence + Larceny), banking all rolled successes.

To access the banked successes, the Dragon-Blood must begin the planned crime. She may add some or all of the banked successes as a Charm bonus on any rolls that she or another character present in the scene makes with Larceny, Investigation, Lore, or Stealth to advance the crime. Additionally, she may expend banked successes to gain the following effects:

1 Success	Retroactively leave her calling card, mark, or sign in a dramatic location.
2 Successes	Waive the anima cost of Evidence-Erasing Tide.
5 Successes	Waive the Willpower cost of Instant Disguise Prana.
7 Successes	Invoke Investigation-Deflecting Current (if she knows it) retroactively to conceal evidence of an act she's already committed in the course of the crime.

Vault-Emptying Whirlwind Heist can only be used once per story, unless reset by successfully upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy as the result of a successful crime. This can either be direct, such as stealing a jewel the Exalt has a Tie of avarice towards, or indirect, such as fencing a jewel in order to feed a community of urchins she has a Tie of compassion for.

Dragon Snatches Jewel

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's grasp is as sure as stone, capable of wresting away the weapons of the Anathema. She makes a disarm gambit from close range with (Dexterity + Larceny), doubling 9s. On a successful gambit, the Exalt may reflexively ready the disarmed weapon and is refunded the gambit's Initiative cost.

If she disarms an artifact weapon, she reflexively attunes to it at no cost for the rest of the scene. This breaks

the original character's attunement. Alternatively, she may steal a hearthstone out of the socket of an enemy's artifact, likewise stealing attunement to it for the rest of the scene.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Burning Sins Seduction

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's tongue stokes the flames of criminal passions, inciting poorly made decisions and reckless disregard for law. She makes a special inspire roll with ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Larceny) against a single character, expounding on the folly of the law or the thrill of the criminal lifestyle.

On a successful roll, the target's player chooses what emotion this influence inspires in him, as well as one of his Intimacies related to that emotion that he'd be willing to break the law for. If he has no such Intimacies, he must form a Minor Intimacy that answers this question. The action that he takes as a result of this influence (**Exalted**, p. 217) must be a crime or equivalent transgression, and must uphold the inflamed Intimacy.

Resisting this influence requires the target to enter a Decision Point, calling on an Intimacy of equal or greater strength than the inflamed Intimacy.

Flowing God-Dragon Stance

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Mute, Signature (Water)
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Artful Flowing Theft, Evidence-Erasing Tide

It's the nature of water to flow past obstacles unchanged. The Dragon-Blood sloughs off the physicality of flesh, her body becoming fluid and translucent for as long as she remains in Water Aura. With her movement action, she may attempt to flow through locked doors, cracks in walls, or any other obstruction that isn't waterproof — passing through the bars of a jail cell, flowing under a door, or pouring herself through a crack in a wall. This also lets her escape any grapple not enhanced by magic. If this Charm ends while she's in a space too narrow to contain her, she's forcibly shunted back to where she entered it, and suffers a level of unpreventable bashing damage.

The Dragon-Blood's watery form is more difficult to damage, granting her +1 Evasion. If she's unarmored, she also gains (Essence + 1) hardness. She adds (Essence/2, rounded up) bonus successes on all Stealth rolls. If she attempts to hide underwater, these don't count as a Charm bonus.

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Terrifying Forest-Devil Mask

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood dons a mask and vanishes into a world of legends and devils, taking up a disguise embodying an archetypal warrior-hero, monster, or mythic character. Most Dynasts create ornate ritual masks from wood by hand, shaping their persona as they carve it, but any mask suffices on short notice if it suitably evokes the persona's image. She rolls to create a disguise with double 7s. Her persona must be either a fictitious identity or archetypal role — such as an Immaculate Dragon, a hero or villain out of folklore, a legendary figure of the Shogunate, or a figure invented out of whole cloth. Her disguise only serves to conceal her identity, not to impersonate specific characters. She divides (Essence) temporary specialties that fit her persona among any of her Abilities for as long as she remains in disguise.

Upon donning the mask, the Dragon-Blood accepts a Defining Intimacy that suits her role, such as "Those who abuse their power must be humbled" or "Destroy all Anathema." As long as she remains in disguise, this Intimacy cannot be weakened or changed by any means. Onlookers who fail to beat her disguise roll will react to her as though they had a Minor Tie, with a context appropriate to her persona and the circumstances. A folk hero might inspire gratitude among the peasants she fights for while drawing the ire of princes and their minions; a horrible devil inspires sheer terror in all who look upon it.

In combat, an enemy may attempt to strike away the Dragon-Blood's mask as a difficulty 6 gambit. Success ends this Charm.

Vaporous Visage Evasion

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Water
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Instant Disguise Prana

Even those who peer into the sea know nothing of its hidden depths. The Dragon-Blood embodies this secrecy, wearing masks behind masks. When another character succeeds on a roll to pierce her disguise, she may conceal her features behind a swirling cloud of mist that spumes from her anima, perfectly obscuring her identity. The opposing character and other onlookers realize that she wasn't who she was posing as, but don't learn anything about who she actually is. The Dragon-Blood reverts back to her true appearance at the end of the scene, making a hasty retreat advisable.

Incendiary Accusation Approach

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Waters-of-Honesty Method

Every criminal knows that they're playing with fire, but those who dare to cheat the Dragon-Blood discover just how true that is. When she uses this Charm's prerequisite to detect a character cheating or using Larceny, she may pay an additional one mote and one Willpower to cause a small fire to ignite on his person, revealing his misdeeds to all and rolling a single die of lethal damage against him, ignoring Hardness. A cheating gambler's illicit cards go up in flames, while a pickpocket is caught literally red-handed.

Investigation-Deflecting Current

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Evidence-Erasing Tide

The Dragon-Blood diverts the watchful eyes of the law from her misdeeds, redirecting them in pursuit of endless false leads or of her own foes, like fish swimming against the tide. She makes a roll to conceal evidence, arranging the scene so that a specific character she knows of is implicated as the perpetrator of whatever actions she took that scene.

An investigator who fails his roll to case the scene believes that he's succeeded, but receives a false clue that points him towards the character the Exalt framed. Even on a successful roll, he still finds the false clue, but also discovers any genuine evidence left behind. He's aware of the discrepancy, but doesn't know which clue is false. A character may realize he's been duped if he turns up enough contradictory evidence. Each time he discovers a clue which contradicts the Dragon-Blood's deception, he rolls (Intelligence + Investigation) opposing the conceal evidence roll to realize the discrepancy and identify the clue as false. Even if he fails, he gains a cumulative +1 non-Charm bonus on his roll the next time he discovers a clue.

Investigation-Deflecting Current can only be used once per story, unless the Exalt resets it by conclusively defeating the attempts of a significant character to investigate her crimes.

Mischievous Wind Grasp

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Artful Flowing Theft

The air itself is the Dragon-Blood's accomplice when she has need of it, rising up in a small breeze directed by deft hand gestures. She directs a subtle current of wind to dislodge an object small enough to hold in one hand from a character within short range, whether it's stationary or on someone's person, though not one that a character's currently using. She could pull a key ring from a jailer's belt, pluck a sealed letter out of a courtier's robes, or knock a wineglass off a banquet table.

If the item is on someone's person, the Exalt must roll (Wits + Larceny) opposing his (Perception + Awareness) roll. In combat, this is treated as a ranged disarm gambit. A successful roll dislodges the item, causing it to fall to its owner's feet. Other characters cannot notice this for up to one minute or (Essence) rounds, whichever comes first, unless circumstances call attention to it, such as trying to draw a displaced blade. Even on a failed roll, onlookers don't realize the unnatural nature of the wind unless they use magic, though repeated use may stir suspicions.

In Air Aura, this Charm's range is extended to medium.

Exploding Evidence Technique

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Investigation-Deflecting Current

Such is the fire behind the Dragon-Blood's crimes of passion that any investigator that pursues her risks being burned. She makes a conceal evidence roll, rolling a non-Charm bonus die for every 10 that appears,

and suffuses the hidden evidence with Fire Essence. If a character attempts to case the scene and fails, the evidence catches fire, exposing him and anyone else on the scene to a one-time environmental hazard with difficulty 5, Damage (Essence)L. This conflagration all but obliterates any evidence remaining at the scene, increasing the difficulty of any subsequent rolls to case the scene by (the Dragon-Blood's Essence).

Window-In-The-Door Technique

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: One round
Prerequisite Charms: Mischievous Wind Grasp

Locks and walls aren't enough to stymie the prying curiosity of a Dragon-Blooded thief. She may peer through an obstruction as though it were pellucid water, spying through solid walls or examining the contents of a chest before risking its trapped lock. This is a (Perception + Larceny) roll against a difficulty based on the material and thickness of the obstacle she attempts to see through. For example, a wooden door or chest is difficulty 1; a stone wall or metal vault would be difficulty 3; a manse's walls, an artifact container, or the heavy stone walls of a fortress are difficulty 5+. Barriers more than (Essence + Perception) feet thick can't be seen through.

A successful roll causes a small portion of the obstruction, up to (Essence) square feet, to appear totally translucent to the Exalt (but not to anyone else). Each use of this Charm lasts a single round, or around ten seconds out of combat. If the Dragon-Blood wishes to renew this Charm at the end of that duration, she doesn't need to pay its Willpower cost or make another roll.

While using this Charm, the Exalt may reflexively activate Mischievous Wind Grasp, waiving its Willpower cost, to send a current of wind through the barrier as though it weren't there.

Expectation-Mirroring Stance

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 5
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Face-Stealing Reflection, Instant Disguise Prana

Those who gaze too long into their own reflection in the water risk drowning in themselves. Upon successfully using Face-Stealing Reflection, the Dragon-Blood may use this Charm to instantly and reflexively roll to disguise herself as the revealed character. Every threshold success on her read intentions roll grants her one mote to spend enhancing her disguise.

Infallible Alibi Approach

Cost: 13m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 5
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Exploding Evidence Technique

The Dragon-Blood is everywhere and nowhere in the sea of crime. Such is her criminal ingenuity and masterful deception that she leaves no trace of her passage. Whenever an investigator rolls enough successes to uncover a piece of evidence she's concealed, she may use this Charm to oppose the investigator's roll with a special (Manipulation + Larceny) conceal evidence roll, doubling 7s. If she beats his roll, his attempt fails, and whatever evidence she left behind dissolves away into water, rendering future attempts futile.

While the evidence is erased, the vanished secret drifts through the mysterious flows of Water Essence, finding itself drawn to the Dragon-Blood. A successful use of this Charm marks her with a swirling tattoo of black jade over her heart chakra. If the tattoo is revealed, witnesses may attempt a difficulty 3 (Intelligence + Occult) roll to realize the Dragon-Blood has used this Charm.

Infallible Alibi Approach can only be used once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134) through criminal or underhanded means. Once the Charm resets, the incriminating tattoo vanishes.

Linguistics

Lightning Quill Mastery

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Linguistics 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Excellency
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's brush scatters calligraphy across the page like leaves on the wind. She may add bonus successes to a Linguistics roll for two motes each. Each 10 on her roll rerolls a non-1 failed die.

SHARED INTIMACIES

Some Charms and other magic require the user to share an Intimacy with other characters to take effect. These don't mean that the two Intimacies have to be worded in exactly the same way — as long as the Storyteller feels that the two Intimacies are identical in the substance of what they mean for the characters that possess them, she should deem that such effects apply. This should be assessed generously to the player.

Cryptic Essence Cipher

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Linguistics 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water, Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's mastery of speech and language is synonymous with her mastery of deception. She rolls ([Manipulation or Intelligence] + Linguistics) to create a coded message, designating a single character who can understand it. Through her insight into his mind, she devises a cipher that he can intuitively read — for him, the symbols on the page seem to rearrange themselves to spell out the hidden message. For others, deciphering the message, even with code-breaking magic, requires a ([Perception or Intelligence] + Linguistics) roll opposing the Dragon-Blood's initial roll.

Alternatively, the Dragon-Blood may draw from one of her Principles to create a code that can be intuitively understood by any character who shares that Intimacy.

Signature-Stealing Calligraphy

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Linguistics 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water, Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's calligraphy ripples like the surface of a pond and settles into another writer's hand. She rolls (Manipulation + Linguistics) to forge another character's handwriting and mimic his writing style. If she includes written social influence in the forgery, she uses the same roll. Using this Charm requires access to either a full manuscript or three smaller samples of the character's writing. A reader may roll (Perception + Linguistics) opposing the Dragon-Blood's roll to detect the forgery, granting +2 Resolve against any influence it contains.

Fervor-Inciting Brushstrokes

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire, Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood writes words to spark flames in her readers' hearts, incinerating all inhibitions in a swell of passion. She doubles 9s on a written inspire roll that creates anger, fear, lust, or another powerful passion. If she chooses to tailor her influence for a single reader only, he must enter a Decision Point and call upon a Major or Defining Intimacy to resist.

Tenacious Dragon Scholar

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood isn't easily swayed by idle words. She gains +1 Resolve against written influence, and may use Linguistics in place of Integrity to calculate her Resolve against written influence.

Wind-Carried Words Technique

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Linguistics 1, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood speaks into the wind, sending her voice afar on subtle currents of air. She may send a spoken message of no more than a few sentences to a chosen target within (Essence) miles. Messages sent with this Charm cannot be overheard or intercepted by any mundane means. Magical attempts to do so must overcome a difficulty of (the Dragon-Blood's Essence + Linguistics).

This Charm's range extends to (Essence x5) miles at Linguistics 3, and (Essence x10) miles at Linguistics 5. With Linguistics 5, Essence 4, the Terrestrial may pay one Willpower to extend it to (Essence x100) miles.

Language-Learning Ritual

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood contemplates a foreign tongue until its meaning is, like air, transparent. She may use this Charm to gain understanding of a language that she's spent at least (6 – Intelligence) days studying, allowing her to understand it in both spoken or written forms. This doesn't confer the ability to communicate in that language.

With Linguistics 4, Essence 2, the Dragon-Blooded may speak and write in the chosen language. She is lacking in accent and unsophisticated in vocabulary, imposing a –3 success penalty on any social influence rolls.

With Linguistics 5, Essence 3, the Dragon-Blooded no longer suffers a penalty after a total of (6 – Intelligence) weeks spent studying or using it.

Enigma-Reading Eye

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Cryptic Essence Cipher

The Dragon-Blood's eye pierces ciphers and circumlocutions like lightning. She rolls ([Perception or Intelligence] + Linguistics) with double 9s to break a code or deceptive message, including those that aren't ciphered but have hidden subtext. Success lets her decipher the text as she reads it, completing hours or days of work in minutes.

Enigma-Reading Eye is capable of contesting magical codes or ciphers, such as Letter-Within-A-Letter Technique (**Exalted**, p. 323).

Thousand Tongues Meditation

Cost: —(+5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 2
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Air
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Language-Learning Ritual

The Dragon-Blood has mastered fundamental principles of language, allowing her to converse with anyone from the conquered princes of the Realm's dominion to the most savage barbarians beyond its borders. She may pay an additional five motes and one Willpower when she uses Language-Learning Ritual to waive the need for prior study and extend its effect to all languages she's ever encountered, rather than a single language, developing fluency without needing any prior study.

Voices on the Wind

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Wind-Carried Words Technique

The Dragon-Blood is privy to backroom dealings and covert assignations, drawing hushed whispers to her ear on currents of air. She adds (Linguistics/2, rounded up) bonus dice on rolls to eavesdrop on conversations. If she reads a character's intentions while eavesdropping on him from medium range or further, he takes the –2 Guile penalty for being unaware of her even if he can see her.

Speech Without Words

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Voices on the Wind

The Dragon-Blood creates a bond between herself and her Sworn Kin, as well as up to (Essence) additional characters, allowing them to communicate silently for the duration of this Charm. Hand gestures, body language, and other visual signals are as easily understood as spoken language, although only short, simple sentences can be conveyed.

Most onlookers don't perceive this signaling, but a character specifically on watch for such tactics or using superhuman or magically enhanced senses may roll (Perception + Awareness) against any participant's Guile to notice, but not understand, his signalling.

Caustic Wit Invective

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water, Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Fervor-Inciting Brushstrokes

The Dragon-Blood lets her scorn overflow into her words, her sarcasm and ridicule slowly wearing down even the strongest-rooted beliefs. She writes a mocking

message or satire that conveys an instill roll to erode a specific Principle or positive Tie. Her mockery inflicts momentary doubts on even the most dedicated readers, preventing them from drawing on the targeted Intimacy to bolster their Resolve.

Flashing Saga Flourish

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air), Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's brush strikes the page like a levinbolt, the only thing swift enough to keep pace with her inspiration. She doubles 7s on a written Linguistics roll, and dramatically reduces the time needed to complete the work — a long-form work like a book or collection of poetry requires only a day, and anything shorter is finished in seconds.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding a Defining Principle by authoring, distributing, or defending a written text.

Unshattered Diamond Parables

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Every word the Dragon-Blood has ever written is engraved into her soul, giving her the strength to defy. In a Decision Point (**Exalted**, p. 221), she may call upon a novel, collection of poetry, or other long-form written work she's completed over the course of the chronicle. Her player summarizes the work's theme or moral in a short phrase, which she treats as a Major Intimacy in the Decision Point. The Dragon-Blood can't invoke the same work twice — she must continue writing to maintain her resolve.

Works that have already played a significant narrative part in the Dragon-Blood's story carry a stronger weight, and count as Defining Intimacies. This includes any work whose completion fulfilled a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) or legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134), or any other work the Storyteller agrees is sufficiently meaningful.

In Earth Aura, the Dragon-Blood may expend her Aura state in place of the Willpower cost to resist influence in a Decision point.

Wildfire Words Technique

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Fire), Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's words spread across Creation like swift-burning flame, a thousand tongues of fire repeating her message in every direction. She makes a written (Charisma + Linguistics) instill roll with (Essence) non-Charm dice to create or strengthen an Intimacy based on a strong passion — love, anger, valor, fear, lust, or the like. She rolls an additional non-Charm die for every 10 on the roll.

On a success, the instilled Intimacy can't be altered or removed for the next (6 – his Integrity) days, although it can be weakened. The next time the target engages in a conversation during this time, he's overcome with a burning urge to spread that Intimacy, and must attempt his own instill roll against all listeners, adding (Exalt's Essence) non-Charm dice. His words don't convey this Charm's effect, though he may direct listeners to the Dragon-Blood's text.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy based on fiery passions with a Linguistics roll.

Rewriting the Truth Technique

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Signature (Water), Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood pens a seductive deception, her words seeping into the deep channels of the subconscious mind. She rolls (Manipulation + Linguistics) as a written instill action, rerolling 5s and 6s until they cease to appear and ignoring any penalties for making implausible claims (**Exalted**, p. 215). This influence must target a specific character. If her influence roll beats his Resolve, he forms a Major Principle of belief in the lie unless he pays three Willpower to resist. Attempting to voluntarily weaken the Principle instilled by this Charm costs one Willpower.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by successfully leveraging a character's Intimacy of belief in a falsehood to persuade him to undertake a serious or life-changing task (**Exalted**, p. 216) that directly advances the Dragon-Blood's goals or those of her Hearth.

Enthralling Lotus Calligraphy

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Signature (Wood), Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood fashions a trap from beautiful words, weaving a puissant compulsion into every sentence and simile. She makes a written influence roll to instill, persuade, or bargain with a specific character. The written message exerts an unnatural influence upon its intended recipient. Once he's able to see the document, even if he cannot see the writing, he's subtly compelled to begin reading it unless he spends (her Essence/2, rounded up) Willpower to break free. This impulse appears natural, and won't force the victim to endanger himself or abandon pressing tasks.

If the target doesn't resist and begins reading, he must do so long enough to be subjected to whatever influence the document contains. A character who resisted this Charm's influence with Willpower is immune to this Psyche effect, although he's still subject to the written influence roll.

Enthralling Lotus Calligraphy cannot be used against the same character more than once per story.

Incendiary Argument Approach

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Linguistics 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire, Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Caustic Wit Invective

The Dragon-Blood sparks outrage with her diatribe. She rolls (Charisma + Linguistics) as a written influence roll targeting a specific character. If she beats his Resolve, her words provoke him to react with hostility and argument regardless of what the message actually says — either by seeking the author out in person, or by sending a written response. This influence doesn't compel the target to endanger himself or escalate to violence, although he may well do so of his own accord. Resisting requires entering a Decision Point and calling on a Major or Defining Intimacy.

If the Dragon-Blood knows Signature-Stealing Calligraphy (p. 209), she may use it reflexively alongside this Charm to write a letter under another person's identity, rolling with (Manipulation + Linguistics) instead. As long as the target is convinced by her forgery, he'll pursue whoever the message is attributed to. If he sees through the forgery, the influence is overturned.

Poisoned Tongue Technique

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Voices on the Wind

The Dragon-Blood insinuates her influence into another's conversation, subtly manipulating his voice's tone and cadence by controlling the air he speaks through. When a character within short range makes a spoken influence roll, the Dragon-Blood may use this Charm to roll (Manipulation + Linguistics) against his Resolve. Each threshold success on her roll subtracts one die from his influence roll.

In Air Aura, if the Dragon-Blood succeeds, (Essence) 1s on the penalized roll subtract successes from it.

With War 3, the Dragon-Blood can use this Charm to penalize an enemy's command action, disrupting the communication between a commander and his troops.

Reading the Unspoken Word

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Speech Without Words

The Dragon-Blood's keen intuition can discern the words that someone expects to hear, uncovering the expectations or assumptions couched in that language. A servant awaiting a foreign prince expects to be greeted with haughty disdain; a disguised intruder fears his identity will be questioned; a guard at a secret meeting awaits a specific password.

The Dragon-Blood makes a read intentions roll with ([Intelligence or Perception] + Linguistics). Success lets her discern exactly what that character expects to be told in his current circumstances. This may assist her in impersonation, or give her an opening to exploit. If she leverages this knowledge as part of an influence roll, she adds (Essence) non-Charm bonus dice.

Dragon's Voice Mastery

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 4
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Poisoned Tongue Technique

When a dragon speaks, who dares dispute her? The Dragon-Blood adds (Essence/2, rounded up) non-Charm successes

on a spoken social influence roll made with any Ability that aligns with one of her Major or Defining Principles. The Willpower cost of resisting her influence increases by one.

Dragon's Voice Mastery can only be used once per day, unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy.

Tantalizing Dragon's Tongue

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire/Wood, Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Incendiary Argument Approach

The Dragon-Blood courts her reader's passion with provocative language and sensuous choices of words, infusing erotic undertones into whatever she writes. This Charm functions identically to Incendiary Argument Approach, except that instead of provoking the target to argue, the influence overwhelms him with passionate admiration and fascination for the author, bordering on lust. If he's sexually attracted to the Dragon-Blood, he'll attempt to seduce her, either by seeking her out in person or with a written declaration of lust. If he's not sexually attracted (or his player invokes the Red Rule, **Exalted**, p. 222), he instead feels inspired to seek her out for friendly conversation.

As with its prerequisite, Tantalizing Dragon's Tongue can be used with Signature-Stealing Calligraphy to forge love letters.

Intoxicating Lotus Manuscript

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Wood, Written-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Enthralling Lotus Calligraphy, Tantalizing Dragon's Tongue

The Dragon-Blood creates an enthralling world of story and sensuality to snare a reader, leaving him desperate for another chance to escape into the bliss of her writing. This Charm is a special (Manipulation + Linguistics) roll with double 9s to compose a piece of poetry, fiction, or other creative narrative tailored to a specific character. If the Terrestrial's influence roll beats the target's Resolve, he develops an obsession with her writing as a Minor Derangement (**Exalted**, p. 167). If he goes more than (6 − Integrity) weeks without reading a new work, he suffers withdrawal symptoms in the form of a −1 penalty on social and mental rolls.

When the target spends Willpower to resist this Derangement, he may also ignore his withdrawal symptom penalty for the same duration. Once he's spent three Willpower, the influence is broken, and the Derangement and withdrawal penalty subside. In addition, if the Dragon-Blood goes a full story without writing and releasing a new work that could fulfill the victim's addiction, it likewise ends. She may make her works difficult or expensive to acquire, but making it impossible for the victim to obtain them negates this Charm.

An Essence 5+ repurchase allows the Dragon-Blood to strengthen the Derangement with repeated uses of this Charm targeting the same character. Once she uses it against him, she must wait until the next story before she can do so again, raising the intensity of the Derangement by one step if she succeeds. Each level of intensity above Minor adds +1 to the total Willpower the victim must spend to break free of this Charm's influence.

With One Mind

Cost: 5m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Perilous
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon's Voice Mastery, Speech Without Words

The Dragon-Blood weaves her mind together with that of her allies, creating a shared battle-consciousness that transcends language's limitations. She forms a mental bond with either a single character she can see, or all of her Sworn Kin she can see. Participants in the bond gain the following benefits:

- They can communicate telepathically with each other. This isn't limited by range or line of sight, but they must share a common language.
- As long as one of them is aware of a hidden threat or concealed character, all of them are. This may render them immune to unexpected attacks (**Exalted**, p. 203) or allow them to attack a concealed enemy.
- Whenever one of them is attacked, another bonded character within close range may reflexively interpose his Parry, as though with a defend other action. Only one character may make this reflexive defense against a single attack, even if several are in range.

- If a participant attempts a distract gambit (**Exalted**, p. 200) against an enemy to benefit another bonded character, the beneficiary doubles 7s on the attack roll. A successful gambit grants the beneficiary one point of Initiative in addition to those spent by the attacker.

Lore

Careful Insight-Gathering Study

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Lore 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Excellency
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Breathing deep of the world's Essence, the Dragon-Blood pronounces her wisdom with impeccable clarity. She may add automatic successes to a Lore roll for two motes each. In addition, if she adds 2+ successes on a roll to introduce or challenge a fact (**Exalted**, pp. 237-238), she doubles 9s on the roll.

Opening the Mind's Gates

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Lore 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Speaking a sagely aphorism, the Dragon-Blooded calls up the winds of knowledge to disperse whatever miasma closes a student's mind to learning. She makes a special instill roll with ([Charisma or Intelligence] + Lore) to induce a state of supernatural receptivity in a single character, treating him as though he had a Major Principle of "I must seek out education" for one scene. If the Dragon-Blood exploits this Intimacy with a persuade or bargain roll to convince the target to study with her, the cost of resisting increases by one Willpower.

Flawless Study Focus

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Opening the Mind's Gates

The Dragon-Blood clears her mind, drawing upon the clarity of the upper air to enter a receptive trance. To use this Charm, she must spend at least (10 – Intelligence) hours studying under a teacher or consulting a library, archive, or similar repository of information. She gains a temporary Lore specialty in a single topic possessed by her mentor or covered by the materials she had access to. She retains the specialty indefinitely, but may only have one specialty granted by this Charm at a time.

Elemental Concentration Trance

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

To use this Charm, the Dragon-Blood must spend a few minutes contemplating an expression of an elements: observing the movement of clouds, meditating beneath a waterfall, staring unblinking into a flame, or so on; this determines the Charm's elemental aspect. At the end, she makes a ([Mental Attribute] + [Bureaucracy, Investigation, Lore, Medicine, Survival, or War]) roll with a single bonus success. She may roll to introduce a fact as though she has a Lore background in facts that relate to the Charm's elemental aspect. An Air-aspected use could introduce facts about weather or music theory; an Earth-aspected use could relate to geology, masonry, or architecture; and so on.

If the Dragon-Blood knows Dragon-Kin Empowerment, she may provide the benefits of this Charm to one of her Sworn Kin, guiding him through meditation.

Dragon-Kin Empowerment

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Elemental Concentration Trance

The Dragon-Blood's understanding of the cycle of elements and the flow of Essence allows her to empower her fellow Terrestrial Exalted. She transfers her Elemental Aura to a touched Dragon-Blood who isn't in Aura state, and up to (Essence x3) of her own motes to her choice of his personal or peripheral pool. This Charm has the same aspect as the transferred Aura, and granted motes can only be spent on Charms of that element, Balanced Charms, or magic without an elemental aspect. If the target's mote pool can't accept all the motes transferred, he has until his next action to spend them before they dissipate.

ELEMENTAL BOLT

Accuracy: +5 Close; +4 Short; +3 Medium; –0 Long; –2 Extreme;

Damage: 10 + Essence (doesn't add Strength); **Overwhelming:** (Essence + 1)

A Lore 5, Essence 2 repurchase of this Charm allows the Dragon-Blood to also transfer a single level of anima when she uses this Charm.

Elemental Bolt Attack

Cost: 4m (+1a); **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Dual
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Elemental Concentration Trance

The Dragon-Blood channels elemental Essence into a deadly blast. Air manifests as crackling lightning; Earth as flying stones; Wood as poisoned thorns; and so on. This is a **withering** or **decisive** attack with (Dexterity + [Archery or Thrown]) against an enemy within short range, which can be enhanced with Charms of the appropriate combat Ability. The Exalt may spend a level of anima to extend this to medium range.

This Charm's elemental aspect is the same as the Exalt's, and it gains additional benefits based on its element.

Air: The elemental bolt deals lethal damage and ignores (higher of Essence or 3) soak or (Essence) hardness from metal armor, including the five magical materials.

Earth: The elemental bolt deals bashing damage and has the Smashing tag (**Exalted**, p. 586).

Fire: The elemental bolt deals lethal damage. **Decisive** attacks double 10s on damage.

Water: The elemental bolt deals bashing damage and has the Flexible and Disarming tags (**Exalted**, p. 586).

Wood: The elemental bolt deals lethal damage. **Decisive** attacks carry a poison with Damage 1i/round (B in Crash), Duration (Essence + 5), and penalty –1.

The Dragon-Blood may purchase additional elemental variants of this Charm for three experience points each.



Elemental Empowerment Meditation

Cost: —(+1llhl *or* 1wp); **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 2
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Elemental Concentration Trance

The Dragon-Blood replenishes her spirit with elemental power drawn from her understanding of Creation. Once per day, when she uses Elemental Concentration Trance to roll (Intelligence + Lore) at difficulty 3+, she may pay one Willpower or one lethal health level before rolling to gain motes equal to twice her threshold successes on the roll. These motes can only be spent on Charms of the same element as the one she meditated on, and last one day.

If the Exalt knows Dragon-Kin Empowerment, she may pay this Charm's cost to provide its benefits to a Hearthmate when she leads him through meditation.

A character — either the Dragon-Blood or a Hearthmate — may only receive this benefit once per day.

Sagacious Elder's Instruction

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air
Duration: (Intelligence) days
Prerequisite Charms: Opening the Mind's Gates

The Dragon-Blooded savant's wise words part the fog of mystery and confusion. When the Dragon-Blood gives advice to another character and successfully rolls to introduce a fact that supports it, that character gains a temporary specialty based on that advice that can apply to rolls with any Ability for the duration of this Charm, as long as he follows her guidance.

Stern Tutor Discipline

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Varies
Prerequisite Charms: Sagacious Elder's Instruction

The Dragon-Blood's tutelage pushes her students to test their boundaries, allowing a single player character studying under her to go into "experience debt" to purchase a single dot in an Attribute, Ability, or specialty, without having to spend the normal experience cost. Instead, any experience points that player gains go towards paying off the experience debt until it has been fully repaid. A character cannot benefit from this Charm while he's still in experience debt due to any effect. The training time is divided by (higher of the Dragon-Blood's Essence or Intelligence)

Alternatively, the Dragon-Blood may confer a specialty to a single Storyteller character after a week of training time, or a dot in an Ability or Attribute after a month. A Storyteller character can only receive one specialty and one Attribute or Ability dot per story.

A Lore 5, Essence 4 repurchase of this Charm allows the Exalt to instead teach any Charm, spell, or thaumaturgical ritual she knows, letting her student go into experience debt to learn it as long as he's normally capable of learning that type of power and meets all necessary prerequisites. Storyteller characters can be trained in a Charm, spell, or ritual over the course of a month. A Storyteller character can only receive this benefit once per story.

Lightning Flash Inspiration

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Lore 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flawless Study Focus

The Exalt's mind races with lightning speed, revealing to her any errors in her logic while she's on the cusp of completing her thought. After a Lore roll, she may reroll (Essence) non-1 failures.

Fulminating Thunderhead Brilliance

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Air)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Flash Inspiration

The Dragon-Blood's mind traces countless branching paths of thought, her eyes crackling with brilliant light. This is a special roll to introduce a fact (**Exalted**, p. 237). Instead of proposing a fact she wishes to introduce, the player names a goal, such as defeating a rival Dynast or investigating corruption within a bureaucracy, and asks the Storyteller to produce the insight she needs with an (Intelligence + Lore) roll at difficulty 3. If other characters are concealing or suppressing relevant information, the highest Guile among them is added to her roll's difficulty. On a success, the Storyteller introduces a relevant fact that will assist her in achieving her goal, which she experiences as a flash of sudden insight. Threshold successes improve the relevance and specificity of her revelation at the Storyteller's discretion.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by achieving a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) through the use of a relevant fact that the Dragon-Blood has introduced, either with this Charm or otherwise.

Truth-In-Stone Binding

Cost: 10m, 1wp, expend Earth Aura; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Drawing on her knowledge of the world and understanding of its Essence, the Dragon-Blooded may speak truths antithetical to the chaos of the Wyld, sealing away those horrors that have no place in Creation. She rolls a special gambit with (Intelligence + Lore) against the Resolve of a raksha or other native of the Wyld within short range. The gambit's difficulty is (higher of target's Essence or Willpower); battle groups add (Size) to the difficulty.

Success incapacitates the enemy, petrifying its Essence into an inanimate form engraved with words of binding that describe the horror trapped within. A raksha might be imprisoned within an egg of jade, while a swarm of hobgoblins might be transformed into stone gargoyles. The bound creatures aren't truly slain, and are restored if the binding words are scratched out or destroyed. The specifics of how this is achieved are left to the Storyteller, but the difficulty should be commensurate with the power of the sealed character, possibly requiring high-level feats of strength, specially crafted artifacts, or sorcery to accomplish.

This Charm can also be used on environmental features of the Wyld, such as a river of flames that lures in travelers with whispers, or a memory-eating mist. She rolls (Intelligence + Lore) against a difficulty equal to the base difficulty of the hazard or whatever roll is used to resist it, plus a modifier based on the intensity of the surrounding Wyld: +2 in the bordermarches that lap up against Creation, +4 in the middlemarches that lie beyond, and +6 in the deep Wyld, the heart of chaos. Success seals away the hazard, rendering it inert and harmless: The lake of fire cools into a glassy patch of obsidian; the mist condenses into crystalline droplets.

At the Storyteller's discretion, overwhelmingly powerful targets — such as uniquely powerful raksha or Wyld behemoths, or equally potent environmental manifestations of the Wyld — can only be sealed away temporarily. Such bindings last a scene at Essence 3, a day at Essence 4, and a year and a day at Essence 5.

Ten Thousand Minds Ablaze

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Knowledge is the spark that lights the tinder of curiosity, crackling like flame from the Dragon-Blood's lips as she expounds her teachings. She rolls ([Charisma or Intelligence] + Lore), which is treated both as a roll to introduce a fact and as an influence roll to instill all characters who hear her with an Intimacy of interest or fascination towards the proposed fact or a broader field it relates to. She ignores the penalty for targeting multiple characters with the influence roll. To resist, a character must spend Willpower equal to (his Intelligence/2, rounded up). Likewise, the instilled Intimacy cannot be voluntarily lowered until the target spends (his Intelligence/2, rounded up) Willpower, while attempts to erode it with instill actions follow the rules for overturning social influence (**Exalted**, p. 221).

Ink-Black Ocean Depths

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: Until completed
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood reaches into the pages of a manuscript as though they were flowing water, plumbing its depths to commune directly with the wisdom it contains. She can absorb and comprehend the contents of a book or other record of information, such as a mural or coded tattoo, in only a handful of minutes as though she'd read it completely. This doesn't allow her to understand information in a language she cannot read. If she uses this Charm on an exotic repository of wisdom, such as a gemstone enchanted with a sorcerer's memories, the Storyteller may require a (Perception + Lore) roll to comprehend its contents. This Charm can be used in conjunction with Flawless Study Focus to waive the normal time requirement for using it.

Once the Dragon-Blood finishes reading a text or similar document, she may roll (Manipulation + Lore) to siphon away its wisdom, removing crucial facts and key details to prevent subsequent readers from discovering useful information by reading it. The target and intention of written social influence cannot be altered. A reader may recognize that the text has been altered with a (Perception + [Linguistics or Lore]) roll opposing the Dragon-Blood's result, but this doesn't reveal

what was erased. This alteration can be undone by another character with a use of this Charm or similar magic, such as Flashing Quill Atemi (**Exalted**, p. 326), requiring an opposed (Intelligence + Lore) roll.

Root-and-Branch Wisdom

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood learns best by teaching, cultivating the garden of her own mind as she sows the seeds of wisdom among her students. Once per story, when she acts as a mentor or trainer to another character (**Exalted**, p. 178), she may impart her student with a Major Tie towards herself while accepting a Minor Tie towards him. Each Tie has a positive emotional context that is defined by the player of the character that gains it. If the Dragon-Blooded maintains her Tie towards a student until the end of the story, she permanently gains a free Lore specialty that relates to what she taught her student and what she learned from him. Providing riding lessons to a Hearthmate might grant a Lore specialty in equestrianism, while instructing a young scion of a Great House in academic topics might grant a specialty in the affairs of that house.

Elemental Succor Method

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 4, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Elemental Empowerment Meditation

Understanding the harmonious flow of elemental Essence through the human body, the Dragon-Blood may direct it to heal her wounds. This Charm upgrades Elemental Empowerment Meditation. The Exalt may exchange five motes granted by it to heal a single level of non-aggravated damage. If she knows Dragon-Kin Empowerment and guides another Dragon-Blood through the meditation, he may likewise heal this way.

Thunderstruck Charlatan Imprecation

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Lore 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Flash Inspiration

The ferocity of the Dragon-Blood's rebuke overcomes those she bests with her mind, leaving them as speechless as if struck by lightning. This Charm supplements a roll to challenge a fact (**Exalted**, p. 238) with a spoken rebuke. If the Dragon-Blood's successes exceed the deceiving character's Resolve, then he's left humbled before her mastery, instantly forming a Minor Tie to her of respect, fear, or a similar emotion, or strengthening such an existing Tie by one step. He cannot speak or otherwise communicate for the rest of the scene unless he resists by entering a Decision Point, calling on an Intimacy that exceeds his Tie towards the Dragon-Blood.

Elemental Burst Technique

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Elemental Bolt Attack

When the Dragon-Blood uses Elemental Bolt Attack to make a **decisive** attack with the same aspect as her current Aura state, she may apply the attack against all characters, friend or foe, within close range of her initial target. She divides her Initiative evenly among all hit characters, rounding down, to determine the damage rolled against them, ignoring Hardness.

Additionally, the attack gains a benefit based on its aspect.

Air: Lightning arcs from foe to foe. Metal weapons, including those made of the five magical materials, can't be used to parry the attack. For each enemy hit by the attack, the Dragon-Blood adds one bonus die to the base damage rolled against each of them, maximum +(Essence).

Earth: The Dragon-Blood adds (Strength/2, rounded up) to the base damage rolled against each hit character, and waives the Initiative cost and Defense penalty for making a smash attack.

Fire: As long as the elemental blast deals 3+ total levels of damage, the targeted area catches fire as long as it contains flammable materials, becoming an environmental hazard with difficulty 4, Damage (Essence – 1)L/round. The hazard burns for at least (Essence) rounds unless extinguished.

Water: Enemies with an Initiative lower than the Dragon-Blood's when she makes the attack are disarmed (**Exalted**, p. 200) if they take any damage.

Wood: The elemental bolt's poison is upgraded to Damage 1L, Duration (Essence + 5), penalty –3.

Elemental Burst Technique can only be used once per scene, unless reset by dealing enough **withering** damage to a nontrivial opponent with Elemental Bolt Attack to reduce his Initiative from a rating higher than the Dragon-Blood's to a lower rating.

Eternal Mind Meditation

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Flash Inspiration

The Dragon-Blood empties her mind of all distraction, dispersing the dark clouds of forgetfulness and ignorance so that she might answer a conundrum with the totality of her knowledge. After a scene spent in contemplation, she makes a roll to introduce a fact that doesn't need to be based on any of her Lore backgrounds. Instead, she draws this knowledge forth by collating an entire lifetime of memories, piecing together fragments of information and intuitions to reveal a greater whole. The Storyteller may still veto the introduction of a fact (**Exalted**, pp. 237-238), refunding this Charm's cost, if it would compromise the narrative of the game, or if a player proposes a fact that not even this Dragon-Blood's entire lifetime of memories could reveal.

Alternatively, the Dragon-Blood may use this Charm to free herself from a Psyche effect that alters her memories, such as the Solar Charm Memory-Reweaving Discipline. She rolls as though introducing a fact with this Charm against a difficulty of (the Essence + Manipulation of the character that used the effect). On a success, she gradually begins recovering her true, unaltered memories; for each day that passes, a single month's worth of memories are restored. Multiply this rate by (her threshold successes + 1).

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by discovering an important secret or piece of information in a way that either upholds one of the Dragon-Blood's Defining Principles or achieves a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170). No reset is needed if the Storyteller vetoes a proposed fact.

Glorious Birthright Font

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 4
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Elemental Succor Method

One with five elements, the Dragon-Blood discovers her true self reflected in the Essence of Creation. This Charm upgrades Elemental Empowerment Meditation. When she or a character she's guiding through the meditation rolls 5+ threshold successes, that character gains a point of Willpower in addition to the usual rewards of the Charm, up to his maximum Willpower.

Endless Coils Enlightenment

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 5
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Air
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Eternal Mind Meditation

The thunderstorm is born from many clouds, each one casting its lightning from horizon to horizon. When the Exalt uses Eternal Mind Meditation to introduce a fact, she may pay one additional Willpower to draw from the wisdom of up to (Intelligence − 1, minimum one) willing Dragon-Blooded within medium range of her. Each Dragon-Blood that contributes his wisdom adds a single non-Charm die on her roll, as well as contributing the whole of his memories and any Lore backgrounds he possesses to the body of information on which the introduced fact is based. On a successful Lore roll, all participating Dragon-Blooded form a Major Tie of loyalty to the Dragon-Blooded as a whole.

The Wind Turns

Cost: 2wp, expend Air Aura; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Aura
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Glorious Birthright Font

A breath sent out into the world may return as a hurricane, and Essence is the breath of the world. The Dragon-Blood rolls (Willpower + Initiative). She and any of her Hearthmates within short range gain one mote for every two successes. Using this Charm resets her to base Initiative.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Tie towards another Dragon-Blood, or to the Dragon-Blooded host as a whole.

Dragon Vortex Attack

Cost: 20m, 2wp, expend Aura; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Elemental Burst Technique, The Wind Turns

At the apex of the Dragon-Blood's understanding, she draws forth the power of her draconic ancestors, shaking Creation to its foundations as she unleashes the primal wrath of the elements. To use this Charm, she must have Initiative 15+. A tremendous burst of elemental Essence radiates outward from her, a one-time environmental hazard that extends to close range, plus an additional range band for every ten Initiative she has. The aspect of this Charm and the hazard's nature depend on which Elemental Aura she expends. Allies and enemies alike are caught in the hazard, but it won't harm the Dragon-Blood's Sworn Kin. If she knows Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings (p. 282), she may likewise spare allied characters.

The hazard has difficulty (the Dragon-Blood's Intelligence), but doesn't have a standard damage. Instead, the Dragon-Blood divides her Initiative evenly, rounding up, among all characters who failed their rolls to determine how much lethal damage is rolled against each. Battle groups and trivial opponents instead suffer (her full Initiative) damage, without counting against the total she divides. As long as at least one enemy fails his roll, this resets the Dragon-Blood to base Initiative.

The hazard carries additional effects based on its aspect:

Air: Roiling storm clouds darken the sky, unleashing countless bolts of lightning and raining down hail. Any character wearing metal armor, including armor made from the magical materials, applies its mobility penalty on his roll to resist the hazard. The damage roll benefits from double 9s.

Earth: The earth rumbles in a mighty earthquake, scattering stone debris skyward to strike flying foes. A character that takes 3+ levels of damage falls into a chasm and lands prone, suffering damage as per a short-range fall (**Exalted**, p. 232). Climbing out of the chasm counts as moving through difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199).

Fire: A pyroclasm sweeps across the battlefield, igniting anything flammable. As long as there's fuel, even after the vortex fades, it leaves behind a hazard with difficulty 5, Damage 4L/round within its range, which burns for at least (Intelligence) hours. These flames won't burn the Dragon-Blood or any allies spared from the vortex.

Water: A standing wave towers above the Dragon-Blood before collapsing outward in all directions with tsunami force. For every three levels of damage a character suffers from the hazard, rounded up, he's knocked back one range band from the Dragon-Blood to fall prone, and suffers an additional three dice of bashing damage, ignoring Hardness.

Wood: Fast-growing briar patches and massive thorny vines spread rapidly across the battlefield, while bright-colored flowers bloom with poisonous pollen. Characters who fail their roll must roll (Stamina + Resistance) against a poison with Damage 3i/round, Duration (Essence + Intelligence) rounds, and a −3 penalty. Additionally, the area of the hazard becomes difficult terrain until the plant growth has been cleared entirely. The Dragon-Blood and any allies spared from the vortex are unimpeded by this terrain, the plants parting to clear their path.

If any of the Dragon-Blood's Sworn Kin are within the vortex's initial range and in Elemental Aura, they may expend it to add that element's effect to the hazard. The expended Aura must be of an element that hasn't already been expended; each participating Dragon-Blood must contribute a unique element to the vortex. Crashed Hearthmates can't contribute their Aura. Each Hearthmate who expends his Aura adds +1 to the hazard's Difficulty and adds his Initiative to the primary Dragon-Blood's total to determine both the range and damage of the hazard, resetting him to base Initiative.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134).

Medicine

Master Healer Meditation

Cost: 1m per die; **Mins:** Medicine 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Blessed with understanding of the flow of living Essence through the body, the Dragon-Blooded physician refines her skill to perfection. She may add bonus dice to a Medicine roll for one mote each. If she adds enough to reach her dice limit (p. 162), she also adds a non-Charm success on the roll.

Disease-Banishing Technique

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood strengthens her patient's body against the malaise that ravages it. She doubles 9s on a roll to treat a disease. If her threshold successes exceed (higher of the disease's virulence or morbidity), then her ministrations grant her patient a temporary Resistance specialty in that disease until it has run its course. A character can only benefit from one such specialty at a time.

Venom Expulsion Method

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Medicine 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Tapping her patient's pressure points with swift, precise strikes, the Dragon-Blood halts the flow of poison through his body. She may roll to cure poison as a miscellaneous action without facing increased difficulty for rushing treatment. If she takes a full hour to administer aid, she instead doubles 9s.

Wound-Closing Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Medicine 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood spends fifteen minutes tending to a patient's wounds, at the end of which she rolls (Intelligence + Medicine). Each success converts a single level of lethal damage to bashing, speeding the rate at which it heals (**Exalted**, p. 173). Alternatively, if she rolls successes equal to (her patient's wound penalty + 1), she may heal a single level of bashing damage. Once a character has been treated with Wound-Closing Technique, he must receive at least a day of bedrest or fully heal all damage before he can benefit from it again.

Ailment-Sensing Meditation

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood observes the natural rhythms of her patient's body, intuiting any ailments that afflict him. She may complete a roll to diagnose a patient (**Exalted**, p. 237) in a handful of seconds. Successfully diagnosing a disease, poison, or similar ailment grants her a temporary Medicine specialty in it. She retains the specialty indefinitely, but may only have one specialty granted by this Charm at a time.

Nature's Healing Bounty

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Survival 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

A master of herbalism and nature lore, the Dragon-Blood finds all she needs to heal her patients in gardens or the wilderness. As long as she has access to medicinal herbs or similar flora, she may roll Medicine to treat injury, disease, poison, or other afflictions without any increased difficulty for lacking equipment or medication. If she uses medicinal herbs in addition to tools, she treats them as exceptional equipment (**Exalted**, p. 580), or converts the bonus die from already-exceptional equipment to a non-Charm success.

Indomitable Vitality Discipline

Cost: —; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 2
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Disease-Banishing Technique

Drawing strength from the Dragon-Blood's ministrations, her patient can fight through the worst of his illness. When the Terrestrial successfully grants her patient a specialty with Disease-Banishing Technique, she may commit that Charm's mote cost. When that disease would inflict an automatic botch on one of his rolls (**Exalted**, p. 234), it instead only inflicts a penalty equal to (6 – [higher of her patient's Stamina or Resistance]). The Exalt may mitigate up to (Essence) botches this way.

Poisoner's Deft Hand

Cost: 3m, 1i; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Venom Expulsion Method

The Dragon-Blood's understanding of toxins and venoms can harm as well as heal. When she poisons another character — with a **decisive** attack, poisoning his food or drink, using magic, etc. — she adds (Essence/2, rounded up) to the poison's duration. Each use of this Charm only applies to a single dose of poison. If the Dragon-Blood wishes to serve a poisoned feast to her

enemies, she must use it separately for each of her victims.

Death-Defying Endeavor

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Medicine 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Ailment-Sensing Meditation

Drawing from her patient's own fierce will to survive, the Dragon-Blood refuses to fail. After a Medicine roll, she may reroll (Essence) non-1 failed dice.

Grievous Wound Alteration Energy

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 2
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Wound-Closing Technique

Even the most horrific injuries inflicted by the Anathema yield to the Dragon-Blooded physician's life-saving prowess. This Charm upgrades Wound-Closing Technique, allowing the Dragon-Blood to pay a one-Willpower surcharge to treat aggravated damage with it. She rolls (Intelligence + Medicine), each success converting a level of aggravated damage to lethal. Any successes above her patient's total aggravated damage convert levels of lethal damage to bashing.

Purity-of-Mind Method

Cost: 10m (+1wp per interval); **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: Extended action
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood may treat afflictions of the mind with insightful counseling, guided meditation, soothing hypnosis, or other beneficial methodologies, granting her patient the serenity of still air and the crystalline clarity of ice. Once she's diagnosed a Derangement, she may treat it with an extended ([Charisma or Intelligence] + Medicine) roll with difficulty 5, goal number (5 + [intensity x5]), terminus (10 − intensity), and an interval of one month (**Exalted**, p. 189). She must pay one Willpower at each interval before rolling. Successfully completing the extended action reduces the Derangement's intensity by one step, to a minimum of Minor, and grants one Willpower to both the Dragon-Blood and her patient.

While under the effects of this Charm, the patient adds (the Dragon-Blood's Essence) bonus dice on Willpower rolls to resist the treated Derangement, and reduces any Resolve penalties it imposes by one. Although this Charm can't reduce Derangements below Minor intensity, the Dragon-Blood may use it to treat a patient's Minor Derangement, rolling ([Charisma or Intelligence] + Medicine) roll at difficulty 5 to grant her patient these benefits for one month. She doesn't need to spend Willpower or commit this Charm's mote cost when using it in this fashion.

Marmoreal Body Fortification

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: None

Alabaster anima limns the Dragon-Blood's hands as she massages her patient's pressure points and meridians, causing his flesh to take on a pale, marble-like hue as the strength of stone suffuses it. She rolls (Essence) dice, granting her patient a single temporary −0 health level for each success. Damage is applied to these temporary levels before the patient's own health levels, and any damage filling them is removed along with them when this Charm ends. In addition, if the patient is unarmored, his stony skin adds (the Dragon-Blood's Essence) to his natural soak and grants 2 Hardness.

Normally, only one character may benefit from this Charm at a time. However, the Dragon-Blood may sustain multiple uses to empower herself and her Sworn Kin with it.

Unbinding the Inner Flame

Cost: 4m, 4i, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Perilous, Signature (Fire)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood stokes the flames of vitality with a precisely-measured strike to the heart chakra, inflaming the Essence of herself or an ally until blood boils and thews surge with unrestrained might. She grants a touched character a bonus dot of Strength and doubles 10s on his **decisive** damage rolls. On each of his turns, he gains one mote and — if he's not crashed — one Initiative.

The power unleashed by this Charm is greater than the body can endure unharmed. Once it ends, the target suffers a level of aggravated damage, which cannot be prevented.

Body-Cleansing Ablution

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood calls upon water as a healing tool, washing away pain and purifying the body. She must spend at least an hour overseeing her patient as he bathes or washing his wounds with pure water. This treatment alleviates pain, allowing her patient to ignore (his Stamina − 1) points of wound penalties for one day. In addition, if the Dragon-Blood has diagnosed any diseases or poisons he suffers from, he makes a single (Stamina + Resistance) roll. This is treated as a roll against the morbidity of each diagnosed disease, except that failure doesn't intensify his symptoms. In addition, each success reduces the duration of any diagnosed poisons in by one interval.

A character can only benefit from this Charm once per story.

Rebirth of Flesh and Ivy

Cost: 10m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Perilous, Signature (Wood)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Grievous Wound Alteration Energy

Vines and ligneous tendrils spring from the Dragon-Blood's anima as she lays hands upon a wounded ally. Ivy stitches shut bleeding wounds; lianas twist to set broken bones; bark grows over damaged limbs to reinforce their strength. The Dragon-Blood rolls (Intelligence + Medicine), instantly healing levels of non-aggravated damage equal to her successes as plants replace damaged tissue.

If the target suffers from any crippling injuries or effects that he could eventually heal or recover from naturally (including magically inflicted effects such as Joint-Wounding Attack or Crippling Pressure-Point Strike), the Dragon-Blood may split her successes between healing damage and alleviating these wounds, spending two successes for each point of crippling penalty she wishes to cancel.

The player of the healed character may choose to be marked by this healing, accepting a scar that resembles wood more closely than flesh or strands of green interwoven with restored tissues.



This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by saving a dying character (one whose Incapacitated health level is damaged) through medical care.

Dread Infection Strike

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Medicine 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Indomitable Vitality Discipline

Drawing on her abundant medical expertise, the Dragon-Blood turns disease into another weapon in her arsenal. She strikes at a foe with malaise-bearing Essence, afflicting him with any mundane disease that she's successfully made a Medicine roll to treat during the chronicle. This is a difficulty 3 gambit using any combat Ability. Success exposes that enemy to the disease, with every two threshold successes on the Dragon-Blood's Initiative roll imposing a −1 penalty on his (Stamina + Resistance) roll against its virulence. Trivial foes and crashed enemies acquire the disease at Major intensity on a failed roll.

With Medicine 5, Essence 5, the Dragon-Blood may add supernatural diseases that she's treated with a successful Medicine roll to the repertoire of ailments she can inflict by repurchasing this Charm for each disease. She must pay a one-Willpower surcharge to do so, and the difficulty of the gambit rises to 5. Incurable or irresistible diseases such as the Great Contagion cannot be transmitted through this Charm.

Flesh-as-Stone Inurement

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Medicine 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Grievous Wound Alteration Energy

The Dragon-Blood brushes her fingers across pressure points to numb her patient to pain. She rolls (Wits + Medicine) against a difficulty of (an ally's wound penalty + 1). Success lets that character ignore (the Dragon-Blood's Essence/2, rounded up) points of wound penalties for the scene.

Alternatively, this Charm can be used to numb an enemy's limb, a gambit rolled against an enemy at close range with (Dexterity + [Brawl, Martial Arts, or Medicine]). Its difficulty equals (higher of the target's Stamina or Resistance). Success imposes a −3 penalty on all actions taken with the struck appendage until the victim receives a day's bed rest. This can be healed with magic such as Wound-Banishing Strike (**Exalted**, p. 343).

Jade Crucible Method

Cost: 1ahl; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Grievous Wound Alteration Energy

Essence flows through all living things, the ultimate source of vitality. Drawing on her understanding of this principle, the Dragon-Blood may heal others at the cost of her own life. After spending fifteen minutes meditating or performing medical treatment, she may roll (current temporary Willpower), gaining one mote per success and one Willpower for each 10. This can raise her above her Willpower rating. These motes and Willpower can only be spent on Medicine Charms, and are lost if unspent by the end of the day.

This Charm may only be used once per day, unless reset by succeeding on a Medicine roll to treat a character the Dragon-Blood has a Major or Defining positive Tie for.

Most Beneficent Seed of the Five Dragons

Cost: 5m, 1ahl; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 5
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Jade Crucible Method

The blood of the Dragons is precious beyond measure, manifesting the vitality of a lineage that reaches back to the dawn of time. Slicing a palm to pour out a draught of her own blood, the Dragon-Blood confers this undying vigor on her patient. She doubles 7s on a roll to provide medical treatment.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by achieving a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) through medical skill or expertise, such as successfully treating a plague-ridden city or saving the life of a sibling stricken with a supernatural malady.

Melee

Stoking Bonfire Style

Cost: 1m per die *or* 2m per +1 Parry; **Mins:** Melee 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental *or* Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Fire, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's aggression stokes her Essence hotter and higher as she strikes relentlessly at her opponent, until he finally falls before her onslaught. She may add bonus dice on a Melee attack roll for one mote each, or raise her Parry for two motes per +1. When she lands an attack against an enemy or blocks one with this Charm, the cost of using this Charm against him is cumulatively lowered by one mote on subsequent rounds. Missing an attack or failing to parry resets the discount, as does attacking or blocking against another enemy, or going a round without using this Charm.

Burning Fury Wreath

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Melee 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's superheated edge cuts through armor as though it were ice. She ignores (Strength/2, rounded up) points of Hardness, plus an additional point for every 10 on her attack roll.

In Fire Aura, double the Hardness ignored.

Flame-Borne Interception

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Melee 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Fire, Uniform
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: None

Flames wreathe the Exalt's weapon, burning brighter with each blow that it deflects. She gains +1 Parry until her next turn. This increases by one each time she blocks an attack. This bonus resets if the Dragon-Blood is hit by an attack, or defends using an Ability other than Melee.

Blinding Spark Distraction

Cost: 1m, 1i; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Fire, Uniform, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flame-Borne Interception

Sparks fly from the Dragon-Blood's weapon as it wards off an attack, blinding her foes. Successfully blocking an attack or winning a clash from close range blinds her attacker (**Exalted**, p. 168) until the end of his next turn unless he succeeds on a (Stamina + Resistance) roll at a difficulty of (her Essence + the successes he missed by).

Graceful Flowing Defense

Cost: 2m, 1i; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Uniform, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flame-Borne Interception

The Dragon-Blood's weapon moves like a flowing river to deflect enemy attacks, suffused with the grace and serenity of water. She ignores a single point of penalty to her Parry.

In Water Aura, she ignores (higher of Essence or 3) points of penalty to her Parry.

Crimson Fang Bite

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Dual, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Burning Fury Wreath

The Dragon-Blood channels the fury of the flame to strike a devastating blow. She adds (higher of Essence or Strength) to the raw damage of a **withering** attack, or doubles (Strength) 10s on a **decisive** damage roll.

Demon-Crushing Wolf Bite

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Perilous, Withering-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Fang Bite

Emerald thorns burst from the Terrestrial's weapon, adding (Stamina) Overwhelming to a **withering** attack.

In Wood Aura, the Dragon-Blood adds (Stamina) to the raw damage of the attack as well.

Elemental Sheath

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

Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood consigns an artifact Melee weapon to the elements, banishing it Elsewhere through a dramatic and significant manifestation of an element that is at least as large as her weapon. Her daiklave might become translucent and fluid as she touches it to the surface of a lake, dissolving into the body of water; a direlance plunged into a boulder or stone wall might vanish into it; a goremaul fades away as a strong gust of wind carries it away. She may alternatively recall it from a similar manifestation of the same element.

If the Exalt doesn't have access to an appropriate elemental manifestation, she may expend a level of anima to banish or recall her weapon. Once banished this way, it may be recalled through a manifestation of her Aspect element.

Dragon-Graced Weapon

Cost: —; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: None
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Elemental Sheath

When the Dragon-Blood recalls a banished weapon with Elemental Sheath, it's wreathed with the element she summons it forth from (or her Aspect element, if she expends anima to summon it). Alternatively, the Dragon-Blood can use Elemental Sheath to reflexively shape and ready a mundane Melee weapon from an elemental manifestation, drawing the flames of a bonfire into a lance or shaping a sword from the razor-sharp edge of a biting gale. Either way, the weapon gains benefits based on the chosen element:

Air: Wind chills the weapon to a deadly cold. An enemy damaged by a **decisive** attack takes a –1 penalty on physical rolls until the end of his next turn.

Earth: Bulky stones reinforce the weapon, granting the Smashing tag. If it already has that tag, its smash attacks deal an additional die of damage.

Fire: Flames wreathe the weapon, granting +1 Overwhelming.

Water: The weapon is fluid and graceful, granting the Flexible and Grappling tags. If it already has at least one of those tags, add one bonus die on the attack roll of grapple gambits.

Wood: Vines or roots twine around the weapon, granting the Disarming tag. If it already has that tag, add one bonus die on the attack roll of disarm gambits.

Crossfire Flash

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Fire, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Blinding Spark Distraction

A wave of flame rolls down the Dragon-Blood's weapon as she strikes, flying into her enemy's eyes or scorching other extremities. She rerolls (Essence) non-1 failures on the attack roll of a clash attack. Each rerolled die that shows a 10 strips away a success from her foe's own attack roll.

Flame Warden Stance

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire, Perilous
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Flame-Borne Interception

The Dragon-Blood's gleaming blade flickers into place between her allies and her enemies. She takes a defend other action (**Exalted**, p. 196) that extends its benefits to one scene, without needing to take the defend other action again on subsequent turns. Her ward must be within close range to benefit, but this Charm doesn't end if he moves out of range.

In Fire Aura, each time the Dragon-Blood parries an attack against her ward, she adds one bonus die to his next attack roll.

Blazing Interception

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Counterattack, Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flame Warden Stance

The Dragon-Blood's battle spirit flares as she fends off peril to her ward, driving her forward in a fiery counterstrike. After successfully parrying an attack against a character she's protecting with a defend other action, she may respond with a **decisive** counterattack.

In Fire Aura, the Dragon-Blood's ward may attempt a reflexive distract gambit (**Exalted**, p. 200) against his attacker to benefit the Exalt before she makes her counterattack. This doesn't count as her ward's attack for the round.

Steel Tempest Strike

Cost: 4m, 1wp, expend Air Aura; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Air)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Exalt leaps into the air and rides a current of wind to strike at her foe with deadly speed. On her turn, she may use her movement action to advance one range band towards an enemy at short range and make a **decisive** attack against him. She ignores difficult terrain, and may skim over chasms or pits as long as she ends on solid ground. This doesn't count as her attack for the round.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by gaining 15+ Initiative in a single tick.

Falling Mountain Fang

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood strikes a blow laden with Earth Essence, magnifying the weight of whatever she strikes. She makes one of the following gambits:

Weigh Down Weapons (Difficulty 6): Earth Essence weighs down a weapon, increasing its weight a thousandfold for the rest of the scene. The wielder must reflexively roll a Strength 5 feat of strength against (the Exalt's Essence + her Initiative roll threshold successes) or drop the weapon to the ground. Such a feat is also required to lift it or ready it. Even if the wielder does retain his hold on the weapon or later manage to lift it, all attack rolls with it take a −3 penalty, and carrying it while moving counts as difficult terrain.

Weigh Down Armor (Difficulty 4): This gambit increases the mobility penalty of armor by −3, and requires the wielder to spend one Initiative in order to take any movement action. This penalty only lasts three rounds, but a subsequent use of this Charm allows a difficulty 5 gambit against the weighted armor that intensifies its weight until the wearer can no longer stand, forcing him prone and preventing him from taking any movement actions at all for the rest of the scene. He can free himself by removing the armor (**Exalted**, p. 591).

Collapse Structure (Difficulty 3+): The Dragon-Blood can collapse flimsy, weakened, or uneven structures, such as a poorly maintained bridge, a makeshift barricade, or an ancient statue. The difficulty is equal to the Strength minimum of the feat that would be necessary to destroy that structure (**Exalted**, p. 231), although the Dragon-Blood need not actually possess that much Strength.

Harnessed Firestorm Assault

Cost: 10m, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Channeling pure Fire Essence to stoke her spirit's fervor and her body's speed, the Dragon-Blood unleashes a furious series of blows that blister the air and fell her foes. She makes ([higher of Dexterity or Strength]/2, rounded down) **decisive** attacks, divided among one or more enemies. If she has an applicable Melee specialty, she adds it to the relevant Attribute to determine how many attacks she makes. Each attack has a base damage equal to (Initiative/2, rounded up), and she doesn't reset to base Initiative until she's completed all attacks. If she uses any non-Excellency Fire Charms to enhance these attacks, she need only pay their cost once.

Harnessed Firestorm Assault can only be used once per scene, unless reset by successfully landing a **decisive** attack while in Fire Aura and building up to Initiative 12+ without leaving Fire Aura.

Roaring River Slash

Cost: 5m, 1wp, expend Water Aura; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The outer edge of the Dragon-Blood's attack is followed by a ribbon of water moving at incredible speed. She makes a **decisive** attack and rolls its damage twice, combining both results to determine the total damage. If used together with offensive magic that sets foes on fire, the water extinguishes the flames.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by going a full round without either making attacks or being attacked. It cannot be reset while the Dragon-Blood is crashed.

Aura of Grasping Branches

Cost: 5m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Perilous, Signature (Wood)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Terrestrial takes on a defensive stance that emulates the snarled branches of a forest, or a beautiful flower's blossom. Each round, she may ignore up to (Essence) points of onslaught penalty to her Parry. She may divide this among multiple attacks in a round, as long as she ignores no more than (Essence) total points of penalty in a single round.

In Wood Aura, the Dragon-Blood doesn't take onslaught penalties from attacks she successfully parries.

Dragon Soul Burst

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Fang Bite

Through intense effort and concentration, the Dragon-Blood can channel a burst of flames through her attack. To use this Charm, she must first spend a turn aiming at an enemy within close range. On her next turn, she may use this Charm to make a **decisive** attack with a base damage of (her Essence + 2), ignoring Hardness. This doesn't include her Initiative or reset her to base Initiative. An enemy that takes 3+ levels of damage from the attack is set ablaze, suffering (Essence) dice of lethal damage on each of his turns until he extinguishes the flames.

In Fire Aura, the Dragon-Blood may add her Initiative to the base damage of this attack. Doing so resets her Initiative to base.

Smoldering Essence Attack

Cost: 5m, 1a; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Fire, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon Soul Burst

The concentrated Essence of flame limns the edge of the Exalt's weapon and burns in her enemy's blood and soul, searing away his fighting spirit. She makes a **withering** attack, burning away an extra point of her foe's Initiative for every 10 on the damage roll, which she doesn't gain. The victim suffers this Initiative loss again on each of his next (Essence) turns, or until he damages the Dragon-Blood with a **withering** attack.

Burning Pinnacle Strike

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Fire, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Smoldering Essence Attack

The Exalt's body, skill, and Essence unite in the moment of her triumph, striking a rapid blow guided by sheer instinct and the flame of her fighting spirit. After making a **withering** attack that leaves her with an Initiative higher than that of all enemies present in the combat, she reflexively makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack. This doesn't count as her attack for the round.

This Charm may only be used once per round.

Root-and-Hand Merging

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Elemental Sheath

The Dragon-Blood is one with her weapon. Roots spring from the bones of her wrists and hands and from her weapon's grip, interlocking to form an unbreakable hold. She gains +1 Parry when blocking with the bound weapon, and the difficulty to disarm it increases by +2.

In Wood Aura, this doesn't count as a Charm bonus.

Portentous Comet Deflection

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Crossfire Flash

The Exalt sees with eyes of fire, realizing the perfect path of a strike the moment before she suffers an attack. She may reflexively clash an attack against her with a **decisive** attack. This counts as her attack for the round, and can't be used if she's already made an attack this round.

In Fire Aura, the Dragon-Blood may expend her Aura to clash without it counting as her attack for the round.

Fire Incites Water to a Riot of Clouds

Cost: 4m, 3i; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Clash, Fire/Water, Withering-only
Duration: Instant



Prerequisite Charms: Portentous Comet Deflection

Water vapor or rain boils into steam as the arc of the Dragon-Blood's attack agitates them with ferocious Essence, whipping a great cloud from the air as she intercepts her enemy's blow. She may reflexively clash an attack against her with a **withering** attack, without it counting as her attack for the round. She doesn't gain any Initiative from the damage roll, but a successful clash creates a steam cloud that spreads out to close range from her enemy, plus an additional range band for every five points of **withering** damage dealt to him. Any of the Dragon-Blood's allies that are within the steam cloud gain one point of Initiative for every 10 on her damage roll. The cloud remains for the rest of the scene, or until dispersed by strong winds or magic.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack while at 15+ Initiative in either Fire or Water Aura.

Mela's Flashing Tongue

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Withering-only
Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Burning Pinnacle Strike

Flaws and openings in her foe's defense draw the Exalt's blade as the mountain draws the lightning. The Dragon-Blood makes a number of **withering** attacks against a single opponent equal to his onslaught penalty at the time she activates this Charm, maximum (Dexterity + Strength), static crackling around her as spent Essence builds a charge in the air. Each **withering** damage roll only grants Initiative equal to half the damage inflicted, rounded down.

In Air Aura, the Dragon-Blood may use the final attack of this Charm to make a **decisive** attack instead of a **withering** attack, channeling the electric charge that has built around her into a final, devastating flash. This attack resets her to base Initiative even if it misses.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by dealing enough decisive damage with a single attack to incapacitate a nontrivial enemy with an uninjured health track.

Mirror-on-Water Focus

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Counterattack, Decisive-only, Mute,

Perilous, Water
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Fire Incites Water to a Riot of Clouds

When her spirit is becalmed, the Dragon-Blood becomes empty and still. She generates no killing intent, and reflects the killing intent of her enemies back upon them. To use this Charm, the Dragon-Blood's anima must be at the dim level, and it ends if her anima rises above dim. If an enemy attacks her, she may end this Charm to make a **decisive** counterattack *before* the enemy rolls his attack, with a base damage equal to (her attacker's Initiative/2, rounded up). She isn't reset to base Initiative by this attack; instead, every success on the damage roll strips one point of Initiative from her attacker, reducing the damage of his own attack, in addition to dealing damage. This counts as the Dragon-Blood's attack for the round, and cannot be used if she's already attacked this round.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by using its prerequisite to successfully clash and deal 20+ **withering** damage while in Water Aura.

Occult

Hidden Secrets Whisper

Cost: 1m per die; **Mins:** Occult 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Excellency
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Attuned to the subtle winds of the spiritual, the Dragon-Blood draws forth sublime truths. She may add bonus dice to an Occult roll for one mote each. Each 10 rerolls a non-1 failed die.

Soul-Fire Cremation Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Occult 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Reciting holy texts or heartfelt words, the Exalt returns a corpse to nature. She may burn a mortal's corpse to ashes in a few seconds, ensuring the deceased's lower soul won't linger in the world as a hungry ghost. An existing hungry ghost is unaffected, though the destruction of its corpse requires it to find a new place it can spend the day without being destroyed by sunlight (**Exalted**, pp. 503-504).

This rite provides emotional catharsis to the deceased's ghost, allowing it to abandon its undead existence and enter the cycle of reincarnation if it chooses. Even if it doesn't, the ritual appeases it, causing it to form a positive Minor Tie towards the Dragon-Blood that cannot be fully removed until the story's end.

Seed and Salt Warding

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth *or* Wood
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood lays down a line of salt or germinated grain to keep ghosts at bay (**Exalted**, p. 506), spanning up to a single range band. The aspect of this Charm depends on which she uses — salt is Earth, while grain is Wood. She rolls (Intelligence + Occult) to determine the power of the warding. Powerful ghosts who could normally cross the line by spending Willpower can only do so if their Resolve exceeds the Dragon-Blood's successes on her Occult roll. Otherwise, they cannot cross the line. The line also repels other forms of undead, such as zombies or hungry ghosts.

Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Occult 1, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

Drawing back the veil between worlds, the Dragon-Blood makes invisible spirits and phantasms visible within the glass. To use this Charm, she must be touching a mirror or a similar reflective surface, such as the blade of a well-polished daiklave. The Exalt can see the reflections of dematerialized characters in that mirror, and can even hear what they say in the form of whispers that rise up from the mirror's surface. Only the Exalt is capable of seeing the reflection — to others, even the spirit itself, it doesn't appear in the mirror.

This doesn't allow the Dragon-Blood to physically interact with spirits, but it can be used in conjunction with magic that does. Using reflections to pinpoint a foe is somewhat awkward — instead of fully negating the −3 penalty for attacking a dematerialized spirit one can't see, it reduces the penalty to −1.

An Occult 5, Essence 3 repurchase of this Charm lets the Dragon-Blood pay one Willpower to make the spirit reflections visible and audible to her allies as well. Their attacks against it still take a −1 penalty.

Spirit-Grounding Shout

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Occult 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique

Rending the air with a fierce kiai, the Dragon-Blood strikes that which cannot be struck. She can strike a dematerialized character with an attack made with any Ability. If the Exalt is unable to see her target, her attack roll suffers a −3 penalty.

If the Exalt uses this Charm on her next turn to attack the same enemy, its mote cost is lowered by one. This discount can be stacked, to a minimum cost of zero. Attacking another character or going a round without attacking that spirit resets the discount to zero.

Secret Wind Revelation

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique

Attuned to subtle currents of spiritual wind, the Dragon-Blood can hear a demon's whispers or a ghost's tread. When a dematerialized entity comes within long range or closer of the Exalt, the Storyteller informs her player that she may activate this Charm. She rolls (Perception + Awareness) with (Occult) bonus dice opposing its (Dexterity + Stealth) roll to pinpoint his location.

A failed roll still reveals the presence of a dematerialized being nearby. However, that entity uses the result of his Stealth roll to establish concealment against the Dragon-Blood until the scene ends or he breaks concealment, escaping her notice even if she later uses Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique. She cannot use this Charm against the same spirit for the rest of the scene.

Dragon's Sacred Talon

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Dual, Earth *or* Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Seed and Salt Warding

When darkness gnaws at the roots of the world and chaos threatens the very balance of Creation, it's the will of the Dragons that restores order. This Charm can supplement an attack made with any Ability, drawing upon the orderly Essence of Earth to strike down raksha and other creatures of the Wyld, or channeling vital Wood Essence to destroy one of the undead. A **withering** attack adds (Essence) dice to its damage after subtracting the target's soak. A **decisive** attack deals aggravated damage and doubles 10s on the damage roll.

Fivefold Resonance Sense

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air/Earth/Fire/Water/Wood
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

Closing her eyes and stilling her mind, the Dragon-Blood reaches out to the Essence of the world. She may spend up to a scene in meditation, during which she can sense the presence of the five elements — weather patterns, rock formations and geology, fires, bodies of water, living plants, and similar elemental manifestations — out to (the higher of Essence or 3) range bands. Their presence is revealed to her without a roll. In addition, she adds a single non-Charm bonus die on any Awareness, Investigation, Occult, or Survival rolls to detect or track jade, elementals, elemental demesnes and manses, or other form of elemental magic for the duration.

An Occult 5, Essence 3 repurchase waives the meditation requirement, allowing the Dragon-Blood to benefit from this Charm while acting normally.

Spirit-Chaining Strike

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Grounding Shout

Dragging a spirit halfway into the material realm with her attack, the Dragon-Blood exposes it to her allies. She rolls a gambit using any combat Ability against a dematerialized foe, adding (Essence/2, rounded up) bonus successes on the attack roll. Spirit-Grounding Shout enhances this attack for free. The difficulty of the gambit is equal to (the target's Essence). A successful gambit weaves gossamer threads of wind through the spirit, binding it partly to the material world. While it doesn't become fully materialized, it's visible to all Dragon-Blooded characters in the scene, and can attack or be attacked by them as though it were material. This lasts for one round, plus an additional round for every two threshold successes the Exalt rolled on the gambit's Initiative roll.

Hundred Devils Whirlwind

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood stirs the winds of the spirit world into a mighty storm. She rolls (Wits + Occult) with double 9s to create a mystical vortex extending out to medium range, and chooses whether it repels spirits and other dematerialized characters or draws them in. Both material and dematerialized spirits are affected.

Each target whose Resolve is beaten is blown one range band in the chosen direction. As long as they remain within medium range of the Exalt, they cannot use Hurry Home to escape and treat any movement opposing the whirlwind's direction as difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199).

Sage of Iron Meditation

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: (Stamina) days
Prerequisite Charms: None

Her will tempered by the blood of dragons, the Exalt imposes order onto chaos. She may spend up to (Stamina) days in meditation. As long as her focus remains unbroken, the Wyld abides by the natural laws of Creation out to short range from her, and cannot cause any mutation, addiction, or other warping to characters in that range. She gains Hardness 20 against attacks made by creatures of the Wyld, and such beings within short range of her lose two Initiative at the start of each turn as long as she continues meditating. Crashed creatures of the Wyld suffers a single die of aggravated damage instead.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy by defeating a creature of the Wyld.

Smoke Ascends to Heaven

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Offering up an efficacious prayer, the Dragon-Blood casts an offering into the fire, beseeching a spirit's favor in exchange for the pleasing scent of smoke. She makes a persuade roll with any social Ability,



doubling 7s, to influence a spirit in person, or to offer up a prayer through any fire. A prayer made from afar will always be heard if the sacrifice is made in the spirit's temple or overseen by one of its priests; otherwise, the Storyteller determines whether the spirit hears the offer.

The intensity of any of the spirit's Intimacies that support the influence is treated as one step higher when determining the level of task it's willing to accept (**Exalted**, p. 216). Even if it has no applicable Intimacies, she treats it as having a Minor Tie towards her that supports the influence. This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) by interacting with spirits. If the Dragon-Blood's prayer isn't heard, no reset is necessary.

Crashing Wave-Dragons Warding

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: (Essence) hours
Prerequisite Charms: None

Blessing a body of running water with her touch, the Dragon-Blood bids it to flow sanctified and pure. Performing the consecration takes one minute. If the body of water is no more than a single range band wide, this effect extends (Essence x2) range bands downstream in a direction of her choice. If it's wider than that, the effect extends (Essence) range bands.

Any demon, undead, or fae that enters the water suffers its wrath in the form of dragon-shaped waves, an environmental hazard with difficulty 5 and Damage (Essence)B/round. They also suffer a −3 penalty on physical actions as long as they touch the water, on top of any penalties crossing normally involves. **Withering** attacks directed at these creatures deal an additional level of Initiative damage.

A character whose Essence exceeds the Exalt's may spend one Willpower as a miscellaneous action that can't be flurried to best the wave-dragons in a dramatic display of its supernatural prowess, freeing it (but not other characters) from this Charm's effects for the remainder of its duration. This counts as both its attack and movement for that round.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by successfully advancing a personal goal or one of the Hearth's group goals by defeating or overcoming a significant demon, fae, or undead in combat or in another milieu, such as intrigue or a contest of riddles.

Eternal Death-Banishing Blossom

Cost: 10m, 1wp (+3a on next turn); **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Perilous, Signature (Wood)
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood, utterly serene, channels the fierce persistence of life through her anima banner, which branches out like a great tree budding with petals of iridescent light. To use this Charm, she must be at bonfire anima. She gains +2 Defense and (Essence + 3) bonus soak. Against undead enemies or necromantic attacks, this increases to +3 Defense and (Essence + 5) soak.

On the Dragon-Blood's next turn, as long as she's still at bonfire anima and not crashed, her anima banner finally blooms as she expends it. Petals of shimmering Essence fall out to medium range from her. This petal-storm is harmless to the living, but any undead or ghost caught in it must succeed on a difficulty 5 (Stamina + Resistance) roll or take aggravated damage equal to (the Exalt's current Initiative/2, rounded up), minimum (Essence). Even dematerialized undead are affected by the petals. Trivial undead foes are automatically destroyed. Against undead Exalted such as Abyssals and powerful beings such as Deathlords, the damage can't exceed (her Essence).

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Blazing Purification Chant

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Soul-Fire Cremation Technique, Spirit-Chaining Strike

Affixing a prayer strip to the forehead of a victim of possession, the Dragon-Blood speaks a potent incantation, setting the paper alight. This flame doesn't burn the possessed character, but rather, the possessing entity. The Dragon-Blood rolls ([Charisma or Intelligence] + Occult) against the possessing being's Resolve. Success deals (her Essence + threshold successes) dice of **decisive** aggravated damage to the possessor, ignoring Hardness. If the total damage equals or exceeds that being's Essence rating, it's forced out of its host, and cannot attempt to possess him again for the rest of the story. Otherwise, the host can't benefit from any use of this Charm until a day has passed.

Up to five Dragon-Blooded who know this Charm can use it cooperatively. Each character beyond the first adds one additional die of damage.

Spirit-Shredding Attack

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Chaining Strike

Rending a spirit's ephemeral form, the Dragon-Blood disperses its Essence like dust on the wind. Her **decisive** attack with any combat Ability against a crashed spirit adds attack roll threshold successes as dice of damage. A spirit slain by this attack can potentially reform its Essence (**Exalted**, pp. 508-509), but does so greatly diminished, losing a *permanent* dot of Essence. This reduces its mote pool by ten motes, and may deny it access to certain Charms based on their Essence minimums.

Seal of Heavenly Binding

Cost: 5m, 1a, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Shredding Attack

The Terrestrial raises her hand in a devil-sealing mudra, raising a binding circle around a spirit or creature of the Wyld. This is a gambit rolled with (Intelligence + Occult) against the Resolve of a spirit out to short range. The difficulty of the gambit is equal to (that being's Essence). Outside of combat, this Charm only requires the (Intelligence + Occult) roll against Resolve to succeed.

On a success, the Dragon-Blood's anima traces an efficacious sigil that entraps that spirit for a single round, plus an additional round for every two threshold successes on the Initiative roll (one scene outside of combat). It immediately materializes, if it wasn't already material, and cannot dematerialize or use the Hurry Home Charm. It cannot move out of the circle or attack enemies outside it, although those who enter the circle to reach close range are fair game. The bound spirit may use its entire turn to attempt to break out of the circle, spending one Willpower to make a (Wits + Integrity) roll opposing an (Intelligence + Occult) made by the Dragon-Blood. Success breaches the circle and lets the being escape.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Chaos-Banishing Revelation Gesture

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon's Sacred Talon, Seal of Heavenly Binding

The Dragon-Blood strikes away temptations and madness born of the Wyld with a mudra of revelation, restoring the harmony of reality. She may free a character within short range of any Psyche effect or Derangement imposed by a creature of the Wyld or exposure to the Wyld itself, including Wyld addiction. The Exalt rolls ([Intelligence or Wits] + Occult) against the Resolve of the character she treats, but (the Essence of the creature that used that magic) is added to his Resolve. A successful roll terminates unnatural influence or removes a Derangement. On a failed roll, the Dragon-Blood cannot use this Charm to treat that character for the same affliction again for the rest of the story.

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Purifying Dragon Suspiration

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air/Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Blazing Purification Chant, Chaos-Banishing Revelation Gesture

The winds banish smog and miasma; the running river washes away pollution. Embodying all the purifying power of Creation, the Dragon-Blood cleanses curses and spiritual malaise. This Charm is an extended (Intelligence + Occult) action that can be used to free one character of a sorcerous curse, such as the spell Corrupted Words, or a shaping effect that transforms the victim's body. It can also lower the intensity of a magically inflicted Derangement by one step. However, sorcerous workings can't be broken with this Charm. The extended action has a difficulty equal to (the Essence of the character that imposed the effect), a goal number of (that character's Essence x10), terminus 10, and an interval of one month. The Dragon-Blood must use this Charm at each interval, anointing the beneficiary with sacred cleansing water or using ritual fans to drive away evil.

Some curses are beyond the power of this Charm to purify. This includes Solar Circle Sorcery; the magic of the Celestial Incarnae, Yozis, and Deathlords; or any other effect the Storyteller deems completely beyond the capability of the Terrestrial Exalted to break.

Anathema-Sealing Tomb

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

Keywords: Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Seal of Heavenly Binding

When the Dragon-Blood incapacitates a spirit with a **decisive** attack, she may use this Charm to seal its Essence away into the nearest dramatic manifestation of Earth Essence: the depths of a cavern, a cairn or standing stone, a statue, an Earth demesne or manse, a mountain, or something similar. The imprisoned spirit is unable to reform itself (**Exalted**, pp. 508-509) for at least (Essence) centuries, and spirits that cannot reform themselves (including most elementals and First Circle Demons) are sealed away permanently. The spirit can be freed by destroying its earthen prison, a dramatic endeavor as difficult as the Storyteller deems appropriate. It's unknown what would happen if this Charm were used to seal one of the Deathlords or Yozis; the result is explicitly left up to the Storyteller's discretion.

Sorcery

Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Any four Occult Charms

The Dragon-Blood steps across the threshold of the Emerald Circle, and is forever changed. She gains the ability to cast spells of the Terrestrial Circle, and learns one shaping ritual (**Exalted**, p. 466) and one Terrestrial Circle spell, which becomes her control spell.

Five Winds Raiment

Cost: 3m, 1a; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air
Duration: Until spell is cast
Prerequisite Charms: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

The Dragon-Blood's anima banner twists into a whirlwind as Essence gathers in her hand, shielding her from all harm. This Charm supplements a Shape Sorcery action (**Exalted**, p. 465). The winds grant her +1 Defense and (Essence) Hardness until she casts the spell or stops shaping.

In Air Aura, this doesn't count as a Charm bonus, and the Hardness granted rises to (higher of Essence or Stamina).

Dragon-Sorcerer Puissance

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Balanced
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

The Dragon-Blood's elemental Essence overflows into her sorcery. Whenever she shapes a spell based on a single element, such as Flight of the Brilliant Raptor, Invulnerable Skin of Bronze, or Wood Dragon's Claw, she gains a single additional sorcerous mote each round she spends shaping it.

If the Dragon-Blooded is in the Aura state that matches the spell's element, she gains three sorcerous motes each round instead.

Performance

Universal

Audience-Enthusing Display

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Performance 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood drinks in her audience's appreciative eyes and repays them with her masterful performance. She may add automatic successes to a Performance roll for two motes each and ignores the penalty for targeting multiple characters with a social influence roll (**Exalted** p. 221).

Hidden Petal Aria

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood expresses multiple layers of meaning via an artistic performance, conveying a secret message through nuances of speech and movement. She may embed a message one sentence long into a performance, conveying it only to select members of her audience. This can incorporate social influence. Magical attempts to detect the message must succeed on a roll at difficulty (higher of her Manipulation or Performance).

Invisible Street Performer Technique

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: One performance
Prerequisite Charms: Hidden Petal Aria

The Dragon-Blood vanishes into her performance, receding from her audience's notice. She rolls (Manipulation + Performance). As long as she continues to perform, characters whose Resolve is beaten by her roll cannot directly notice her. While they see or hear her artistic display, they pay no mind to the person performing it. The Dragon-Blood can take other actions while continuing the performance by flurrying them with a miscellaneous action to continue performing, but this Charm ends if the Dragon-Blood stops performing, rolls Join Battle, or takes an overt action that draws notice to herself, such as brandishing a weapon.

Dance of Flashing Swords

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Invisible Street Performer Technique

The Dragon-Blood can pass off a fight to the death as a piece of street theater. She makes a special instill roll with (Manipulation + Performance) against all bystanders to a combat or other violent altercation, explaining how it is actually an artistic performance. A character whose Resolve is beaten by this roll accepts the Dragon-Blood's explanation of the scene's events. He cannot spend Willpower to resist this influence unless the circumstances of the fight dramatically change in a way that undermines the Exalt's lie, or if his ignorance would pose a threat to one of his Major or Defining Intimacies.

Unlike other Simple Charms, Dance of Flashing Swords can be placed in a flurry.

Talented Improvisation

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood is moved by an innate genius for performance, intuiting the entire composition of a song after hearing only a few notes or turning a clumsy misstep into the beginning of a provocative dance. After making a Performance roll, she rerolls (Essence) non-1 failed dice. If she uses a stunt to explain how she recovers from her misstep, this Charm's cost is reduced by the stunt's level.

Soul-Stirring Performance

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Talented Improvisation

The Dragon-Blood's grace and beauty sow the seeds of passion in her audience's hearts. She makes an inspire roll with (Essence) non-Charm bonus dice. A character whose Resolve is beaten must enter a Decision Point to resist, calling on an Intimacy of any intensity that opposes the emotion the performance conveys.

Heart-Strengthening Defense

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: One performance
Prerequisite Charms: Soul-Stirring Performance

The Dragon-Blood's performance charges her audience with the vital will to endure. All characters that can see or hear her performance gain +1 Resolve against any other influence, or +2 Resolve against Psyche effects or other unnatural influence. The Dragon-Blood can take other actions while continuing the performance by flurrying them with a miscellaneous action to continue performing.

Harmonious Life-Affirming Song

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: One performance
Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Strengthening Defense

The Dragon-Blood's performance revives those who hear it, like the coming of an early spring. All characters who witness her performance add a bonus success on rolls against poison, disease, and other maladies, and multiply the rate at which they heal damage (**Exalted**, p. 173) by (Essence + [Charisma or Appearance]). The Dragon-Blood can take other actions while continuing the performance by flurrying them with a miscellaneous action to continue performing.

Irresistible Whirlpool Diversion

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: One performance
Prerequisite Charms: Soul-Stirring Performance

The Dragon-Blood's performance draws in her audience's attention like a maelstrom sucking in flotsam, making it difficult for them to pay attention to anything but her. She rolls ([Manipulation or Appearance] + Performance) with double 9s. Any audience members with a Resolve lower than her rolled successes suffers a penalty of (her Essence) to Awareness-based rolls to pay attention to anything or anyone other than her. The Dragon-Blood can take other actions while continuing the performance by flurrying them with a miscellaneous action to continue performing.

Thundering Dragon Proclamation

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

Breathing deep of the world, the Dragon-Blood raises her voice to a resounding shout, her words rumbling across the sky like thunder. Her voice is loud enough to be heard clearly by characters at extreme range, up to four bands away from her. The influence she can take through her amplified voice is limited to inspire and threaten actions, but she ignores environmental or distance penalties. She doubles 9s on all voice-based Performance rolls, as well as command actions (**Exalted**, p. 209). She may lower her voice to normal volume, and must do so to engage in non-Performance forms of social influence, but doesn't benefit from doubles 9s when she does.

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Tears-From-Stone Eloquence

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's performance brings the world into harmony, suffusing the traditions and institutions of society with the enduring Essence of earth. She makes an inspire roll with (Charisma + Performance). If any character's Resolve is overcome by the inspire roll, his player must choose a response to the inspired emotion that will affirm, support, or protect a social institution or tradition that he has an Intimacy towards. If that character has no such Intimacies, he must immediately form one at Minor intensity. A stern polemic could rouse villagers to the defense of the Immaculate Order, while a joyful tune played at a Dynastic salon might inspire shows of gratitude and goodwill to the Great House hosting it. Resisting this influence requires spending one Willpower in a Decision Point, calling upon an Intimacy at least as strong as the one affected by this Charm.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy for a social institution or tradition.

Immolating Passion Alleluia

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood lets the fires of her performance consume her, radiating passionate intensity with every word, note, or movement. She makes an inspire roll using ([Charisma or Appearance] + Performance), rolling an additional non-Charm die for every 10. The emotions she inflames are incredibly intense, compelling an equally intense response from her audience. While the player of an affected character still chooses how that character reacts to the influence, his reaction must rise to the level of at least a serious task (**Exalted**, p. 216) chosen by his player. Resisting this influence costs three Willpower.

Immolating Passion Alleluia can only be used once per story, unless reset by achieving a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134) by influencing a character to act on his passions.

Mesmerizing Siren Call

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Signature (Water)
Duration: One performance
Prerequisite Charms: None

A scintillating facade of beauty and grace conceals hidden depths of danger. The Dragon-Blood rolls (Manipulation + Performance), rerolling all dice that initially show non-1 failures. Each character whose Resolve is beaten by this roll is hypnotized by the performance. The Exalt may

spend her threshold successes over a given character's Resolve to impose one or more illusions from the following list on him for as long as she continues to perform. If she affects multiple characters, she may inflict different illusions on each, though groups of minor targets should be combined into audiences (**Exalted**, p. 223).

0 Successes	The target perceives phantasmal imagery, sounds, or scents, but is aware that they're unreal.
1 Success	The target perceives a single illusory entity or object, up to roughly the size of a person or horse, and believes it to be real. This cannot imitate a specific character.
2 Successes	The target perceives an illusory duplicate of an existing, human-sized character that the Exalt knows, and believes it to be real.
2 Successes	One individual within medium range, no larger than a human, is concealed from the target's senses. He cannot perceive the concealed character, even if she takes overt actions that would normally draw his attention, although she's revealed if she attacks him.
3 Successes	The target perceives a single large illusory entity, object, or structure, up to the size of a house or tyrant lizard, and believes it to be real. This can imitate a specific character.

The Dragon-Blood can take other actions while continuing the performance by flurrying them with a miscellaneous action to continue performing. Illusions created with this Charm act as the Exalt wills them to, but cannot physically interact with the world. If a figment engages the target in social influence, it uses the Exalt's dice pools, but she cannot enhance its rolls with her magic.

If a victim of this Charm discovers evidence that what he's perceiving isn't real, he can spend two Willpower to resist, breaking free of all illusions. Walking into an unreal fire and discovering it doesn't burn, being attacked by an enemy concealed behind an illusory wall, or noticing a discrepancy in an illusory impostor's behavior would all provide such an opportunity. In addition, he may resist if the illusions would cause him to act against or fail to protect one of his Major or Defining Intimacies.

Mesmerizing Siren Call can only be used once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) through deception.

Life-Spirit Symphony

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: One performance
Prerequisite Charms: None

Nature dances, exultant, to the Dragon-Blood's performance. Flowers blossom from her footsteps, vines twist and coil with her rhythm, and thorns turn away from harming her. As long as the Exalt continues to perform, she and all allies within medium range can ignore difficult terrain based on foliage or vegetation, its movements opening a path to let them through. Whenever a plant-based environmental hazard or poison threatens those allies, she may roll (Charisma + Performance). They can use the result of her roll in place of their own rolls to resist the hazard or poison.

The Dragon-Blood can take other actions while continuing the performance by flurrying them with a miscellaneous action to continue performing. If she wishes, she may use her miscellaneous action to direct vines and plants to attack an enemy within medium range, rolling a difficulty 4 gambit with (Charisma + Performance). Success ensnares him in vines, preventing him from taking any movement actions until he or one of his allies clears them with a difficulty 3 gambit using an edged weapon. Even after they're hacked away, they linger on as difficult terrain beneath his feet.

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Blossom Hides Thorns

Cost: 6m, 1wp, expend Wood Aura; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Mute, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dance of Flashing Swords

The Dragon-Blood turns the strumming of her fingers on an erhu's strings or the graceful steps of a dance into a facade for a deadly ambush, concluding her show with a truly breath-taking finale. To use this Charm, she must be in the middle of a performance. She rolls (Manipulation + Performance) with double 9s against the Resolve of a single target. On a successful roll, the Dragon-Blood, her allies, and her target roll Join

Battle. Either the Exalt or one of her allies, designated before the Join Battle roll, has the opportunity to make an unexpected attack against the target (**Exalted**, p. 203). If the attacker beats the target's Join Battle, the attack is an ambush that bypasses defense completely; if not, it's only a surprise attack, inflicting −2 Defense.

Dance of Flashing Swords can be activated reflexively together with this Charm to disguise the sneak attack as part of the performance. If so, its Willpower cost is waived.

Oratory

Lightning Declamation Style

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Performance 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The voice of a dragon evinces perfection. The Exalt rerolls 6s until they cease to appear on an oratorical Performance roll. If she's upholding a Major or Defining Principle, she rerolls 5s until they cease to appear as well.

Legend-Hewn Wisdom

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Declamation Style

Dragon-Blooded storytellers pass down lessons of history and tradition, ensuring that society's foundation remains strong. She rolls (Charisma + Performance) to inspire an audience with emotion by telling a story. In addition to creating the chosen emotion, this influence also instills targets with an Intimacy based on the moral or allegory of her story, either creating it at Minor intensity or strengthening an already-existing Intimacy.

A Performance 5, Essence 3 repurchase allows the Dragon-Blood to pay one Willpower to grant a temporary point of Willpower to any character that allows the influence to succeed without applying his Resolve. This Willpower may only be spent to resist influence that opposes the Intimacy instilled with this Charm. A character may only benefit from this effect once per day.

Storm-Gathering Fervor

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Aura
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Declamation Style

An electric understanding arcs between the Dragon-Blood and one who shares her values. When she uses oratory to make an inspire, instill, or persuade roll that is supported by a Principle that her target shares with her, she adds non-Charm bonus dice equal to (the Intimacy of whichever of them has the Principle at the lowest rating). If she targets multiple characters, all of them must share the same Principle with her for her to benefit from this Charm.

Epoch Saga Memory

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Legend-Hewn Wisdom

The Dragon-Blood has eidetic recall of every story she's heard before. Finding one within the depths of her memories, she forces it to the surface. Her flawless recitation adds a non-Charm bonus success on a Performance roll made to tell that story, or any mental or social roll with another Ability that could benefit from her perfect recall of every detail of the story. Alternatively, she may add +1 Resolve against an influence roll contrary to that story's moral, or +1 Guile against a roll by immersing herself in recollection, as a non-Charm bonus.

Epoch Saga Memory can only be used once per day.

Puissant Precursor's Monologue

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Storm-Gathering Fervor, Thundering Dragon Proclamation

The Dragon-Blood speaks with the undeniable authority of a revered grandmother, her every word as powerful as a bolt of lightning. She makes a persuade roll with ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Performance), doubling 7s, to convince her audience to take a course of action that upholds one of her Defining Principles. Characters who share that Intimacy with her must pay an additional point of Willpower to resist her influence.

This Charm can only be used once per story unless reset by achieving a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134) that upholds one of her Defining Principles.

Magic and Singing

Sanxian-Charming Fingers

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood draws on practice-honed perfection and creative virtuosity, doubling 9s on a Performance roll to play a musical instrument.

Voice-Uplifting Aspect

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood sings with the voice of the winds, adding an automatic success on a Performance roll to sing and rerolling a single die that showed a non-1 failure for each 10 on the roll.

Blossoming Instrument Evocation

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Sanxian-Charming Fingers

Nature itself yearns for the sweet music of the Dragon-Blood, offering itself up as the instrument of her harmony. A tree branch will reshape itself into a sanxian should she have need of it, and reeds become flutes of unsurpassed beauty in her hands. She may create a musical instrument from any living plant. If she has a Performance specialty in that instrument, it's an exceptional tool (**Exalted**, p. 580). Once this Charm's duration ends, the instrument reverts back to its natural form.

Vibrating Strings Defense

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Sanxian-Charming Fingers

The Dragon-Blooded makes no distinction between weapons and instruments, rebuking anyone gauche enough to interrupt her song. To use this Charm, she must be carrying or playing a musical instrument. She reflexively clashes an attack against her with a decisive attack, rolled with (Wits + Performance). This doesn't count as her combat action.



If successful, the Dragon-Blood doesn't roll damage or reset Initiative, but her attacker loses (Essence + attack roll threshold successes) Initiative, which she doesn't gain. The base Resolve of an enemy crashed by the gambit is set to 0 against the first Performance-based influence roll the Dragon-Blood makes against him before he recovers from crash.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by lowering an enemy's Initiative from a value higher than the Exalt's own to a value lower than hers.

Three-String Sword Prana

Cost: 7m, 1a; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Vibrating Strings Defense

Drawing on her mastery of an instrument, the Dragon-Blood suffuses its music with anima, unleashing a deadly attack with her song. She can send spectral blades flying at a foe with a strum of her sanxian, play a bone-shattering trill on a flute, create a phantasmal beast that moves in time with the beat of her drums, or similarly spectacular displays of martial prowess. This is a **decisive** attack rolled with (Wits + Performance) against an enemy out to medium range. With the Storyteller's permission, the Exalt's stunt can grant this attack any weapon tags (**Exalted**, pp. 585-590) that fit the manifestation of the attack. She rolls her Initiative for damage as usual, doubling 10s.

If the Dragon-Blood is using other Performance Charms that require her to continue playing to maintain their effect, using Three-String Sword Prana counts as continuing her performance on the round she uses it.

Battle Anthem of Ten Thousand Dragons

Cost: 4m, 4i; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Perilous, Wood
Duration: One performance
Prerequisite Charms: Three-String Sword Prana

The war-song of the Terrestrial Host has been passed down from mother to daughter for time immemorial, a battle hymn as ancient as the Divine Revolution. As long as the Dragon-Blood continues her musical performance with instruments or her voice, she and all allies that hear it gain a single bonus die on all attack rolls, combat movement, and command actions. Allied battle groups also add this bonus on rolls to resist rout. In addition, her and her allies' successful **withering** attacks grant one bonus point of Initiative. If multiple characters use this Charm, these bonuses don't stack.

The Dragon-Blood can take other actions while continuing the performance by flurrying them with a miscellaneous action to continue performing.

Dance

Swaying Boughs Arabesque

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Performance 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Moving with sensuous rhythm and vivacious appeal, the Dragon-Blood embodies beauty through dance. This Charm supplements a Performance roll to dance, lowering the Resolve of all targets by 1. This both lowers the difficulty of the roll and potentially increases the bonus dice added by the Exalt's Appearance (**Exalted**, p. 371).

Petal-Strewn Pavane

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Performance 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Perilous, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Swaying Boughs Arabesque

The Dragon-Blood makes no distinction between dance hall and field of battle. She adds (Performance) bonus dice to any combat movement roll. Additionally, she can flurry the supplemented movement with a Performance-based action without flurry penalties. This Charm can't be used if the Exalt is wearing medium or heavy armor.

In Wood Aura, this Charm also adds a non-Charm bonus success on the roll, and allows the Dragon-Blood to ignore the normal penalties for moving through difficult terrain.

Falling Leaves Sway

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Swaying Boughs Arabesque

Every movement of the Exalt's body is suffused with emotional intensity. Her Appearance adds non-Charm bonus dice to an inspire roll made through dance based on her target's Resolve (**Exalted**, p. 218). Any social influence that she or her allies subsequently use against that target in the same scene that's supported by the inspired emotion gains an automatic success.

Waltz of Honeyed Wine

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 4
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Aura, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Falling Leaves Sway

The Dragon-Blood is vivacity and allure made manifest in motion, dancing with irresistible sensuality. She converts the non-Charm dice added by her Appearance on any dance-based Performance roll to non-Charm successes. Characters with a base Resolve at least two points lower than her Appearance must spend an additional point of Willpower to resist her influence, while those whose Resolve is five points lower cannot spend Willpower to resist at all.

Waltz of Honeyed Wine can only be used once per story, unless reset by achieving a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) by playing on another character's emotions, or by seducing him.

Presence

Glowing Coal Radiance

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Presence 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The blazing power that radiates from the Dragon-Blood's every word and gesture is enough to humble those who stand before her. She may add automatic successes to a Presence roll for two motes each, and rolls an additional non-Charm die for every 10.

Eternally Argumentative Flame

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Presence 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Fire
Duration: One turn
Prerequisite Charms: None

A Dragon-Blood's tongue is but one of her many weapons. When she flurries a Presence- or Socialize-based influence roll, the flurry penalty on both actions is reduced by one point, and she doesn't suffer a Defense penalty.

In Fire Aura, this Charm removes the flurry penalty entirely.

Unbearable Taunt Technique

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Presence 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Even the meekest hearts are tinderboxes for the flames of outrage the Dragon-Blood stirs. She rolls to inspire a single character with anger. If successful, her target must immediately respond to her with hostility. His player chooses the form this takes — outrage, threats, or even Joining Battle.

In combat, this influence roll instead provokes an enemy into prioritizing attacking the Dragon-Blood instead of any of her allies on his next turn. Even if he does pay the Willpower cost to resist, he loses two Initiative if he attacks any other character that turn.

Burning Dragon Mien

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The fury of a dragon strikes fear into even the boldest hearts. The Dragon-Blood makes a threaten roll with double 9s against a single character. An enemy whose Resolve is beaten in combat loses 1 Initiative, even if he resists.

Warm-Faced Seduction Style

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood radiates desirability and enchanting allure. She makes a persuade roll to seduce a single target. Overcoming his Resolve also instills him with a Minor Tie of lust or desire toward her unless he spends Willpower to resist.

In Fire Aura, the Dragon-Blood may convert up to (Essence) bonus dice added by her Appearance (**Exalted**, p. 218) to non-Charm bonus successes.

Debate-Sparking Bonfire

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Unbearable Taunt Technique

A few choice words are all it takes to turn any soiree or party into a firestorm of argument and recriminations. The Dragon-Blood rolls to inspire one or more characters with anger, ignoring the penalty for targeting multiple characters. Affected characters must express their outrage towards the Dragon-Blood using social influence in a way chosen by their player —engaging the Dragon-Blood in an argument, bad-mouthing her to his associates, or some similar social expression of outrage. If that character already intended to commit violence against her, he may do so, but must express his rage through word and deed simultaneously.

Hot-Blooded Ardor

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Warm-Faced Seduction Style

The Dragon-Blood is fire given flesh. She treats her Appearance as one dot higher, even above 5, when determining how many bonus dice it adds (**Exalted**, p. 218) to an influence roll made with Presence or Socialize.

With a Presence 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Dragon-Blood may expend her Fire Aura to treat her Appearance as (Essence/2, rounded up) dots higher instead.

Passion-Transmuting Nuance

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Burning Dragon Mien, Unbearable Taunt Technique, Warm-Faced Seduction Style

Just as a rising tide transforms landscapes, the Terrestrial's words can turn fear to hope or delight to sorrow. She makes an inspire roll with (Manipulation + Presence) against a single character who's in the grip of strong emotion, either as a result of an inspire action (**Exalted**, p. 217), or due to roleplaying reasons. Success lets the Dragon-Blood change her target's emotion to another, unrelated passion. The new emotion is treated as a Major Intimacy even if the original wasn't inspired using influence. A character must enter a Decision Point and call on a Major or Defining Intimacy to resist this influence with Willpower.

Fearsome Dragon Presence

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire, Perilous
Duration: One tick
Prerequisite Charms: Burning Dragon Mien

The Dragon-Blood's terrifying battle aspect cows her foes. For one tick, all attack rolls, social influence rolls, and rushes made against the Dragon-Blood take a −2 penalty. An enemy may spend one Willpower to become immune to this penalty for the rest of the scene.

In Fire Aura, the penalty inflicted by this Charm rises to (Essence).

Moth to the Candle

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Unbearable Taunt Technique

Outraged foes rush headlong for the Dragon-Blood like moths plunging to their doom. The Dragon-Blood's enemies are so enraged by the sight of her that they must prioritize attacking her over any other character. This doesn't prevent them from taking non-attack actions, but they cannot attack her allies as long as she remains in the fight. An enemy can resist this for one scene by spending a point of Willpower.

This Charm also reduces the cost of Unbearable Taunt Technique to one mote. If the Dragon-Blood successfully taunts an enemy who hasn't resisted Moth to the Flame, that character must use his next turn to move into range and attack her if possible.

Grinding Millstone Argument

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Eternally Argumentative Flame

The Dragon-Blood embodies the relentless nature of earth in her persistent argument, shaking the convictions of even her strongest-willed rivals. After failing a persuade roll, she may reset her attempt (**Exalted**, p. 222), allowing her to try again. If her target uses the same

Intimacy to bolster his Resolve that he did against the original attempt, the bonus it provides is lowered by one.

Grinding Millstone Argument can only be used once per scene.

Haunting Words Infliction

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Even if the Dragon-Blood cannot persuade another with her arguments, she can give him the clarity of air to know the truth for himself when he sees it. She rolls (Charisma + Presence) with double 9s to instill a single character with an Intimacy she possesses. Even if she doesn't beat her target's Resolve or he resists, her words linger with him for (6 – his Integrity) weeks thereafter. Every gust of wind seems to whisper her argument in endless repetition, while weather patterns take on symbolic or allegorical meaning to him.

Each time the target learns new information that supports the Dragon-Blood's argument and would allow her to retry her instill action (**Exalted**, p. 222), he makes a (Charisma + Presence) instill roll against *himself*, adding (the Dragon-Blood's Essence) in non-Charm bonus dice. He cannot choose to fail the roll, and the rules for lengthy debates apply (**Exalted**, p. 219). Successfully asserting his Resolve against such a roll ends this Charm's effect.

This Charm may only be used against any given character once per story.

Virtuous Mountain's Shadow

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Disharmonious words, offensive to propriety and right action, invite the Dragon-Blood's censure. When she witnesses a character using social influence she wishes to dispute, she may draw on one of her Major or Defining Intimacies to make her counterargument. All characters who hear her gain access to that Intimacy, which they may use to bolster their Resolve against the influence or in a Decision Point. Characters who choose to accept this benefit gain the chosen Intimacy at Minor intensity.

Terrifying Fire-Dragon Roar

Cost: 10m, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Roaring with her draconic ancestors' fury, the Dragon-Blood exhales a deadly blast of fire. She rolls an unblockable **decisive** attack with (Charisma + Presence) that extends in a line out to medium range, striking all characters caught within it, including allies. The attack roll is also treated as a threaten roll against all enemies caught in the blast to terrify them into fleeing, even if they successfully dodge. The Dragon-Blood divides (her Initiative + Essence) evenly among all hit characters, rounded down, to determine the lethal damage rolled against them, ignoring Hardness. Battle groups caught in the blast suffer (Initiative + Essence) damage, which doesn't count against the total Initiative she has to divide, and must roll against rout (**Exalted**, p. 209) if their Resolve is beaten. Any flammable scenery in the area of the blast catches fire.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by gaining 15+ points of Initiative in a single tick.

Fluid Recollection Insinuation

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Essence of the Dragon-Blood's presence flows into her target's mind like seeping water, finding a place in his memories wherein she can exist. She rolls (Manipulation + Presence) as a special instill roll, describing a past encounter between the two of them that never happened. If she beats the target's Resolve, she creates a false memory, up to five minutes long, of that encounter. The memory is focused solely on the interaction between the two, whether that was a conversation, a dance at a soiree, an introduction as children, or a street brawl. Implausible claims (**Exalted**, p. 215) in this false version of events do not inflict penalties; instead they subtract successes equal to the penalty they'd normally inflict.

If a target has never met the Dragon-Blood before, he forms a Minor Tie towards her, with an emotional context chosen by his player based on the nature of the false memory. He cannot voluntarily weaken this

Tie. For him to resist this influence, other characters must fully erode the Intimacy using social influence or magic, at which point he may pay one Willpower to recognize the false memory for an illusion.

A character who already knows the Dragon-Blood can still have his memories altered. He still forms a new Minor Tie based on the false memory, but doesn't need to erode it before he may pay Willpower to recognize a discrepancy between the false memory and what he knows about the Dragon-Blood.

This Charm may only be used against any given character once per story.

Spirit-Cultivating Leadership

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: (Essence) days
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood is a source of strength for her followers and attendants, helping them realize their true potential through her leadership. She may use this Charm on a character with a Defining Tie of loyalty to her. For the duration of this Charm, he gains the following benefits:

- +2 Resolve against any influence that would weaken his Tie to the Dragon-Blood.
- Three temporary specialties of the Dragon-Blood's choice, distributed among the Archery, Athletics, Awareness, Brawl, Dodge, Integrity, Martial Arts, Melee, Presence, Resistance, Ride, Sail, Survival, Thrown, or War Abilities.
- One extra Willpower per day, which may only be spent resisting social influence. This cannot raise him above his permanent Willpower and is lost at the end of the day if not spent.

The Dragon-Blood may use this Charm on up to a maximum of (Essence +3) characters at a time.

Blazing Heart Ascendancy

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Debate-Sparking Bonfire

Fire is best fought with fire. This Charm supplements a persuade or threaten roll made with Presence or Socialize. If the target enters a Decision Point to resist the supplemented influence, the only Intimacies he can call upon to justify his resistance are those based on passion. Intimacies with no emotional power, such as a Principle of belief in the rule of law, cannot be used, even if they have a higher intensity. Characters who have no passionate Intimacies to inflame are immune to this effect.

Heartstring-Pulling Approach

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Hot-Blooded Ardor

The Dragon-Blood speaks directly to her listener's emotions, stoking the flames that burn within his heart. She adds a non-Charm success on a Presence- or Socialize-based influence roll with a single target. If the target's Resolve is lowered by a Major or Defining Intimacy based on passionate emotion, the cost to resist the influence increases by one Willpower.

Aura of Invulnerability

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Fire, Perilous
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Fearsome Dragon Presence

A fiery nimbus of anima engulfs the Dragon-Blood, burning with the radiance of her own peerless self-confidence. After paying this Charm's cost, she rolls (current temporary Willpower), gaining a temporary −0 health level for each success, and adds (Charisma) to her natural soak. Once this Charm ends, these temporary health levels fade, and all levels of damage contained in them shift back into the Dragon-Blood's damage track. If this incapacitates her, she falls unconscious, even if lethally damaged, instead of being left dead or dying.

Vivacious Dragon Beauty

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Wood
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Hot-Blooded Ardor

Suffusing her demeanor with the sensuality of Wood Essence, the Dragon-Blood affects an efficaciously seductive bearing. She gains a bonus dot of Appearance, which may raise her Appearance above 5.

Minds Like Fertile Fields

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth, Psyche
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Grinding Millstone Argument

The Dragon-Blood speaks an aphorism weighted with Earth Essence, suffusing her listener with receptive passivity. She rolls ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Presence) against the Resolve of a single character. A successful roll induces a pleasant trance state that lasts a few seconds. If anyone immediately follows this up with an influence roll targeting the entranced character, his receptive state leaves him unable to call on Intimacies to bolster his Resolve, nor can his Intimacies be exploited to lower his Resolve.

Entombed Mind Technique

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Earth, Psyche
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Minds Like Fertile Fields

With a low droning voice, the Dragon-Blood lulls her listener into dreamless sleep. To use this Charm, she must first use its prerequisite to induce a receptive state in her target. She rolls (Manipulation + Presence) against his Resolve, causing him to fall asleep unless he pays two Willpower to resist. He cannot be woken from this sleep by others without magic for the rest of the scene and an hour thereafter, and won't awake of his own volition for at least a day. While asleep, the Dragon-Blood may make a single influence roll against him with the benefits of Minds Like Fertile Fields, whispering the words in his ear as he sleeps.

With an Essence 4 repurchase, the Dragon-Blood may pay an additional five motes to place a target whose permanent Willpower is lower than her Essence into perpetual slumber. He doesn't suffer from hunger or thirst while he sleeps, nor does he age, but he cannot be woken without magical intervention. The Exalted are immune to this effect; other supernatural creatures aren't.

A third Essence 5 repurchase lets her pay a total of ten motes and two Willpower to petrify a target she could have placed into eternal slumber, transforming him into an inanimate statue. She may spend five motes and one Willpower to reverse the petrification with a touch. Otherwise, it can only be undone with magic such as Order-Affirming Blow (**Exalted**, p. 334).

This Charm may only be used against a character once per story.

Dragon Warlord's Convocation

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Blazing Heart Ascendancy, Heartstring-Pulling Approach

The Dragon-Blood forges loyalty with fiery words, overawing and inspiring those who hear her. She makes an instill roll against a single character with ([Charisma or Appearance] + Presence), doubling 9s, to create a Tie of loyalty towards her. This creates an Intimacy at Major intensity, or strengthens a Minor or Major Intimacy to Defining intensity. If the target wishes to resist, he must enter a Decision Point, calling on another Intimacy of equal or greater intensity and paying two Willpower.

For the remainder of the story, the target cannot voluntarily weaken this Intimacy unless the Dragon-Blood directly harms him or threatens one of his Major or Defining Intimacies. Even then, he can only weaken it by one level for each offense.

Dragon Warlord's Convocation can only be used once per story, unless reset by achieving a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134).

Resistance

Ox-Body Technique

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 1, Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The blood of the dragons confers incredible resilience. Each purchase of this Charm grants extra health levels based on the character's Stamina rating.

At Stamina 1 and 2: Two −2 health levels.

3 and 4: One −1 and one −2 level.

5: One −1 and two −2 levels.

This Charm may be purchased (Resistance) times. If the Dragon-Blood's Stamina increases, her health levels change to reflect her new rating.

Purifying Blood Ascendancy

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Resistance 1, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Balanced, Earth, Excellency
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The blood of the Dragons suffuses the Terrestrial's body with legendary vigor. She may add automatic successes to a Resistance roll for two motes each, and rerolls 6s until they cease to appear.

Body-Cleansing Prana

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air *or* Fire *or* Water, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood overcomes poison through mastery of her body's own internal cycle of elements, channeling Essence inward to cleanse herself of poison or disease. She may use this as an Air Charm against inhaled poisons, as a Fire Charm to burn disease from her body, or as a Water Charm against poisons transmitted through food, drink or weapons. Regardless of aspect, she doubles 9s on the roll to resist.

With a Resistance 5, Essence 3 repurchase, if the Dragon-Blood rolls enough successes to completely negate the duration of a poison, she may pay one Willpower to expel it at an enemy within short range as an unblockable attack, either exhaling a great gout of venomous gas or smoke, or driving poisons from her pores in a liquid burst. She rolls (Stamina + Resistance) against his Evasion, exposing him to the poison if successful.

Uneating Earth Meditation

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Resistance 1, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: One week
Prerequisite Charms: None

Like the earth itself, the Terrestrial has no need for external nourishment. She ignores any deprivation penalties from starvation or dehydration (**Exalted**, p. 232). Additionally, she adds (Resistance) to the amount of time she can go before succumbing to starvation or dehydration, as long as she uses this Charm for that entire time.

Untiring Earth Meditation

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Resistance 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: Uneating Earth Meditation

Exhausted, the Dragon-Blood may find sustenance in the ground beneath her feet. As long as she's standing on the ground or touching stone, she ignores fatigue penalties.

Impervious Skin of Stone

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Resistance 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Earth, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Bracing herself against a blow, the Dragon-Blood deflects attacks with the force of solid stone. She doubles her Stamina to determine her natural soak against a single **withering** attack.

In Earth Aura, this Charm can be used after an attack hits the Dragon-Blood, but before damage is rolled.

Eternal Tide Endurance

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Resistance 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Water, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Impervious Skin of Stone

The Dragon-Blood adapts to her foe's attacks, turning his force to her advantage. Every 1 on a **withering** attack roll against her increases her soak by +1.

In Water Aura, this Charm can be used against **decisive** attacks, granting two points of Hardness, plus an additional point for every 1 on the attack roll, maximum (Stamina) Hardness. This doesn't stack with other sources of Hardness.

Supple Viridian Scales

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Wood
Duration: One tick
Prerequisite Charms: Impervious Skin of Stone

The Dragon-Blood wears her armor like a second skin, pliant and yielding as living wood, as she moves with the sinuous grace of a dancing dragon. She lowers her armor's mobility penalty by 1 for a single tick. If it's light armor, she instead adds a non-Charm die on rolls to rush or disengage.

In Wood Aura, this Charm's duration lasts for as long as the Dragon-Blood remains in Aura.

(Element) Protection Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Dual
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Impervious Skin of Stone

The Dragon-Blood harmonizes her body with one of the five elements, rendering her body almost impervious to any harm from that element. She chooses one of the five elements upon activating this Charm, gaining +3 natural soak and (Stamina) Hardness against attacks made using that element, such as a firewand's blast, a wooden spear, a hurled stone, or the talons of an air elemental. She subtracts (lower of Stamina or Resistance) from the damage of appropriate environmental hazards.

This Charm can only negate harm that directly relates to the chosen element. An Earth-aspected use won't defend against metal weapons, nor would a Fire-aspected use defend against a Blazing Solar Bolt.

Elemental Aegis

Cost: 4m (+1a); **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Supple Viridian Scales

The Dragon-Blood can banish artifact armor into one of the five elements, dissolving her hauberk into water or letting the whirling wind divest her of armor piece by piece. She may send attuned jade armor Elsewhere through a significant and dramatic manifestation of the chosen element: it might vanish as she walks through fire, dissolve as she meditates beneath a waterfall, or be drawn beneath a tree's bark or into the rocky surface of a boulder or stone pillar. She may use this Charm to retrieve the armor from a similar elemental manifestation, donning it as though donning it normally (**Exalted**, p. 591).

If the Exalt doesn't have access to an appropriate elemental manifestation, she may expend a level of anima to banish or recall her armor. Once banished this way, it may be recalled through a manifestation of her Aspect element.

Unsleeping Earth Meditation

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Uneating Earth Meditation

The Terrestrial sustains herself without need for sleep, renewing her wearied body by drawing on Earth Essence. Once per day, she may spend an hour in meditation to gain all the benefits of a good night's sleep, including a point of Willpower. She may use this Charm to remain awake for up to (Essence + Stamina) days without hindrance, but past that point, she ceases to regain Willpower from it until she's received a full eight hours of sleep normally each day over as many days as she used this Charm to stay awake.

Unbreathing Earth Meditation

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Earth
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Unsleeping Earth Meditation

A single breath of air is enough to sustain the Dragon-Blood as she slows the rhythm of her lungs and the beating of her heart. She may hold her breath for up to ([Stamina + Resistance] x5) minutes, or ([Stamina + Resistance] x2) rounds in combat.

Unfeeling Earth Meditation

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Unbreathing Earth Meditation

The Dragon-Blood suffuses her body with Earth Essence, inuring herself to the pain and frailty of her flesh. She may ignore wound penalties on a single action with any Ability.

With an Essence 4 repurchase, using this Charm in Earth Aura extends its duration for as long as the Dragon-Blood remains in Aura.

Body-Like-Clouds Meditation

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Air), Withering-only
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood channels Air Essence throughout her body with circular breathing, lightening and dispersing her form to become all but untouchable. **Withering** damage rolls against her take a penalty of (Essence), which can reduce them below their minimum damage, minimum one die. If a **withering** attack hits her but deals no damage, she steals 2 Initiative

from her attacker as he overextends, striking where she's not.

Perfected Scales of the Dragon

Cost: 7m, 1wp, expend Earth Aura; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood settles into a deep-rooted stance, will and Essence hardening her body into an impervious form with an almost crystalline sheen. She gains Hardness equal to ([Essence + Stamina] x2) against all **decisive** attacks until her next turn. This doesn't stack with Hardness from armor, but is compatible with Hardness granted by Resistance Charms. Whenever a **decisive** attack is negated by her Hardness, her attacker doesn't reset to base Initiative; instead, he loses Initiative as though he'd missed, which she gains.

Such is the focus required by this Charm that the Dragon-Blood cannot attack or move on her next turn after using it, although she may still take other miscellaneous actions.

Raging Fire-Dragon Spirit

Cost: 6m, 1wp, 1ahl; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood unleashes the deepest flames of her vitality, awakening the deadly force of her inner fire. Her body becomes faster and stronger at the cost of risking exhaustion or death. She gains a bonus dot of Strength, ignores a single point of wound penalty, and adds (lower of Essence or Stamina) bonus dice on all rolls she makes to attack, rush, or attempt a feat of strength. However, her Stamina doesn't add to her soak and she loses one point of Initiative at the end of each round.

Fathomless Depths Replenishment

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood meditates on the deepest depths of herself, discovering that she is eternal. After spending



an hour in meditation, she rolls (Essence + Stamina), unmodified by other effects. Each success grants her a temporary −1 health level. Undamaged health levels fade away at the end of this Charm's duration, but the Dragon-Blood keeps any levels that are filled with damage, and they count against her total successes on a subsequent roll to use this Charm. These health levels are healed before any others of the same level when the Exalt recovers from rest or receives magical healing. If the Dragon-Blood carries a wounded health level for more than (Stamina) days, it falls from a −1 to a −2 health level. After another (Stamina x2) days, they become −4 levels. Damaged levels vanish once they're healed.

Well-Tended Garden of the Soul

Cost: 5m, 1wp, expend Wood Aura; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Perilous, Signature (Wood)
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood beckons to the Wood Essence that moves through the wilderness, calling forth healing renewal from the forest's boughs. In a barren wilderness, it's sufficient that she touches a single shoot of green life to use this Charm. She weaves her hands through a series of mudras that ends in a flash of anima that leaves every plant out to medium range radiant and flourishing, traced with hints of green anima. Any blighted or diseased plants are healed, while mundane plants that have died of winter frost or drought might be revived.

On her next turn, the blessing of life circles back unto her, unless this Charm is interrupted before then by her being crashed, taking **decisive** damage, or being forced into a range band devoid of plant life. She rolls (Essence + Stamina), unmodified by other effects, and heals a single level of non-aggravated damage for each success.

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Earth Bears Witness

Cost: 5m, 3i; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Earth, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: (Element) Protection Technique

The Dragon-Blood braces her body solidly against the ground, feeling the Earth's Essence upholding her own. As she's struck, the force of the blow passes through her and into surrounding earth or stone. She subtracts (Stamina/2, rounded up) dice from the damage of a **decisive** attack, shunting it into the ground. The Storyteller may deem that this creates difficult terrain or destroys mundane objects.

If there's a large, dramatically significant source of stone or other earth-based substance, such as a boulder or stone pillar, within short range of the Exalt, she instead subtracts (Stamina) as it bears the force of the attack for her. The force of her enemy's blow might smash a crater in the shape of her silhouette into a fortress's walls or blast a stone monument from its pedestal.

With Resistance 5, the Dragon-Blood may purchase the following elemental variants of this Charm for three experience points each.

Water: In Water Aura, this Charm can shift (Stamina/2, rounded up) dice of **decisive** damage into any nearby water. It reduces damage by (Stamina) if she shifts it into a body of water or a large vessel, such as a cistern or a well.

Wood: In Wood Aura, this Charm can shift (Stamina/2, rounded up) dice of **decisive** damage into wooden objects or living plants. It reduces damage by (Stamina) if she shifts it into a wooden structure or tree-sized plant.

Immovable Mountain Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth, Perilous
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Earth Bears Witness

Filling her body with the incredible weight of mountains and continents, the Dragon-Blood refuses to be moved. She cannot be knocked back by smash attacks, thrown in a grapple, or shifted by comparable mundane forces. Even magic is impeded by this Charm, although not entirely negated, with the Storyteller adjudicating the specific nature of the defense based on the nature of the Charm being used: A Solar using Heaven Thunder Hammer might be forced to halve her damage successes when determining how far she can knock the Dragon-Blood. This Charm ends if she moves from the spot where she used it, or if she's crashed or incapacitated.

Ripples-on-Water Defense

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Dual, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Earth Bears Witness

The Exalt's body becomes almost fluid as it disperses the force of attacks. Against a **withering** attack, (lower of Essence or Stamina) 1s on the damage roll subtract

successes. Against a **decisive** attack, (lower of Essence or Stamina) 1s force her attacker to reroll that many damage dice that show success, beginning with 7s and moving up.

Dragon's Unfailing Vigor

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Ox-Body Technique (x5)

The Dragon-Blood has forged her body to a fivefold extreme of durability, reaching the apex of her supernatural vitality. She gains one –0 health level and one –4 health level.

Flowing Dragon-Body Endurance

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Ripples-on-Water Defense

The Dragon-Blood becomes as a standing wave, untouched by the attacks of lesser enemies. She gains Hardness equal to her current Initiative against all **decisive** attacks. This Charm isn't compatible with armor.

Revolving-Hurricane-Force Defense

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 5
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Aura, Withering-only
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Dragon-Body Endurance

The Dragon-Blood's incredible resilience is like a raging gale barely contained within her body, striking aside her enemies' blows before they even touch her. She rolls (Stamina + Resistance) with (Essence) non-Charm bonus dice, and gains a soak bonus equal to the successes against any attack by a character with lower Initiative. The soak bonus falls by one point each time an attack hits the Dragon-Blood.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Ride

Scattered Pearl Hoof Falls

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Ride 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The hoofbeats of the Dragon-Blood's mount strike the ground as swiftly and lightly as pearls falling from a broken necklace, speeding her onwards to her goal. She may add automatic successes to a Ride roll for two motes each, and she ignores one point of mobility penalty from her mount's barding.

Heaven-Racing Leap

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Ride 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood urges her steed skywards in a leap that defies gravity. She may have her mount automatically jump one range band forward horizontally with her reflexive movement for the turn. Alternatively, when she has her mount jump as part of a movement roll, including rushing and disengaging, every 10 rerolls a non-1 failed die.

In Air Aura, her steed may leap one range band vertically, as long as the steed can land on a surface capable of bearing its weight.

Tread Rooted in Life

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

At one with the wilderness that surrounds them, horse and rider move with matchless grace. They may gallop through undergrowth, weave between trees in a dense forest, or trample over brambles. The Dragon-Blood ignores plant-based environmental penalties to her mounted movement actions.

Any environmental penalties on her Ride rolls due to plants or vegetation-covered terrain are lowered by two points.

With Essence 2, the Dragon-Blood may learn elemental variants of this Charm for three experience points each. These variants are Stackable with each other.

Air: This variant negates penalties from wind and foul weather.

Earth: This variant negates penalties for moving over uneven earth or rocky terrain.

Water: This variant negates penalties for moving while partially immersed in water, or over a wet or slippery surface.

Great Heart Companion

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Ride 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Even the best-trained warhorse trembles at the perils that the Dragon-Blood faces, but the bond between mount and rider is strong enough to withstand any test. She may grant her mount +2 Resolve against a threaten roll or other fear-based influence, or herself +1 Defense against an unhorse gambit.

In Wood Aura, this Charm lasts as long as the Dragon-Blood remains in Aura, providing both benefits.

Cloud-Harnessing Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: Heaven-Gracing Leap

The hooves of the Dragon-Blood's horse barely seem to touch the earth as it gallops, seeming to fly over the ground. Until her next turn, her mount can run across and stand on surfaces that wouldn't normally bear its weight, and ignores difficult terrain.

Dance of the Jade Bridle

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Great Heart Companion

Even the mightiest beasts learn to bow before the dragon. The Dragon-Blood rolls ([Attribute] + Ride) against an animal's Resolve, impressing or subduing it with a stunt over the course of a few minutes of interaction. She might win a tiger's respect by staring it down using Charisma, wrestle a river dragon using Strength to secure a place on its back, or leap out of a tree to land on a strix using Dexterity. On a success, the animal allows the Dragon-Blood to saddle and mount it, forming a Minor Tie of loyalty to her.

A single use of this Charm is insufficient to completely tame a wild animal, but it begins the process. Kindly treatment, roleplaying interactions, and magic such as Beast-Taming Aspect (p. 271) over the course of one or more sessions can tame even the most feral beast, at the Storyteller's discretion.

Reins-Like-Roots Unity

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Great Heart Companion

The bond between the Dragon-Blood and her mount isn't easily broken. This Charm can be used to defend against an unhorse gambit. 1s on the attack roll subtract successes, and the difficulty of the gambit increases by 1.

In Wood Aura, this Charm's duration lasts as long as the Exalt remains in Aura.

Creation-Turning Hoof

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Tread Rooted in Life

Enemies ridden down by the Dragon-Blood know that escape is hopeless when they hear her steed's pounding hoofbeats build to a rumbling avalanche behind them. The Dragon-Blood imposes a penalty equal to her mount's Speed bonus on an enemy's roll to oppose her mounted rush.

Ebony Spur Technique

Cost: 2m, 3i; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Creation-Turning Hoof

Dragon-Blooded cavalry learn to ride and fight together in martial harmony, creating openings in even the strongest defenses. This Charm can be used when a mounted ally successfully lands an attack against an enemy within short range of the Dragon-Blood. She may reflexively move up to one range band towards that enemy and make a **decisive** attack using any combat Ability, adding her mount's Speed bonus to the attack roll. This counts as her combat action for the round, and she cannot use this Charm if she's already attacked earlier in the round, but it doesn't count against her movement action.

Ebony Spur Technique can only be used once per scene, unless reset by crashing an enemy with a mounted **withering** attack.



Ass-to-Elephant Method

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Great Heart Companion

A humble draft horse can haul massive boulders behind it when ridden by a Prince of the Earth. This Charm supplements a feat of strength by a mount being ridden by the Dragon-Blood, adding its Speed bonus to its Strength. This both increases its dice pool and its effective Strength rating for determining what feats it may attempt (**Exalted**, p. 231).

Untethered Pegasus Spirit

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Air)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Cloud-Harnessing Method

With a deft hand on the reins, the Dragon-Blood urges her steed skywards. She can ride horizontally over thin air for as long as her mount continues to move, allowing her to horizontally cross over canyons and similar gulfs. In addition, she may pay an additional point of Willpower when she uses Heaven-Gracing Leap to rush an aerial enemy at out to medium range. If successful, she'll automatically ride one vertical or horizontal range band towards her target on the rushed character's next two turns, in addition to her normal movement. If the Dragon-Blood ceases movement, ends this Charm early, or is unhorsed, both she and her steed drift to the ground without taking falling damage.

Mountain-Trampling Hoof

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Ass-to-Elephant Method

The Dragon-Blood endows her mount with the endurance of the mountains and the strength of a falling avalanche as it charges forward like a battering ram to smash down gates and fortifications. The Exalt's mount makes a feat of demolition to destroy or topple an object at least human-sized, adding (Essence/2, rounded up) non-Charm bonus successes. If she uses this Charm after spending multiple consecutive turns moving towards the object, each range band of movement lowers the Strength total required to attempt the feat by one, to a maximum of (Essence). The mount is able to complete the feat in instants, even if it would normally take longer.

The immense force unleashed by the mount's battering charge isn't without risk. For every 1 on its feat

of strength roll, roll a single die of bashing damage against it, ignoring Hardness. This Charm cannot be used if the Dragon-Blood's mount has no undamaged health levels above Incapacitated.

Charge of One Hundred Generals

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Ebony Spur Technique

The Dragon-Blood and her allies charge across the battlefield like a rapidly spreading flame. She makes a mounted rush roll against a significant enemy or battle group out to four range bands away, but no closer than medium range. If not already rolled into battle, all characters Join Battle immediately. On a success, the Dragon-Blood and all other mounted characters within close range of her (short range for mounted battle groups) move one range band towards the target on each of their next four turns in addition to their normal movement, or until they reach close range. All characters in the charge gain 1 Initiative for each range band they move while charging the rushed character.

Ride Beneath the Waves

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood can lead her mount even to the ocean's depths, dancing through rivers and seas as though born to them. Her mount can breathe water and is capable of swimming or running over riverbeds and sea floors at no penalty. Ride rolls to control it underwater double 9s. Note that this Charm doesn't extend to the Dragon-Blood, who must use other magic such as the Water Aspect anima or Unbreathing Earth Meditation (p. 248) to survive underwater.

Dragon-Among-Horses Exaltation

Cost: 5m, 1wp, 1ahl, 2xp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Great Heart Companion

The Terrestrial anoints her beloved steed with her own blood, marking it with the blood of the Dragons. As the droplets fall on its hide, the beast begins to flare with the Exalt's own anima banner, building over the next few minutes into a great bonfire of Essence in which it's transformed. A mount transformed by this Charm gains the following benefits:

- It gains one of the following: +1 die to all Strength-based dice pools and raw **withering** damage; +1 die to all Dexterity-based dice pools; or +1 die to all Stamina-based dice pools and +1 soak.
- Its natural Hardness increases by one point. Note that this renders it immune to anima flux (p. 154).
- It gains two additional –4 health levels.

The Dragon-Blood can only use this Charm on a single mount at a time, but is refunded its experience point cost if that creature dies. Rare horses descended from bloodlines intermingled with elementals of the appropriate aspect are prized by the Dragon-Blooded, and using this Charm on them requires no experience cost. The Blessed Isle's horse-breeders compete ruthlessly over such stock, which are sufficiently rare that Resources expenditures alone aren't enough to secure them. A Dynast might need to procure an opulent gift simply to open negotiations with a seller, or perform a significant favor for a family elder in exchange for making use of his connections.

Indomitable Warhorse Endurance

Cost: 3m, 1i per die removed; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Perilous, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Reins-Like-Roots Unity

The Dragon-Blood may activate this Charm when her mount would take **decisive** damage, after any attack roll but before damage is rolled. She may spend up to (Essence) Initiative to subtract that many dice from the damage roll. Outside of combat, such as riding through an environmental hazard, she always subtracts (Essence) dice.

Seizing-the-Reins Approach

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dance of the Jade Bridle

The Dragon-Blood rides away with her enemies' steeds, showing even the most ferocious mounts that they cannot equal her burning, reckless spirit. She attempts

to leap onto the mount of an unhorsed foe (or another trained animal without a rider) within close range. This is a difficulty 3 gambit rolled with (Dexterity + Ride). Successfully executing this gambit lets the Dragon-Blood climb onto the animal and reflexively order it to make a **withering** attack (**Exalted**, p. 203).

In Fire Aura, the Dragon-Blood may use this Charm reflexively when she successfully unhorses an enemy (**Exalted**, p. 200) within close range using any combat Ability.

Unbreakable Stallion Spirit

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Wood
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Creation-Turning Hoof

Essence ripples through the thews of the Dragon-Blood's mount, bolstering its speed and surety. This Charm adds +1 to the Speed bonus of the Exalt's mount, and doubles 9s on any Ride rolls she makes to maintain her steed's balance, avoid being thrown from the saddle, or otherwise avoid mount-related obstacles.

Seven-League Gallop

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: One hour
Prerequisite Charms: Unbreakable Stallion Spirit

Imbued with legendary vitality, the Exalt's mount achieves the apex of speed. She converts one die of her mount's Speed bonus into a non-Charm success on rolled movement. Outside of combat, her mount's movement speed is dramatically accelerated, letting her move (Essence) times the normal distance she'd be able to cover in an hour. If she maintains the use of this Charm throughout a longer journey, the time it takes to complete is halved.

Once the Dragon-Blood has spent two Willpower in a day on this Charm's cost, she waives the Willpower cost of all subsequent activations.

Trail-Blazing Dragon Steed

Cost: 5m, 1a; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Seven-League Gallop

The inexorable Essence of fire blazes in the Dragon-Blood's steed as it gallops at full speed towards its goal, leaving a trail of burning hoofprints behind it. After a successful mounted rush, if the rushed foe provokes the Dragon-Blood's reflexive movement, she ignites a fiery environmental hazard along her path, with difficulty 4 and Damage (Essence)L/round. It continues to burn until her next turn, although the Storyteller may deem that terrain such as dry grass continues to burn for a full scene.

Vanishing Cloud-Rider Ways

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Cloud-Harnessing Technique

Moving with the grace and speed of a zephyr, the Dragon-Blood's steed effortlessly evades harm. This Charm supplements a mounted disengage roll, rerolling 6s until they fail to appear and negating all penalties from flurrying the roll.

In Air Aura, this Charm also refunds the Initiative cost of a successful disengage.

Blazing Charger Attack

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 4
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Aura, Fire, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Trail-Blazing Dragon Steed

The Dragon-Blood builds her killing pace as she charges across the battlefield, urging her mount onwards faster and faster. She doubles 9s on a mounted rush. On a success, if her enemy provokes her reflexive movement, she may move up to two range bands towards him instead of one. If she reaches close range, she may also make a reflexive **decisive** attack using Brawl, Martial Arts, or Melee. If she attacks with a fixed lance, she may make an impaling attack (**Exalted**, p. 203) without needing to meet the normal requirements.

Elusive Skirmisher Tactic

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Uniform, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Vanishing Cloud-Rider Ways

Horse and rider move as one to take aim, lining up the perfect shot. Upon disengaging from an enemy, the

Dragon-Blood may use this Charm to reflexively aim at him. A ranged attack that receives the dice from aiming also adds one bonus die of raw damage.

Horses-Like-Dragons Stampede

Cost: 5m, 2wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Until battle is joined
Prerequisite Charms: Blazing Charger Attack, Seize-the-Reins Approach

Stampeding beasts follow the Dragon-Blood in an overwhelming charge, routing enemy formations and smashing through their fortifications. This Charm is a dramatic action to prepare for an upcoming battle by rounding up a herd of horses or other wild, ridable animals — even blundering yeddim. This is a series of (Charisma + Ride) rolls, which are treated as rally for numbers actions (**Exalted**, p. 209), building up the Magnitude of animals that the Dragon-Blood has gathered. Each roll takes five minutes of animal calls, handling, or impressive stunts to complete. Once the Dragon-Blood has built up enough Magnitude to form a Size 1 battle group, she may continue making rally rolls to increase the group's Size, up to a maximum of Size 3. Concealing the approach of this stampeding herd is impossible without large-scale magic.

The herd isn't treated as a battle group in combat. Instead, when the Dragon-Blood rolls Join Battle, it stampedes across the battlefield, imposing a penalty equal to (its Size) on all enemy Join Battle rolls, before dispersing. Every enemy whose Join Battle roll is beaten by the Dragon-Blood's takes **decisive** damage as the stampede tramples over them. She divides (Initiative + stampede's Size) dice of bashing damage evenly among the victims (round up), ignoring Hardness. Trivial opponents and battle groups instead take the full (Initiative + Size) damage roll, which doesn't detract from the total divided among other enemies. This attack resets the Dragon-Blood to base Initiative once it's completed.

The Dragon-Blood may learn elemental variants of this Charm for three experience points each. While she's in appropriate terrain, she may rouse that element's natural perils instead of wild animals. She still rolls to build up its effective Size for determining the Join Battle penalty and total damage inflicted, but this represents the force of nature that follows her, growing stronger as she rides.

Air: Riding through snow-covered land, the Dragon-Blood trails an avalanche behind her. Any enemy that takes **decisive** damage on the initial roll is hurled one range band away from the Dragon-Blood and falls prone. The numbing cold imposes a penalty equal to the avalanche's Size on all movement rolls a damaged character makes until he receives medical treatment as a difficulty 3 (Intelligence + Medicine) roll.

Earth: Charging across mountainsides or stony terrain, the Dragon-Blood unleashes a rockslide that follows in her wake. Any enemy that takes **decisive** damage on the initial roll is hurled one range band away from the Dragon-Blood and falls prone, covered in rubble. A buried character or one of his allies must succeed on a Strength 3 feat of strength at difficulty 3 to clear the rubble before he can attempt to rise from prone.

Fire: Riding over dry grass or other parched foliage, the Dragon-Blood ignites a roaring grass fire that follows in her wake. A bonfire (4L/round, difficulty 5) ignites at the feet of each enemy that that takes **decisive** damage from the initial roll. At the Storyteller's discretion, flammable scenery may also catch fire as long as no character is present in the same space. These fires burn until the end of the scene unless put out.

Water: The Dragon-Blood may ride with a river, coastline, or similar body of water at her back, running along the riverbed until the river runs with her. As she Joins Battle, it changes its course to spill over onto the battlefield, positioned by the Storyteller to benefit the Dragon-Blooded. Its largest dimension is at least (Size/2, rounded up) range bands long, from a starting point determined by the Storyteller. Once the scene ends, the river slowly reverts to its original course.

Sail

Fine Passage-Negotiating Style

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Sail 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood threads her ship like a needle through dangerous patches of sargasso seas, rock-strewn shallows, or warship-patrolled waters. She may add automatic success to a Sail roll for two motes each, and rerolls 6s until they cease to appear.

Storm-Outrunning Technique

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Sail 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Pilot, Water

Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood is the ocean's own kin, plying its waters not as obstacles to be overcome but as welcome friends to be greeted. When she makes a Sail roll that her ship's Speed applies to, she rerolls ([lower of Wits or Speed], minimum one) non-1 failed dice.

Ocean-Darting Maneuver

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Pilot, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Storm-Outrunning Technique

Steering her ship with the fluid grace of Water Essence, the Dragon-Blood can accomplish nigh-impossible maneuvers. She doubles 9s on a roll to navigate through a naval hazard or enact a positioning stratagem in naval combat (**Exalted**, pp. 244-245). On a successful positioning stratagem, she receives (Essence) additional Momentum.

Dragon Mariner Attitude

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Sail 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Water
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's reputation precedes her ship to shore. She can manipulate the flow of her reputation as though it were a stream of water, choosing one of the following effects.

Carousing: Adopting the poise of a sailor in port, the Dragon-Blood radiates a desire to take part in drinking, gambling, and similar vices common to sailors, as well as any local indulgences. Characters seeking to supply such vices will seek her out to provide them or information about where to get them.

Heroism: The Dragon-Blood's naval prowess marks her as a hero of the seas. Characters facing problems that a seafaring hero could solve, such as pirate raids, a loved one lost on a missing ship, or an urgent shipment of exotic goods that needs to be delivered, will seek her out as the solution to their problem, treating this as a Minor Tie of trust to her.

Leadership: The Dragon-Blood radiates the confidence of a commanding admiral. All sailors under her command are treated as having a Minor Tie of respect towards her, and she adds one bonus success on inspire rolls and command actions targeting them. Trivial characters who are seafarers gain this Intimacy even if they aren't part of the Exalt's crew.

Menacing: The Dragon-Blood's bearing suggests ruthlessness and a history of violence. She adds one automatic success on threaten rolls and gains the Hideous Merit (**Exalted**, p. 162).

Deck-Striding Prana

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Sail 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Perilous, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon Mariner Attitude

No landlubber she, the Dragon-Blood crosses over storm-tossed decks or windswept rigging with fluid grace. She adds (Sail) bonus dice on a movement roll or a roll to maintain her balance, or may use her reflexive move action to ascend or descend one vertical range band up a ship's rigging, a ladder that spans decks, or similar nautical scenery without needing to roll.

In Water Aura, this Charm's Initiative cost is waived and it loses the Perilous keyword.

Hurricane-Predicting Glance

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon Mariner Attitude

The Dragon-Blooded mariner can smell trouble on the salty breeze or see a coming storm in red clouds, allowing her to steer safely through monsoons, thunderstorms, and roiling waves. She rolls ([Perception or Intelligence] + Sail) against a difficulty based on her familiarity with the seas she's sailing — home waters might be difficulty 1; a trade route leading to an island she's never been to before might be difficulty 3; and completely unmapped seas might be difficulty 5+. A successful roll lets her flawlessly predict any weather she'll encounter at sea along the course of her ship's travel for a single day, letting her foresee even the most freakish natural weather phenomena. She cannot predict the effects of weather-controlling magic.

If the Exalt foresees dangerous weather, she gains a temporary Sail specialty in avoiding or navigating it, which lasts until the weather has passed. She may only have one specialty granted by this Charm at a time.

Old Salt Spirit

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Mute, Water
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon Mariner Attitude

Weathered by her time at sea, the Dragon-Blood is undaunted by unknown terrors and deaf to the calls of sirens. She gains +1 Resolve against fear-based influence, as well as any influence that would cause her to sail her ship into peril or prevent her from taking to the seas aboard her ship. If she incorporates the memory of a past seafaring adventure into a stunt, this bonus increases to (Sail/2, rounded up) for that action.

Seven Seas Wind-Luring Chanty

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: Hurricane-Predicting Glance

The Dragon-Blood leads her crew in a bawdy chorus, appeasing the spirits of air. When she suffers penalties for sailing against the wind or from other foul weather, she may roll (Charisma + Sail). Every two successes she rolls, rounded down, lowers any penalties she faces by one point. If she uses this Charm in favorable weather, success calls up a wind that keeps her sails filled, increasing any Speed bonus from the ship's sails by +1.

Sturdy Bulkhead Concentration

Cost: 4m, 1a; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Ocean-Darting Maneuver

The Dragon-Blood's anima spreads to enfold the timbers of her ship, hardening its hull to rebuff the harshest perils of the sea or the weapons of oceangoing pirates. Whenever her ship suffers Hull damage from a failed roll to navigate an aquatic hazard or from a damage-dealing stratagem such as a broadside in naval combat (**Exalted**, p. 245), she may roll (Essence + 2) non-Charm dice. If these successes raise the Dragon-Blood's total roll high enough to have beaten the hazard's difficulty or the opposing captain's roll, the total damage her ship suffers is reduced by one point, although this doesn't change her failure on the roll.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by succeeding on a Sail roll with difficulty 4+.

Storm-Singer's Reprieve

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Seven Seas Wind-Luring Chanty

Singing ancient rimes and sea shanties passed down across generations of sailors since the dawn of history, the Dragon-Blood appeals to the gods of the sea for mercy, dispersing thunderstorms or opening a path through hurricane winds. Faced with a weather-based maritime hazard or other troubled waters (**Exalted**, pp. 244-245), she may use this Charm to roll (Charisma + Sail) with double 9s against the hazard's difficulty. Success disperses the hazard entirely, without needing an extended Sail action. On a failed roll, she can still attempt to navigate the hazard normally.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by successfully dispersing or otherwise navigating through a hazard to continue sailing on to a location for the direct purpose of achieving a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) or a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134).

Hull-Shattering Avalanche Impact

Cost: 6m, 1a, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Pilot, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's anima banner enfolds her ship as it builds speed, growing into an insurmountable onslaught of force to smash through enemy ships or fortifications. She undertakes a ram stratagem in naval combat (**Exalted**, p. 245) with double 8s. A successful stratagem inflicts an additional point of Hull damage.

Outside of combat, this Charm can be used to demolish a seafaring structure or obstacle by ramming it. This is a feat of strength (**Exalted**, p. 229) rolled using (Wits + Sail), adding (the ship's Speed) non-Charm bonus dice. This Charm can be used to attempt feats that normally require up to Strength 10, as long as the Storyteller deems it feasible based on the size of the ship.

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Dragon Sets the Seas Ablaze

Cost: 10m, 1a, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Pilot, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The dragon admiral's burning fury reduces enemy fleets to charred cinders. The Exalt makes a broadside stratagem (**Exalted**, p. 245) with double 9s, discharging her anima through her ship's weaponry to set the enemy ship aflame. On a successful roll, the enemy ship catches fire and continues to burn for the rest of the scene. At the end of each round, including the round this Charm is used, roll one die of Hull damage against that ship. A captain can direct her crew to put out the fires as a special naval stratagem rolled with (Wits + Sail) that costs two Momentum. If that ship's captain loses the opposed roll for that stratagem, the ship remains aflame, although it doesn't take damage from the fire that round.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Shipwreck-Strewn Tempest Wake

Cost: 5m, 1a, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Pilot, Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's ship churns the seas into a roiling frenzy in its wake, forcing her pursuers to choose between risking destruction or watching her sail free into the horizon. When she succeeds on an extended roll to escape from naval pursuit or to enact an escape stratagem in naval combat, she creates a swirling maelstrom or similar peril that the opposing captain must contend with. Navigating this hazard is a (Wits + Sail) roll at a difficulty of (the Exalt's Essence + 2). A ship whose captain fails this roll suffers one point of Hull damage. In addition, he's either thrown off course or otherwise delayed, leaving him unable to make any meaningful progress towards pursuing the Dragon-Blood's ship for (Essence) days. If multiple ships are in pursuit of the Dragon-Blood or engaged in naval combat in the same waters, they must all navigate through the hazard if they wish to follow her.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by achieving a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) through seafaring prowess, or after using a ship to reach a vital locale.

Benediction of the Living Ship

Cost: 10m, 1a, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Wood)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Sturdy Bulkhead Concentration

Verdant Essence races across the Dragon-Blood's ship, reawakening the sylvan vitality of its timbers. Roots and branches knit together damaged portions of hull; flowers or fruit sprout to nourish the ship's crew. She



rolls (Essence), plus any applicable Sail specialty, and heals her ship of that many points of Hull damage.

The Exalt and all allied characters aboard the ship heal a single level of non-aggravated damage as they bask in the fragrant aroma of blossoming flowers or eat of the ship's bounty. If the ship's food stores are running low, this Charm provides enough food to sustain the crew for the rest of the story. All members of the crew gain a non-Charm bonus success on any roll to resist poison or disease that they make while aboard the ship.

This Charm can only be used on a ship once per story, unless all Hull damage to it is fully repaired.

Vanishing Fog-Bank Escape

Cost: 5m, 1a; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute, Pilot, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Seven Seas Wind-Luring Chanty

The Dragon-Blood sloughs off her anima banner as a cloud of mist that engulfs her ship, buying her a chance to flee unseen. In naval combat, she may use this Charm to attempt an escape stratagem (**Exalted**, p. 245) at a reduced cost of six Momentum. In addition, for each point of Momentum she has over the opposing captain after both pay the costs of their stratagems that interval, she adds one bonus die on the escape roll.

This Charm can also enhance the interval roll for a pursuit at sea (**Exalted**, p. 244) in which she's fleeing, imposing a penalty of (Essence) on the opposing captain's roll. This Charm can be used outside of naval combat or naval pursuit, creating a large fogbank that covers the entire ship for one scene unless dispersed by magical or extremely strong winds.

Pirate-Masquerading Method

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Water
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Vanishing Fogbank Escape

Skilled in the ways of seafaring deception, the Dragon-Blood conceals the true colors of her ship under a mirage of Essence, causing other vessels to perceive it as a ship of their own allegiance or purpose. A merchant vessel from a foreign kingdom would see her warship as flying under its own kingdom's flag, while a pirate raiding-ship would see her as a fellow corsair. She rolls (Manipulation + Sail) to determine the quality of this ruse, adding (Essence) non-Charm bonus dice. Any nontrivial character within long range or closer of the ship can attempt to see through this ruse with a (Perception + [Awareness or Investigation]) roll with a difficulty equal to the Dragon-Blood's result on the roll. Characters who attempt this roll without the benefit of applicable magic or superhuman senses suffer a –3 penalty on the roll. Once a character has boarded the ship, he can see through this ruse automatically.

Alternatively, the Dragon-Blood may use this Charm on herself whenever she attempts to fit in to a society of sailors or other seafarers: a ring of smugglers operating out of Champoor, a Tya guildhouse, the Lintha crime family, etc. She adds (Sail) bonus dice on any disguise roll she makes to pose as a member of that group, and gains +2 Guile against any roll that would reveal information exposing her outsider status.

Bellowing Thunder Admiral

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Old Salt Spirit

Barking orders over the din of hurricanes, the Dragon-Blood incites her sailors to courage and swift victory in battle. She adds (Essence/2, rounded up) successes on command actions targeting battle groups made up of sailors under her command. Such groups add (her Essence/2, rounded up) successes on Willpower rolls against rout and gain the Resolve bonus of Old Salt Spirit as long as they're within medium range of her.

Special activation rules: If the Dragon-Blood wins Join Battle after taking a boarding action in naval combat (**Exalted**, p. 246), she may use this Charm reflexively.

Ship-Seizing Dragon Talon

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 4
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Bellowing Thunder Admiral

Enacting a fluid battle strategy, the Dragon-Blood and her crew descend on enemy ships with unstoppable force. This Charm enhances any boarding action in naval combat (**Exalted**, p. 245) with double 9s. If the Dragon-Blood successfully boards and initiates combat,

every threshold success on her naval stratagem roll adds one bonus die to the Join Battle rolls of her and all her allies, and she may waive the Willpower cost of Bellowing Thunder Admiral if she wins Join Battle.

Fog Shroud Ambush

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 5
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Mute, Pilot, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Pirate-Masquerading Method, Ship-Seizing Dragon Talon

Mist swirls around the Dragon-Blood's ship as she maneuvers it out of sight, catching enemy ships off guard as she emerges from the fog. She waives the Momentum cost of a concealment stratagem in naval combat (**Exalted**, p. 245). If she succeeds and uses her next round to enact a broadside, escape, or ram stratagem against the enemy ship, she succeeds automatically, regardless of the opposing captain's roll. If the opposing captain benefits from superhuman senses capable of seeing through fog or magic such as Eye of the Unconquered Sun, or is guided by an ally with such senses, the Dragon-Blood doesn't automatically succeed, but imposes a penalty of (Manipulation) on opposing rolls.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by successfully incapacitating an enemy ship with a naval stratagem.

Socialize

Loquacious Courtier Technique

Cost: 2m per success *or* +1 Guile; **Mins:** Socialize 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental *or* Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Fire, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood endears herself to all company with pleasing and faultless manners, She may add automatic successes to Socialize rolls or raise her Guile for two motes each.

Wary Yellow Dog Attitude

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Socialize 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The line between social pleasantries and drawn blades can be all too thin, but the Dragon-Blood isn't caught unawares. When combat breaks out amid social interaction, she may use this Charm to Join Battle with ([Perception or Wits] + Socialize). If she's successfully influenced or read the intentions of one of her enemies earlier in the scene, she rolls an additional non-Charm die for each 10 on her Join Battle roll.

Friend-to-All-Nations Attitude

Cost: —; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood ingratiates herself into insular cliques, foreign courts, and barbarian tribes with skillful understanding of their customs and mores. After spending at least an hour being exposed to any culture or social group, she may gain a temporary Socialize specialty in it. She may have up to (Essence) specialties granted by this Charm at a time. If she wishes to gain a new temporary specialty while at the maximum, she must abandon an old one.

Loyalty-Reading Meditation

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Who can conceal the heat of his passion from the Dragon-Blood's keen eye? When she reads intentions to discern an Intimacy based on emotion, that Intimacy penalizes the target's Guile as though it were his Resolve (**Exalted**, p. 215).

Smoke-Wreathed Mien

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Feigned languor conceals the Dragon-Blood's true feelings. When a character she's aware of rolls to read her intentions, (Essence) 1s on his roll each force him to reroll a successful die, starting with 7s and moving up.

Auspicious First Meeting Attitude

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple

Keywords: Balanced, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Friend-to-All Nations Attitude, Loyalty-Reading Meditation

Swift to win new friends and impress new acquaintances, the Dragon-Blood reads them and tailors her bearing to their expectations to leave a perfect first impression. Upon meeting a character for the first time, the Dragon-Blood may combine a read intentions action with an instill action to create a positive Tie towards herself, making a single ([Charisma, Appearance, or Perception] + Socialize) roll against his (lower of Guile or Resolve).

Brother-Against-Brother Insinuation

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Wary Yellow Dog Attitude

Sometimes a lone spark is all it takes to destroy a relationship. The Dragon-Blood makes an instill roll with double 9s to either weaken a positive Tie towards a character that belongs to the same culture or social group as her target, or to instill a negative tie towards such a character. In addition, targets cannot draw on Intimacies towards the culture or group they share to bolster Resolve against this influence.

Seizing-the-Tongue Technique

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Friend-to-All-Nations Attitude

Quick wits allow the Dragon-Blood to nimbly avoid social pitfalls and correct faux pas without giving offense. She rerolls (Essence) non-1 failed dice on an influence roll made with Presence or Socialize.

In Air Aura, the Dragon-Blood may use this Charm reflexively after making a roll.

Sweeten-the-Tap Method

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire/Wood
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Friend-to-All-Nations Attitude



Whether it's freely flowing libations at a Dynastic salon or a ration of rum at a military encampment, alcohol improves moods and eases social friction. When the Dragon-Blood supplies drinks, she may use this Charm to heighten their potency and quality. Each character who partakes is treated as having a positive Minor Tie for his fellow partygoers — whose context, such as affection or camaraderie, is chosen by his player — and suffers −1 Guile.

However, sweetening the tap also increases the risk of fraying tempers or violent overreactions. If a character botches a social action, the positive Tie towards him created by this Charm inverts into a negative Tie for all inebriated partygoers who witnessed the offense.



Shadow-Dispersing Radiance

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Loyalty-Reading Meditation

Whether enticed by her striking looks or menaced by her intimidating features, few can keep their secrets when they look upon the Dragon-Blood. If her Appearance is higher than a character's Guile, she adds non-Charm dice equal to the difference on a roll to read his intentions.

Eye-for-Passions Scrutiny

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Shadow-Dispersing Radiance

When the Dragon-Blood successfully reads a character's intentions, the Storyteller reveals an additional Intimacy based on emotion that relates to the motives or other Intimacy she discerned. For example, uncovering a courtier's Intimacy for a beautiful performer might reveal his Tie of hatred for a romantic rival, while uncovering that a vagabond intends to pickpocket her

might reveal a Tie of love for the family he needs to feed.

Watching the Salon's Shadows

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Loyalty-Reading Meditation, Smoke-Wreathed Mien

Even as she flaunts her finery and shares laughter with intimate friends, the Dragon-Blood is at her most vigilant. She gains +1 Guile against the read intentions roll of a character she's unaware of. If she defeats his roll, she may roll (Perception + Awareness) with double 9s to detect him.

Smoke Without Flame

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Smoke-Wreathed Mien

Those who expect intemperance or unthinking passion from the Dragon-Blood are the most easily deceived. She gains +1 Guile. If the opposing character fails to read her intentions, he believes that he's succeeded, but what's revealed to him is an exaggeration of the Dragon-Blood's emotional state or one of her emotion-based Intimacies, chosen by the player. Irritation might be misread as a hate-filled vendetta; infatuation as passionate longing; or boredom as soul-crushing ennui.

In Fire Aura, the Guile bonus doesn't count as a bonus from Charms.

With a Socialize 5, Essence 4 repurchase, even if the Dragon-Blood's Guile is beaten, she may expend her Fire Aura to exaggerate any emotions or emotion-based Intimacies that are revealed.

Clear-Eyed Courtier's Scrutiny

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute, Signature (Air)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

As she gazes down from a superior social vantage, the complexities of courtly intrigues lay themselves bare before the Dragon-Blood. She makes a single read intentions roll against all characters she can perceive, doubling 9s. She may either attempt to determine each of their intentions in the current scene — for instance, scanning an office of functionaries to determine which ones are working dutifully, which are lazing, and which are in the process of embezzling; or she can attempt to identify their Intimacies on a single topic — discerning how the members of a prince's court feel about him, or the reasons why a mob of peasant is protesting a satrap's rule. Even if her roll fails to overcome a character's Guile, she doesn't need to reset her read intentions action before attempting it against him again in the same scene.

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Unfaltering Pillar of Unity

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Expounding on the importance of tradition and social order while inveighing against disloyalty, the Dragon-Blood strengthens the foundations of society. She rolls (Charisma + Socialize) to instill one or more members of a single culture or social group with a Tie of loyalty towards that society, doubling 8s and ignoring the penalty for influencing multiple characters. A character whose Resolve is beaten must enter a Decision Point and call on a Major or Defining Intimacy to resist the Tie being created. As usual, strengthening an existing Intimacy can't be resisted with Willpower.

An affected character cannot voluntarily weaken the instilled Tie until (6 – his Integrity) weeks have passed, nor can he take actions that would oppose the Intimacy during that time, unless failing to do so would oppose a Defining Intimacy. Other characters can attempt to erode the Tie normally using social influence, but are subject to the rules for overturning social influence (**Exalted**, p. 221). Fully eroding the Intimacy frees the character from this Charm's effects.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) that benefits a culture or social group that the Exalt belongs to.

Wildfire Scandal Revelation

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

No tinder burns hotter than a stolen secret, igniting a blaze that spreads with the swiftness of rumor. To use

this Charm, the Dragon-Blood must first uncover an embarrassing or damaging secret of another character, one that, if revealed, would have dramatic negative consequences for that character. She may then use this Charm when she reveals his secret to others, rolling (Charisma + Socialize), doubling 8s, to instill a negative Tie toward him or weaken positive Ties towards him. This also instills a negative Tie or weakens positive Ties towards a culture or social group that he belongs to, chosen by the Exalt. Resisting this influence costs (Dragon-Blood's Essence/2, round up) points of Willpower. For the rest of the story, affected characters gain the benefit of a temporary specialty on any influence roll they make to spread the secret using any social Ability.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) by orchestrating the social downfall of a rival — causing him to lose an official position or social standing, creating a scandal that destroys his reputation, or similar. She can only use this Charm again on the same character by revealing a different secret, even if it resets.

Ego-Dissolving Deception

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Signature (Water)
Duration: One story
Prerequisite Charms: None

Diving below the shallows of her conscious mind into the depths of her deepest self, the Dragon-Blood submerges herself in a life of falsehoods. After spending at least an hour in meditation, she may rewrite her own memories of a single event or relationship. She could convince herself that a beloved spouse died in battle, erase an incriminating meeting with a co-conspirator from her memory, or make herself believe that she's defected from her Great House to loyally serve a group that she's actually infiltrating. She gains a Major Principle reflecting this belief, and may treat any influence that would weaken it as unacceptable for this Charm's duration. She may release her mote commitment to this Charm reflexively to end its duration and restore her true memories, even if she doesn't remember using it, but the Intimacy remains in place until she erodes it normally, until which time she may confuse her two sets of memories.

At Essence 5, the Dragon-Blood may expend her Water Aura to use this Charm reflexively in response to any effect opposing her Guile, altering her memories so that even if the effect succeeds, the information gleaned will be falsified.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) that the Exalt has altered her memories to achieve.

Poisonous Sneer Reproach

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Tongue dripping with venom, the Dragon-Blood excoriates the speech of an ill-mannered rival. When she witnesses another character attempt social influence, she may speak against it, deriding the speaker or exposing the flaws in his argument with a ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Socialize) roll. Each of her successes imposes a −1 penalty on the speaker's influence roll. If this penalty reduces his dice pool to zero, or if he rolls and botches, his influence has the opposite of its intended effect on each character whose Resolve was beaten by the Dragon-Blood's roll. Attempting to flatter an official would create a negative Tie instead of a positive one, while intimidating a group of guards into standing down would cause them to attack instead.

This Charm can only be used once per day.

Ember-Fanning Provocation

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Brother-Against-Brother Insinuation, Seizing-the-Tongue Technique

A dragon's breath stokes the embers of enmity into a full-blown bonfire. The Dragon-Blood makes a persuade roll supported by a negative Tie for foreigners, outsiders, or members of an undesirable subculture, or a negative Tie instilled with Brother-Against-Brother Insinuation, doubling 9s. If the leveraged Intimacy is Major or Defining, the cost of resisting increases to two Willpower.

Smoothing-Over-the-Past Technique

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Ember-Fanning Provocation

The Dragon-Blood's lulling speech and hypnotic bearing muddles the memory of an enemy, rival, or ill-treated acquaintance, banishing a past event that would reflect poorly on a current conversation to the depths of his unconscious. She makes a special (Manipulation + Socialize) instill roll against a single character to suppress his memory of a single incident of her past misbehavior. She takes a penalty determined by the Storyteller based on the misconduct's severity — an insult without lasting consequences might suffer no penalty; petty theft or humiliation in front of a small group might suffer a −1 penalty; inflicting a disfiguring wound or public humiliation before a large group might suffer a −3 penalty; a murder attempt might suffer a −5 penalty.

Success suppresses the chosen memory, allowing the Dragon-Blood to interact with her victim for a single scene as though it never happened. The victim cannot bring it up or even remember it, rationalizing away any inconsistencies this causes. If he has a negative Tie towards the Dragon-Blood based on the erased memory, it's likewise suppressed. If the Intimacy is based on more than one transgression, the Dragon-Blood must erase them all with multiple uses of this Charm to suppress the Intimacy.

If the victim's loss of memory would cause him to act inconsistently with a Major or Defining Intimacy, other than a negative Tie for the Dragon-Blood, he may pay one Willpower to resist. However, he's unaware she caused his memory lapse.

A Socialize 5, Essence 5 repurchase allows the Dragon-Blood to expend her Water Aura to permanently erase the targeted memory with this Charm. The penalty for erasing egregious misdeeds subtracts successes instead of dice. The victim may still resist, as above, but doing so only restores the memory for a single scene. Once he's spent three total Willpower resisting, the memory is restored permanently.

Enticing Flame Feint

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Watching the Salon's Shadows

The Dragon-Blood draws attention away from less-subtle allies with inflammatory words or a provocative display. When she witnesses a character attempting to read an ally's intentions, she may impose a penalty of (lower of her Essence or Manipulation) on the roll. Each use of this Charm inflicts a −1 penalty on her own Guile for the rest of the scene.

Rumor-Dredging Gaze

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Auspicious First Meeting Attitude, Shadow-Dispersing Radiance

A master blackmailer, the Dragon-Blood draws forth secrets from the murkiest depths. She rolls to read intentions with double 9s. Instead of specifying an Intimacy she wishes to discern, the Dragon-Blood instead uncovers whichever Intimacy her target most desires to keep hidden from her. If she uses this information to blackmail her target with a bargain or threaten action in the same scene, she doubles 9s on the influence roll, which can be made with any social Ability. A successful influence roll grants her one Willpower.

Implacable Dragon Mien

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth, Mute
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: Smoke Without Flame

The Dragon-Blood's stoic countenance gives away no more than a mountain's face. She gains +2 Guile, except against rolls that would reveal a Major or Defining Intimacy based on emotion, or an intention arising out of such an Intimacy.

In Earth Aura, this rises to +3 Guile. Even against rolls that would reveal an emotion-based Intimacy or an intention that upholds such an Intimacy, she adds +1 Guile.

Rippling Mirror Face

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Rumor-Dredging Gaze, Smoke Without Flame

The sparkling waters of the sunlit ocean conceal dark depths, hidden beneath blinding reflections. The Dragon-Blood may use this Charm when she asserts her Guile against a read intentions roll. If that roll fails, the opposing character believes he succeeded. Instead of revealing the truth, the Dragon-Blood may choose an Intimacy possessed by any character present in the scene that she's previously discerned with her own read intentions action, passing it off as her own.

In Water Aura, this Charm may be declared after a character has failed a read intentions roll, rather than before he rolls.

Stealth

Distracting Breeze Meditation

Cost: 2m per success; **Mins:** Stealth 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Excellency, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

As the Dragon-Blood moves through the shadows, the wind itself conspires to conceal her, blowing out torches, flapping curtains, or knocking over objects to create distractions. She may add automatic successes to a Stealth roll for two motes each.

Vanishing Wind-Body Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood is one with the air around her, releasing the solidity and substance that weigh down her body. She ignores one point of the penalty for using Stealth in combat, and effects that detect air motion, like Living Pulse Perception (**Exalted**, p. 271) or the air-aspected variant of All-Encompassing Earth Sense (p. 172), don't work against her. She can still be detected normally by hearing and other senses.

In Air Aura, the Dragon-Blood may ignore (her Essence/2, rounded up) in penalties for using Stealth in combat.

Flowing Shadow Stance

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Vanishing Wind-Body Technique

The Dragon-Blood moves with the grace of a secret current, flowing past the notice of her enemies. She rerolls 6s on a Stealth roll until they cease to appear, and gains a point of Initiative if she beats the opposed rolls of all enemies.

In Water Aura, when the Exalt gains Initiative with this Charm, she may choose one of the enemies she beat with her Stealth roll, causing him to lose one Initiative.

Soundless Action Prana

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Mute
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: Vanishing Wind-Body Technique

The Dragon-Blood silences herself with an inner whirlwind, drawing in the sound of every unintended gasp or misplaced footstep before it reaches the ears of her foes. Every 10 on a Stealth roll rerolls a non-1 failed die, and she can't be detected by hearing unless the opposing character's hearing is superhuman or magically enhanced. Such characters still take a −2 penalty on rolls to hear her.

Shimmering Heat-Mirage Tactic

Cost: 4m, 2i; **Mins:** Stealth 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire, Perilous
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Shadow Stance

The Dragon-Blood's outline wavers and distorts like heat haze, her movements seeming to double and treble as she trails afterimages. She gains +2 Evasion. This Charm ends if a nontrivial enemy attacks her and rolls no 1s, even if she successfully defends.

In Fire Aura, **withering** attacks don't end this Charm even if they have no 1s, as long as they have no 10s.

Whispering Dragon Soul

Cost: —(2m per Charm); **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Mute, Signature (Air)
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

Having meditated on the nature of silence, the Dragon-Blood directs her enlightenment inward, suffusing her anima banner with the subtlety of air. She may pay two motes to apply the Mute keyword to any Air or Balanced Charm she uses.

The Dragon-Blood can master this Charm for other elements for three experience points each. She cannot mute multiple Charms of different elements in a single instant (excluding Balanced Charms).

Sleeping Dragon's Lair

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute, Signature (Earth)
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood descends into the earth beneath her, either to coil and slumber or simply to wait. As long as she's touching reasonably pliant ground, she may sink into it, entombing herself just below the surface. She cannot be seen or heard without using applicable magic, such as hearing her heartbeat with Knowing Beyond Silence or sensing her presence with Feeling the Dragon's Bones (p. 173). She can still be tracked by scent, but her trail ends abruptly at the point where she vanished into the earth.

While entombed, the Dragon-Blood cannot use her senses or move without the use of appropriate Charms. She could eavesdrop through a layer of topsoil with Deep-Listening Palm (p. 172), detect the presence of anyone within range with All-Encompassing Earth Sense (p. 172), or move underground with One-With-Earth Embodiment (p. 174). She buries herself along with enough air to breathe for five minutes, after which she must hold her breath or make use of Charms such as Unbreathing Earth Meditation (p. 248).

When this Charm ends, the Dragon-Blood emerges from the earth in a great plume of dust that she can hide within. She may expend her Earth Aura through the dust plume to blind all enemies in short range for one scene unless they succeed on a (Stamina + Awareness) roll at difficulty 3. Blinded characters must spend three Initiative and a turn washing out their eyes to regain sight.

An Essence 5 repurchase of this Charm lets the Dragon-Blood descend into solid rock as long as it's natural, unworked stone. She could embed herself in the wall of a cavern or a mountain overhang, but not the stone floor of a dungeon. She may expend her Earth Aura when she emerges from solid rock to unleash a spray of stone shrapnel that both blinds enemies as above and acts as a one-time environmental hazard out to short range from the Dragon-Blood with Damage 3L and a difficulty equal to (the lowest of her Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina).

Flame-Becomes-Shadow Technique

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Psyche, Signature (Fire)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Terrestrial shrouds the flame of her presence in smoke and shadows, diverting the attention of those who are most in awe of her. The Dragon-Blood rolls ([Manipulation or Appearance] + Stealth) against the Resolve of any character that has an Intimacy which supports deference or submission towards her — whether love, fear, or belief in Immaculate orthodoxy. The targeted Intimacies penalize Resolve as normal. Affected characters are incapable of perceiving the Dragon-Blood until she takes hostile action or chooses to reveal herself. An Immaculate monk could walk unnoticed into the midst of a meeting plotting sedition against the Realm, stepping forward from the shadows to pronounce judgment.

A character that wishes to resist this unnatural influence must enter a Decision Point, calling upon an Intimacy of equal or greater strength than the one exploited and paying a point of Willpower.

Depth-Stalking Discipline

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Mute, Signature (Water)
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Shadow Stance

The Dragon-Blood submerges herself in Water Essence to wash away anything that might betray her presence. She doubles 9s on Stealth rolls. While surrounded by water, such as being submerged or in driving rain, she doubles 8s and is completely imperceptible by scent — able to evade the hunting hounds of a god by fleeing into a storm, or to swim through the sea while bleeding heavily without drawing the notice of siaka.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Shadow-Stalking Predator Spirit

Cost: 5m (+1wp, expend Wood Aura); **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Dual, Mute, Signature (Wood)
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood moves through the wilderness as its hidden master, stalking her prey unseen. Boughs twist to conceal her movement; fragrant flowers and pollen obscure her scent trail. To use this Charm, she must be moving through or hiding behind light foliage, small trees, or comparable vegetation. When an enemy within medium range — or long range, in areas of heavy growth such as thick bamboo groves or forests dense with underbrush — rolls to oppose her Stealth, his 1s subtract successes.

When the Dragon-Blood makes an unexpected attack against an enemy within range of this Charm, she may pay one Willpower and expend her Wood Aura — ending this Charm — to double her attack roll's threshold successes when calculating the damage of a **withering** attack, or to add her threshold successes as dice to the damage of a **decisive** attack. If she conveys poison through an unexpected **decisive** attack this way, she adds (Essence/2, rounded down) to its duration.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Burning Shadow Double

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Shimmering Heat-Mirage Tactic

The Dragon-Blood radiates her presence through the shadows as a heat mirage, distorting the air to create a near-perfect double of herself, tinged with glowing hints of her anima. To use this Charm, she must be in concealment. She may place a decoy at any point within medium range. The decoy is realistically lifelike and can appear to take most actions the Exalt could, as determined by her, but cannot speak, make sounds, or touch anything, and has no scent. It can't move beyond medium range from her, and vanishes if she moves further than medium range from it.

The decoy has Evasion (Manipulation) against attacks, and dissipates into nothingness once struck. Against attacks made from short or close range, its Evasion falls to 0. As long as it isn't hit, it continues to convincingly imitate the Dragon-Blood, though it cannot take combat actions.

Once a character comes within short or close range of the decoy, he may roll (Perception + Awareness) opposing (the Dragon-Blood's Manipulation + Stealth) to realize the decoy is a sham, and can warn his allies not to attack it. Magic such as Keen Sight Technique (**Exalted**, p. 267) allows characters to make this roll at any range.

In Fire Aura, the Exalt may create up to (Essence + Manipulation) separate decoys with each use of this Charm, paying two motes for each additional mirage.

Zone of Silence Stance

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Mute
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Soundless Action Prana

The Dragon-Blood weighs down the air around her, trapping sounds in frozen stillness. She can silence the ringing of blades, the desperate cry of a wounded bandit, or the shattering of a thousand-year-old vase. This Charm functions as Soundless Action Prana, but silences the Exalt completely, defeating even supernatural hearing. In addition, she can radiate silence out to close range, making it impossible to hear anyone or anything within that radius and obstructing the passage of sound through the zone of silence as though it were a solid steel dome over her. Characters may pay one Willpower to speak forcefully enough to pierce the silence long enough to make one social roll if remaining silent would threaten one of their Major or Defining Intimacies.

In Air Aura, the Dragon-Blood may expand the zone of silence by one range band at the end of each round, maximum long range.

Deadly Riptide Executioner

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Dual, Mute, Water
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Shadow Stance

The Dragon-Blood stalks her victim calmly but inexorably, slowly gathering force until she finally draws blood. This Charm can only be used in concealment. The Dragon-Blood chooses a character, and gains one point of Initiative each turn that she moves towards him without breaking concealment. If she leaves concealment or fails to pursue the chosen target, this Charm ends.

If the Dragon-Blood ends this Charm by making an unexpected attack, she may expend her Water Aura to dissolve into dark water as she lunges forward, ignoring (Essence + 2) points of soak on a **withering** attack, or ignoring (Essence) points of Hardness and doubling 10s on the damage roll of a **decisive** attack.

Dragon Shroud Technique

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Mute
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Zone of Silence Stance

The Dragon-Blood spins air into an enfolding shroud against all senses. Her form is blurred and indistinct, her noises muffled, and every other trace of her presence masked from detection — scent, body heat, and more. All rolls to oppose her Stealth take a penalty of (her Essence/2, rounded up), and she waives the cost of muting Air Charms with Whispering Dragon Soul. The Charm ends if the Dragon-Blood attacks.



Mela's Hungry Jaws

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Aura
Duration: Aura
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon Shroud Technique

The Dragon-Blood steals the very air from her victim's lungs, suffocating him without ever laying a hand on him or being seen. This Charm can only be used while in concealment, against an enemy within medium range who's unaware of the Dragon-Blood. She steals his breath, causing him to begin to asphyxiate (**Exalted**, p. 232). Trivial opponents never receive a chance to hold their breath, even outside of combat.

The Terrestrial cannot move while using this Charm to siphon her foe's breath, but neither can her victim move without rolling a disengage against her, regardless of the distance between them. A victim can only break free of Mela's Hungry Jaws by successfully finding the Dragon-Blood with a (Perception + Awareness) roll or withdrawing to extreme range. His allies can attempt to free him by attacking the Dragon-Blood once they've found her. Even if the attack roll misses, as long as it rolled no 1s, this Charm ends, while a hit automatically ends it.

Survival

Ration-Enhancing Method

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Survival 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Excellency, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The wilderness welcomes the Dragon-Blood's presence, recognizing her as a Prince of the Earth. She may add automatic successes to a Survival roll for two motes each. If she enhances a roll to forage for food, it yields enough edible plants or game to feed a single additional character besides her for one day per threshold success.

Quarry Revelation Technique

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Survival 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood can track wild beasts back to their dens or the Anathema to their lairs. She rerolls 6s on a tracking roll (**Exalted**, p. 230) until they cease to appear, and is capable of rolling to contest even magical concealment that is otherwise perfect, such as a Solar's Traceless Passage.

Trail-Concealing Measure

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Mute, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Quarry Revelation Technique

Skillfully concealing all signs of her passage, the Dragon-Blood may tread over twigs without snapping them and walk through grass without bending a blade. She doubles 9s on a Survival roll to conceal her tracks or on a Stealth roll to establish concealment in a forest, grassland, or similar wilderness.

The Dragon-Blood may learn elemental variants of this Charm that function in different terrain for three experience points each.

Air: This variant can be used in snowfall, or amid snow-covered or icy terrain.

Earth: This variant can be used underground, or in mountainous or other rocky terrain.

Fire: This variant can be used in widespread fire or smoke, or amid deserts or active volcanic terrain.

Water: This variant can be used in rainfall, near bodies of water, or amid marshy or swampy terrain.

Beast-Taming Aspect

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's mien gives pause to even the most ferocious predators, proving to them that she deserves their respect. She doubles 9s on a roll to train an animal (**Exalted**, p. 554) or to influence it using Performance or Presence. Even if she uses this Charm to scare off a dangerous predator, her noble bearing causes the beast to regard her with respect. Over the course of weeks, she can claim such an animal as her familiar. This takes a number of weeks equal to (its Resolve), and the Dragon-Blood must successfully interact with it using this Charm at least once each week. Once this is done, that animal becomes her familiar at no experience cost.

Animal Empathy Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Beast-Taming Aspect

The Dragon-Blood needs no words to communicate with animals, mimicking their bestial body language or vocalizations to engage them. She adds (Essence) non-Charm bonus dice on an influence roll made against an animal using any Ability. In addition, her target doesn't gain the Resolve bonus for lacking a common language (**Exalted**, p. 221).

Wild-Wandering Forester's Charm

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Survival 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood knows the wilderness as well as she knows her own domain, aware of the secrets and wonders hidden within it. She rolls ([Intelligence or Wits] + Survival) to introduce a fact (**Exalted**, p. 237) about a wilderness region that she's familiar with. She might recount her knowledge of an animal species native to the region, the location of a rare medicinal herb, or effective preparations against a hazard she might encounter.

Mother-of-Beasts Mastery

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: One week
Prerequisite Charms: Beast-Taming Aspect

The Dragon-Blood's natural affinity for animals makes her a peerless trainer, able to rear and nurture even the most savage beasts. She may complete one interval of the extended roll to train an animal (**Exalted**, p. 554) in a week of training, rather than a month, and ignores the usual specialty requirements.

A Survival 5, Essence 3 repurchase of this Charm lets the Dragon-Blood train her familiar to awaken magical abilities (**Exalted**, p. 555) at a cost of two experience points each. This cost is refunded if her familiar dies.

Invoking Nature's Forgiveness

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's skill in weathering difficult climes lets her protect her allies from even the most hostile environments, leading them through searing desert or frozen tundra. She may protect herself, her Sworn Kin, and (Essence) additional characters. The Exalt must spend five minutes in one-on-one training and preparations with each beneficiary. Each protected character gains a temporary Resistance specialty in withstanding his current environment, and ignores (her Essence) in environmental penalties from harsh climes.

Up to five Dragon-Blooded who know this Charm can use it cooperatively. Each additional Exalt adds +1 to the effective Essence of the user to determine how many additional characters can be protected and the amount of penalty reduction.

Stalking Wolf Pursuit

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Quarry Revelation Technique

Honing her senses with Essence, the Dragon-Blood can hunt her foes no matter how they try to hide. She ignores any penalties on a tracking roll from visual obstructions, the age of the tracks, and similar environmental factors. A successful roll also lets her determine how much time has elapsed since the target left based on the remaining strength of his scent.

Vanishing Tracks Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Survival 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Trail-Concealing Measure

The Dragon-Blood is a master of moving without trace, and can obscure the passage of others with her mastery. She rerolls 6s on a roll to cover her tracks. She may conceal the spoor of her Sworn Kin and (Essence) additional characters, allowing them to use half of her rolled successes (rounded up) in place of their own result if it's higher.

Cunning Beast-Mind Inspiration

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Air)
Duration: One turn
Prerequisite Charms: Mother-of-Beasts Mastery

The Dragon-Blood's familiar has wisdom beyond the ken of ordinary beasts, its mind honed by Air Essence. The Exalt may use this Charm on her familiar's turn, rolling (Charisma + Survival). She adds half the total successes rolled, rounded up, to one action her familiar takes that turn. In addition, if her familiar takes a defend other action to protect her, it may do so reflexively. If it attempts a distract gambit to benefit her, it doubles 7s on the attack roll.

Earth-Moving Kata

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Moving with practiced discipline through whirling steps and dragon-claw mudras, the Dragon-Blood unleashes a seismic pulse of Earth Essence to strike aside an obstacle. Any natural earthen scenery that bars her path can be removed, such as fallen rocks that block a road, a boulder rolled in front of a cave mouth, or a pool of quicksand. The Storyteller describes the exact effects of this pulse on the scenery — it might cause piled-up stones to fall away, harden quicksand into solid terrain, shatter boulders, or cause stone to meld back into the earth. However, she cannot use this Charm to affect masonry walls or other man-made obstructions.

Alternatively, the Dragon-Blood can create a bridge or stairway out of earth or stone to span a canyon, chasm, or similar gap. This cannot extend more than (Essence/2, round up) range bands from her.

Wildfire-Taming Technique

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood may admonish even a wildfire, brandishing elemental Essence to impose her will on the flame. This Charm can be used to divert a prairie wildfire, forest fire, or similar free-burning flame from the path of the Dragon-Blood and her travel companions. She must come within at least short range of the wildfire's edge and roll (Charisma + Survival). The difficulty of the roll depends on the fire's size — a small grass fire or a just-kindled forest fire might be difficulty 1, a larger forest fire difficulty 3, and an out-of-control blaze that spans miles difficulty 5+. The Storyteller may apply penalties or bonuses based on environmental factors such as recent rainfall or high winds that help the fire spread.

A successful roll diverts the wildfire from the Dragon-Blood's path. Though it continues to burn, it avoids the Exalt and her companions, and won't pose any direct obstruction to them for the remainder of the story. If she has any threshold successes on the roll, she may redirect the wildfire to track down a character, using her total threshold successes in place of the (Perception + Survival) roll for tracking. Though it lacks sapience, the tamed wildfire is able to sense its quarry magically, and is thus even capable of tracking down a Solar using Traceless Passage. The Storyteller decides the fire's speed based on environs and weather, up to a maximum of 150 miles per hour in ideal conditions. However, if there's no path of forested land, grass, peat, or other fuel that the fire can follow to pursue its target, its efforts end, making it possible to escape by fleeing from the wilderness.

Roaring Dragon Font

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Water)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Meditating in communion with the Essence of underground waters, the Dragon-Blood can find hidden springs in the most desolate climes, beckoning them forth with a mighty stomp that sends a font of water gushing up from underground. She rolls (Wits + Survival) against a difficulty based on her environs — finding a spring in a region that receives regular rainfall or has abundant natural aquifers might be difficulty 1-2, while doing so in an arid desert is difficulty 5+. A successful roll creates a spring. Normally, this spring becomes a permanent feature of the environs, but in regions so harsh that a spring couldn't conceivably exist, it flows for only a limited time, providing enough water to sustain the Dragon-Blood, plus one additional character for each threshold success, for a day. She can only draw water up from the ground; she couldn't use this Charm to pierce a marble floor or the hull of a boat.

In the scene that this Charm is used, the waters that flow from the spring are suffused with purifying Essence. Any character who drinks of the water and either has a positive Tie towards the Dragon-Blood or accepts one out of gratitude may add a non-Charm bonus success on all Athletics, Resistance, and Survival rolls he makes for the rest of the day.

Roaring Dragon Font can only be used once per story, unless reset by succeeding on a difficulty 4+ Survival roll.

Stalking Apex Predator Technique

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: One hour
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood moves through the wilderness as its master, running with packs of wild beasts and deftly weaving through jungles. She ignores penalties for crossing difficult terrain made up of dense forests, thick foliage, briar patches, or other plant-based obstructions. While in such terrain, she also ignores the penalty for entering concealment in combat (**Exalted**, p. 203) and can attempt rushes while in concealment. Additionally, she adds (Essence) non-Charm bonus dice rolls to conceal her tracks.

Once per scene, the Dragon-Blood may expend her Wood Aura when she makes an unexpected **decisive** attack from plant-based concealment to add (Essence) bonus dice on the attack roll and double 10s on the damage roll.

Tireless Caravan Prana

Cost: —(+7m); **Mins:** Survival 4, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Invoking Nature's Forgiveness

The Dragon-Blood guides her companions through the deepest forests and harshest climes. She may commit an additional seven motes when she uses Invoking Nature's Forgiveness to increase the rate at which she and the other affected characters can travel through wilderness. If they're traveling through normal wilderness, they can cover (Essence + 10) miles with a single day's march. Extremely harsh terrain or weather halves the distance they can cover, such as when hiking through a blizzard or climbing a mountain's face.

If multiple Dragon-Blooded stack the benefits of Invoking Nature's Forgiveness, the Essence bonus also applies to this Charm to determine the distance that can be covered. Only one of them needs to know and use Tireless Caravan Prana to yield this benefit.

Dragon's Nest Shelter

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: (Essence) days
Prerequisite Charms: Tireless Caravan Prana

Calling upon nature's mercy, the Dragon-Blood fortifies a shelter with the power of the elements. Vines twine around tent poles to secure them in place; the ground beneath a hut compresses itself to form a sturdy foundation; falling snow forms a crystalline shell atop an igloo. This Charm wards an enclosed shelter, such as a cave or hut, that's large enough to comfortably house herself, her Hearth, and up to (Essence) other characters. This takes around an hour to complete. This Charm has the aspect of whichever element the Exalt called upon to fortify her shelter. Up to five Dragon-Blooded who know this Charm can cooperate to erect this shelter. Each additional Exalt adds 1 to the effective Essence of the user to determine the shelter's maximum size, and allows the shelter to protect against an additional element.

Characters within the shelter are protected from environmental hazards and other wilderness perils related to the chosen element. For example, if the Exalt fortifies a cave with Air Essence, even hurricane winds can't pass through the cavern mouth, while a shelter fortified with Earth Essence withstands rockslides and protects those within. This protection doesn't extend to elemental magic or attacks used by characters.

At Essence 5, if the Dragon-Blooded enhances a shelter while in the bordermarches or middlemarches of the Wyld, it protects its inhabits from any physical or mental effects of the Wyld. It offers no protection once she reaches the deep Wyld.

Uncanny Fugitive's Intuition

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Survival 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Vanishing Tracks Technique

A master hunter knows when she becomes hunted. When a character fails an opposed roll to track the Dragon-Blood, she intuits that someone is pursuing her, and discerns a general sense of distance and direction to his current location.

Burning Fang Strike

Cost: 3m, 3i, expend Fire Aura; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Mother-of-Beasts Mastery

A flame blazes in the eyes of the Dragon-Blood's familiar as it leaps into battle. When her familiar makes a **decisive** attack, it adds the Exalt's Initiative to the attack's total damage. A successful attack resets both Exalt and familiar to base Initiative; they both lose Initiative on a missed attack. If the familiar's attack incapacitates a nontrivial opponent or deals enough damage to a battle group to reduce its Size, both it and the Exalt add +2 to base Initiative on resetting.

Eternal Elemental Harmony

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Invoking Nature's Forgiveness

The Dragon-Blood is one with the five elements, capable of dancing with lightning and walking through wildfires. This Charm can be used upon failing a roll against an environmental hazard. The Exalt rolls (Stamina + Survival). Every success reduces the hazard's damage by one die. If the hazard inflicts no damage on the Exalt, she gains a point of temporary Willpower. This Charm's elemental aspect is that which most closely matches the nature of the hazard it's used to protect against.

If the Dragon-Blood is in the Elemental Aura that matches this Charm's aspect, the duration of its protection lasts for as long as she remains in Aura, subtracting dice of damage based on her initial roll. She can only gain Willpower once, even if she withstands multiple hazards without taking damage.

Labyrinth of Mist Technique

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air/Water, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Uncanny Fugitive's Intuition, Tireless Caravan Prana

Those who chase after the Dragon-Blood may as well hunt phantoms. She rolls to conceal her tracks with double 8s. Additionally, a character that fails the roll becomes lost in the wilderness he's tracking her through, chasing the Exalt's false trails until he loses all sense of location and bearing. Escaping the wilderness requires a difficulty 5 (Wits + Survival) roll to locate a path leading out. On a failed roll, that character must wait until the next day before he can retry it. This doesn't prevent him from using magic to ascertain his location or to find a way out without needing to make a Survival roll.

Thrown

Seeking Throw Technique

Cost: 1m per die; **Mins:** Thrown 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Excellency, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's hostile intent stirs up a current of wind that guides her weapon to its victim. A thrown knife might change trajectory in midair to strike an enemy hidden behind a tree, wall, or similar cover. She may add bonus dice on a Thrown roll for one mote each, and ignores the Defense bonus of enemies in light cover.

In Air Aura, if the Dragon-Blood aims before attacking, she may ignore one point of Defense bonus from heavy cover.

Armor-Rupturing Fang

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Thrown 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood strikes at stress points in a foe's armor. On a successful **decisive** attack, her weapon becomes embedded in her enemy's armor, lowering its soak by one point and raising its mobility penalty by one. Unarmored enemies are unaffected unless the Storyteller deems the enemy's body super-durable, like an automaton's metal body or a tyrant lizard's thick scales.

Removing the embedded weapon is a Strength 3 feat of strength at difficulty (higher of Essence or Strength) that can be attempted by the target or any of his allies within close range, negating the penalty on success.

In Earth Aura, the Exalt can embed multiple weapons into an enemy's armor with successive uses of this Charm. Each weapon's penalty stacks, maximum (Essence + 1), and requires a separate action to remove.

Blinding Spark Throw

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood grinds a nail against her weapon or palm, sending a cascade of sparks into the eyes of an unfortunate foe. This is a difficulty 3 gambit against an enemy out to medium range. Success blinds him for three rounds. He may pay two Initiative to roll (Stamina + Resistance) against difficulty 3 as a miscellaneous action that can't be flurried, regaining his eyesight on success.

The Dragon-Blood may expend her Fire Aura when she crashes an enemy using any combat Ability to use this Charm against him reflexively.

Venomous Thorn Attack

Cost: 3m, 1i; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Venom drips from the Dragon-Blood's blades. She reflexively poisons her weapon as she makes a **decisive** attack, even if it lacks the Poisonable tag. This Charm's Initiative cost is waived for weapons that have that tag.

Arcing Levinbolt Precision

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Armor-Rupturing Fang

A flash of lightning precedes the Dragon-Blood's weapon, tracing the path to her foe. An enemy wearing metal armor, including armor made from the five magical materials, applies its mobility penalty to his soak and Hardness against an attack.

Earth-Shattering Strike

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Armor-Rupturing Fang

The Dragon-Blood's weapon descends on her foe with the force of a hurled boulder. She makes a **decisive** attack that shatters the ground beneath her target's feet on a hit, creating difficult terrain beneath him.

Invisibly Hidden Chakram Method

Cost: 2m (1m); **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Stackable
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's weapons vanish in a whirl of wind. She banishes a Thrown weapon Elsewhere until she recalls it to her hand by ending this Charm. She may stack this Charm to banish up to (Essence + 1) weapons at a time, paying only one mote for weapons beyond the first.

In Air Aura, the Dragon-Blood may banish any number of weapons with a single use of this Charm, committing two motes for the first and one mote for each additional weapon.

Mela's Twin Fangs

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Aura, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Invisibly Hidden Chakram Method

The Dragon-Blood palms a weapon from Elsewhere as she attacks with another weapon, throwing one in the shadow of the other. To use this Charm, she must have at least one weapon banished with its prerequisite and another readied. She makes two **withering** attacks against a single enemy — one with the readied weapon, and another with the banished weapon, which she recalls to her hand. She only gains Initiative from the attack that deals the highest damage.

Elusive Zephyr Strike

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's weapon is guided by unseen winds, changing course in mid-flight to misdirect a foe. She doubles 9s on the attack roll of a distract gambit.

In Air Aura, the Dragon-Blood adds her attack roll threshold successes as dice to her Initiative roll.

Smoke Burst Eruption

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire, Mute
Duration: Until end of next turn
Prerequisite Charms: Blinding Spark Throw

A shockwave of Essence bursts from the Dragon-Blood's weapon, casting up smoke and strewing the battlefield with debris. A successful **decisive** attack creates a smoke cloud out to short range from the target, providing sufficient concealment to roll Stealth. If the Dragon-Blood or any of her allies makes an unexpected attack against the same enemy from within the smoke, they add a bonus die on both the attack and damage roll. The smoke dissipates once this Charm ends.

With a Thrown 5, Essence 5 repurchase, the Dragon-Blood may pay one Willpower upon landing an attack while in Fire Aura to reflexively roll (Dexterity + Stealth) to establish concealment within the smoke.

Persistent Hornet Attack

Cost: 5m, 1wp, expend Air Aura; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Air), Withering-only
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Mela's Twin Fangs

The Dragon-Blood's weapon takes to the air with a life of its own, pursuing her foes like a murderous metal wasp. She makes a **withering** attack, but doesn't gain any Initiative from it (including Initiative Breaks). Instead, if she hits, that Initiative is transferred to her weapon, which enters battle as a living weapon carried on the wind, orbiting the target at close range.

The weapon cannot act until the round after this Charm is used. The only actions it can take are to reflexively move, aim, or attack an enemy at close range. The weapon uses the Dragon-Blood's dice pools, but she cannot use Charms or other magic to enhance its actions. The weapon has its own separate Initiative, which benefits from its **withering** attacks and determines the damage of its **decisive** attacks. Upon successfully landing a **decisive** attack, this Charm ends. If it goes a round without aiming or landing an attack, it loses three Initiative.

The weapon has Defense and soak (higher of Essence or Wits). It can be targeted with **withering** attacks or knocked out of the air with a successful disarm gambit, ending this Charm.

Devastating Avalanche Barrage

Cost: 5m, 4i, 1wp, expend Earth Aura (+1a); **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Perilous, Signature (Earth), Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Earth-Shattering Strike

Stones, debris, and clods of hard-packed earth rise up into the air around the Dragon-Blood and orbit her weapon as she focuses her Essence, building to an

unstoppable landslide of force. She makes a **withering** attack against a single enemy, but also uses her attack roll as an unblockable **withering** attack against that foe and all characters within short range of him (including allies) as rock fragments and debris trail her weapon. If there's no usable stone present, the Dragon-Blood may expend a level of anima to manifest it instead. After rolling damage normally for the first attack, she rolls (Strength) dice of unsoakable damage against each enemy hit by the second attack roll, although it cannot deal more damage than the first. She gains no Initiative from the second attack, but characters damaged by it are knocked prone. A character crashed by it is buried beneath rubble, and cannot rise from prone until he or another character has cleared it away with a Strength 3 feat of strength at difficulty (higher of Dragon-Blood's Essence or Strength).

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by successfully landing a **decisive** attack from Initiative 15+ while in Earth Aura.

Exploding Weapon Technique

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Smoke Burst Eruption

The Terrestrial's anima pours into her palms as burning flames, wreathing her weapon in an aura of explosive Essence. To use this Charm, the Dragon-Blood must have Initiative 12+. She makes a **decisive** attack that detonates on impact, adding (Essence) dice of damage and rolling an additional die of damage for every 9 and 10 on the damage roll. Artifact weapons suffer no damage from being used with this Charm, but most mundane weapons are destroyed.

An Essence 5+ repurchase unlocks two additional effects that can be used in conjunction with other Charms.

Exploding Armor Strike: When the Dragon-Blooded lands a **decisive** attack enhanced by this Charm against an enemy whose armor has been weakened by Armor-Piercing Fang (p. 275), she can detonate the embedded weapons for five motes each, adding three bonus dice of damage for each additional explosion.

Rain of Falling Stars: When the Dragon-Blooded uses Thousand Razor Wind, she may reflexively activate Exploding Weapon Technique as a Balanced Charm without needing to be in Fire Aura. Instead of this Charm's usual effect, the first attack that hits detonates, adding three dice of **decisive** damage. She may detonate any subsequent attacks that hit for five motes each, with the same effect.

Fatal Riptide Strike

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Mute, Signature (Water), Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's anima limns her hands and weaponry with aqueous Essence, allowing them to move through water as though it were air. She ignores penalties for throwing a weapon from or through water or similar liquids. Surprise attacks she makes while underwater deal (Essence) additional dice of damage.

Once per scene, when the Dragon-Blood makes an unexpected attack against an enemy with lower Initiative while underwater, she may pay one Willpower and expend her Water Aura to convert it to an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203).

Hundred Thorns Blossom

Cost: 5m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Decisive-only, Signature (Wood)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Elusive Zephyr Strike

The Dragon-Blood draws a foe off guard with lithe, suggestive motions, taking advantage of his wavering attention to unleash a deadly barrage of needles or other concealed weapons from her hair, fingertips, or the back of her throat. On her turn, she may force an enemy with lower Initiative within short range to roll (Perception + Awareness) against her Guile. If he fails, she reflexively makes an unexpected **decisive** attack against him with (Manipulation + successes by which the enemy failed) dice of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. This doesn't include her Initiative or reset her to base.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by successfully establishing concealment against all enemies with a Stealth roll.

Stone Needle Strike

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Earth-Shattering Strike



The Dragon-Blood's wrath leaves her foes pinned to the earth. An enemy damaged by her **decisive** attack loses his movement action on his next turn, and is impaled by her weapon, requiring him or an ally to succeed on a Strength 3 feat of strength at difficulty (higher of the Dragon-Blood's Essence or Strength) before he can take any movement actions.

Winter Fang Attack

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Elusive Zephyr Strike

The Terrestrial's weapon is chilled by her deadly intent, numbing flesh as it strikes. This Charm can supplement a **decisive** attack or a gambit. If the attack deals damage or the gambit succeeds, the enemy loses Initiative equal to the 10s on the damage roll or the Initiative roll, maximum (Essence). The Dragon-Blood doesn't gain this Initiative.

Thousand Razor Wind

Cost: 1m, 1wp, expend Air Aura; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Aura, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Mela's Twin Fangs

The Dragon-Blood unleashes her gathered fury in a storm of deadly steel. She instantly recalls every weapon she's banished with Invisibly Hidden Chakram Method and sends them flying towards a single foe. She makes a **decisive** attack with her readied weapon (if any) and with each recalled weapon, making a separate attack roll for each weapon. She divides her Initiative evenly among all attacks, rounded down, to determine their damage, ignoring Hardness. She doesn't reset to base Initiative until she's completed all attacks.

Whirlwind Shield Technique

Cost: 7m, 1wp, expend Air Aura; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Aura
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Thousand Razor Wind

Whirling currents of wind swirl around the Exalt, catching her weapons as she tosses them into the air to create a vortex of deadly steel and whatever rocks, branches, or other detritus are caught up in the wind. She rolls the whirlwind into battle with (Wits + Thrown). It has a Parry rating equal to half the total successes, rounded up, on its Join Battle roll (maximum 5), and its only action is to protect the Exalt with defend other (**Exalted**, p. 196), moving to accompany her wherever she goes. It gains one Initiative whenever it successfully defends against an attack.

The whirlwind shield has soak (Essence + Dexterity + Stamina). **Withering** attacks against the whirlwind shield reduce its Initiative normally, while **decisive** attacks strip two points of Initiative for each level of damage, although this isn't awarded to the attacker. If the whirlwind is crashed, this Charm ends.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Vengeful Gust Counterstrike

Cost: 3m, 1wp, expend Air Aura; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Aura, Clash, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Whirlwind Shield Technique

The swirling winds surrounding the Dragon-Blood spin with deadly force, deflecting blades and arrows while gouging deep cuts along her foes. While Whirlwind Shield Technique is active, the Dragon-Blood may reflexively clash an attack from out to short range with a **decisive** attack, with damage equal to the whirlwind's Initiative. This doesn't count as her combat action or reset her to base Initiative. Success resets the whirlwind to three Initiative; on a failure, the clashed attack strikes the whirlwind instead of the Exalt.

Wind Armor Technique

Cost: —; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Air
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Vengeful Gust Counterstrike

The Exalt has refined her control of the Whirlwind Shield Technique to create invisible armor out of swirling air. While that Charm is active, she gains Hardness equal to the whirlwind's Initiative. If the whirlwind's Parry blocks an attack from close range, the attacker suffers one die of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. This Charm is incompatible with armor.

War

Tactics Mean Everything

Cost: 1m per die; **Mins:** War 1, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Earth, Excellency
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Wise strategy is the foundation upon which victories are built. The Dragon-Blood may add bonus dice to a War roll for one mote each, and rerolls 6s until they cease to appear.

Excellence of the Dutiful General

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** War 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood strengthens her judgment and strategic insight with the steadiness and calm of the earth, finding the path that leads to victory. She converts up to (Essence) situational bonus dice on a Strategic Maneuver roll (**Exalted**, p. 212) to non-Charm successes.

Tireless Footfalls Cadence

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Excellence of the Dutiful General

Earth Essence sustains the Dragon-Blood's soldiers as they march in steady, rhythmic unison. She ignores penalties from troop fatigue or movement through strenuous environments on a Strategic Maneuver roll. If she defeats the opposing general on the roll and implements her stratagem, allied battle groups ignore fatigue-based penalties for the duration of the fight.

Roaring Dragon Officer

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** War 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Balanced, Earth, Perilous
Duration: One turn
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood's voice echoes across the battlefield as though it were a canyon. She may place a command action in a flurry, although not with an attack.

In Earth Aura, the penalty on both flurried actions is reduced by one point, and the Dragon-Blood's Defense isn't penalized.

Blazing Courageous Swordsman Inspiration

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Balanced, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Roaring Dragon Officer

The Dragon-Blood leads from the front, a blazing icon that ignites her soldiers' hearts. She rolls an additional non-Charm die for each 10 that appears on a Charisma- or Appearance-based command action to give orders.

In Fire Aura, bonus dice granted by the Dragon-Blood's command also add to the battle group's Willpower rolls to resist being routed this round (**Exalted**, p. 209).

Army-To-Mob Assault

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Water, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Blazing Courageous Swordsman Inspiration

The Dragon-Blood overwhelms enemy forces with tactics designed to spread confusion and chaos. When an allied battle group attacks an enemy battle group under the Dragon-Blood's orders, she converts (Manipulation) bonus dice granted to the battle group's attack by her command to automatic successes. If this empties the enemy battle group's Magnitude, add +1 to the difficulty of its roll to resist rout.

Choking Weeds Tactic

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Army-To-Mob Assault

The Dragon-Blood strangles an enemy army with guerrilla raids on supply lines and base camps, forcing them to fight on empty stomachs while her soldiers enjoy the windfall of stolen supplies. When she rolls a Strategic Maneuver, the threshold of the opposing general's stratagem is increased by 1.

If the Dragon-Blood successfully enacts her stratagem, enemy battle groups suffer a −3 penalty on their Join Battle rolls in the affected fight.

Changing Winds Cunning

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Balanced
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Tireless Footfalls Cadence

When the wind of battle reverses direction, the Terrestrial adapts her strategy at a moment's notice. She rerolls (Essence) non-1 failed dice on a Strategic Maneuver roll.

A War 5, Essence 5 repurchase allows the Dragon-Blood to spend one Willpower after rolling her maneuver, but before rerolling failures, to change her chosen stratagem.

Storm-Calling Strategos

Cost: 10m, 1wp (5i); **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Air)
Duration: Until stratagem is completed
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood commands the skies themselves, calling down bolts of lightning to smite her enemies and darkening the horizon with storm clouds that precede her armies. This Charm creates a unique magical stratagem with threshold 3 to manipulate weather, forcing the enemy to contend with storms or similarly perilous atmospheric conditions. Once the Dragon-Blood Joins Battle against the opposing army, the harsh weather culminates in a thunderstorm, gale-force wind, heavy snowfall, or other extreme weather. This imposes a −3 environmental penalty on all physical actions that enemy battle groups take in combat. Non–battle group enemies may suffer a −1 environmental penalty on appropriate actions. The weather doesn't impede the Dragon-Blood or her allies.

At the beginning of each round, if the Dragon-Blood has 12+ Initiative, she may pay five Initiative to reflexively create an instantaneous environmental hazard targeting a single battle group — a bolt of lightning, an avalanche, or similar dangers. This hazard has difficulty (higher of Essence or Intelligence) and Damage (Willpower)L. If this deals enough Magnitude damage to reduce the battle group to Size 0, the Dragon-Blood gains one point of temporary Willpower.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless reset by achieving a cumulative total bonus of +4 on a Strategic Maneuver roll from any combination of non-magical sources.

Ramparts of Obedient Earth

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Signature (Earth)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The battlefield is clay to be sculpted in accordance with the tactical genius of the Terrestrial general. To use this Charm, the Dragon-Blood must be leading her soldiers. She may roll to Join Battle with (Intelligence + War), and receives a number of points equal to her



Join Battle successes that she may spend to reshape the battlefield:

Sinkhole (1-5 points): The Dragon-Blood tears open a sinkhole between the ranks of an enemy army or sculpts stone into a constricting obstruction. The ground out to close range from an enemy battle group becomes difficult terrain, and the battle group acts last on the first turn regardless of its place in Initiative order. The point cost is the Size of the battle group targeted.

Barricade (4 point): The Dragon-Blood wrenches up great masses of earth and compresses them into barriers or walls, instantly enacting a Fortifications stratagem (**Exalted**, p. 212).

Sapping (7 points): If an enemy general has successfully employed a Fortifications stratagem, the Dragon-Blood may negate its benefits by tunneling through earth and stone, or otherwise creating ways to bypass the fortifications. The Dragon-Blood's forces don't treat the terrain as difficult, and may reflexively advance one range band towards the enemy forces. The Storyteller may also adjudicate additional advantages depending on the context of the battlefield.

Reshape Battlefield (10 points): If the Dragon-Blood has successfully enacted a Strategic Placement stratagem (**Exalted**, p. 212), she may resculpt the battlefield to her specifications, preparing it before the battle and ensuring her enemy will fight her there. She might prepare rows of trenches and fortified towers of earth for her own forces, while forcing her enemy to traverse pits filled with stone spikes, narrow stone tunnels, and similar obstacles. The Storyteller adjudicates the specific effects of these creations. She cannot directly harm foes with the moving stone, although she can create all types of traps and dangers.

Deadly Wildfire Legion

Cost: 5m, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Aura, Signature (Fire)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

A raging nimbus of flames surrounds the Dragon-Blood's forces, manifesting her martial prowess as she urges them onward. Deadly flames dance along the edges of their swords and the points of their spears as they charge. She adds (Essence) non-Charm dice on a

command action to give orders. In addition to adding to the battle group's attack roll, this also adds one die to its damage roll for every two successes. The battle group may immediately take its turn for the round to complete the orders on her tick if it hasn't already acted this round, regardless of its place in Initiative order.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset when an allied battle group attacks under the Dragon-Blood's orders and deals enough damage to incapacitate a significant foe, or successfully routs an enemy battle group by depleting its Magnitude.

Fog-of-War Misdirection

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute, Signature (Water)
Duration: Until stratagem is completed
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blooded general lures her enemies into battle within the depths of an eerie fogbank, trapping them within a prison of water. This Charm creates a unique magical stratagem with threshold 3 that shrouds the battlefield with a heavy mist, forcing enemies to fight against the confusion and disarray amid their own ranks before they can even contend with her forces.

When the Dragon-Blood rolls Join Battle after successfully enacting this stratagem, she designates a point on the battlefield to be the center of the fog. The cloud extends out to long range from this point. The fog imposes a –2 penalty on all affected vision-based rolls and on any attacks made from medium range or beyond.

Enemy battle groups caught in the fog take a –1 penalty on rolls to resist rout. A character that wishes to target them with a command action must pay one Initiative to do so, and takes a –2 penalty on the roll.

If a battle group suffers dissolution after being routed in the mist, the Dragon-Blood gains Initiative equal to (its Size/2, rounded up). The Dragon-Blood cannot gain more than (Essence) Initiative in a single round this way.

Normal winds and weather conditions won't disperse the mist, but magically created wind or weather-manipulating magic, including the intervention of elementals, can do so.

This Charm can only be used once per story, unless the Dragon-Blooded resets it by roleplaying a scene in which she gains a concrete advantage over an enemy that adds dice to a Strategic Maneuver roll (**Exalted**, p. 212) through deception, subterfuge, or treachery.

Hidden Thorn Treachery

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Signature (Wood)
Duration: Until stratagem is completed
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Dragon-Blood scatters her spies like dandelion seeds on the wind, letting them grow deep roots of trust amid the ranks of her enemy before she comes to reap the harvest. This Charm creates a unique magical stratagem with threshold 3 to infiltrate an enemy's ranks with a traitor in combat. To use it, the Dragon-Blood must already have at least a +1 bonus to her Strategic Maneuver roll from spies or traitors in the enemy's ranks. Success lets her reflexively reveal the presence of her loyal double agent within a battle group at any point during the combat the stratagem applies to. The Storyteller may rule some betrayals impossible, or require a stunt in which the Dragon-Blood describes how the infiltration occurred. Battle groups with Might 2+ or perfect morale are immune to infiltration via this stratagem.

Once she's declared the betrayal, the battle group suffers automatic rout, as its most notable or highest-ranking member is revealed to be loyal to the Dragon-Blood. If this character is narratively significant on his own and his defection would defy suspension of disbelief, the Storyteller may declare that another member is the traitor instead. If an opposing commander is able to successfully rally the battle group, he preserves a single dot of that battle group's Size for every two successes on the roll. The rest are subtracted from the group and rolled into battle as a splinter faction loyal to the traitor. If the battle group isn't rallied, then the entire force goes over with the traitor, reforming on its next turn.

Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings

Cost: 3m, 1i; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth, Perilous, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Tireless Footfalls Cadence

The Dragon-Blood's soldiers brace themselves to hold the line, fortified with the strength of mountains by her command. When an allied battle group within short range of the Dragon-Blood is attacked, she may reflexively roll a special command action with ([Charisma, Appearance, or Intelligence] + War). Every two successes on her roll add +1 to the battle group's Defense and soak against the attack.

This Charm can only be used once per scene unless reset by successfully rallying or rallying for numbers.

At Essence 5+, the Dragon-Blooded can extend this Charm's range to medium for an additional two motes.

Phantom Fire-Warrior Horde

Cost: 5m, 1a; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Blazing Courageous Swordsman Inspiration

The Dragon-Blood draws on the subtler strengths of flame, overwhelming enemy forces with the appearance of superior force. Her anima banner disperses among the ranks of her soldiers, creating illusionary warriors of smoke to fill in any holes in their ranks. When she successfully rallies for numbers, she adds (Essence/2, rounded up) to the Magnitude restored.

The Dragon-Blood also treats the results of her roll as a threaten action against all battle groups that see the fire-warriors come into existence. Battle groups whose Resolve is beaten will retreat from her army, moving away from it each turn until an enemy commander makes a successful command roll to give them other orders.

Indomitable Flame of Valor

Cost: 1m (+1wp); **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Aura, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Phantom Fire-Warrior Horde

The Dragon-Blood ignites incredible courage in the hearts of her soldiers with the burning Essence of her exhortations, showing her army what it is to have a dragon's valor. She doubles 9s on a roll to rally or rally for numbers. If the battle group has elite Drill, she can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to grant it perfect morale (**Exalted**, p. 210) for one round on a successful roll.

At Essence 5, the Dragon-Blooded may pay 4 Initiative to extend the duration of the perfect morale to one scene.

Blessed Dragon Champion

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Aura, Earth
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings

When the Dragon-Blood steps forward to lead her forces into battle, she never stands alone. To use this Charm, she must be leading her soldiers under a successfully enacted stratagem. She doubles 9s on all War rolls, and gains +2 Defense against battle groups. She adds non-Charm dice equal to (the Size of the largest battle group under her command) on all attacks she makes against enemy battle groups.



Realm Year 768

Cynis Cogen hiked up a scarred Northern mountainside, following a stream in the morning sunlight. Stumps of clearcut forest gave way to a copse untouched by axes, ringed by curtains of red-blooming vines that twitched coyly away from the old man's fingers. Cogen followed the stream further uphill, and found it running beneath a pavilion of latticed tree branches, surrounded by moldering barley and charred elkmeat. He'd found the heretics' shrine.

Cogen stepped over the offerings and entered, pulling his hat low against the wind whistling through the shrine. He knelt under rustling vines and waited. Gods moved in their own time, and Cogen wasn't hurried yet. The ever-changing song of running water kept him focused. When the sun was overhead, Cogen drew an apple from his satchel. He savored it to its core as the sun fled west.

In late afternoon, the god sought his attention. A dust devil arose, drawing in petals and vines to become a country skirt and ruffled sleeves. The god Almgava took on flesh as firm and healthy as a sapling, and hair of golden wheat. They gave a bow of welcome, and said in a voice like laughter, "You please me, old man. I sense you've sown much in your years, in many fruitful fields. Seek you a blessing to renew youth's vigor?"

Cogen laughed and removed his roughly made grass hat, to show the god his shaven pate. "To the dismay of many, as of late I no longer sow. And I hear your blessings are costly." He smiled gently. "I come as one person of the world to another, asking only that you do the duty the Dragons gave you."

Almgava raised their chin and arched their brow. "Lecture me not, venerable meddler. I sought no truck with mortals; I was sufficient before their gifts, their prayers. If they beg me to bless this crop or that belly, shall I leave them barren? If I can soothe them, shall I leave them desolate?" The god held their palms out toward Cogen. "I am health, bounty, beauty. Why shouldn't mortals crave my touch? Why wouldn't you?"

Cogen meant to argue, or to rise to his feet, but did neither. Almgava moved toward him and laid a hand like a summer breeze on Cogen's cheek. A joyous, lustful flame flared to life in Cogen's heart and belly, and his head forgot reason. But his hand sought the stream flowing beside, and from its icy touch Cogen drew clarity. He remembered his oaths, his purpose, and his training.

Cogen surged upward, striking the god's chest thrice to soften the flesh Almgava wore, then once more to reverse the flow of sustaining Essence beneath. Almgava reeled back, choking, eyes wide with horror. They hadn't truly known breath in all their ageless years until now, when they knew breathlessness.

"Bounteous harvests should arise from honest work, not Almgava's whims," said Cogen, diverting his upward momentum into assuming a fluid, adaptive stance. "Nearby villages feud over your favor, and forget their fields. What they — what we crave isn't what we need."

The god clawed the air, and vines snaked downward to bind Cogen. He breathed in and out like the tide, and his body was as the sea: flowing around every obstacle, impossible to grasp, and ever returning to the shore. With each dodge, Cogen landed another body-blow, and added another principle to his lecture.

"Shun interference; mortals have their own duties and troubles! Shun idleness; care for Creation is the gods' way! Shun greed; the Immaculate Order provides your worship!"

"I yield!" croaked Almgava. Vines hung limply throughout the shrine. The god cowered and heaved, struggling to calm the churning Essence within.

"Good, good," said Cogen, standing over Almgava, calm and kind as the ocean's surface. "But will you obey?"



Chapter Eight

Martial Arts and Sorcery

Immaculate Martial Arts

After the last bloody days of the Usurpation, the victorious Dragon-Blooded set out to claim dominion over Creation, bearing the sanction of the nascent Immaculate teachings. But they lacked the Lawgivers' all-conquering might, and the small gods of the world defied them, whether out of loyalty to the fallen Solars or their own selfish opportunism. To tame the unruly world, the greatest Terrestrial martial artists and their Sidereal sifus created the Five Immaculate Dragon styles, martial arts that perfectly exemplify the elemental Essence of the Dragon-Blooded. Immaculate monks who master one of these styles transcend the limitations of Dragon-Blooded martial arts prowess, and are feared by demons, ghosts, and wayward gods alike.

The Immaculate styles differ from other martial arts in the following ways:

- Like Dragon-Blooded Charms, the Charms of each Immaculate style have an elemental aspect, and can benefit from Elemental Aura (p. 162). These don't allow non-Dragon-Blooded to enter Elemental Auras.

- The Immaculate styles are intensely demanding. While anyone can learn the fundamentals of the styles, their Charms can only be learned by the Dragon-Blooded and by other martial artists that aren't restricted by the Terrestrial keyword, such as Solars and Sidereals.

- Because of their perfect harmony with Dragon-Blooded Essence, the Immaculate styles lack both the Terrestrial and Mastery keywords.

- Once a Dragon-Blood has learned the Form Charm of an Immaculate Dragon style, she may harmonize that style's elemental Essence with her martial arts. As long as she's in *any* Martial Arts Form, she may expend the Aura of the mastered style's element to ignore the restrictions of the Terrestrial keyword (**Exalted**, p. 427) on *all* her Martial Arts Charms for one tick.

Air Dragon Style

To practice Air Dragon style is to be the wind: elusive, intangible, omnipresent, and devastating in its fury. Its students train in acrobatics to cultivate an intuitive awareness of their body's own movements, and master breath control to lighten the body and walk silently. Unlike the other Immaculate styles, Air Dragon stylists strike from afar, throwing chakrams to claim their foes' heads.

Air Dragon Weapons: Air Dragon unarmed attacks are chops and spinning kicks. They also use the chakram, which can either be thrown as a ranged weapon or wielded at close range as a light weapon. Unarmed attacks enhanced by Air Dragon Charms can be stunted to deal lethal damage.

Armor: This style is compatible with light armor.

Complementary Abilities: Occult is used for battling spirits, while Dodge and Stealth are used to evade and outmaneuver foes.

Air Dragon's Sight

Cost: 1m, 1i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Reading her foe's movements through the slight disturbances they create in the air, the Immaculate could dodge his attacks blindfolded. She ignores (Perception/2, rounded up) total points of onslaught penalties or environmental penalties to her Evasion. Additionally,

WHERE DO I LEARN THEM?

The vast majority of Dragon-Blooded Immaculates train in the Cloister of Wisdom (p. 86), but it's not the only source of tutelage. Immaculate monks occasionally mentor lay Dragon-Blooded who hold the Order's favor. Beyond the Realm, Lookshy's Immaculate Faith and Prasad's Pure Way provide instruction in the styles, as do the Sidereal Exalted. Renegade ex-Immaculates teach in heretical dojos, while lost scrolls and training manuals of the Shogunate offer instruction to whoever finds them.

surprise attacks (**Exalted**, p. 203) inflict no penalty to her Evasion, though she can't dodge ambushes.

In Air Aura, the Immaculate ignores (Perception) points of penalties instead.

Cloud-Treading Method

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Following in Mela's footsteps, the Immaculate walks paths closed to her earthbound brethren. She ignores (higher of Essence or 3) total points of penalties from moving through difficult terrain, moving in concealment, or any other environmental penalties on a movement action. She can traverse surfaces that couldn't normally bear her weight, such as tree branches or rice paper, although she must end her movement on stable footing.

In Air Aura, the Immaculate may walk over liquid or any vapor other than thin air, such as the smoke from a campfire. She must still end her movement on solid ground.

Wind Dragon Speed

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Air
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Cloud-Treading Method

The Immaculate moves with wind-rivaling grace, striking and instantly regaining her balance and composure. She may flurry a disengage with an attack, ignoring the usual flurry penalties. If she successfully disengages and ends her movement at short range or further from all enemies, not counting crashed foes or trivial characters, she doesn't lose Initiative for disengaging.

In Air Aura, the Immaculate may flurry a disengage with an aim action. This allows her to move and aim on the same turn, but only benefits Air Dragon attacks.

Breath-Seizing Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Air Dragon's Sight

The Immaculate forces the air from her enemy's lungs, denying him Mela's precious gift. To use this Charm, the Immaculate must have Initiative 12+. She makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy. Before rolling decisive damage, she rolls (her weapon's Overwhelming) dice of unsoakable withering damage. She doesn't gain Initiative from this damage roll; if she crashes her enemy, the Initiative Break is added before she rolls **decisive** damage and resets to base. Beings that don't need to breathe, such as zombies and automatons, are unaffected. If an enemy that takes **withering** damage from this attack is holding his breath (**Exalted**, p. 232), the total number of rounds he may do so for is reduced by one.

Essence is the breath of spirits, rendering them especially vulnerable to this technique. They lose motes equal to the **withering** damage they suffer.

Air Dragon Form

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Form, Mute
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Breath-Seizing Technique, Wind Dragon Speed

The Immaculate's hands cut through the air as she executes a rapid kata and draws a deep cleansing breath, respiring the Essence of the Air Dragon. Her **withering** chakram attacks are treated as made from close range to determine their Accuracy bonus, regardless of the actual distance. She gains +1 Evasion, and adds an automatic success on disengage rolls and Stealth rolls.

Special activation rules: When the Immaculate deals enough **withering** damage to lower a foe's Initiative from a rating higher than her own to a lower rating, she may reflexively enter this Form.

Shroud of Unseen Winds

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Mute, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Air Dragon Form

Silent and light on her feet, the Immaculate moves unseen. She adds (Essence) dice on a Stealth roll, or (Essence) successes at Initiative 12+. With an appropriate stunt, such as throwing a flash bomb or handful of blinding powder, she may roll Stealth even if there's no place to hide.

In Air Aura, the Immaculate adds successes instead of dice as long as she isn't crashed, and needs no stunt to enter concealment, vanishing into thin air.

Avenging Wind Strike

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Air Dragon Form

The Immaculate's strike is Mela's exhalation, driving her foes back with the force of fivefold winds. She doubles 10s on a **decisive** damage roll. If she deals damage, she may knock her enemy prone and hurl him one range band away from her. With 3+ levels of damage, she may hurl him two range bands instead. He cannot be flung further than long range from the Immaculate.

In Air Aura, any damage is enough to knock an enemy back two range bands. With 5+ levels, the Immaculate may knock an enemy back three range bands.

Lightning Strike Style

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Air, Decisive-only



Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Avenging Winds Strike

Blue-white flickers of electricity arc across the Immaculate's weapon or limbs, lancing out in a brilliant stroke of lightning as she strikes. She extends the range of her **decisive** attack by one range band (maximum long) and adds (Essence + Strength) attack roll extra successes as dice of damage. Her attack ignores Hardness from metal armor, including those made from the five magical materials.

In Air Aura, the Immaculate's attack also ignores cover (**Exalted**, p. 199) from metallic objects or structures, passing through them in a flash of lightning. Even enemies in full cover from such structures can be attacked if the Immaculate can see them, but receive +3 Defense.

Thunderclap Kata

Cost: 7m, 5i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Avenging Winds Strike

Slamming her hands together, the Immaculate creates a deafening thunderclap. All other characters in medium range, including allies, must roll (Stamina + Resistance) against it as an environmental hazard with difficulty (Essence + 1), Damage (Strength/2, rounded up)B. The shockwave strikes dematerialized characters as well as materialized ones, and has (Strength)B Damage against spirits. This technique can be heard for miles around, but doesn't affect characters beyond medium range.

Special activation rules: If the Immaculate enters Air Dragon Form with Initiative 20+, she may reflexively use Thunderclap Kata.

Tornado Offense Technique

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Strike Style

The Immaculate is a deadly whirlwind, scything down foes with a spinning strike. The Immaculate chooses a range band within her weapon's range and rolls a single **decisive** attack against all enemies at that range from her — she might deliver a spinning kick to all enemies in close range, or send a chakram flying to strike all enemies at medium range. If she wishes to attack at medium range or further, she must first spend a round aiming, as usual.

The player rolls (Initiative/3, rounded up) dice of damage against each hit enemy, plus (Perception) dice against each enemy against whom the attack was unexpected. Trivial opponents suffer the Immaculate's (full Initiative) damage.

In Air Aura, if the attack hits every enemy in the range band, the Immaculate adds the number of nontrivial enemies hit to her base Initiative upon resetting, maximum +(Essence).

Wrathful Winds Kiai

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Air, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Thunderclap Kata

Echoing the awful roar with which Mela rules Creation's storms, the Immaculate gives a ferocious shout that strikes like a gale-force blast. She rolls (Stamina + Martial Arts) as a special unblockable **withering** attack against all characters in a ninety-degree arc out to medium range, including allies. The attack doesn't use a weapon; it has no Accuracy bonus, and has raw damage (Strength + Initiative + threshold successes) against each hit enemy, minimum (Strength). Damaged enemies are knocked back one range band and fall prone; enemies crashed by the attack can't take a move action on their next turn.

The Immaculate doesn't gain any Initiative from this **withering** damage. Each 10 on a damage roll against an enemy rolls a die of **decisive** bashing damage against him, ignoring Hardness. Spirits instead suffer dice of **decisive** damage equal to the total **withering** damage dealt to them, and can be struck even if dematerialized.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by incapacitating a nontrivial foe.

Hurricane Combat Method

Cost: —(+6m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Air
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Shroud of Unseen Winds, Tornado Offense Technique, Wrathful Winds Kiai

Honing her speed and reflexes beyond their utmost, the Immaculate unleashes the hurricane. Upon entering Air Dragon Form, she may pay six motes and one Willpower to enhance it. Its Evasion bonus increases to +2, and she doubles 9s on Stealth and movement rolls. Once per round, she may pay five Initiative to reflexively make a **withering** or **decisive** attack that doesn't count as her attack for the round, and can be used to clash attacks against her.

Earth Dragon Style

Earth Dragon style tempers overwhelming force with meticulous deliberation, moving slowly and surely with every technique. Students undergo training regimens that strengthen the body, hardening fists through hours spent striking barrels of gravel and learning to ignore their pain by sleeping on beds of nails. This training tempers them into nigh-invincible warriors who can stand toe to toe with unruly gods and Anathema, withstanding deadly blows and answering in kind with their mighty tetsubos.

Earth Dragon Weapons: Earth Dragon unarmed attacks are solid, powerful strikes delivered with the elbows, knees, or two-handed hammer blows. This style also uses tetsubos. Unarmed attacks enhanced by Earth Dragon Charms can be stunted to deal lethal damage.

Armor: This style is compatible with all armor.

Complementary Abilities: Occult is used to battle spirits, while Athletics is employed in feats of strength.

Stone Dragon's Skin

Cost: 5m, 1i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Dual, Earth, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Unbowed by pain, the Immaculate withstands blow after blow. She ignores (Stamina/2, rounded up) points of wound penalties to her Parry. Against **withering** attacks, she adds (higher of Essence or 3) natural soak; against **decisive** attacks, she adds +1 to her Hardness from armor or other magic.

This Charm costs one mote less in medium armor, and two motes less in light armor. While unarmored, it costs two motes less and the Initiative cost is waived.

Force of the Mountain

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Dual, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Immaculate draws strength from her firm stance. She adds (lower of Essence or Strength) dice of raw **withering** damage, or doubles 10s on a **decisive** damage roll. Additionally, an unarmed attack gains the Smashing tag (**Exalted**, p. 586).

In Earth Aura, she adds (higher of Essence or Strength) raw **withering** damage.

Stillness-of-Stone Atemi

Cost: 2m (+1i per point of penalty); **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Earth, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Force of the Mountain

The staggering force of the Immaculate's blow teaches her enemies what it is to bear the world's weight. Her **withering** attack gains +1 Overwhelming. For each 10 on the damage roll, the Immaculate may pay one Initiative to raise her foe's mobility penalty (**Exalted**, p. 591) by one until the end of his next turn, maximum (Essence). An enemy crashed by the attack suffers this penalty until he recovers from crash, if that's longer.

In Earth Aura, the Immaculate may also pay Initiative for 9s on her damage roll to inflict penalties.

Unmoving Mountain Stance

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Dual, Earth, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Stone Dragon's Skin

Motionless as a statue, the Immaculate stubbornly refuses to yield ground to her enemies. After being hit by an attack, but before damage is rolled, she may use this Charm. The Initiative her attacker would gain from **withering** damage is reduced by (her Stamina/2, rounded up), although this doesn't negate the Initiative he gains for hitting her or the Initiative Break for crashing her.

Smash attacks (**Exalted**, p. 586) or other attacks that forcibly move the Immaculate fail to do so unless they deal at least (Stamina + Resistance) **withering** damage or (Stamina) **decisive** damage.

In Earth Aura, the Immaculate denies her attacker (Stamina) Initiative, and adds (Essence) to the minimum damage that must be dealt to knock her back.

Earth Dragon Form

Cost: 9m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Earth, Form
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Stillness-of-Stone Atemi, Unmoving Mountain Stance

The Immaculate moves through slow and deliberate katas as though the air were stone carved by her movements, crafting a perfect stance. She adds (Strength/2, rounded up) bonus dice on attack rolls of smash attacks or attacks against prone enemies. She adds (Strength) natural soak.

Special activation rules: When an enemy whose Initiative is lower than the Immaculate's hits her with an attack, she may reflexively enter this Form, gaining its soak bonus against **withering** attacks.

Ghost-Grounding Blow

Cost: 5m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Earth, Perilous, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Earth Dragon Form

Corrupt gods and truculent spirits must bow their faces into the earth until they have learned humility. After crashing a spirit with a **withering** attack, the Immaculate may use this Charm. The spirit instantly materializes at no cost if dematerialized, and cannot dematerialize or use the Hurry Home Charm until (Immaculate's Strength) rounds have passed after it recovers from crash.

Earthshaker Attack

Cost: 10m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Earth Dragon Form

The ground trembles beneath the Immaculate's blow as she drives her tetsubo or stomping foot into the ground. To use this Charm, the Immaculate must have Initiative 15+. She makes a single **decisive** attack roll against all other characters in short range, including allies. This attack is unblockable, undodgeable, and can't be clashed. Instead, each character in range must make a (Dexterity + Athletics) opposed roll against the Immaculate's attack to maintain his balance. A character who fails is knocked prone and suffers (Strength) dice of bashing damage, ignoring Hardness. This doesn't include the Immaculate's Initiative or reset her to base. Battle groups with Might 0 fail the roll automatically. Enemies that take 3+ levels of damage are knocked back one range band with immense force, suffering damage as per a short-range fall (**Exalted**, p. 232).

In Earth Aura, after paying this Charm's cost, the Immaculate may divide her total Initiative evenly among each hit enemy, rounded up, adding it on top of this Charm's base damage of (Strength). Doing so resets her to base Initiative as long as at least one enemy is hit.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by crashing a nontrivial foe while he's prone.

Shattering Fist Strike

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Earth Dragon Form

The Immaculate's raw power is all the mightier for her precision, striking a weapon's weakest point to shatter it. Her disarm gambit destroys a mundane weapon on a success. Alternatively, she may supplement a feat of demolition (**Exalted**, p. 229), doubling 9s and completing in a miscellaneous action what would normally take longer, such as punching through a brick wall.

The Immaculate may expend her Earth Aura to target an artifact weapon with a supplemented disarm gambit, adding its rating to the gambit's difficulty. Success fractures the weapon, breaking its wielder's attunement and rendering the artifact unusable until repaired (**Exalted**, p. 242). Such repair projects only require a single successful roll, rather than an extended action.

Weapon-Breaking Defense Technique

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Shattering Fist Strike

The fool who proclaims he'll slay the mountain can only blame himself when he returns home with a broken sword. The Immaculate reflexively clashes an attack from close range with a disarm gambit that benefits from Shattering Fist Strike. This doesn't count as her combat action for the round. Winning the clash adds her attack roll threshold successes to the gambit's Initiative roll. This Charm can't clash unarmed attacks or other attacks that have the Natural tag.

In Earth Aura, the Immaculate may clash to fracture artifact weapons without expending her Aura.

This Charm may only be used once per scene, unless reset by dealing 7+ levels of damage to a nontrivial enemy with a **decisive** attack.

Avalanche Method

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Earth
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Weapon-Breaking Defense Technique

Striking blow after hammering blow, the Immaculate forces even the haughtiest heretics to kneel. To use this Charm, the Immaculate must have Initiative 12+ and her target must have a mobility penalty of at least –1. She makes **decisive** attacks against a single enemy until she's made a total equal to his mobility penalty, or until she misses. A successful attack doesn't reset her to base Initiative — instead, she loses Initiative equal to the successes on her damage roll, to a minimum of her base Initiative. Once she's completed all attacks, she resets as usual.

If the Immaculate successfully lands a smash attack against an enemy, he isn't knocked back until she's completed all attacks made with this Charm. Landing multiple smash attacks lets her fling him back multiple range bands, to a maximum of long range. He crashes to earth with incredible force, suffering damage as per a short-range fall if he's knocked to medium range, or per a medium-range fall if knocked to long range (**Exalted**, p. 232). An enemy trapped with Hungry Earth Strike isn't dislodged from his earthen prison, but still suffers falling damage as he's ground against his prison's stone walls with bone-breaking force.

In Earth Aura, missing doesn't prevent the Immaculate from launching further attacks.

Hungry Earth Strike

Cost: 10m, 6i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Earth, Perilous, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Earthshaker Attack, Ghost-Grounding Blow

The jaws of Pasiap yawn wide in jagged fissures to consume those the Immaculate condemns. She makes a **withering** attack that must either be a smash attack or directed against a prone enemy, doubling 8s on the damage roll. If she crashes an enemy who's standing on soil, stone, or a similar earthen substance (or is knocked onto such terrain by a smash attack), the ground beneath his feet swallows him to the waist. While swallowed in earth, that enemy cannot take movement actions and suffers the penalties for being prone (**Exalted**, p. 202). On each of his turns, he suffers one die of bashing damage from grinding stone, ignoring Hardness. Spirits suffer the effects of Ghost-Grounding Blow while trapped.

If an enemy is incapacitated while buried, he dies, his body entombed in the depths of the earth.

A buried enemy may attempt to break free from the earth as an extended (Strength + Athletics) action, with difficulty (Immaculate's Strength) and a goal number of (Immaculate's Essence + Strength). That character's allies may also attempt to pry him free with their own (Strength + Athletics) rolls, adding their threshold successes towards his total. This roll is a miscellaneous action that can't be flurried.

In Earth Aura, the Immaculate may bury an enemy without crashing him if her attack reduces his Initiative from being higher than hers to lower.

This Charm may only be used once per scene, unless reset by incapacitating a nontrivial foe with a **decisive** attack from 20+ Initiative.

Perfection of Earth Body

Cost: —(+6m, 6i, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Earth, Perilous
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Avalanche Method, Hungry Earth Strike

The Immaculate concludes the katas of Earth Dragon Form by dropping to her hands and knees, humbling herself before Pasiap. As she rises, her body twists and shifts as Earth Essence suffuses it, her skin becoming rough and craggy as her body hardens into living stone. Upon entering Earth Dragon Form, she may pay six motes, six Initiative, and one Willpower to enhance it. When she attacks a prone enemy or makes a smash attack, she adds (Stamina) raw **withering** damage or **decisive** damage. She's immune to all wound penalties, as well as crippling penalties inflicted by effects such as Joint-Wounding Attack or Crippling Pressure-Point Strike.

If the Immaculate is unarmored, the soak bonus from Earth Dragon Form rises to (Willpower + Strength), and she gains Hardness (Strength + Stamina).

Fire Dragon Style

Fire Dragon style demands both the capacity for unpredictable violence and immense self-discipline. Its students train in the rhythm of combat, sparring and performing weapon drills in time to music. Walkers on the path of Hesiesh fight with incredible speed and a dancer's grace, knowing when to withhold their force and when to unleash it without restraint.

Fire Dragon Weapons: Fire Dragon unarmed attacks are rapid barrages of punches and chops, as well as powerful kicks. The style also uses short swords, traditionally wielded paired. Unarmed attacks enhanced by Fire Dragon Charms can be stunted to deal lethal damage.

Armor: This style is compatible with light and medium armor.

Complementary Abilities: Occult is vital to subduing unruly gods.

Flash-Fire Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Her sense for violence honed by training and tempered by self-discipline, the Immaculate draws her blades without needing to think. She rolls Join Battle twice, taking the higher of the two results. Any Charms she uses must be paid separately for each roll. If she wins Join Battle and makes a **decisive** attack on her first turn, she adds (Dexterity) attack roll extra successes as dice of damage.

Searing Edge Attack

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Fire, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Immaculate's killing intent radiates from her strike as overwhelmingly painful heat. As long as her **withering** damage roll receives at least one success, her target loses (Essence) additional Initiative, which she doesn't gain.

Flame-Flicker Stance

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flash-Fire Technique

Moving like the shifting flame of a candle, the Immaculate fends off blows in a dance of whirling blades. 1s on an attack roll against her grant +1 Parry each. If she successfully blocks an attack made by an enemy with lower Initiative, it doesn't inflict an onslaught penalty.

In Fire Aura, this Charm can be used after the attack roll.

Perfect Blazing Blow

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Searing Edge Attack

Striking with overwhelming intensity, the Immaculate burns through her foe's defense. She doubles (Essence) 9s on a **decisive** attack roll against an enemy with lower Initiative. She doubles 8s against crashed foes, though still up to a total of (Essence) doubled successes.

In Fire Aura, each success doubled by this Charm also adds one die of damage.

Fire Dragon Form

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire, Form
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Flame-Flicker Stance, Perfect Blazing Blow

Flames seem to glow in the Immaculate's eyes as she dances through a rapid kata, assuming a graceful, deadly battle stance. Against enemies with a lower Initiative, her attacks inflict onslaught penalties before the roll is made, penalizing the enemy's Defense against them. When she parries a **decisive** attack, the Initiative her attacker loses (**Exalted**, p. 191) is doubled.

Special activation rules: When the Immaculate wins Join Battle, she may reflexively enter this Form.

God-Immolating Strike

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Fire Dragon Form

Wayward divinities and unrighteous spirits are tinder for the flames of righteousness. The Immaculate's **decisive** attacks deal aggravated damage to spirits, and she treats her Initiative as (Essence) higher for the purposes of this style's Charms or similar effects that gain benefits against lower-Initiative foes.

If she deals damage, she ignites the spirit's Essence, rolling (Essence) dice of aggravated damage on its next turn, ignoring Hardness. Dematerialized spirits are more easily consumed, suffering (Essence + 2) dice instead.



Essence-Igniting Nerve Strike

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fire, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: God-Immolating Strike

Her blades rippling with invisible flame, the Immaculate agitates her foe's Essence with a precision strike, burning him from within. She makes a **withering** attack against an enemy with a lower Initiative. The Initiative she gains from the damage roll is halved, but the enemy loses one mote for every 9 on the damage roll, and two for every 10. The Immaculate chooses whether personal or peripheral motes are lost first. If this crashes that enemy, his lost motes ignite as an inward flame, rolling one die of lethal damage for every two motes lost (rounded up), maximum (Essence), ignoring Hardness.

The Immaculate may expend her Fire Aura to gain the full amount of Initiative from the damage roll.

Overwhelming Fire Majesty Stance

Cost: 6m, 3i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Fire, Perilous
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: Fire Dragon Form

The power and majesty of a raging conflagration cows even the bravest hearts. Flames wreathe the martial artist, imposing a penalty of (lower of Essence or Charisma) on attacks against her. Enemies that hit her from close range suffer one die of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. A foe may pay one Willpower to become immune to this Charm's penalty for the scene, but not its damage.

In Fire Aura, this Charm's Initiative cost is waived and it loses the Perilous keyword.

Fiery Blade Attack

Cost: 5m, 4i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Fire Dragon Form

The Immaculate delivers a rapid flurry of finishing blows, setting the air ablaze with her speed. She makes a **decisive** attack. As long as it deals any damage, it ignites a bonfire (Damage 4L/round, Difficulty 5) engulfing her victim, which burns without fuel for as long as

he remains within it. Escaping the blaze requires him to disengage even if no combatants are in close range of him, in which case he rolls at difficulty 2.

Breath of the Fire Dragon

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Overwhelming Fire Majesty Stance

The Immaculate ignites the air within her lungs, expelling it as a mighty gout of flame. She rolls an unblockable **decisive** attack with (Stamina + Martial Arts) against all characters, including allies, in a ninety-degree arc out to close range, plus an additional range band for every 10 Initiative she has, to a maximum of medium range with 20+ Initiative. This attack strikes both dematerialized and materialized characters with (Initiative/3, rounded up) lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. Trivial opponents and battle groups suffer (Initiative) damage instead. If at least one enemy is hit by the attack, the Immaculate resets to base Initiative.

Enemies that take 3+ levels of damage catch fire, suffering (Essence) dice of lethal damage each turn, ignoring Hardness, until extinguished. Dematerialized spirits suffer aggravated damage and are made visible to all by the flame as long as it burns, and cannot extinguish it unless they first materialize. Flammable scenery caught in the blast catches fire, burning as a bonfire (Damage 4L/round, Difficulty 5) for the rest of the scene.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by gaining 15+ Initiative on a single tick.

Smoldering Wound Attack

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Decisive-only, Fire
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Essence-Igniting Nerve Strike, Fiery Blade Attack

This Charm may only be used after landing a **decisive** attack, but before rolling damage. For every 10 on the damage roll, the Immaculate rolls one die of unsoakable **withering** damage, which adds to her base Initiative upon resetting. She can't gain more than (Essence) Initiative this way. Against a crashed enemy, she rolls **decisive** damage instead, but still gains Initiative equal to the damage dealt.

In Fire Aura, this Charm may be used after damage has been rolled.

Consuming Might of the Fire Dragon

Cost: —(+5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Dual, Fire
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Breath of the Fire Dragon, Smoldering Wound Attack

A swirling flame erupts from the Immaculate's crown chakra, engulfing her in a deadly blaze. Upon entering Fire Dragon Form, she may pay five motes and one Willpower to enhance it. She treats her Initiative as (Wits) points higher to determine when she acts each round, and for the purposes of Charms of this style or similar effects that offer benefits against lower-Initiative foes. **Withering** attacks gain (Strength/2, rounded up) Overwhelming, while **decisive** attacks add one die of damage. An enemy that hits her from close range suffers one die of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness.

The Immaculate's blazing aura grows stronger as she defeats her foes. Each nontrivial enemy she incapacitates or battle group she successfully routs adds one to the Initiative bonus, Overwhelming bonus, **decisive** damage bonus, and damage dealt to enemies that hit her.

Water Dragon Style

Water Dragon teaches that all things are flow — the rhythm of a fight, the blood of a living body, the Essence of Creation. Practitioners of this style train in techniques that block, redirect, or impede these flows, subtly manipulating the conditions of battle to seize victory. Its defense emphasizes fluid motions and outmaneuvering enemies with footwork, while its offense relies on repeated strikes, exploiting the lightest wound to unleash a cascading torrent of death.

Water Dragon Weapons: Water Dragon unarmed attacks emphasize swift sequences of punches, kicks, and claw strikes. It also uses tiger claws. Unarmed attacks enhanced by Water Dragon Charms can be stunted to deal lethal damage.

Armor: This style is compatible with light and medium armor.

Complementary Abilities: Occult is needed to battle spirits.

Flowing Water Defense

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Immaculate flows between offense and defense, lunging forward to strike before returning to a defensive posture. She can flurry a full defense with an attack, ignoring the Defense penalty for flurrying.

In Water Aura, if the Immaculate's attack succeeds, the Initiative cost of her full defense is refunded.

Rippling Water Strike

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Immaculate's strike breaks her foe's guard like a pebble dropped into still water, spreading outward to throw enemies off-balance. Her **withering** attack gains +2 Overwhelming, and she may use Dexterity in place of Strength to determine its raw damage. If she crashes a nontrivial foe with the attack, all other enemies within close range suffer a −1 onslaught penalty.

In Water Aura, the Immaculate adds her Dexterity to raw damage in addition to her Strength.

Drowning-in-Blood Technique

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Striking her foe's chest with a rapid barrage, the Immaculate redirects the flow of his blood so that it pours into his lungs. Her **decisive** attack doubles 10s on its damage roll. If she deals 3+ levels of damage, her foe begins choking on his own blood, raising his wound penalty by one until the scene ends or he crashes the Immaculate.

Essence is the life's blood of spirits, and this attack turns its flow against them. Multiple uses stack the wound penalty increase against spirits, maximum (Essence).

In Water Aura, the Immaculate adds (her foe's wound penalty/2, rounded up) bonus dice of damage.

Shrugging Water-Dragon Escape

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Water Defense

The Immaculate's fluid posture and footwork defies all restraint. She doubles 9s on a (Strength + Martial Arts) roll to resist a grapple, a disengage roll, a roll opposing an enemy's rush, or any roll to escape from restraints such as manacles.

In Water Aura, success on the roll grants one Initiative.

Water Dragon Form

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Form, Water
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Drowning-in-Blood Technique, Shrugging Water Dragon Escape

The Immaculate drops into a fighting stance in which offense and defense are a single fluid motion. She adds bonus dice on attack rolls equal to her target's wound penalty, wearing down foes in an endless tide. Her Stamina is doubled when calculating her natural soak.

Special activation rules: When the Immaculate deals enough **decisive** damage to a nontrivial enemy to raise his wound penalty, she may reflexively enter this Form.

Theft-of-Essence Method

Cost: 4i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Water Dragon Form

Landing a telling blow, the martial artist redirects the flow of a foe's Essence. Upon crashing an enemy, the stylist steals (Essence + his wound penalty) of his motes, adding them to her own pool. She may choose whether to drain personal or peripheral motes, adding them to the same pool she steals from.

Bottomless Depths Defense

Cost: 5m, 1ahl (+1wp, expend Water Aura); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Water Dragon Form

The martial artist's body ripples and deforms around a blow, dispersing its force into the bottomless abyss of her vitality. She rolls (Essence + Stamina), unmodified by other effects, with each success cancelling a level of **decisive** damage. Even if she rolls no successes, she still cancels one level of damage. This Charm must be declared before the attack is rolled.

The Immaculate may pay one Willpower and expend her Water Aura to negate all damage from the attack.

This Charm can only be used once per day, unless reset by being hit by three **decisive** attacks from nontrivial foes without taking a single level of damage.

Essence-Dousing Wave Attack

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Theft-of-Essence Method

Striking with the dark, smothering Essence of a crashing wave, the martial artist quenches the flame of her foe's battle prowess. If her **decisive** attack against a crashed enemy deals at least (his Essence) damage, she chooses one of his ongoing Charms to deactivate, which must belong to a combat Ability or be a combat-based physical Attribute Charm. The Storyteller should inform her player what applicable Charms her victim has active before she chooses.

The martial artist may expend her Water Aura to use this Charm against an enemy who isn't crashed.

Flow Reversal Strike

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Theft-of-Essence Method

The Immaculate channels a surge of Essence through her strike, causing every moving fluid in her foe's body to reverse its course. She makes a **decisive** attack. On a hit, her victim rolls (Stamina + Resistance) against a difficulty equal to her attack roll threshold successes. If he fails, each success he failed by adds one die of **decisive** damage, and after taking the **decisive** damage he suffers **withering** damage equal to his current wound penalty, which is added to the Immaculate's base Initiative.

This attack twists and disrupts the Essence of spirits, causing their wound penalty to subtract successes rather than dice from their (Stamina + Resistance) roll.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by crashing an enemy whose Initiative was higher than the Immaculate's.

Crashing Wave Style

Cost: 5m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Perilous, Water, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flow Reversal Strike

The Immaculate strikes blow after furious blow, like waves pounding the shore. She makes **withering** attacks against a single enemy until she misses, crashes him, or has made a total of (1 + his wound penalty) attacks. Against battle groups, she attacks until she misses or depletes the group's Magnitude.

In Water Aura, crashing an enemy deals dice of lethal damage to him equal to his current onslaught penalty (including the point inflicted by this attack), ignoring Hardness.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack against a crashed enemy and then building up to Initiative 12+.

Ghost-Restraining Whirlpool

Cost: 6m, 2i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Perilous, Water
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Essence-Dousing Wave Attack

Moving through a winding kata, the Immaculate stirs the seas of Essence that surround her, creating a maelstrom that inexorably draws in spirits. Spirits within medium range can't move away from her without disengaging, nor can they use the Hurry Home Charm. The Immaculate gains all Initiative lost by spirits disengaging away from her. Additionally, at the end of each affected spirit's turn, if he didn't either move towards the Immaculate or end in close range to her, she steals two Initiative from him.

Dematerialized spirits are even more susceptible to the whirlpool, treating its entire range as difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199). If she steals Initiative from them, they also suffer one die of bashing damage, ignoring Hardness.

In Water Aura, this Charm's range extends to long.

Special activation rules: The Immaculate may use this Charm reflexively when she enters Water Dragon Form.

Tsunami-Force Shout

Cost: 10m, 10i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Water
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Bottomless Depths Defense, Crashing Wave Style, Ghost-Restraining Whirlpool

Breathing deep, the Immaculate fills her lungs with liquid Essence. With a mighty, bellowing kiai, she expels a rumbling torrent of spiritual pressure. To use this Charm, she must have Initiative 20+. She rolls an unblockable **decisive** attack with (Stamina + Martial Arts) against all enemies in a ninety-degree arc out to medium range. If she's using Ghost-Restraining Whirlpool, its currents bear the force of her attack to strike all spirits within its range, materialized or dematerialized. This attack deals bashing damage to each struck enemy equal to ([Attack roll threshold successes x his wound penalty] + 1), ignoring Hardness. Battle groups are treated as having a −4 wound penalty to determine damage. This doesn't include the Immaculate's Initiative or reset her to base.

Each enemy damaged by the attack is flung one range band away from the Immaculate and falls prone. Spirits cannot be forced outside the range of a Ghost-Restraining Whirlpool, and instead suffer damage as per a short-range fall (**Exalted**, p. 232) if driven to the whirlpool's edge. An enemy that takes 3+ levels of damage is knocked back two range bands and suffers damage as per a short-range fall (or medium range, for spirits forced against a Ghost-Restraining Whirlpool's edge).

Tsunami-Force Shout can only be used once per scene, unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack that resets the Immaculate's Initiative and building back to Initiative 20+.

Wood Dragon Style

The most esoteric of the Immaculate Dragon styles, Wood Dragon oversees the cycles of life and death. Its students undergo grueling regimens that bring them to the edge of death, fasting to their bodies' limits while consuming copious quantities of hallucinogenic and entheogenic drugs. When they return to the world of the living, they bring mysterious insight with them. In battle, these mystics draw on an extensive knowledge of pressure points and Essence flows to both subdue foes and heal allies. Masters of the style are rumored to possess a technique that can bring instant death, destroying the soul itself.

Wood Dragon Weapons: Wood Dragon unarmed attacks are precise finger jabs targeting pressure points and nerve clusters. The style also uses the staff. Wood Dragon stylists train in wielding the long bow as a close-range weapon, using the traits of a staff. Wood Dragon style can't be used through ranged attacks made with a bow, but the Immaculate doesn't need a ready weapon action to change between using a bow as a ranged weapon and wielding it as a staff.

Armor: This style is compatible with light armor.

Complementary Abilities: Occult is necessary to battle spirits, while Performance is used to distract and misdirect.

Wood Dragon Vitality

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Dual, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

At one with the font of all life in Creation, the Immaculate suffuses her body with unyielding vitality. She adds (Martial Arts) natural soak against a **withering** attack, or subtracts one die from the damage of a **decisive** attack.

In Wood Aura, the Immaculate adds (Essence + Martial Arts) soak, or subtracts (Essence/2, rounded up) dice of **decisive** damage.

Eyes of the Wood Dragon

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Withering-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Perceiving the path of living Essence through chakras and meridians, the Immaculate lands a precise strike to disrupt her foe's vital energies. She adds (Perception) raw **withering** damage and can make piercing attacks (**Exalted**, p. 586) with Wood Dragon attacks.

In Wood Aura, the Immaculate doesn't suffer a Defense penalty for making a piercing attack.

Mind-Over-Body Meditation

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Perilous, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Wood Dragon Vitality

The Immaculate is keenly aware of the rhythm and circulation of her body's vital forces, sensing bruises and cuts as disturbances in its course. Closing her eyes in a moment of intense focus, she rights the flow of her living Essence and seals her wounds. She rolls (higher of Essence or 3) dice, unmodified by other effects, and heals a level of non-aggravated damage for each success, minimum one.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, and only while in combat.

Soul-Marking Style

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Eyes of the Wood Dragon

Striking through her enemy's flesh to reach at his spirit, the Immaculate drives a thorn of deadly Essence into his soul. As long as her **decisive** attack deals damage, further Wood Dragon attacks are guided by her awareness of the soul mark, granting the benefits of aiming (**Exalted**, p. 196) against that foe for the scene. Spirits suffer a –1 crippling penalty on all actions for the scene.

Wood Dragon Form

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Form, Wood
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Mind-Over-Body Meditation, Soul-Marking Style

The Immaculate strikes her own pressure points and chakras with a series of quick, precise blows, bringing her Essence into perfect alignment. She gains (lower of Essence or Stamina) temporary –1 health levels the first time she enters this form in the scene. She keeps these health levels even if she leaves this form. At the end of the scene, these temporary health levels fade, and all damage contained in them returns to her normal health track.

Additionally, when the Immaculate lands a **decisive** attack from 12+ Initiative that incapacitates a nontrivial enemy, she resets Mind-Over-Body Meditation.

Special activation rules: When the Immaculate heals enough damage from Mind-Over-Body Meditation or similar effects to reduce her wound penalty, she may reflexively enter this Form.

Spirit-Wracking Method

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Withering-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Wood Dragon Form

The Immaculate chastises unruly spirits with strikes that carry the seeds of her vital Essence, to blossom within the spirit's anima. Her **withering** attack against a spirit doubles 8s on the damage roll, but doesn't grant her any Initiative. She rolls a die of lethal **decisive** damage for every 10 on the **withering** damage roll, ignoring Hardness.

A spirit crashed by her attack suffers agonizing pain, doubling its wound penalties and the crippling penalty from Soul-Marking Style until it recovers from crash.

Death-Pattern-Sensing Attitude

Cost: 5m, 2i (+1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Wood
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisite Charms: Wood Dragon Form

Her senses fully attuned to the web of living Essence that surrounds her, the Immaculate foretells the approach of impending death. She gains the benefits of a full defense (**Exalted**, p. 196) to block attacks from enemies marked with her Soul-Marking Style, and ignores the Defense penalty from their surprise attacks.

If the Immaculate is ambushed by a marked foe, she may pay one Willpower to block the attack. Her Parry is limited to (her Essence/2, rounded up), and cannot be raised higher or benefit from other Charms.

Spirit-Rending Technique

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Wracking Method

Having placed her mark on a truculent god, the Immaculate rends its Essence apart from within. She adds (Willpower) dice to a **decisive** damage roll against a spirit marked by her Soul-Marking Style, and deals aggravated damage. If this incapacitates a spirit, the Immaculate gains (its Essence) motes.

Unbreakable Fascination Kata

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Wood Dragon Form

Moving in a sinuous, vine-like kata, the Immaculate entrances her foes. She makes an inspire roll with (Appearance + Performance) against one or more enemies that can see her to fill them with fascination. Each enemy whose Resolve is beaten cannot attack on his next turn, and cannot move away from the Immaculate without disengaging that turn.

Once an enemy has resisted this influence with Willpower, he's immune to losing his attack for the rest of the scene, but must still disengage to move



away from the stylist. An enemy who carries the Immaculate's soul mark must pay Willpower to resist twice before gaining this immunity.

Enthralling Blow Attack

Cost: 10m, 5i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Withering-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Unbreakable Fascination Kata

The Immaculate transitions through the undulating motions of her Unbreakable Fascination Kata into a sweeping blow that sends foes reeling. Upon using this Charm's prerequisite, the Immaculate reflexively rolls a single **withering** attack against each enemy in close range whose Resolve she beat, even if they resisted with Willpower. She rolls damage separately against each hit enemy, but only gains Initiative from the highest damage roll. Damaged enemies cannot take any move actions on their next turn.

An enemy crashed by Enthralling Blow Attack suffers the full effects of the Immaculate's Unbreakable Fascination Kata until he recovers from crash, even if he's already paid Willpower to resist.

In Wood Aura, in addition to gaining Initiative from the highest damage roll, the Immaculate gains up to (Essence/2, rounded up) Initiative from each additional damage roll.

Wood Dragon Succor

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Death-Pattern-Sensing Meditation, Spirit-Rending Technique

The Wood Dragon lives so that all may live. To use this Charm, the Immaculate must have Initiative 12+. She lays hands on another character, activating pressure points with gentle touches as verdant Essence flows from her hands to suffuse his body and heal his wounds. She rolls (Initiative), healing her ally one level of non-aggravated damage for each success, to

a maximum of (his Stamina + Resistance) levels. She suffers an unpreventable level of bashing damage for every two health levels she heals this way, rounded down.

Using this Charm resets the Immaculate to base Initiative. If she expends her Wood Aura, she only loses Initiative equal to the total levels of damage healed, to a minimum of her base Initiative. A character can only benefit from this Charm once per day.

Soul Mastery

Cost: 5m, 1wp, 1ahl; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Wood
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Enthralling Blow Attack, Wood Dragon Succor

Standing at the center of life and death, the Immaculate unleashes the legendary secret technique of Wood Dragon style. A swirling black-green aura wreathes her weapon as she strikes at her opponent's very soul. This Charm can only be used against an enemy suffering from the Immaculate's Soul-Marking Style. She rolls a gambit against him, with a difficulty of (his Essence + Willpower − wound penalty), minimum 6. Success destroys him utterly. Spirits are permanently destroyed, the undead crumble into dust, and the living die as their souls are struck into Lethe, ensuring that they'll reincarnate rather than lingering as ghosts. Constructs and similar beings neither living or dead are unaffected.

Soul Mastery can only be used once per scene.

Other Styles

Golden Janissary Style

This ancient art has been passed down by generations of devil-fighting sages who pledged their lives to defend Creation from darkness. Its training regimens combine weapon katas, dance-like footwork, and meditation on light and shadow. It's studied by holy ascetics, warriors who guard the borders of shadowlands, and barbarian tribes dwelling in demon-haunted wilderness, as well as Dragon-Blooded shikari.

Golden Janissary Weapons: Stylists use sweeping unarmed attacks, as well as the spear and staff. Unarmed attacks enhanced by Golden Janissary Charms can be stunted to deal lethal damage.

Armor: This style is compatible with light armor.

Complementary Abilities: Occult is useful to practitioners of this style, while Athletics is key to its mobility.

Where-Is-Doom Inquisition

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Dual, Mastery
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Those who hide in the darkness reveal their own wickedness. The martial artist adds (Occult) bonus dice on an Awareness roll to Join Battle or detect a hidden threat in combat. If any creatures of darkness oppose her roll, (her Essence) total 1s on their rolls add non-Charm dice to her roll. She cannot pinpoint which of her enemies are creatures of darkness with this Charm, but can sense she's in the presence of unhale forces.

Mastery: If the martial artist wins Join Battle against a creature of darkness and uses her first turn to attack one, she may reflexively move one range band towards it before attacking in addition to her normal movement action, and adds (Occult) dice of post-soak **withering** damage or one success on a **decisive** damage roll.

Rotten Leaf Arrested

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Let no unclean thing set foot over Creation's threshold. The stylist's **withering** attack gains +1 Overwhelming and knocks her enemy prone if it deals damage. An enemy crashed by this attack cannot take a movement action on his next turn.

Against creatures of darkness, the Overwhelming bonus rises to (Occult/2, rounded up), minimum +1, and she adds one automatic success to her **withering** damage roll. A creature of darkness crashed by the attack cannot move or attack on its next turn.

Cleansing Flame Strike

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Rotten Leaf Arrested, Where-Is-Doom Inquisition

Answer the abomination with flame. Aureate fire streaks along the stylist's **decisive** attack, adding one

CREATURES OF DARKNESS

Creatures of darkness are foes of Creation who stalk through the night or dwell in the dark places of the world. This includes demons and undead by default, but the Storyteller is free to include or exclude beings from this category at her discretion. A benign ancestor ghost might not be a creature of darkness, while a subterranean monstrosity empowered by forbidden gods could be.

die of damage and ignoring two points of Hardness. Against creatures of darkness, she deals aggravated damage and doubles 10s on the damage roll.

Golden Janissary Form

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Form
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Cleansing Flame Strike

Stand proud in defense of Creation, and you will never fall. The martial artist adds (Strength/2, rounded up) to her natural soak and as bonus dice on rushes, and gains one Initiative on a successful rush. She gains +1 Parry and +(Occult) natural soak against creatures of darkness, and +1 base Initiative when she resets after landing a **decisive** attack against one.

Special activation rules: Whenever the stylist lands a **decisive** attack against a creature of darkness, she may reflexively enter this Form, granting her its Initiative bonus.

Devil-Slaying Spear Dance

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Golden Janissary Form

Be as a spreading blaze, always advancing towards the fuel of your enemies. Upon incapacitating a nontrivial foe, the stylist may reflexively rush another enemy, doubling 9s. This doesn't count as her movement action for the round. When rushing a creature of darkness, every 1 on his opposed roll grants the stylist one Initiative.

Mastery: On a successful rush, the stylist may instantly move into close range with her target in place of the normal effects of a rush and reflexively make a **decisive** attack against him, which doesn't count as her attack for the round. If she incapacitates that foe, she may trigger this Charm again to make another rush.

Paralyzing Combustion Imbuement

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mastery, Terrestrial
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Devil-Slaying Spear Dance

The deepest darkness yields before the smallest flame. The stylist makes a **decisive** attack. Damaging her foe causes bursts of fiery, golden light to erupt from within his body with the sound of ringing bells. This penalizes his Stealth as a glowing anima banner (p. 154) and increases his wound penalty by −1. If this raises his wound penalty above his Stamina, he cannot disengage from close range with the martial artist for as long as he remains illumined. Creatures of darkness are burned by this light, suffering (Essence) dice of aggravated damage each turn, ignoring Hardness. This light shines until the scene ends, or until the victim crashes or incapacitates the stylist.

Mastery: An enemy whose wound penalty is raised above his Stamina must disengage to move away from the martial artist regardless of the distance between them.

Terrestrial: An illumined enemy may free himself of the effect by landing a **decisive** attack against the stylist.

Light-on-Dark Shield

Cost: 5m, 3i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Clash, Perilous, Terrestrial, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Golden Janissary Form

No shadow intrudes upon the light. Spinning her weapon to build momentum, the stylist clashes an attack with her own **withering** attack. Her attack cannot deal more damage than (her Overwhelming), which she doesn't gain. Against creatures of darkness, a successful clash also rolls one die of aggravated damage, ignoring Hardness.



Terrestrial: This counts as the stylist's attack for the round, and can't be used if she's already attacked this round.

Lone Spark Lights the Conflagration

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mastery, Terrestrial
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Light-on-Dark Shield, Paralyzing Combustion Imbuement

Purify the world with flame; let each slain devil be a spark. The stylist makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy suffering from her Paralyzing Combustion Imbuement. Her weapon shines with brilliant light, leaving a white-hot afterimage seared on the eyes of those who witness it. She adds (Essence) attack roll extra successes as dice of damage, or (Essence + Occult) successes against a creature of darkness.

If she damages a nontrivial creature of darkness with this attack, the light emanating from within it flares out to strike each other creature of darkness within medium range, wreathing them in ghostly bonfires. Each one suffers one die of aggravated damage, plus an additional die for every 10 on the first damage roll, ignoring Hardness. Those damaged begin to shine, suffering the effect of Paralyzing Combustion Imbuement.

Mastery: After incapacitating a nontrivial creature of darkness and resetting to base Initiative, the stylist may use Devil-Slaying Spear Dance to roll a rush against all enemies caught in this Charm's bonfires. She moves in a blur of blinding motion, coming into close range of each rushed enemy and making a **decisive** attack against him before moving on to the next. Her Initiative doesn't reset to base until she's completed all attacks.

Terrestrial: This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by crashing an enemy suffering from the stylist's Paralyzing Combustion Imbuement.

Mantis Style

Mantis style emphasizes a combination of grappling and rapid strikes. It draws no distinction between offense and defense, employing painful joint holds that leave enemies unable to fight back or deflecting the force of a blow so that the attacker's guard is left wide open. It's commonly studied by Immaculate monks for its ability to subdue foes without killing, but is also widespread throughout Eastern and Southern dojos.

Mantis Weapons: Practitioners deliver unarmed attacks with mantis hook strikes — using one to three fingers to strike weak points, grab foes, and block attacks — as well as knee and elbow strikes. Mantis style also uses batons, kamas, nunchaku, seven-section staffs, and war fans. Unarmed attacks enhanced by Mantis Charms can be stunted to deal lethal damage.

Armor: Mantis style is incompatible with armor.

Iron-Arm Block

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mastery, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Using her defense to divert her attacker's weapon or limbs, the Mantis stylist creates an opening in his guard. She gains +1 Parry, and inflicts a −1 onslaught penalty on her attacker if she successfully blocks. If she's grappling, successfully blocking an attack also prevents it from reducing her rounds of control.

Mastery: The stylist doesn't suffer an onslaught penalty from an attack she successfully blocks.

Crushing Claw Technique

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The mantis catches its prey with deadly speed. The martial artist adds one automatic success on the attack roll of a grapple gambit or a **decisive** attack. If she lands a grapple, she rolls ([Strength or Dexterity] + Martial Arts) with (higher of Essence or 3) bonus dice to establish control over it. If she lands a **decisive** attack, (Essence) 10s on her attack roll add dice of damage.

Mantis Form

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Form
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Crushing Claw Technique, Iron-Arm Block

The stylist adopts the signature stance of the mantis, shifting her weight onto her rear leg as she extends her front leg forward, her hands outstretched to block and strike. She gains +1 Parry. If she attempts to block an attack but is hit by it, she adds (Parry) natural soak against **withering** damage or gains Hardness (Parry/2, rounded up) against **decisive** damage. Against enemies with lower Initiative or that she's grappling, she doubles 10s on **decisive** damage rolls.

Special activation rules: When the stylist wins control of a clinch against a nontrivial enemy, she may reflexively enter Mantis Form.

Leaping Mantis Technique

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mastery
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Mantis Form

The martial artist's rapid footwork brings her within striking range before her foe can react. She rushes an enemy with (Strength) bonus dice. If the rushed foe provokes her reflexive movement, she may move two range bands toward him instead of one. If this brings her into close range, she may reflexively make a **decisive** attack or grapple gambit against him, adding half the threshold successes, rounded up, on her rush roll as bonus dice on the attack roll.

If the rushed enemy does not provoke her reflexive motion, then on her next turn, she may make an unblockable **decisive** attack or grappling gambit against him (assuming he's within her attack's range), adding all extra successes from the rush as bonus dice on the attack roll.

Mastery: If the martial artist succeeds on the rush and lands an attack against her enemy, she gains one Willpower.

Joint-Locking Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mastery

NEW WEAPON: KAMA/SICKLE

Light (Accuracy +4, Damage +7, Defense +0, Overwhelming 1)

Tags: Lethal, Melee, Disarming, Piercing

NEW WEAPON: NUNCHAKU

Light (Accuracy +4, Damage +7, Defense +0, Overwhelming 1)

Tags: Bashing, Martial Arts, Disarming, Flexible

Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Mantis Form

Catching her foe's limb, the stylist forces it into a painful lock. While grappling an opponent, she restrains him (**Exalted**, p. 201) and rolls (Strength) dice of unsoakable **withering** damage. If she's grappling a crashed foe, restraining him doesn't cost any rounds of control.

Mastery: The martial artist may exchange the Initiative she receives from Joint-Locking Technique to gain more rounds of control over the grapple, gaining one round for every two Initiative she forgoes.

Grasping Claw Method

Cost: 3m, 1i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mastery
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Mantis Form

With a deft twist of her foe's wrist, the stylist strips him of his weapon and establishes a hold in a single motion. Upon winning control of a grapple, she may disarm her enemy, flinging his weapon to short range.

Mastery: The martial artist adds her attack roll threshold successes as bonus dice to her control roll.

Grasping Mantis Defense

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Terrestrial
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Grasping Claw Method

Deflecting an attack with one hand, the martial artist uses the turning force of her attacker's blow to grab him with the other. She clashes an attack from close range with a grapple gambit. Winning the clash adds (higher of Strength or 3) non-Charm dice on the clinch's control roll.

Terrestrial: This counts as the stylist's attack for the round, and can't be used if she's already attacked in this round.

Joint-Breaking Attack

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Terrestrial
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Joint-Locking Technique

Once the mantis catches its prey, there is no escape. While grappling a foe, the stylist savages him with a difficulty 6 gambit that requires no attack roll. Success inflicts a single level of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness, and breaks one of the character's limbs as a crippling injury — the martial artist bends the bone of an arm or leg until it snaps. A broken arm is useless and imposes a −3 penalty on all actions that require two hands to perform, while a broken leg causes a character to treat all ground as difficult terrain. Additionally, the pain of this injury raises that foe's wound penalty by −2 for the rest of the scene. If not treated with applicable healing magic, the broken bone heals in (7 – victim's Stamina) months, assuming he receives adequate medical treatment.

If the martial artist crashes a grappled enemy with Joint-Locking Technique, she may reflexively activate this Charm to attack with the crippling gambit.

Terrestrial: This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by expending three rounds of control over a grapple for this purpose.

Unfolding Retribution Strike

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mastery, Terrestrial
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Grasping Mantis Defense, Joint-Breaking Attack, Leaping Mantis Technique

The signature finishing move of Mantis style is a deadly barrage of hundreds of blows in a matter of seconds. To use this Charm, the stylist must have Initiative 15+ while controlling a grapple. She releases the clinch, then rolls a single unblockable, undodgeable **decisive** attack to represent the flurry of blows. Each round of control she gave up by releasing the grapple adds + 3 dice of **decisive** damage and increases its onslaught penalty by −1.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by crashing a grappled foe whose Initiative was higher than the stylist's.

Mastery: If the stylist incapacitates her victim, she adds (rounds of control expended / 2, rounded up) to her base Initiative upon resetting.

Terrestrial: The martial artist cannot benefit from more than (Essence) rounds of released control.

White Veil Style

There is no White Veil Society. It's not a loose-knit association of martial artists, spies, and assassins spread throughout the Realm and beyond. Its members don't practice a deadly martial art, nor has this style ever

spread to students willing to pay vast sums for secret instruction or to rival martial artists who haven't uncovered records of its secret techniques. It never sees use at dinners, salons, and galas. People don't die from it, occasionally silently and occasionally screaming, days or weeks after not encountering it.

White Veil Weapons: If it existed, White Veil would use swift, precise unarmed attacks to strike pressure points, as well as garrotes and hand-needles.

Armor: This style would be incompatible with armor if it were real.

Complementary Abilities: Socialize and Stealth are essential to the modus operandi that isn't employed by masters of this nonexistent style.

Birdsong Over Blades

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Concealing her hostile intentions behind common, everyday movements, the stylist can strike without striking. After successfully landing a **decisive** attack, she forgoes making a damage roll and resetting to base Initiative. Even though the attack doesn't deal any damage, it still conveys poisons applied to her weapon (**Exalted**, p. 232) and the deleterious effects of Charms, as long as they don't directly enhance the damage roll.

NEW WEAPON: GARROTE

Light (Accuracy +4, Damage +7, Defense +0, Overwhelming 1)

Tags: Bashing (rope garrotes)/Lethal (razor wire), Brawl, Concealable, Flexible, Grappling, Two-Handed, Special

Special: Garrotes have the Improvised tag, except when used to grapple.

NEW WEAPON: HAND NEEDLE/KAKUTE

Light (Accuracy +4, Damage +7, Defense +0, Overwhelming 1)

Tags: Lethal, Martial Arts, Concealable, Grappling, Worn

Noticing the attack requires a (Perception + Awareness roll) from all onlookers, including the victim, against a difficulty of (her Essence + Manipulation). If she attacked from concealment, it doesn't break stealth, and she substitutes her total Stealth successes for the difficulty of the Awareness roll if they're higher.

Mastery: An enemy struck by the attack takes a penalty of (the stylist's Manipulation) on rolls to resist poison or other harmful effects conveyed through it.

Owl Clutches at the Night

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mastery, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Birdsong Over Blades

When the silent-winged owl dives into the field and rises with empty talons, it vanishes back into the night. After missing with an attack, the stylist conceals her attempt, requiring her victim and other onlookers to roll (Perception + Awareness) against (her Essence + Manipulation) to realize she attacked. If the failed attack was made from concealment, her stealth isn't broken as long as no enemies or bystanders succeed on their Awareness roll.

Mastery: As long as no character succeeds on the Awareness roll, the stylist gains one Willpower.

Alehouse Memory Stance

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Mute, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

POISON OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

If a character is exposed to poison that deals Initiative damage outside of combat, the Storyteller should call for him to make a Join Battle roll. This doesn't represent him suddenly becoming aware of hidden poisoners, but supplies him with a buffer of Initiative for the poison's damage to wear down before he's crashed and begins suffering decisive damage from it. If combat begins, perhaps as a result of the victim or his allies finding the hidden assassin, he carries over the result of his initial roll rather than making another Join Battle roll.

Appearing relaxed and comfortable, the stylist's demeanor gives every indication that she wants nothing more than to sit back and gossip. She adds her base Guile in bonus dice to a Stealth roll. As long as no character present has witnessed her make an attack this scene, she ignores the penalty for attempting Stealth in combat.

White Veil Form

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Form, Mute
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Alehouse Memory Stance, Owl Clutches at the Night

The White Veil stylist puts herself completely at ease, her palpable nonchalance drawing onlookers' attention from whatever she's doing with her hands to focus on her pleasant smile and witty repartee. She gains +1 Evasion and +1 Guile, and takes no penalty for flurrying if she includes at least one Socialize-based action. She may substitute Manipulation for Dexterity when calculating her Evasion or when rolling to enter concealment, disengage, or withdraw. Any enemy that rolls Join Battle in response to her actions rolls must roll with (Perception + [lower of Awareness or Socialize]).

Special activation rules: When the stylist successfully lands a surprise attack against a nontrivial enemy, she may reflexively enter this Form.

Blithe Unruffled Plumage

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Dual, Mastery, Mute, Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: White Veil Form

The martial artist responds to attacks with speech and posture more suited to a friendly altercation or test bouts than a life-or-death struggle. She adds (Guile + 1) to her natural soak against a **withering** attack and reduces its Overwhelming value by one, or gains (Guile) Hardness against a **decisive** attack. This includes bonuses to her Guile from White Veil Form or other effects. If an attack fails to damage her (including if it misses), she may conceal it from onlookers' notice as per Owl Clutches at the Night.

Mastery: When the stylist successfully conceals an attack against her from all onlookers, she may steal (Manipulation) Initiative from her attacker.

Blinded by Laughter

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mastery, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Blithe Unruffled Plumage

A toast to old friends, a tempting appetizer, a well-timed joke — these provide all the opportunity the stylist needs. She may attempt an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203) even in plain view of her target, seeming as though she's simply carousing or engaging in conversation up until she plunges a needle into his throat. Instead of rolling Stealth, she rolls (Manipulation + Socialize), doubling 9s, against her target's Resolve. If she succeeds, she uses the result of her roll in place of her Join Battle roll. As usual, if this is a higher Initiative than her victim rolls, her attack is an ambush; otherwise, it's merely an unexpected attack.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by successfully landing a **decisive** attack against the same target without being noticed by him or any other onlooker. It cannot be used to make an ambush attack against the same character more than once per scene, even if reset.

Mastery: If the stylist successfully launches an ambush, she doubles the threshold successes of a **withering** attack roll or adds up to (Guile) threshold successes on a **decisive** attack roll as dice of damage. This includes bonuses to her Guile from White Veil Form or other effects.

Tickling the Dragon's Throat

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mastery
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: White Veil Form

Jabbing a needle into a pressure point or twisting her garrote to cut off a foe's breath, the martial artist sends even the hardiest of carousers in search of fresh air. Every two threshold successes on her **decisive** attack roll impose a −1 penalty on her victim's actions and Defense, maximum (Essence), until the onslaught penalty inflicted by the attack has worn off.

Mastery: If the attack inflicts the maximum penalty, remaining extra successes prevent the onslaught penalty inflicted by it from wearing off for an additional turn per two successes.

The Dragon Dies in Bed

Cost: 5m, 4i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Blinded by Laughter, Tickling the Dragon's Throat

For some, a quiet, unassuming death is a kindness. For others, it's a shame. Either way, the White Veil stylist allows them to experience it. She makes a **decisive** attack that exposes her victim to a supernatural disease if it hits. The cost of Birdsong Over Blades is waived when used with this attack.

This disease, called the Subtle Mercy by White Veil masters, has virulence (Manipulation + 1), morbidity 5, and an interval of one day. This disease can kill characters with Exalted healing. In addition to the usual effects of disease (**Exalted**, p. 234), it has the following magical effects based on its intensity:

Minor: The victim feels weary and lethargic, suffering a −1 fatigue penalty on all rolls unless he receives twelve hours of sleep each day. Rolls to diagnose the disease are made at +4 difficulty.

Major: The victim's fatigue penalty stacks by one each day he goes without twelve hours of sleep, maximum −5. In addition, he can no longer heal damage naturally (**Exalted**, p. 173) if he remains fully active during convalescence. Rolls to diagnose the disease are made at +3 difficulty.

Defining: The victim now requires twenty hours of sleep to avoid suffering a fatigue penalty, as well to recover Willpower from a night's sleep. Rolls to diagnose the disease are made at +2 difficulty.

The Dragon Dies Screaming

Cost: 6m, 6i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mastery, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: The Dragon Dies in Bed

The martial artist's subtle touch is laced with deadly venom, Essence suffusing her strike with toxic potency. She makes a **decisive** attack that exposes her victim to this poison if it hits. The poison has Damage 4i/round (Aggravated in crash), duration (Essence + Manipulation) rounds, and a −(Manipulation) penalty. The cost of Birdsong Over Blades is waived when used with this attack.

Rolls to diagnose this poison are made at +3 difficulty. The stylist may choose to delay the poison's onset by anywhere from an hour to (Essence) weeks; the difficulty to diagnose it while delayed is increased by +5 instead.

This Charm can only be used once per scene, unless reset by successfully incapacitating a nontrivial enemy without any other character realizing the martial artist is responsible.

Mastery: No matter how many successes the target rolls to resist, the poison's duration cannot be reduced below one round.

The Dragon Succumbs

Cost: 10m, 7i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mastery, Mute, Terrestrial
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: The Dragon Dies Screaming

It's rude to keep death waiting, and the White Veil master's manners are beyond reproach. She makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy that suffers from poison or disease (or both). The cost of Birdsong Over Blades is waived when used with this attack.

If the attack hits, the victim makes a single (Stamina + Resistance) roll against the morbidity of each disease he suffers from. If he fails to beat a disease's morbidity, it rises by one step. If a disease is already at the Defining level, it doesn't immediately progress to death, but instead inflicts a level of unpreventable aggravated damage.

Additionally, on a hit, the victim immediately suffers the damage of a single interval of one poison in his system, plus an additional interval for each attack roll threshold success, maximum (Essence + 1). If he suffers from multiple venoms, the martial artist chooses which one applies its damage. This damage doesn't reduce the duration of the poisons themselves, but the stylist cannot apply a poison's damage more times than it has intervals remaining.

Mastery: If the martial artist's victim fails his roll against the morbidity of a disease at the Defining level, he'll die of it — even if he has Exalted healing — after (his Stamina) turns, unless a character who has diagnosed the disease succeeds on an (Intelligence + Medicine) roll against (its morbidity + 5) as a miscellaneous action that can't be flurried.

Terrestrial: The martial artist must be able to make an ambush against her target to use this Charm.

Sorcery

Shaping Rituals

Student of the Heptagram

Graduates of the Heptagram initiate into sorcery through many different paths. The following is only the most common initiation.

Shaping Rituals

- *Sorcerous Archives:* Once per story, the sorcerer may research arcane texts and roll (Intelligence + Lore), gaining sorcerous motes equal to the successes that last until the story ends. Access to a sorcerous library or mentor adds one bonus die, or two for an especially comprehensive library or skilled mentor.

- *Sevenfold Art Invocation:* The sorcerer channels Essence through esoteric formulae and rigorously-practiced mudras. Once per scene, when she stunts the first shape sorcery roll of a spell with invocations or mudras, she gains (stunt rating + 2) sorcerous motes towards completing the spell. Enhancing her control spell doesn't count against this once-per-scene limit.

- *Geomantic Mandala:* The sorcerer channels Essence through elemental geomancy, gaining one additional sorcerous mote each turn she spends shaping a spell in an elementally aspected demesne or manse. Once per story, she may tap an elementally aspected hearthstone to which she's attuned to gain five sorcerous motes (ten from a greater hearthstone) until the end of the scene. Doing so renders that hearthstone defunct until the story ends.

Other Benefits

Geomantic Prodigy (Merit •••): Well-versed in sacred geometry and esoteric principles of architecture, the sorcerer may add (Occult) dice on a Craft (Architecture or Geomancy) roll once per week. These count as Charm dice.

Spirit Speaker (Merit •): The sorcerer has been schooled in consorting with spirits and other magical beings. When she rolls a social action against such beings or asserts Resolve or Guile against them, she benefits from any Occult specialties in that type of being as though she had them in the relevant social Ability.

Words of Binding (Merit ••): The sorcerer doubles 9s on rolls to bind summoned demons or elementals.

Wanasaan Exorcist

The Wanasaan exorcists (p. 127) awaken their sorcerous potential through ceremonial drowning in the Silent Isle's frozen spring, seeing the truth of the world on the threshold of life and death.

Shaping Rituals

- *Living Ancestor Reverence:* The sorcerer draws empowerment from offerings of paper effigies and other grave goods made to her ghost while she yet lives. The sorcerer may draw (the offering's Resources rating) sorcerous motes from such a sacrifice once per day. These motes vanish at sunrise.

- *Drowning in Mystery:* Suspending herself in a basin or body of salt water, the sorcerer draws power from the moment she stood on the verge of death. After an hour of submerged meditation, she rolls (Wits + Occult), gaining sorcerous motes equal to the successes. These last until she performs this ritual again, or until the end of the story. She cannot perform this ritual more than once per day.

- *Drink Deep of Lethe:* By compelling a ghost to abandon its unnatural existence and return to the cycle of reincarnation, the sorcerer may breathe in the remnants of its Essence. After incapacitating a ghost or similar shade or using social influence to convince it to pass on (a life-defining task, **Exalted** p. 216), she rolls (Stamina + Occult) with (the ghost's Essence) bonus dice, gaining sorcerous motes equal to the successes. These motes last until the story's end, although she cannot stock more than ([Essence + Willpower] x4) sorcerous motes with this ritual at a time.

Other Benefits

Eyes in Both Worlds (Merit •••): The sorcerer lingered a little longer than most at the edge of death's marches during her initiation. She can perceive dematerialized ghosts as though they were material.

Breath Without Air (Merit •••): Having drowned once, the sorcerer is proof against it a second time. She may breathe normally in water. Water Aspects ignore a single point of wound penalty while submersed, shedding the weakness of the living.

Terrestrial Circle Spells

Beckoning That Which Stirs the Sky

Cost: Ritual, 2wp
Keywords: None
Duration: (1 + threshold successes) hours

As the sorcerer recites ancient prayers to deities long forgotten beneath the open sky, huge chitinous limbs emerge from above, weaving the wind and clouds to her will. Shaping the weather is an (Intelligence + Occult) roll that takes a few minutes to complete, with a difficulty based both on how drastic the change the sorcerer wishes to make is and how typical the desired weather is for her current climate and season. Creating a light rain in a temperate climate might only be difficulty 1, while strengthening a heavy rain to a thunderstorm or halting it completely might be difficulty 2-3. Summoning a thunderstorm from blue skies or diminishing a hurricane to a severe storm would be difficulty 5+. Likewise, any attempt to create rain might incur increased difficulty if attempted in a desert, as would calling a blizzard outside of the winter season. This spell can never create extreme natural disasters such as hurricanes, though it can diminish them to lesser weather.

If the sorcerer succeeds, That Which Stirs the Sky weaves the desired weather in an area out to (Essence + threshold successes) miles from the point cast the spell. It lasts for (1 + threshold successes) hours before reverting to normal. Subsequent castings by any sorcerer cannot alter the weather within the spell's range until its duration elapses. Characters within the weather can identify its unnatural origin with a (Perception + [Occult or Survival]) roll of difficulty 1-5, with subtler alterations being more difficult to detect.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell may create sorcerous weather that follows her as she moves; this costs half her threshold successes, rounded up.

Distortion (Goal Number: 10): Distorting this spell reverses the alteration to the weather. It doesn't merely revert back to its previous conditions, but is changed in the other direction — if the original sorcerer had calmed a thunderstorm, distortion would result in an even greater storm; if she'd summoned rain, distortion could result in intensely arid heat.

Floral Ferry

Cost: 20sm, 1wp
Keywords: None
Duration: Until journey is completed

Tossing a leaf, petal, or fruit into a body of water, the sorcerer beckons it with mudras of the turning seasons to grow into a small, seaworthy craft. This is a ship with the following traits (**Exalted**, p. 244):

Speed: Magically impelled +2; current +1; oars +1; empty cargo hold +1

Maneuverability: +3; **Hull:** −1/−2/−4/Incapacitated

Cargo: One ton. The ship can comfortably carry a half-dozen passengers.

Upon casting this spell, the sorcerer names the destination she intends to sail to. If she has even approximate knowledge of its location, the Flory Ferry will sail itself as close as possible to that destination, using the sorcerer's (Essence + Occult) for sailing rolls. However, it lacks the sapience to engage in pursuit or naval combat. Other characters can attempt to sail it, although the Speed bonus from its magically impelled travel becomes a −1 penalty if they attempt to travel anywhere but the named destination. Once it's reached its destination and its crew has disembarked, the ferry shrinks back into the foliage from which it was summoned.

Sorcerers with an Essence pool may use the following powers while this spell is active:

Barque of Durant Heartwood (10m, 1wp; Simple; One day): The ship's hull hardens to thick bark, gaining (Essence/2, rounded up) −0 Hull levels. Once they fade away, damage marked in them rolls over into regular Hull levels.

Hay-Fever Seabloom (5m; Supplemental; Instant; Pilot): Thick, sticky pollen trails in the Floral Ferry's wake. Success on an interval of a naval pursuit while fleeing a ship imposes a penalty of (sorcerer's Intelligence) on the pursuing captains' next interval.

Whirling Maple-Seed Swiftness (10m, 1wp; Simple; One day; Pilot): As long as the sorcerer helms the Floral Ferry, its total Speed is doubled.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell may awaken Evocations from the Floral Ferry.

Distortion (Goal Number: 5): Distorting the Floral Ferry allows the opposing sorcerer to name a new destination that it will sail itself towards.

Impervious Sphere of Water

Cost: 15sm, 1wp
Keywords: None
Duration: One scene

Water streams from the sorcerer's outstretched palms, twisting and coiling like flowing serpents into a dome that encompasses her and her allies. The dome extends out to short range from the sorcerer, although those within find that they can breathe the water as easily as air. While the dome is translucent, its surface provides full cover (**Exalted**, p. 199) to those within it against attacks from without,

and vice versa. Moving into or out of the dome requires a (Strength + Athletics) roll at a difficulty of (sorcerer's Intelligence). If the sorcerer takes a move action or non-reflexive action, this spell immediately ends. Once the spell ends, the sphere collapses, and can be collected to drink.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell can take move actions without ending this spell. The sphere moves with her, although it doesn't drag those within its area along with it, flowing around them without friction.

Distortion (Goal Number: 12): Distorting this spell strips the water of its breathability, causing those within the dome to begin drowning (**Exalted**, p. 232). It ceases to provide cover to those within (but not without) the dome, and characters may enter (but not exit) the dome without a roll. The dome remains intact even if the sorcerer takes an action that would end the spell.

Keel Cleaves the Clouds

Cost: 25sm, 2wp
Keywords: None
Duration: One day

As fog or clouds touch the seas, the sorcerer speaks honeyed lies to a ship, convincing it that it may sail forward upon them. The enchanted ship may sail over mist, fog, or other vapors as though they were water, and can ascend vertically through such vapors until it's skimming over their surface. In sufficiently misty environs, it's even possible for the ship to rise high enough to sail on the clouds themselves. However, while vapor-borne, the ship cannot benefit from Speed bonuses from oars or currents. If this spell ends, or there's no vapor left for the ship to sail on, it descends, landing safe and undamaged, albeit potentially landlocked.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell is constantly wreathed by pale mists, though she may disperse them with a thought unless distracted by involved activity, deep contemplation, or tumultuous emotion. She may walk on mist or fog as though it were solid ground, albeit as difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199).

Distortion (Goal Number: 8): Distorting this spell causes mist to envelop the ship in a thick cloud, making it all but impossible for its crew to see outward. Sail rolls to pilot it suffer a –3 penalty, and those aboard have no warning if it's about to run out of mist that can support it.

Sculpted Seafoam Eidolon

Cost: 10sm, 2wp
Keywords: None
Duration: One day



The sorcerer shapes foam and aqueous reflections into a simulacrum of reality. From nothing, she may create a lifelike, convincing water-replica of a person, an animal up to the size of a horse, or an object up to the size of a wagon. She rolls (Manipulation + Occult) to determine the quality of the illusion. The illusion performs lifelike motions, is capable of simple speech, and has scent, body heat, and other sensory qualia, though it's not capable of taking actions that require rolls. While the sorcerer is present, she may direct the illusion's behavior; if she goes further than long range from it, it reverts to a default pattern of behavior that is realistic but uncomplicated.

A character within short range can roll (Perception + Awareness) opposing the sorcerer's initial roll to realize its illusory nature. Touching the eidolon's water-sculpted surface grants three bonus dice on this roll. A character who speaks with the eidolon may realize it's illusory by reading its intentions, opposing the sorcerer's initial roll.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell may create up to (Manipulation) separate illusions each time she casts it.

Distortion (Goal number: 10): Distorting this spell allows the opposing sorcerer to wrest control of the illusion away from the sorcerer who cast it.

Spoke the Wooden Face

Cost: 5sm, 1wp
Keywords: None
Duration: One scene

Closing her eyes and entering a trance, the sorcerer projects her awareness into a tree that bears her visage. To use this spell, the sorcerer must have first carved a life-sized likeness of her face into the bark of a living tree, a basic Craft (Woodworking) project with difficulty 1. Casting this spell lets her perceive and speak through the face, regardless of distance. She may make Perception-based rolls from its vantage or make influence rolls as she speaks through it, but cannot enhance her actions with Charms. While using this spell, she can't sense anything through her own body nor take actions with it, unless she chooses to end it prematurely. Taking damage automatically ends this spell.

While the sorcerer isn't speaking, her projected presence can't be detected without the use of magic. A character who knows or suspects that a tree has been marked for use with this spell may destroy the carved visage to render it unusable. This usually doesn't require a roll, unless the tree has been reinforced with other magic.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell may simultaneously project herself into up to (Perception) separate wooden faces, seeing and speaking through all of them simultaneously.

Distortion (Goal Number: 5): To distort this spell, a sorcerer must be within short range of the tree, not the sorcerer. Distortion renders the wooden face blind, deaf, and mute (**Exalted**, pp. 168-169), plunging the casting sorcerer into sensory isolation that causes her to lose one Willpower.

Stalwart Earth Guardian

Cost: Ritual, 1wp
Keywords: None
Duration: Twelve hours

Drawing a geometric figure in the soil or tracing it out on stone with chalk over the course of a few minutes, the sorcerer wards herself and her allies from harm. This figure spreads out to close range from its center. Characters within the ward gain +1 Defense and +1 Resolve against any attacks or other effects used on them from without. Characters outside the ward but within medium range of its center come under attack as the earth turns against them, an environmental hazard with difficulty (higher of Essence or Intelligence) and Damage 1B/round. Characters who fail a roll against the hazard treat moving through it as difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199) for that round. In addition, the churning earth makes stealthy approaches all but impossible, increasing the mobility penalty of characters caught within it by –2 and making enough noise to awaken anyone sleeping inside the ward.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell has a certain earthiness to her, smelling of plowed soil and loamy clay. She can use her fingernails to etch lines in stone, an exceptional tool (**Exalted**, p. 580) for Craft rolls to work stone or Linguistics rolls to inscribe writing on it.

Distortion (Goal Number: 15): Distorting this spell inverts the ward, nullifying its effects outside while causing those within to suffer the environmental hazard and mobility penalty.

Thunder Wolf Howl

Cost: 15sm, 1wp
Keywords: Decisive-only
Duration: Instant

White winds swirl around the sorcerer as she draws forth the ancient echo of a slain behemoth's death-howl. The sorcerer designates a point within medium range as the center of a deafening thunderclap that

extends out to short range from that point. Characters caught within it, including allies, roll (Stamina + Resistance) at a difficulty of (the sorcerer's higher of Essence or Intelligence). Battle groups suffer a penalty of (their Size). Characters who fail suffer base **decisive** damage of (Essence)B, ignoring Hardness, and the sorcerer divides her Initiative evenly among them, rounding up, to determine the total damage rolled against them. As long as one character fails his roll, the sorcerer resets to base Initiative. A character that takes damage is deafened (**Exalted**, p. 198) until he receives medical treatment, and suffers a crippling penalty on all actions equal to the number of 10s on the damage roll. This penalty falls by one at the end of each of that character's turns. Objects and structures made of wood, glass, and similarly flimsy or fragile material suffer damage at the Storyteller's discretion.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell increases the difficulty and base damage of this spell by one each. When overcome with strong emotion, her voice booms and echoes like the peal of distant thunder.

Unslakable Thirst of the Devil-Maw

Cost: 15sm, 1wp
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant

The flesh of one of the sorcerer's hands splits to reveal a monstrous gaping mouth with fangs of tourmaline and a squirming viridian tongue. The maw leeches away at water, condensing vapor from thin air and desiccating plants or living flesh. She rolls (Intelligence + Occult) as an unblockable **decisive** attack against all characters, including allies, in a ninety-degree arc out to medium range. Against battle groups, it's unblockable and undodgeable. Each character hit suffers ([sorcerer's Intelligence + extra successes] − [lower of target's Stamina or Resistance])A dice of **decisive** damage, minimum one die. This doesn't include the sorcerer's Initiative or reset her to base Initiative. Enemies with no body moisture whatsoever, such as fire elementals or bonesiders, are immune. Conversely, enemies primarily made of liquid, such as water elementals, don't subtract anything from the damage. Trivial plant life within range is completely desiccated, dying instantly.

Moisture siphoned by this spell is gathered into a sphere of solid water that floats above the sorcerer's hand for up to a few minutes after casting this spell. The sorcerer may direct it into a container for storage, or it can be drawn on with Charms such as Elemental Sheath (p. 225). Even if there are no victims of her spell, she may gather water with it in all but the most arid environments.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell has a devil-maw permanently opened on one of her palms. Unarmed attacks with that hand deal aggravated damage and gain the Piercing tag (**Exalted**, p. 586) against enemies that have any body moisture, draining it through their armor. Against water elementals and similar enemies, her unarmed attacks deal an additional die of **withering** or **decisive** damage.

Virtuous Guardian of Flame

Cost: 15sm, 2wp
Keywords: None
Duration: One day

The sorcerer draws a flaming sword from her own heart, shaping a fiery sentinel to keep vigil over her. As she completes the spell, the burning blade collapses into a will-o'-the-wisp no larger than a torchlight — the sorcerer may conceal the Virtuous Guardian of Flame by commanding it to rest within an existing lit lantern or torch she carries. Should she be attacked, the wisp flares back into sword shape to fend off her enemy, protecting her as per the defend other action (**Exalted**, p. 196) with a Parry of ([higher of Essence or Intelligence] + 1). The virtuous guardian can even notice threats of which the sorcerer is unaware, rolling (Essence + Perception + Occult) to detect hidden enemies. Wooden projectiles or weapons successfully blocked by the guardian are burnt to ashes. If it parries an unarmed attack or other natural attack, the attacker suffers one die of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. Even when its parries fail, its flames blunt the force of attacks against the sorcerer, adding (Essence) natural soak against all but unblockable attacks.

The guardian has soak (Essence + 5), Hardness (Essence), and (Essence + Intelligence) −0 health levels. When the sorcerer Joins Battle, it gains Initiative equal to hers. It cannot take any actions of its own; instead, this Initiative is used solely as a buffer against **withering** attacks. If the guardian is crashed, it dissipates for a scene, unable to protect the sorcerer, but reforms after that. If its health track is filled with damage, it's utterly destroyed, and the sorcerer cannot resummon it until its full duration has elapsed.

A sorcerer with this as her control spell may awaken Evocations from it, enhancing the guardian's defensive power or wielding it offensively.

Distortion (Goal Number: 15): Distorting the virtuous guardian lets the distorting sorcerer temporarily usurp it from its caster, stealing its protection away from her for one scene.

Realm Year 768

Left Hand Chalima was the bad kind of tired. Her daiklave and devil caster sat on her dining table, red jade polished and gleaming. Her boots were mudless and her firedust pouch was full. Only the ink-stains on her fingers proved she'd done any kind of work at all. Her fingers drummed without rhythm, and she stared at the latest militia report without reading it. Her cloak of office rested on the back of her chair, where its oppressive warmth couldn't stifle her. Nobody'd warned Chalima that the queen's cloak would chafe. She wouldn't have grabbed it off the old king if she'd known.

Chalima's husband Xocha had offered to take over the administrative tasks for the evening, and Chalima had said no. After an hour, Chalima privately admitted she should've said yes. She got up, stretched her back, and headed for the basement. She took her weapons with her and left the reports behind.

The royal shrine beneath the manor was tasteful, in Chalima's opinion: several crematory urns surrounding an incense bowl carved from interlocking ivory pieces. The old royal shrine had been a wasteful, imposing thing, and Chalima had gotten rid of it — respectfully — when she moved in. The old ghosts protested, but their descendants weren't in charge now. Their choices were Chalima or nothing, and most chose Chalima. At least she honored them, unlike the Immaculate Order.

But Chalima wasn't here for an old ghost. She lit a candle with a finger-snap and a spark of Essence, and with the candle lit several sticks of incense. She breathed in the scent, eyes closed, then breathed out a name.

"Itzli, it's your wife." She smiled wryly at his imagined, teasing greeting. "Still breathing, thanks for asking."

Chalima never knew when her prayers might get a response. But she knew she could talk, and Itzli would feel it. Most nights, that was enough.

"I've been running in circles all day, Itzli, putting out fires. Which is a lot harder than starting them, it turns out." Chalima rested her weapons against the shrine. "That rat-bastard riotmonger I told you about is still out there. Still spreading his heresy. Still breaking down my city — our city — piece by piece."

You'll stop him, said nobody.

"It wouldn't be so bad if he'd give me a fight, but he's like a weevil in grain. His zealots are everywhere, and he's nowhere." Chalima clenched her hand. "He's Anathema. I can feel it in my gut. But my gut can't summon a Wyld Hunt."

You know why, said nobody.

"It didn't used to be like this. Do you remember? We used to go years between Anathema sightings, and now they're all through the Hundred Kingdoms. And good luck putting together a hunt like in the old days. We used to be fast as a rumor and twice as mean. I used to be…."

The incense smoke was thick and hot, and Chalima's hands itched for her weapons. Her jaw was clenched. She had to do something. Anything. And she would have, if she hadn't felt the cooling touch of a hand on her own. She gasped slightly, but didn't open her eyes. Itzli didn't look like he used to, after all. Instead she rested her head against his, soaking in his calm.

"I wish my Kinship was here," said Chalima, surprising herself. "Mathar's letters don't compare to his voice. I'd even take River preaching 'proper canon' at me. How would they deal with this?"

Chalima felt Itzli's touch, familiar and unfamiliar, on her cheek.

"It's not too late to find out," said Itzli.



Chapter Nine

Heirlooms of Power

Calumny
(Green Jade Wrackstaff, Artifact •••)

Two centuries ago, a lone thief drove the Great Houses to wrath. Concealed behind her signature mask, the Artful Tanuki uncovered the Realm's rarest treasures and most forbidden secrets. She sold both to eager buyers, sowing chaos among the Scarlet Dynasty.

Peasants and Dynasts alike speculated about the Artful Tanuki's prowess and motivations. Magistrates and assassins sought the thief's head and the mysteries kept therein. After years of infamy, the Artful Tanuki vanished. Then her true work began. Without her mask, no one recognized the daughter of House Cynis as the infamous thief, and her stolen secrets fed a budding political career.

Though many spoke of her insolent mask, few recalled the Artful Tanuki's unassuming staff. Calumny is a length of bamboo cut from the slopes of the Imperial Mountain and banded with green-and-brown speckled jade. It has been passed down through generations of Cynis blackmailers, offering its secrets to those who feed its hunger.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Medium (+3 ACC, +12 DMG, +1 DEF, OVW 4)

Tags: Bashing, Melee, Reaching

Hearthstone Slot(s): 1

Era: Reign of the Scarlet Empress

Evocations of Calumny

Calumny may be collapsed to a jade-tipped rod six inches in length, giving it the Concealable tag (**Exalted**, p. 588), or extended back to full length, as a reflexive action.

Calumny feeds upon secrets. A secret's intensity corresponds to the level of task that would be required to persuade the person it concerns to reveal it to the world: inconvenient, serious, or life-changing (**Exalted**, p. 216). A secret can lose or gain intensity as circumstances change, such as being widely revealed.

Rustling Grapevine Whispers

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Resonant, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

Hidden truths speak through silence. The wielder may activate this Evocation whenever she hits or touches another character with Calumny. The target's unspoken secrets vibrate up Calumny's length, whispering a one- or two-word clue to the target's most potent or most immediately relevant secret, decided by the Storyteller. This adds an automatic success on a read intentions or profile character roll to uncover that secret. Only the wielder hears Calumny's whispers.

Special activation rules: This Evocation cannot be purchased with experience points. Instead, it awakens at no cost when the wielder whispers a serious or life-changing secret of her own to Calumny. A Dragon-Blooded Cynis scion may awaken it with an inconvenient secret.

Resonant: Rustling Grapevine Whispers may be used from short range, using shared contact with significant plant life (e.g., vines, tall grass, a tree) as a medium instead of direct contact.

Unassuming Ornament Camouflage

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Naked Thief Style

RESONANCE AND DISSONANCE

Different Exalted harmonize differently with each of the magical materials. An Exalt can be resonant with a material, neutral, or dissonant. The Resonant and Dissonant keywords mark Evocations that function differently depending on the user's connection to an artifact. Solars are resonant with all magical materials, while Dragon-Blooded are resonant with jade; neutral with orichalcum, moonsilver, and starmetal; and dissonant with soulsteel. See **Arms of the Chosen**, pp. 16-17, for more.

To find secrets, one must keep secrets. The Dragon-Blood may use Naked Thief Style (p. 203) while Calumny is collapsed to conceal it as a small mundane object, such as an ornamental fan, necklace, or pipe. No roll is necessary to conceal it; its true nature is completely undetectable by anything short of Eye of the Unconquered Sun or comparable effects.

Salon-Spider Entrapment

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Resonant, Stackable, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Rustling Grapevine Whispers

A tangled web traps its maker. A successful **withering** attack spins the opponent's secrets into sticky, binding threads of Essence until the end of his next turn. A bound foe must pay one Initiative in order to take a movement or attack action.

If the wielder knows a bound foe's secrets, she may strike him again with this Evocation, renewing the binding web for another of her enemy's turns and raising the Initiative cost it imposes by one. She may stack it up to a maximum based on the most potent secret known: 2 for inconvenient; 3 for serious; 4 for life-changing.

Resonant: A crashed enemy cannot take movement actions while bound.

Swallowtail's Grace

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Counterattack, Dual, Perilous, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Rustling Grapevine Whispers

He who denies, attacks; she who knows, invites. After parrying an attack made by an enemy whose secrets she knows, the wielder makes a **withering** or **decisive** counterattack. The attack roll gains a bonus success for a serious secret, or two successes for a life-changing secret.

Resonant: The wielder may reflexively make an influence roll in place of a counterattack, leveraging one of the attacker's secrets against him. She steals a point of Initiative from him for each threshold success, maximum (Manipulation).

Ripened Bitter Fruit

Cost: 5m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Salon-Spider Entrapment, Swallowtail's Grace

Secrets poison the heart in which they take root. The wielder whispers one of her opponent's secrets to Calumny, and ferments that secret into a deadly poison through a **decisive** attack. If the wielder's attack deals damage, the poison takes hold with a duration of (5 + damage dealt) rounds. This secret-poison's damage/interval and penalty both correspond to the secret's potency: 1L/round and −1 for inconvenient; 2L/round and −2 for serious; 3L/round and −3 for life-changing.

Characters poisoned by Ripened Bitter Fruit cannot speak above a whisper until free of the poison. Hearts stopped by this secret-poison grow hard and black, like the stone of a fruit.

The secret used to create the venom no longer holds power for Calumny's Evocations. This Evocation may be used once per day, unless reset by discovering a life-changing secret. The Dawn Caste anima cannot reset this Evocation.

Dissonant: A character dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Resonant: Crashed characters suffer the poison's entire remaining duration and lethal damage at once, at the end of the round.

Daring Venture
(Green Jade Powerbow, Artifact •••)

When V'neef was a girl, still considering what manner of life she'd lead, the hills and forests of the Dragon's Blanket offered novelty that her studies couldn't. To her tutors' consternation, V'neef would disappear for days on end, returning from her wanderings soiled, smiling, and animated with some discovery. Her father recognized this curiosity as the seed of wisdom, and commissioned Daring Venture for V'neef's 14th birthday to accompany her in her travels.

In her 17th year, while journeying with Daring Venture, V'neef discovered a great wolf, grown giant through some lost First Age magic, wounded by a hunter's lance. Though it snarled and snapped at her, she calmed it with notes plucked from Daring Venture's bowstring and tended to its wounds, winning the beast's affections. She named the wolf Hundred Rivers, and his legend has been intertwined with Daring Venture's ever since.

Daring Venture is a tall, slender powerbow of opaque emerald jade. Etchings depict scenes of wild splendor — waterfalls, pine forests, sunrises — whose details change to reflect its wielder's recent journeys. Daring Venture yearns to traverse the wilderness, callings its wielder to explore new vistas at the edges of Creation's maps. Its Evocations embolden the wielder with wood's dynamism, rewarding discovery with flowerings of inspiration, and summon Hundred Rivers to its master's aid.

As matriarch of her house, V'neef has little time for the adventures of her youth, though she still enjoys the occasional escapade. She grants Daring Venture to scions with kindred spirits, charging them to go forth and discover House V'neef's shining future.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Medium (+12 DMG, 0VW 4)

Accuracy: Close –1; Short +5; Medium +3; Long +1; Extreme –1

Tags: Lethal, Archery (Long)

Hearthstone slot(s): 1

Era: Reign of the Scarlet Empress

Evocations of Daring Venture

Daring Venture's wielder adds an automatic success on Survival rolls to navigate unfamiliar terrain.

Song of Sunlit Dreams

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

Daring Venture's golden bowstring vibrates with its progenitor's beauty, giving a serene note that soothes wild beasts and calms the wounded. Add (higher of Essence or Occult) bonus dice on a Performance- or Presence-based roll to influence a wild beast, or on a Medicine roll.

Special activation rules: A Dragon-Blooded V'neef scion awakens this Evocation at no cost upon attuning to Daring Venture.

Resonant: A wielder who resonates with jade may use this Evocation reflexively to enhance any action taken by an animal familiar, or to add ([higher of Essence or Occult] / 2, rounded up) to her familiar's Defense, Resolve, or Guile for one instant. This doesn't stack with other effects that add dice or successes to the familiar's roll.

Seeker's Heart Intuition

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Song of Sunlit Dreams

Imbued with the spirit of exploration, Daring Venture probes the wilderness for unfamiliar places of interest and guides its wielder in their direction. If the wielder seeks an unknown location she can name, such as a town or natural feature, Daring Venture provides the wielder with its direction relative to her position. Alternatively, if the wielder seeks novelty from the unknown, Daring Venture points her toward undiscovered or forgotten places of significance or power, such as demesnes or historical ruins. Daring Venture never points the wielder toward locations she's previously visited.

Resonant: Once per week, a wielder who resonates with jade gains one Willpower when she activates this Evocation, which she can only spend on any applicable Ride, Sail, or Survival charm to move in the direction indicated.

Beckon the Wandering Wolf

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Resonant

HUNDRED RIVERS, THE WANDERING WOLF

Hundred Rivers has a Minor Tie of kinship towards his master upon first being summoned. At the end of each session, this Intimacy is strengthened one step if the Storyteller deems he had a positive experience with his master at any point during it. If he had a negative experience he deems his master's fault, the Tie instead weakens by one step, and he flees her side to wander the wilderness. She cannot summon him again with Beckon the Wandering Wolf until a week has passed.

Hundred Rivers, like Daring Venture itself, yearns to explore Creation. He won't enter buildings, and exhibits great discomfort on paved surfaces. He especially loves sweet citrus fruits.

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 8; **Join Battle:** 8 dice

Health Levels: –0/–1x6/–2x6/–4/Incap.

Speed Bonus: +4. Hundred Rivers consents to carry riders toward whom he has a Major Tie.

Actions: Feats of Strength: 8 dice (may attempt Strength 7 feats); Resist Poison/Illness: 8 dice; Senses: 10 dice; Stealth: 8 dice; Threaten: 8 dice; Tracking: 10 dice

Appearance 3, Resolve 5, Guile 2

COMBAT

Attack (Bite): 10 dice (Damage 17)

Attack (Grapple): 10 dice (12 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 5 dice

Evasion 4, Parry 3

Soak/Hardness: 10/2

Hundred Rivers may be trained in any of the latent or magic special attacks or merits of a wolf (**Exalted**, p. 562).

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Harry: If Hundred Rivers moves into close range of an enemy and deals 5+ withering damage on the same turn, that enemy cannot disengage on her next turn.

Pack Hunting: Hundred Rivers considers his master and any of her Sworn Kin his pack. When Hundred Rivers attacks, he adds one automatic success for each packmate in close range of his target, maximum three successes.

MERITS

Keen Nose: Hundred Rivers doubles 9s on scent-based Perception rolls.

Marvel of Coat and Claw: Those who see Hundred Rivers' master and her companions in the beast's presence are treated as having a Minor Tie towards her, either positive or negative depending on how they view the legendary wolf. Dynastic youths might marvel at the sight of him, while Thousand Scales bureaucrats might find his presence distasteful.

Wild Guardian: Hundred Rivers grants his master three automatic successes to Survival rolls to track quarry or find food, water, or shelter.

Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Seeker's Heart Intuition

Upon awakening this Evocation, the wielder of Daring Venture gains the legendary wolf Hundred Rivers as her familiar. She may activate it to call the wolf to her current location. No matter how great the distance between them, he'll travel towards her as fast as possible.

Resonant: A Dragon-Blooded wielder always counts Hundred Rivers as one of her Sworn Kin.

Wolf-and-Dragon Bond

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Beckon the Wandering Wolf, Mother-of-Beasts Mastery (x2)

This Evocation upgrades Mother-of-Beasts Mastery (p. 271). When the Dragon-Blood uses it to train Hundred Rivers, the time required is halved, and she waives the experience point cost of awakening his magical abilities. Any experience she's already spent doing so is refunded upon awakening this Evocation.

Special activation rules: This Evocation cannot be purchased with experience points. It awakens at no cost when the wielder risks her life or undergoes great hardship to defend, heal, or otherwise help Hundred Rivers.

Packmate Devotion

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 4
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Resonant
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Wolf-and-Dragon Bond

After bonding over the course of many adventures, Hundred Rivers accepts the wielder as a lifelong packmate. He rejects any influence that would cause him to betray his master or weaken or alter his Tie to her as unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220). He'll only weaken his Tie to his master at the end of the session if she betrays him outright. Hundred Rivers gains two Initiative when he witnesses his master suffer **decisive** damage.

Special activation rules: This Evocation cannot be purchased with experience points. When Hundred Rivers' Tie toward the wielder reaches the Defining level, the wielder awakens this Evocation at no cost.

Faith's Pillar
(White Jade Grand Goremaul, Artifact •••)

Mnemon Beral, son of Mnemon herself, set the house standard for proselytizing across Creation. His journeys led him to every corner of Creation, then to the secretive cities of the inhuman Mountain Folk below its surface. The Jadeborn do not speak of their faith in their few exchanges with the Dynasty, but they speak of Beral with the utmost respect.

Mnemon Beral never returned home. Faith's Pillar did. The Mountain Folk carved it out of respect for Beral's wisdom and courage against the unholy monsters of the depths, and he carried it into battle against those horrors. After he fell in defense of a Mountain Folk city, the Jadeborn entrusted the weapon to his family.

Faith's Pillar is a glittering white jade obelisk representing the Imperial Mountain, with symbols for the four outer Directions on each of its faces. At the end of its long haft, the pommel bears a sign of the Center, just as the mountain's roots reach far below the light of day. Faith's Pillar traditionally serves monks of House Mnemon, consecrated in a Mountain Folk dedication ceremony kept by house savants.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Heavy (+1 ACC, +14 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 5)

Tags: Bashing, Melee, Reaching, Smashing, Two-Handed

Hearthstone slot(s): 1

Era: Reign of the Scarlet Empress

Evocations of Faith's Pillar

Upon attuning to Faith's Pillar, the wielder chooses one of her Principles of religious belief or social order to dedicate the goremaul to, gaining an additional +1 Resolve against influence opposing it. She may change the chosen Principle once per story with a ritual rededication.

Faith Maintains

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: One scene
Prerequisites: None

A life of virtue begins with a foundation of faith. Touching Faith's Pillar to the ground, the wielder consecrates the ground on which she stands. As long as she doesn't move from this point, she adds (Essence + the dedicated Principle) to her natural soak and gains (Essence) Hardness.

Special activation rules: This Evocation awakens at no cost when a Dragon-Blooded Mnemon scion attunes to Faith's Pillar with the proper dedication ritual.

Dragons Provide

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Resonant, Withering-only
Duration: One scene
Prerequisites: Faith Maintains

When the faithful call, the very stones answer. On her turn, the wielder draws Faith's Pillar through earth, loose stones, or even solid rock, compacting them into a boulder to serve as her hammer's head. This boulder adds (lower of Strength or the dedicated Principle) dice of raw damage and +1 Overwhelming on **withering** attacks with Faith's Pillar. Enemies may attempt to destroy the boulder with a difficulty 4 gambit, ending this Evocation.

Resonant: While standing on ground consecrated by Faith Maintains, the wielder's **withering** smash attacks don't cost Initiative.

Orison of Thunder

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Dragons Provide

The Earth Dragon's judgment is abrupt and devastating, brooking no response. The wielder's **decisive** attack channels Earth Essence into an echoing rebuke. On a hit, the attack's target is selectively deafened (**Exalted**, p. 168) for (wielder's Charisma) rounds. He hears only the wielder's voice, and takes a –2 Resolve penalty against her.

The wielder may end Dragons Provide upon landing a **decisive** attack with Orison of Thunder to explosively detonate the boulder-head of Faith's Pillar. This adds up to (lower of Strength or Principle) attack roll threshold successes as dice of damage.

Special activation rules: This Evocation awakens at no cost upon joining battle against a nontrivial foe who has violated the Principle that Faith's Pillar is pledged to.

Foundations of Sand

Cost: 3m, 1i; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Faith Maintains, Dragons Provide

The earth shall not suffer the heretic's tread. When the wielder is attacked from close range by an enemy standing on earth or stone, she may use this Evocation. A successful parry causes her attacker to be sucked into the ground up to the waist, suffering the effects of being prone (**Exalted**, p. 202). He must succeed at a difficulty 2 ([Strength or Dexterity] + Athletics) roll to free himself, which counts as his move action.

The wielder may end Dragons Provide, detonating the boulder-head of Faith's Pillar, upon successfully parrying with Foundations of Sand to instead shatter the surface (earthen or otherwise) on which the attacker stands, creating a hole one range band deep. The attacker falls if he doesn't catch its edge with a reflexive (Dexterity + Athletics) roll with a difficulty of (1 + the number of successes he missed by).

If the attacker has defied Faith's Pillar's dedicated Principle and stands on ground consecrated by Faith Maintains, the difficulty to extricate himself or arrest his fall increases by (Principle – 1).

Iniquity's Reward

Cost: 5m, 1i; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Faith Maintains

Discord and lawlessness encumber the soul. The wielder imposes a penalty of (her Intelligence) on an enemy's roll to disengage.

Resonant: If the wielder stands on ground consecrated by Faith Maintains, the penalized character loses an additional (Principle – 1) Initiative for disengaging.

Pasiap's Gentle Embrace

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Foundations of Sand, Iniquity's Reward

Those who shun the perfected path deserve only the mercy of a proper burial. Immediately after crashing an opponent, the wielder prays for nearby earth and



stone to rise and entomb the fallen, reflexively rolling an unblockable gambit with difficulty 4.

Success seals the opponent in a rocky tomb without light, air, or room to move. Shattering the tomb is a Strength 3 feat of strength, with a difficulty of (the wielder's Essence), or (the wielder's Essence + the dedicated Principle) if that enemy has violated the Principle. Outside of combat, each roll takes 20 seconds to complete, and time is of the essence as the sealed character asphyxiates (**Exalted**, p. 232). Ghosts, demons, and other creatures of darkness suffocate and die within the tomb as if made of flesh and blood, sending ghosts to Lethe and destroying other beings permanently, with the exception of Yozis, Deathlords, and similarly powerful beings. More wholesome spirits reform, if able, sealed within the tomb until freed.

This Evocation may be used once per day, unless reset by instilling a nontrivial opponent with the Principle Faith's Pillar is pledged to at Major Intensity. The Dawn Caste anima power cannot reset this Evocation.

Dissonant: A character dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Resonant: If the wielder slays a spirit with a **decisive** attack, she may use this Evocation to entomb it without rolling a gambit.

Heavenly Typhoon
(Blue Jade Infinite Chakram, Artifact •••)

Many among the Scarlet Dynasty have heard of Heavenly Typhoon, but few know its true story. The common tale in House Ledaal is that the magnificent chakram was forged in a bygone era by an ancient Dragon-Blood who used it to cut down Anathema through the ages. Inspired by a summer gale, the artisan made a weapon to strike down the unjust like a thunderbolt and cut down the wicked as a storm tears down trees and buildings. Heavenly Typhoon's real origin is more complex.

In truth, Heavenly Typhoon dates back to the First Age, when the Lawgiver Sees-in-Shadow forged it for her spymaster (and sometimes lover), the Dragon-Blood Rising Storm. Together they uncovered plots, hunted the corrupt, and slew infernalists and blasphemers. Rising Storm passed her drive for retribution unto her lineage. In the Usurpation, Rising Storm's granddaughter took up Heavenly Typhoon and struck down Sees-in-Shadow, grown wicked in the centuries since Rising Storm's death, at the cost of her life. Over a thousand years later, it would be discovered by a distant descendant and scion of House Ledaal, drawn to the Anathema-slaying weapon by their shared lineage.

Heavenly Typhoon is a blue jade infinite chakram. Orichalcum inlay on its cloudy, marbled surface resembles a jagged bolt of lightning. Viewed from another angle, the pattern looks like bared dragon fangs.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Light (+10 DMG, 3 OVW)

Tags: Lethal, Thrown (Medium), Cutting, Special

Hearthstone slot(s): 1

Era: The Midnight Century

Evocations of Heavenly Typhoon

An Exalt who attunes to Heavenly Typhoon awakens Righteous Enemy-Slaying Strike at no cost.

Righteous Enemy-Slaying Strike

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

The golden etchings upon Heavenly Typhoon glow with righteous fury and snap with lightning. An enemy damaged by a **decisive** attack is *condemned* by the weapon's wrath. Condemnation is permanent unless revoked by Heavenly Typhoon's wielder, although new wielders don't gain the benefit of past wielders' condemnations. Heavenly Typhoon adds (Essence/2, rounded up) **withering** damage and +1 Overwhelming against condemned foes.

Resonant: A character resonant with jade waives this Evocation's cost against creatures of darkness.

Storm-Shield Bulwark

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Seed and Salt Warding

The Exalt draws a line with the keen edge of Heavenly Typhoon and creates a stormy boundary no creature of darkness can cross. This Evocation upgrades Seed and Salt Warding (p. 230). The Dragon-Blood may use it as an Air-aspected Charm to create a line of rippling air pressure that affects condemned characters as well as the undead.

Special activation rules: This Evocation awakens at no cost when a Dragon-Blooded Ledaal scion attunes Heavenly Typhoon.

Demon-Slaying Zealot's Mantra

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Counterattack, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Righteous Enemy-Slaying Strike

When a condemned target attacks the wielder, a ring of ancient script appears in gold around her, driving her attacker to fear and despair. The wielder makes a **withering** counterattack. If it deals more than (her attacker's current temporary Willpower) damage, his Hardness is set to zero against **decisive** attacks with Heavenly Typhoon for the rest of the scene.

This Evocation may only be used once per scene, unless reset by incapacitating a nontrivial condemned enemy.

Searing Wind-Razor Bolt

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Demon-Slaying Zealot's Mantra

Golden lightning trails behind Heavenly Typhoon as the wielder summons a storm to cut down an unjust foe. The wielder makes a **decisive** attack against a condemned enemy with a lower Initiative, adding the difference between their Initiative ratings in bonus dice to the attack and damage rolls, up to a maximum of (higher of Essence or 3).

Resonant: A wielder resonant with jade also knocks her target back one range band if any damage is dealt.

OTHER MAGICAL MATERIALS

While the Realm's artificers sometimes incorporate the other magical materials into jade artifacts, an artifact that is made primarily or entirely from another material is considered second-rate, more suited to an outcaste than a Dynast. Their use is accepted but may occasionally draw disparaging remarks from other Dynasts who've yet to witness their power.

Standing in the Storm's Eye

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Searing Wind-Razor Bolt, Storm-Shield Bulwark

This Evocation permanently upgrades Hundred Devils Whirlwind (p. 231), affecting condemned foes as though they were dematerialized spirits.

Ten Thousand Typhoon Burst

Cost: 5m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Dissonant, Perilous, Resonant, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Searing Wind-Razor Bolt

Heavenly Typhoon roars through the air like a tornado unleashed, splitting into a dozen spiraling afterimages that shower enemies with furious cutting Essence. The wielder rolls a **withering** attack against a condemned target, and also applies her attack roll against every condemned enemy within short range of him. She only rolls damage against the original target; other foes struck lose Initiative equal to the 10s on the damage roll. The wielder cannot gain more than (Essence) total Initiative from the secondary targets.

This Evocation may only be used once per scene, unless reset by incapacitating a nontrivial condemned enemy.

Dissonant: A character dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Resonant: A character resonant with jade gains one Willpower if this Evocation crashes at least one enemy.

Pyre of Legions
(Red Jade Grand Daiklave, Artifact •••)

Cathak Falu was never well-loved by her comrades or her commanders in the house legions. She was an adequate but unexceptional officer, never equaling the martial glory of her fellow Dragon-Blooded no matter how doggedly she practiced weapon drills with her daiklave or memorized strategies from *The Thousand Correct Actions*. Perhaps this could have been forgiven, if not for her lack of social graces, her standoffish demeanor, and her taciturn brooding. She was most comfortable on the battlefield, and spent the rest of her time isolated from the women and men of her legion. Her fellow Dynasts often wondered why she hadn't been married off quietly and never spoken of again, and rarely cared whether or not she was in earshot of their questions.

It was at the Rainbow Scales that Cathak Falu, for once in her life, won the admiration of all in her house. The Dynasty lost a soldier, but the invaders lost a vanguard. House Cathak recovered her blade from the boiling river that had been the Rainbow Scales. Now celebrating the former reject as the pinnacle of soldierly virtue, Cathak elders show the blade called Pyre of Legions to their young heirs in its resting place before Cathak Falu's tomb, her burning handprint still visible upon its hilt.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Heavy (+1 ACC, +14 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 6)

Tags: Lethal, Melee, Reaching, Two-Handed

Hearthstone slot(s): 2

Era: Reign of the Scarlet Empress

Evocations of the Pyre of Legions

Falu's last desperate thoughts were burned into Pyre of Legions when she fell in battle, carved into searing hot jade, and any who wield the blade feel them coursing through their own heart as surely as though they were her own. Its wielder gains a Defining Principle of "I will give anything to protect my comrades" that cannot be weakened or altered so long as she's attuned to the daiklave.

Loyalty-Kindling Warmth

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Dual
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

Pyre of Legions' loyal soul empowers those that stand with their comrades, such that they may face a thousand foes as one. **Withering** attacks against battle groups ignore (Strength) points of soak; **decisive** attacks against them add (Strength) bonus dice on the attack roll.

Special activation rules: This Evocation awakens at no cost when attuned by a Dragon-Blooded Cathak scion.

Resonant: A character resonant with jade may pay an additional two motes to use this Evocation against an individual enemy with lower Initiative.

All-Consuming Guardian Stance

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Perilous, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Loyalty-Kindling Warmth

Flames leap from Pyre of Legions to guard a comrade, burning away volleys of arrows and pushing back errant blades. She takes a defend other action to protect an ally within medium range. Used together with Flame Warden Stance (p. 226), it extends that Charm's range to medium as well.

Resonant: When defending her ward against the attacks of battle groups, the wielder gains +1 Parry.

Army-Routing Aegis

Cost: 3m, 3i, 1ahl; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Resonant
Duration: Until next turn
Prerequisites: All-Consuming Guardian Stance

The passion within Pyre of Legions cannot be contained in the form of a single hero — she's consumed alive, becoming a walking pyre that scorches the earth around her. On her turn, she wreathes herself in a bonfire (difficulty 5, damage 4L/round) that extends out to short range, moving with her. The flames deal her no damage (other than the health level cost). If she activated this Evocation on her previous turn, she waives its mote cost.

Resonant: The bonfire gains +1 difficulty and +2L Damage.

Unstoppable Heart-Stoking Incandescence

Cost: 2i; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous
Duration: One scene
Prerequisites: Army-Routing Aegis

The air around Pyre of Legions shimmers and burns with heroism, encouraging ferocious loyalty in soldiers following that awesome apparition. While the wielder is rolled into combat, the mote cost of her War Charms is reduced by (her wound penalty + 1), to a minimum of one mote. Exalted with non-Ability Charms apply this discount to any Charms that deal with leading battle groups or defeating enemy strategies.

Somber Pyre Conflagration

Cost: 2ahl, 3a; **Mins:** Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Dissonant, Uniform
Duration: One scene
Prerequisites: Army-Routing Aegis

The wielder's anima banner burns away in the crucible of the Pyre, leaving in its place a towering inferno that can be seen for leagues. Battle groups don't add their Size to attack rolls or damage against the wielder, and treat her as a battle group of Size (higher of Essence or Strength) to determine whether they can move past her without disengaging **(Exalted**, p. 209).

She waives the health level cost of Army-Routing Aegis while this Evocation is active.

Special activation rules: As long as the wielder isn't dissonant with jade, this evocation awakens at no cost when she upholds a Major or Defining Tie of loyalty when confronting a significant threat alone.

Ashes Feed the Seeds

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Resonant
Duration: One scene
Prerequisites: Somber Pyre Conflagration

No matter how an inferno scars the countryside, it leaves fertile soil ripe for the future. The Exalt ignores wound penalties, and may spend Willpower in place of health levels for the cost of Pyre of Legions' Evocations. She's treated as having a −4 wound penalty for Unstoppable Heart-Stoking's Incandescence's discount.

This Evocation can only be activated once per story. This may be reset by accomplishing a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134). The Dawn Caste anima can't reset this Evocation.

Special activation rules: This evocation cannot be awakened with experience points. It awakens at no cost if the wielder is reduced to her −4 health level while upholding Pyre of Legions' Intimacy.

Sea's Verdict
(Black Jade Longfang, Artifact •••)

When the wheel-priests of Zumachi made sacrifices to the Vortex of Scales, begging him to wreck an inbound Peleps tribute ship, they assumed they'd won a few months respite. An hour later, the folly of assumptions was laid bare when Peleps Lirel stalked from the waves, dragging their elemental patron's serpentine carcass up the beach.

Sea-soaked and glaring, she recited a list of charges as the three lead priests threw themselves on her mercy, promising the young judge whatever she desired. In reply, she dragged the triumvirate to the secret jade monolith on which they offered their youths, bound them with their silver chains of devotion, and waited for the tide to come in.

The final judgment she returned to House Peleps included "Attempted bribery."

Hewn from the dismantled sacrificial stone, Sea's Verdict is a jet-black trident engraved with argent serpents and capped by moonsilver prongs. In the hands of poets and pirate-hunters it's smashed through the living masts of the Lintha, drowned shining bandit queens in their desert castles, and cast evildoers to distant shores.

To those versed in its use, Sea's Verdict is a reminder that seafaring romance is a pleasant illusion. The trident's spirit remains unstained by those it's condemned, unmoved in its search for justice. Guilty or innocent, its victims are mere crimson drops in the deep black sea within. The sea has only one verdict, which it returns without thought or qualm.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Medium (+3 ACC, +12 DMG, +1 DEF, OVW 4)

Tags: Lethal, Melee, Thrown (Short), Disarming, Piercing

Hearthstone slot(s): 2

Era: Reign of the Scarlet Empress

Evocations of Sea's Verdict

Sea's Verdict has its own anima banner, which grows one level when its wielder spends 5+ peripheral motes on Charms or Evocations enhancing a single attack or parry with it. As the weapon's anima intensifies, its silver engravings writhe and dissolve like broken chains, and the black jade itself begins to expand, crack, rumble, and leak or spray dark water; a dam ready to burst.

With its anima at burning, Sea's Verdict gains the Smashing tag (**Exalted**, p. 586). At bonfire, the Initiative cost of smash attacks is waived.

From the Depths

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Elemental Sheath

Drifting in pelagic shadow, Sea's Verdict remembers its true nature. If the wielder calls the trident forth from a large body of open water, its anima immediately flares up to glowing.

In Water Aura, she can use Sea's Verdict's anima to pay the cost of her own Charms.

Special activation rules: This Evocation awakens at no cost when a Dragon-Blooded Peleps scion attunes to Sea's Verdict.

Kraken's Gavel

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

The crushing weight of the sea whirls between Sea's Verdict's forks, sweeping foes to the depths. This Evocation can only be used while Sea's Verdict's anima is at burning or higher. The wielder makes a **withering** or **decisive** smash attack with no Defense penalty. If it hits a target at close range, all other opponents at close range must roll (Strength + Athletics) at a difficulty of (wielder's Essence + 2) or be knocked back one range band away from the wielder.

Hull-Breaking Tsunami Swipe

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Resonant, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Kraken's Gavel

All castles are built on sand. When attacking, the wielder unleashes a crashing wave of force, reflexively rolling a feat of demolition (**Exalted**, pp. 229) with (Sea's Verdict's anima x2) bonus dice to destroy an object in her opponent's range band that's not being carried. This can reduce cover (including full cover) before the attack is resolved.

Resonant: The wielder adds (Sea's Verdict's anima) to her Strength rating to determine what feats of demolition she may attempt.

Lost Blade Riptide

Cost: 5m, 2i, 1a from Sea's Verdict; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Hull-Breaking Tsunami Swipe

Sea's Verdict's prongs spin and twist, unleashing a whirl of black water that rips weapons away. If an enemy tries to parry a **decisive** attack, the wielder first reflexively rolls a disarm gambit (**Exalted**, p. 200), waiving the Initiative cost. A disarmed enemy can only use his Evasion to defend against her attack.

Dissonant: This Evocation can only be used once per scene.

Awaken the Tide

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: From the Depths, Lost Blade Riptide

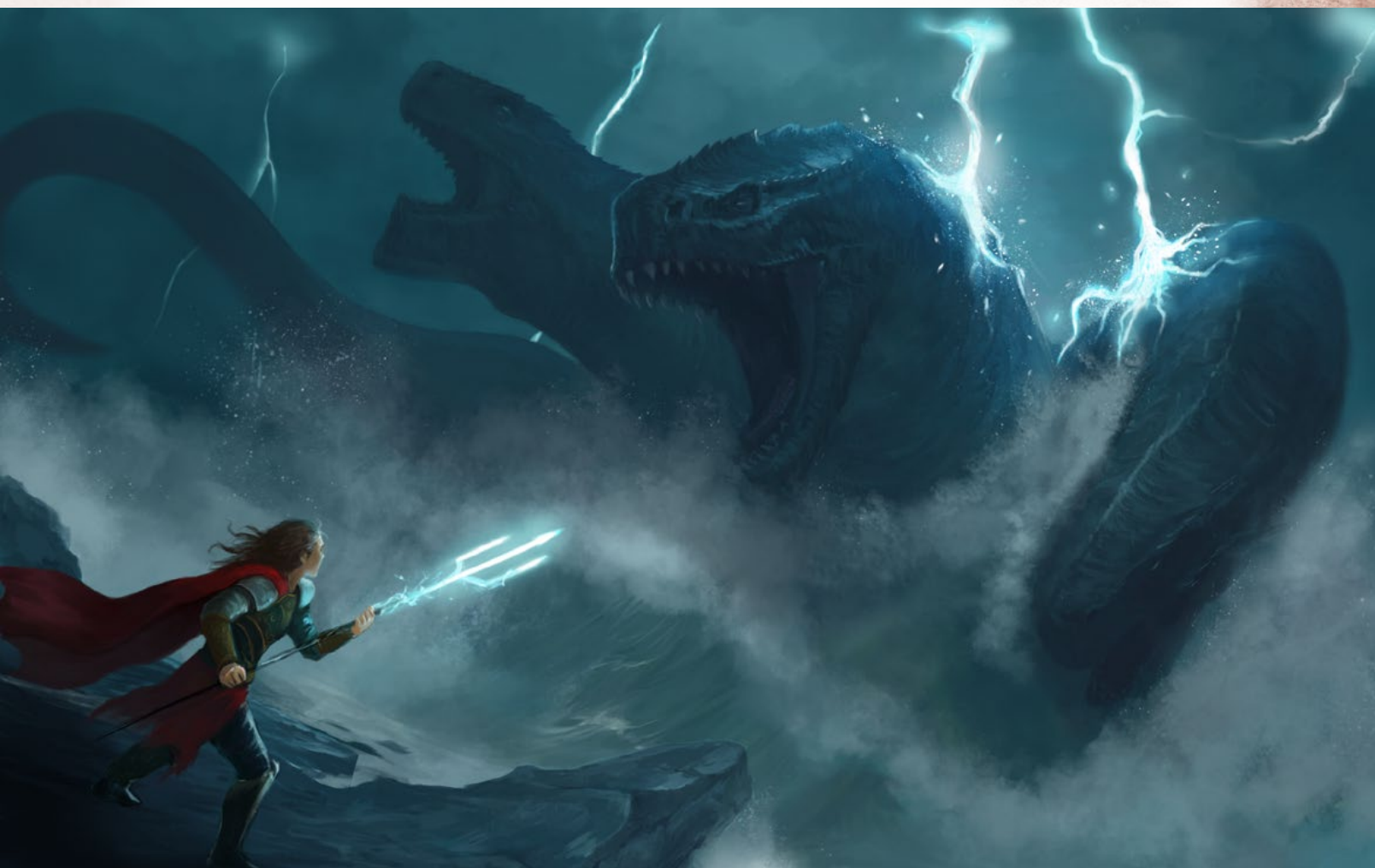
A dark ocean stirs into wakefulness, its waters spilling forth to swirl around the wielder's feet and drag at enemies with unnerving strength. While Sea's Verdict's anima is glowing, enemies within close range of the wielder are slowed as though moving through difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199) if their Initiative is lower than hers. At burning or higher, the whirlpool clutches possessively at fallen foes, applying the difficult terrain penalty on rolls to rise from prone. At bonfire, the penalty rises to −4.

Gaol Without Fathom

Cost: 8m, 1wp, 2a from Sea's Verdict (2i per enemy);
Mins: Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Awaken the Tide

The air flickers with hadal darkness and insurmountable pressure as the wielder slams Sea's Verdict to the ground, fraying the chains on its power. Gaol Without Fathom can only be used while Sea's Verdict's anima is burning or higher. The wielder rolls a **decisive** attack against every opponent at close range, but doesn't roll damage normally. She may pay two Initiative for each enemy hit to knock them prone and grapple them without needing a gambit, pinning them beneath spiritual pressure like that of the ocean depths. This cost is waived against prone enemies.

Each victim rolls for control separately, comparing their results to the wielder's original attack roll. The wielder can only restrain her victims, who are slammed prone and rendered mute, deaf, and blind (**Exalted**, pp. 168) while grappled, as a lightless silence presses against them. While Sea's Verdict is at bonfire, the restrain action costs only one turn of control. The



wielder doesn't lose rounds of control for being attacked or damaged, but a grappled enemy may attempt to struggle free as his action for a round, which can't be placed in a flurry, removing two rounds of control.

Thunder of the Abyss

Cost: —(+1-3a from Sea's Verdict); **Mins:** Essence 4
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Decisive-only
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Gaol Without Fathom

The Sea's Verdict strains under the pressure of its own infamous Gaol, black water spraying from every crack. The released waters unnaturally swirl above the wielder as a great maelstrom that she can collapse into a pelagic hammer blow, dissolving the trident's silver prongs like corks popping from a bottled ocean.

The wielder can end Gaol Without Fathom by inflicting a **decisive** slam attack on every grappled character, dividing her Initiative evenly, rounded up, between every victim. The damage ignores Hardness. She doesn't add bonus damage for remaining turns of control. Instead, she may expend one level of Sea's Verdict's anima for each round she's maintained the clinch, dealing that many levels of bashing damage to each victim. The bodies of those killed by the Thunder of the Abyss vanish, only ever found as water-bloated flotsam on some distant shore.

The Sea's Verdict reforms unscathed after using this Evocation, but its silvery chains wrap with watertight urgency, resetting its anima to dim and preventing it from growing for the rest of the scene.

Smiling Razors
(Red Jade Short Daiklaves, Artifact •••)

Sesus Kalama, the Grinning Wicked Flame, received the Smiling Razors from the Empress for exceptional service in the Immaculate Order. She wielded them in many a Wyld Hunt, stalking Anathema as a flickering shadow and gouging painful burning wounds across their skin before dispatching them.

Kalama loved the violence of the Wyld Hunt, but grew discontent with the life of a monk. She publicly decried the Order, igniting her anima to incinerate her robes and profaning an offering-laden Immaculate altar. She declared herself a force against those who clung too tightly to tradition and order, publicly challenging monks to duels so that she might demonstrate the fallibility of the Immaculate Texts, and seducing Dynasts into apostasy.

There was only one word for what the Grinning Wicked Flame had become — Anathema. A Wyld Hunt was dispatched to hunt down the flame-devil, led by her cousin Sesus Bajo tracking her by the wake of blasphemy and fire she left across the Blessed Isle. Kalama fought fiercely, and maimed many of the shikari sent to kill her, but in the end, she fell. Her death became an object lesson to young Dragon-Blooded on the dangers of heresy, and the specter of the flame-devil lingered as a threat whispered to rebellious adults and disobedient children alike.

Bajo retrieved the Smiling Razors from his cousin's corpse to return them to his house. Though the cruel blades were ill-suited to his temperament, he made a show of wielding them publicly to cleanse the stain of Kalama's blasphemy. Once the house deemed its reputation suitably repaired, the Smiling Razors were turned over to its vaults. House Sesus' Masked Council has chosen subsequent wielders of the Smiling Razors, reforging Grinning Wicked Flame's legacy into a weapon suited to their clandestine purposes.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Light (+5 ACC; +10 DMG; +0 DEF, 4 OVW)

Tags: Lethal, Melee

Hearthstone slot(s): 2

Era: Reign of the Scarlet Empress

Evocations of the Smiling Razors

Surprise attacks made with the Smiling Razors add one die to the attack roll.

Still-Burning Ember Ambush

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute, Perilous, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

Like an ember that burns an unsuspecting hand, the Exalt strikes suddenly from ambush and vanishes as quickly as she came. When she rolls to establish concealment in combat, she doubles 9s.

Special activation rules: This Evocation awakens at no cost when a Dragon-Blooded Sesus scion attunes to the Smiling Razors.

Resonant: If the wielder is resonant with jade, a surprise attack made with the Smiling Razors on the turn after entering concealment with this Evocation adds one automatic success on the damage roll.

Coiling-Smoke-Plume Deception

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: One scene
Prerequisites: Still-Burning Ember Ambush, Vanishing Wind-Body Technique

This Evocation permanently upgrades Vanishing Wind-Body Technique (p. 267). The Dragon-Blood may use it as a Fire Charm to render herself immune to detection via her body heat rather than air movement. Such uses grant their enhanced benefits in Fire Aura instead of Air Aura.

Inviting Fireside Distraction

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: One scene
Prerequisites: Rose-Among-Thorns Distinction, Still-Burning Ember Ambush

This Evocation permanently upgrades Rose-Among-Thorns Distinction (p. 204). The Dragon-Blood may use it as a Fire Charm to gain a specialty in non-criminal organizations that she's targeting for infiltration, theft, assassination, or similar uses of Larceny or Stealth.

Searing Pain Infliction Tactic

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Still-Burning Ember Ambush

The Exalt descends upon her victim with the intent to inflict terrible pain as smoke and coiling flames roll from the Smiling Razors' blades. To use this Evocation, she must be in concealment. She makes a **decisive** attack against an opponent who cannot perceive her. If her attack deals enough damage to increase his wound penalty, he doubles his wound penalty for the rest of the scene, to a maximum of (4 + wielder's Essence).

Resonant: If the wielder resonates with jade, the victim's wound penalties remain doubled until he's healed at least one level of lethal damage.

Soul-Burning Mark

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: Stackable, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Searing Pain Infliction Tactic

The Smiling Razors burn their mark into the flesh of victims with sadistic glee. Their wielder makes a **withering** attack. If it deals more than (5 + number of marks the victim already has) damage, it brands him with a mark that lasts until the scene's end, maximum (Essence + 1) marks. **Decisive** attacks with the Smiling Razors gain one die for each mark the victim has.

Resonant: If the wielder lands an unexpected attack, it automatically marks her victim regardless of how much damage she deals.

Drifting Smoke-Cloud Passage

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Dissonant, Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Inviting Fireside Distraction, Soul-Burning Mark

The wielder of the Smiling Razors transmutes her body into drifting smoke, passing through places where she normally couldn't. She can fit through spaces so tight that only smoke could pass through with a single move action on her turn, and ignores difficult terrain or environmental penalties on the roll. Any tight space she wishes to flow through must be short enough that she could successfully traverse it in a single move action. If she's in concealment, she doesn't need to make another Stealth roll as long as she ends her movement in a location that provides concealment, and she may even rush while in concealment.

This Charm may only be used once per day, unless reset by incapacitating a nontrivial enemy with an unexpected attack.

Special activation rules: This Evocation may not be awoken with experience points. Instead, it awakens at no cost when the wielder kills a nontrivial enemy from ambush.

Dissonant: A character dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Vengeant

(Black Jade Razor Claws, Artifact •••)

Part of it came from Petal Glider, the vain daiklave that defeated the Grass Dancer at the Battle of Three Crossings for the sake of its master's camaraderie with foreign traders. Another came from Crow's Friend, which annihilated the Gutter Water Gang, opening Nexus to Iselsi ambitions. A third piece belonged to Amara, which slit Sesus' cheek in revenge for a night of adulterous beauties now long forgotten. Now all that remains is Vengeant.

Many of House Iselsi's ancestral blades were destroyed by the Scarlet Empress for their foolish attempt to strike at her. She had fragments of each forged into a new weapon to remind the Iselsi of her mercy and of the state she'd forced upon them. The Iselsi took the lesson well. With their old blades they'd fought to create dynasties — with Vengeant, they would end them.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Light (+5 ACC, +10 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 3)

Tags: Lethal, Brawl, Concealable, Worn

Hearthstone slot(s): 2

Era: The Fall of House Iselsi

Evocations of Vengeant

Vengeant remembers those who wronged its former wielders, and delights in the chance to humble their descendants. The wielder may focus Vengeant's spite against a specific individual or group, marking him as *despised*, after one of the following events:

- The wielder reveals her true identity and her enmity to the object of a negative Tie.
- A Dragon-Blooded Iselsi scion discovers how the target or his ancestors have wronged House Iselsi.

Vengeant gains +1 Overwhelming against despised opponents. This effect is indefinite, lasting until the wielder manages to destroy the target or rededicates Vengeant against a new despised individual or group.

Still Waters Hide Fury

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute, Resonant
Duration: One scene
Prerequisites: None

The Great Houses think the Iselsi dead, a mighty river tamed to barely a trickle, but those waters belie the violent currents that hide below the surface. To use this Evocation, the wielder must be in concealment and choose a target that's unaware of her. At the start of each of her turns, the wielder makes an opposed roll of (Manipulation + Stealth) against her target's (Perception + Awareness) roll, gaining (Essence/2, rounded up) Initiative if she wins the opposed roll. Each subsequent round, she incurs a cumulative −1 penalty on the Stealth roll. If she fails the roll, her target detects her, sensing Vengeant's killing intent. This Evocation ends when the wielder is detected by her target or leaves concealment. If she makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy other than her target, the Initiative she gained is lost.

This Evocation can be used once per scene, unless reset by incapacitating a despised opponent or a nontrivial foe who wishes to protect him.

Resonant: As long as the wielder has a Major or Defining Intimacy that would be furthered by killing the target, she may waive this Evocation's Willpower cost.

Ember-Smothering Convolution

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Still Waters Hide Fury

Spurred on to finish the grudge before Vengeant's victim can escape, the wielder adds two bonus dice on a rush against a character she has a negative Tie towards. She gains one Initiative if she wins the rush.

Resonant: The wielder may pay an additional mote to extend this Charm's duration to one scene against a despised opponent, enhancing all rushes she makes against him. She may stack multiple uses against multiple despised foes.

Earth-Eroding Tactic

Cost: 4m, 2i; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Still Waters Hide Fury

Vengeant's patient hatred wears down even the most resilient. To use this Evocation, the wielder must have surveilled him with Still Waters Hide Fury in the same scene. If her **decisive** attack hits him, his total

onslaught penalty doesn't refresh at the start of his turns until he's taken a number of turns equal to the number of turns she spent undetected while using Still Waters Hide Fury, maximum three.

Resonant: Vengeant's **decisive** attacks against a despised opponent suffering from this Evocation ignore Hardness until his onslaught penalty refreshes.

Breath-Denying Vengeance Current

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Earth-Eroding Tactic

The wielder inundates her victim with Vengeant's sluggish, hateful essence, filling his lungs with black bile. This is a gambit whose difficulty is (higher of target's Essence or Stamina). Success causes the victim to begin asphyxiating (**Exalted**, p. 232). He may attempt to clear the obstruction with a (Stamina + Resistance) roll as a miscellaneous action that can't be flurried. A single success is sufficient for that round not to count against the total he can hold his breath, while overcoming a difficulty of (wielder's Essence) purges the obstruction entirely. With a stunt, a character may roll a different dice pool, such as (Wits + Medicine), to clear the obstruction.

Resonant: Against a despised opponent, each threshold success on the gambit's Initiative roll adds one bonus die on her rolls to oppose his disengage actions until he's cleared the obstruction.

Drink the Lesser Seas

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Ember-Smothering Convolution

Vengeant's attack tears away flesh while drinking deeply of the water in its victim's body, leaving nothing but desiccated skin and bone. To use this Evocation, the wielder must be in concealment. She makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy who's unaware of her, adding (Essence) dice of damage and doubling 10s on the damage roll.

This Evocation can only be used once per scene, unless reset by incapacitating a nontrivial despised opponent.

Resonant: Against a despised opponent, the wielder doubles 9 on damage rolls.

Hundred-Generation Forest Desecration

Cost: —(+5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Essence 4
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Dissonant
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Drink the Lesser Seas, Breath-Denying Vengeance Current

Ten thousand gentle crests can leave even the grandest groves of trees stunted and malformed, poisoned from the roots with the sea's saltwater grief. When the wielder uses Still Waters Hide Fury against a despised character with whom she's interacted socially in a previous scene, she may pay five motes and one Willpower to treat each such scene as a turn studying him from concealment, up to a maximum of (Essence) scenes. She makes a single (Manipulation + Stealth) roll against his (Perception + Awareness) for these past interactions, gaining (Essence/2, rounded up) Initiative for each scene on a successful roll. Failure doesn't reveal her presence.

This Evocation can only be used once per story, unless reset by achieving a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) by killing a despised character.

Dissonant: Characters dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Dragon-Shattering Restitution

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant, Psyche
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Hundred-Generation Forest Desecration

In death, the foes of House Iselsi serve as a gruesome warning to their kin that none are safe from the Vendetta. This Evocation can be used when the wielder kills a despised enemy, leaving his remains as reminder to the rest of House Iselsi's enemies that they're next on the list.

Relatives of the victim, including her Sworn Kin, who discover the body must roll (Wits + Integrity) against a difficulty of (victim's Essence + 3). On a failure, they form a Minor Tie of horror towards House Iselsi that cannot be weakened or altered by any means until the story's end. If a target already has a related Intimacy, it's instead strengthened by one step and is likewise protected for the story.

Special activation rules: This Evocation cannot be purchased with experience points. It awakens at no cost and can be used for free when the wielder slays a despised opponent she has a Major or Defining

negative Tie for. Her victim must have been aware of both her presence and her Intimacy for him.

Dissonant: Characters dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Horizon Cleaver
(Blue Jade Grand Grimcleaver, Artifact ••••)

When the Dragon-Blooded and Sidereal Exalted threw down their Solar masters in the Usurpation, the fury of Creation's Chosen stirred the heavens into world-spanning storms, a thunderous reflection of the struggle below. Inspired by strife and storm, the Sidereal mastermind Echo Gyre forged Horizon Cleaver, a titanic battle axe that honors the resplendence of those storms, for Ashen Tiger, her most trusted lieutenant.

A six-foot rod of blue jade forms the grimcleaver's haft, wrapped in braided steel and black rubber. Twin blades resemble reflections of a jagged moon, with inlays of red jade extolling the Usurpation in lyric poetry. Horizon Cleaver hums while resting, and in battle wreathes itself with blue, rapacious lightning. A wielder with sufficient discipline can direct the axe's fury, but one who falters spills the storm and decimates without aim.

Ashen Tiger carried Horizon Cleaver as she led legions against surviving Lunar mates of dead Solars. Her daughter, Song of Ivory, used it to raze an insubordinate city, beginning its long ancestral lineage. It was wielded by one of Tepet's sisters in their ill-fated siege of the Imperial City, and she and the grimcleaver joined House Tepet. Its most recent wielder, the dragonlord Tepet Yasenar, fell during the house's ruinous campaign in the North. Accounts conflict as to the grimcleaver's fate. Some say it sank into the White Sea; others that it answers now to the Bull of the North; and others still that Yasenar's daughter, Tepet Mareja, recovered the axe and gathers strength to reclaim her house's glory.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Heavy (+1 ACC, +14 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 5)

Tags: Lethal, Melee, Chopping, Reaching, Two-Handed

Hearthstone slots: 2

Era: Dawn of the Shogunate

Evocations of Horizon Cleaver

Horizon Cleaver crackles with lightning, adding one die of **withering** or **decisive** damage on chopping attacks. Unattuned characters who draw it from its ebony case become thunderstruck for the remainder of the scene, as per Brilliant Reproach.

Brilliant Reproach

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

Horizon Cleaver's wielder can unleash its lightning — at great collateral risk. She makes a **decisive** attack. If it deals damage, its victim loses (Essence) Initiative, which the wielder doesn't gain, and becomes *thunderstruck* for the scene, suffering a −2 penalty on physical actions.

If the wielder's 1s and 2s on her attack roll exceed (lower of her Integrity or Resistance), she loses control of Horizon Cleaver, and the attack is redirected to a random target within range — including the wielder or her allies.

Special activation rules: A Dragon-Blooded Tepet scion who attunes to Horizon Cleaver awakens this Evocation at no cost.

Resonant: If a character resonant with jade has a Principle that reflects her code of honor, she adds its rating to the total number of 1s and 2s she can roll without losing control of the lightning.

Arcing Death Strike

Cost: —(+2m); **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Resonant
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Brilliant Reproach

The wielder may pay two motes to attack an enemy at short range when she uses Brilliant Reproach. This also increases the range at which it can strike random targets if she fails to control the attack.

Resonant: At Essence 3, a wielder who resonates with jade may extend its range to medium for a four-mote surcharge. At Essence 4, she may pay a four-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to extend its range to long.



On Wings of Deadly Lightning

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Arcing Death Strike

Horizon Cleaver's master becomes one with the lightning. On her turn, she may reflexively rush a thunderstruck character within long range. On a success, she instantly moves to close range with him without having to cross the intervening space. If she attacks him using Brilliant Reproach, she adds an automatic success on the attack roll.

Intemperate Tempest Fusillade

Cost: —(+2m, 1wp); **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Dissonant
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Arcing Death Strike

Lightning rips from Horizon Cleaver, striking in all directions. The wielder may pay two motes and one Willpower when she uses Brilliant Reproach to apply her **decisive** attack roll against up to (Essence) total enemies within range. She divides her Initiative evenly among all hit characters, rounding up, to determine the **decisive** damage rolled against them, ignoring Hardness. If she loses control of the lightning, then it instead strikes (Essence) randomly chosen targets.

Dissonant: A character dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Maelstrom-Taming Warrior's Code

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 4
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Intemperate Tempest Fusillade, On Wings of Deadly Lightning

Horizon Cleaver's lightning submits to the wielder's will. She's mastered its mercurial zeal, gaining the following benefits:

- Horizon Cleaver doubles 10s on **decisive** damage rolls against thunderstruck characters.
- When she incapacitates a nontrivial enemy who's thunderstruck, she adds (Essence) to her base Initiative upon resetting.
- Only 1s on her attack roll count towards losing control of Brilliant Reproach.

Dissonant: A character dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Imprimatur

(White Jade Daiklave, Artifact ••••)

Under the bough of a heavy fruit tree in the final spring of Nellens' life, the Empress bequeathed her consort — a mortal man — the blade that would protect his legacy. Before the jealous proxies of the Empress' daughters and their gossiping servants, she gave him Imprimatur, sheathed in a scabbard of stone from which it couldn't be drawn, bound by a crimson tassel. Inscribed on the blade she left a message she promised that only Nellens' heirs would ever read.

Nellens passed soon after, but despite the Empress' proclamation, no heir of any Great House sired by him ever received the blade. It remained in the Empress' armory until the day she elevated House Nellens. Since then, the blade has become a familiar sight whenever a Nellens Dragon-Blood appears at a heated debate or tense negotiation. For almost a generation, the infamous duelist Nellens Zijiren used it to humiliate his rivals of high social standing, until his recent demise. The sight of Imprimatur has always meant the same thing for those that oppose House Nellens — an upstart who thinks herself their equal, and a weapon that proves it.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Medium (+3 ACC, +12 DMG, +1 DEF, OVW 5)

Tags: Bashing, Melee

Hearthstone slot(s): 2

Era: Reign of the Scarlet Empress

Evocations of Imprimatur

Imprimatur's emblazoned sheath is a seal of the Empress's approval. This is measured by *Renown*, which begins at zero and is increased by Imprimatur's Evocations, up to a maximum of (the wielder's Essence + Charisma). Dragon-Blooded Nellens scions add 1 to Imprimatur's maximum Renown. Renown resets at the end of every scene.

Attuning to Imprimatur awakens As Two Strangers Upon the Road at no cost.

As Two Strangers Upon the Road

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

The wielder draws power from Imprimatur's authority, growing in strength and arrogance with each strike. She adds (Renown/2, rounded up) to a **withering** attack's raw damage. She may forgo gaining up to (higher of Essence or 3) Initiative from the damage roll to gain that much Renown instead.

Sibling-Humbling Placation

Cost: 3m, 2 Renown; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: As Two Strangers Upon the Road

With a flourish, the wielder bats her foe's weapon from his hand with Imprimatur. If her disarm gambit succeeds, she also treats its Initiative roll as either a persuade roll to convince the foe to cease or deescalate hostilities, or as an inspire roll to fill him with shame, embarrassment, or frustration.

Resonant: The wielder's influence roll targets all who witness the disarm gambit, ignoring the penalty for multiple targets.

The Matchmaker's Cockerel Stride

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Sibling-Humbling Placation

The wielder may flurry a supplemented full defense with a disengage roll, and it grants her an additional +1 Parry, which counts as a bonus from Charms. Until her next turn, she gains one Renown whenever she successfully parries an attack.

Resonant: If the wielder flurries a full defense and a disengage and succeeds on the disengage roll, neither action costs Initiative.

Youngest Son's Inheritance

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Dissonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Sibling-Humbling Placation

Imprimatur's keen edge and social license work as one, empowering the wielder to swat aside errant blades and poisonous words with equal ease. The wielder reflexively clashes a **decisive** attack from close range with a disarm gambit, adding (Renown) bonus dice

on the attack roll. Attack roll threshold successes are added to her Initiative roll. This doesn't count as her attack for the round.

Alternatively, the wielder may oppose another character's influence roll with her own (Charisma + Presence) roll, adding (Renown) bonus dice. If successful, the wielder's repartee leaves the target stunned silent. He's unable to attempt another influence roll until he's able to compose himself with a miscellaneous action. She gains one Willpower from her triumph.

This Evocation can only be used once per scene, unless reset by going a round without either being hit by an attack or having one's Resolve beaten.

Dissonant: Characters dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

The Final Words of Queens

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Dissonant
Duration: One scene
Prerequisites: The Matchmaker's Cockerel Stride, Youngest Son's Inheritance

Striding the battlefield and the courts of the Blessed Isle alike with noble bearing, Imprimatur's master awakens the sealed blade. This Evocation can only be activated at Initiative 15+. For the rest of the scene, the Exalt may reflexively spend any amount of Renown to add that many dice to the initiative roll of a **decisive** attack.

Additionally, each time the wielder uses this Evocation, she is given a vision of a unique message etched across the blade in Old Realm, an excerpt of the Empress's words to the proud inheritor. She may choose one of the following messages to gain the benefit of for this Evocation's duration as long as Imprimatur has the requisite amount of Renown.

- **Ambition is a Promise** (Renown 3): After winning a clash with a **decisive** attack, the wielder may expend all Renown and roll that many dice of damage, ignoring Hardness, instead of using her Initiative. This doesn't include her Initiative or reset her to base.

- **Marriage is a Blade** (Renown 5): The wielder may reflexively spend a point of Renown to share Imprimatur's power with an ally, letting him use all its Evocations whose Essence minimums he meets, other than this one, with one weapon of his choice until the scene ends. She pays any Renown costs, and any Renown he'd gain is instead granted to her.

- **A Dragon is Born** (Renown 7): The wielder may make a special disarm gambit that resets an Exalt's anima banner to dim or cancels a Dragon-Blood's Elemental Aura. The wielder may choose to add the stolen levels of anima to her own banner or enter the stolen Aura.

Upon awakening this Evocation, the Storyteller and the wielder's player may work together to create a new unique message discovered by the wielder with benefits comparable to the above options.

The Final Words of Queens can only be used once per story, unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Tie to one's family, be they by blood or by adoption, by accomplishing a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170). The Dawn Caste anima power cannot reset this Evocation.

Dissonant: A character dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Perdurant Vault
(White Jade Thunderbolt Shield, Artifact ••••)

Perdurant Vault — a reflective disc of milk-white jade — emerged from the workshop of the occultist Ragara Lasime during his family's solidification as "the Imperial Bank." Among the innumerable deals House Ragara struck during that climb, Lasime sojourned to the Underworld to treat with the ghost-queen Hymn of Shackles, whose consortium once monopolized earthly goods passing through Stygia. No one knows what Lasime offered, but the fruits of his workshop display what he gained.

Four feet in diameter and strung with an obsidian chain, this ornate aegis complements high-society fashion, offering Evocations that shield the wielder from Dynastic intrigue. Its polished surface occasionally reflects glimpses of an ethereal city, a secret world hidden within its depths. Perdurant Vault has been wielded by bureaucrats, sorcerers, and politicians of House Ragara, and seen use in occult experiments conducted by the house's inner circle. It's often entrusted to scions carrying out important matters for the house that require the utmost discretion and incorruptible will.

Attunement: 5m; Type: Medium (+3 ACC, +10 DMG, +1 DEF, OVW 4)

Tags: Bashing, Melee, Shield

Hearthstone slot(s): 1

Era: Reign of the Scarlet Empress

Evocations of Perdurant Vault

Perdurant Vault's wielder adds one bonus die on Appearance-based rolls.

Clairvoyant Mirror Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

Perdurant Vault's gleaming surface reflects the hearts of those who engage with its wielder, providing her with secret insight. When the wielder resists an instill action, she makes a reflexive read intentions roll against the influencing character, doubling 9s. Success reveals that character's Intimacy most relevant to his attempted influence. For instance, if a House Cynis blackmailer failed to persuade the wielder to aid in a conspiracy, Perdurant Vault might reveal the Cynis' Major Tie of hatred for House Cathak that motivates the conspiracy.

Special activation rules: This Evocation awakens at no cost when attuned by a Dragon-Blooded Ragara scion.

Unblemished Petal Prana

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: None

Perdurant Vault's elegance bolsters its wielder against defilement by pestilence and poison. Its wielder adds a non-Charm success on a roll against the virulence or morbidity of a disease, or to resist a poison. Using this Evocation against poisons also reduces their penalty by one.

Subliminal Sanctuary

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute, Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Clairvoyant Mirror Technique

Perdurant Vault shelters the wielder's psyche behind an ephemeral spiritual wall. The wielder gains +2 Resolve against an influence roll, or negates the Guile penalty for being unaware of an observer on a single roll.

Resonant: Each time a character resonant with jade uses this Evocation, the cost of subsequent activations in the same scene is cumulatively discounted by one mote, to a minimum of zero.

Protect the Empress

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Resonant
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Subliminal Sanctuary

In moments of vulnerability, Perdurant Vault conceals its wielder's deepest beliefs from all prying minds — including her own. When a character penetrates the wielder's Guile with a read intentions action, she may use this Evocation before any information is revealed to seal away one of her Major or Defining Intimacies inside the City of Opal Unstained, a dream-realm within Perdurant Vault. That Intimacy is sealed away for (Willpower) days, during which it has no effect on the wielder.

Hidden Intimacies manifest in the City of Opal Unstained as spirits of appropriate nature whose strength is based on their intensity: Minor Intimacies yield spirits only as strong as weak gods or First Circle Demons, while a Defining Intimacy's spirit is comparable to a notable terrestrial god or Second Circle Demon. A Principle of faith in the Immaculate Philosophy might manifest as a pious, ceremonially robed monk, whereas the Principle of "Creation must burn" might appear as a raging fire elemental. If the wielder enters the dream-realm via Traverse the Secret City, she can interact with her Intimacies, potentially learning some insight or nuance about her belief or destroying a spirit to remove the Intimacy entirely.

This Evocation can only be used once per story, unless reset by successfully preventing the discovery of a Defining Intimacy whose revelation would have significant consequences for the wielder.

Resonant: A wielder who resonates with jade can activate this Evocation as if it were Simple, manifesting an Intimacy in the dream-realm at will rather than in response to social influence. Such uses don't require this Evocation to be reset.

Banish the Afflictions

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Dissonant
Duration: One day
Prerequisites: Protect the Empress, Unblemished Petal Prana

Perdurant Vault's wielder may retreat to a place of serenity and meditate over the shield, banishing a disease or poison from her body into the artifact's dream-realm. After a full day of meditation, the wielder rolls (Stamina + Resistance), rerolling (Essence) failures. Against disease, she rolls against its morbidity, reducing its intensity by one step on a success or purging it entirely if it's Minor. Against poison, each success reduces its remaining duration by one interval.

When the wielder completely purges a disease or poison using this Evocation, that affliction manifests as a spirit in the City of Opal Unstained, as per Protect the Empress. Such spirits linger for a number of weeks equal to (their Essence), attacking visitors to the dream-realm or attempting to corrupt them when encountered. Destroying them allows the wielder to add (Essence) bonus dice to her (Stamina + Resistance) rolls to resist that disease or poison for as long as she remains attuned to Perdurant Vault.

This Evocation may only be used once per week.

Dissonant: A character dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Traverse the Secret City

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4
Type: Simple
Keywords: Dissonant, Resonant
Duration: (Essence + Integrity) days
Prerequisites: Banish the Afflictions

A wielder who masters Perdurant Vault gains access to its secret depths: the City of Opal Unstained, a dream-realm of timeless purity. The city contains an urban landscape of white marble, alabaster, and jet — a jewel-box of domed villas, near-vertical amphitheaters, filigreed cupolas, and hidden courtyard fountains. It serves as private retreat and storage space, offering many halls and daises for meditation, as well as alcoves and pedestals for the wielder's panoply. She also might encounter here any Intimacies, diseases, or poisons she manifested as spirits via Protect the Empress or Banish the Afflictions.

When the wielder activates this Evocation, her body leaves Creation and manifests within the City. Any belongings she wears or carries accompany her, including Perdurant Vault itself. At the Storyteller's discretion, the City of Opal Unstained may contain artifacts or legacies of narrative significance hidden somewhere throughout its spires and corridors that once belonged to the shield's former wielders, whose locations might be bargained from its resident spirits.

Any changes visitors make to the City disappear as soon as all visitors leave. (Spirits count as visitors and prevent this reset, until the City dissolves them.) The City is secure against mundane intrusion, but can be entered for this Evocation's duration as though it were a spirit sanctum by dematerialized characters or characters using sanctum-opening magic to pursue the wielder and her companions at the spot where they entered. When the wielder wishes to depart, she and her companions reappear instantly at the same spot where they entered.

Special activation rules: This Evocation cannot be purchased with experience points. It awakens at no cost when the wielder achieves a major character or story goal (**Exalted**, p. 170) despite the efforts of her enemies to influence her, impede her with poison or disease, or set similar narrative obstacles in her path.

Dissonant: A character dissonant with jade cannot awaken this Evocation.

Resonant: A character resonant with jade can bring other willing characters within close range into the dream-realm with her.

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"…numbering at least four, my lady." The young minister was bold — perhaps too bold for a mortal.

"Four." River winced internally. Four Anathema on the loose, on the Blessed Isle itself. "And that is a minimum, is it? What is the highest possible?"

"Well, my lady, we can be fairly confident the number is no higher than eleven, after checking the records." The rice-paper sheets in the youngster's hands rustled gently as he leafed through them, speaking absent-mindedly as he did. "The documents found on the site of the breach detailed approximately seven times that number throughout the history of the Realm, but the majority of ledger entries show the Anathemas' death in various manners."

"I see. Thank you. That, though, still leaves the question — why bring this to me?"

"A courtesy, my lady, from my superior." Presumably that would be River's cousin Ledaal Idisa. The boy had the Ledaal eyes. But Idisa had never favored River much — this was uncharacteristic of her. River thoughtfully thumbed the end of her braid. The boy paused to read something on the papers, and then said, "She thought my lady ought to know, and besides… ah, yes, here it is. It would be pleasing if my lady would take a look at this." He handed over a page.

River took it, concerned, and started reading. The boy spoke again, "Ah, very good… my lady might wish to focus her attention upon the second line below the crease, if it pleases her."

•••••

"Are you sure?" Jihe's voice was calm, as usual. Her sheer, unflappable stoicism had been one of the first things that drew River's eyes; she'd never regretted leaving the Immaculate Order or going against her family's wishes to be with her wife. They had talked about what happened fifty years ago, of course. The death of three fellow shikari wasn't the sort of thing for which River could truly forgive herself.

"I sent someone to verify. All the facts are consistent with the magistrate's report. He's free." It had been half a day at least, and the cold, dark lump in River's belly had not loosened in the least. "I cannot sit idly by, Jihe. We should never have taken this creature alive. We should have killed him. I should have killed him. They deserved that much."

"So you feel responsible for his — Adan!" The conversation was interrupted by a small child dashing into the room. "Young man, I have told you not to interrupt when Dragon-Blooded are talking, especially not your parents!" The boy froze, scared.

A flustered young man came jogging in after the youngster. "I am so sorry, mistress Ledaal, I swear it will not happen again!" He took the young child's arm, and hustled on out.

Jihe muttered darkly, "I swear, that boy will never turn out well. We must have the tutor flogged." River nodded, and her wife continued. "You performed your duties impeccably, River. I will not dishonor you by failing mine. And right now, it is my duty to tell you that your guilt is misplaced."

River nodded, only paying half a mind to words. The sight of the child only strengthened the pit in her belly, now made of ice-cold iron. Her old Anathema nemesis had taken three sword-sisters from her. If he were to….

"You're in danger, Jihe. Take Adan and go into hiding."

"And you, my love?" Jihe's concern seeped through her normally impeccable poise.

River drew a deep breath. "I'm going to see Eshuvar. I think it's time the Hearth reunited."



Chapter Ten

Princes of the Earth

Thousands of Dragon-Blooded champions can be found across Creation, ranging from princes and ministers to monks and rogues. The following quick characters can be used both to represent specific characters and as guidelines for others. Some are movers and shakers in the Realm; others are travelers who might enter a story for many purposes.

Might of the Dragon-Blooded

The powers listed in each of these Quick Character stat blocks are meant only as a sampling of their most iconic powers, not a complete list. Storytellers should feel free to customize them by adding Charms, Evocations, or spells as they see fit.

Amon Mora

Amon Mora is among the most important patricians in the Realm. As Keeper of the First Imperial Seal, he was trusted by the Empress to oversee the Imperial Palace's day-to-day functioning. Under his management, Palace staff are seen as among the most efficient, least corruptible servants and bureaucrats in the Realm, even as the Great Houses descend into chaos. Entering or leaving the city-sized Palace — or removing the treasures, documents, and artifacts stored therein — is nigh-impossible without approval from Mora or his deputies.



Mora's appointment was preceded by a long, upstanding history in the Stewards of Imperial Assets. He began his career tainted by his family name; his parents were the last generation of a once-powerful Shogunate gens whose privileges and holdings were being swallowed up by the Empress and her new Great Houses. Their only Exalted child, Mora refused to join the Great Houses through marriage or adoption, and though never explicitly seditious, maintained vocal pride in his family's heritage. Persistent, rigid adherence to bureaucratic rules eventually earned his colleagues' trust, and he eschewed backroom deals for advancement in favor of honest work. The Empress took note, and saw use for him.

Mora never produced Exalted children, and his only marriage was centuries ago. Belonging neither to a Great House nor to the influential patrician families dominating the Imperial Service, he's cultivated a reputation for impartiality. In a nation mired in familial politics, Amon Mora is a rare Prince of the Earth without close relatives to sway his opinions. He guards this reputation fiercely, and is careful about showing favoritism towards friends and protégés, or even his few remaining Amon cousins. He only steps in to find a mentor or teacher for a suitable young relative, someone who'll drill them hard but reward capability.

Old friends hope Mora will back a candidate for the throne who'll grant the patrician families power at the Great Houses' expense, playing to his old frustration with the Great Houses who lessened his family name and his continued disgust for Dynastic corruption and excess. He listens and is tempted, but has yet to be convinced.

Despite the Realm's many failings, Mora held the Empress herself in the highest esteem. From the ashes of the Shogunate, she built an empire that held half the world together. Mora is hidebound, but no fool: He's seen how the world has changed and knows the Realm cannot simply pick up where it left off, but despises the thought of alterations to his precious system. Every candidate for the throne is either too reckless or too mired by tradition, and he despises both in equal measure. He cedes as little control over the Palace as he can, and does nothing to legitimize the pretensions of any would-be Empress.

Mora could never be mistaken for young, though even with his cane and bent back he towers over many younger Terrestrials. He dresses plainly for his station, as if to contrast with his colleagues' gaudy displays, and keeps his white hair long, tied back in a style passé a century ago. More than one young Dynast on her first trip to the Palace has mistaken him for a well-appointed servant.

Day-to-day execution of his orders falls to numerous deputies and protégés. Mora doesn't like drawing attention to himself; he prefers to act unseen and unnoticed, when acting in person at all. Only a few situations demand his personal attention, such as the legal requirement for him to lead the Imperial Force — the elite law-enforcement unit empowered to bring Dragon-Blooded before the Imperial courts — if it must perform its duties in the Palace.

To the frustration of those who'd buy his favor through vice, Mora is disinterested in career advancement, satisfied regarding money, and thoroughly asexual. He's also reaching the end of his lifespan, and fears that his efforts in rooting out corruption within the Imperial Service will die with him.

Aspect: Air

Essence: 4; **Willpower:** 8; **Join Battle:** 6 dice (+2 for 2m)

Personal: 15; **Peripheral:** 39

Health Levels: –0/–1x2/–2x2/–4/Incap.

Actions: Administration: 11 dice (+3 successes for 6m); Code-breaking: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Read Intentions: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Senses: 7 dice (+2 for 2m); Social Influence: 10 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Stealth: 9 dice (+4 for 4m);

Appearance 3, Resolve 4 (+2 for 4m), Guile 5 (+2 for 4m)

COMBAT

Attack (Elemental bolt): 11 dice at short range (4m per attack, +4 for 4m; Damage 14L/5, ignores 4 points of soak from metal or artifact armor)

Attack (Unarmed): 10 dice (+2 for 2m, Damage 8B)

Attack (Grapple): 6 dice (+2 for 2m; 4 dice to control, +2 for 2m)

Combat Movement: 8 dice (+4 for 4m)

Evasion: 4 (+2 for 4m); Parry 2 (+1 for 2m)

Soak/Hardness: 2/0

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: Law and order must be maintained.

Defining Tie: The Scarlet Empress (Admiring Loyalty)

Major Principle: The Imperial Service is the backbone of the Realm.

Major Principle: Bureaucratic corruption is a mark of poor moral character.

Major Principle: The Realm needs change to survive.

Major Tie: Old friends in the ministries (Trusting Loyalty)

Minor Tie: Dynasts (Distaste)

Minor Tie: Protégés and former protégés (Benevolence)

ESCORT

Mora is usually accompanied by Imperial Palace guards. Use Legion of Silence Quick Characters from **The Realm**, or elite troops (**Exalted**, p. 497). He may also be accompanied by Dragon-Blooded protégés or underlings.

THE FIRST IMPERIAL SEAL (ARTIFACT ••••)

In addition to officially sealing important documents in the Empress' name, the Seal is the key to the Imperial Palace. Mora or an appointed underling (her palm blazoned with luminous scarlet by the Seal for one

committed mote) must officially welcome all visitors to the Palace, or they're marked and targeted as intruders by its many sorcerous defenses; several junior ministers are thus blazoned to handle Palace traffic. He may also revoke this welcome at any time. A few rooms of the Palace can only be opened by wielding the Seal as a more literal key, though the inconvenience of dragging the aging Keeper away from his business elsewhere means most are rarely accessed.

The Empress never needed the Seal to control every facet of the Palace, and those who share her blood are welcomed by it automatically and irrevocably. She extended this immunity to other agents during her time on the throne, and it hasn't been rescinded in her absence.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Ascendant Ideal Inspiration (6m, 1wp; Simple; Indefinite; Air): Mora dedicates himself to a Defining Principle. Influence to weaken it must be rolled twice, using the lower result. Double 9s on influence rolls to instill the Principle in others or persuade them to act on it.

Clear-Eyed Courtier's Scrutiny (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Air, Mute): Roll Read Intentions with double 9s against all characters in a scene. Once per day.

Puissant Precursor's Monologue (6m, 1wp, expend Air Aura; Simple; Instant, Aura, Air): Roll social influence with double 7s to persuade targets to take action that upholds one of Mora's Defining Intimacies. Resisting costs an additional Willpower for targets that share the Intimacy. Once per story.

Thundering Dragon Proclamation (10m, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Air): Mora can be heard out to extreme range, doubling 9s and ignoring environmental or distance-based penalties on inspire and threaten rolls, but unable to use other influence unless he lowers his voice. Once per day.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Bestow the Saffron Mantle (5m, 1wp; Simple; Indefinite; Water): Subordinate with a positive Major/Defining Tie toward Mora gains a Bureaucracy specialty in following his orders. She gains +1 Resolve against influence opposing that Tie, and it can't be fully eroded. Once per day, she may ignore Willpower cost of resisting influence opposing that Tie.

EVOCATIONS

Keeper of the Eternal Dynasty (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; One scene): Within the Imperial Palace, Mora gains +1 Defense, +15 soak, and Hardness 10 against attacks by enemies marked as intruders. He also gains +1 Resolve and Guile against them, and is immune to any Psyche effects they use.

Berit

There is no House Berit.

It's not a matter of "...yet," nor is it the tale of a house that fell into obscurity. Berit is a daughter of the Scarlet Empress, alive and well. She's a decorated general of the Imperial legions. Once, she rivaled even the great Cathak for acclaim on the battlefield.

Berit has become, for many Dynasts, a cautionary tale of achieving *too much.*

Berit's reputation was sterling. She had her troops' respect and her colleagues' admiration. The Realm's enemies were rightfully afraid when they saw her mon on the approaching army's banners. And, for many years, the Empress herself expressed her confidence in Berit's command.

As word of Berit's tactical brilliance spread, and as more and more troops aspired to one day serve under her leadership, Berit let it be known she desired — and deserved — her own Great House. The Empress left this petition ungranted, to Berit's ever-increasing frustration.

For nearly a decade, the Lunar Anathema Evisa Drinks-the-Sky harried satrapies at the edges of her territory. Efforts to draw her and her cohort out failed; thousands of soldiers sent into the forests to hunt them never came back.

Then Berit led a legion into Evisa's dominion. Villages who'd sheltered the Anathema were persuaded to give up information or face the sword. When the Lunar and her forces attacked, Berit and Evisa clashed. The Water Aspect slew the Lunar single-handedly.

The Empress acknowledged the victory, celebrating Berit and her troops as befit their accomplishments. Parades were thrown in their honor. Officers and their families received generous gifts and writs of recognition. Yet the Empress still neglected to name Berit matriarch of her own Great House.

Berit voiced her unhappiness. The two quarreled bitterly, first in letters, then in person. Any witnesses to their last argument are long dead, but in its wake, Berit removed herself to the island of Iora, capital of rustic



Wading Crane Rookery Prefecture, where she's dwelt ever since. Her exile is widely regarded as self-imposed. Though the Empress never reconciled with her daughter, neither did she send assassins against her.

Berit occupies the House of the Rusted Sword, a cliffside manse overlooking Iora city. She very rarely leaves its confines — many Iorans go their entire lives without ever seeing her. She has a few friends in the city whom she'll visit once in a great while; the occasional scholarly pursuit will also lure her out of the manse for short periods. Otherwise, the only way to see Berit is to make the treacherous climb to the House.

Those who disappear on the island are considered "taken by Berit" by the locals, though what purpose she'd be taking people *for* is unknown. Perhaps she takes them as slaves or lovers, or uses their blood in sorcery. Perhaps she leads them into the manse's depths to feed some devil trapped within, or calls on the wind and waves to sweep travelers off the cliffs before they've made the ascent.

Now that the Empress is missing, Berit's star is rising again. There's been a significant uptick in the number of ships sailing into port bearing the mons of Great Houses, and more than a handful of majestic ships flying no flags, but clearly carrying people of great import. All aim to win Berit's favor, gather her wisdom, and possibly bring her to side with their cause and serve as a general to their favorite for the throne.

Berit hasn't forgotten her own ambitions. If a faction with a sizable army were to back her, she'd be a willing contender for the throne herself.

Berit looks just past middle age, with twists of gray winding through her blue-black hair. She speaks and carries herself as though still in charge of a legion, the military bearing something she never lost despite over a century in exile.

Dynasts who come seeking her help find Berit formidable. She makes no promises, but listens coolly and intently to her visitors and asks pertinent questions.

Aspect: Water

Essence: 5; **Willpower:** 8; **Join Battle:** 9 dice (+4 for 4m)

Personal: 16, **Peripheral:** 32

Health Levels: −0/−1x7/−2x7/−4/Incap

Actions: Command Soldiers: 9 dice (+4 for 4m); Dynastic Education: 9 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Feats of Strength: 6 dice (+1 success for 2m, may attempt Strength 3 feats); Read Intentions: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Resist Poison/Disease: 6 dice (+1 success for 2m); Senses: 10 dice (+4 for 4m); Social Influence: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Sorcery: 8 dice (+4 for 4m); Strategy: 10 dice (+5 for 5m)

Appearance 3, Resolve 4 (+2 for 4m), Guile 4 (+1 for 2m)

COMBAT

Attack (Black Vein's Compass, jade daiklave): 13 dice (+6 for 6m, Damage 16L/5)

Combat Movement: 9 dice (+2 successes for 4m)

Evasion 2 (+2 for 4m), Parry 6 (+3 for 6m)

Soak/Hardness: 14/10 (Maelstrom, jade articulated plate)

INTIMACIES:

Defining Principle: The Realm is my home. I am still loyal to it, even if it isn't always loyal to me.

Defining Tie: Herself (Pride)

Major Principle: Hard work is *not* its own reward; my efforts deserved better recognition.

Major Principle: Mastering the enemy general is no challenge compared to mastering oneself.

Major Tie: The Scarlet Empress (Feelings of Betrayal)

Minor Principle: The battlefield is where I belong.

Minor Principle: I have done much for the Dynasts. Now what can they do for me?

Minor Tie: V'neef (Jealous Resentment)

ESCORT

The House of the Rusted Sword contains dozens of household guards trained to the level of elite troops (**Exalted**, p. 497), which form a Size 2 battle group with elite Drill. It's also home to Berit's former lieutenant, the outcaste Riven Dusk (use the traits for an experienced Dragon-Blood, **Exalted** p. 544). Berit may also be accompanied by any number of bound elementals.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Crimson Fang Bite (3m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Dual, Fire): Add +5 **withering** damage or double four 10s on **decisive** damage.

Harnessed Firestorm Assault (10m, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; Simple; Instant; Aura, Decisive-only, Fire): Make three **decisive** attacks, each with (Initiative/2, rounded up) damage. Crimson Fang Bite's cost need only be paid once to apply to all. Once per scene.

Roaring River Slash (5m, 1wp, expend Water Aura; Simple; Instant; Aura, Decisive-only, Water): Make a **decisive** attack, roll damage twice and add together. Once per scene, unless reset by going one round without attacking or being attacked.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Fighting-the-Tide Gemstone (Hearthstone): The first time Berit parries an attack in a round, she takes no onslaught penalty from it.

Graceful Flowing Defense (2m, 1i; Reflexive; Instant; Perilous, Uniform; Water): Ignore one point of penalty to Parry (five points in Water Aura).

Mirror-on-Water Focus (7m, 1w; Simple; Aura-length; Aura, Counterattack, Decisive-only, Mute, Perilous): Must be at dim anima to use; Charm ends when anima reaches glowing or higher. When enemy attacks, may end Charm to make a **decisive** counterattack before his attack roll, using (his Initiative/2, rounded up) for damage. Each level of damage strips one Initiative from his attack, in addition to dealing damage. Doesn't include her Initiative or reset her to base. Counts as her attack for the round. Once per scene.

Portentous Comet Deflection (3m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Clash, Decisive-only, Fire): Clash with a **decisive** attack. Counts as her combat action for the round unless she expends her Fire Aura.

Ripples-on-Water Defense (4m; Reflexive; Instant; Aura, Dual, Water): Up to three 1s on a **withering** damage roll subtract successes; up to three 1s on a **decisive** damage roll reroll successful dice.

WAR CHARMS

Fog-of-War Misdirection (6m, 1wp; Simple; Until stratagem is completed; Mute, Water): Roll strategy against opposing general. Winning with 3+ threshold successes shrouds battlefield in mist, imposing −2 penalty on vision-based rolls and attacks from medium range or beyond. Enemy battle groups take −1 rolls to resist rout, and commanders must pay one Initiative to target them with command actions. If an enemy group is routed, Berit gains its (Size/2, rounded up) Initiative, maximum 5 per round. Once per story.

Hidden Thorn Treachery (5m, 1wp; Simple; Until stratagem is completed; Wood): Roll strategy against opposing general. Winning with 3+ successes lets Berit reveal a traitor in his ranks once fight begins, automatically routing a battle group. If opposing general can successfully rally, he preserves one dot of Size per two successes, with the rest switching sides to fight for Berit. If not rallied, entire battle group switches sides on next turn.

Roaring Dragon Officer (3m; Reflexive; One turn; Balanced, Earth): Flurry a command with a non-attack action. In Earth Aura, lower penalty on rolls to −2, and negate Defense penalty.

SORCERY

Shaping Ritual: When shaping a spell in a manse, gains one additional sorcerous mote per round. Once per story, can drain her Fighting-the-Tide Gemstone for ten sorcerous motes that last until the story's end, but losing its benefit until the story ends.

Beckoning That Which Stirs the Sky (Ritual, 2wp; [1 + threshold successes] hours): Roll sorcery to alter the weather, with difficulty based on degree of change and climate. Altered weather extends out to (5 + threshold successes) miles.

Sculpted Seafoam Eidolon (10sm, 2wp): Roll sorcery to create a convincing illusion of a person, an animal no larger than a horse, or an object no larger than a wagon. Characters within short range can roll (Perception + Awareness) against her roll to see through the illusion (+3 dice if they touch it), or roll (Perception + Socialize) against her roll if speaking with the illusion.

Silent Words of Dreams and Nightmares (Ritual, 1wp; One dream; Control spell): Roll social influence to instill, persuade, or inspire a character through a sorcerous dream the next time he sleeps. His Intimacies don't modify his Resolve, and he can't spend Willpower to resist unless the influence opposes an Intimacy.

Summon Elemental (Ritual, 2wp; Instant): Summon an Essence 1-3 elemental in a four-hour ritual, rolling sorcery against its Resolve to bind it.

Cathak Cainan

Handpicked by the house founder as head of House Cathak, Cainan is well over three centuries old. Today, he barely recalls his youth. Training to join the legions, he Exalted feuding with his bullying eldest brother, scarring him forever. Fearful and guilty over losing control, Cainan turned to the strictures of the Cloister of Wisdom. Having spent years learning to control his body in combat, in the Cloister he learned to control his mind and emotions, to better and more safely serve with his peers. Returning to the legions, he continued to grow in skill and power, until his devotion and temperament led to his being named Cathak's successor.

Cainan takes his role as head of House Cathak with the utmost gravity, knowing his house's power to influence the rest of the Realm. While preserving Cathak's legacy, he also seeks to maintain and stabilize the Realm, despite it slowly crumbling around its occupants. He's willing to work with other houses to achieve his goals — suppressing satrapial rebellions against the Realm, strengthening the Wyld Hunt to destroy the Anathema, securing Cathak's position against its rivals should civil war come — so long as any alliances or deals don't besmirch Cathak's honorable name. In everything he does, he strives to uphold House Cathak's values and honor, steadfastly determined to maintain his founder's legacy.



Given his advanced age, Cainan doesn't aspire to Imperial power — to die on the throne before securing the Realm's stability would only prolong the Realm's suffering. But he understands that if the Realm is to persist, it needs a leader in the Scarlet Empress' absence. He's willing to back any viable contender to the throne — someone with the tenacity to survive, the will to employ the power of the throne against the Realm's enemies, and the honor to place the Dynasty's needs over that of house or personal desires — but so far such a contender appears difficult to find.

An imposing figure, Cainan stands tall and heavily muscled. He bears his scars with pride, testaments to every struggle he overcame in the legions. Each move he makes is purposeful and practiced, with the subtle grace that comes from being entirely aware of his body as all times. Only the streaks of gray in his scarlet braid and the wrinkles around his eyes belie his advanced age, its effects held at bay by exercise, age-staving cordials, and a family heritage of longevity. Others have yet to notice, but he can feel himself slowing.

When Cainan speaks, his cadence is even and measured, each word carefully considered. He prefers to fully formulate his answers before speaking, sitting in silence until he's decided his response. Yet even when still and silent, he radiates intensity. His gaze, heavy and steady, is often enough to silence a room on its own. His eyes glow like embers on the battlefield, but otherwise hold surprising warmth.

Cainan seeks to treat all matters with fairness and give each the time it deserves. Of course, not all things deserve his time — he spares no mind for the laments of Cathak's satrapies as the house raises their taxes and imposes its order (and favors making violent examples of rebellious populations). Seen by his kin as an honorable man, devoted more than ever to Immaculate precepts, he doesn't tolerate under-the-table, back-alley dealings from his family, and will swiftly replace anyone he discovers taking part in such practices.

Aspect: Fire

Essence: 5; **Willpower:** 9; **Join Battle:** 9 dice (+5 for 5m)

Personal: 16, **Peripheral:** 33

Health Levels: −0/−1x4/−2x8/−4/Incap.

Actions: Command Soldiers: 10 dice (+5 for 4m); Feats of Strength: 9 dice (+2 successes for 4m, may attempt Strength 3 feats); Read Intentions: 5 dice (+1 successes for 2m); Resist Poison/Disease: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Senses 8 dice (+5 for 5m); Social Influence: 11 dice (+3 successes for 6m); Strategy: 10 dice (+6 for 6m)

Appearance 3, Resolve 4 (+2 for 4m), Guile 2 (+1 for 2m)

COMBAT

Attack (Tempering Wisdom and Inferno Razor, jade short daiklaves): 14 dice (+6 for 6m, Damage 14L/4)

Combat Movement: 10 Dice (+3 successes for 6m)

Evasion 2 (+1 for 2m), Parry 6 (+3 for 6m)

Soak/Hardness: 13/7 (Unbowed-by-Armies, jade lamellar)

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: Self-discipline is everything.

Defining Principle: Creation should be ruled by the firm grip of the Dragon-Blooded.

Defining Tie: House Cathak (Pride)

Major Principle: No mercy for enemies of Creation, enemies of the Realm, or heretics.

Major Principle: The truth of the Immaculate Philosophy is unquestionable.

Major Tie: The Immaculate Order (Pious Obligation)

Minor Tie: His wife, Cathak Urima (Respect)

ESCORT

In addition to his many elite bodyguards (**Exalted**, p. 497), a Size 2 battle group with elite Drill, Cainan is rarely found without at least one Dragon-Blooded Cathak scion nearby.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Burning Pinnacle Strike (3m; Reflexive; Instant; Aura, Fire, Uniform): After a **withering** attack leaves his Initiative higher than all enemies', make a reflexive **withering** or **decisive** attack.

Crimson Fang Bite (3m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Dual, Fire): Add +5 **withering** damage or double four 10s on **decisive** damage.

Harnessed Firestorm Assault (10m, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; Simple; Instant; Aura, Decisive-only, Fire): Make three **decisive** attacks, each with (Initiative/2, rounded up) damage. Crimson Fang Bite's cost need only be paid once to apply to all. Once per scene.

Smoldering Essence Attack (5m, 1a; Simple; Instant; Fire, Withering-only): Make a **withering** attack that drains additional Initiative equal to 10s on damage roll (which he doesn't gain). A damaged enemy loses this much Initiative again on each of her next five turns, or until she hits Cainan with a **withering** attack.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Overwhelming Fire Majesty Stance (6m, 3i; Reflexive; Until next turn; Fire, Perilous): Attacks against Cainan take a −5 penalty; enemies who hit take one die of Hardness-ignoring lethal damage. Foes can pay one Willpower to resist penalty (but not damage) for one scene. No Initiative cost in Fire Aura.

Portentous Comet Deflection (3m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Clash, Decisive-only, Fire): Clash with a **decisive** attack. Counts as his combat action for the round unless he expends his Fire Aura.

MOBILITY CHARMS

Dancing Ember Stride (4m, 2i; Simple; Instant; Fire, Perilous): Rush with double 9s, instantly move to close on success. Expend Fire Aura to rush from medium range.

Inescapable Blazing Advance (5m, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; Supplemental; Instant; Aura, Fire): Rush with five non-Charm dice. Up to five 1s on enemy's opposed roll subtract Initiative from him and grant it to Cainan; crashed enemies burn for that many dice of lethal damage each turn until extinguished.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Dragon Warlord's Convocation (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Fire): Make an instill roll with double 9s to create a Major Tie of loyalty towards himself, or strengthen such a Tie to Defining. Resisting costs two Willpower in a Decision Point. Intimacy can't be voluntarily weakened unless Cainan wrongs the target. Once per story.

Implacable Dragon Mien (5m, 1wp; Simple; One day; Earth, Mute): +2 Guile to conceal Major or Defining Intimacies of emotion (+3 in Earth Aura, or +1 Guile to conceal non-emotional Intimacies).

WAR CHARMS

Deadly Wildfire Legion (5m, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; Supplemental; Instant; Aura, Fire): Add five non-Charm dice on a roll to order a battle group to attack and let it take its turn immediately, regardless of Initiative. Every two successes also add +1 damage to its attack. Once per scene unless battle group incapacitates a significant foe or routs an enemy battle group on Cainan's orders.

Indomitable Flame of Valor (1m [+1wp]; Supplemental; Instant; Aura, Fire): Rally with double 9s. Pay a one-Willpower surcharge to give elite Drill troops perfect morale for one round, or for one scene for an additional four Initiative.

Roaring Dragon Officer (3m; Reflexive; One turn; Balanced, Earth): Flurry a command with a non-attack action. In Earth Aura, lower penalty on rolls to −2, and negate Defense penalty.

Cynis Cogen

To most Cynises, the two things that matter are profit and pleasure. Other things can be important, of course, but at the end of the day, what are you living for if not to make a world that's more fun to live in? Love, hope, joy, jade, armies, magic — they're all different means to the same end. Few Cynises choose to go against this path, but some have eschewed it entirely.

One such Dynast is Cynis Cogen.

Cynis Cogen is a grandson of Cynis by one of her older daughters. He was raised among vineyards and drank wine like water. In his youth, he took upwards of a thousand lovers — some say a hundred in the first week after he Exalted. He was a dilettante and a duelist, a useful spy for his house, and a lover of pleasure for its own sake.

He wasn't a devout follower of the Immaculate Philosophy; he paid it the homage expected of a Dynast, and ignored it otherwise. When one of his lovers fell to an Anathema, he rode in the Wyld Hunt to chase it down, then went right back to his everyday life.

But after his two hundredth year, his old pastimes began to bore him. Slowly, he pulled back from his socialite life — the galas and orgies, liquor and drugs, spying and scheming. And when his wife, who gave him three Exalted daughters, died of old age, he turned to the Immaculate Order to find some meaning in his life.

He found his purpose outside of the cloister. As an itinerant monk, Cynis Cogen travels across the Blessed Isle and throughout the Threshold, teaching the Immaculate Philosophy and rooting out heresies. He collects knowledge as he travels, and he brings it back to share with the Order to better perfect their tactics.



Anyone who sees Cynis Cogen might mistake him for someone's grandfather at first glance. He wears a tattered blue traveling cloak, enjoys telling stories, and always has a snack in his satchel alongside some secondhand romance novel. But his robes conceal a powerfully muscled body, and he's ferocious in the face of threats to the helpless or to himself. Cogen knows he doesn't have much time left. He fights as though he has nothing left to lose — and he enjoys it, which makes him extremely dangerous as a result.

But while Cogen has moved on from his old life, he cannot entirely turn away. As before, his daughters turn to him for advice and support in their troubles; as before, old friends come to him for aid in their schemes. He cannot quite shed his old affections and old loyalties, even knowing that they sway him from wholehearted devotion to his new path, and all too often he finds himself swept away from his duties into Dynastic intrigue.

Aspect: Water

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 7; **Join Battle:** 8 dice (+5 for 5m)

Personal: 14, **Peripheral:** 35

Health Levels: −0x2/−1x7/−2x7/−4x2/Incap.

Actions: Disguise: 7 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Feats of Strength: 9 dice (+2 successes for 4m, may attempt Strength 5 feats); Investigation: 5 dice (+1 success for 2m); Read Intentions: 8 dice (+3 successes for 6m);

Resist Poison/Disease: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Senses 7 dice (+5 for 5m); Social Influence: 9 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Stealth: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m)

Appearance 4, Resolve 4 (+2 for 4m), Guile 5 (+3 for 6m)

COMBAT

Attack (Unarmed): 13 dice (+6 for 6m, Damage 10B)

Attack (Clinch): 9 dice (+6 for 6m; 9 dice to control, +6 for 6m)

Combat Movement: 9 dice (+2 successes for 4m)

Evasion 3 (+1 for 2m), Parry 5 (+3 for 6m)

Soak/Hardness: 4/0

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: Selfless devotion to the Immaculate Philosophy is my true path.

Major Principle: Deceit can be used for more than selfish means.

Major Principle: Empty pleasure gnaws at the soul.

Major Tie: Old friends and colleagues (Nostalgia)

Major Tie: His daughters (Affection)

Major Tie: Immaculate Order (Obedience)

Minor Principle: Truth to tell, at times I miss the scheming and debauchery.

Minor Tie: House Cynis (Troubled Loyalty)

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Drowning-in-Blood Technique (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Decisive-only, Water): Double 10s on **decisive** damage (add half foe's wound penalty, rounded up, to damage in Water Aura). Dealing 3+ damage raises foe's wound penalty by one until the scene ends or she crashes Cogen.

Essence-Dousing Wave Attack (5m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Decisive-only, Water): If a **decisive** attack against a crashed enemy deals (her Essence) or more damage, cancel a single one of her ongoing combat Charm. Expend Water Aura to use against an enemy not in crash.

Flow Reversal Strike (7m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Decisive-only, Water): Make a **decisive** attack that forces an enemy to roll her (Stamina + Resistance) at a difficulty of attack roll threshold successes. On failure, she takes one die of **decisive** damage for each success she failed by, ignoring Hardness, then takes **withering** damage equal to her wound penalty. Once per scene, unless reset by crashing higher-Initiative enemy.

Mantis Form (7m; Simple; One scene; Form): +1 Parry; add (Parry) to natural soak and gain (Parry/2, rounded up) Hardness against blocked attacks. Double 10s on **decisive** damage rolls against lower-Initiative enemies or enemies he's grappling. Enter reflexively by grappling a nontrivial foe.

Water Dragon Form (10m; Simple; One scene; Form, Water): Attacks gain bonus dice equal to target's wound penalty, +4 soak. Enter reflexively by raising a nontrivial foe's wound penalty with a **decisive** attack.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Bottomless Depths Defense (5m, 1ahl [+1wp, expend Water Aura]; Reflexive; Instant; Decisive-only, Perilous, Water): Roll 7 dice, negate that many levels of **decisive** damage, minimum one. Pay one Willpower and expend Water Aura to negate all damage. Once per day unless reset by being hit by three **decisive** attacks without taking any damage.

Iron-Arm Block (4m; Reflexive; Instant; Uniform): +1 Parry. Successful block inflicts −1 onslaught penalty on attacker.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Rumor-Dredging Gaze (6m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Mute, Water): Roll read intentions with double 9s to uncover the Intimacy target most wishes to keep hidden from Cogen. Using it to blackmail target in the same scene doubles 9s on a bargain or threaten roll; success grants one Willpower.

Smoothing-Over-the-Past Technique (5m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Water): Make an instill roll against one character to make her forget a past incident of misconduct by Cogen for one scene. If this would make her act against a Major or Defining Intimacy, she may resist for one Willpower.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Instant Disguise Prana (1m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Water): Roll disguise in one minute, ignore penalties for lacking equipment. With equipment, double 9s.

Ledaal Kes

Ledaal Kes was already known as a skilled Gateway player when his family sat him across the board from the Scarlet Empress at a gala. For her part, the Empress played against eight-year-old Kes the same way she'd played against the grizzled old Dynasts who'd challenged her earlier that evening. Though Ledaal Kes ultimately lost the game, the story of that match swept across the Realm.

His Exaltation shortly after his ninth birthday made him one of the youngest on record to Exalt. Wagging



tongues speculated on what further feats he might accomplish, and from that day on, Ledaal Kes was determined to excel at everything he attempted. His skill at mathematics and finances landed him a job as an Imperial Treasurer right out of school.

Kes' childhood fame made him a sought-after guest at society events, where he developed an eye for observation. He learned to spot deals being made, conflicts arising, alliances being formed. While it was frustrating to be dismissed for his youth, Kes practiced using that to his advantage — a skill he employs to this day, still appearing much younger than his years, even for a Dragon-Blood.

As he grew older, Ledaal Kes availed himself of all the Realm's hedonistic pleasures — exotic drugs, fine foods, luxurious accommodations. Growing up among the Imperial City's movers and shakers taught him how to be charming, intriguing, and occasionally scandalous. His romantic pursuits are a perpetual topic of conversation; he falls for a new man seemingly at the turn of each season. Decades removed from youthful fame, he's still an honored guest at any celebration.

Shortly after graduation, he married friend and Gateway rival Ragara Szaya (p. 62). Their union is one of equals, two intensely intelligent and inventive minds working together. Kes and Szaya are known amongst their peers for strange and wondrous inventions, many of which are accomplished in a few feverish days, their senses heightened and minds racing from whatever magical or alchemical substances they've ingested. Both Ledaal Kes and Ragara Szaya are homosexual. They pursue relationships outside of marriage with each other's blessing, and have produced multiple Dragon-Blooded children as the Realm requires.

In his position as a high-ranking official in the Imperial Treasury — and a member of Treasury head Bal Keraz's inner circle — Kes is charged with managing coin and goods flowing into and out of the Realm, keeping tabs on the coffers, and knowing whether the obol has risen or fallen in value and why. He's aware of how money moves between the houses: who has it flowing in, and who's bleeding jade at an alarming rate. Following the money trail is as exciting to him as plotting out moves on a Gateway board. All of which lends itself quite nicely to his other, secret position as an agent of the All-Seeing Eye.

He still resents the way other Dynasts dismiss him; the sexist things said about him that reach his ears still grate. No matter his accomplishments, his youthful appearance means that others sometimes fail to read him as a threat. These things sting bitterly, yet he uses them to gather information from the unsuspecting. There's an advantage in being underestimated, and Ledaal Kes wields it like a knife.

It all comes back to puzzles, in the end: Gateway, the Treasury, the All-Seeing Eye. He derives great pleasure from putting seemingly disparate pieces together, and few are better at doing so.

Though in the latter half of his sixties, Kes looks young for his age. Even this is a subject of gossip: they say it's due to the drugs he takes, or his myriad lovers keeping him young at heart, or exorbitant amounts spent on cosmetics. There are, of course, whispers of sorcery and deals with demons.

His clothing always reflects the height of current trends; his closets could swallow up some patricians' houses. Kes tends toward understated looks and dark tones, but every outfit has a flash of color or an intricate design to draw the eye.

Aspect: Air

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 7; **Join Battle:** 8 dice (+2 for 2m)

Personal: 14; **Peripheral:** 35

Health Levels: −0/−1x2/−2x2/−4/Incap

Actions: Administration: 11 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Crafting: 7 dice (+2 for 2m); Disguise: 9 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Dynastic Education: 10 dice (+3 successes for 6m); Investigation: 7 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Playing Gateway: 11 dice (+3 successes for 6m); Read Intentions: 9 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Senses: 7 dice (+4 for 4m); Social Influence: 9 dice (+3 successes for 6m); Stealth: 7 dice (+2 successes for 4m)

Appearance 4, Resolve 4 (+2 for 4m), Guile 4 (+2 for 4m)

COMBAT

Attack (Throwing Knives): 8 dice at close range (+2 for 2m; Damage 9L)

Attack (Unarmed): 7 dice (+2 for 2m; Damage 9B)

Combat Movement: 7 dice (+4 for 4m)

Evasion 4 (+2 for 4m), Parry 2

Soak/Hardness: 2/0

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: The world is a puzzle I will solve.

Major Principle: It's my duty to serve the Realm.

Major Tie: Ragara Szaya (Respect and admiration)

Major Tie: Bal Keraz (Loyalty)

Major Tie: The All-Seeing Eye (Loyalty)

Minor Principle: Underestimate me at your own peril.

ESCORT

Kes rarely has personal guards, but is accompanied by battle-ready household troops (**Exalted**, p. 496) while on the road, a Size 1 battle group with average Drill. It's not uncommon for him to be accompanied by one or more young Dynasts (**Exalted**, p. 541) beguiled by his wit and charm; these often have their own bodyguards as well.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Winter Fang Attack (4m; Supplemental; Instant; Air, Balanced, Decisive-only): If **decisive** Thrown attack or gambit succeeds, enemy loses Initiative equal to 10s on Initiative roll, maximum 3 (which Kes doesn't gain).

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Safety Among Enemies (5m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Air, Aura, Decisive-only, Perilous): Redirect a **decisive** dodged attack to another character in range, making a new attack roll with the same pool, as long as his Initiative exceeds the combined sum of his attacker and the new target.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Clear-Eyed Courtier's Scrutiny (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Air, Mute): Roll Read Intentions with double 9s against all characters in a scene. Once per day.

Foul Stench of Lies Discernment (3m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Air, Mute): Roll Investigation with three non-Charm dice against a character's Guile when he speaks to determine if he's lying. Waive Willpower cost for subsequent uses once a lie's been found.

Smoke Without Flame (4m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Fire): +1 Guile (non-Charm in Fire Aura). If opposing character fails, he instead sees a misleadingly exaggerated version of Kes' emotional state or an emotion-based Intimacy.

Voices on the Wind (3m, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Air): Add +2 dice on Senses rolls to eavesdrop. Reading intentions while eavesdropping from medium range or farther imposes −2 Guile.

Wind-Carried Words Technique (3m; Simple; Instant; Air): Send a message of up to a few sentences to a character within 15 miles.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Zone of Silence Stance (10m, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Air, Mute): 10s on Stealth rolls reroll non-1 failures, and Kes can't be heard. Can extend silence to everything within close range (expands an additional range band per round in Air Aura, maximum long); characters may pay one Willpower to make a single spoken social roll if silence threatens a Major or Defining Intimacy.

Mnemon



In the Realm today, there's perhaps no name spoken with such reverence, and such resentment, as that of the Empress' eldest living daughter. Nearly four centuries old, Mnemon remains active in politics and warfare. Her bloodline's strength is impeccable. Manses raised by her own hand are among the finest on the Blessed Isle. Her house's prestige is unquestioned. She doesn't hide her plays for the Scarlet Throne, and some talk of her as the de facto new Empress, though rarely happily. Ruthless and uncompromising, Mnemon is more like her mother than any other contender for the throne, and other Great Houses have no desire to see the rise of a new Scarlet Empress — especially one bearing grudges against them.

When her brother Ragara was born, he was greeted with a meteor shower. Mnemon's birth was heralded by an earthquake that shook the Imperial Mountain. She received the best education the Blessed Isle could offer. She Exalted at age fifteen, during a sparring bout with an Immaculate monk — secretly a Sidereal, placed in her retinue by Chejop Kejak himself.

This was the most dangerous time in her life. Ragara, uninterested in being overshadowed as heir apparent, set assassination plans in motion, beginning with a suit of poisoned armor on her sixteenth birthday. When that failed, his tactics became more overt. Mnemon fled the Versino — precursor to the Heptagram — under cover of darkness, and found shelter with the Immaculate Order.

Under the Order's protection, Mnemon furthered the training in warfare and sorcery that makes her what she is today, and honed her wary distrust of those around her into a nigh-constant vigil. Even when she bears no obvious weapon, she's never defenseless, surrounding herself with loyal guards, invisible demons, and devious sorceries. Her knowledge of magic and miracles is second to none — but still she wants more. Mnemon is a collector of knowledge and artifacts, such as the mighty demon-binding Emerald Thurible.

Mnemon is a devoted adherent of the Immaculate Order that took her in and protected her. She's personally funded the construction of many monasteries and was influential in the selection of the current Mouth of Peace. Several Wyld Hunts have ridden with Mnemon at their head, and she's funded many more. She also makes a point of following the Philosophy's precepts, though possibly more in letter than in spirit. Members of House Mnemon who take the vows may expect a private audience with their house founder, with congratulations and careful instructions on how to best serve both house and Order.

Mnemon remains unmarried, though she has many consorts and would-be lovers. She selects her partners carefully, based on pedigree and power, and lavishes affection on them until she can find them a marriage that better suits her aims.

As house matriarch, Mnemon keeps herself intimately involved with her descendants' personal lives. Every member of the house receives her wisdom, scolding, comfort, or scorn. Mnemon is the beating heart of her family, and to go against her guarantees retribution. Her scions are a clannish lot by design, and they're the pillar on which her power rests. There are nights where she won't sleep in order to fuss over a great-great-grandchild's marriage, or counsel a child who's nervous about studying at the Heptagram or entering the Immaculate Order. While it's rare for anyone outside of the house to interact with her as anything other than a general or sorcerer, those in House Mnemon

know her to be exacting but generous toward her kin, with an acerbic sense of humor and a bone-deep devotion to Dynastic duty.

Small wonder she's considered a major contender for the Scarlet Throne. It irritates Mnemon that she's considered a contender and not the heir apparent. After all, isn't it her birthright?

Aspect: Earth

Essence: 5; **Willpower:** 9; **Join Battle:** 9 dice (+5 for 5m)

Personal: 16, **Peripheral:** 32

Health Levels: –0x2/–1x7/–2x7/–4x2/Incap.

Actions: Administration: 10 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Crafting: 11 dice (+6 for 5m); Dynastic Education: 10 dice; Read Intentions: 7 dice (+1 success for 2m); Resist Poison/Disease: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Senses 9 dice (+5 for 5m); Social Influence: 10 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Sorcery: 11 dice (+6 for 6m)

Appearance 4, Resolve 5 (+3 for 6m), Guile 4 (+1 for 2m)

COMBAT

Attack (Sword of Sorrows, jade daiklave): 12 dice (+5 for 5m, Damage 14L/5)

Attack (Unarmed): 12 dice (+4 for 4m; Damage 9B)

Combat Movement: 6 dice (+1 success for 2m)

Evasion 1 (+1 for 2m), Parry 5 (unarmed 4) (+2 for 4m)

Soak/Hardness: 14/10 (Omphalos' Embrace, jade-reinforced breastplate)

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: I alone deserve to be Empress; I alone can restore the Realm's glory.

Defining Principle: My devotion to the Immaculate Philosophy is unwavering.

Defining Tie: House Mnemon (Authoritarian Pride)

Major Principle: I crave the secrets of the First Age.

Major Tie: The Scarlet Empress (Admiration)

Major Tie: The Immaculate Order (Gratitude)

Major Tie: Ragara and his house (Hatred)

Minor Tie: The Anathema (Pragmatic Wariness)

Minor Tie: The Sidereal Exalted (Mistrust)

Minor Tie: V'neef (Resentment)

ESCORT

Mnemon never goes unprotected. In addition to elite bodyguards (**Exalted**, p. 497), bound demons, and sorcerous defenses, she's rarely found without at least one Dragon-Blooded Mnemon scion nearby.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Burning Fury Wreath (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Balanced, Fire, Decisive-only): Ignore (2 + 10s on attack roll) points of Hardness with a Melee attack. In Fire Aura, double the Hardness ignored.

Essence Disruption Attack (5m, 1wp, expend Earth Aura; Simple; Instant; Aura, Earth): Touch a character (difficulty 1 gambit) and roll social influence against his Resolve. Success raises the total cost of any magic he uses in a single instant by (4 + threshold successes) motes, until he's paid this surcharge (6 – his Integrity) times or after a day.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Flame-Borne Interception (4m; Reflexive; Until next turn; Balanced, Fire, Uniform): +1 Melee Parry. Each attack blocked with Melee Parry grants an additional +1. Bonus resets if she's hit with an attack or defends with Evasion or unarmed Parry.

Perfected Scales of the Dragon (7m, 1wp, expend Earth Aura; Reflexive; Until next turn; Aura, Decisive-only; Earth): Gain Hardness 16. Attackers that fail to overcome Hardness lose two Initiative, which Mnemon gains. Can't attack or move on next turn (but can shape sorcery).

Unfeeling Earth Meditation (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Earth): Ignore all wound penalties for one action. In Earth Aura, ignore all wound penalties while in Aura.

Unmoving Mountain Stance (6m; Reflexive; Instant; Dual, Earth, Perilous): After being hit by an attack, but before damage is rolled, reduce Initiative enemy gains from **withering** damage by two points (3 in Earth Aura). Smash attacks and similar effects won't move her unless they deal 8+ **withering** damage (13+ in Earth Aura) or 3+ **decisive** damage (8+ in Earth Aura).

SOCIAL CHARMS

Ascendant Ideal Inspiration (6m, 1wp; Simple; Indefinite; Air): Mnemon dedicates herself to a Defining Principle. Influence to weaken it must be rolled twice, using the lower result. Double 9s on influence rolls to instill the Principle in others or persuade them to act on it.

Unfaltering Pillar of Unity (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Earth, Mute): Roll to instill group members with a Tie of loyalty to their group, doubling 8s. Resisting requires calling on a Major or Defining Intimacy in a Decision Point. The instilled Intimacy can't be voluntarily weakened for (6 – target's Integrity) weeks, and requires overturning influence to erode with instill rolls. Once per story.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

All-Encompassing Earth Sense (3m; Reflexive; Instant; Earth): Roll Senses with double 9s to detect hidden threats standing on the same surface as her out to short range.

Sense-Riding Technique (5m, 1wp; Simple; 10 days; Earth): Touch a character and roll social influence against his Resolve to ride his senses, perceiving the world through them while meditating. Ends if target goes more than twenty-five miles from Mnemon.

EVOCATIONS

Breath of the Demon City (5m, 5i, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Perilous): Fill a single range band with thick, sickly-sweet smoke. Demons in the smoke halve the mote cost to materialize (round down).

Sweet Scent of Hell (5m; Supplemental; Instant): The Emerald Thurible doubles 9s on a roll to bind a demon, or an instill, persuade, or bargain roll against a demon.

SORCERY

Shaping Ritual: Once per story, Mnemon may study her vast collection of sorcerous texts to roll sorcery with +3 non-Charm dice, gaining that many sorcerous motes until the story ends.

Dragon-Sorcerer Puissance: Gain one sorcerous mote per round while shaping an element-based spell; three per round in the appropriate Elemental Aura.

Corrupted Words (15sm, 1wp; Psyche; Indefinite; Control spell): Roll sorcery against the Resolve of a target at short range to forbid him from speaking of a single subject. Casting this can't be detected without magic.

Death of Obsidian Butterflies (15sm, 1wp; Decisive-only; Instant): Roll sorcery as an undodgeable **decisive** attack against all characters in a line out to medium range (battle groups take −2 Defense). Roll (5 + threshold successes)L damage, or (10 + threshold successes)L against battle groups. This doesn't reset Mnemon's Initiative.

Demon of the First Circle (Ritual, 2wp, Instant): Summon a First Circle Demon in a night-long ritual, rolling sorcery against its Resolve to bind it.

Infallible Messenger (5sm, 2wp): Conjure a cherub to deliver a message up to five minutes long to a single individual anywhere in Creation, reaching him within a day. Can convey social influence, but not social Charms.

Stormwind Rider (15sm, 1wp; One hour + an additional hour per 5m): Ride a flying whirlwind that can carry up to ten other characters. Roll sorcery for movement actions, can double 8s for 1m, 1wp. In combat, the whirlwind is light cover; passengers that are hit by **decisive** attacks or crashed fall from it.

Demon of the Second Circle (Ritual, 3wp; Instant): With the power of the Emerald Thurible, Mnemon may summon a Second Circle Demon on the night of the new moon, rolling sorcery against its Resolve to bind it.

Ragara Benoru

Ragara Benoru was, from childhood, blessed with an overdeveloped sense of morality that no amount of schooling seemed to drive from her — she'd criticize instructors' lapses with as much ferocity as her peers', without the slightest sense of decorum. Even her parents found it difficult to tolerate her moral excess, but no admonishment or punishment deterred her commitment to make the world around her more just.

It was scarcely a surprise to her family when Benoru rode into the hills to join the Bloodied Scythe Uprising, siding with the peasants against a cruel Dynastic prefect. Among the rebels of Cypress Mountain, the girl who couldn't stomach the hypocrisy of fellow Dynasts became a woman who captured the imagination of peasants she'd sworn to defend. One of the Seventy-Two Heroes of Cypress Mountain, she commanded the righteous militias of the Bloodied Scythe Uprising, leading lightning raids under the noses of the corrupt prefect and crafting stratagems that confounded legions sent to crush the rebels. Then Imperial messengers approached, offering clemency for herself and the peasants who served with her from the Scarlet Empress herself in return for surrendering to her total and divine mercy. In her wisdom, the Empress set Benoru to a task eminently suited to her uncompromising nature — serving the Realm as a magistrate.

And served she has. For fifty years Benoru lived in austerity, holding neither wealth nor title, witnessing the humble lives of the poorest peasants and the decadent displays of Dynastic families hoping to sway her judgment. Long years have honed Benoru's instincts and ground away her bravado. She's sought out the perpetrators of everything from fixing exchange rates for agricultural goods to betrayals of Great House matriarchs. To this day, peasant children fall asleep to stories of the Corvée-Swallowing Mountain Devil, Sixteenth of Seventy-Two Heroes, Ragara Benoru — stories that are officially disallowed but thrive nonetheless.

Now the Empress is gone and the magistrates' world has changed drastically. Rather than wandering each farming village in turn, Benoru spends most of her days leaning on Dynastic families' hospitality, balancing their contempt for the magistrate with their fear of a magistrate's death



within their compounds — even if the Empress herself is no longer there to protect them, few magistrates are quite so loved by the people as Ragara Benoru.

With or without the Empress on the throne, it's her duty to see that the Realm is a just place, and nothing will dissuade her from the task. Her family safely sheltered in Ragara holdings in the Threshold, Benoru sees no reason not to use her power to keep the land orderly and punish the spoiled children that seek to better themselves in their Empress' absence. After fifty years, the experiences of a rebel leader are coming in handy again. She once led starving peasants against soldiers of the world's mightiest empire. Should the rich and powerful unleash their hounds against her, they'd do well to remember that this hare was once a dragon.

Ragara Benoru is a weathered woman, with dark brown skin from years living in the wild and wandering amongst the poorest villages in the Blessed Isle. Approaching a century old, she's starting to show her age from a life on the road — more so than peers who've taken easy jobs in Dynastic high society. She dresses simply even in the company of Dynastic hosts, preferring clothing that's easily mended and replaced over whatever impractical style is in fashion this season. Her signature weapon is a white jade firewand, but she does not own it herself; it belongs to her wife Ledaal Quya, who vigorously advocates on Benoru's behalf within House Ledaal. Benoru carries herself with the attitude of a peasant, but takes on the aggression and thunderous voice of a drill sergeant when acting in her role as magistrate, a change in character that takes most people off guard.

Aspect: Earth

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 8; **Join Battle:** 8 dice (+4 for 4m)

Personal: 14; **Peripheral**: 30

Health Levels: –0/–1x4/–2x4/–4/Incap.

Actions: Command Soldiers: 9 Dice (+4 for 4m); Feats of Strength: 7 dice (+2 successes for 4m; may attempt Strength 3 feats); Investigation: 11 dice (+3 successes for 6m); Read Intentions: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Senses 7 Dice (+4 for 4m); Social Influence 7 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Strategy: 10 Dice (+4 for 4m); Tracking: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m)

Appearance 3, Resolve 4 (+2 for 4m), Guile 2 (+1 for 2m)

COMBAT

Attack (Swan's Cry, jade dragon sigh wand): 12 dice at close range (+5 for 5m, Damage 18L/5)

Attack (Unarmed): 12 dice (+3 for 3m, Damage 10B)

Attack (Grapple): 10 dice (+3 for 3m; 8 dice to control, +4 for 4m)

Combat Movement: 6 dice (+2 successes for 4m)

Evasion 4 (+2 for 4m); Parry 4 (+2 for 4m)

Soak 7/0 (Chain shirt)

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: The powerful must protect the meek.

Major Tie: The Seventy-Two Rebels of Cypress Mountain (Wistful Camaraderie)

Major Principle: I shall not be deterred from the path of justice.

Major Tie: Ledaal Quya and their children (Love)

Major Tie: Those who abuse their power (Righteous Fury)

Minor Principle: I don't believe in peasant superstition, but why risk bad luck?

ESCORT

Benoru often travels alone, aside from her scribe, the acerbic monk Horizon Turtle (**Exalted**, p. 499), but has a handful of archons that she can call upon. Use archon Quick Characters from **The Realm**, or spymasters (**Exalted**, p. 499).

MERITS

Sobriquet: Once per story, when Benoru makes an influence roll that aligns with her image as a folk hero and former revolutionary, the level of the stunt she's awarded is increased by one.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Blossom of Inevitable Demise (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Dual): Attack at medium range with her dragon sigh wand; double 10s on **decisive** damage.

Boughs of Burning Autumn (2m, 1i; Reflexive; Instant; Fire/Wood, Perilous): Reloads her dragon sigh wand reflexively.

Phoenix Flies on Golden Wings (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Dual): Dragon sigh wand **decisive** attack deals +4 damage dice at close range; +3 at short; +2 at medium; +1 at long. **Withering** attacks add that many successes instead.

Righteous Devil Form (5m; Simple; One scene; Form): Roll social influence with three bonus dice against all enemies to threaten or inspire guilt. Affected enemies must pay one Willpower to resist or take −3 penalty on disengage, withdraw, and Stealth rolls. Benoru may reflexively aim at an affected enemy once per turn (even if he paid Willpower).

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Earth Bears Witness (5m, 3i; Reflexive; Instant; Aura, Decisive-only; Earth/Wood, Perilous): Subtract two dice of damage from a **decisive** attack. In Earth Aura, subtract three dice within short range of large stone objects.

Impervious Skin of Stone (4m; Reflexive; Instant; Balanced, Withering-only): +3 soak. In Earth Aura, can use after being hit.

Unfeeling Earth Meditation (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Earth): Negate wound penalties on a single action.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Falsehood-Unearthing Attitude (3m; Simple; Earth; Instant): Roll Investigation with two bonus successes against a character's Guile; success reveals an Intimacy he'd lie to protect.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Bloodhound's Nose Technique (4m, 1wp; Simple; 4 days; Water/Wood): Roll investigation with double 9s to determine who left behind a piece of evidence. Double 9s on rolls to track him.

Echoes Caught in Stone (3m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Earth): After finding evidence, roll investigation against a difficulty of the number of days since it was placed. Success reveals a relevant conversation that occurred near it within the last three months. Once per story.

Sesus Nagezzer, The Slug

The old keep on the hill seems more nocturnal than not. By day, merchants and courtiers move to and fro though the gates, but at night, the place seems to come alive, thronging with exotic crowds. Newcomers and children whisper that under the keep is the lair of some terrible monster, and to some degree, they're right. Once called the Throne of Roses, it's now better known as the Fungal Manse. It's home to a massive transient population of lowlives, hangers-on, criminals, shady dealers, and con artists. And in the center of it all, ruling from a throne of affected civility amidst chaos, is the prodigious bulk of Sesus Nagezzer.

Sesus Nagezzer is a huge man. When he stands, he's over six feet tall, and he more than amply fills out his heavy frame. His fashion sense is impeccable, and he's ostentatiously meticulous in dress and grooming. Nagezzer can be surprisingly fast despite his bulk and maimed leg, and his strength is formidable. He makes no apologies for his proclivities, which run towards food and carnality. Nagezzer's appetites in both areas are legendary: In a typical dinner, he'll consume an entire table of food alone, and in the morning he'll often awaken refreshed with multiple partners in his bed.

When he holds court or attends other Dynastic social events, he speaks little, listening quietly as others beseech his favor, gossip, or ramble drunkenly. When he does speak, it's most often to punctuate the awkward silence after someone commits a faux pas or realizes she's revealed too much, and even then, he speaks but briefly.

Nagezzer knows what it means to be a hero, for he was once one himself. A graduate of the House of Bells and an officer in the Imperial legions, he styled himself a paragon of House Sesus' martial prowess. His promising destiny died abruptly the day that his pursuit of the dangerous spirit Wind Across the Savanna ended in his maiming and near-fatal wounding at the god's hands. He sees his younger self reflected in fledgling heroes, and knows the value of holding leverage over them — be it an unpaid debt, an imprisoned loved one, or a sense of obligation to a kindly, if unpleasant, mentor who saw value in a young protégé that no one else saw.



After his maiming, Nagezzer was discharged from the Imperial legions, and sent to the Cloister of Wisdom to heal. In his time among the monks, Nagezzer realized he'd never achieve the power and peace he sought through conventional means. He might never again lead a legion in the Empress' service. Instead he'd create a silent army, unseen and underestimated.

Inheriting the Throne of Roses upon his hated mother's death, Nagezzer transformed it from an elegant sanctuary into a den of vice. Now it serves as the capital of his hidden empire. There he holds court among layabouts and sycophants whom he's carefully cultivated to act as set dressing for those who seek his counsel. From behind that veil, he rules a shadow network of spies, informants, messengers, and assassins that runs from tiny insignificant satrapies all the way up to the highest halls of power in the Imperial City. In the hinterlands of the Threshold, his mercenaries — directed by his cousin Sesus Warru, a drunkard veteran of the Red-Piss Legion — fight for causes of his choosing under the anonymous banner of a white rose.

At this point, Sesus Nagezzer is vital to many of the simple day-to-day workings of several prefectures. He didn't need an army to conquer his enemies, only time and leverage. But despite his underhanded ways and his accumulation of profit, he's no common crime lord. He serves the Empress' Realm, and would sacrifice everything he has for its continuance.

Aspect: Wood

Essence: 4; **Willpower:** 8; **Join Battle:** 6 Dice (+3 for 3m)

Personal: 15, **Peripheral:** 30

Health Levels: –0/–1x6/–2x6/–4/Incap.

Actions: Administration: 6 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Command Soldiers: 7 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Disguise: 7 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Dynastic Education: 7 dice (+2 success for 4m); Investigate: 6 dice (+1 success for 2m); Medicine: 5 dice (+2 for 2m); Read Intentions: 9 dice (+3 successes for 6m); Resist Poison/Disease: 7 dice (+1 success for 2m); Senses 6 dice (+2 for 2m); Social Influence: 11 dice (+3 successes for 6m); Strategy: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Tracking: 5 dice (+1 success for 2m)

Appearance 3, Resolve 3 (+1 for 2m), Guile 6 (+2 for 4m)

COMBAT

Attack (The Sower's Rod, jade wrackstaff): 8 dice (+4 for 4m, 14B/4)

Attack (Unarmed): 9 dice (+4 for 4m, Damage 9B)

Combat Movement: 3 dice

Evasion 1, Parry 4 (+2 for 4m)

Soak/Hardness: 9/4 (Thousandfold Tantra Mantle, jade chain shirt)

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: I serve the Realm, and nothing else.

Defining Principle: I delight unashamedly in pleasures of the flesh.

Major Principle: Understanding others' desires is the key to my triumphs.

Major Tie: Himself (Self-Pity)

Major Tie: House Sesus (Distrust)

Minor Principle: I devote myself to the Immaculate Philosophy.

Minor Tie: Sesus Warru (Trust)

Minor Tie: Anathema (Enmity)

ESCORT

Nagezzer almost never leaves his palace, which is protected by dozens of battle-ready household guards (**Exalted**, p. 496), a Size 2 battle group with elite Drill led by grizzled mercenary lieutenants. He's also protected by his twin Western concubines, Spinda and Echo (use assassin traits, **Exalted**, p. 499), and by his teacher and bodyguard, the Wood Aspect monk Autumn Spiral.

MERITS

Sobriquet: Once per story, when Nagezzer makes an influence roll that aligns with his image as a debauched hedonist, the level of the stunt he's awarded is increased by one.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Eyes of the Wood Dragon (4m; Supplemental; Instant; Withering-only, Wood): Add +3 raw **withering** damage. Pay +1i and take a −1 Defense penalty to ignore 4 points of armored soak (no Defense penalty in Wood Aura).

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Mind-Over-Body Meditation (5m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Perilous, Wood): Roll 4 dice; successes heal non-aggravated damage levels. Once per scene.

Wood Dragon Vitality (5m; Reflexive; Instant; Dual, Wood): Gain +4 soak (+8 in Wood Aura) or reduce **decisive** attack's damage by −1 (−2 in Wood Aura).

SOCIAL CHARMS

Poisonous Sneer Reproach (2m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Wood): When another character makes an influence roll, roll social influence; impose penalty equal to successes. If this reduces target's pool to 0 or she botches, her influence has opposite of intended effect.

Rose of Millions (Hearthstone): Can automatically tell if a character shares his Principle of "I serve the Realm, and nothing else."

Rumor-Dredging Gaze (6m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Mute, Water): Roll read intentions with double 9s to uncover the Intimacy target most wishes to keep hidden from him. Using it to blackmail target in the same scene doubles 9s on a bargain or threaten roll; success grants one Willpower.

Sweeten-the-Tap Method (5m, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Fire/Wood): Partygoers gain positive Minor Tie for fellow carousers and −1 Guile.

Tepet Ejava, the Roseblack



Disgraced and dishonored after losing its legions, House Tepet desperately searches for a means to regain its lost favor. Its greatest hope may lie with a woman who has disdained house politics and dedicated her life to the defense of the Realm.

Tepet Ejava was born while her mother was in the field. War was the first thing she knew, and for good or ill, it set the tone for the rest of her life. As a child, she excelled at strategy and war-games, and her Exaltation attuned her to the violent struggles underlying the natural world. As she matured, Ejava found herself ill at ease in the well-manicured garden of Dynastic society — something that became less metaphorical when she inadvertently devastated the dominie's beloved rose garden. Her classmates nicknamed her "Roseblack" after the incident, but rather than seethe, Ejava embraced the nickname as a symbol of humility. It stayed with her through her training at the House of Bells, and through her engagements as a newly commissioned officer of the Imperial Legions, from putting down bandits and peasant revolts to vicious battles against Anathema and the Fair Folk. By the time Ejava made winglord, the name "Roseblack" was spoken with pride.

Then came the Battle of Futile Blood. Ejava wasn't with the Tepet legions when it happened, and still regrets

that she wasn't there to fight alongside them. When word of the Tepet legions' fate arrived, Ejava found her world upended. Not only had she lost friends, comrades, and loyal soldiers, but the Realm she loved had been dealt a devastating defeat.

Even those Tepets jealous of Ejava's rising star now acknowledged her value as one of the house's most capable surviving officers. Promoting her to general, they placed her in charge of the one legion that had been foisted on the house in the partition of the Imperial legions — the infamous Vermilion, or "Red-Piss," Legion. While many officers might quail at the thought of managing such a disgraceful mob, the Roseblack saw it as an opportunity. Over the past three years, she's rebuilt the Vermilion into a competent and disciplined fighting force, equal to any legion fielded by the other Great Houses.

Ejava is the consummate Dragon-Blooded officer — disciplined, resolute, and professional. While other members of her house might chide her for putting off marriage, Ejava feels that she's exactly where the Realm needs her, and that her own career is fulfillment enough. Her closest confidant is the Chanos prefect, Ragara Nova, a socialite who once tried to win her hand. Other than Nova, there are few who've really gotten to know her. Her true home is the battlefield, and her soldiers are her true family. She has little time for anything else.

Ejava is a tall, imposing woman with the same long red hair as the Empress. When in the field, she's rarely seen without her armor and sidearm — a full suit of green jade articulated plate, and Thorn, her daiklave.

Aspect: Wood

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 7; **Join Battle:** 9 dice (+6 for 6m)

Personal: 14, **Peripheral:** 24

Health Levels: −0x1/−1x6/−2x6/−4/Incap.

Actions: Command Soldiers: 10 dice (+6 for 6m); Feats of Strength: 8 dice (+2 successes for 4m; may attempt Strength 3 feats); Read Intentions: 5 dice (+1 success for 2m); Resist Poison/Disease: 7 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Senses 7 dice (+5 for 5m); Social Influence: 9 dice (+2 successes for 4m); Strategy: 10 dice (+6 for 6m)

Appearance 3, Resolve 4 (+2 for 4m), Guile 3 (+1 for 2m)

COMBAT

Attack (Thorn, jade daiklave): 14 dice (+6 for 6m, Damage 15L/5)

Attack (Long Bow): 11 dice at short range (+2 for 2m, Damage 12L)

Combat Movement: 9 dice (+3 successes for 6m)

Evasion 1, Parry 6 (+3 successes for 6m)

Soak/Hardness: 14/10 (Triumph's Blossom, jade articulated plate)

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: A Dynast's only honor is defense of the Realm.

Defining Tie: House Tepet (Impatient Frustration)

Major Principle: I have no time for romance.

Major Tie: Those who sold out the legions for political gain (Contempt)

Major Tie: The Red-Piss Legion (Camaraderie)

Minor Tie: Her grandfather, Tepet Arada (Irritated Respect)

Minor Tie: Ragara Nova (Friendship)

Minor Tie: Her uncle, Tepet Fokuf (Loathing)

ESCORT

When not with the Vermilion Legion, Ejava is usually accompanied by a young Dragon-Blooded officer (**Exalted**, p. 541) and several elite house guards (**Exalted**, p. 497), a Size 1 battle group with elite Drill.

MERITS

Sobriquet: Once per story, when Ejava makes an influence roll that aligns with her image as a heroic commander, the level of the stunt she's awarded is increased by one.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Burning Fury Wreath (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Balanced, Decisive-only, Fire): Ignore (2 + 10s on attack roll) points of Hardness with a Melee attack. In Fire Aura, double the Hardness ignored.

Crimson Fang Bite (3m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Dual, Fire): On a Melee attack, add +3 **withering** damage or double three 10s on **decisive** damage.

Demon-Crushing Wolf Bite (4m, 1i; Supplemental; Instant; Perilous, Withering-only; Wood): Add +3 Overwhelming to a Melee attack. In Wood Aura, add +3 **withering** damage.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Aura of Grasping Branches (5m, 3i, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Perilous, Wood): Ignore up to three points of onslaught penalty to Parry each round. In Wood Aura, parried attacks don't inflict onslaught penalties.

Aura of Invulnerability (5m, 1wp; Simple; Aura state; Aura, Fire, Perilous): Roll (current temporary Willpower) dice and gain that many temporary −0 health levels and add +4 natural soak.

Earth Bears Witness (5m, 3i; Reflexive; Instant; Aura, Decisive-only; Earth/Wood, Perilous): Subtract

two dice of damage from a **decisive** attack. Subtract three dice within short range of large stone objects (in Earth Aura) or trees (in Wood Aura).

Impervious Skin of Stone (4m, Reflexive; Instant; Balanced, Earth, Withering-only): +3 natural soak. In Earth Aura, can use after being hit.

Portentous Comet Deflection (3m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Clash, Decisive-only, Fire): Clash with a **decisive** Melee attack. Counts as her combat action for the round unless she expends her Fire Aura.

WAR CHARMS

Deadly Wildfire Legion (5m, 1wp, expend Fire Aura; Supplemental; Instant; Aura, Fire): Add three non-Charm dice on a roll to order a battle group to attack and let it take its turn immediately, regardless of Initiative. Every two successes also add +1 damage to its attack. Once per scene unless battle group incapacitates a significant foe or routs an enemy battle group on her orders.

Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings (3m, 1i; Reflexive; Instant; Earth, Perilous, Uniform): Make a command roll when a battle group in short range is attacked; every two successes grant +1 Defense and soak. Once per scene, unless reset with a successful rally.

Roaring Dragon Officer (3m; Reflexive; One turn; Balanced, Earth): Flurry a command with a non-attack action. In Earth Aura, lower penalty on rolls to −2, and negate Defense penalty.

EVOCATIONS

Thousand-Thorn Strike (1m, 1a, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Decisive-only): Make a **decisive** Melee attack, thorns of anima bursting from within the foe's body as the daiklave strikes. Add three attack roll threshold successes to **decisive** damage and double 10s unless the enemy accepts a crippling injury **(Exalted**, p. 201).



Realm Year 768

River massaged her writing hand absently as her chatelaine departed with the packet of letters. It was an old habit, the memory of long-ago correspondence bringing on a phantom ache. She supposed the news of the Anathema her Hearth had captured breaking out of the Imperial Manse had exacerbated it. For a moment that morning, even though she sat in her own study, separated from that place by fifty years and more than a thousand miles, she'd gone right back there: sitting by the roadside in the River Province in her monk's robes, scratching out *I regret to inform you…* over and over again.

But she wasn't sitting idly, waiting for someone else to fix this. Eshuvar had agreed as soon as she'd laid out her plan, and she knew the others would answer the call as well. The Solar was their responsibility. They'd dragged him here to the Imperial City — alive — and received the Empress' accolades. How proud they'd been that day: the Hearth who had slain one Anathema and captured another. If River had given any other thought to the Wretched in the years since, it was little more than the hope he was being tormented deep within the Imperial Manse, facing punishment for all the lives he'd taken.

They should have killed him. The Empress would have honored them just as much for it.

But the past was already written, and she'd dwelled on it long enough. Her wife Jihe said as much, and she was right. All they could do now was track him down and finish the job. Before he came for them first. Before he came for their families.

•••••

Eshuvar leaned against the ship's rail, his back to the sea, and grinned at River. She couldn't help but think the wind whipping his hair artfully about his face was his own doing. The direction of the sea breeze should have been blowing it *into* his eyes. The same could be said of his clothing: no salt spray marred the silks, and the tassels at the end of his ornate belt hung smooth and untangled. It might have been an infuriating use of his anima to another Dynast, but to River it was just Eshuvar. A little vain, a little bit of a show-off. "It will be good to see him again. Mathar."

"I know who you meant."

"Swift and Chalima, too, of course."

"Of course." She didn't tease him about it, though over the years they'd become like brother and sister. When River and Jihe wanted to have a child, it was Eshuvar who summoned the neomah that gave them Adan. When a dalliance of Eshuvar's caused a bit more scandal than he'd intended to bite off, it was River who smoothed things over between him and his wife.

She remembered how young he'd seemed when they set sail on that first Hunt, fifty years ago. He'd aged well, still tall and slim and handsome, his face's youthful softness giving way to harder angles. Still, she couldn't help but notice how a weight seemed to lift from his shoulders the farther out to sea they drew.

She wondered if he saw the same weight lifting from hers.

•••••

Tereya Kingfisher Swift still wasn't used to Seren's study. She'd been head of the Tereya household guard for three years now, stood in this room more times than she cared to count, and still felt like she wasn't quite at home. Most things were the same: the room, the clock, the tea set, Swift herself. Only Seren's appearance spoke to the passage of time. She was grayer than when she'd first offered Swift the position, more frail. Her mind was still sharp and her hands still steady, but her mortality was an undeniable fact.

Now, she was frowning in turn at Swift and the letter the Earth Aspect had brought her. "I suppose you have little choice in this matter?"

"They're my Sworn Kin, niece. And the thing that's broken free…." Swift gestured to the windows that overlooked the garden, where a pair of her young cousins were playing. "It might come for our families. It's best we do this now, before it runs too far and starts building up support again. Before it comes back here looking for us."

Seren's mouth twisted in displeasure. "And what if someone else comes? What if one of the Great Houses finally makes their move while you're out in the Threshold?"

She thought of the letters she and River had exchanged. There were always schemes afoot, and River knew how to read the political currents better than anyone Swift had ever met. Between what River's letters said and the whispers Swift herself had heard, she thought the status quo might last a little longer. "It's been three years, niece. It might be another three before anyone dares try to claim the throne. It *won't* be another three before this Anathema harms people again."

Seren *hmmphed,* but it was a sound that said she knew Swift was right. "Very well," she said, folding the letter and handing it back to Swift. "But I expect that if you hear word of an uprising, you'll hurry back here right away. We'll need you."

Less than an hour later, by the chiming of the Varangian clock, Swift rode out from the gates of the Tereya estate. She'd only paused long enough to write back to River and don her white jade armor. Anything else she needed, she could purchase on the road.

•••••

Much had changed for Mathar since last he'd seen his Brotherhood. Oh, Chalima called on him now and again, when her kingdom's responsibilities let her sneak in a diplomatic visit. Eshuvar wrote from time to time, his letters full of his exploits. But to see them all together again? He almost wished he'd learned some basic sorcery, to find some spell to get everyone gathered faster. His warhorse stamped as he checked the saddle one last time. The horse's green jade barding jingled, and Mathar knew he wasn't alone in the stable anymore.

"What do you want?" he said, not bothering to turn.

"I heard you were leaving Lookshy. Going out ranging. Where to?" The voice was smooth and smug, and it took all of Mathar's strength not to lift the biwa from the horse's back and smash it in his companion's face.

He didn't. Mainly because it would be a waste of a damned fine instrument. "What business is it of yours?"

She slipped into view, keeping a safe distance both from Mathar and the horse. A well-trained warhorse might bite on command, and Vaya wasn't going to find out how well Mathar's horse obeyed. "I thought I'd offer you another chance to change your mind about your friends. To prove your loyalty to Lookshy rather than a trio of Dynasts."

Mathar also didn't reach for his longfang. That took more effort. "I told you, no. I've told you that for forty years and it's not going to change."

Once, Mathar and Vaya had been peers. They were both vying to climb the ladder in Lookshyan intelligence, and Mathar was, by all accounts, the favorite for a newly opened position.

Until Vaya remembered his renown for killing the Anathema, and started asking around about his companions on that Hunt. Two Dynasts and a "found egg" married into a wealthy patrician family: one in the Imperial Navy, one respected among the Immaculate Order, and one in the Imperial Legions. His outcaste friend, ascended as queen of a Hundred Kingdoms province. Surely Mathar could lean on his friends for information, couldn't he?

Wouldn't he?

But to do that, to pass the contents of Swift's letters along to his higher-ups, or to ask River not-at-all innocuous questions about her observations in the Imperial City, or see what Eshuvar could tell him about Sesus' current interests, or report on Chalima's territory… no. He refused. His loyalties lay with his Hearthmates, even above his beloved Lookshy.

Vaya had reported that up the chain, and there had gone years of Mathar's hard work and ambition.

But he'd do it all over again, exactly the same.

"Your loss," said Vaya.

"I recommend you not be in the stables when I leave," said Mathar. His normally bright smile instead resembled a shark's hungry grin. "People get trampled all the time."

•••••

Left Hand Chalima draped her cloak of office over the chair and let Xocha help her with her steel breastplate's buckles. On the table beside her daiklave and devil caster sat River's letter. It had come the day after Chalima sent River a letter of her own, asking what the Realm's view on the surge of Anathema might be. She hadn't been accusatory in it — she respected River too much for that — but neither had she been subtle about her desire to ride in a Wyld Hunt, if she could. She supposed River could answer her questions in person when they were reunited.

Xocha checked the straps and buckles one more time, then declared Chalima ready. "Promise me you'll take care out there. I want you to come back to us."

Chalima smiled as Xocha caressed her cheek. "I will." She said it again, this time for Itzli, and felt her dead husband's cool, ghostly fingers trace her jaw.

"Good," said Xocha. "I'll only do so much of your paperwork before I decide to set the whole desk on fire."

"I wouldn't stop you if you wanted to. In fact…." She looked over at the piles of parchment needing her attention and reached for a pinch of firedust with a grin.

Xocha laughed and smacked her hand — gently, so as not to ignite the firedust. "When you get home, we'll see how far behind I am."

"It's a deal." Chalima kissed him once more, then hefted her weapons, and went to meet Mathar on the road.

•••••

They came together by the northern borders of the River Province, arriving within hours of one another. First Mathar and Chalima, then Swift, then Eshuvar and River. Where once there'd been an empty road, a town had sprung up. It was small, still, but had enough traffic and trade passing through to support a caravanserai. River suspected that its common room sat on the place where her commander's tent once stood, fifty years gone. She wondered if any of the things they'd left behind had paid for this place. If she peeked in the study, would she find the lap desk she'd used so long ago to write her dreadful condolences?

She shuddered. She hoped not. She hoped that had sunk into the ground and rotted away fifty years ago.

But here she was, among her friends. Among her Hearth. Eshuvar and Mathar sat close, their foreheads touching as they shared some intense story. Eshuvar said something that made Mathar throw back his head and laugh. It was the same laugh River remembered, hearty and full, unconstrained. Swift and Chalima had acquired a newly drawn map from somewhere — perhaps from off the inn's wall? They were already pointing out places to begin their search. River's contacts in the All-Seeing Eye had sent her a few leads, while Mathar had accessed reports from Lookshy's Intelligence Directorate. Small markers were scattered across the River Province where there'd been sightings of the Wretched.

Swift looked up and caught River watching them all. "We should swear again," Swift said. Mathar and Eshuvar went quiet. Chalima set down her glass.

"We should," said River, and got up to lead them all outside. She was fairly certain she knew exactly where they'd been standing the first time they swore their oath. It didn't take long to find it. By the time they all stood in a loose circle, a small crowd had gathered to watch.

"I swear," Chalima said, her voice as sure now as it had been back then, "by Earth; by Wood; by Fire; by Air; by Water…."

As their voices joined together and rang out into the evening, River thought how good it was to be home.



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Billy K
Bradley Osburn
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Cathak Moeru, Prophet of the Dragons.
Champions of the Stars
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Charles R
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Eric Silagi
Goblin Society
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Jaedo Wavesoul
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Tobi Addams
Vera Vartanian
Viktoria Julie Salzmann (Paragon Gal)
William "Midnight Fox" Coleman

Scion of the Scarlet Dynasty

"Fu"
"Plucky Hero"
"Thomas Wolf"
A McNab
A Tim Jones
A. Fewings
A.Henle
Aaron Haaf
Aaron Mouritsen
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Aaron Scott
Adam
Adam "Magus" Loyd
Adam "WhirlwindMonk"
Bednarek
Adam and Looie Krump
Adam Conner
Adam Epstein
Adam F
Adam Zacharias
Aero Vox
Aidan H.
Al Gonzalez
Alastair Irving
Albert Sandstedt
Aleksay
Alessandro Bruschi
Alessandro Ezio Lot
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Alex Bauer
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Asa DuBose
Atmu
Austin Andrews
Austin Moore
Austin Zeigler
autXautY
B. Huth
B. Jackson
B. Mariana
B.Herbig
B.R.
Bear Carson
Beittin
Bella Dona
Ben Cook
Ben Leong
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Ben Pimlott
Ben Russell
Ben Russell
Benjamin Gold
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Bernat Anton
Bill R
Black Rhum
Blaine W. Flowers
Blake McCormack
Bo Bratsberg
Bob Huss
Bob Manning
Bowie Sessions
Braden Kanipes
Brandon Baer
Brandon H
Brandon Paul
Brendan O'Donnell
Brennan Dawson
Brent Lundberg
Brett Alexander
Brian and Allison Dellinger
Brian Conley
Brian Jennings
Brian King
Brian Leddy
Brian Morton
Bruce Stone
Bryan Buschmann
Bryan Fowler
Bryan G
Bryan Stone
C. D. Raspin
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Camille Blackbird
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Carol Lai
Caroline Mendlewicz
Casey
Casey Johnson
Casey L.
Cedric « Sagara » Roland
Charles Strange
Charles Watford
Chase R.
Chosen of Luna W & A
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Chris 'AkatsukiLeader13' Gawne
Chris Brashier
Chris Coleman
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Chris Curry
Chris L.
Chris Lauth
Chris Mawford
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Chris Shaffer
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Clockworkfiction
Cody Black
Cody Murray
Cody Thoroman
Connor Whyte
Conor Pillasch
Corey Bruner
Corey Rhodes
Cory Gilman
Craig
Craig S. Cheairs
Crumplepunch
Curt Johann S.
Cynis Falen Aranet
D
D. Ault
D. Avant
D. C Wolf
D. Lim
D. Strokovsky
D. White
D.Falese
D.Hariman
Damien Wellman
Dan Cowden
Dane "Noctis" Madsen
Dani Jang (장일환)
Daniel "Arista"
Daniel Armishaw
Daniel De Bernardo
Daniel Fiaccone
Daniel Forinton
Daniel Gatten
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Daniel Markwig
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Dexter "Swift" Ray

Dillen Cooper
Dom Hero Ellis
Domina Symplis
Donald R. Clarke
Donald Squires
Donnie Hanby
Donovan Ranney
Don't include my name
Dorsey
Doug Rosenberger
Douglas Fotheringham
Dr. Devastation
Drew Clowery
Duan Bailey
Dwayne MacKinnon
Ed Morland
Edward Feeney
Eetu Pykäläinen
Elethayn
Eli B
Eli Wasick
Eliel
Ella Argueta
Emerald Winds
Emile St. Secaire
Eoin Maloney
Eric "Jheral" Lindroth
Eric Garcia
Eric Guffey
Eric Lin
Eric Lofgren
Eric McCommon
Eric Peterson
Eric Ruhnow
Eric Schuller
Erich D
Erik Bjorn
Erik Tyrrell
Erika Hoagland
Erin Firth
Erin Short
Ester Piña
Eugene Allen
Evan Dickson
Evan Lusky
Evil Midnight Lurker
Fake Name
Forrest Martin
Foul Shaxbot
Francesco L.
Frank Stibane
Fred P.
Fredrik "Mephil" Brinck
Freya Sessrúmnir
Froth
G Force.
G. Shellabear
Gareth Powell
Gary S
Gedeon McBain
Genevieve Cogman
George F. Robbins
George G Hoeflinger
George Parrott
Georgia Moody
Giles Knox
Glen Llorca
Glenn Fayard
Graham Kemp
Grant Anderson
Greg Peterson
Greg Voss
Gregory Rolfe
Gregory Smith
Gunar Liepins
Gunner Gawith
Guy Reece
H. Mainzer
Halwin Malison
Hanne R.
Happy Yeti
Heath De Witt
Heidi Shelton
Herman Page
HK-87
Hugh D.
Ian Franke
Ian Hamilton
Ian Holzman
Ian Otto
Ian Ruark
Ibon Presno Gonzalez
Iorwerth Owain Thomas
irodrigu13
Isaac Obeng
Isabelle Godin
Iselsi Nadia
Islesi Marros
Ivan V. A. N. Slipper
J Sköld
J Troyer
J. Barnett
J. Dabe
J. Krutt
J. Random Hacker
J. Vig
J. Will
J.Byrge
J.Moran
Jackson Brantley
Jacob
Jacob Bodmer
Jacob Mandel
Jacob VanGunda
Jacqui Macgregor-Pahl
Jake Mandel
Jalinth
James
James
James B
James Barton
James Bun
James Ford
James Freeman
James Glanville
James N.
James Pitt
James Wesley
James Whelan
JamieXIII
Jan Mäkinen
Jane Narbon
Jani Heino
Jantzen Bell
Jason "Empyrean" Jones
Jason Ramboz
Jason Ross
JD Maynard
JDJ Plocher
Jeffrey Chow
Jeffrey Gilbert
Jeffrey Kreider
Jeffrey Merola
Jeffrey Meyer
Jeffrey S. Mintz
Jeffrey Simpson
Jeffrey W. Borden
Jeph Lewis
Jere Manninen
Jeremey
Jeremy D. Parker
Jeremy Seeley
Jesse Anderson
Jesse Bigger
Jesse Riggs
Jessica Petersen
Jesus Luzon
Jim Schofield
Joachim Treimmer
Joakim Abrahamsson
João Pedro Rodrigues
Joe Rainwater-Cummings
Joel Silverman
Joeyjojo

John
John “Woeden” Berks
John Baston
John D Kennedy
John Daly
John Hyl.
John Kulp
John LE BLANC
John Lorinskas
John Palmer
John TK Veltman
Johnathan Rummage
Jón Gísli Björgvinsson
Jon Michael Razp
Jon Nay
Jonathan A
Jonathan Bauleke
Jonathan Lang
Jonathan Marshall
Jonathan Stoetzer
Jonathan van Ekelenburg
Jordan Woodhouse
Jörg G.
Joris
Joseph Dempsey
Joseph Horan
Joseph P.
Joseph Senior
Joseph Shipley
Josh Raymond
Joshua Cremer
Joshua Spiegel-Brown
Jow
JP Bridier
Jubbinaut
Julian P.
Jürgen Czerny
Jürgen Hubert
Justin Delaney
Justin Melton
Justin Whitman

K
K Hood
K.G. Haught
K.Kofoed
K.L.Svarrogh
Kajetan Abt
Kalzky
Karasawa Aokahime
Kari Tuurihalme
Karl Hailperin
Katherine “April” P.
Kathryn Schiller Wright
Katrina Agdestein
Katrina Ostrander
Keith A Harper
Keith Pare
Kelly Pedersen
Kergonan
Kevin Chauncey
Kevin Mueller
Kim houtmeyers
Kirsi Solovyeva
Kolbey Araujo
Konrad Tucher
Kris W
Krissy Thomas
Kristian Magnus Pettersen
Kristopher Volter
Krystopher Haynes
Kuyan Judith
Kyle Delint
Kyle Novich
Kyle Stoneman
Lauren Hays
Lauren Priest
Laurence M. Pereira
Ledaal Zyden, the Spear of Heaven
Lee Saxon
Leeruri
Leonard Tai

Leonardo Cruz
Leslie
Lewis McCoy
Lexi Hernandez
Li Jiyang
Liam Miller
Liz Duong
Loki. Wyrm
Luca S.
Lukas Albrecht
Luke Moran
Luke Wethington
Lupin Chevalier
M Beck
M Jowett
M Randy
M. Albuquerque
M. Box
M. Kremer
M. Mathew
M. Moore
M. Trent
M. W. Oldhaver
M. Williamson
Mad_Rat
Madeline McCaul
Maggie
Magnus Lundgren
Mäkelä Atte
Marc Pantel
MarcDuhal
Marcus Dageryd
Marjolaine V.
Mark “Toroid” Rae
Mark A. Baagø
Mark Parker
Markus Raab
Marshall Brengle
Marshall Chaney
Martin Alonso
Martin Gattis

Martin Hansen
Martin Jenner
Mary E. L.
Mason O’Neil
Mathias Jack
Mathieu Lapierre
Matt Bainbridge
Matt Cadwallader
Matt H
Matt Houle
Matt Lemmons
Matt Strawn
Matt V
Matt Weatherson
Mattan Abergel-Mamane
Matthew Aper
Matthew Foley
Matthew Harrison
Matthew J. Gillen
Matthew Jones
Matthew Lawrenson
Matthew Lussi
Matthew McKitrick
Matthew P.
Matthew Russo
Matthew Siegel
Matthias Wasser
Maximilian Schug
Max Romanco
Maxum Immaculaten monk of Hesiesh
meianmaru
Menmeth Stormwind
Merrygoblin
Michael “Waju” Canfield
Michael Agapeyev
Michael Amirault
Michael B Warren
Michael Beck
Michael J. O’Connor
Michael Jacobson

Michael McAvoy
Michael Parker
Michael Sanguinetti
Michaella Amora Ragowsky
Michelot Bertrand
MightyHunter
Mikael Assarsson
Mike Bowie
Mike Gilligan
Mike Koster
Mike Ong
Mike W. Leavitt
Miroslav Žůrek
mitchberthelson
MItchell Diamond
Mithridantes Goldenleaf
Mnemon Antares
Mnemon Terod
Moreno Bianconcini
Morgan Cassidy
Morty
Mr. Rage
MuscaDomestica
N Green
N. Canfori
N. Torda
N.Harrow
Nate Martin
Nathan Carroll
Nathan Dillabough
Nathan Giles
Nathaniel Rivers
Newton Grant
Nicholas Kirkpatrick
Nicholas Peterson
Nick Ashton
Nick Cadigan
Nick Irish
Nick Kline
Nick Stella
nico
Nicola Went
Nicolai
Nigel Steven McShane
Niko
Nitsan Bracha
Old Lunar
Olivier Bérubé-Fortin
Ondřej Böhm
Oomizuao
Ostarion
Oughan
Owen Cartwright
Owen Griffiths
P. Burks
P. Keller
P.McKnight
Paolo Biggio
ParaPara ParaPara
Pare
Pat McMullin
Patrick Chapman
Patrick Fagan
Patrick H
Patrick Murphy
patty efird
Paul Harris
Paul Hayes
Paul Kingston
Paul Ryan
Paul Thompson
Paul Waldron
Paulo Contopoulos
Peleps Venya
Perverseness
Peter Dean
Peter Filipe
Peter Lee
Peter Steponaitis
Phil Ames
Phil Hattie
Philip Beal
Philipp Hinderer
Philippe Prigent
phragmosis
Pierre Chaloux
Pierre Dupuy
Preston Bruce
prototype00
Pumchu
Queshire
quinn
Quinton Huntington-Silver
R. Colin Nelson
R. Haberzettl
R.Weston
Raf Bressel
Rafe Richards
Ragara Ehar
Randy Berry
Randy Massey
Ray Hodson
Ray Newman
Raymond Welt
Rebecca Harbison
Red Panda Lunar Waifu
Reetta Raitanen
Remo Pendowski
Remy Lester
Reth Shannar
Richard brooks
Richard Handy
Richard Mehlinger
Richard Pardy
Richard Pennertz
Rick Jones
Rob Donoghue
Rob Sansone
Rob Wall
Robert Armstrong
Robert Christmas
Robert Fitzgerald
Robert Frost
Robert G. Male
Robert L. Lewis
Robert Mooney
Robert Rutherford
Robin Bell
Robin Hellgren
Robin Longhurst
Robinson Fulcher
Rodger L. Gamblin
Ron Searcy
Ronald Bev
Rory J.
Rotekian Xynth
Ruby Monsoon
Ryan Dukacz
Ryan Elliott
Ryan Gersovitz
Ryan Gracey
Ryan Kent
Ryan Looney
Ryan McWilliams
Ryan Poindexter
Ryan Wellman
Ryo Ogawa
S. Lim
S. Miller
SAM
Sam “Scattershot” Miller
Sam Clarke-Willson
Samuel Brana-Soto
Santeri Leppänen
Satchel
Satoshi Nakamoto
Scambonious Funk
Scott Dockery
Scott Hebert
Scott Kelley Ernest
Scott Kendrick
Scott Ryder
Sean Greaney
Sean Patterson

Sean too thanks
seb
Sebastian Sigmon
Sebastiano Sitran
Seraaron
Serrah's Aoi
Seth Klein
Seven Deadly Whispers
Shafi Ziauddin
Shane G.
Shane Scriven
Shardstar
Shay Stringer
Shen. Hung-Yang
She-Who-Knows-10,000-Things
Shining Fire of the Mind
Sieben Flammen
Silvio Herrera Gea
Simon J. T. Kunz
Simon Jennings
Sion I Fidelis
Sofia Harkin
SrNavarre
Stefan K.
Stephen Denison
Stephen Egolf
Stephen Ford
Steven Locke
Steven Thesken
stilgar the triumphant judge
Stoker
Stuart Taft
Sven M.
Sven Podewils
Sydney C.
T. Haakinen
Taft Punk
Tanay Dutta
Tara Urbanek
Ted Johansson
Ted Ludemann
Tepet Jinyan
TerraNova
Terth
Tetsuzuru Akeha
Tharek
Thaumaterge
The Circle with No Name
The Errant
The Luminate
The reserve Harpists
The Unconquered Sun
The_Reptile_
TheWzrd
Thiago Harry
Thomas A Rider
Thomas H. Elsom
Thomas Hargrove
Thomas Panebianco
Tiernán Ó hAlmhain
Tim S
Timolution
Timothy C
Toloran
Tom Garrett
Tom Ladegard
Tomisser Manuel
Tørkede Arlfson
Totenrand
Travis Clemens
Travis Penrod
Travis Tomon
Trevor Hannon
Troy Brown
Troy Ellis
Tuomas Lempiäinen
Tweedbarista
TwoQuestions
Ty Logan Rollins
Tybar
Venatius
Viatos
Victor Nicollet
Victor T.
Vilkas Fowler
Violet Green
Violet Storm on the Sea of Shadow
Viveka Nylund
Vojtech Pribyl
Vultor Daer
W.Bentley
Walker Glassmire
Walter S
Warr Byrd
Warren Myers
Wasitora
Weltwandler
Will Farley
Will Hudson
Will North
Will Robinson
Will S.
William Cappelletti
Winterstar
World War Kaan
Wren
Xaq Morris
Xavier Spinat
Yannick Chartrand
Zachary Nimkoff
Zahras
Zane Roskoph
Zuirgarisha

Minister of the Thousand Scales

A. C.
A. Quentin Murlin
Aaron
Aaron Braegen
Aaron J. Schrader
Aaron M Keating
AC
Adam Kosakowski
Adam Pecar
Adrian Praetorius
Aela Brighteyes
Agrael Fidavis.
Alan R McKane
Aleksandra Janusz-Kamińska and Mikołaj Kamiński
Alex Stuart
Alex Whisennand
Alexander Armstrong
Alexander Boucher
Alexander Munkelwitz
Alexandre "Wingless" Tiv
Alison Gill
Amiel Kievit
András Adrovicz
Andrew Clark
Andrew Gedrich
Andrew Leggett
Andrew McAteer
Andrew Stephens
Andrew Stevens
Andrzej Kubera
Angela Prendergast
Antoine ASTIER
Aravon Harlingar
Artur 'Evin' Plociennik
Ashes of the Phoenix
Aurius Vorayn
Austin Coccia
Avalon Zayakev The Azure

Shadow of the Seas
Ben Walker
Benjamin P BB
Benjamin s
Bernd Kruse
Bill Stull
Bishop Clarke
Blair Cliff
Blake
Błażej “Rals” Kosiński
Borgia Leandra and Kisaragi Miyuki, taking on the threshold hand in hand.
Bradley Yesko
BRANDON MASTERS
Brazen Infernal Lion
Brent Page
Bri
Brian Campbell
Brian Nisbet
Brook C Hubbard
Bruce Turner
Bruno Giuliano Nicolau
Bryce s Mcewen
Buddy Richards
C Canadian
Cathak Cythan
Cathi Gertz
Charles L’Espérance
Charles S. Morrill
Charlie “PookaKnight” Cantrell
Chase Horn
Chasym
Chris Gunning
Chris Hall
Chris Raney
Chris Snyder
Christen D
Christer Malmberg
Christian A. Nord
Christian Dante
Christoph Schulz
Christopher “Diablerist” Lenaris
Christopher Gallo
Christopher Humphrey
Christopher J. Dowling
Christopher Kaufman
Chubby Kobold Gaming
Clark Clawson
Claudio “Cianfe” Cianferoni
Clyde Arrowny
Cody K.
Corbin McMahel
Corpse-Body Dragon
Cristo Kyriazis
Curtis Helsley
Cynis Falen Nissica
Cynis Kurgal
D. Handley
D. Kruse
D.J. Sweet
D.S. Jenkins
Damien C.
Damien Starlurker
Dan Lewis
Daniel “Muecke” Gebel
Daniel and Elizabeth McLeroy
Daniel P Owens
Daniel Poulin
Daniel Singer
Darkshmoo
Dashekita N. Brooks
Dave Jones
Dave Rosenzweig
David “JustDave” Talboy
David A Bradley
David Figueroa
David Harrison
David Liming
Dayton Johnson
Del Webb
Dennis Lowrey
Dhillon Singh
Diana C. Jakobs
Dirk Walbrühl
Douglass Kern
DrowDrew
Eben
Edward Monical-Vuylsteke
Elegiac Catalyst
Elliott Freeman
Elliott I Davis
Emily Brumfield & Susann Hessen
Eoin Burke
Eric Faulwell
Eric Minton
Eric Smailys
Erik M
Erik Radman
Eryi the Graceful Inferno
Esben Mølgaard
Evan Larkin
Evan W.J. Parson
Fabio V.
Fletcher
Flint “Raemus” Olsen
flowerysong
Francis Arachea
François Drouin-Morin
Frankie Mundens
Frazier Manfull
Fredrik “Dremacon” Oskarsson
Gabe T.
Gerald Claycomb
Adam ‘Diesel’ Fairris
Gina Ricker
Glen Nelson
Glen R. Taylor
Graham Starfelt
Greg C-M
Gregg “Pyrosorc” Parrott
Harrison “Merlinhawk” Furmidge
Harrison Sharp
Harvest of an Age Past
Hauke van Almelo
HEEELGA!
Heinrich Krebs
Himno de Humillación
Hubnutzen
Hyun-Shik
Ian Price
Ian S.
Ikalios
ipsi
Iron Phoenix
Isaac Carr
Isaiah Bahr
J. Bär
J. H. Frank
J. Rodrigues
Jack E.
Jack Milton
Jacob “light-hero” Bruhn Paasch
Jacob Bjørnø Klünder
Jacob L. Osborne
James Jones
James Rodrigues
James Shaw
Jared Fattmann
Jared Koon
Jason Barton
Jason C Marshall
Jason Dickerson
Jason Ross Inczauskis
Jasper Stafleu
Jeffrey Hayes
Jenny Langley
Jesal Sena
Jim Searcy
Joachim Mander
Joe Black

Joe Edge
John A W Phillips
John Baggett
John Beadle
John Pennington
John Stansbury
Jonathan Head
Jonathon Burgess
Jose Diaz
Joseph Zavcer
Josh Morse
Joshua
Joshua Gammon
Jub Jub, Fear Be His Name
Justin Lawless
Justin Sandhu
K W Mocabee
Kalasmourn
Kareem Gabriel Fortes
Kate Adams
Kazumi Chin
Keldi
Kelly and Alex Beigh
Ken Brandt
Kenneth Gilbert
Kevin Paramore
Khalayn Sepret
Kolton E. Mohn
Konig-Wolf
Korey Enright
Kylan Day
Kyle Oppy
Kyle Rimmer
Kyle Wheeler
Laurence Cooper
Lawrence Reynolds
Lawrence Thrall
Ledaal Kebok Nuzel
Lee Elliott
Lee Hefner
Liam Murray
Lina Weingård
Lindsay Paul
Lord Fox-Huntington
lordofgibberish
Luciole au Masque de Jade
Lucy Moulton
Lyam Trainor
Lyle Hansen
mads madsen
Majdi Badri
Maly
Manosque So Ren
ManusDomine
Marc B.
Marco Klomfas
Mark Cornelius
Mark E. Kwaitkowski
Mark Rucker
Markus Viklund
Martin Deppe
Massimo Cassiani
Matt Blocksom
Matt Lyons
Matt Proctor
Matt Rock
Matthew Cooper
Matthew Einhorn
Matthew Kuhn
Matthew Sanderson
Matthew Scott
Matthew Skillings
Matthew Tait
Matthew York
Max Meyers
McLeprechaun
Micaiah
Michael “Locke” Macary
Michael Hording
Michael Mooney, The Tyranny of Books
Michael Prather
Michael Wood
Micheal Howell
Michele Marie Arko
Michelle
Mike Ostrokol
Minister Kiara Dawn’s Hope
MintPhoenix
Mischa Wolfinger
Mnemon Gentlewave
Morgan Weeks
Moxiane
Nathaniel Colón
Nelens Raphael
Nicholas Kosky
Nicholas Stylianou
Nick Esposito
Nick Herhilan
Nick Long
Nick W
Nicki Saurage
Niklas Nordberg
Nikolaus Salvador Keuter
O. Clegg
Odanuki
Pär Lindén
Paradim
Pater Père Brind’amour
Patrice St-Louis
Patrick Flannigan
Patrick Healey
Paxson Bachus
peelingchrome
Peleps Lago
Peleps Sepeta Arlun
Penguin King Games Inc.
Petter Wäss
Phil Spalding
Pierre “Tyrendia” Martin
Pól Stafford
Prayers In The Dark
Prince E. Maxi
R. Sean Callahan
Raevyn Fletcher
Rajiv García Meguel Bartol
Ralf G.
Rasmus Lyngkjær
Reynard Kisigari
Rich Pelvin
Richard August
Rkaiyu and Lisette
robdog
Robert Coutu
Robert Davidson
Robert Riley
Robert Whitehouse
Ronan Comaskey
Rose Henke
Ross Owen Qualls
Russ Trippett
Russell Desman
Ryan Coltrain
Ryan Edlinger
Ryan Holden
S. Ralph
Sairasu
Saleem Halabi
Scott Mullock
Sean and Katherine Handcock
Seán Leaney
sean novak
Sean O’Neill
Sebastian Strid
Sesus Tikor
Sethteich Ardestahdt
Shawn Hagen
Shelby Mehl
Solomon Nehrig
Spencer Wilson
Steph
Stephen Abounader
Stephen Lea Sheppard

Steve Huntsberry
Steve Martin
Steve Zelenty
Steven Brunner
Stewart Polshaw
Studious Gao
T. Ebert
Taliesin Morgan
Tao Fan
Taxman
Tellyn Languedoc
Tepet Berel Sanya
Tepet Chenow
Tepet Kevian
The Maiden Roxo
The Sovereign Hammer Khou
The Viper of Seven Waves
Theodore Alteneder
Thomas A Fagan
Thomas Hunkeler
Thomas Schadeberg
Titus of the Vermillion Legion
Todd Goldberg
Tom Coleman
TomAtlus
Tommie Boatwright
Torrey Stouder-Studenmund
Travis Totcky
Trevor C Hughes
Tricia Guillot
Tyler Carpenter
Uri Almazán Alvarado
Victor
Vincent Gonsalves
Vincent Turchetta
Violetta_Cantrell
V'neef Syne
Walter F. Croft
Waroth Kel'dire
William Darpinian
Z the Lightbringer
Z. Starr
Zack Jeffreys
zmt00
Zobot257

IMPERIAL MAGISTRATE

"Cursed for Vengeance Sated"
"J. Langley & L. Karry"
A. Gunnerson
A. Leslie
A. Strange
A. von Köhler
A. Wang
Aaron "Sunder" Schweitzer
Aaron Fleishman
Aaron James
Aaron 'Shrike' Nightingale
Ada Lerner
adam
Adam Carbone
Adam Debus
Adam "Invisible Iron Crane Harrier" Fry
Adam Mock
Adam Rajski
Adam Thomas-Brashier
Adam Whitcomb
Adrian "Maarken Brashari" Cumming
Adrian Tymes
Ain Soph Aur
Alan Lateer
Alan Orr
Alex B
Alex F.
Alex Gagnon
Alex Karge
Alex Tigwell
Alexander M
Alexander Ma
Alexander Rodriguez
Amara Ahmed
Amaranth
Amit Ben Zeev
Amy Veeres
Anders Mejstrick
Andrei Antonio Gonzalez Reyes
Andrés Muñoz Alarc
Andrés Santiago Pérez-Bergquist
Andrew
Andrew D. Watson
Andrew Kole
Andrew M.
Andrew McGraw
Andrew Mcmenemy
Andrew Waterfall
Andy Zeiner
Aneurin J Harrow
Angelborn
Annah Comyn
Anne W
Anonymous
Anthony Dami
Anthony E Harbo
Anthony McLoughlin
Anthony Tarola
Arajin the white Lion
Aredin Lentier
Arkon Nielsen
Arwen Ross
Ash Hubbard
Ash Walter
Ashiya
AtticusSteele
Audrey Paiement
Austin "Geomantic Positioning System" Loomis
Austin Lamb
Azouth
B. Deniker and J. Poppenbeck
B. J. Chojnacki
B. Stellfox
B.J. Black
Backris
Baofengyu
Basileus
Beachfox
Ben Kruger
Ben Stewart
Ben Wood
Benjamin "BlackLotos" Welke
Benjamin "eSca" Reed
Benjamin Grand
Benjamin Loy
Benjamin White
Benoit "LeTipex" Perraud
Benoit Devost
Bentley W. Chism
Benton Little
Bertrand Kuentzler
Bess Everett
Bilious "Exploding Frogs" Slick
Bill James
Bill Shaffer
Bill Weepie
BJ McManus
Blair A Monroe

Blazing Emerald Voice
Booty GOODz
Brad
Brad Bears
Bradley D.
Brandan Yares
Brandon and Kimberly Utter
BrandonQ
Brannen
Brenden Miller
Brennan Greene
Brennan Willingham
Brennen Willer
Brent Nellis
Brett Lindow
Brian C. Bowman
Brian Creswick
Brian Quinn
brian walgren
Brigette Swan
Brightfires
Broken Boughs
Bruce Ferguson
Bryce Undy
Caleb Haddix
Caleb Shelley
Cameron Starkel
Cameron Wise
Carl Lyon
Carles Samarra
Carlos "ChecaWolf" Checa Barambio
Carter Michael Dohoney
Cassandra W
Cathak Bavos
"Cathak Ibara Ju-Li"
Cecil Maye
Charan DuFrançois
Charis Siozios
Charles Crowe
Charles Lines
Charles Nichols
Chazz Kellner of The Story Told
Cherry Blossom on the Wind
Chris 'Errant' Harper
Chris Bras
Chris Chambers
Chris Eggers
Chris Larrabee
Chris Mangum
Chris Marsili
Chris McPeake
Chris Venus
Chris Wagner
Christian
Christian Carugo
"Christian Higuti
Czar Santos
Cesar da Mota"
Christian Selgrad
Christie Jennings-Wyckoff
Christoph Laurer
Christopher Bolster
Christopher Campione
Christopher Coward
Christopher Dubuque
Christopher Frances
Christopher Lavery
Christopher Lee Moore
Christopher Martin
Christopher Noske
Christopher 'Orannius' Kay-Chalk
Christopher Trapp
Clayton Bell
Clete D. Collum
Cody M Kern
Cody Marbach
Colin Earle
Colin Fredericks
Colin Urbina
ColinJ
Connor Ryan
Copper Crow
Corey Elliott
Corwyn Alambar
Cory Pinto
Coyotekin
Craig Bishell
Craig Bonnes
Craig Mercer
Crescens
Curtis Stark
cveachmartin
Cynis 'No Man's Child' Kagami
Cynis Orin
Cynis Ragus
D. Cruise
D. Lacheny
D.Ladopoulou
D.S.
Dacar Arunsone
Dan Tunseth
Dana
Dana Jacobson
Daniel Engström
Daniel Ericsson
Daniel Hoover
Daniel L. Gochnauer
Daniel Norton
Danny "Dman" May
Danny Fisher
DarkBlaze
Dashiel Nemeth
Dave Poppel
david andrew dutton
David Boniface
David D.
David Devier
David Dorward
David Gearhart
David Likar
David McKie
David Miller
David Mitchell
David Rego
David Sander
David Scott (Gaius)
David Sonderling
David Weidendorf
David Winterbottom
Dawn Michaels
Dawngreeter
Deadly Reed
Dean Harmon
Denis Matray
Dennis Cowan
Denshi no Yousei
Devin H
Devin La Salle
Dmitri Kolytchev
Donnie "Lord Aludian" Roos, Jr.
DPS
Drew (Andrew) South
Drew and Tia McLeroy
Drew Stevens
DUMAS
Dylan Humphries
Ed Gibson
Elais Player
Elias Helfer
Elizabeth Barnfield
Ellie Whitten
Elspeth Thorne
Elzo Tovani Benzaquen
EmanantVolition
Emiliano Marchetti
Empty Sky
Epitome
Erebus & Ariadne Cote

Eric
Eric Alexander Arroyo
Eric Allen
Eric Schalk
Erik Daguerre
Erik Gurule
Erik Welehodsky
Eryck Brisson
Ethan Wilke
Evan Lewis
Everett Oakley
Fabian Nordenskjöld
Feder
Felix Shafir
FellowsBrokenknee
Filip Van Huffel
Fire's Bloom
Fireside
Florian Weiss
Francis Delaney
Francis Helie
François "Eznoka" Perriot
François Boivin
Frank Hayden
Frank McCormick
Frédéri "Volk Kommissar Friedrich" POCHARD
Fredrik Lyngfalk
G.Ess
G.F. Duthie
Garrel V'neef
Gaspard Fleury
Gavin Mutter
Gearov
GenericMaleNPC01
Geoff S.
Geoffrey (Jetstream) Walter
Geoffrey Neil Meikle
Glen Blosser
Glenn McClure
Golodhrim
Gonzo Ramírez
gotyaoi
Gray Huntzinger
Graziano Zanichelli
Great Designs of Perfect Wisdom, Immaculate Instructor and Sidereal Exalted (Club Mecatol Rex, Madrid)
Greg Colfer
Greg Larkin
Greg Link
Greg Nitchals
Greg Roy
Greg Valleau and Red Cone
Greg Weir
Gregory H. Connell
Griffin Mitchell
Guillermo Heras Prieto
Halvor S. Grønaas
Hank Driskill
HAO
He who follows the trail of tears shed by the widows of his slain foes
Henrik J.
Henry F. Bruckman Vargas
His Magnificence Lord Fuzzy
Hugo Richard
Iain King
Ignatius Montenegro
Imran Inayat
Ingrid Emilsson
Iomhar
Iselsi Hiroyuki, The Eye who Turned
Itzhak Even
Ivo "Xireon" Goudzwaard
J. Angell
J. Jönsson
J. P. "Exrandu" Bauer
J. Schlutter
J. W. Bennett
Jack Riggins
Jackie Anderson
Jacob Bieber
Jade Fox (KJS) and the Obsidian Leapard
Jae Michels
Jair Vianna
James "Cyborg Stan" Diller
James Innes
James Moar
James Okkema
James Small
Jami Morrison
Janiv A Mann.
Jared Buckley
Jared Levi
Jared Shields a.k.a. Darkstone
Jared Slupsky
Jaron Kennedy
Jason Duncan
Jason Italiano
Jason Place
Jason Polson
Jason W. Hall
Jay Smith
Jeff Churchill
Jeff Taylor
Jeff Tressler
Jeff Zitomer
Jeffrey and Christopher
Jeffrey Brodovsky
Jeffrey Palmer
jeg
Jennifer Neff
Jens Ole Knudsen
Jens Thorup Jensen
Jeremy and Tasha Cue
Jeremy Brown
Jeremy Gwinner
Jeremy Mowery
Jeremy Puckett
Jeremy R. Smith
Jeremy Salyer
Jesse Belanger
Jesse Breazeale
Jesse Goble
Jesse Sauer
Jessy J. T.-Bigras
Jim Heide
Jim Stock
Jimi Jon
Joe Arnaud
John 'FearMeForIAmPink' Franglen
John Jerdet
John Lambert
John M Atkinson
John R. Trapasso
John Rafter
John Ruddy
Jon Morin
Jonathan Backer
Jonathan David Rust
Jonathan Finke
Jonathan Weber
Jonathon R. Gershon
Jonci Aguillard
Jorgamond
Joseph Burbank
Joseph Earthborne, Bonus Administrator of Imperial Narrative
Josh
Josh Rayden
Josh Robison
Joshua Brown
JP Estey
Jukka Karvonen
Julian Kuleck
Julien "Crop Weaver" Teychené-Blanc
Julien LECLEIRE

Junshi
Justin Buckley
Justin Mabry
Justin S
JV “Arkon Ender” Picard
K. T. Smith
Kaeli Chambers
Kaelidin
Kate Crittenden
Katrina Phillip
Kay Seidel
Kaylee “Lokisdottir” Ashaman
Keegan Clefisch
Keegan Sullivan
Keichi Okami
KEK7go
Ken Finlayson
Kennedy Jones
Kepa Eizaguirre-Borreson
Kevin Case
Kevin Hanley
Kim Dahlin
Kim Janfalk Carlsson
Kirke Rafael
Kitagawa Chihiro
Klaek
Konstantinos Rosmpoglou
Krister M. Michl
Kurtis Dube
Kylar Nerazzo
Kyle Liming
Kyle Burton
L. Dyson
L.Kamptner
Lance Arnold
Lara Collins
Larae Dragos
Lars Holgaard
Lars Lauridsen
Lauren Voswinkel
Laurie & Genevieve
Lawrence G.
LCollins
Ledaal Kebok Catala
Ledaal Ranil
Ledaal Ratan, the Black Butterfly Magistrate
Lee Leggett
Libor Dener
“Louis-Philippe Desroches
Pierre-Olivier Desroches
Ian Brayer
Jonathan Bibeau
Jean-Martin Larochelle”
Luca Beltrami
Lucas Brown
Lucy “wyrdness” Fletcher
Luke Phillips
Lydia H.
M. Barselow
Maciej “Delf” Baran
Maciej Napiórkowski
Mads Jessen
Magistrate Aaron McKay
Magus
Mak Andrlon
“Makoto Mizuhara
Ifurita”
Malte Schultz
Mana Taylor
Marc Lummis
Marcus “Vorpalesque” McClure
Margaret Meyers
Marissa Sidhe-Laux de Souza Lima
Mark “Fukata” Hill
Mark A. Moore
Mark Couture
Mark Magagna
Mark Solino
Mark Wankier
Mark Williams
Markus K.
Marques Haley
Martin Cumming
Mary M.
Matt (Strength of the Mountain) and Miranda (Nexa) Gnepper
Matt Breece
Matt Herrboldt
Matt Hufstetler
Matt Meader
Matt Petruzzelli
Matthew Blanski
Matthew Doherty
Matthew Dunne
Matthew Earlywine
Matthew G Payton
Matthew J. Martens
Matthew Nixon
Matthew Palsson
Matthew Roberts
Matthew Tridento
Matthew Bambridge
Matthias Pettersson
Matthias Pilz
Max B. Werner
Max Lerin “Khamyr Lannan”
Maxim May
Maximilian Mnemon
Meles Badger
Meredith Theaker
Michael “Monghani” Watkins
Michael “Storyteller” Holland
Michael Bruner
Michael Connolly
Michael DAwson
Michael Feldhusen
Michael Finch
Michael Gilson
Michael Kostruba
Michael Porter
Michael Segarra
Michael Sims
Micheal Glenn
Mike “Laz” MacMartin
Mike Montgomery
Mike Richards
Mouseychan
Murakami Arashi
N.James
Nasser al’Ahmad
Natalya Kelley
Nathanael Grinnell
Nathaniel Davis
Nicholas and Kelley Radcliffe
Nicholas Chivas
Nicholas D. Dragisic
Nick Keyuravong
Nick Payida
Niels van Tol and Brend Wanders
Nightwinder
Nikhil Majumdar
Niki Chrétien
NinjaHELL!’s Roll The Page Podcast (Neena, Logan, CW, Adam, Kendall, Patrick)
Ntslatko
NWZ
Obedient Ivy
Octavio Arango
Oren Geshuri
Orukan
Oscar Ubeda Segmar
Otso Pajunen
Overflowing Crystal Glass
Owen Milton
P.Link
Pants McPants
Panu ”Possessed” Laukkanen

Pascal Koos
Pat Prince
Patrick “Jobin” Curoe
Patrick Bryant
Patrick Eli Dunn
Paul Chaisson
Paul Lukianchuk
Paul Singleton
Paul Weimer
Pebbles Darwin
Peleps Shinobu
Peleps Teokar
Peter Baldwin
Peter Engebos
Peter Petrovich
Petrea Boning
Petri Wessman
Petteri Turtiainen
Philip D Carter
Philipp Neurohr
Phoebia&Aviru
pinvendor, Legendary Merchant of Pins
PitDigger
Pratap Gajjala
Preston L. Bobo
PsyberOwl
R Hendriks
R. Simons
Rae C.
Rafael and Luciana Devera
Rain & Aidenn
Randel Evans
Ravraxas
Refhi
Rev. Phillip Malerich
Richard C. Clarke
Richard Clayton
Richard Jenkin
Richard Sexton
Richard Stratton
Richard Visentheiner
Rick Luebbers
Riklurt
Rob Lally
Robert Biskin
Robert D. Mayotte
Robert DeCaroli
Robert H. Mitchell Jr.
Robert Jordan
Roberto Hoyle
Rogerio TM
Roland Ayliffe
Romain de l’Adret du Piciorus
ron beck
Ronald Neises
Ronald Steeves
Rory Whittle
Ross Ramsay
Ross Shaw
Ross Story
Ruby Hidden in the Sands.
Russell Stross
Ryan
Ryan “Galby” Galbraith
Ryan Ferguson
Ryan Moore
Ryan Poss
S Doorley
Salia Markudewan
Sam Garamy
Sam Gruber
Sameer Yalamanchi
Samuel H.
Samuel Karlin Björk
Saturnus
Saul Schimek
SAVARIAULT Jean-Christophe
Sayantan Bandyopadhyay
Schelos
Scott Kuban
Scott Mitchell
Sean Massaro
Sean McAlister
Sean Moore
Seana McGuinness
Sebastian Menke
Sebastian P. Rochefort
sebi77
Seras Seral
Sesus Ceravik
Sesus Weijin Jahar
Shai’haud The Golden Prophet
Shan Wolf
Shanna Broussard
Shannon Hames, Anthony Youssef, and Gordon Chapman
Shawn C Campbell
Shawn Connor
Shawn P
shlagevuk
Shu The Pirate
Simon Andrews
Simon Lavigueur
Skafte
Slaunyeh
Sobriquet
Somajima “Quercia Tempestosa”
Song of the Butterfly and the Depths
SophieGSirois
Stanley Swierzewski
Star ‘n Six
Steel Lotus
Stefano Monachesi
Stephan Szabo
Stephen Gawrit
Stephen T
Steve Wohlwend
Steven Ehrbar
Stuart “Pattern Spider” Adam
Surih
Suzushiro Aoi
Sydney Savoy
T. Jetzfellner
T.J. Wilson
Taiga Brenerman
Taizei Karal Ryu Daichi
Takero
Taren
TastyMusic
Ted Williams
Tepet Kaven
Tepet Yena Xiru
Teresa O.
Terrance A. Bryant
Terrence Deming
Terry L Gilbert Jr
Tessa McLaughlin
Tetsuo
The Brothers Nellens Benata
The Illustrious Mage of Cows
The Stacy Family
The Unsung Hero
TheBearIsDriving
Thiago Gueiros Tavares da Silva
Thomas Connolly
Thomas Huddleston
Thomas Hunt
Thomas Martin
Thomas Maund
Thomas Reval
Thomas Slaughter
Thorn Amidst Roses
Thurman F. Carey IV
Tiemi Hashizume
Tim Davis
Timothy Mushel
Tobias B. L. Jørgensen,

Frej Guldberg Hansen
Tom G Huber
Tom Moss
Tommy T. K. Phannareth
Tony Adkins
Tony Bilzi
Tony Ferrannini
Trollune
Troy Lenze
Trygve Lie
Two Steps Over the Horizon
Tyler Shield
Tyler Wirth
Tyson Collins
Valles
Vincent “Victorien Loyola” Mora
Vitamancer
V’neef Marulai
Volcanic Sacrifice
Waelcyrge
Wajanai Snidvongs
Walker FitzRoy
Warren P Nelson
Wayne
Wayne Coburn
Wei-Yau Huang
Welverin
Wendy Crescent
Whayne Sebrey
Will Figueiredo
William “The Nightmare Lord” Smith
William Delmar III
William Franks
William J Bethel & Rachael Elisheva
William J. Schebler Jr
william Larabell
William Lewis Overstreet
Willis Schiftner
Willy
Wiseman
Wolfgang „Tepet Talin” Neckel
Wombat
Wrenna Robson
Xee Ziem
Xiwo Xerase
Yeshin Hariparsad
Yuan He
Zack Simon
Zak Strassberg

FOUNDER OF THE REALM

“Eleanor Saxton”
“John L. Gaisano III, Tepet Eran”
A. Neal
Aaron Davey
Aaron LaBrie
Aaron Woodside
Adam Daniel-Wayman
AG
Alan-Michael Havens
Aldo “Kwako” Montoya Reynaga
Alex Carstense
Alex Sauriol
Alun ‘Wolfie’ Powell
Alwin Penterman
Andi Eames
Andrew Hows
Andrew Kemp
Andrew Snow
Andrey Stroilov
Annei Lyranae
Anton A. Adam
Antonio Borrani
Ashley Thompson
B. Ezell
Benjamin Mire
Benoît “Pacmantima” Stella
Bert Corluy
Bill Frerking
Brian
Bryant Devillier
C. Lowe
C.Wardwell
Calm Skeleton
Carl Soderberg
Carlo Tommasini
Cathak Creos
Catherine Roberts
Charles “Lukkychukky” Ulveling
Charles F. Lovett
Chase Burton
Chris Dron
Chris Schwalbe
Christian Walters
Christopher Reinhardt
Cole Lane
Colin Jones
Corey Davidson
Corey Reynolds
Cory Tabibian
Danern
Daniel Gulka
David “Weimann” Karlson-Weimann
David Bufkin
David Futterrer
David Horton
David Kotsonis
Davide Ferlan
Déan Pijpker
deluge
Dominik Jaworski
DRAGONfluffy
Ejtaka
Emissary of Zork
Eric Kroier
Erica Anne James
Erik Dahlman
Estevan F. Queiroz
Fiikragg
Fofo
Francis Rapadas
Francisco Costa
Frédérik Laporte-Morais
Fredrik Karlsson.
Frognskins D. Rainskins
G. Alex Williamson
Geoff Kincaid
Glenn Clifford
Gordon G Gordon
Götz Weinreich
grafe
Gregory Stayner
Ice Raven
Incandescent Dragon Creations
Iskandar
Jaakko Heinonen
Jacob Cromer
jacob kleffel
James Bell
James Edward Gray II
James Kite
James Taylor
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Jeremy Dillon
Jim Groves

Joe Limond
Joel Mattson
John Clayton Oeffinger II
Jon T Moran
Jonathan Cotton
Jordan Goldfarb
Joseph “Highest Reward” Hales
Joseph Moore
Joseph Nikolaus
Joseph Pomes
Josh “For the Vendetta” Raveling
Joshua Zganjar
Jürgen Pünter
Justin Ashley Powell
Justin Miller
Justin Walduck
Keith Block
Kelvin Mok
Ken Marquetecken
Kim Caya
Kintani Mayatovar
KWMcComber
Kyle Henick
Kyle Vansant
Kyranthos
Larry Hymes
Lars-Henrik Evjan
Ledaal Joumae
Lee Moneta-Koehler
Little Wolf and Angry Jackal
Liz Rogers
Lord B Jenkins
Lorenzo De Crais
Lori Krell
Mackenzie Belmont
Marc Alewine
Marc-André Sarrazin (a.k.a Hubris Knight)
Mark Cockerham
Martin V Ottesen
Matthew and Stephanie Roark
Matthew McGuire
Matthew Parker
Matthew Scott
Matthias Zuchowski
Melody Haren Anderson
Michael Brewer
Michael Denholtz
Michael Maitan
Michael Pietrelli
Michael Tree
Michael V. Roberts
Mike Tidman
Mitchell Spencer
Mnenon Aliden
Morgan Foxgrove
MysticTemplar
Nagi Sungila
Nat Kisa “Kizna” A
Nathan Henderson
Nathan R.
Nellens Sekali
Nicholas Scott
Nickolas Clark Kik
Nicolas Vandemaele Couchy
Nik May
Noelle Nilsson
Nullpunkt
Olav Magne Voll
Owen Stewart
Pascale McDuff
Patrick J.
Paul Messenger
Pierre coppet
Quasi
Quinn Radich
R.Wilkinson
Rand Brittain
Raoni Rego Godinho
Rian Socia
Richard Javier “Blaque” Stephenson
Robert “Jefepato” Dall
Robert M Soderquist
Robert Vance
Robert Wyatt
Ross & Katie B.
Russell Turnbull
Ryan Williams
S. Snyder
Sam Cameron-McKee
Sam Gulliver-Goodall
Scott Morris
Sean ‘Ariamaki’ Riedinger
Sesus Denerid Versino
Seth Landry
Shawn Polka
Sophie Larivière-Mantha
Steen Chr. Rosenørn
Stephen Naum
Stevie Lantalia Metke
Stretch Andrews
Synapse
Tenno Mao V
The Freelancing Roleplayer
The Lazy One
Theo Moon
Thomas J Fleming
Tiffany Albers
Tim Aumonier
Timothy Peterson
Travis Wiedenhoeft
Tucker “Sleeves” Perry
Twilight hymn
Tyler Perry
U.Kaya “Silent Shadow” Yavuz
Valery Belayev
Veronica Ellis
Vic Smith
vincent furstenberger
Vortigern
Wern212
Will Hochella
William Teebay
Wouter Janssens
Zach Moring
Zeuk Taren
Zhivko Yakimov

EXALTED
THIRD EDITION

Name:_____ Concept:_____
Player:_____ Anima:_____
Aspect:_____ Lineage:_____

Attributes

Strength_____ ●OOOO
Dexterity_____ ●OOOO
Stamina_____ ●OOOO
Charisma_____ ●OOOO
Manipulation_____ ●OOOO
Appearance_____ ●OOOO
Perception_____ ●OOOO
Intelligence_____ ●OOOO
Wits_____ ●OOOO

Abilities

☐ Archery_____ OOOOO
☐ Athletics_____ OOOOO
☐ Awareness_____ OOOOO
☐ Brawl_____ OOOOO
☐ Bureaucracy_____ OOOOO
☐ Craft_____ OOOOO
☐ Dodge_____ OOOOO
☐ Integrity_____ OOOOO
☐ Investigation_____ OOOOO
☐ Larceny_____ OOOOO
☐ Linguistics_____ OOOOO
☐ Lore_____ OOOOO
☐ Martial Arts_____ OOOOO
☐ Medicine_____ OOOOO
☐ Melee_____ OOOOO
☐ Occult_____ OOOOO
☐ Performance_____ OOOOO
☐ Presence_____ OOOOO
☐ Resistance_____ OOOOO
☐ Ride_____ OOOOO
☐ Sail_____ OOOOO
☐ Socialize_____ OOOOO
☐ Stealth_____ OOOOO
☐ Survival_____ OOOOO
☐ Thrown_____ OOOOO
☐ War_____ OOOOO

Additional Abilities

☐ _____ OOOOO
☐ _____ OOOOO
☐ _____ OOOOO
☐ _____ OOOOO
☐ _____ OOOOO
☐ _____ OOOOO

Specialties

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Willpower

O O O O O O O O O O
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Essence

O O O O O

Personal ____ | ____
Peripheral ____ | ____
Committed _____

Merits

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_____ OOOOO
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_____ OOOOO

Experience

Current:_____ Total:_____

Dragon Experience

Current:_____ Total:_____

Weapons

Weapon Name	Acc	Dmg	Def	Ovw	Tags	Dice Pool

Health & Defense

Armor	Soak	Hard	MP	Tags

Natural Soak:_____ Final Soak:_____

Parry:_____ Resolve:_____
Evasion:_____ Guile:_____
Rush:_____ Disengage:_____
Join Battle:_____

Health Levels

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



Intimacies

Intimacy	Intensity	Intimacy	Intensity

Charms

Name	Type	Duration	Cost	Book	Page#	Effect



For a thousand years, the Dragon-Blooded have ruled Creation from thrones of jade, secure in their power and authority as Princes of the Earth. Through command of the elements and mastery of every martial discipline, their ruling bloodlines exercise dominion over the wealth and armies of the world. Now, in this time of tumult, their hegemony is challenged by breakaway states, monsters from world's edge, and the dreadful power of the Solar and Lunar Anathema.

This Exalted Third Edition sourcebook provides everything that players and Storytellers need to introduce the Dragon-Blooded into their story. In addition to details of life in the Scarlet Realm, Lookshy, and among a variety of outcaste groups, it covers character creation and Dragon-Blooded Charms, along with new Merits, spells, martial arts styles, and heirloom artifacts that can be included in any game.

EXALTED

THIRD EDITION

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